



Africa's Voluntary National Reviews and Domestication of Agenda 2063 for the HLPF 2022: Peer-learning and Resilient Practices in the Face of COVID-19

African Peer Review
Mechanism

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Social Affairs

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Foreword



The Federal Republic of Nigeria had the honour to host the fourth African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) Continental Workshop on the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Africa from 28 - 30 March 2022 in Abuja, Nigeria. The high-level workshop was a needed and timely event for African countries to engage in capacity-building for the VNRs ahead of the High-Level Political Forum in New York on 13-15 July 2022. It also provided a one-day capacity building event for the SDG Sub-National Focal Persons in Nigeria on the 2030 Agenda and its alignment with the AU Agenda 2063, and guidelines on Voluntary Local Reviews (VLR) preparations.

The Senior Special Assistant to the President on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Nigeria and the APRM/AUDA-NEPAD office in Nigeria would like to express gratitude and appreciation to all the partners who put efforts together to make this high-level event possible. First and foremost, the APRM led by the CEO of the Continental Secretariat, Prof. Eddy Maloka and the APRM team that has been supporting the VNR processes in Africa since 2018. Further, our special appreciation goes to the United Nations Department of Social

and Economic Affairs (UN DESA) for supporting the workshop and providing thorough knowledge and guidance to the participants, as well as the Sub-National SDGs focal points in our thirty-six (36) states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) in Nigeria. While the continent continues to be threatened by severe economic and human consequences of COVID-19, African countries need to synergize efforts and maximize resource mobilisation strategies as buffers to similar future shocks. We also noted that further efforts need to be exerted to address the gaps between the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union Agenda 2063 at the national and sub-national levels. The role of the African Union and APRM in providing such a regional platform is significantly valuable and shall be supported by the AU Member States.



Princess Adejoke Orelope-Adefulire
Senior Special Assistant to the
President on SDGs, Nigeria



Princess Gloria Akobundu
CEO, APRM-AUDA/NEPAD Office in Nigeria



Acknowledgments

The African Peer Review Mechanism has been assigned an expanded mandate since 2017 to play a role in monitoring and evaluation of Agenda 2030 and Agenda 2063, particularly governance trends and national governance reporting challenges across the continent. Responding to this mandate and our Universal Accession strategy, the APRM established a continental capacity building platform to assist member states in reporting on the SDGs and Agenda 2063 in Africa through the VNRs. This is imperative to support the operationalization of the AU-UN Framework for the implementation of both Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda signed by the Secretary General of the UN and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission in 2018. As of April 2022, four VNR continental workshops were organised by APRM in Ethiopia, Rwanda, Djibouti, and Nigeria to deliver on this goal. The last workshop was jointly organised by the APRM and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, through its Divisions for Sustainable Development Goals (DSDG), Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government (DPIDG) and Office of Intergovernmental Support and Coordination for Sustainable Development (OISC).

Supported by various stakeholders, state and non-state actors and development partners, the continental workshops on VNRs provided necessary guidance to African member states on the VNR/VLRs and their guidelines. Accordingly, it deliberated on various thematic areas including institutional arrangements and means of implementation of both Agenda 2030 and Agenda 2063. This platform has proven to be extremely beneficial to African countries, including in peer-learning and exchange of best practices for the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of both the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want.

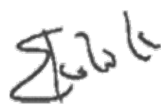
This report provides a synthesis on the VNR processes and institutional arrangements in Africa guided by inputs and presentations by thirty (30) African countries that participated in the APRM workshops in 2021 in Djibouti and 2022 in Abuja. Knowledge-sharing and peer-learning between African countries are imperative to improve the operation of

institutional mechanisms and coordination amongst national authorities. The High-level Political Forum 2022 is a milestone for the continent as twenty-one (21) African countries present their progress towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. Some African countries are also referring to Agenda 2063 in their VNRs to emphasize the strong linkages between both Agendas. Therefore, it is necessary to take stock of the institutional progress made towards VNRs, the SDGs, and the synergies between the two Agendas.

I am thankful for the unconditional support of our strategic partner including UN DESA, UNDP, GIZ, SDG Centre for Africa and the African Development Bank (AfDB) in sustaining this activity every year. My appreciation, likewise, goes to the APRM team for leading the VNR programme at the APRM Continental Secretariat, and in particular Mr. Jean-Yves Adou, Acting Director of Monitoring and Evaluation, Ms. Sara Hamouda, Officer-in-charge of Agenda 2063 and SDGs Unit, and Ms. Rutendo Nazare Agenda, 2063 Researcher.

The APRM expresses great appreciation to the contributors of this report including Amson Sibanda, Saras Jagwanth, Tonya Vaturi, all of UN DESA; Dr. Bala Yusuf-Yunusa of the Office of the Senior Special Assistant to the President on Sustainable Development Goals (OSSAP-SDGs); and Enock Nyorekwa Twinoburyo of the SDG Centre for Africa. The overall coordination of the report drafting and consolidation was conducted by Ms. Sara Hamouda, APRM Continental Secretariat. The report also benefitted from overall contributions delivered by the Office of the Senior Special Assistant to the President on Sustainable Development Goals (OSSAP-SDGs).

We hope you find this publication useful for your orientation on the VNRs in Africa, and the innovative approaches developed by African countries for continued commitment towards Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda within the COVID-19 period and beyond.



Prof. Eddy Maloka
Chief Executive Officer
APRM- Secretariat

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Acronyms

AU	African Union
AUC	African Union Commission
ACDEG	African Charter on Democracy, Elections, and Governance
AfCFTA	Africa Continental Free Trade Area
AGA	African Governance Architecture
APRM	African Peer Review Mechanism
AUDA-NEPAD	AU Development Agency
APSA	African Peace and Security Architecture
CEPA	United Nations - Committee of Experts on Public Administration
CSAR	Country Self-Assessment Report
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
UN DESA	United Nations - Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals

ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
EU	European Union
EUC	European Union Commission
FTYIP	First Ten-year Implementation Plan of Agenda 2063
MAP	UNDP Millennium Partnership for Africa Recovery
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NDP	National Development Plan/Planning
NPoA	National Plan of Action
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
ODA	Official Development Assistance
PAD	Political Affairs Department – AU Commission
PAP	Pan African Parliament
PCSD	Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development
PRC	African Union Permanent Representatives’ Committee
TWG	Agenda 2063 Technical Working Group
WB	World Bank

Executive Summary and Key Messages to the President of ECOSOC

The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) and United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) organised the fourth African Continental Workshop for the Preparations of Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) and Domestication of Agenda 2063 in Abuja from 28 – 30 March 2022. The workshop aimed to support African countries on the following areas:

- Strengthen national capacities of AU Member States in preparation for Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) for the 2022 High-level Political Forum
- Raise awareness of Agenda 2063 and its indicator framework, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and integrated tools to report on both SDGs and Agenda 2063.
- Take stock on institutional arrangements, coordination mechanisms, means of implementation, finance, and partnerships for the implementation of both Agendas on the continent.

Familiarize national experts with the available monitoring and evaluation tools of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 including available SDG 16 questionnaires.

The Africa VNR Continental Workshops provided a peer-learning platform for member states to share challenges, opportunities and best practices on the domestication and implementation of the African Union Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda at the national and sub national level. Strategic partners participated and presented monitoring and evaluation tools to support the systematic reporting of progress regarding the attainment of targets of both agendas. Further, it offered the chance for the National SDG focal points in Nigeria to be familiarized with the Voluntary Local Review (VLR) guidelines to encourage more states to assess the state of implementation of the 2030 Agenda at sub-national level.

On the alignment and domestication of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and AU Agenda 2063, participants noted the following:

- The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063 are the most powerful frameworks for change for the creation of inclusive and sustainable socio-economic development in Africa. Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063 needs to be strengthened with a full appreciation of the interlinkages and synergies between both Agendas.

- The First and second Continental Reports on the implementation of Agenda 2063 (2019 & 2021), that were prepared following various technical workshops and data validation consultations held between 2018 and 2020 under the auspices of the AU Commission and supported by AU organs including NEPAD and APRM, are a consolidation and evidence-based assessment of country and regional-level progress reports. However, member states are encouraged to bridge the gap between knowledge and application of both Agendas and engage in raising more awareness, particularly on Agenda 2063.
- Notable progress towards integrating both the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 into national development plans (NDPs) and planning instruments is taking place in a growing number of African countries. Tailoring the SDGs to NDP priorities and local contexts is imperative to localizing the SDGs and delivering on people's expectations. Domestication is defined by context, as the national circumstances determines local approaches in each country but should also be embedded into national processes from strategic planning, implementation, monitoring, and oversight.
- Alignment and domestication both benefit from a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach that involves, among others, collaboration, knowledge sharing, financing, and funding, strategic planning, and monitoring with indicators to measure progress and results that can be replicated. Engagement of youth, women, and other stakeholders has proven to be effective when it comes to enriching and strengthening the delivery of results through committees, working groups, meaningful partnerships, consultations, and collaboration. Member states were making inroads in establishing multi-stakeholder inclusive coordination mechanisms for sustainable development.
- The most successful alignment structures ensure bottom-up approaches that reflect capabilities of local authorities. Mechanisms for monitoring implementation require review and approval by local authorities, budgetary allocation, and measures to ensure that the right indicators are in place.
- The lack of disaggregated data remains one of the most pressing issues facing African countries and the importance of ensuring that systems are in place to collect data was noted. Timely and disaggregated data is a challenge in decentralized planning systems,

and there can be more reliance on administrative data, which is easier to access than survey data. New digital tools offered by organisations such as the APRM, UNECA UNESCO and Sustainable Development Goals Center for Africa (SDGCA) are significant to fulfil data gaps on SDG 16/Aspiration three.

- Tools are necessary but not sufficient. Capacity building initiatives must be complimentary with the roll out of such tools leading to also harmonisation and understanding of the data methodologies behind the respective tools.
- The overarching theme of both Agendas is that of leaving no one behind. There is a challenge to reach people living in poverty and the most vulnerable populations in rural and remote areas.

On the institutional framework and coordination mechanisms, participants noted the following:

- Key actions are being taken by African governments to implement inclusive, effective, and accountable institutions and raise ownership of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. Public institutions should be empowered to handle shocks and disasters specially to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. More transparent mechanisms as well as coordination amongst government bodies to minimize illicit financial flows and corruption are needed.
- The Principles of Effective Governance for Sustainable Development, which were developed by the UN Committee of Experts on Public Administration (CEPA) and endorsed by the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (UN ECOSOC), were reaffirmed as highly relevant to meeting Africa's governance and inclusive development challenges. The principles can also guide and inform reporting and review processes at local, regional, and national levels, and constitute a powerful tool for assessment of national and local progress in both Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) and Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs).
- The application of the principles of effective governance can advance the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 and can guide countries towards whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches to achieve sustainable development.

·Further capacity building activities to enhance awareness of the CEPA Principles and provide more focused support to facilitate their adoption in practice are needed. The APRM, as the AU autonomous mechanism for the promotion of good governance on the continent, should be supported by the UN system, including UNDESA, to assist in building the capacity of member States on the principles of effective governance and the integration of both Agendas into national development plans, including at sub-national level. Further workshops, study tours and digital platforms should be created to develop peer-learning, capacity building and training in Africa.

On Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs), participants noted the following:

- The VNRs should be substantive, and knowledge based, as well as open, inclusive, participatory, and transparent for all people, with a particular focus on the poorest, most vulnerable and those at risk of being left behind. The VNRs are evolving in their depth and scope, illustrating how countries have progressed with integration and localization of the SDGs and inclusion of stakeholders.
- Inclusion and participation in the VNR preparation process is crucial, and a whole-of-society approach is important for efforts to deal with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Stakeholder engagement, including the private sector and civil society, is necessary to ensure an inclusive process and effective overall development planning.
- Noting that 21 African countries will be presenting VNRs at the 2022 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), the sharing of good practices, including on national development planning and on implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the 2030 Agenda, was encouraged. Peer-learning between African countries, including sharing of experiences, challenges, and opportunities as well as an exchange of lessons learned is crucial for VNRs. The scope for learning and cooperation on COVID-19 recovery scenarios and governance responses was underlined.
- The UN Secretary General's voluntary common reporting guidelines for VNRs provide a framework for common elements within the VNR reports, facilitating comparison of VNR reports from different countries, as well as chronological comparison of VNR reports from the same country over time.

- First time VNRs aim to align their national goals with the 2030 Agenda and set a framework for follow-up. Second and subsequent reports focus more on continuity and comparability, highlight actions that show progress from earlier VNRs, and report on the process of implementation regarding institutions, stakeholders, and baseline data.

On Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs), participants noted the following:

- Localizing the SDGs and Agenda 2063 entails integrating them in the design, implementation, and monitoring of sub-national plans through the VLR process. VLRs are growing at an expeditious pace and are recognized as advancing the implementation and localization of both the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 from the bottom-up approach.
- VLRs enable subnational authorities to conduct self-assessment and reflection on progress, improve coordination transparency/accountability, cooperation (horizontal and vertical), and awareness of the SDGs. Relevant examples of local involvement in national responses to COVID-19 are important for an analysis of what has worked for strengthening multi-level governance and vertical integration.
- The link between VLRs and VNRs should be further strengthened, and local perspectives and fully participatory and inclusive community involvement should be enhanced. Participants highlighted the need for peer-learning for VLRs in Africa.
- In addition to DESA's Global Guiding Elements on VLRs, APRM and UNDESA should also publicize the VLR guidelines prepared by UNECA to consider Africa's context and specificities.

On gender, participants noted the following:

- A gender perspective should be integrated into all reporting processes, including through more effective inter-ministerial coordination and inclusive multi-stakeholder partnerships. In reporting and review processes, including VNRs and VLRs, countries are encouraged to look at gender gaps across all SDGs from an intersectional perspective.

- Sex-disaggregated statistics and gender-specific indicators were important to assess progress towards gender equality and countries should develop guidelines on gender mainstreaming in planning and budgeting processes.
- Leveraging access to finance for women, for example, for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) help empower them and reduce the impact of disasters and shocks.
- Regional mechanisms in Africa like the APRM should assist countries in fulfilling data gaps concerning gender equality through governance assessment and targeted reviews. Coordination with AUC and UN Women is imperative to enhance data collection.

On youth, participants noted the following:

- The importance of meaningful and active participation of children and young people in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its monitoring and review processes, including in preparation and presentation of the VNRs and VLRs, was recognised.
- Young people should be seen, not only as beneficiaries of government programmes, but as crucial contributors to the development process. Africa has the largest generation of young people ever who face significant obstacles to achieve their full potential. Efforts to ensure that young people are included at all levels of decision-making and strengthening civic education for sustainable development and leadership training, including for the youth, to advance intergenerational equity is crucial.
- The African Union through the African Governance Architecture (AGA) and APRM have coherent youth programmes which can be promoted to offer a regional platform for youth, and particularly girls, to express their views and initiatives for the implementation of Agenda 2063 and ensure a whole-of-society approach in sustainable development decision making.

On financing development and partnerships, participants noted the following:

- Effective fiscal and debt management, financing for development and capacity to mobilize domestic resources are key to ensure recovery for African economies from the negative impact of the COVID-19 pan-

demic. Debt levels were exacerbated by COVID-19 as many economies did not adhere to the established fiscal rules. Adherence to fiscal rules path is imperatively needed and immediately.

- Sound institutions to ensure the resilience of financial frameworks to future shocks were crucial. Additionally, in many African countries, there is a need to strengthen the link between budgeting and planning.
- National planning processes should be integrated with the national and external financing for development strategies, including through integrated national financing frameworks (INFFs).
- Reducing reliance on donor countries' assistance and transformation to technical assistance and knowledge sharing programmes are favoured by African countries for sustainable finance. Investment in green economy, mobilization of domestic resources for climate resilience and sustainable food systems are priorities.

VNRs in Africa and Lessons Learned from COVID-19

In 2020 and 2021, 26 African countries submitted Voluntary National Reviews on the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to the United Nations High-Level Political Forum. Globally, the VNRs have proven an effective approach to enhance monitoring and reporting on the SDGs and a tool to nurture collaboration amongst government bodies on one hand, and between government and non-state actors on another hand.

Some African countries that submitted VNRs in 2020 and 2021 and those which are foreseen to submit reports in 2022 participated in the APRM virtual dialogues and the continental workshops in Djibouti and Abuja described above. Special focus was paid on the impact of COVID-19 on the VNR process and the preparedness of countries for such an exercise in the midst of the pandemic.

National technical experts and VNR focal points emphasized that the pandemic had to a large extent distracted the process of VNR preparation at national level. However, African countries also reflected on the important opportunity provided by the pandemic to develop innovative tools to prepare VNRs. They deliberated on the efforts exerted by African governments to raise accountability and ownership

as regards the implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda, in partnership with private sector and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). Some reflections from member states are shown in the following section:

Sierra Leone

Inputs provided by Dr. Francis Mustapha Kai-Kai, Minister of Planning and Economic Development

Sierra Leone submitted its VNR for the third time during the 2021 HLPF. The country utilized its experience in preparing VNRs in 2016 and 2019 to improve the quality of reporting on SDGs. Through the process of developing the VNR, policymakers in Sierra Leone improved accountability measures in the country and developed tools to tackle data gap issues. The government had started to address accountability through the introduction of procurement processes and increased oversight mechanisms. Further, the government had begun to use primary data to address the data gap which contributed to reducing the cost of developing VNRs at national level.

Table 1: Countries reporting on VNRs[1]

2020	2021	2022
Benin***	Angola	Botswana*
Burundi	Cape verde*	Cameroon*
Comoros^	Chad*	Cote d'Ivoire*
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Egypt**	Djibouti
Gambia	Madagascar*	Eritrea
Kenya*	Namibia*	Eswatini*
Liberia	Niger**	Ethiopia*
Libya	Sierra Leone**	Equatorial Guinea
Malawi	Tunisia*	Gabon
Morocco*	Zimbabwe*	Gambia*
Mozambique		Ghana*
Niger*		Guinea-Bissau
Nigeria*		Lesotho*
Uganda*		Liberia*
Zambia		Malawi*
		Mali*
		Senegal*
		Somalia
		Sudan*
		Togo***

Notes: *Presenting for the second time

**Presenting for the third time

***Presenting for the fourth time ^ Presenting in 2023

[1] Draw info from <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/vnrs/>

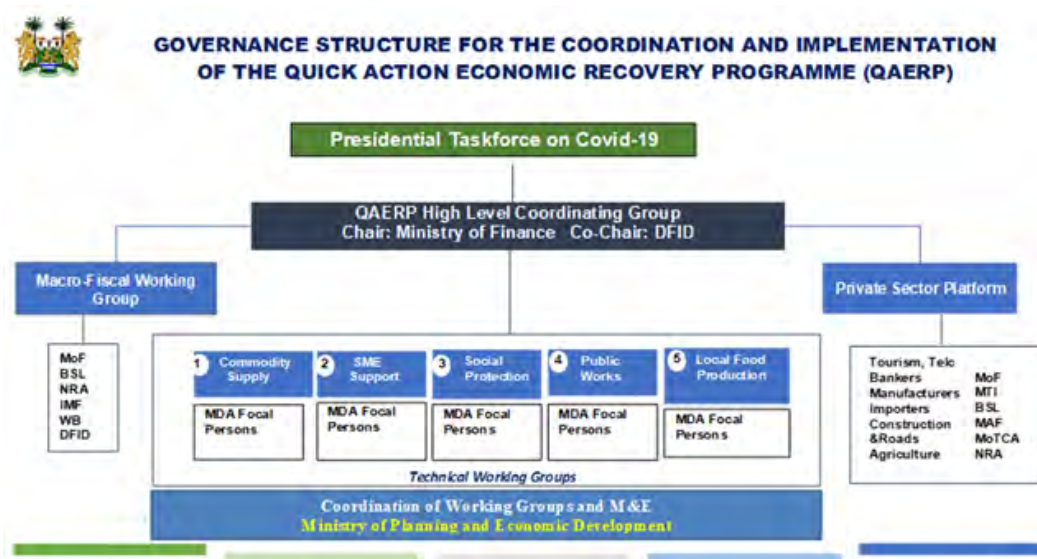
Some key lessons emanating from the Voluntary National Reviews included the following:

1. There is a need to engage a whole-of-society approach while reporting on SDGs and Agenda 2063.
 2. The new decentralization strategies and inclusive processes undertaken by the Government of Sierra Leone to help achieve the realisation of SDGs as well as report comprehensively on the SDGs was highlighted.
 3. There is a need for reporting mechanisms to be instituted to ensure that reporting at the local levels is comprehensive.
 4. There is a strategic need for comprehensive planning for all policies including investment in science and digital technologies to further develop goals.
 5. It is important to utilize existing structures of civil society at district and at community levels for data collection as well as organize consultations on progress with regards to implementation.
 6. The value of existing secondary information, such as from National and Sector-based Annual Progress Reports on implementation of NDPs and other relevant sources, including relevant studies and surveys.
- The benefits of Voluntary National Reviews include a better appreciation of the state of service delivery efforts while promoting peace and social cohesion with emphasis on areas of improvement.

The VNR experience in Sierra Leone assisted the country to be prepared in the face of COVID-19 to practice healthcare and institutional resilience. Before recording the first case of COVID-19, the government took proactive steps including adoption of a National COVID-19 Health Preparedness Response Plan (HPRP) and a Quick Action Economic Recovery Programme (QAERP). Development of the strategies drew heavily from the country's experience in the fight against Ebola, which aims to adequately prepare to contain the pandemic or limit local transmission through containment strategies and reduce mortality through effective disease surveillance and case management. In this respect, identifying, isolating, and caring for patients early and communicating critical risks and events information to all communities, and countering misinformation are some targets. The Quick Action Economic Response Programme (QAERP) is intended to attenuate the economic shocks caused by COVID-19. Sierra Leone has worked closely with the UN Country Team to undertake a socio-economic impact assessment for COVID-19 and prepare a response and recovery plan around the UN pillars of health, protecting people, economic response,

macroeconomic recovery response, multilateral cooperation and social cohesion and community resilience. Further, the government has conducted a special targeted review study together with the APRM on the governance and health resilience in Sierra Leone and developed a set of recommendations and plan of action to be developed to enhance leadership in the health sector and respond to the basic need of healthcare service delivery in the country.

Figure 1: Governance Structure for QAERP



Source: Ministry of Economic Planning and Finance

Zimbabwe

Input provided by Mr. Simon Masanga, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Public Service, Labour, and Social Welfare

Zimbabwe presented its VNR report in 2021 for the second time. The country also was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic which had a severe impact on the economy and caused many human casualties. The 2021 VNR report emphasized the negative and encumbering impact of the COVID 19 pandemic. Therefore, key SDGs were identified by the government as a priority for implementation. The 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 have been integrated into the 14 Priority Areas of the National Development Plan (2021-2025). Various efforts are being taken by the Zimbabwean Government to implement, monitor and raise awareness on the SDGs and Agenda 2063. Over the 2020 – 2022 period, the government has been working on introducing the Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) to local communities. UN DESA already supported different workshops there in 2020 and 2021 to assist the country in VLR preparations.

Figure 2: SDG of priority for Zimbabwe



Source: Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Industry

Zimbabwe is one of the forerunners of VLRs in the continent since 2 VLRs were undertaken for Harare and Victoria Falls in 2020. Preparations to conduct 4 VLRs (Nkayi, Zvishavane, Bulawayo and Mutasa) are at an advanced stage in April 2022. Zimbabwe also has environmental challenges such as droughts, and the need for accessibility to COVID-19 vaccines put a strain on the country's resources. Amongst the key lessons learnt from COVID-19, besides reprioritization of the SDGs, are the following:

- Government's redirected focus and efforts away from international aid to self-reliance in funding national development priorities towards the achievement of development goals as a key strategy to address funding challenges presented by external and COVID-19 related factors.
- Overall, the data gaps faced by the country were noted and the preparations for the national census which began in April 2022 were highlighted. This is intended to help increase the availability and accuracy of data.
- Attention was paid to the decentralization processes put in place by the government to help achieve both Agenda 2063 and 2030 targets and goals. This has served to capacitate government at the local level by empowering the decentralised level to determine their own priorities.

Egypt

Inputs provided by H.E Dr. Hala El-Said, Minister of Planning and Economic Development, Dr. Sherifa Sherif, Head of National Institute of Management, and Dr. Reham Rizk, Head of Social planning and Development Unit, Ministry of Planning and Economic Development

Egypt submitted its VNRs on three occasions (2017, 2019 and 2021). Since 2016, the Egyptian Government conducted various administrative, political, and economic reforms to ensure the domestication of Agenda 2030. The Ministry of Planning and Economic Development leads overall coordination of the report in collaboration with different stakeholders and national authorities.

The Egyptian experts highlighted in different events hosted by APRM that the pandemic caused the greatest global economic downturn in almost a century, reversing decades of development gains as the world approaches 2030. It further pushed hundreds of millions of people into a state of food insecurity, magnifying national and regional instability, disrupting global supply chains, and much more.

The VNR provided an important platform for the government to implement Egypt's Vision for 2030 as well as the development and enhancement of human resources to achieve such a goal. Further, the government launched various administrative reforms including revising the competence scheme of public civil servants, enhancing wages for public sector, and adoption of new strategies such as the "Egyptian National Anti-Corruption Strategy" which aimed at reducing corruption and enhancing efficiency to promote SDG 16 amongst other goals. The Egyptian experience with VNRs in 2021 show that lessons learnt were as follows:

- A participatory approach was maintained and emphasized while preparing the 2021 VNR.
- The active contribution of the NGOs, private sector, UN agencies alongside strategic governmental partners was ensured.
- The VNR was enriched with essential data and figures, measuring the progress in goals and targets, and identifying the gaps.
- COVID-19 was not just a health, humanitarian, or socio-economic crisis; but a governance crisis, testing the resilience of governance systems and institutions.

- The linkages between the most affected SDGs by COVID-19 have intensified, for example, the links between health, education, consumption, decent work, and labour.
- It is necessary to accelerate efforts to deliver the “Decade of Action” for sustainable development by focusing on fragile contexts and investing in evidence-based approaches, which was the theme of the 2021 VNR.

It is also worth highlighting the role of the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMS) which enriched the VNRs with essential data and figures that make up the backbone of the assessment of progress made on goals and targets’ data availability. Despite these efforts, data on key indicators such as agricultural production and productivity, proportion of children in child labour, neo-natal and maternal mortality rates and new HIV infections amongst others have challenges in the collection process. To address these challenges, a national strategy for statistics was put in place to introduce a new national representative survey.

Show case of reporting on localization of SDGs amongst the 27 Egyptian Governorates

Egypt, through the MPED, also worked on developing voluntary local reviews to assess the SDG progress at national level. MPED in partnership with UNFPA, launched 27 reports for localization of the SDGs in different governorates. These reports are intended to be updated annually to document the progress of each governorate in its effort towards achieving the SDGs. It provides an overview of the status of implementing SDGs at the governorate level through measuring and updating the values of 32 indicators for 11 SDGs based on data availability. Further, the collected data identified the SDGs and relevant indicators that need more attention, and to design and implement appropriate interventions (programs, policies, and measures) to improve the performance of the local governments and accelerate the implementation of the SDGs. These reports also assisted in comparing and ranking the performance of each governorate towards implementing the SDGs.

Source: Ministry of Planning and Economic Development

Digitalization is becoming a key for economic and social transformation. The pandemic urged the government to create innovative tools for data collection for the 2021 VNR. Firstly, different methods of engagement for stakeholders were used, that were mainly digital using online platforms, to cope with the COVID-19 situation. Secondly, a series of online public consultations were conducted for stakeholders' initial feedback. Thirdly, a tailored template was then sent to each stakeholder to guide their inputs. This template aimed to capture initiatives implemented on the ground, their inter-linkages with different SDGs, as well as outcomes and challenges faced, which were then incorporated into the report.

South Africa

Input from Dr. Kefiloe Masiteng, Acting Secretary, National Planning Commission, South Africa

South Africa's 2019 VNR was developed in broad consultation with civil society and private sector entities. The National Planning Commission (NPC) at the Presidency took the lead in drafting the report with inputs from various national entities. One of the best practices shared by the NPC is the creation of a Coordination Mechanism to work on the implementation of the National 2030 vision as well as VNR preparations and recommendations.

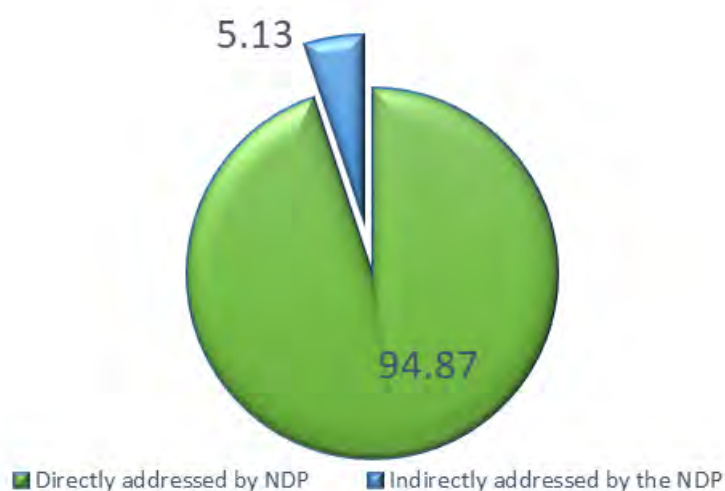
South Africa, like most countries of the world, has also been negatively affected by the pandemic which caused economic ramifications and many human casualties. This has affected the overall progress of many development programmes in South Africa including SDG implementation programmes. The country had also intended to conduct VNRs for some municipalities, including Cape Town, but COVID-19 interrupted the national plan to proceed with such a goal. However, the goal of submitting the second VNR report to the HLPF in 2023 was outlined.

South Africa's lessons learnt from the 2019 VNR highlighted the importance of partnerships, integrated nature of the development goals of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, advanced planning and preparation and the critical need for more statistical data. Also identified from the VNR and pandemic was the need to pursue development goals with increased urgency to help improve the socio-economic lives of citizens.

The NPC exerted various efforts to localize SDGs and Agenda 2063 and ensure the integration of both Agenda 2030 and Agenda 2063 by streng-

thening their alignment into the National Development Plan. The two were identified as mutually reinforcing Agendas that support inclusive sustainable development. Therefore, the government looked forward to capitalising on the 2019 experience to prepare for the 2023 VNR with strong engagement with all stakeholders, particularly the APRM and African Union.

Figure 3 Mapping exercise: Convergence of Agenda 2063/Agenda 2030 with NDP of South Africa



Institutional and Coordination Mechanisms for Domesticating the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063

Institutional and coordination mechanisms for SDG planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation are imperative to ensure national ownership and domesticate the 2030 and 2063 Agendas in Africa. Throughout the last four years, the ownership, and efforts of African countries to domesticate the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 have strongly improved. Evidence shows that countries with designated institutional frameworks and settings for SDG planning have more sustainable development results.

The following is input from member states including Nigeria, Uganda, São Tomé and Príncipe and Djibouti. The participant countries reflected on the different institutional mechanisms established at the government level to ensure policy coherence for SDG planning & implementation for SDGs. Further, they reflected on how governments considered inclusive and participatory approaches in national SDG institutional decision-making and the ways in which the principles of effective governance for sustainable development developed by the Committee of Experts on Public Administration (CEPA principles) contribute to effective, inclusive

and participatory approaches in national SDG institutional decision-making and the ways in which the principles of effective governance for sustainable development developed by the Committee of Experts on Public Administration (CEPA principles) contribute to effective, inclusive, and accountable institutions for the implementation of Agenda 2030 for sustainable development.

Nigeria

Input from Dr. Bala Yusuf Yunusa, *Senior Technical Advisor, Office of the Senior Special Assistant to the President on SDGs*

Since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Office the Senior Special Assistant on SDGs at the Presidency was established to manage and coordinate the implementation of development agendas in the country. The office serves as the institutional and coordination mechanism for VNR preparation at the federal level. Further, Nigeria's VNR was developed as an evidence-based report through a whole-of-society approach involving all segments of society. It highlighted areas of progress and challenges in the achievement of SDGs.

Nigeria presented VNRs twice; the first in 2017 and the second in 2020 during COVID-19. The VNR process was useful to establish a multi-stakeholder core working group on VNRs (CWG-VNR) at the government level. A research team used secondary data collection to produce draft summaries for each SDG. The COVID-19 induced lockdown across the country constrained the ability to carry out primary research to access relevant documents. There was strong leadership and institutional backing of the core working group on VNRs in providing technical guidance and valuable feedback on draft deliverables. The country already identified 7 SDG priorities to be implemented within the NDP. Fighting hunger and ending poverty came on the top of the government's priorities to lift 100 million Nigerians out of poverty over the next 10 years. Alignment exercises undertaken by government to develop Voluntary National Reviews and how they assisted in the implementation of the goals set out in the African Union Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda were also emphasized.

The role of digitalization was emphasized to facilitate consultations during the 2020 VNR preparations. Five virtual consultations took place across the key segments of the society, and across Northern and Southern Nigeria – inter alia the civil society, the private sector, and persons with special needs - drawing on Draft SDG summaries.

Figure 4 SDG of priority for Nigeria (Source: Presidency)



Source: SDG Secretariat, PM office

UN DESA in collaboration with APRM also organised national capacity building sessions for SDGs focal persons in the 36 States and the FCT in Nigeria in order to raise awareness on the VLR process and create awareness of the application of the CEPA principles at sub-national level. Thus, Kwara, Lagos and Nassarawa states already expressed an interest to prepare their first VLR for the year 2023/2024 as sub-national governments.

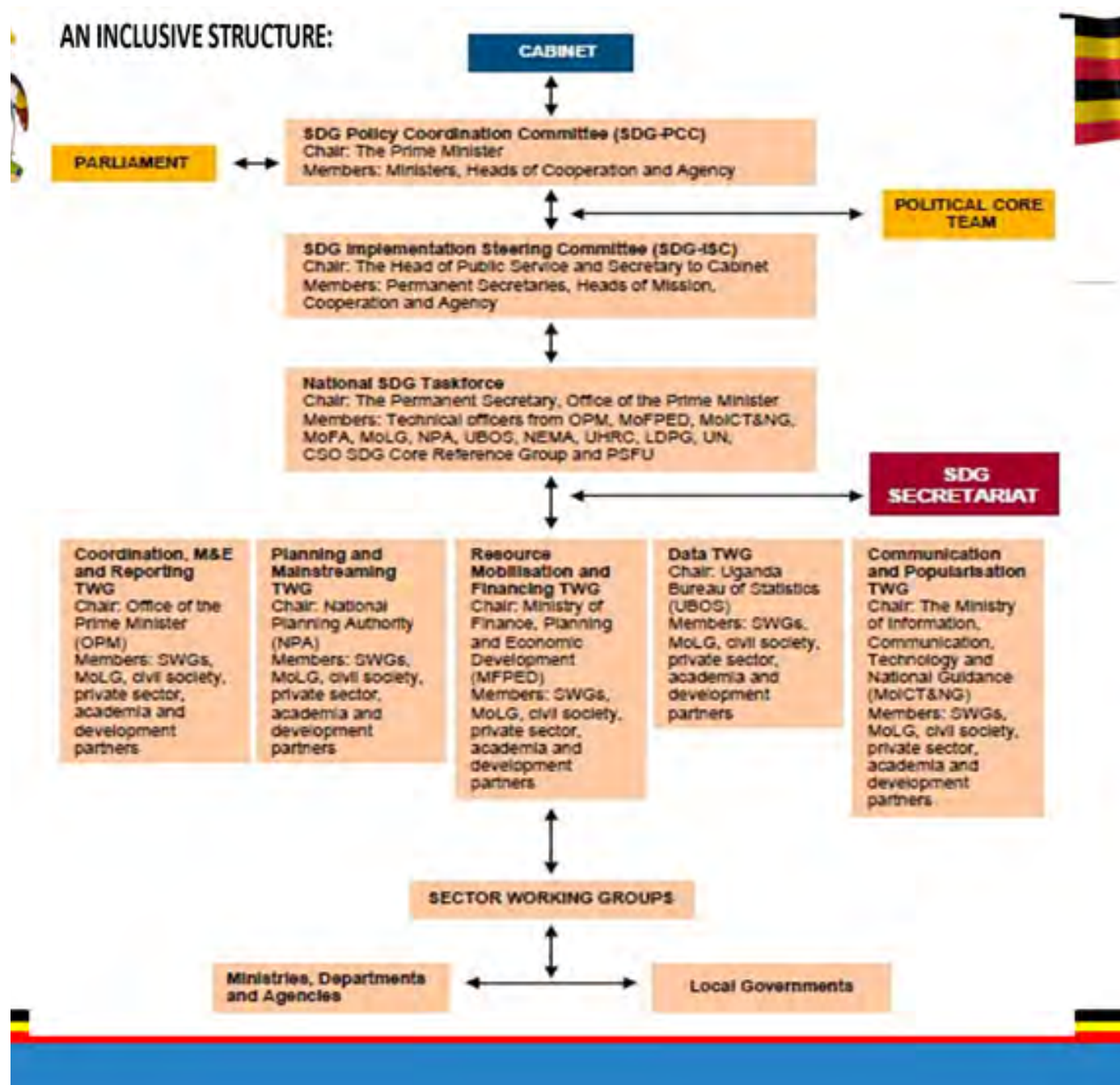
Uganda

Inputs provided by Ms. Jackline Arineitwe, SDG Secretariat, Office of the Prime Minister

Uganda presented its VNRs in 2018 and 2020. The SDG Secretariat was mandated with coordinating the multi-stakeholder framework which was launched in September 2021. It had a mandate to provide technical support and expertise to Ministries, departments and agencies, private sector, development partners, civil society, and academia. Further, the secretariat worked intensively with various ministries to ensure the mainstreaming of the SDGs into the NDP – Uganda's vision 2040. For example, 6 SDGs (3, 6, 8, 9, 11, 15) targets were fully aligned with its Vision 2040. NDP III has now a special chapter on the approach to realization of SDGs.

Reference was made on the role of civil society who are instrumental for the delivery of SDGs through their outreach to people in the communities, and as change makers that can provide evidence from the ground. The engagement of faith-based organizations was also important

Figure 5 Institutional Structure of SDG/Agenda 2063 coordination in Uganda)



Source: SDG Secretariat, PM office

because they have the capacity to mobilize resources and participate in local, provincial, national, and international advocacy.

The key lessons learnt from COVID-19 is the necessity to support the development of national coordination frameworks at local level to ensure that implementation efforts are effectively coordinated in government for impactful results.

São Tomé and Príncipe

Input by Mr. Helmute Barreto, Director of Planning, Ministry of planning, Finance, and Economy, São Tomé and Príncipe.

São Tomé and Príncipe is one of the small island states which struggles with various environmental challenges. The country is presenting its first VNR in 2022 and has been engaged in various consultations and activities with UNECA and AU organs to share experience alongside learning from other African countries. The Ministry of Planning, Finance and Blue Economy is leading the governmental efforts to prepare the VNR in collaboration with the UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP.

The government has worked on aligning and domesticating the SDGs into its National Development Plan (NDP). The domestication process was affected by COVID-19. However, the pandemic offers an opportunity for the government to reallocate its budget for further disaster-mitigation programmes. The repurposing and shifting of budgets away from development is to mitigate the effects of Covid-19 pandemic.

- The allocation of resources towards the pandemic has pushed the government to be more selective of development priorities.
- The effect of the pandemic significantly impacted the national economy due to border closures, and negative effects at the local level which affected the level of self-sustainability by communities.

Djibouti

Djibouti is presenting its VNR for the first time during the HLPF 2022. The APRM supported the country's preparations for this exercise by a continental workshop in Djibouti in February 2021. The institutional mechanism of SDG implementation is led by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and supported by different ministries including the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development. Further, the President approved the foundation of a National Steering Committee and a Technical Committee (Sectoral Focal Points) for the preparation of the first VNR on the SDGs. Djibouti has also collaborated with the UN Resident Coordinator's Office and UNDP to enhance its mapping exercise on SDG planning. Reforms have been implemented in Goals 3 and 5 as the Government of Djibouti initiated the adoption of a law increasing the quota for women from 10% to 25% in the National Assembly, together with a compulsory health insurance for the active segment of the population as well as a health social assistance programme (PASS) for all persons previously identified as with no income.

UN DESA

Input by Ms. Saras Jagwanth, Inter-regional Adviser, Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government

The importance of the United Nations Committee on Public Administration (UN-CEPA) Principles in facilitating the development of effective, accountable, and inclusive systems to enhance sustainable development was highlighted. Given the special focus on institutional aspects of SDG 16 and strong, effective, and efficient institutions, the principles remain valid to be also tracked during the VNR process.

Institutional arrangements are central to all public functions. Building strong institutions for implementation of the SDGs is important. Accordingly, one of the first and most important steps governments take to implement the 2030 Agenda is to shape different institutional arrangements for driving the achievement of the sustainable development goals and for reviewing progress.

The UN DESA-APRM collaboration in Africa has been imperative to raise awareness on CEPA Principles and their application at national and local levels. The CEPA principles and associated strategies further aim to:

- Promote mainstreaming of effective governance in SDG implementation and development plans and programmes at all levels
- Bring together proven standards and operational guidelines in all areas of public sector institution-building relevant to SDG implementation
- Provide a baseline for policymaking while strengthening evidence-based and action-oriented implementation of and follow-up to the 2030 Agenda
- The principles are given depth and made operational through a selection of commonly used strategies and related practices, which are an integral and evolving part of this work.

EFFECTIVENESS			ACCOUNTABILITY		
COMPETENCE	SOUND POLICY-MAKING	COLLABORATION	ACCOUNTABILITY	TRANSPARENCY	INDEPENDENT OVERSIGHT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> →Promotion of a professional public sector workforce →Strategic human resources management →Leadership development, training of civil servants →Performance management →Results-based management →Financial management and control →Efficient and fair revenue administration →Investment in e-government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> →Strategic planning and foresight →Regulatory impact analysis →Promotion of coherent policymaking →Strengthening national statistical systems →Monitoring & evaluation systems →Science-policy interface →Risk management frameworks →Data sharing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> →Centre of government coordination under Head of State / Government →Collaboration, coordination, integration, dialogue across levels of government, functional areas →Raising awareness on SDGs →Network-based governance →Multi-stakeholder partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> →Promotion of anti-corruption policies, practices and bodies →Codes of conduct for public officials →Competitive public procurement →Elimination of bribery, influence trading →Conflict of interest policies →Whistle-blower protection →Provision of adequate remuneration and equitable pay scales for public servants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> →Proactive disclosure of information →Budget transparency →Open government data →Registries of beneficial ownership →Lobby registries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> →Promotion of the independence of regulatory agencies →Arrangements for review of administrative decisions by courts or other bodies →Independent audit →Respect for legality
INCLUSIVENESS					
LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND	NON-DISCRIMINATION	PARTICIPATION	SUBSIDIARITY	INTERGENERATIONAL EQUITY	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> →Promotion of equitable fiscal and monetary policy →Promotion of social equity →Data disaggregation →Systematic follow-up and review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> →Promotion of public sector workforce diversity →Prohibition of discrimination in public service delivery →Multilingual service delivery →Accessibility standards →Cultural audit of institutions →Universal birth registration →Gender-responsive budgeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> →Free and fair elections →Regulatory process of public consultation →Multi-stakeholder forums →Participatory budgeting →Community-driven development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> →Fiscal federalism →Strengthening urban governance →Strengthening municipal finance and local finance systems →Enhancement of local capacity for prevention, adaptation and mitigation of external shocks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> →Multilevel governance →Sustainable development impact assessment →Long-term public debt management →Long-term territorial planning and spatial development →Ecosystem management 	

Reference was also made to the availability of Curriculum on Governance for Sustainable Development for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) developed by UN DESA to assist countries in developing necessary arrangements and policies at national level for the attainment of 2030 development agenda.

Domestication of Agenda 2063 and 2030 Agenda: A peer-learning exercise

Domestication of development agendas refers to the degree of integration of the SDGs into National Development Frameworks as well as the indicators pertinent to these goals. The integration of the SDGs into national frameworks is strongly linked to the alignment of NDPs with five imperatives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which shall be pursued in full. These are: Leave no one behind; put sustainable development at the core; transform economies for jobs and inclusive growth; and build peace and effective, open, and accountable institutions for all and forge a new global partnership.

The APRM's discussion of domestication of the agendas also helps African countries to exchange views on issues related to good practices and challenges on the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.

Ghana (VNR candidate for the HLPF 2022)

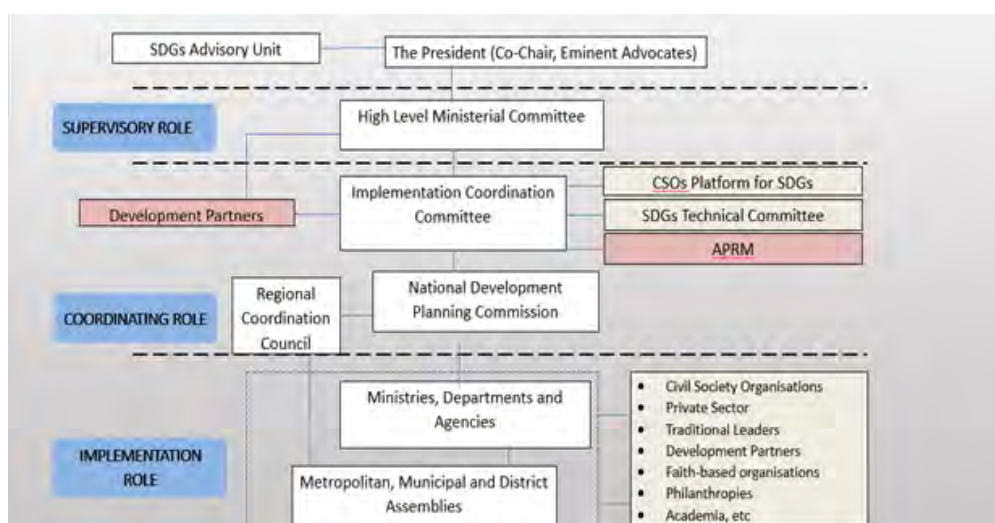
Input provided by Mr. Felix Addo-Yobo, Deputy DG, SDGs Unit at the Presidency

Ghana presented its first report in 2019 and is currently preparing for the second VNR in 2022. Over the last three years, the Government of Ghana led by the Presidency and the National Planning Commission (NPC) had a national exercise to ensure the alignment and integration of both the SDGs and the African Union Agenda 2063 into Government policies and mandates.

Further, the NPC also established a multi-stakeholder approach to identify lead agencies for each development target of the SDGs to ensure accountability and delivery as well as integration of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 into National Development Plans. As Ghana developed a decentralised planning system, each state became responsible for facilitating the reporting and implementation processes of both Agendas with an advisory role by the federal government.

Connecting with the SDG domestication process, the government also introduced the development of quarterly Agenda 2030 and 2063 reports by various government agencies for systematic monitoring and evaluation purposes. The 2022 VNR of Ghana will be highlighting progress towards all 17 SDGs to display the country's best practices and key challenges to foster the implementation of both Agendas. Ghana intends to showcase its first VLR for Accra and illustrate how collaboration with AU-APRM may enhance reporting on the Agendas at local level.

Figure 6 Decentralised system as a vehicle for SDG& Agenda 2063 implementation and reporting- Ghana



Source: SDG unit, Presidency

Cote d'Ivoire

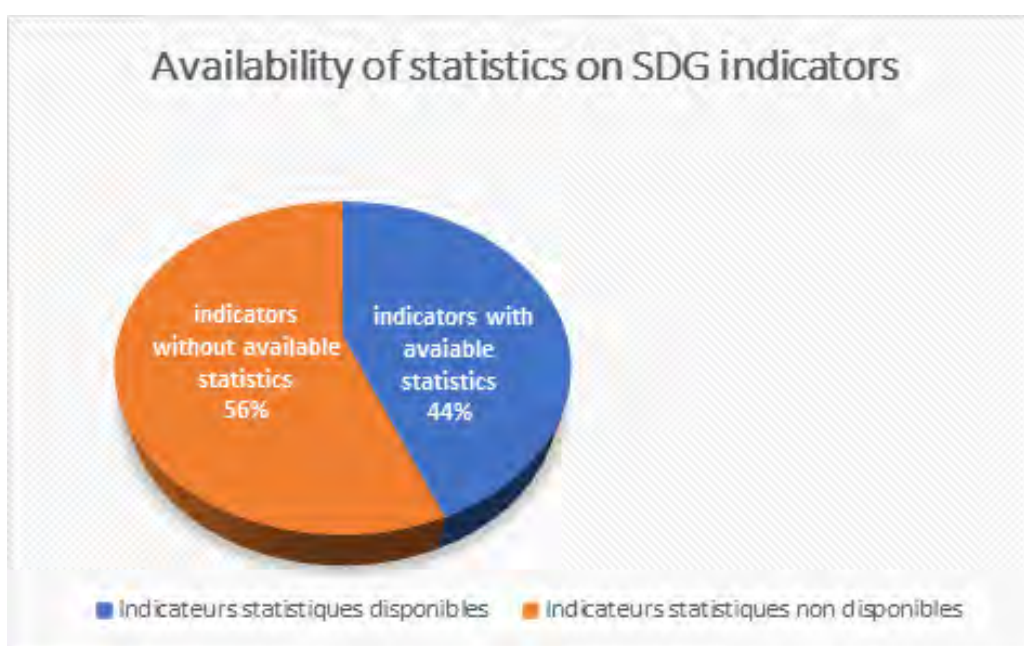
Input provided by Mr. Eloi Godo Gouro, Senior Strategic Planning Expert, Ministry of Planning and Development

The government, guided by the President, has been requested to ensure proper integration of both the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 especially given the fact that Cote d'Ivoire is the champion of Agenda 2063. Accordingly, there is a strong level of convergence between the First Ten Year Plan (2014-2023) of Cote d'Ivoire with both Agendas. The Ministry of Planning adopted the following key steps to conduct the domestication:

1. The comparison of identified indicators and related data needs, as well as sources, including alignment and statistical validation
2. The identification, alignment and coherence in national priorities, specific goals, and targets, as well as the means of achievement
3. Programmes undertaken in an integrated and coherent manner to facilitate coordination within sectors and ensure an inclusive implementation process
4. Establishment of multi-stakeholder thematic groups which also serve to raise awareness of implementation and mobilization efforts
5. Establishment of a department in charge of Planning and Statistics within Ministries according to the government Decree No. 2012-1159 of 19 December 2012 to strengthen their capacities and facilitate the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of National Development Plans.

At present, 87 out of 105 priority indicators are fully aligned with the NDP. Data gaps were identified as an undermining factor in the monitoring and evaluation of SDGs, but several efforts have been made to address this issue. This includes Decree No. 2012-1159 of 19 December 2012 which mandated the establishment of a department in charge of Planning and Statistics within Ministries to facilitate the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the framework for operationalizing Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda.

Figure 7: Availability of Statistics on SDG Indicators



Source: Ministry of Planning and Economic Development

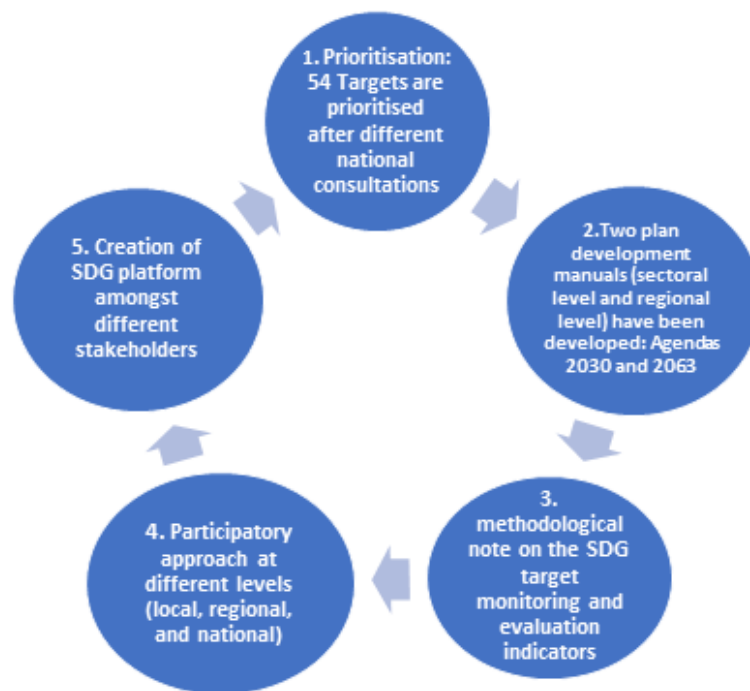
Tunisia

Input provided by Mr. Belgacem Ayad, Director, General Committee of Sectoral and Regional Development, Ministry of Economy and Investment, Tunisia

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs led the political coordination of the VNR preparations in Tunisia. After the successful submission of Tunisia's VNR in 2019, the government submitted a second VNR in 2021. The Ministry of Economy and investment in Tunisia is responsible for technical planning, implementation and domestication of the SDGs in collaboration with other national authorities. Given the political changes in Tunisia since 2011, governments have tried to broaden the whole-of-society approach.

- National consultations were held in 2014 which identified 54 targets from the national priorities.
- Limited resources have led to prioritization of development projects and various management strategies.
- Efforts were made by the Government of Tunisia to organize regional workshops for tertiary and primary students to raise awareness.
- The lack of quality data and statistics disaggregated by region and gender was highlighted.

Figure 8: Process of setting Tunisia 2035 and 2023-2025 National Development Plan (NDP)



Source: Ministry of Investment and Economic Development

Nigeria (Delta State)

Input provided by Dr Andy Ilabor, Director General, SDGs & Agenda 2063 Directorate

The state of Delta in Nigeria perceives domestication of the SDGs as integrating the development plan and goals into activities to enhance socio-economic conditions for the local people in communities, households, and individuals particularly those at risk of being left behind. As far as Delta State is concerned, there were major successes recorded during the MDGs era in Education, Health, Water and Sanitation, Women and Youth sector interventions/programmes. However, the impact of COVID-19 and other socio-economic challenges affects the overall progress towards SDGs at the state level.

The Directorate of SDGs set out strategic activities geared towards the domestication of the 2030 Agenda, including the following:

- Establish capacity building programmes on the SDGs and a Multi-Stakeholders Forum at the state level
- Training of SDG Staff, Desk Officers across the MDAs on the articulated goals, targets and indicators, SDGs data gathering, collection, analysis, and reporting

- Publication of impact assessment: Measuring the Development Efforts of Delta State as against the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Delta State.
- Strategic Meeting on Localizing the SDGs with Local Government Chairmen across the 25 LGAs in Delta State.
- Policy Advocacy to the House of Assembly, Committee on Special Duties, Head of Service, Secretary to the State Government and Ministry of Economic Planning on policy framework development, budget line for SDGs, application of SDG principles in preparation, planning and implementation of project /programme cycles across the MDAs.
- Sensitization and interactive engagement with the MDAs on accelerating actions on the SDGs.
- Community Social Mobilization needs assessment and implementation of projects (Conditional Grant Scheme - Sustainable Development Goals Model) on Health, Sanitation, and Water interventions in communities across the 25 Local Government Areas in the State.
- Media Engagement and SDGs approved space in print and electronic media for SDGs awareness programme by the State Government.
- Creation of Database Management System, interactive social handles, and website on SDGs, to highlight local and state activities and international updates, events and programmes.

Key achievements of DELTA State concerning progress towards certain SDGs

SDG3: Health and Well-being

The state of the primary health centres over time has improved with adequate facilities, equipment, supplies, attitudinal change, conducive working environment for staff, increased patronage of services offered at the centres etc. Access to preventable diseases treatment has increased, there is improved and assured quality healthcare services for people at all ages. Thanks to these efforts, Delta State recorded reduced maternal mortality rate ratio from 2016 to 2019. Out of 24,000 average live births, only 30 maternal

deaths; for child mortality under the age of five, the state recorded 350 deaths in 25,000 live births averagely.

SDG 5: Gender Equality

According to statistics, Delta State had 38.24% of women commissioners from 2016 -2019. Women in managerial positions increased from 54.30 to 58.42% between 2016 and 2019 at the local government level. Women who are vice Chairperson is 1:1 to chairman position at the 25 Local Government Areas in the State. High consideration is made during setting up of special committees at the state and local level with Women as the Chair, Alternative Chairman, Leader, or members positions.

One of the good practices and impact of these activities is the increasing role and representation of women in decision making processes in governance as well as increased sensitization and engagement of local and state stakeholders.

Monitoring and evaluation tools of SDGs and Agenda 2063

Monitoring and Evaluation is a critical component of the SDG domestication and implementation process. Various regional organs including the AU Commission in partnership with other AU organs, UNECA and others have adopted different tools to assist regional monitoring and evaluation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. At national level, each country shall also practice ownership concerning the most adequate monitoring system for the NDP and SDG goals and indicators. This session demonstrates tools provided by the Technical Working Group (TWG) of Agenda 2063 and UNECA Integrated reporting tool. It also reflects on some countries' national monitoring and reporting experiences.

Nigeria, Kaduna State

The state has a project support office to coordinate and manage projects across the State of Kaduna. The Budget and Planning State Commission has adopted various programmes to enhance the implementation of the SDGs. What has been noted though is the lack of awareness of Agenda 2063 compared to the 2030 Agenda at the sub-national level.

Kaduna state is one of the few states in Nigeria that shows commitment to report systematically on the implementation of those development agendas. The Kaduna State Bureau of Statistics has been developing annual reports on SDG progress. One of the best practices at the state level is the inclusion of citizens in the monitoring and evaluation process of projects by providing them with information on the timeline and progress made as well as providing space for their input.

Malawi

Input provided by Ms. Tissie Nadzanja, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, National Planning Commission

Malawi has developed a long-vision for development of “Malawi 2063” which is strongly aligned with the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. The government consulted various M&E frameworks to facilitate reporting on SDG including the UNECA Integrated Planning and Reporting Toolkit. The toolkit has been useful to track progress in the implementation of both Agendas through identification of gaps between actual performance and targets. However, the country has various challenges for reporting due to coordination limitations of the national statistical system, inadequate financing for the Government agency, insufficient investment in data digital systems and transparency of processes.

Agenda 2063 Technical Working Group

I. AUC: Agenda 2063 core indicators framework overall reporting on Agenda 2063

Inputs provided by Ms. Josephine Etima, M&E Expert, Strategic Planning Division, African Union

Reference was made to the development of AU Core indicators framework for reporting on Agenda 2063 primarily, alongside the 2030 Agenda. The primary basis for M&E of SDGs is the Agenda 2063 M&E framework and core indicator handbook guided by the AU and UN joint framework to implement Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Both organizations have agreed to promote the following: integrated and coherent reporting by member states through development frameworks; participation in the HLPF including VNRs; engagement of relevant AU & UN entities in the implementation of and reporting of the two Agendas; development of comprehensive and integrated continental and national data platforms and methodologies,

covering relevant indicators contained in the two agendas.

Milestones have been achieved, such as the Technical Working Group's approval on the updated core indicators framework in 2020. The African Union Commission (AUC)/AU Technical Working Group, of which APRM is part, provides technical guidance and oversight on implementing, monitoring, and evaluating, and reporting on Agenda 2063. Further, the AUC will continue rolling out the Agenda 2063 M&E framework and reporting tool in 2021.

Figure 9 Agenda 2063 Progress

Continental Progress at Aspiration-level



Source: AU continental report, 2022

II. APRM: strengthening M&E Capacities and reporting on SDG16/Aspiration three

Input provided by Mr. Jean-Yves Adou, Acting Director of Monitoring and Evaluation

The APRM Expanded Mandate is designated with key responsibilities to support African countries in monitoring and evaluation. The APRM as per the AU Assembly decision in 2017 went through a revitalization process which required a lot of efforts to support the continental secretariat to enhance the state of governance reporting at national and continental levels. This is also associated with the need for capacity building for member states with monitoring and evaluation skills alongside National Plan of Action preparations by APRM member states.

GOOD GOVERNANCE ASSESSMENT

- Africa Governance Report 2019&2021 (peace, development, rule of law and cross-cutting issues)
- Network with African Universities
- Oriented-research on governance challenges in the continent

Agenda 2063/SDGs monitoring and evaluation

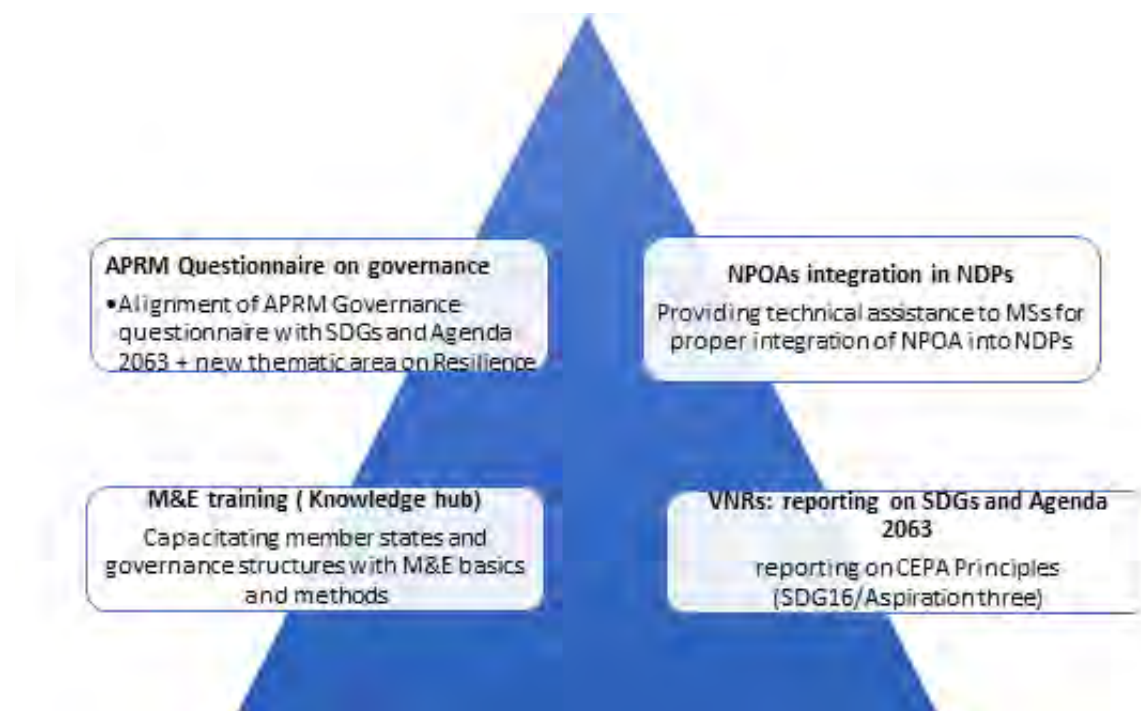
- Continental mechanism for VNRs sharing experiences and training
- Knowledge products on SDG 16- good governance for SDGs
- Engagement with UN organs , UNDESA , CEPA, UNECA for policy coherence (HLPF)
- Collaboration with AUC to roll-out Agenda 2063 reporting framework
- Supporting the UN-AU Framework for the implementation of Agenda 2030/2063 cluster 8&9 on governance (RCM)

Early warning for conflicts Prevention

- APRM roadmap for integrating peace and conflict issues into governance assessment reviews
- Coordination with AUC and other partners to mainstream APRM disaster framework in governance assessment
- Resilience , social contract and sustainability in post-conflict and fragile states

On the M&E component of the APRM core and expanded mandate, reference was made to the key pillars of M&E programmes at APRM which includes tracking the governance mechanisms for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 together with alignment of NDPs with both agendas. A second area of support targets national governance capacity building on M&E issues.

Figure 10 Key Pillars of APRM Support for an Integrated M&E Governance System in Africa



Source: APRM -Monitoring and Evaluation Directorate

III. UNESCO: enhance reporting on Access to Information (SDG16.10.2)

Input provided by Mr. Jaco du Toit, Chief, Access to Information (ATI) Branch, UNESCO

UNESCO, through its mandate, has a strategic role in supporting access to information for empowerment of people and effective participation in sustainable development programmes. Access to information requires an inclusive multi-stakeholder approach which involves civil society organizations and the private sector to help to improve data collection.

In Africa, there are 25 countries with legal frameworks and ATI laws. According to the ATI 2021 report, countries with specialized institutions for access to information performed better on implementation of SDGs, especially SDG 16 which deals with inclusive, efficient, and effective institutions. Governments in North & Latin America which had these institutions in place showed that they played important roles to access information. They also kept good records, enjoyed multi stakeholder approaches and improved data collection. Access to information was therefore a main lever to achieve the 2030 Agenda.

A glance on Africa: state of Play of Access to Information

Until 2021, twenty African countries had adopted Access to Information (ATI) legislation and press codes (Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote D' Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Seychelles, South Africa, South Sudan, and Togo (UNESCO, 2021). Further, some African countries like Kenya, already placed freedom of the press and right to information at the center of national development planning. Under the Political Pillar of the 2030 vision for development, the Government of Kenya recognises the centrality of people's voices in pursuing inclusive development.

Some African countries which created institutional mechanisms to follow up on the application of ATI and implementation included the following:

Ghana: following the signing of the Access to Information Act in 2019, established the Right to Information Commission and Secretariat in 2020. Further, Right to Information Officers have been deployed to government agencies.

Tunisia has also conducted various reforms concerning freedoms of expression and access to information (organic law 2016-22 of 24 March 2016). Following the adoption of the Right to Information law in 2016, the establishment of the new regulatory body for audio-visual communication under international standards, and the degeneration of hostility and violence against journalists. Thanks to these reforms, Tunisia's position in the world ranking of press freedom carried out by the organization Reporters Without Borders (RSF), was upgraded from 97 in 2018 to the 72nd position amongst 180 countries in 2019.

Gambia also passed the Access to Information Bill in July 2021.

Source: country submissions for Agenda 2063 Report & UNESCO

Progress towards some persistent goals: Gender Equality

Input provided by Diana Demba, Gender Officer, African Peer Review Mechanism

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a disproportionate impact on women and girls in Africa, yet tremendous progress in promoting gender equality and women empowerment has been achieved in different sectors. African women are getting further support and empowerment especially with the development of the AU Gender Parity Policy.

There is limited gender disaggregated data available which hinders policy making. Under the APRM Expanded mandate, various efforts were taken to improve the conditions of this demography. APRM developed a Gender Audit report and gender mainstreaming guidelines to serve as a reference tool for improved integration of gender in development programmes.

Examples from Nigeria (Bauchi State)[2] referred to different programmes developed by the local state to address the negative effects the COVID-19 pandemic had on small holder farmers particularly women and increasing access to credit facilities. The State has also adopted a gender policy which was currently under a domestication process at the state level. There is room for improvement with regards to increasing the proportion of women in decision-making positions. However, one of the setbacks remain political will to implement policies that promote the rights of women and gender equality especially in Northern Nigeria.

Eswatini

Input provided by Ms. Lungile Mndzebele, Principal Economist, Ministry of Economic Planning and Development, Eswatini

Government efforts and progress on improving the participation of women in policy formulation and decision making particularly at political level were noted. These efforts yielded positive progress with the proportion of seats held by women in the national parliament increasing slightly from 18 percent in 2013 to 22 percent by 2021.

Further support is also extended to economic activities which include measures for women to enable them to enter the formal economy and securing rights to economic resources such as access to land. This has led to the establishment of the Centres for Financial Inclusion which empowers vulnerable groups and supports them to access finance for business purposes.

Government commitments on a number of regional and international instruments to promote gender equality including the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which Eswatini ratified without reservation were evident. Further, the government also ratified the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Declaration on Gender and Development.

[2] Input provided by Dr. Esther Ahmed, Nigeria, SDGs focal point representative

Youth and Civil Society role in promoting the localization of SDG and Agenda 2063

Youth and civil society play a key role in the advocacy and visibility of the African Union Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The VNR process facilitates engaging youth and young people in the localization of the SDGs and myriad development initiatives. Examples from Mali, Morocco, and Djibouti were shared at the APRM Regional VNR platform.

Morocco

Input from Dr. Mehdi Rais, Director, Initiatives for Development, Morocco

The Government of Morocco has made efforts to identify priority SDGs which can be achievable at the municipal level including ensuring gender equality, facilitating investment and access to finance for young entrepreneurs as well as empowering youth to have a role in the domestication of the SDGs and Agenda 2063. The Initiatives for Development is one of the new initiatives established by a group of Moroccan youth to raise awareness on SDGs and support Voluntary Local Reviews and Agenda 2063 in Morocco. The localization strategy is based on four key steps:

- 1- Creating projects in line with the local agenda
- 2- Training and technical work workshops on VLR methodology
- 3- Technical and practical support
- 4- Sharing of experience at national and international level (Africa) alongside participation of partners and networks engaged.

Figure 11 SDG localization model (City of Tetouan-Morocco)



The city of Tetouan was the most advanced at the end of the first stage of performing projects aligned with local development agenda. Efforts to train agencies on the methodology and implementation strategy of Voluntary Local Reviews were conducted and the municipality already adopted different programmes to localize the SDGs.

Nigeria

Input provided by Semiye Michael, Nigerian Youth representative

Nigeria is a youthful country and youth believe in their duty to support the country's development path to address socio-economic issues. Programmes run in 7 States across Nigeria were adopted to educate youth on climate change as well as COVID-19 related hygiene initiatives in collaboration with the private sector. Nevertheless, efforts are needed to support youth with start-up ideas and projects for young enterprises. Private sector and government shall provide them with opportunities to harness their economic and innovative potentials.

Access to finance and designated budget for youth projects shall be also boosted. Holding the government accountable during the budget processing and ensuring a participatory budget approach is also imperative to ensure that the voices of youth are heard. This will also have a positive impact on SDG-16 which focuses on governance issues. Challenges highlighted towards youth contributing to the achievement of SDGs is brain-drain because of a lack of adequate opportunities offered to them on the continent.

IGAD: Intergovernmental Authority on Development – East Africa

Mr. Fathi Bashe, IGAD Champion for East Africa, IGAD Secretariat, Djibouti

East Africa is rich with youth, and youth experiences working on promoting SDGs especially Somali youth actors and advocates. Youth however are struggling with economic opportunities as well as lack of government support to empower them or to play a larger role in the achievement of SDGs through enterprise efforts and innovations. Quality of education and training essentially matter to ensure that such an empowerment is impactful.

Civil society organizations also play a key role in localising the African Union Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda. Various civil society organizations utilize new communication technologies and modern applications to facilitate effective outreach campaigns to local commu-

nities. Therefore, SDG education and awareness need to be enhanced and youth equipped with further tools.

APRM

Input provided by Mr. Lennon Monyae, *APRM youth focal point, APRM Continental Secretariat, South Africa*

The APRM Youth Engagement Programme is geared towards mainstreaming youth participation in all APRM processes including governance assessment reviews and Agenda 2063 activities and programmes. Further, APRM seeks to provide a space for youth to make a decisive contribution to the success of the AU Agenda 2063, the 2030 Agenda and promotion of good governance on the continent.

APRM activities that aim to raise awareness of the larger role that the youth can play in development were demonstrated.

These activities include the following:

- African Youth Economic Forum which takes place biennially
- The APRM Youth Symposium
- APRM Youth Study, with an analysis which focused on 10 APRM Reviewed Countries.
- The APRM electronic questionnaire initiative which includes indicators reporting on SDGs
- The APRM Continental Secretariat CEO & CEO of the APRM-AUDA Nigeria Office inauguration of the APRM Nigeria Youth Vanguard in March 2021.

In July 2022, the third version of the youth symposium will be taking place in Kampala Uganda. The symposium's theme focuses on Reposition the Youth Agenda for a Transformative Continent

Mali: Accountability Lab model

Input from Mali: Mr. Moussa Kondo, *Director at Accountability Lab, focused on civil society's perspective in his presentation.*

Reference was made to the negative impact of the pandemic as a pretext to close civic space, restrict freedom of speech and consolidate corrupt networks in some countries. On the other hand, CSOs have filled gaps where governments have been slow to respond, for example, the delivery of essential services including healthcare provision and psychosocial support, food, and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

In Mali, significant efforts were made to counter misinformation and fake news. The Accountability Lab took the lead in sharing messages on COVID-19 in Bambara and French. Besides political constraints, individuals working for CSOs have struggled with mental health issues. The sector's sustainability requires acknowledging the pressure staff face and the wellness, emotional, physical, and digital support they need to survive. Civil society must be prioritized as an essential component of healthy, democratic societies. When face-to-face interactions are complicated, meaningful, and deep engagements with communities are needed to make sure that their voices are heard.

SDGs & Agenda 2063 financing and partnerships

Development finance is one of the persistent obstacles faced by many African countries especially the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) since the adoption of both the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. Countries across the globe are advised to adopt a National Resource Mobilization Strategy (NRMS) alongside mobilising resources from different partners and financial institutions. Africa has already struggled with funding some programmes and sectors especially those pertinent to infrastructure, industrialization, and human capital. The African Development Bank estimates that the continent's infrastructure financing needs will be as much as \$170 billion a year by 2025, with an estimated gap of around \$100 billion a year.

This section displays support offered by different partners of Africa for the implementation of both Agendas. Further, countries are also sharing experiences concerning NRMS.

UNDP

Input provided by Mr. David Mahfouz, *Adviser, Governance and Peace Building team, UNDP Regional Centre, Addis Ababa*, and **Dr. Amarakoon Bandara**, *Senior Economic Advisor to the UNDP (Nigeria)*.

The UNDP Regional office in Addis Ababa is working intensively on the governance, peace and security nexus. A special focus is paid to reconstructing and supporting national planning for the achievement of SDGs. However, lack of industrialization undermines the continent's capacities and productivity. UNDP already sets strategies that provide policy support on technical assistance to help countries and align priority areas with national budgets to achieve the SDGs.

Further, the interrelated nature of all SDGs need a special focus on climate change and green finance. While SDG finance is a persistent problem, there is also a need for further collaborative efforts to push and address the issue efficiently.

Focusing on the example of Nigeria, the capacity of UNDP to mobilize and build capacity based on its comparative advantage to mobilize resources was noted. An example is the design of the Development Finance Assessment for Nigeria in partnership with the government to design policies for revenue/expenditure framework/strategy for the country.

Outlined were critical areas of financing in sectors that have a great multiplier effect like infrastructure, education, and roads. National Development Plans/Agendas are key instruments to ownership which would inform investment strategies, and which have the capacity to be aligned to the SDGs.

Generally, few recommendations were generated from both experts including the following:

1. More strategies should be geared towards policies and mechanisms that can be put in place to benefit from the resource abundance on the continent
2. Governments need to make efforts to build strong social contracts with the people through recognizing the larger role the private sector can play; and
3. Peer-learning on SDG finance issues and financial gap assessments can be useful.

Bringing experts to help develop financing strategies could assist, as well as inviting experts from other countries or regions for peer sharing and increased effectiveness, financing and development efforts.

UNECA

Input provided by Mr. Bartholomew Armah, Director a.i., Macroeconomics and Governance Division, UN Economic Commission for Africa

Outlined was the change in cost of financing which has gone up in the last few years in the context of the global and continental crises. The repayment of loans in US Dollars in the face of depreciating African currencies and depleted resources has worsened the economic situation faced by African countries. The UNECA, therefore, has worked on provid-

ing research on suggested response policies and ideas for governments to consider by African policy makers.

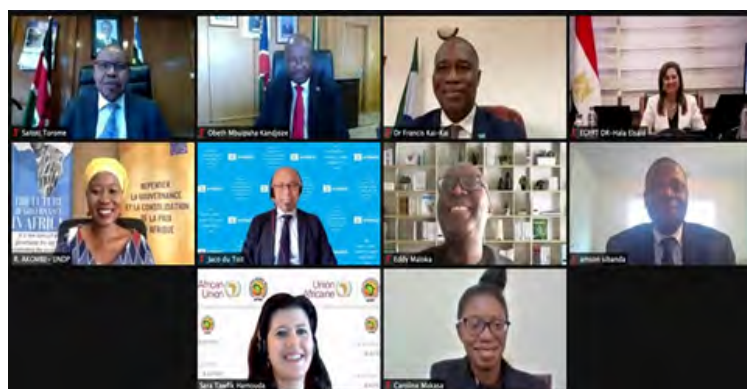
For instance, the work of UNECA concerning development loans has included the following:

- The mobilisation of debt service payment suspension which was executed, and assisted African Countries during the pandemic
- The organization convened the Ministers Finance Forum and raised awareness about credit lines and facilities offered by the IMF which was more conducive for African States.

Acknowledging the above, governments are encouraged to consider the following:

- Align financing methods with inter-planning and reporting tools to maximize benefit of expenditure on SDGs while focusing on main priorities.
- Invest in the energy industry as it significantly affects how countries can support their small and medium enterprises.
- The need for a strategy to assess the contribution of the informal sector to the formal economy so it can be incorporated in the official economy's labour scheme. This also involves enticing them through the provision of basic services to support their businesses including access to basic needs i.e. infrastructure, electricity, and water. This would facilitate the building of social trust with citizens and the information gained would help to develop targeted policies.

Figure 12 APRM virtual side event on 2021 Africa's VNRs -HLPF with Representatives of Egypt, Namibia, Sierra Leone and Kenya alongside partners: SDG centre for Africa, UNDP, UNDESA and UNECA.



Experiences from African countries

Input from Mr. Sherif Dawoud, *Deputy Head, Sustainable Development Unit, Ministry of Planning and Economic Development, Egypt*

Efforts to localize the SDGs and Agenda 2063 in Egypt have included the adoption of a bottom-up approach which relies on on-the-ground initiatives such as the “Decent life initiative” (DLI). The DLI aims to develop infrastructure in rural areas to increase the quality of life of this select demography. These efforts also prioritize evidence-based reporting, and the Government of Egypt has developed 27 SDG governance reports as well as a Governance Competitive Index. These feed into the allocation of funding at the governorate level.

Outlined were challenges experienced during the development of the 2018 voluntary national reviews which include limited data and statistics on population growth as well as access to financing for Sustainable Development Goals, availability of data, financing, and population growth. Emerging issues that were highlighted included environmental challenges, the digital divide across the country and the limited participation of women in the labour force.

Acknowledging the issue of SDG finance emanating from the 2018 VNR, the Government of Egypt developed the first national Financing for Development Report. This is an independent, non-governmental report prepared through a participatory approach that encompasses all development partners such as the private sector, civil society, and specialized experts, alongside the Government.

It is geared towards providing decision-makers to enable effective planning and implementation efforts and includes alternative and innovative as well as promising future financing mechanisms as options to be utilized for development purposes. Other policy frameworks which have been developed by the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development to overcome the challenges identified such as the “National Strategy for Climate Change,” and the “National Hydrogen Strategy” addressing the plight of the vulnerable to negative impacts of climate change in many sectors, such as coasts, agriculture, and water resources, health, population, and infrastructure.

Perspectives on VNR and VLRs from African countries for the HLPF 2022

UNDESA offered the VNR handbook and guidelines for reporting in 2022. In this session, three member states also shared progress towards VNR preparations and lessons learnt within the process for the HLPF 2022.

UN DESA

Input provided by Ms. Tonya Vaturi, *Sustainable Development Officer, UN DESA on lessons, and good practices from the 2021 VNRs*, and **Mr. Amson Sibanda**, *Chief, National Strategies and Capacity Building Branch/ DSDG - Benefits of Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs), UN DESA*

The 2021 and 2022 Voluntary National Reviews considered a number of challenges registered in light of the COVID-19 pandemic which included:

- Decreased industrial activity, the disruption of supply chains and high unemployment which all affect the socio-economic lives of citizens
- Gender equality setbacks and the increase of gender-based violence as well data gaps.

Positive aspects included: The increased alignment of the SDGS with national development plans and processes especially in countries that were undertaking VNRs for the second or third time and use of innovative and non-traditional data methods.

The availability of the UN Secretary General's Voluntary Common Reporting Guidelines for Voluntary National Reviews as well as the HLPF timeline is useful for countries to remain on track while conducting VNRs. The Voluntary Local Reviews assess the level of progress made in the achievement of SDGs at subnational level.

The Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) provide an opportunity to local and regional governments to report their progress on the SDGs which may not be fully reflected in the Voluntary National Reviews. The VLRs is another opportunity for countries to place emphasis on special goals pertinent to sustainable development on a district/city level. UN DESA Global Guiding Elements for VLRs propose a shared structure for local reports, and at minimum, give a checklist of issues that could be reflected in the process.

The effect of Voluntary Local Reviews (VLR) can also be enriching on Voluntary National Reviews through providing a source of up-to-date data that is focused in-depth on different areas of the country.

Efforts have been made to promote a shared understanding of complex national issues as well as to develop integrated solutions that benefit from broader social consensus through the submitted VNRs from Africa. It has been also noted that African countries have improved reporting on some goals especially SDG 16 and 17. However, few challenges are also identified including the following:

- The implementation of SDGs requires further decentralization as well as the provision of technical and financial support to local governments to implement local SDG strategies.
- A lack of political will and the implementation of decentralization
- A lack of disaggregated data and capacities to perform subnational monitoring.

Lesotho (VNR candidate 2022)

Input provided by Mr. Thabiso Kompi, Chief Economic Planner, Ministry of Economic Planning, Lesotho

Lesotho presented a VNR in 2019 as the country reported on various goals. Considerable progress was made in maternal and paternal healthcare, gender mainstreaming and education due to positive engagement of communities coupled with sensitisation. However, the need for stronger commitment to partnerships and cooperation is needed to achieve the SDGs. Further, the role of digitalisation is a key enabling factor for effective economic growth and for effective planning and monitoring of government activities.

One of the main targets of the country's national development priorities is reducing reliance from developed country assistance towards a more sustainable domestic resources mobilisation strategy. Also, Lesotho seeks to apply a comprehensive M&E framework together with appropriate tools in the country, but this has not yet been fully implemented. There is currently limited awareness of the framework among the users or how to complete reports, when to report or why they form an integral part of good governance. Like other African countries, Lesotho experiences the lack of data to monitor and track performance.

Somalia

Mr. Abdulkadir Gedi, *VNRs Taskforce, National Bureau of Statistics*

Somalia is foreseen to present the first VNR in July 2022. As a country with a post-conflict context, many efforts were applied to initially align and embed the SDGs into the country's National Development Plan. Amongst these efforts is the development of a data scorecard as well as a report detailing challenges caused by data and information gaps in the country. Next steps for the country will entail efforts to ensure ease of access to disaggregated data and reporting on all regions of the country.

Gambia

Mr. Samba Sowe, *Principal Planner, Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs, The Gambia*

Gambia developed its first VNR in 2020 and adopted a participatory approach despite COVID-19 imposed limitations. The outreach and consultation process ensured participation of all stakeholders, government, civil society, private sector, youth and children, women, persons living with disabilities as well as development partners. The country seeks to provide data regarding progress with targets focusing on various socioeconomic areas.

Collaborative efforts by the government and UNDP were instrumental to conduct a survey from 2021-2022 to improve availability of data on SDG indicators, which was instrumental to the process and its success.

Key lessons learnt from developing the first VNR were applied to the current processes to develop the second VNR for the 2022 HLPF for continuous improvement. Amongst those lessons are the need to raise awareness of SDGs and Agenda 2063. Further, the necessity to increase coordination with civil society organizations and NGOs as well as to enhance the alignment of their interventions with Agenda 2030. Finally, the importance of aligning the SDGs with development strategies by governments at the national and sub-national levels was emphasized.

Conclusion

The APRM regional platform for VNRs served to be an efficient space for African countries to share experiences, identify challenges and opportunities for collaboration on SDG planning, monitoring, and evaluation. The key messages from the deliberations of the meeting were made, for further finalisation and submission to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) for the 2022 High-Level Political Forum. The APRM remains committed through this platform to support the AU-UN framework of collaboration to support the implementation of both the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and African Union's Agenda 2063 – **The Africa We Want**.

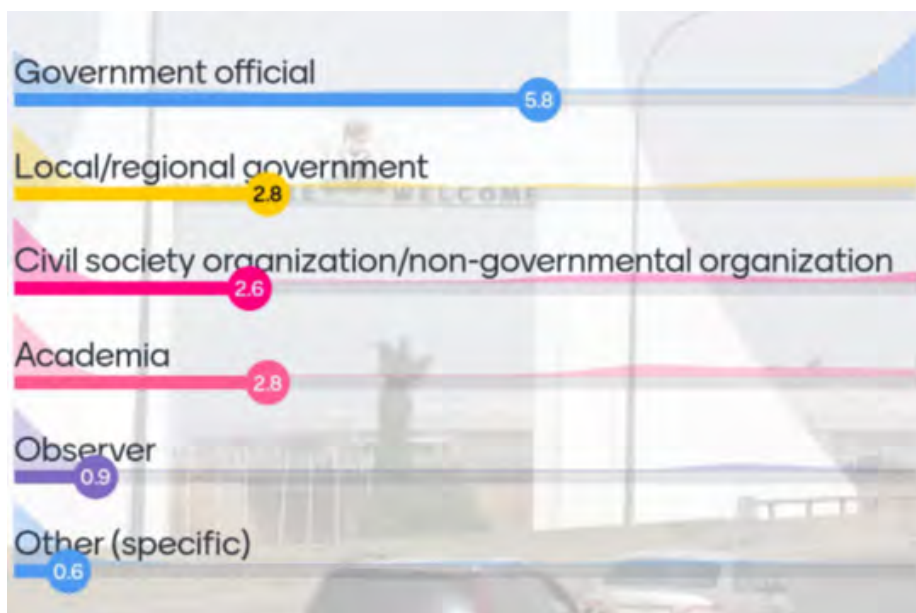
The resilience beyond recovery from the current COVID-19 crisis requires a holistic and whole-of-society approach to tackle the challenges of governance in Africa. Tackling this will make the Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda realistic and realisable plans for African countries. Thus far, the APRM will continue to support the VNR/VLR platforms in Africa for ensuring effective and efficient reporting. For the 2023 VNRs, the APRM continental workshop will be organised in South Africa in collaboration with the National Planning Commission and other stakeholders.

Feedback on the APRM VNRs workshops

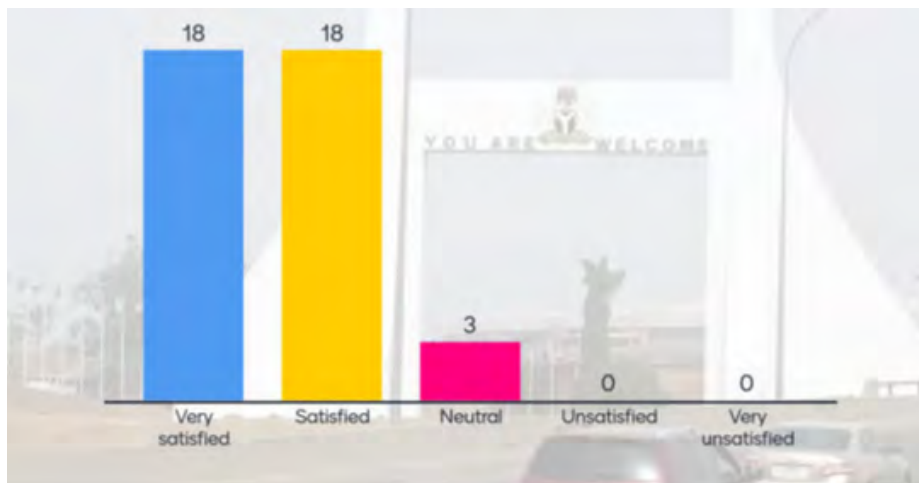
Key takeaway message from the APRM-UNDESA workshop on VNRs



Categories of participants



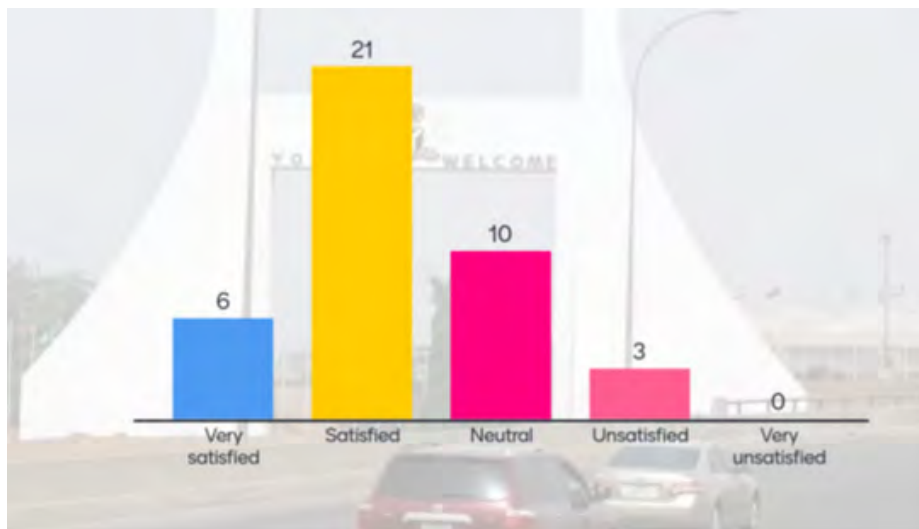
Satisfaction about the workshop objectives and deliverables



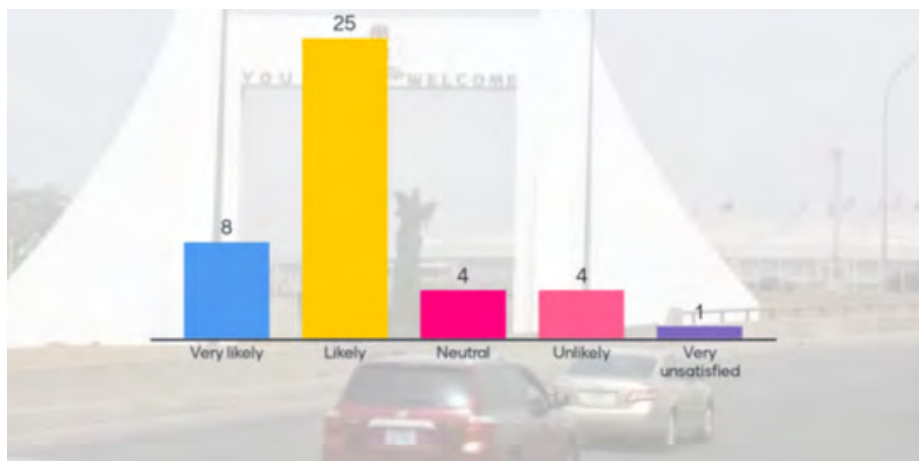
Satisfaction about the peer-learning on VNRs and Agenda 2030 integration into NDP



Understanding of UN CEPA Principles and Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs)



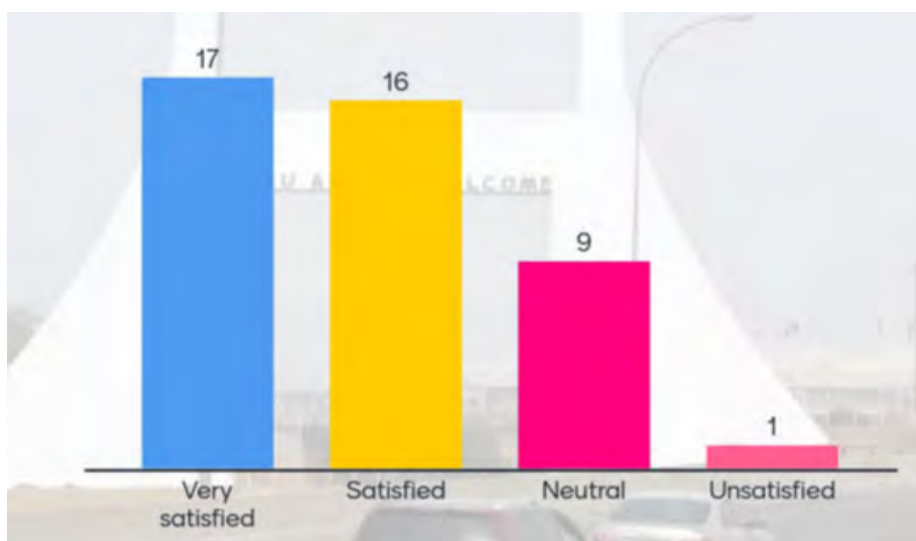
The readiness to incorporate reporting on CEPA Principles in VLRs



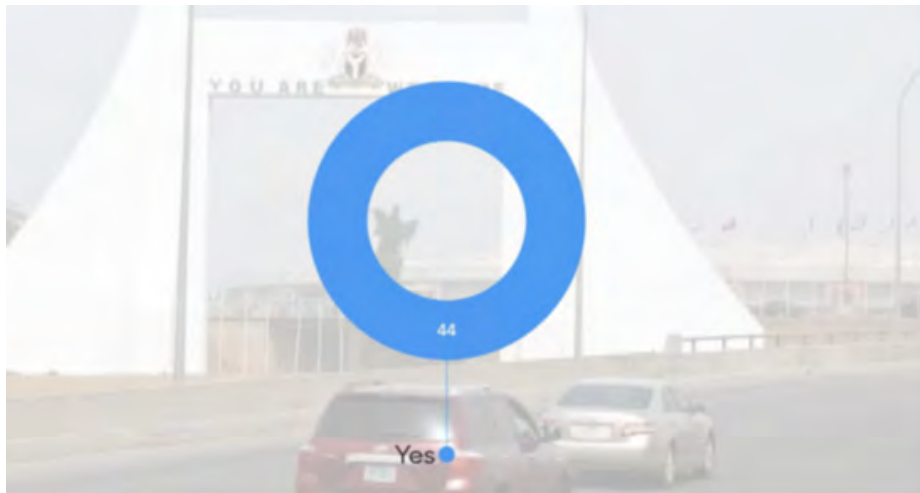
Usefulness of presentations and key notes provided by experts



Satisfactions about logistics and support provided by APRM-UNDESA for preparations to the workshop



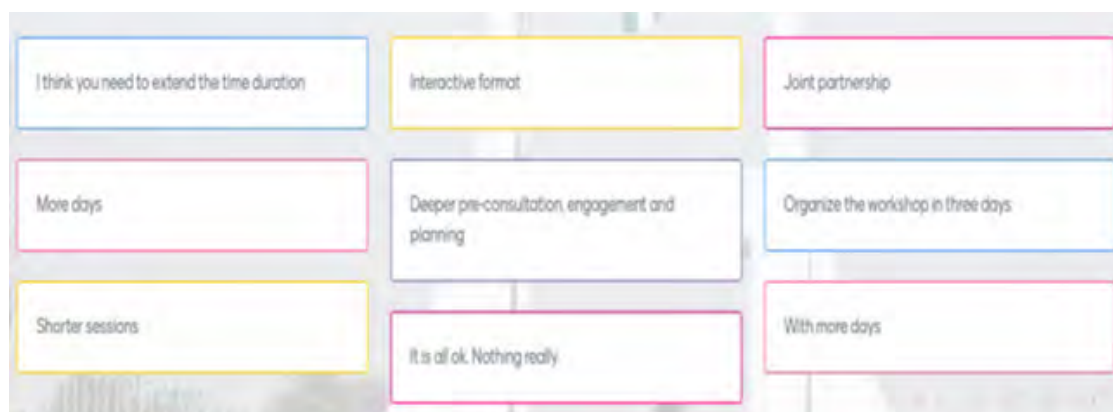
Eagerness to attend similar VNRs/VLRs workshops organised by APRM/UNDESA



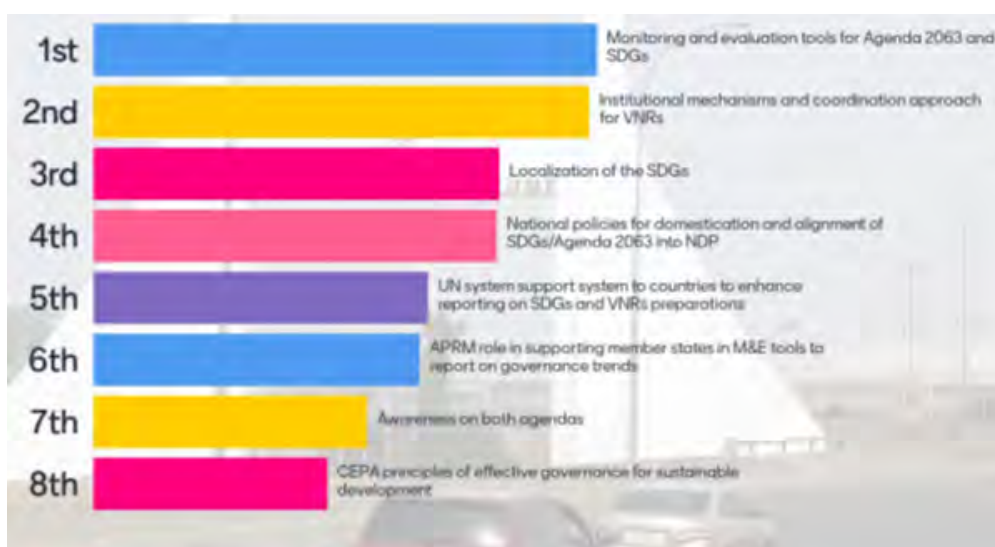
Productivity of the workshop



Ways of improvements



Most useful topics learnt at the workshop





African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM)
230 15th Road, Randjespark
Midrand, South Africa
Tel: +27 (0) 11 256 3401

   
www.aprm-au.org