

Please see some shared messages below that Forus and some of its CSO partners have developed on this topic.

The HLPF must continue to have 'a central role in overseeing a network of follow-up and review processes of the 2030 Agenda at the global level' (70/299). At present, we do not believe it is effectively playing this role effectively, and we have outlined six principles to guide the upcoming review.

1. The ambition of the HLPF must be maintained and increased: The review of the HLPF must 'benefit from lessons learned' rather than to reduce ambition (70/299). This includes:
 - a. Agreement that the HLPF should not become more closed or untransparent
 - b. Basing the review on strengthening existing resolutions - 67/290 and 70/299 - from the lessons learned over the first four years of implementation; building on the principles within these resolutions of a coherent process for follow up and review.
 - c. Basing the review on the principles of the Open Working Group, which was a successful and collaborative member-state led multi-stakeholder process (https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/1692OWG_methods_work_adopted_1403.pdf)
2. The presentation of Voluntary National Reviews must be given more time: VNRs are at the heart of the HLPF and play a critical role in fostering SDG implementation in the countries that undertake them. They are an opportunity for national assessments of progress and for effective stakeholder engagement, and they result in detailed and reflective reports on national progress, with the intention that they identify lessons. However, the current approach to the presentations lets them down: three ministerial days, with 15 minute presentations and little opportunity for constructive dialogue is insufficient. In order to make VNRs better there must be:
 - a. Better presentations, including: more time, more learning, more openness, more involvement of civil society. There are a number of ideas about how to achieve this, either with each VNR having a corresponding side event for more dialogue to devoting the full 8 days of HLPF to VNR presentations - all ideas must be explored in order to make this critical part of the HLPF more effective
 - b. Link up with regional forums, and other relevant bodies (including those related to environment and human rights) should be strengthened in VNR presentations
 - c. There must be greater clarity on VNR alignment with UN guidelines - Member States should be encouraged to follow this guidance
 - d. Member States should be encouraged to include non-government stakeholders in presentations and to present their VNRs at national level ahead of the HLPF
3. Ensure that there is a focus on leaving no one behind: In line with the 2030 Agenda, there is a responsibility for countries - governments and all stakeholders - to ensure no one is left behind in progress towards achieving the SDGs, and that the furthest behind are reached first. The HLPF should ensure that the voice of marginalised people are heard, through:
 - a. Increasing opportunities for the voice of those left behind in the HLPF
 - b. Ensuring engagement of left behind groups in development and presentation of VNRs
 - c. Safeguarding a space for left behind groups in goal-specific discussions
 - d. Providing resources to facilitate travel for marginalised people to attend the HLPF

4. Better alignment integration of the 2030 Agenda with other frameworks, particularly environmental and human rights:

Sustainable development recognises and aligns with environmental, climate, human rights and other sectors. It is therefore important that the HLPF provides more space for the input from the relevant sector mechanisms and agencies. This needs to be in both the HLPF as a whole and within VNRs. This should include:

- a. Better link up with key international processes and agreements - FCCC, CBD, UPRs, etc.
 - b. Better synergies with the FFD process
 - c. Meaningful involvement of all relevant UN bodies with HLPF (IMF, WTO, UNIDO, etc.) to promote greater policy coherence in implementation of the 2030 Agenda
5. More opportunities for meaningful follow up, learning and review: The HLPF is intended to 'facilitate sharing of experiences, including successes, challenges and lessons learned, and provide political leadership, guidance and recommendations for follow-up' (2030 Agenda, 82), and in order to fulfil this mandate it needs to have many more opportunities for constructive engagement. This should include:
 - a. A rethink on the current focus on specific goals - the HLPF needs to be organised in a way for clear presentation of progress and identification of shared challenges, and add value beyond repetition of the Expert Group Meetings - it might be that they are integrated into VNR presentations (see below)
 - b. The facilitation of Regional Commissions to play a stronger role in identifying regional challenges and feeding them into the HLPF
 - c. More use of the 'VNR labs' to allow govts and various stakeholders to discuss issues and challenges, and jointly problem-solve in less public forums
 6. Major groups and other stakeholders must be able to meaningfully participate in the HLPF: Paragraph 89 of the 2030 Agenda, paragraph 14 of 67/290 and paragraph 11 of 70/299 all note the importance of the participation of major groups and other stakeholders in the HLPF. This participation must be meaningful, but the major groups and other stakeholders also need to review their engagement with the HLPF to ensure the mechanisms for participation are effective, legitimate and representative. This should include:
 - a. More transparent processes for linking civil society, private sector, academia, local authorities and others from national level to the HLPF
 - b. Investment in the capacity of major groups and other stakeholders to effectively represent and organise participation. This is at the heart of meaningful engagement
 - c. Greater opportunity for interaction between MGoS from national level with governments in VNRs
 - d. More opportunity and profile for reporting from major groups and other stakeholders on their SDG implementation
 7. Please also see some further headline messages on upcoming HLPF Review (below) from Forus (the organisation I now work for). We are working on a fuller position paper but this is not ready to share yet - these are just our topline advocacy messages.

General messaging

- The HLPF Review must go well beyond a superficial reflection process and should identify a range of fundamental and necessary reforms to the format and functioning of the HLPF
- These changes should allow for more meaningful and effective participation by civil society in all parts of the world and at multiple levels (local, national, regional and global) in the monitoring and implementation of the Agenda 2030
- The review of the HLPF must be multi-level and include the national, regional and global levels of the overall HLPF monitoring cycle.

Specific messaging

- The multi-stakeholder dimension of the HLPF monitoring cycle must be strengthened
- Official status must be given to CSO Shadow/Spotlight Reports within the HLPF cycle
- The Ministerial Declaration must become much more “action- oriented” and civil society and other stakeholders should have a right to a published response or parallel statement.

National level

- There should be more focus on strengthening national level voices in the HLPF monitoring and review processes and on ensuring more effective VNR processes based informed by best practice
- VNRs should be presented for debate and approval by national parliaments before being submitted to the HLPF
- Inclusive outreach strategies for public engagement with VNR process should become standard practice at national levels
- Inclusive consultation and capacity-building processes linked to the VNR should be developed at national levels
- There should be more focus by VNRs on challenges and obstacles to implementing Agenda 2030 at national levels
- Better planning of national follow-up processes for VNRs following their submission to the international HLPF review process is needed
- The extent to which VNRs have fulfilled their mandate to strengthen policies and institutions of governments and to mobilize multi-stakeholder support and partnerships for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, should also be evaluated as part of the HLPF review

Regional

- The regional SD follow -up and review mechanisms should be strengthened
- There is a need for better resourcing civil society to organise itself at regional level
- Regional Sustainable Development Exchange & Learning Hubs should be developed for the purpose of joint capacity development of stakeholders
- More priority needs to be given to the outcomes & summary reports of the UN regional SD Forums

Global

- There should be more representative and co-ordinated engagement by stakeholders (this needs some thought – how to makes MGoS more effective and representative of regional, national and sub-national voices)
- There needs to be better balance between different dimensions of sustainable development in order to promote Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development across the UN agencies & system
- There needs to be better linkages between the HLPF and other United Nations agencies, funds and programmes

- There needs to be more focus on policy discussions and processes within the HLPF that will support and steer changes in policy direction.
- There needs to be greater strengthening of accountability mechanisms within the HLPF
- A specific multi-stakeholder mechanism for an annual review of Goal 17 needs to be established
- There needs to be better synergies between Goal 17 discussions on Financing for Development and the Addis Ababa FfD agenda
- More focus needed on challenges facing most vulnerable countries
- A strengthened secretariat needs to be put in place for the UN HLPF