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HLPF 2016 HIGHLIGHTS: TUESDAY, 19 JULY 2016

On Tuesday morning, two sessions on Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) took place at the 2016 meeting of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF). In the afternoon, a special address by UN Secretary-General (UNSG) Ban Ki-moon was followed by another session on VNRs, and the general debate.

VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEWS 1

This session was chaired by Sven Jürgenson, Permanent Representative of Estonia to the UN and Vice President of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), and moderated by Robert Glasser, Special Representative of the UNSG for Disaster Risk Reduction.

Presenting Mexico's VNR, Francisco Guzmán Ortiz, Office of the President, said his country: has established a specialized technical committee to monitor and implement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); created a national online platform to share best practices, policies and technological advances; and plans to create a high-level commission for SDG implementation, headed by the President and including academia and civil society.

Mohamed El Ouafa, Minister Delegate to the Head of Government in charge of General Affairs and Governance, Morocco, said his country has conducted several consultations on the 2030 Agenda and outlined the: national plan for industrial development; Green Morocco Plan; renewable energy programme; green tourism strategy for 2030; gender equality project; and housing and economic assistance programme.

Manuel Sager, Swiss Development Cooperation, Switzerland, highlighted five elements of the Swiss action plan: commitment at the highest political level; partnerships across levels of governments and with stakeholders; coherence and coordination; a sustainable development monitoring system; and mobilization of resource and international assistance. Presenting the private sector perspective, Sabine Döbeli, Swiss Sustainable Finance, said the action plan focuses more on risks than opportunities, and the monitoring system should reflect Switzerland's global footprint.

Milorad Šćepanović, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Montenegro, emphasized sharing good practices and called on the UN system to deliver support in an integrated manner. Jelena Knežević, Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism, Montenegro, highlighted: the policy planning and consultation process to implement the SDGs; a phase-wise approach to integrate SDG indicators into national monitoring systems; and milestones for review before 2030.

Noting domestic revenue shortfalls and post-Ebola recovery as key challenges, Patrick Saidu Conteh, Minister of State II, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, Sierra Leone, said the country had: published a simplified version of the SDGs; engaged in sensitization activities; aligned the SDGs with its Agenda for Prosperity and the national budget; and drafted country-specific indicators.

Glosser summarized the key points from the presentations as including the need to: modify existing national economic and development planning processes; engage different government departments and broader technical expertise; develop indicators and collect data; ensure high-level leadership; take into account the global, regional, sub-regional, national and local levels; and involve stakeholders.

Expert discussant Rachel Kyte, Special Representative of the UNSG for Sustainable Energy for All, highlighted the importance of: integration of SDGs into existing planning processes; strong institutions; inclusivity; and intergenerational equity.

Discussant Sandra Andovska, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, asked how the countries presenting VNRs plan to integrate youth, the private sector and fragile groups into national implementation of the SDGs.

Ortiz highlighted the importance of high-level involvement in the implementation of the SDGs. Ouafa noted the need for broad consultations with young people. Sager outlined both top-down and grassroots leadership which includes young people and the private sector. Šćepanović highlighted Montenegro's human rights-based approach. Conteh agreed youth must be involved in the process of development.

From the floor, AUSTRIA asked how the countries plan to interact with parliaments. A representative of persons with

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disabilities asked what measures governments would put in place to address human rights violations.

Ortiz noted the close involvement of the Mexican Parliament in sustainable development, including through national budgeting. Ouafa said the policy formulation process in Morocco was inclusive, involving over 7000 participants and generating over 140 recommendations. Sager said the Swiss development cooperation strategy for 2017-2020 is based on the 2030 Agenda. Šćepanović said the approach of Montenegro to sustainable development is based on human rights. Conteh noted the Parliament's role in outreach and sensitization.

VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEWS 2

This session was chaired by Frederick Musiiwa Makamure Shava, Permanent Representative of Zimbabwe to the UN and ECOSOC Vice President, and moderated by Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi, African Development Bank.

Noting that the HLPF should be used to share good practices and constructive criticism, Erna Solberg, Prime Minister, Norway, highlighted: that each ministry is analyzing the SDGs and targets within its area of responsibility; annual progress reporting; efforts to ensure high quality education for all; and participation of indigenous peoples and civil society as key elements of Norway's 2030 Agenda implementation. Speaking on behalf of Norwegian civil society, Martin Østerdal, Norwegian Children and Youth Council, said the SDGs are only achievable if governments stand with civil society, instead of oppressing it.

Herilanto Raveloharison, Minister of Economy and Planning, Madagascar, highlighted: an institutional framework to implement the SDGs; two national consultations; direct initiatives to achieve equity, fairness and non-exclusion, including a social protection policy; and efforts to develop a national resource mobilization strategy, and to mainstream natural capital accounting in national planning.

David Zalkaliani, First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Georgia, highlighted a Joint Technical Working Group for the SDGs, with experts from line ministries and the National Statistics Office; prioritization of 14 SDGs; and the integration of the SDGs into the Annual Governmental Work Plan.

Halit Çevik, Permanent Representative of Turkey to the UN, described: efforts to embed the SDGs into the upcoming national 11th Development Plan; plans to strengthen the Sustainable Development Coordination Commission and update existing indicators; and Turkey's emerging role as a development cooperation donor, providing 0.54% overseas development assistance (ODA)/GNI in 2015.

Fraser-Moleketi highlighted innovations in reporting such as shared reporting by governments and stakeholders and urged the full integration and "domestication" of SDGs.

Discussant Thoriq Ibrahim, Minister of Environment and Energy, Maldives, emphasized the need to localize SDGs and said prioritization does not undermine the universality and indivisibility of the goals.

Solberg said tackling the "black economy" could provide resources for implementation. Raveloharison noted the need for inclusive growth to avoid triggering crises. Zalkaliani said

coordinating structures play an important role in integrating SDGs across government. Çevik said the SDGs provide a vision to direct his country's five-year plans.

ARGENTINA enquired about the costs of implementing the 2030 Agenda. CHILDREN AND YOUTH, on behalf of the Major Groups and other stakeholders (MGoS), asked: Norway about the country's efforts to ensure sustainable consumption levels; Madagascar about plans to ensure decent work and a social protection floor; and Georgia and Turkey about their gender equality measures. They also recommended: partnering with all MGoS in conducting national reviews; undertaking at least three reviews in 15 years; and utilizing other UN mechanisms, such as human rights bodies; to implement the SDGs. The Inter-Parliamentary Union highlighted the growing role of parliaments in implementing and monitoring the SDGs.

Çevik highlighted the country's action plan for gender equality, and, in closing, underlined the need for inclusion and to find more resources. Zalkaliani said the country's 2016-2017 Human Rights Action Plan would address gender equality and stressed cooperation with the UN. Raveloharison highlighted increasing employment levels as a priority and actions to address this, and called for a more responsible global partnership. Solberg noted efforts to address food waste through legislation and incentives, and underlined the SDGs as the answer to the biggest challenges of our time.

SPECIAL ADDRESS BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

UNSG Ban Ki-moon outlined the main messages from the first progress report on the SDGs; called for active participation in the HLPF; described the VNRs as a key feature of the HLPF; pledged full support from the UN in implementing the 2030 Agenda; and noted the need to improve the quality of ODA. He called on Member States to ratify the Paris Agreement, and "pledge never to rest" until a world of peace, dignity and opportunity is achieved for all.

VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEWS 3

This session was chaired by Héctor Alejandro Palma Cerna, Deputy-Permanent Representative of Honduras to the UN and ECOSOC Vice President. It was moderated by Babatunde Osotimehin, Executive Director, UN Population Fund.

Kimmo Tiilikainen, Minister of Agriculture and the Environment, Finland, said that the country's Sustainable Development Coordination Secretariat is managed by the Prime Minister's office, and the sustainable development strategy and development policy were updated in 2016 in line with the 2030 Agenda. Rilli Lappalainen, Finnish NGDO Platform to the EU, Kehys, noted the VNR does not mention Finland's level of ODA.

Sili Epa Tuioti, Minister of Finance, Samoa, said the country had conducted a consultative assessment of its 2012-2016 development strategy against the SDGs, which forms the basis for its 2016-2020 development strategy, and had produced national indicators.

Matia Kasaija, Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, Uganda, said Uganda's second development plan will focus on the agriculture, tourism and mineral sectors and highlighted new legislation to attract private investment.

Thomas Silberhorn, Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, Germany, highlighted: taking all aspects of SDGs into account, and accounting for impact of actions beyond national borders. Rita Schwarzelühr-Sutter, Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety, Germany, identified a number of strategies designed to reduce Germany's ecological footprint, including national strategies for biodiversity and sustainable consumption. Ansgar Klinger, German Education Union, called for structured and binding options for stakeholder participation in the 2030 Agenda.

Expert discussant Marianne Beisheim, German Institute for International and Security Affairs, urged Member States to consider a format for the VNRs to encourage learning, and posed questions related to the choice of instruments for implementation; support for systemic challenges like climate change; and follow-up and support.

Discussant Ana María Baiardi, Minister for Women, Paraguay, queried how the countries were ensuring broad participation, and the integration of the gender perspective into all 17 Goals. Discussant Morten Jespersen, Under-Secretary of State for Global Development and Cooperation, Denmark, asked how countries could: sustain ownership until 2030; avoid neglecting some SDGs while prioritizing other; and localize the Goals.

From the floor, QATAR outlined national efforts to integrate and achieve the SDGs. MALDIVES, on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States, asked how Samoa is ensuring coherence between the SAMOA Pathway and the 2030 Agenda. CHILDREN AND YOUTH, on behalf of all MGoS asked: Germany and Finland, about reducing inequality; Finland, about reducing the national ecological footprint; Uganda and Samoa, about civil society participation; and Samoa, about balancing the three pillars of sustainable development.

In response to questions, Tillikainen listed efforts to achieve a circular economy and bio-economy as ways to reduce the national ecological footprint. Epa Tuioti underlined the key role of civil society in the country's development planning and implementation process; challenges facing small island developing States (SIDS); and the importance of ownership. Kasaija highlighted, *inter alia*, his country's mid-term progress review and annual performance report to monitor progress, and the consultation of stakeholders through a Presidential roundtable.

Silberhorn stressed, among other issues, the need for the public sector to lead by example with regard to women and girls' empowerment, and characterized multi-stakeholder cooperation as a "permanent challenge."

In closing, Moderator Osoimehin highlighted: universality, human rights, data, equity, integration, gender equality and partnerships as key issues to consider.

GENERAL DEBATE

ECOSOC Vice President Shava chaired this session.

Presenting the UNSG's report on "Implementing the post-2015 development agenda: moving from commitments to results" (E/2016/64), Wu Hongbo, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, noted the report analyzes measures

to ensure a strong foundation for 2030 Agenda implementation and focuses on the design of national sustainable development strategies and policies. Wu also addressed the UNSG's note on infrastructure for sustainable development (E/2016/70), noting its recommendation to policy makers that infrastructure policy investments be integrated, risk-informed and inclusive, and outlining different roles for the UN system to help ensure resilient infrastructure.

Presenting the report of the Committee on Development Policy (CDP) (E/2016/33), José Antonio Ocampo, CDP Chair, called for: supporting least developed countries (LDCs), including through continued preferential market access and targeted aid for trade; strengthening tax cooperation so foreign investors contribute to tax revenue; and drawing a distinction between ODA and total official support for sustainable development.

Statements by Member States and stakeholders followed.

The Permanent Representative of the US to the UN identified three key areas to make progress on SDGs: using data to track progress and improve public policies; shining light on shortfalls in SDG implementation; and involving resources and innovations beyond government.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Czech Republic, said his country would emphasize the social dimension of foreign policy, including by incorporating the theme of "leaving no one behind" into their development cooperation strategy.

The Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, China, highlighted, *inter alia*, joint global efforts; people-centered approaches; and prioritizing poverty eradication.

The Minister of Agriculture and the Environment, Finland, emphasized SDG 12 (responsible consumption and production) and climate change action among national priorities, while calling for an effective follow-up and review process for the 2030 Agenda.

The Minister for Public Administration, Sweden, outlined a national multi-stakeholder committee to support the implementation of SDGs. The Minister for Women, Paraguay, outlined a new national development plan towards 2030. The Minister of Economy, Afghanistan, highlighted the need for special attention to its development challenges. The Minister of International Co-operation, Egypt, said the international community must pull together to tackle the spread of terrorism worldwide. The Minister of Finance and Development Planning, Liberia, said their modest gains in achieving the MDGs motivated his country to take an active role in developing and implementing the SDGs.

The Minister for Environment, Sustainable Development, and Disaster and Beach Management, Mauritius, said the country is a "victim of its own success" in moving from an LDC to an upper middle-income country (MIC) as it no longer qualifies for many ODA sources.

The Minister of Forest Economy, Sustainable Development and Environment, Republic of the Congo, highlighted: the country's forthcoming 2017-2021 development programme; progress in addressing HIV/AIDS and malaria; and efforts in the areas of reforestation.

The Minister of Environment and Energy, Costa Rica, noted the establishment of a high-level council to address the SDGs in his country, and ongoing work to define a short-term national implementation strategy. Speaking as the President of the second session of the UN Environment Assembly of the UN Environment Programme (UNEA-2), he said the adoption of 25 resolutions at UNEA-2 in May had provided a renewed mandate for the implementation of the environmental dimension of the SDGs.

The Minister of Planning, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), highlighted the country's long-term national strategy for development, which aims to see the DRC become a MIC by 2021, an emerging economy by 2030, and a knowledge economy by 2050.

The Deputy Minister for Multilateral and Global Affairs, Republic of Korea, underlined rising global inequalities and prolonged conflict as key challenges to leaving no one behind; and highlighted, among other initiatives, the country's air ticket levy, which contributes to a global poverty fund.

The Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Spain, said an inter-ministerial commission would coordinate sustainable development policies.

The Vice Minister of Economy and Planning, Saudi Arabia, identified preliminary steps undertaken to implement SDGs, including: the launch of the 2030 Vision and 2020 Transition Program; the search for a follow-up body; and developing indicators to track performance.

The Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Russian Federation, noted his country's increased assistance to developing countries and said preparations for monitoring the SDGs were underway.

The Parliamentary Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs, Japan, said an "SDG Promotion Headquarters" had been launched under the leadership of the Prime Minister, and it was formulating principles to guide implementation.

The Vice-Chairperson, NITI Aayog Government of India, said the SDGs are already reflected in existing policies, and resonate with the government's goals, targets and vision.

The Director-General for International Environmental Affairs and Sustainable Development, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Iran, said the agreed principles of national ownership and common but differentiated responsibilities should remain a cornerstone of the 2030 Agenda.

The Principal Advisor, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, New Zealand, said his country will continue its leadership on: eliminating fisheries and inefficient fossil fuel subsidies; promoting open rule-based trade mechanisms; and advocating for SIDS.

The State Minister of Finance and Development, Ethiopia, said the SDGs were integrated into the country's growth and transformation plan in 2015.

The Permanent Secretary, Cabinet Office, Zambia, said the country is currently implementing its seventh national development plan, which will set the foundation for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

The Ambassador in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Serbia, outlined an inter-ministerial working group headed by the Deputy Prime Minister, which will nationalize the SDGs.

The Senior Special Assistant to the President on SDGs, Nigeria, emphasized the need for international support to achieve domestic resource mobilization.

The Director-General, National Development Planning Commission, Ghana, identified national processes to deliver both the 2030 and 2063 Agendas in a coherent and robust manner.

The Deputy Director General of International Economic and Financial Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Algeria, said human capital was at the center of his country's development policy.

The Advisor, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Iraq, noted efforts for social reform, problems caused by terrorism, and the impact of the drop in the price of oil.

The Commissioner General for Sustainable Development, France, called for integrated action between the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement.

The Permanent Representative of Belgium to the UN called for: improving the lives of the most vulnerable; assisting fragile countries and LDCs; addressing synergies between the SDGs; and partnerships. The Permanent Representative of the Seychelles to the UN said the elaboration of a multi-dimensional poverty index would be an important step to address poverty.

The Ambassador of Israel to the Caribbean Islands, Caribbean Community and Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States highlighted the integration of a gender perspective in the country's state budget. The Permanent Representative of Palau to the UN noted the protection of 80% of its Exclusive Economic Zone as the country's entry point to SDG implementation.

The International Telecommunications Union stressed the need to realize universal and affordable Internet access to achieve the SDGs. The International Association of Economic and Social Councils highlighted: combatting corruption; promoting good governance; and identifying additional resources as being among the issues ECOSOC should address.

IN THE CORRIDORS

Tuesday was a "historic" day for the HLPF – 13 countries, including LDCs, SIDS, MICs and high-income countries, presented their VNRs for the first time. A veteran delegate said it was "satisfying" to see the process reflect its universal form, as developed countries admitted they have problems too. An NGO representative was more skeptical, describing the presentations as "couch therapy," with no common format and minimal scrutiny. The SDGs are to be prioritized by countries based on national circumstances - and a delegate admitted that if it is a national priority, chances are that national governments are already addressing it. It was perhaps not surprising then, that more than one country said they have been working on the SDGs years before they were adopted. The NGO representative hoped that these therapy sessions would "change mindsets about sustainability."

The *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* summary and analysis of the HLPF will be available on Saturday, 23 July 2016 at <http://www.iisd.ca/hlpf/2016/>