Africa's Peer-learning engagement on the Voluntary National and Local Reviews for the 2023 HLPF and Domestication of Agenda 2063

African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) and

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA)

Continental capacity building Workshop

Durban, South Africa

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Contents

Introduction

The African Peer Review Mechanism and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) continental workshop [1] on the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) and domestication of Agenda 2063 aimed to support national capacities of AU member States in preparing their voluntary national reviews (VNRs) that will be presented at the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) in July 2023. This annual continental workshop offers a regional platform for peer learning on best practices of the integration and implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063, guided by the principles for effective governance (CEPA Principles) endorsed by the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). It also allows national executives and experts to be familiarized with the available tools to enhance monitoring and evaluation of both Agenda 2030 and Agenda 2063 and equally APRM tools to support them in enhancing good governance measurability.

Forty experts from twenty-three (23) African countries, including the 7 African countries /VNR candidates at the HLPF 2023, took part in this continental workshop alongside representatives of UN Agencies, AU organs, civil society, and youth organs.

Opening session and welcoming remarks

The opening session featured remarks provided by Prof. Eddy Maloka, the CEO of APRM continental Secretariat; Mr. Li Junhua, Under-Secretary-General, UN DESA (pre-recorded video); Mr. Nelson Muffuh, UN Resident Coordinator, South Africa; and Mr. Amson Sibanda, Chief, National Strategies, and Capacity Building Branch, UN DESA.

Prof. Eddy Maloka, CEO, APRM Continental Secretariat

During his opening remarks, Prof. Eddy Maloka, Chief Executive Officer of APRM, welcomed all national experts, the UN delegation, and strategic partners to the APRM annual gathering on VNRs and Agenda 2063. This continental exercise has been institutionalized with the support of the African Union and its strategic partners to assist member states in planning, implementation and monitoring Agenda 2030 and African Union Agenda 2063 "the Africa we want". He highlighted the significance of the workshop to take stock of lessons from African countries conducting their VNRs in 2022-, build and strengthen national capacities of African countries to continue reporting through the VNR process through strong institutional and governance frameworks and effective national-to-local implementation of the SDGs. He also noted that the workshop provided a platform to discuss the preparation and presentation of VNRs at the HLPF to be held at United Nations Headquarters in New York from 10 to 19 July 2023. The APRM, in partnership with UN DESA, has been supporting African countries to strengthen reporting on both Agendas under the VNRs.

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[1] The workshop is coordinated by Monitoring and Evaluation Directorate – APRM continental Secretariat and UN DESA – Capacity Building Division

Mr. Li Junhua, Under-Secretary-General, UN DESA

Mr. Li remarked that UN DESA and the APRM have built a productive relationship under the umbrella of the AU-UN Cooperation Framework since 2018, to support national capacity building for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union's Agenda 2063, noting that both Agendas provide detailed roadmaps for inclusive, equitable and transformative development. He emphasized that VNRs are the primary means of measuring national progress towards the SDGs and encouraged countries presenting VNRs at the HLPF to use the CEPA principles to guide and inform their review processes, and to incorporate local reviews of progress into their VNRs. He commended governments' efforts to coordinate among ministries, strengthen institutions for good governance, and domesticate the SDGs; and to engage local authorities and stakeholders in data collection, to assess community needs and challenges more effectively.

Mr. Amson Sibanda

Mr. Amson Sibanda highlighted that VNRs are to be undertaken with inputs from national stakeholders that include civil society, the private sector, academia, women and youth, persons with disabilities and other groups. The views of these local stakeholders are important, as they enrich the VNR reports. He emphasised that this work complements and builds on the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa's annual Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (ARfSD), which was held in Niamey, Niger from 28 February to 2 March 2023, where region-specific best practices, success stories and common challenges were shared.

The UN DESA's work with the APRM in the past four years has helped build the capacities of African countries to prepare VNRs, and highlighted the importance of cooperation, partnerships, and continued collaboration with African partners. Multi-level stakeholder committees and platforms are aiding implementation through national measures such as legislation and institution building, as well as through local actions that engage and empower women, youth, and other community groups, to implement innovative solutions. After seven years of reporting, it is evident that the VNR exercise creates channels for knowledge-sharing and serves to support the collaborative work of governments, development partners, stakeholder groups, and local communities to understand how to build back better, including by scaling-up local initiatives and adjusting national development policies and plans. He concluded that VNRs can also support the continuation of best practices so that no one is left behind.

Session one: Lessons learnt from 2022 Voluntary National and Local Reviews on SDGs and alignment with Agenda 2063

The session brought experts from five African countries to discuss lessons learnt from the 2022 VNRs and ways to improve reporting on both Agenda 2063 and Agenda 2030.

Ethiopia

Input provided by: Mr. Tamiru Terefe, Senior Advisor, Ministry of Planning and Development

Ethiopia has a comprehensive national development plan which integrates national, regional, and continental approaches, including Agenda 2063. Agenda 2063 and SDGs are highly convergent, as they share similar indicators and goals. Likewise, Ethiopia has submitted two VNRs in 2017 and 2022. The 2022 report addressed all (17) seventeen goals with a special highlight on reforms conducted on some goals, including infrastructure and human rights. Despite the pandemic, Ethiopia has been a leading example in repurposing commercial flights to cargo for all African Union member states Amongst Ethiopia's good practices is the new homegrown economic reform programme, while key challenges include climate change induced drought, human development, and unemployment.

Ethiopia's mixed progress towards SDGs and AU Agenda 2063 needs to be addressed, including the invigoration of e-services through digitalisation, and strengthening governance and institutional reform. Period reviews of governance performance and comprehensive development planning is essential. Recommendations were made to strengthen institutions and human capabilities for better planning, monitoring, and evaluation. More disciplined, and systemic approaches to risk mitigation and management is key in ensuring the journey towards achieving SDGs and Agenda 2063 is maintained with minimal to zero negative impact.

Liberia

Input provided by Mr. Fohn T. Gborweah, Economist/Special Assistant, Ministry of Finance & Development Planning (MFDP).

The Liberian Development Plan was aligned with the SDGs in 2018. In 2022 Liberia submitted its VNR, showing that amongst the country's good practices are 1) alignment of the SDGs into the National Development Plan (NDP); 2) the importance of stakeholder collaboration, which is essential for domestication; 3) the importance of establishing clear reporting and identification of institutional pillar leads to ensure reporting according to timelines.

Some lessons learnt included the necessity of early preparations for the VNRs, readiness assessments in advance of the reporting, knowledgeable stakeholder input into the draft report and use of images, graphs, and infographics for easier consumption/communication of the final VNR.

Cameroon

Input provided by Ms. Christelle Stella Ngangue, National Planning Commission

Cameroon's second VNR was submitted at the 2022 HLPF. The challenges of preparing the VNR included i) restrictive measures against Covid-19 which limited the number of participants in preparatory meetings; ii) outdated data; (iii) non-functioning monitoring systems for implementing the SDGs (iv) low mobilization of resources to finance planned activities.

Lessons learnt from the Cameroonian experience in VNR preparations included the importance of an early start; involvement of the strategic authorities to ensure the application of leaving no one behind; and the establishment of sectoral, multisectoral, and multi-stakeholder exchange platforms. Emphasis

was also put on collaboration with civil society, which was useful as they organised into forums and were a strategic partner towards generating the report which helped to centralize sources of information.

Cameroon has some good practices which include i) organising a national forum on sustainable development which will take place in 2023 after the collection of the results of the major surveys in progress on SDGs, including on employment and the informal sector, poverty survey, general population and housing census and general business census; ii) the increased use of data from administrative sources due to the Law on Statistics signed in July 2020 by the President of the Republic; iii) strengthened working collaboration with the Civil Society Forum on the SDGs and the production of a special report of the Forum appended to that of the Government; (iv) the full participation of the Decentralized Territorial Communities (CTD) in the development of the VNR 2022 including the union of local cities and communities "Association de Communes et Villes Unies du Cameroun (CVUC), with the support of United Cities and Local Government (UCLG), which prepared an alternative report of the CTDs on implementing the SDGs, annexed to the 2022 VNR; (v) Development of a voluntary local review through the city of Yaoundé.

Malawi

Input provided by Dr. Martin Limbikani Mwale, Principal Economist, Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs

The impact of COVID-19 related, and climate change shocks, negatively affected the Malawian process to prepare the VNRs. Several committees were formed for the VNR preparation, including thematic commissions responsible for data collections on SDG progress. Malawi's 2063 First 10 Year Implementation Plan (MIP-1) included a framework for the achievement of the SDGs, showing that overall alignment with SDGs was 81.62%. At the Goal level, alignment was at 98.53%, at target level, alignment was at 72.19% and at indicator level, alignment was at 53.48%. Overall, the MIP-1 alignment with the African Union Agenda 2063 was at 73.6 %. Some innovative practices during the VNR preparatory process included u-reporting-phone text messages by UNICEF; Microsoft forms (online google forms) sent to institutions; phone-in radio programs, for the public; and digitized early warning systems. Issues relating to the capture of data, the need for ministries to engage more locally and the need for harmonisation and standardization of management systems were among the discussion topics.

Somalia

Input provided by Mr. Ahmed Abdullahi Ali, Sustainable Development Officer, National Bureau of Statistics. (SNBS).

Somalia conducted its first VNR in 2022. To track and monitor SDGs, Somalia has developed an online data visualization tool as an online dashboard. Somalia's National Development Plan is aligned to SDGs, which includes 4 pillars which covers i) Inclusive and accountable politics; II) security and rule of law; III) economic growth; and IV) social development. During the process of preparation of the VNR, Somalia National Bureau of Statistics engaged and consulted 500+ prominent members through more than ten consultation workshops with civil society, Government, and the private sector, including a dedicated session with Somalia's youth. Specifically, the consultation with Federal Member State (FMS)

Directors Generals (DG) and Federal level DGs presented an opportunity to deliberate progress, present and validate data on each SDG with relevant ministries, departments, and agencies.

The VNR process provided the opportunity to identify the various challenges which impede Somalia's ability to reach SDG targets and the report writing process itself, most notably:

- Weak coordination for consolidating, measuring, and reporting on SDG national progress.

- Insufficient monitoring and reporting on SDG implementation by relevant institutions affected the quality of submissions on progress, which required more time and capacity to rectify which the SNBS lacked;

- Shortage of primary level data sources meant data has mostly been collected from secondary sources;

- The lack of baseline data for some indicators made it difficult to track their progress.

- The VNR process coincided with an election period, which made it difficult to get the full participation of relevant stakeholders.

- Budget and cost constraints have limited the participation of stakeholders compared to the needs and expectations. Lack of funding can also be attributed to the difficulties faced in data collection and sourcing.

- The country's vulnerability to environmental challenges also presents a challenge.

Session two: CEPA principles of effective governance and institutional and coordination mechanisms for domesticating the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063

UN DESA

Input provided by Mrs. Saras Jagwanth, inter-regional adviser, DESA, United Nations

The principles of effective governance for sustainable development (CEPA principles) show the solid linkages between the institution-building objectives of the 2030 Agenda and all the SDG, offering a range of recommendations for all levels of government, including local authorities. The CEPA principles can be used to assess and showcase good examples in public service delivery. DESA/DPIDG is leading the development of strategy guidance notes which assist public civil servants. for further info, please visit -

https://publicadministration.un.org/en/Intergovernmental-Support/CEPA/Principles-of-Effective-Governance

Figure 1 CEPA Principles (Source : UN DESA,2019)

EFFECTIVENESS			ACCOUNTABILITY		
COMPETENCE	**SOUND POLICY-MAKING**	**COLLABORATION**	**ACCOUNTABILITY**	**TRANSPARENCY**	**INDEPENDENT OVERSIGHT**
--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	--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	--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	--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	--Proactive disclosure of information --Budget transparency --Open government data --Registries of beneficial ownership --Lobby registries	--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**	
--Promotion of equitable fiscal and monetary policy --Promotion of social equity --Data disaggregation --Systematic follow-up and review	--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	--Free and fair elections --Regulatory process of public consultation --Multi-stakeholder forums --Participatory budgeting --Community-driven development	--Fiscal federalism --Strengthening urban governance --Strengthening municipal finance and local finance systems --Enhancement of local capacity for prevention, adaptation and mitigation of external shocks	--Multilevel governance --Sustainable development impact assessment --Long-term public debt management --Long-term territorial planning and spatial development --Ecosystem management	

Senegal

Input provided by Mr. Bocar Ka Diallo, Economist, Ministry of Planning, Economy, and Cooperation

Senegal's experience in the application of CEPA principles and implementation of the 2030 Agenda is taking place in a context of political, economic, and social stability. However, the country faces certain challenges related to the fight against poverty, the promotion of equity and gender equality, resilience to the effects of climate change and the Covid-19 pandemic.

Senegal recorded levels of economic growth of over 6% on average over the period from 2014 to 2020. Regarding the development of human capital, the Government is continuing its efforts to establish quality education, compulsory for all children under 16, as well as improving the health of mothers and children under five. Senegal reduced the incidence of poverty to 37.8% in 2019, the lowest rate within the West African region, through the national cash transfer programme covering nearly 400,000 households.

On partnership for achievement of the SDGs, Senegal encourages the financial commitment of development partners, as provided in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, on financing for development. Senegal supports the decentralisation of the SDGs through their effective integration into local development plans. In terms of education, focus is placed on the diversification and quality of supply, particularly in the regions of Diourbel, Louga, Matam, Tambacounda, and Kaffrine.

Senegal has also taken urgent measures in favour of including women in the production of national wealth and the employability of young people, through the rapid entrepreneurship programme for young people and women and the emergency youth employment programme. To strengthen the monitoring and reporting of the SDGs, Senegal is committed to becoming a champion of inclusive data by producing complete, detailed, disaggregated, and regular data to "leave no one behind".

South Africa

Input by Mr. Lusanda Batala, National Planning Commission

South Africa's efforts to enhance the CEPA principles and bringing government to the core of decision making were discussed. As the government recognises interconnectedness of these complementary aspirations and developmental agendas, South Africa has recently established a national coordinating mechanism for national engagements and for reporting on the 2030 Agenda, the AU's Agenda 2063, and the Southern African Development Community's (SADC) Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP), in alignment with the NDP.

This national coordinating mechanism ensures that national resources are optimally deployed, together with international support, the provision of public sector finance, technology, and capacity building, which are required for successful integrated implementation of the development agendas. Whilst the government plays a significant role in achieving targets, it is also important that they are intentional about creating mechanisms for inclusivity by encouraging multi-stakeholder inclusion. The Central coordinating Unit leverages political, administrative, and other efforts as it relates to SDGs, Agenda 2063 and SADC-RISP.

Session three: Peer exchange with voluntary National Review countries on experiences and promising practices implementing Agenda 2063 and 2030 Agenda, including localizing the SDGs.

Rwanda

Input provided by: Mr Thierry Watrin, Green Economy, and climate Change advisor to

the Minister of State in Charge of Economic Planning

The National Development Plan of Rwanda addresses the linkages between the national Vision 2050, the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the first National Strategy for Transformation (NST-1: 2017-2024). It focuses on the social and economic transformation of Rwanda, showcasing remarkable achievements in life expectancy and human capital indicators, as well as significant advancements in agriculture productivity. The Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic yielded substantial results, including effective service delivery.

The immediate impact of the pandemic was a delay in Rwanda's increased reliance on domestic sources. To manage the long-term effects of COVID-19, trade-offs between short-term macroeconomic stability, SDGs spending, and debt management will be necessary. Therefore, establishing a mechanism for resource mobilization is crucial to foster innovative and blended finance, supporting not only national development but also prioritizing SDGs' interventions and climate in the country's agenda.

Rwanda has explored different opportunities to mobilize programmatic finance, including exploring opportunities under the UNDP Integrated National Financing Framework (INFF). Under the INFF diagnostic report, different financing approaches have been proposed and these approaches have direct links with the SDGs implementation.

> ### Box 1. Innovative financing approaches for the implementation of Agenda 2030 and Agenda 2063
>
> - Strengthening domestic resource mobilization capacities with a focus on turning sectors from tax discount to premium and plugging various sources of revenue loss including streamlining tax exemptions.
> - Developing innovative sources of finance by tapping into SDG debt instruments including green financing, Fintech/digital finance, diaspora bonds.
> - Ensuring efficient public resource management - including management of public debt and enhanced budget effectiveness through SDG budgeting and impact standards.
> - Strengthening partnerships in particular to align public and private investments through integrating more closely private investment in the public investment program and enhancing public-private partnerships in socio-economic infrastructure investment as well as blended finance.
> - INFF emphasizes the need of consolidating SDGs in the budgeting process and strengthening linkages between the long-term vision, the medium-term national plan, and the national budget, including SDG budgeting while increasing the role of non-state actors in the budgeting process.

To sustain Rwanda's progress towards the SDGs, a robust and holistic monitoring framework is critical. The Economic Commission for Africa's (ECA) Integrated Planning and Reporting Toolkit (IPRT) can be a valuable tool, allowing for comprehensive assessment across development agendas and sectors. It facilitates alignment between the SDGs, Agenda 2063, and NST-1 at the level of goals, targets, and indicators. Countries are encouraged to track progress, identify performance gaps, and establish stronger linkages between national plans and SDGs, ensuring access to readily accessible data reports.

Gambia

Input provided by Mr Ibrahima Kinteh, Deputy Director of Development Planning, Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs

Gambia actively participated in global negotiations related to Agendas 2030 and 2063, submitting Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) in 2020 and 2022 to the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF). A National VNR steering committee was established, comprising representatives from the Government, National Assembly, academia, CSOs/NGOs, Development Partners, youth, and women, responsible for coordinating the VNR process and supervising the drafting team.

Efforts to promote SDGs localization in Gambia include aligning the National Development Plan (NDP) with the SDGs and Agenda 2063 frameworks. Collaboration with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) has facilitated IPRT training to enhance national capacity in tracking progress towards implementing Agendas 2030 and 2063. The government aims to engage indigenous leaders and marginalized groups, raising awareness and localizing both agendas. Adherence to global and continental codes and standards, such as the Paris Agreement, is also sought through consultations at grassroots and national levels. Inclusiveness and leaving no one behind, particularly for people with special needs, youth, women, and academia, are prioritized.

Eritrea
Input by Dr Fikresus Amahhazion, Researcher/Analyst, Eritrean Center for Strategic Studies

Eritrea's national policies, action plans, and strategies closely align with and support progress towards the SDGs and Agenda 2063. These include the National Charter (1994), the Joint Strategic Cooperative Framework (2022-2026), Macro Policy, National Indicative Development Plans, and sector-specific strategic development plans. However, there is no specific national agency or entity tasked with implementing or monitoring the SDGs and Agenda 2063.

Some national practices are put in place to enhance localisation, including:
- Public events and campaigns: Regular and frequent
- Involve communities, schools, various groups, or stakeholders, and mass media. This also occurs nationwide and, in all languages,
- Raise public awareness and understanding of SDGs and Agenda 2063.
- Bolster mobilization, participation, and progress

Some reforms are also recommended to accelerate implementing both agendas in Eretria:

i. Although policies and frameworks are generally compatible and consistent, it is imperative to reinforce aligning some sectors with proper national policies, such as climate change and health policies (SDG 13 or Goal 3).
ii. Improve national statistical capacity and mainstream indicators into national framework.
iii. Promote monitoring, evaluation, reporting systems.
iv. Support national mapping exercise to identify opportunities and actions to speed up progress.
v. Enhance planning, budgeting, and implementation of evidence-based policies.
vi. Promote transparency and accountability.

Botswana

An input provided by Ms Modiegi Ngakane, Interim Assistant Commissioner- General, National Planning commission.

Botswana has made significant strides in domesticating Agenda 2030 and Agenda 2063. Recognizing the convergence of the two agendas, a National SDGs Roadmap has been developed to guide implementation of the SDGs which has also guided the development of strategic initiatives towards implementing the SDGs.

Coordinating structures, including the Parliamentary Special Select Committee on SDGs, Joint National Steering Committee (JSC) on SDGs, Technical Task Force, and SDG Focal Points within Line Ministries, have been established. The 2022 Voluntary National Review (VNR) Report was crafted through an inclusive approach, with stakeholder consultations conducted nationwide. Both Agenda are being integrated into the National Agenda of the country with the help of Development Partners. Despite the above progress, further efforts are needed to integrate and capacitate stakeholders on the two agendas and particularly in terms of localization. Data availability remains a serious challenge, with only 35% of indicators being assessable with accurate data.

Cote Ivoire

Input provided by Mr. Amoya Kobenan Kossonou, Advisor, National Planning Commissioner

Côte d'Ivoire has been an advocate for SDGs and Agenda 2063 since adoption, reflected in various government programs promoting socio-economic development, including Government Social Programs "PSGouv 1" and "PSGouv 2." These programs address poverty and social inequality reduction, tackling fragility in the northern border areas, improving living conditions for disadvantaged groups, addressing unemployment, and promoting regional integration projects.

A further glance on SDG3- *Health and wellbeing,* efforts are made to ensure that 70.1% of the population has quick accessed to health services, targeted free medical procedures for pregnant women and children aged 0-5 infant and child mortality rate fell from 96% in 2018 to 74% in 2021. Maternal mortality ratio has reduced from 614 per 100,000 live births in 2018 to 385 per 100,000 live births in 2021. On social protection, the country adopted the Universal Health Coverage (UHC) since 2019. This has facilitated enrolment of more than 3,191,213 citizens and the distribution of 2,200,000 membership cards.

The Government is also committed to accelerate mobilization of national and external resources and development partners to finance Côte d'Ivoire's development. Some good practices to finance development programs featured as follows:

- Enhance constructive collaboration and coordination among government and national stakeholders in implementing the 2030 and 2063 Agendas, with the support of the United Nations system.
- The effective participation of central and local level actors, including civil society and the private sector, in the planning and development progress reporting processes and utilisation of academic research to assist in the oriented planning process.

Cote d'Ivoire's challenges in pursuit of SDGs, include improving education access and quality for all, gender equality and demographic balances between rural and urban areas. Other challenges include strengthening internal and external efficacy of the education-training systems and the creation of sustainable jobs to reduce youth unemployment and curb illegal immigration.

Central African Republic

Input provided by Ms Dany Sandra Yadila, acting Director General of Cooperations for Development, Ministry of Economy

Central African Republic (CRA) is committed to enforcing and domesticating Agenda 2030 and 2063. The Prime Minister's office provides political ownership to promote domestication of SDGs, by establishing an Inter-ministerial Committee in charge of coordinating national efforts pursued both agendas. Focal points at technical, inter-ministerial and institutional levels have been assigned to follow-up on implementing both Agenda's

To enhance domestication of both agendas, the government adopted the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan (RCPCA) in 2016. The Three Pillars of this Plan focus on: (1) *Restoring peace, security, and reconciliation;* (2) *Renew the social contract between the State and the population* and (3) *Promote economic recovery and the revival of the productive sectors, are aligned with the SDGs and the AU Agenda 2063*. This has enhanced alignment of NDP programs with Agendas 2030 and 2063

CRA submitted the first VNR in 2019, both VNR and VLR produced in 2019 were beneficial in highlighting pressing issues, which included societal issues, I.e., exclusion for marginalized groups, women, and children.

To implement key reforms effectively, the government shall prioritize transparency and ensure public accessibility. This can be achieved through open communication channels and the integration of specific targets into a comprehensive action plan. The report also highlights noteworthy progress in various sectors, including health and well-being, education quality, and improved access to sanitation and water supply.

However, the persistent conflicts in certain regions of the country pose a significant challenge to implementing the National Development Plan (NDP). Additionally, the economic repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic, the evolving international political landscape, and the lack of funding or

suspension of budget support from certain partners have collectively weakened the government's ability to promote the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Agenda 2063. Despite these obstacles, it is crucial to view them as opportunities for proactive measures in favor of development, particularly in the areas of poverty and inequality reduction, capacity building, justice, peace, and economic recovery.

Session Four: Monitoring and evaluation tools for SDGs and Agenda 2063

Sudan

Input provided by Mr. Amin Salih Basher, Acting Under-Secretary of Economic Planning

Despite the complex environment and political transition in Sudan, the transitional government submitted its second VNR at the 2022 HLPF, highlighting progress and challenges. The government made efforts to promote inclusiveness and social justice, leaving no one behind. This included 2 million refugees and 2.5 million internally displaced persons (IDPs). They also accentuated the need for technical and financial assistance to align the SDGs and Agenda 2063, forming one national development plan supported by an integrated national financing framework (INFF).

Box 2. Policy oriented / programmatic Recommendations from the interventions of day one.

- Localisation/domestication requires political and administrative buy-in and ownership.

- Early preparations towards the VNRs through continuous data collection from multiple credible sources is key in mitigating potential issues which may arise during reporting period.

- Multi-stakeholder approach is key, including civil society, private sector, and the development community in the implementation of SDGs and data collection.

- Reaching remote communities/constituencies, and those particularly affected by climate disaster is part of ensuring that no-one is left behind.

- Promote leaving no-one behind principle, countries are encouraged to develop a National Action Plan on inclusive policies succinctly. This is imperative to ensure that women, children, youth, and people living with disabilities including the most vulnerable groups are considered.

- Increased awareness and transformative educational programs especially in areas or regions with historically disadvantaged, marginalised context.

- International cooperation, continental efforts and UN-AU partnerships are needed more than ever to support African countries in implementation, monitoring and evaluation of both agendas.

- Connecting government, stakeholders and local municipalities within the African continent is necessary to share innovative solutions and articulate them in aligned and focused areas/goals under the Agenda 2030 and 2063 frameworks. CSOs can be beneficial to invest and implement projects and programs pertinent to social equality and inclusiveness alongside transparency and accountability of institutions.

Egypt

Input provided Ms. Nada Yacoub, Deputy Ministry of Planning and Economic Development

Egypt submitted VNRs three times since 2017-2022. Egypt's National Statistical Report for Monitoring the SDGs highlighted the establishment of a *new SDG Observatory website*, which is currently under new revision and update to track all SDGs. The platform for sustainable development functions as a tool for gathering data on SDG progress and evaluating stakeholder involvement and contribution to SDG implementation.

The Ministry of Economic Planning and Development conducts periodic national progress reports for the 27 governorates of Egypt to evaluate their performance towards Agenda 2030. They have successfully achieved localization efforts, and a localization dashboard provides free access to the reports. Integrating both agendas was enhanced by consulting the UN ECA's IPRT. Additionally, the Ministry supported African Union efforts to report on Agenda 2063 by submitting two national reports on implementing Agenda 2063 in Egypt to the African Commission in 2019 and 2021.

Challenges related to data collection and availability, capacity building, information sharing, and unifying the use of available data and SDG indicators were emphasized. To overcome these challenges, Egypt is developing a national strategy for statistics, intergovernmental committees, and systems for data sharing involving different strategic partners and stakeholders.

Lesotho

Input provided by Ms. Malefu Delinah Khanyapa, Director of Monitoring and Evaluation, Ministry of Finance and Development Planning

Lesotho is committed to enhancing reporting on Agenda 2030 and 2063. The government supported continental reporting on Agenda 2063 in 2019 and 2021 to assess the overall performance of Agenda 2063. Lesotho's VNR, presented at the HLPF in 2019 and 2022, showcased progress achieved towards the seven aspirations of Agenda 2063, including the promotion of tourism and hospitality. Challenges related to climate change and limited achievements towards reducing hunger were highlighted. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated inequalities in education, the labour market, and healthcare. While the government provided social protection measures for vulnerable groups, it did not sufficiently address the pandemic's consequences.

Niger

Input provided by Mr. Youssef Ibrahim, Senior Monitoring and Evaluation Expert, Ministry of Planning

Contextualization and prioritization of the SDGs have been considered in Niger's National Development Plan during 2017-2021 and then integration of the SDGs into the NDP 2022-2026. Niger's VNR submitted at the 2022 HLPF noted improvements in poverty eradication, malnutrition, maternal mortality, education, access to clean water and electricity. To implement the VNR's recommendations, Niger is conducting acceleration actions, such as identifying projects, establishing financial flows through banks, and creating new institutional structures.

APRM

Input provided by Mr. Sampson Osei, M&E Directorate, APRM Continental Secretariat

The APRM Governance Index Framework is a crucial initiative aimed at improving and monitoring governance progress throughout the African continent. The index effectively tracks governance reforms by using validated indicators and targets that are approved by AU member states. The framework poses important questions, such as "how, why, and so what," to ensure a comprehensive assessment. The APRM conducts various workshops, including the VNRs workshop at the continental level, and implements an M&E capacity building program alongside the framework.These efforts enable the identification of progress and challenges in achieving the SDGs and Agenda 2063, as highlighted in the APRM's Country and Targeted Reviews and annual progress reports. To gain access to these reports and other relevant updates, AU member states are encouraged to consult the APRM National Offices.

Figure 2 APRM Governance Index -areas of focus
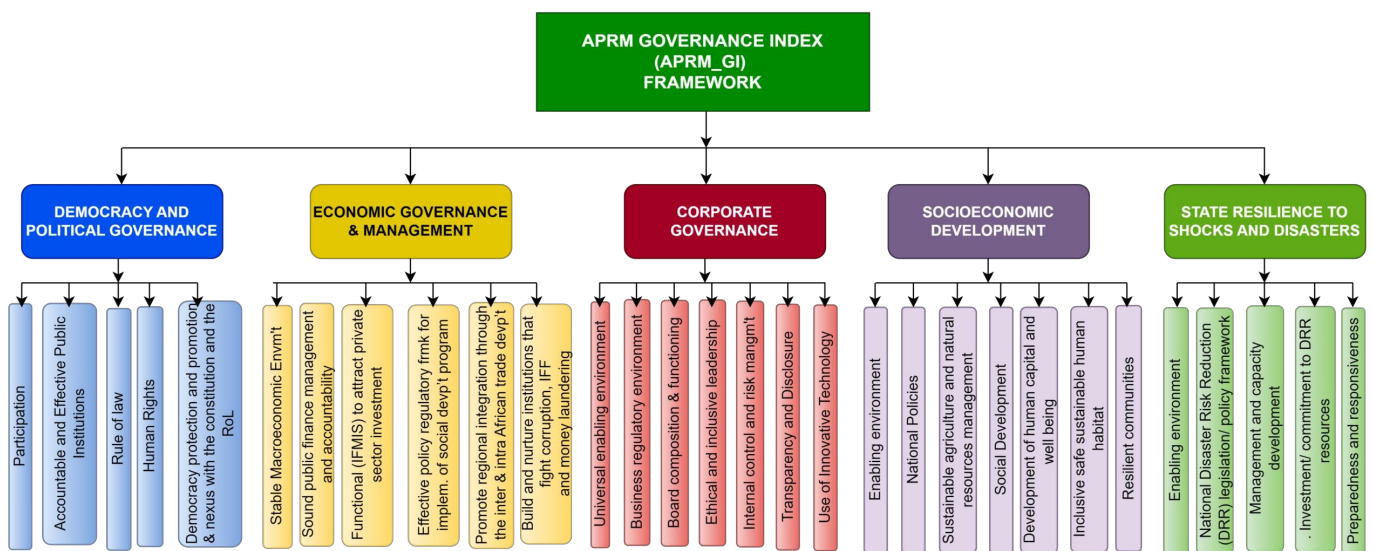
AUDA-NEPAD

Input provided by Mr. Simon Kisira, M&E Senior Expert, member of Agenda 2063 Technical Group

Key steps in reporting on Agenda 2063 using the methodology developed by the AU Technical Working Group (TWG) were featured. Also, some insights on the Agenda 2063 reporting framework and key highlights of the continental report on the First Ten-Year Implementation Plan (FTYIP) were presented. This include progress towards some aspirations pertinent to economic prosperity, governance, employment etc. recommendations were made to member states, AU Organs, and RECs to provide their inputs on the FTYIP evaluation, and undertake special studies, amongst others, to assess

emerging impact of Agenda 2063 FTYIP implementation. The final draft report of the FTYIP is foreseen to be tabled before heads of states of the AU during the Mid-Year Coordination Summit in July 2023.

Session five: Energy-Water–Infrastructure nexus for sustainable, safe, and inclusive communities in Africa

Togo

Input provided by Mr. Dao Alaza Wiyao, Chief of Environment and Rural Development, Ministry of Cooperation and Planning Development

Certain reforms to improve the water sector have been incorporated into Togo's 2025 national development plan (NDP) . The government aims to ensure *the supply of drinking water* to 75% of households in urban areas, 85% in semi-urban areas and 95% in rural areas by 2025. Implementing several projects has yielded encouraging results between 2018 and 2021. National drinking water supply rate from 50% in 2015 to 61.53% in 2021 against a target of 80% in 2025 and 100% in 2030. Thanks to these efforts, the rate of drinking water supply in rural areas augmented from 55% in 2015 to 69.49% in 2021 against a target of 95% in 2025 and 100% in 2030. Drinking water supply rate in urban areas from 50% in 2015 to 60.25% in 2021 against 75% in 2025 and 100% in 2030. Drinking water supply rate in semi-urban areas from 49% in 2015 to 52.88% in 2021 against 80% in 2025 and 100% in 2030.

Togo has adopted a national electrification strategy to provide access to electricity for all its citizens by 2030. The strategy emphasizes the development of renewable energy sources, particularly in rural areas. In 2018, Togo enacted a law promoting electricity production from renewable energy sources, and the Togolese Agency for Rural Electrification and Renewable Energies (AT2ER) was established. Additionally, the *"Tinga Fund"* facilitated access to electricity for all. These measures and reforms have led to an increase in the population's proportion with access to electricity, rising from 45.6% in 2018 to 58.1% in 2021. Furthermore, the proportion of the population primarily using clean energy has increased from 8.04% in 2018 to 10% in 2021.

Concerning industrial capacities, Togo has implemented various reforms, such as expediting the RN1 development project, which connects the productive hinterland to the Lomé agglomeration and the Port. Digital solutions have been promoted, and efforts have been made to enhance Togo's competitiveness as a logistics hub. The operationalization of Lomé airport as a regional air hub has been prioritized, and an industrial park focusing on logistics and agro-industry has been developed. Access to finance, hydrocarbons, land, and research and innovation units has also been improved.

Togo has established an active portfolio with different partners, including the African Development Bank. Since joining the bank, Togo has benefited from a total of 76 projects with cumulative financing of USD 705.7 million. These projects encompass various sectors, such as transport, agriculture, energy, governance, and the social sector. The country has undertaken twelve national projects, four regional

projects, and one project from the private sector, amounting to CFAF 203 billion. The overall disbursement rate for these projects stands at 61.6%.

Comoros

Input provided by Mr. Mohiuddin KAAMBI, Director General of Strategic Planning and Population

The 2030 vision for development includes ensuring that 80% of households have access to water and 82% of households have access to electricity (5.6% solar energy). Further reforms are taken to modernize *urbanisation,* which include i) Restructuring the institutional framework; ii) Protection and monitoring of Water Resources for rationalization and sustainability; iii) Reinforcement of drinking water infrastructure to providing inclusive access to drinking water for all population.

Regardin*g energy production*, the government is working on merging energy production, integration of renewable energies, promotion of thermal energy. Furthermore, the presenter referred to the opportunities of the African continental free trade area including access to a large export market, opportunity for growth and job creation, improvement of the overall framework of the economy.

Despite these efforts, Comoros faces several challenges that require attention, such as the necessity to diversify economic activities in order to ensure competitiveness and foster the implementation of SDGs and Agenda 2063. Comoros has received financial support from its partners for various research studies, including fisheries resource assessments, pre-feasibility studies for complex projects, exploration and research of the seabed, as well as development projects such as the Corridor Maritimes, competitive ports and airports, industrial zones (SEZs), roads, and other necessary facilities. Furthermore, the private sector is also playing an emerging role by supporting improvements in the business environment and facilitating the creation of large companies.

Congo DRC

Input provided by Mr. Modeste Nyembo Kakanda, National Coordinator, Sustainable Development Centre

DRC has severe challenges to provide access to clean drinking water to citizens since only one percent-1% of the population has access to drinking water from an improved source. Reforms of the water sector include:

  i.   the adoption of the National Water-Hygiene and Sanitation Plan (PNAEHA) which aim to increase the rate of access to drinking water from 33% to 80%.
  ii. improving sanitation and hygiene for all and eradicating and most vulnerable areas by 2030, guided by the Local Development Plan (PDL)-145T.
  iii. Adoption of a water law (new institutional architecture based on the decentralization and transfer of water services and resource management to provincial administrations
  iv. regulatory authority for the public water service to limit of the operationalization of the law (25 regulatory texts planned): Decree No. 22/05 March 1, 2022, setting the terms of application of the legal procedures related to management of the Public Water Service.

Regarding energy, progress has been made to identify and locate 890 sites for hydroelectric facilities across the country was conducted, with a total of more than 100,000 MW Penultimate position in sub-Saharan Africa in terms of annual electricity consumption per capita is only 94 KWh.

Public-private partnership has proven profitable for the construction of the hydroelectric plant. Other notable reforms include the application of the electricity law in 2014, which effectively liberalized the public electricity service. In addition, the National Agency for Electrification and Energy Services in rural and peri-urban areas (ANSER) and the Electricity Regulatory Authority (ARE) were established in 2020. To address inequalities in access to electricity between urban, peri-urban, and rural areas, the MWINDA Fund was created, and the electrification plan for rural and peri-urban areas Local Development Plan (PDL)-145T was implemented.

As far as industrialisation and infrastructure is concerned, DRC holds strong potential for industrialization (factorial and natural endowment–land and resources). However, the number of industries has declined significantly from 9,600 in 1960 to around 600 presently, indicating a virtual stagnation of the industrial process.

 Progress has been noted in some areas, including:

   i.   Development of a sectoral strategy for industrialization.
   ii.   Adoption of an Industrialization Master Plan (Zlecaf issues, reintegration of AGOA);
   iii.   Establishment of industrial zones (special economic zones), administered by the Special Economic Zones Agency–created for the need of the cause.
   iv.   Establishment of an agency to support investors who wish to benefit from customs and tax incentives (National Agency for the Promotion of Investments - ANAPI).
   v.   Signing (in 2022) between the DRC and Zambia of a memorandum of understanding for cooperation in the manufacture of electric batteries - development of the value chain in the electric battery and clean energy sector.

Infrastructure improvement in DRC entails improving the river, railways, and road networks. The Launch of the Bonana deep-water port regional project (mouth of the Congo River); Important infrastructural land for Africa (Zlecaf) as it has at least eight corridors (North-South, Central/Goma-Bukavu, Dar Es Salem, North/Mombasa, Luanda/Malanje, Lobito, North-West/Kribi and Beira) likely to link the landlocked African regions to the various neighbouring ports; Intergovernmental agreement for the road-rail bridge project linking the two capitals Kinshasa and Brazzaville Collaboration between the DRC and Uganda on the construction/rehabilitation of infrastructure.

Eswatini

An input provided by Mr. Thandazani S. Sibiya, Economist, Ministry of Planning and Development

Eswatini has implemented several policies to ensure a reliable energy supply. For example, the country has adopted the National Energy Policy (2003), the National Energy Efficiency Policy (2018), the National Energy Implementation Strategy (2018), and the Eswatini National Energy Master Plan (2018-2034). In addition to policy measures, the government has taken various actions:

I. Established Eswatini Energy *Regulatory Authority* to ensure sustainable access to affordable, reliable, and modern energy.

II. Established and operationalized th*e Rural Electrification Access Fund* to fast- tracking access to modern energy, esp. Rural areas.

III. Adopted Petroleum Act, 2020, and regulations are now in place to ensure that the petroleum sector is well regulated to attract investment.

IV. Diversification of energy sources is increased to improve energy security, i.e. solar installation in Shiselweni region.

Thanks to these efforts, access to electricity improved from **78%** in 2018 to **82%** in 2022. However, affordability of energy resources and pricing remain a challenge to be addressed.

Concerning water resources, the national Water Policy (2018) provides a framework for water management– provide rules and regulations for promotion of sustainable water harvesting and sharing of trans-boundary watercourses at all levels in the country. Other institutions and reforms include:

i. **Department of Water Affairs** that handles the management and development of water resources in the country.
ii. **Eswatini Water Service Corporation** - provide potable water and sewerage treatment and disposal.
iii. Rehabilitation and implementation of water and sanitation projects has been undertaken.
iv. A few water schemes have been established and the installation of boreholes has increased.
v. Improvement from **69.5%** in 201 to **75.6%** in 2022 of the population having access to safely managed drinking water services was realized.

Challenge of **inequality** to provide access to water still exists in the country (67.4% for rural while 92% is for urban) Other challenges include:

i. lack of infrastructure connectivity: Eswatini has only one railway line which connects the country to Mozambique – yet RSA is the major trading partner.
ii. Limited maintenance budget for road infrastructure.
iii. Cost escalations and delays in project completion are a serious challenge in road construction.
iv. Relatively, high ICT costs which impacts operations in both public and private sector Unaffordable costs of connection
v. Inequality in the distribution of the infrastructure
vi. The quality of access to basic services: water, energy, and infrastructure services is also a challenge.

Some opportunities were also listed, including:

   I.   Signing the Solemn Commitment for the establishment of the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM) in 2021

   II.   ICT for introducing significant and lasting positive change across the Eswatini.

  III.   Rapid penetration of mobile access has resulted in considerable improvements in the lives of the poor.

 IV.   Good road network infrastructure which connects to other neighbouring countries

Eswatini has received external assistance from various partners to support socio-economic development. The major partners of Eswatini include the African Development Bank (AFDB), Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA, the European Union (EU), the Global fund. These funds were utilized to support investments across key social and productive sectors. As a result of these interventions, positive trends are noted towards achieving the development Agendas. However, overdependence on fundings from partners must be considered since implementation of projects might be interrupted due to lack of funds predictability.

Guinea Bissau

An input from Mr. Agostinho Moisés, Head of Department, M&E, Ministry of Economy, Planning, and Regional Integration

The demographic context of Guinea Bissau is represented by a high percentage of youth and equally females' segment which represents 35% and 50% respectively of the total population.

The government is striving to rebuild effectively from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union's Agenda 2063. To achieve these goals, the country identified key priorities, including *peace, good governance, respect for biodiversity, natural capital, infrastructure, human development, and business and growth sectors.*

Concerning reforms related to the water sector, the government has made significant efforts to enhance access to quality water in alignment with the national development plan. According to the MICS5 report from 2014, 75% of the population had access to quality water. However, this percentage dropped to 66.8% in 2018-2019 after introducing water quality tests in households. The test showed that the concentration of E. coli at the national level was 81.7%, with a higher prevalence in rural households (83.5%) compared to urban households (78.4%). Although there was a decline to 68% in 2016, the distribution rate of produced energy has shown positive progress, reaching a peak of 77% in 2017. From 2015 to 2018, energy distribution experienced fluctuations. Encouragingly, the rate recorded in 2018 was 74%, giving hope to achieveing the target of 80% by 2025.

A notable example of regional collaboration in water resources management is the ongoing energy project led by the Organization for the Development of the Gambia River Basin (OMVG). This project involves the launch of a 225 kV interconnection line spanning 218 km and the construction of four high-speed substations and medium voltage (HV and MV) facilities across Guinea-Bissau, Senegal, Gambia, and Guinea.

Regarding infrastructure development, the government adopted the national decentralization program (2015) and the DEL 2018-2020 regional development plan. Manufacturing's value added to GDP rose from $64.5 per capita in 2015 to $71.8 in 2018, then fell back to $70.7 in 2019. In 2017-2018, processing activities accounted for 5.3% of total employment, with 5.2% for men and 5.4% for women. The

international assistance (official development assistance and other public sector contributions) allocated to infrastructure grew from around $3 million per year in 2015-2016 to $14 million in 2017, then jumped to $47 million in 2018 to fall back to 20 million in 2019.

Some challenges were also highlighted, including:

i. Weak industrial infrastructure and limited use of new infrastructure technologies.
ii. Lack of preservation of industrial and institutional infrastructure.
iii. Poor access to communication routes and infrastructure.
iv. Absence of legislation for the construction of housing complexes; Lack of application of the law on town planning.
v. Increase industrial infrastructure.
vi. Implement the land use and urban development plan.
vii. Develop legislation for the construction and establishment of housing and industries Create a technology infrastructure centre.

Concerning partnerships, the mobilization of domestic fund needs to be strengthened to respond to the needs of the national development plan, with the support of international partners and donors. An integrated national financing framework (INFF) has been created by the Government as a crucial tool for implementing the 2015 Addis Ababa Action Agenda. The INFF aims to reinforce the relationship between national development priorities, financing, and implementation. It will equally create the conditions necessary to mobilize new and innovative sources of financing, both private, and public.

A set of recommendations were also provided, including the necessity of strengthening partnerships and aid effectiveness, including promoting regional integration and foreign policy; Clear communication on policy intentions and measures to protect vulnerable people; Building social support around difficult and emerging reforms and trade-offs; Training and transfer of expertise through qualified human resources to ensure the sustainability of interventions.

Session Six: Leaving no one behind: enhancing the role of women, youth, and civil society in implementation/localization of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063

Rwanda

An input provided by Mr. Jean Bosco Ndayisenga, Director-General, National Programmes, and Project Monitoring

Rwanda's NDP is cascaded into sectoral and district-oriented plan while ensuring that the entire framework is linked and interdependent, to succeed all levels must implement accordingly. Implementing NDP and related sectoral plans is also supported by the institutional framework of organs and non-state actors with designated roles and functions. The Parliament (chamber of duties and senate), Cabinet, National dialogue council and different ministries alongside district councils collaborate to implement, advise, and oversight the implementation of these plans.

i. Leaving no one behind the principle as incorporated into the NDP through different programs:
ii. Strong Commitment to gender equality and women empowerment.
iii. Gender Responsive Budgeting.
iv. Representation youth women and people with disability in parliament.

v.   Representation of youth, women, people with disabilities, CSOs and private sector at all levels of local government and sector levels.

vi.   Categorization exercise for people with disabilities to inform the design of appropriate interventions.

vii.   Rwanda conducts Multidimensional Poverty Index and Multiple Overlapping Deprivation Analysis of child poverty.

viii. Rwanda is implementing the comprehensive refugees' response framework for enabling socio-economic inclusion of refugees.

Reference made to the constitution of Rwanda, which guarantees equal rights for all Rwandans. As an example of women's empowerment, the Parliament chambers include 61.3% female members while women represent 38.4% of the Senate and 55% of Cabinet members. Women make up 51% of the judges, further highlighting their involvement in the judiciary.

Burkina Faso

Input provided by Mr. Emmanuel Savadogo, Director of Monitoring and Evaluation, Ministry of Economy, Finance and Foresight

Throughout the past six years, Burkina Faso has been facing a security crisis besides the harmful effects of climate change. Lately, Burkina Faso, like many other countries, has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Russian-Ukrainian war, which led to price increases for various goods and necessary materials in Burkina Faso. The security crisis has caused socio-political instability and an upsurge in humanitarian issues and new challenges for internally displaced persons. Despite these difficulties, Burkina Faso's economy has shown resilience, with a need to align humanitarian, security and development actions has led the country to adopt the Nexus humanitarian-development-security approach by (i) building resilience; (ii) strengthening stability and security and (iii) establishing joint planning cycles.

Leaving no one behind principle (LNOB) is enriched through the four main phases of planning: Public policy design or formulation phase (national or local), Budgeting Phase, Implementation phase, Monitoring – evaluation phase. Further, guidelines have been issued for the development of public policies at both sectoral and local levels to encourage LNOB (regions and municipalities). These guidelines define the actors to be involved in the formulation of public policies and the role of each actor. Thus, there is a great involvement of civil society (including young people, women, the disabled, etc.) in the formulation of public policies. Another area of intervention includes the issuance of decrees by members of *ad hoc* committees responsible for the development of various public policies, whether

at sectoral or local level (regions and municipalities) to allow full participation of all social groups in policy formulation.

Box 3. Efforts to promote Leaving no one behind principle in Burkina Faso

Burkina Faso seeks to improve LNOB at community level. The national development Plan is cascaded into sectoral, thematic, and local policies which have taken into account the continental Agenda 2063 and Agenda 2030. Amongst the policies and policies and laws endorsed LNOB are the following:

   i.   the sectoral policy "Labour, employment and social protection" (PS-TEPS);
   ii.   the National Social Protection Policy (PNPS);
   iii. the National Gender Policy (PNG).
   iv.   the National Strategy for the Promotion of Women's Entrepreneurship (SNPEF);

In the same vein, the government developed specific programs and projects to reduce inequalities between regions and within the population including free care program for pregnant women and children under age of 5 years; National strategic plan to promote the elimination of FGM; the development of health insurance; the Spontaneous Housing Resorption Strategy (SRHS); the Social Safety Nets Project "*Burkin naong saya*" which means: poverty is over Emergency (in local language), Program for the Sahel (PUS-BF) , Support program for the development of local economies (PADEL), Emergency territorial development and resilience project (PUDTR) and growth poles etc, The development of programs to reduce for the digital and financial divide: financial inclusion program; digital inclusion program.

Some programs are recently adopted due to the security situation, with the vulnerable layers within the internally- displaced persons. Amongst these programs are the national strategy for education in emergency situations (SN-ESU); the financing of generative activities in favor of internally-displaced persons (IDPs) and the operationalization of the Nexus approach "*Peace, security-humanitarian and development*" by the Government and the technical and financial partners in the various interventions in the areas affected by the security crisis. Also, the adoption of laws to guarantee better protection of vulnerable groups and ensure their full participation in public life.

Amongst these laws are:

   i.   the law on the penalty code which strengthens the legal measures against repression of all forms of violence against women and girls.
   ii.   the law on the prevention, repression, and reparation of violence against women and girls and support for victims
   iii. the laws fixing the quota for legislative and municipal elections in Burkina Faso of 30% and fixing the quota and procedures for positioning candidates for legislative and municipal elections in Burkina Faso;
   iv.   The law on rural land which grants at least 30% of new developed areas to women.

The government has been equally committed to consider certain issues pertinent to LNOB including gender, human rights, Gender-sensitive budgeting, human resources, budget programming to consider the concerns of vulnerable groups (women, children, disabled people, young people, etc.).

Some recommendations are adopted for strengthening national security and resilience. The acceleration of reforms aimed at modernization and efficiency of the mobilization of internal resources improve productivity, competitiveness of the production and capacity building of the national statistical system.

Zambia

Input provided by Ms. Rachel Ponde, Principal Planner, Ministry of Finance and Planning

Zambia's policy framework is well aligned to LNOB principle. Nevertheless, more efforts shall be adopted to scale-up and strengthen implementation of some key policies if the commitment to LNOB is to be met. Further reference was made to the role of youth in society as current demographics shows that over 48% of the population categorized under youth segment, hence their participation in political life and SDGs oriented programs is essential for the achievement of Agenda 2030 and Agenda 2063.

Reference was made to the youth involvement in the institutional coordination structures involved in SDGs planning including i) Women, youths and Civil Societies are part of the National and Sub-national Coordination structures, ii) Co-Chairing the 8NDP Cluster 2 focusing on Human and Social Development - Civil Society; iii) Co-Chairing for the Lusaka Province Provincial Development Coordinating Committee under Pillar 4 focusing on Governance in the 8NDP - Civil Society; iv) Co-Chair for the Accountability Mechanism on SRHR/FP in Zambia- Youth Organization.

The country has also benefited from cooperation with the World Bank and strategic partners to expand social inclusion policies, especially the social safety net program. Number of recipient households for the Food Security Pack program also increased in 2021 from 80,000 to 263,000 households, with a further expansion to 290,000 households planned for 2022. On another hand, constituency Development Funds (CDF) have been also bolstered t for holistic development at constituency level. by 2022 allocation of CDF per constituency increased from ZMK1.4 million to ZMK25 million.

Some recommendations to improve LNOB in Zambia were listed:

I.   Enhancing data collection systems to provide comprehensive information and data base on the inequality experienced by vulnerable groups to ensure accurate and easily accessible records.

II.   Accelerate the updating of the National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) to enhance responsiveness for data needs.

III. Conduct data awareness activities to enhance statistical literacy across stakeholders and users of statistics.

IV.   Leverage digital platforms and e-governance for data collection.

V.   Strengthening reporting systems at different levels of service delivery.

Box 4. Supporting Women in Zambia under LNOB provisions

Women have been benefiting from incorporating LNOB provisions into certain policies, especially from health provisions. Certain programs are dedicated to support women including:

- Vulnerable population such as the disabled, old aged and women are targeted under the Social Cash Transfer.

- 563 health-posts have been constructed out of the projected 650 and 92 out of 115 mini-hospitals. This will reduce the distances women will have to cover to access safe motherhood services, including family planning, antenatal care, delivery services and postnatal care.

- To enhance maternal health care services at primary health care level, Zambia offers services for free.

- National Health Insurance Scheme has been introduced to enhance access to health services. The introduction of health insurance has increased access to specialised care for women with complications.

- Food security and Social safety net programs such as "*Keeping Girls in School*" and the "*Home-Grown School Feeding Program*".

Tunisia

Input provided by Ms. Khouloud Baghouri, AU Youth Enjoy, North Africa

Youth in Africa are championing both Agenda 2030 and 2063 through various platforms. They collaborate closely with governments and civil society, demonstrating notable engagement in innovation and technology. In Tunisia and Egypt, for instance, youth are actively taking part in community and regional activities to expedite the implementation of the SDGs. Empowering youth in government positions has been also emphasized across the continent. They are appointed as project leaders and coordinators, and ministries dedicated to youth or youth offices have been established. These reforms signify the countries' commitment to enhancing youth involvement in decision-making processes and strengthening their leadership abilities.

Tunisia, for example, is a leading country in recognizing the crucial role of youth in combating Climate Change. They have established a group called Tunisian Young Climate Negotiators, who support and participate in Tunisia's official delegation during international negotiation events like the Conferences of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Subsidiary Bodies (SBs) Meetings.

The Climate negotiators receive capacity-building training and intensive technical meetings before the official kick of the high-level meetings and negotiations. Some of the covered topics are "the history of

climate diplomacy, the official framework of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, as well as the main negotiation topics of COP, such as climate finance, the transparency framework, and the carbon market." and this is adapted based on each year's COP theme.

A recommendation was made to ensure more engagement from the stakeholders with youth, especially those with challenges to get access to some platforms, participation, or difficulty to find local opportunities to skill up their abilities. This will not only help advance the SDGs but will also build an intergenerational exchange and merge both the ambition of the leaders of today with the experts at the senior level.

Box 5. African Union efforts to empower youth under Agenda 2063

The African union's efforts in amplifying youth voices and supporting the participation of African youth in peace and security are emphasised under the current reforms of the union. This has been witnessed through several initiatives as follows:

I. "*Youth for Peace Africa Program (Y4P)*, an initiative that seeks to effectively engage, involve, and collaborate with young women and men as well as organized youth groups in the promotion of peace and security on the continent.

II. **Appointment of youth Ambassadors for Peace** : the Peace and security council requested the Commission to appoint five (5) regional African Youth Ambassadors for Peace (AYAP) to work with the AU Youth Envoy in championing the promotion of peace and security on the continent. This also serves the implementation of Agenda 2063. The Youth Ambassadors are collaborating with the UN Youth Envoy Office to merge both agendas and promote the active role of youth in the peace and security spheres towards achieving sustainable development.

The Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms such as APRM continental secretariat assist youth to gain expertise in matters related to peace and security, climate change, migration, intercontinental trade agreements, and others. For example, in West Africa, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has included *youth among the priority areas in its conflict prevention Framework*; the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) *mainstreamed youth and youth issues into its Regional Strategy*; and the East African Community (EAC) launched *a Youth Policy* and instituted the Youth Ambassadors to promote youth engagement.

 In other instances, RECs have launched programs designed to address the underlying conditions associated with youth participation in violence, especially initiatives on youth empowerment and employment such as the *Southern African Development Community* SADC Youth Employment Promotion Policy

South Africa

Input from Ms. Philile Faith Shange, Researcher (SAIIA group)

The Government of South Africa supported youth through different policies and platforms. These initiatives entail Transformative youth Dialogues; Policy making initiative; APRM youth dialogue supported by the South African Institute of International Affairs; UNESCO Creative Cities; COP 27; and Voice Unite.

Other activities were executed to support LNOB including i) three community dialogues were hosted in Gauteng, Western Cape and Free State, stakeholders could engage and ways that will provide a safe space for disenfranchised groups and communities; and national dialogue which brought together civil society, government and chapter 9 (statutory bodies); ii) The LNB dialogues took place in three different provinces, the first one was held on the19th October 2016 In Free State, in the Western Cape on the 27th of October 2016 and lastly on the 28th October in Gauteng; iii) The national dialogue was held on the 16th of November 2016 in Johannesburg. Other policies and institutions are dedicated to empowering youth including:

    i.   The Nnational Youth Development Agency

   ii.   The National Youth Policy 2030

  iii.   Yyoung Patriot Programme

  iv.   National Development Plan 2030

   v.   New Growth Path 2019

  vi.   Youth Development Strategy for Local Government (2010)

At the regional level, the regional economic communities supported adherence to different codes and standards to promote youth, including the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG). The AU has adopted soft laws as policies, frameworks, and programmatic interventions to further pursue constructive participation by youth, particularly at the continental level. This includes:

- ✓ The African Youth Decade Plan Action 2009–2018 (DPoA), which provides a roadmap for implementing the African Youth Charter and the AU Agenda 2063, amongst others.
- ✓ Aspiration six of the AU Agenda 2063 envisages 'an Africa whose development is people-driven, especially relying on the potential offered by its women and youth, and well-cared for children.
- ✓ the AU Youth Volunteer Corps (AU–YVC) at the programmatic level. The program has helped to change the face of various AU organs and institutions, particularly the AU Commission (AUC) and has seen over 150 young people benefit from the program.

Some challenges were listed including issues of unemployment, crime & violence, lack of accountability and corruption, lack of resources which transferred to the most vulnerable marginalized groups such as women, children and people living with disabilities. On another hand, recommendations were made to enhance good governance practices, full access to information, create greater awareness, education programs of the SDGs at local level especially in rural areas, decentralize economic opportunities, promote evidence driven and credible policies around implementation and accountability to enhance LNOB provisions in South Africa.

Session seven: Updated guidelines on VNR/VLR guidelines for HLPF 2023

The session provided a chance for member states to be updated on the VNR Handbook and guidelines for reporting in 2023. The guidelines are inspired by a broad discussion led by UNDESA to ensure relevance to global challenges and enhance the quality and comparability of VNR reporting. Global Guiding Elements for Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) of SDG implementation were presented and progress made by the African country aspiring for 2023 in their reports.

UNDESA

Input provided by Ms. Tonya Vaturi, Sustainable Development Officer, OISC/DESA: 2023 Voluntary National Reviews: emerging themes, roadmap, and key highlights.

The HLPF is crucial in overseeing global follow-up and review processes (2030 Agenda, para. 82). Prior to the HLPF, preparatory processes support countries in VNR preparation and integrating sustainable development dimensions. It also offers political leadership, guidance, and recommendations for implementation, follow-up, and addressing emerging sustainable development issues.

The 2023 HLPF focuses on Accelerating the recovery from COVID-19 and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at all levels"". The HLPF structure includes thematic and regional review processes, along with a Ministerial segment for VNR presentations. The HLPF's follow-up and review architecture is based on a three-tier system: the national level as the foundation for review, the regional forums as platforms to further the exchange of best practices and reinforce mutual learning, and the HLPF, held annually under ECOSOC and every four years under the General Assembly (the "SDG Summit"). The SDG Summit is scheduled for September 2023 during the high-level week of the 78th session of the UN General Assembly.

Reference was also made to the key principles of VNRs as a voluntary, country-led, rigorous, evidence-based, open, inclusive, and participatory reports. It also mentioned the UN Secretary-General's voluntary common reporting guidelines, which guide Member States in preparing VNR reports for consistency. The UN's online VNR Database currently has *300+ reports from 189* countries since 2016, providing helpful examples for all countries.

Some recommendations were provided to the participants to maximize benefits of the VNR exercise, as follows:

I. Embed VNRs into institutions and link the VNRs to report to other mechanisms and conventions.
II. Undertake costing analysis for SDGs and align with national budgets.

III.   Strengthen policy coherence by identifying inter-linkages among SDGs and assessing trade-offs.
IV.   Engage parliaments and supreme audit institutions.
 V.   Report at the national level before and after a VNR have been presented at the HLPF.

VI.   Take actions in the executive and legislative branches of governments.

Finally, some key elements that a VNR should include were featured, including the timeline and important deadlines for preparing and submitting the VNR report, and how the reports are presented at the HLPF in New York. Challenges around how to integrate different data sources, and the importance of engaging parliamentarians were also highlighted.

Input provided by Mr. Amson Sibanda, Chief, National Strategies and Capacity Building Branch, DSDG/DESA: Benefits of conducting voluntary local reviews (VLRs)

Although VLRs are not officially considered a part of the HLPF, localization is a key aspect for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. Localization is 'the process of defining, implementing, and monitoring strategies at the local level for achieving global, national, and sub-national sustainable development goals and targets' (Open Working Group of the GA on Sustainable Goals 2014).

A simple definition of localisation was introduced as 'process of taking into account sub-national contexts in the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, from the setting of goals and targets, to determining the means of implementation and using indicators to measure and monitor progress' (UCLG 2019).

Additional insights were shared on VLRs, which originated from adapting Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) conducted by national governments to the local level. VLRs are reports prepared by local and regional governments, highlighting their progress, gaps, challenges, strategies, and measures for sustainable development using the SDG framework (goals, targets, and indicators). VLRs serve as tools for identifying interlinkages, fostering the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of local measures encompassing environmental, social, economic, and institutional dimensions of sustainability.

Reference was also made to the VLR Guidelines, which aim to help countries prepare VLRs, UNDESA prepared Global Guiding Elements and provide a proposed shared structure for the reports, and at minimum, give a checklist of issues that could be reflected in the process. The VLRs draw from the Secretary-General's common voluntary reporting guidelines for the VNR and are fully compatible with other, more detailed guidance documents, e.g., those developed by UNECA and UN Habitat. Further, the guidelines aim at fostering a dialogue between the Voluntary National Reviews and the VLRs, where applicable.

Some lessons learnt were shared from the VLRs practices:

(1) VLRs broaden the scope for inclusive multi-stakeholder consultations.

- Thanks to DESA engagement on VNRs and VLR processes, a growing number of citizens are being engaged in local actions, and in the process:

- promote shared understanding of complex national and local problems.

- devise integrated solutions that benefit from broader societal consensus.

- ensure ownership and commitment to solutions and that no one is left behind.

- This allows the voices of civil society groups, youth, and groups in vulnerable situations to be taken onboard.

- National governments seeking to mainstream, accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs also realize that they can be more inclusive and expand their perspectives by engaging more directly with LGAs, local communities, CSOs, private sector.

(2) VLR processes have the potential to contribute to building strong institutions for SDGs, especially sound policy making and data availability.

- However, the participation of local and regional governments in national coordination mechanisms remains weak.

- According to UCLG, globally, participation was 28% on average between 2016-2021, and 34% in 2022.

(3) *Breaking silos or promoting horizontal policy coherence* across sectoral departments of local and regional governments and countries to manage trade-offs across policy domains in implementing SDGs and NDPs is not an easy process.

- Reviews have also shown that while countries have been skillful in aligning their efforts with existing laws, institutions, and development programs, they have been less skillful with developing new integrated strategies for achieving the SDGs.

- Many countries have also not done enough to incorporate local and regional governments in SDGs implementation.

(4) *Co-creation* is helping local and regional governments to align the resources and capacity and cultivating the political support and buy-in that is necessary for the successful adoption and localization of the SDGs.

To address some of these shortcomings, some countries have embarked on decentralization while others are actively reaching out and engaging local and regional governments, communities, and stakeholders.

The presentation was followed by different questions from member states including Botswana, Uganda, regarding the submission process, modus operandi of presenting the VNR and reporting the fatigue issue on both Agenda 2030 and 2063. While Zambia emphasized that a major challenge is getting disaggregated data at the local level; noting that data is not disaggregated to local specificities or data contribution to SDGs. Last, Tanzania expressed an interest in peer-learning with other countries are more advanced in tracking SDG indicators and targets.

Reflections from countries presenting their second VNR in 2023

Burkina Faso: The engagement of a high level of leadership started early and has strengthened the VNR assessment. A long-term process has been adopted to improve the quality of indicators and capacitate the national statistical office to measure where statistics are available and where they are needed. The structure of SDGs management includes orientation, technical, and coordination committees. Different regions have validated the VNR process and reported on gaps in the assessment.

Central African Republic: The VNR report is being drafted with broad consultation with different actors and stakeholders. The 2019 report was impacted by the transitional period to democratic governance that lasted until 2016 and concluded during a crisis. Lack of statistics availability continues to pose a challenge in recent years. The second VNR reflects strong will for a new legal and technical framework towards implementing Agendas 2030 and 2063.

Comoros: Key updates for the second VNR include a technical committee and involvement of ministries in SDG implementation. This time, the VNR will focus on five thematic areas presented for pre-validation. International and local consultants were involved to strengthen national capacities in VNR preparations and address data challenges. Although there are some data gaps, efforts have been made to collect more data, making this year's VNR stronger than the 2020 edition.

Democratic Republic of the Congo: The DRC Observatory on SDGs is responsible for VNR preparation. The first DRC report included several recommendations. The 2023 report, conducted in partnership with the Millennium Institute, provides a more comprehensive assessment of SDG progress. The revision of the NDP this year will enhance the VNR. To enrich the second VNR, stakeholder-validated thematic studies and assessments (e.g., on education, youth employment) were recommended. UNDP and AfDB supported the DRC in improving target measurement. Political validation of the VNR is also taking place with involvement from state actors such as the Parliament, academia, and universities. Discussions are ongoing regarding the inclusion of SDG education in academic curricula. Additionally, civil society prepares an annual alternative shadow report in June to assess national-level SDG implementation, which contributes to the VNR.

Tanzania: During the first VNR in 2019, no national framework for reporting on the SDGs existed. An inclusive institutional structure was created to involve all stakeholders in SDGs implementation. Data challenges persist, but Tanzania employs advanced data planning tools to map SDG indicators through the NDP. Key stakeholders participate in the VNR task force, and the first draft of the VNR report will be submitted to them by the end of March, including the parliament.

Zambia: A roadmap was presented on current progress towards the 2023 VNR, highlighting political will and ownership issues. UNECA collaborated on an SDG assessment feeding into the VNR. Stakeholder engagement has begun, and one local government chapter is included to institutionalize the process at the sub-national level and leverage their SDG reporting. Similar challenges exist, such as data gaps and empowering sub-national mechanisms for SDG planning.

Peer Guidance and Advice for countries presenting a VNR this year.

Reflections from **Liberia and Ghana** focused on the length of the VNR and the importance of leveraging technology to enrich the VNR and engage more stakeholders. The role of UN offices at the national level remains essential to support the process. **Ivory Coast** provided some advice to provide objective analysis of the current situation of SDGs, which reflects the reality on the ground. **Cameroon** also suggested that VNR countries this year should be focused on and identify potential areas for

partnership with other countries and financial institutions. **Senegal** representative recommended that preparing the VNR should be inclusive, and while the VNR presentation is important, the report remains more important. Apart from presenting at the HLPF, the VNR supports the spread of Agenda 2030 and 2063 awareness and a focus on leaving no one behind. **Gambia** acknowledged the challenge of incorporating SDGs indicators into the NDP and the support provided by DESA; supporting national statistics offices for data collection as a primary step remains essential. **Lesotho** recommended engagement by youth to incorporate their views into the VNR.

Last, a record of key messages from the ninth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development held in Niger was shared by Mr. John Sloan of ECA.

Feedback from member states on the workshop (survey findings)

✓ **Overall satisfaction about the workshop**

How satisfactory was the workshop in achieving its objective to support national capacities of African countries to prepare and report through the VNR process, including on effective national-to-local implementation of the SDGs and building strong institutional and governance frameworks?

🔵 Very satisfied	33	
🟠 Satisfied	12	
🟢 Neutral	0	
🔴 Unsatisfied	0	
🟣 Very unsatisfied	0	

How satisfactory was the workshop as a regional platform for peer-learning on good practices for integration and implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063?

🔵 Very satisfied	32	
🟠 Satisfied	13	
🟢 Neutral	0	
🔴 Unsatisfied	0	
🟣 Very unsatisfied	0	

How would rate your understanding of the principles of effective governance and voluntary local reviews?
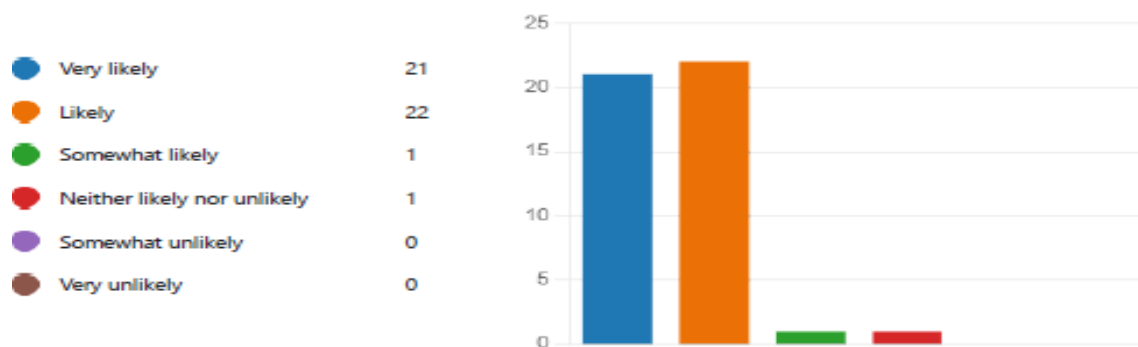
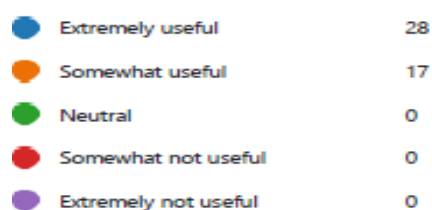|		
🔵 Very satisfied	21	
🟠 Satisfied	23	
🟢 Neutral	1	
🔴 Unsatisfied	0	
🟣 Very unsatisfied	0	

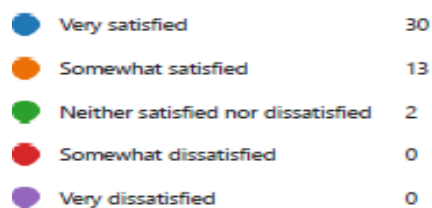✓ **presentations, logistics and policy impact**

How likely are you to implement and report on the principles of effective governance, vertical coherence and localization of the SDGs in your voluntary national reviews?

●	Very likely	21
●	Likely	22
●	Somewhat likely	1
●	Neither likely nor unlikely	1
●	Somewhat unlikely	0
●	Very unlikely	0

How useful were the speakers' presentations and speeches to you?

●	Extremely useful	28
●	Somewhat useful	17
●	Neutral	0
●	Somewhat not useful	0
●	Extremely not useful	0

How satisfied was your team with the logistics and preparatory instructions provided by APRM and UN DESA?

●	Very satisfied	30
●	Somewhat satisfied	13
●	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	2
●	Somewhat dissatisfied	0
●	Very dissatisfied	0

✓ **Useful topics and CEPA principles**

3. What are the most useful topics you at the workshop?

🔵	Monitoring and Evaluation tools...	16
🟠	Awareness and Advocacy on bo...	4
🟢	National policies for domesticati...	13
🔴	CEPA principles of effective gov...	6
🟣	Institutional mechanisms and co...	13
🟤	Localization of the SDGs and Ag...	7
🩷	UN system support system to c...	6
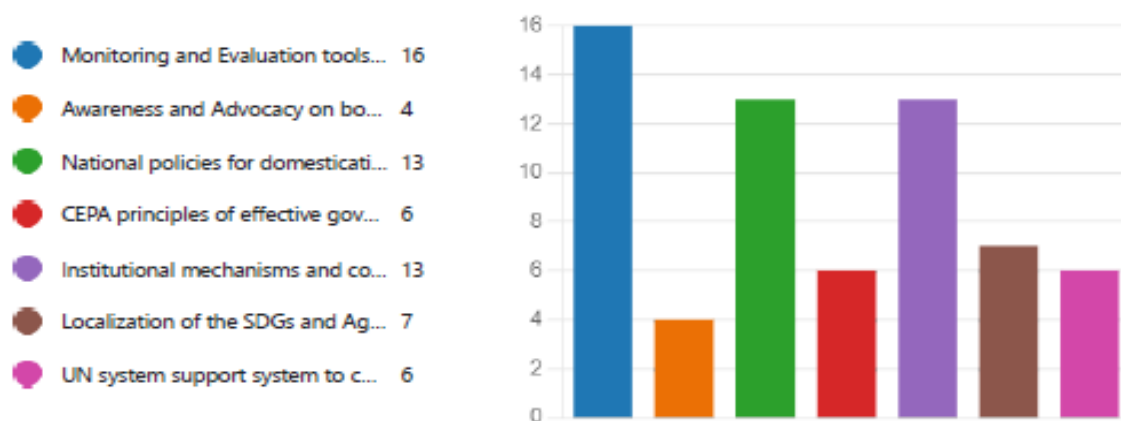
4. Please indicate the extent to which the workshop increased your understanding of whether the principles of effective governance for sustainable development and voluntary local reviews (VLRs) are relevant for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and the localization of SDGs.

🔵	Did not increase	1
🟠	Increased somewhat	12
🟢	Increased significantly	29