



## VNR LABS HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM

### 2025 High-Level Political Forum

#### ***VNR LAB: **Participation Works! Strengthening the Role of Stakeholders in the Implementation and Reporting of the 2030 Agenda*****

**Date and time:** Wednesday, 23 July, 1-2pm, New York

**Venue:** UN-building, Conference room S-1522/23 (15th floor)

**Organiser:** German Council for Sustainable Development

#### **Description**

With just five years remaining to deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda, the coming period presents a critical opportunity to accelerate progress. While challenges remain, this moment calls for renewed partnerships. Strengthening and rebuilding trust in the multilateral system will be key to advancing inclusive and innovative solutions that can help realize the promise of the 2030 Agenda.

By examining the structural conditions necessary for meaningful participation, **this VNR Lab aims to inspire a more robust and inclusive implementation of the 2030 Agenda** — one where all stakeholder groups, especially civil society, youth, the scientific community and local authorities, are recognized not just as a stakeholder, but co-creators of sustainable development outcomes.

This VNR Lab will explore how participatory processes over time can support stronger and more meaningful SDG implementation and reporting of the 2030 Agenda. Across different national contexts, stakeholder participation is key in shaping sustainable development – from planning and implementation to monitoring and reporting. By sharing experiences, challenges, and innovative practices, countries can learn from one another how to build more inclusive governance structures. The Lab will provide space to discuss how participation can move beyond consultation towards collaboration, and how engagement mechanisms can be institutionalized to strengthen transparency, accountability and long-term impact.

#### **Goals and Objectives**

- Exchange experiences and good practices on how inclusive approaches to SDG implementation and reporting have been implemented in Germany
- Identify key pre-framework conditions and success factors, that enable meaningful participation of all societal stakeholders
- Engage in an open, honest and critical review and implementation discussion for tailored and socially accepted transformation pathways for sustainability

#### **Format and Modality**

The in-person meeting will be held under the Chatham House Rule and conducted in English.

## Guiding Questions

- What concrete approaches and institutional mechanisms have effectively and meaningfully integrated diverse stakeholders into national decision-making for sustainable development?
- How can stakeholders be systematically involved in drafting national sustainable development strategies and VNRs, and what pre-conditions are needed to ensure their active engagement?
- What concrete steps are needed to counter shrinking civic space in order to safeguard inclusive participation and accountability in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda?
- What kinds of inclusive, procedural and institutionalized as well as trust-based spaces are needed to openly share both good practices as well as challenges and setbacks in SDG implementation, and how can governments, civil society, and other stakeholders be meaningfully engaged in these dialogues to foster mutual learning and joint problem-solving?
- What are challenges for stakeholder groups and governments in realizing participatory processes for SDG implementation and reporting?

## Tentative agenda

### **00' Welcoming and introductory remarks**

Prof. Dr. Kai Niebert, Member of the German Council for Sustainable Development (RNE)

### **05' Stakeholder participation as a critical success factor in the German Sustainability Strategy (DNS) and VNR processes**

Dr. Bärbel Kofler, Parliamentary State Secretary, Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

Rita Schwarzelühr-Sutter, Parliamentary State Secretary, Federal Ministry for the Environment, Climate Action, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMUKN)

### **15' German stakeholder perspectives on an effective and inclusive stakeholder engagement mechanism**

Audrey MacLean, German Federal Youth Council

Dr. Marianne Beisheim, German Institute for International and Security Affairs

Dr. Bettina Bunk, International Sustainability and Development, Mayor's Office, City of Stuttgart

### **35' Open discussion with participants**

### **50' Reflection on Germany's stakeholder engagement mechanism**

Ambassador David Donoghue, Distinguished Fellow at Overseas Development Institute (ODI)

### **55' Concluding remarks**

Prof. Dr. Kai Niebert, Member of the German Council for Sustainable Development (RNE)