

ENSURING CHILDREN ARE NOT LEFT BEHIND

Guidance for
countries preparing
for Voluntary
National Reviews
at the High-level
Political Forum
on Sustainable
Development

INTRODUCTION

Children are essential to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the key to sustaining progress beyond 2030. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (the 2030 Agenda) recognizes children as “critical agents of change” and states that follow-up and review processes at all levels will be “open, inclusive, participatory and transparent for all people” as well as “people-centred, gender-sensitive, respect human rights and have a particular focus on the poorest, most vulnerable and those furthest behind.”¹ In line with these principles, children – including those from marginalized and vulnerable groups – should be *considered, included* and *visible* in all Voluntary National Review (VNR) reports and processes presented at the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF).

This paper provides detailed guidance to United Nations (UN) Member States on how to include children’s rights, including children’s participation, in VNRs at the HLPF. It follows the general structure of the UN Secretary-General’s updated *Voluntary Common Reporting Guidelines for Voluntary National Reviews at the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF)*² (the Guidelines), which were most recently updated in January 2025. It also highlights examples of good practices from VNRs from 2017-2024 and provides a useful checklist to support Member States in ensuring that their VNR is child-sensitive. In line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), this paper defines “children” as people below the age of 18.



GUIDANCE

1 Opening statement

The opening statement should highlight the current status of SDG progress for children including those from marginalized and vulnerable groups. It should highlight the outcomes and results achieved thus far for children and indicate the steps the country intends to take to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for children, including to end child hunger and malnutrition (SDG 2), which remains an urgent issue.³ Subsequent VNR reports should also highlight the main steps the country has taken towards SDG implementation for children, as a vulnerable group, since its previous VNR report. The opening statement may also acknowledge how children have contributed to the VNR.



Good Practices:

- The foreword of **Ghana's** 2019 VNR report identifies "the effective mainstreaming in national development of issues related to children" as one of five issues of particular importance in order to accelerate progress and increase efficiency in achieving the SDGs in the coming years.
- The foreword of **The Gambia's** 2020 VNR report highlights progress in terms of school enrolment and retention, the prevalence of stunting, wasting and underweight among children under five years old, and the proportion of women attended by skilled health personnel during delivery.
- The foreword of **North Macedonia's** 2020 VNR report states that it is strongly determined to reduce child poverty and to enable each child to have an equal chance of success in life.
- **Liberia's** 2020 VNR report's "Message from the President" emphasizes that accelerating actions to achieve the SDGs will focus on – inter alia – the protection of children's rights.
- The foreword of **Bhutan's** 2021 VNR report notes that national policies on gender equality, disabilities, and mother and child health have been endorsed to improve key social outcomes.
- The Opening Statement by the Prime Minister in **Iceland's** 2023 VNR report states that children and youth have been at the forefront of Iceland's VNRs, with the SDG Youth Council recently presenting their thoughts and priorities to the ministers of government.

2 Highlights

The highlights section should refer to children in the following key areas:

- **On VNRs previously presented to the HLPF** – The report should identify the most significant changes in relation to children – both positive and negative – since the country's last review.
- **On the country-level review process** – The report should identify whether children, including those from marginalized and vulnerable groups, have participated in VNR preparations.
- **On the status of SDG implementation** – The report should highlight whether children generally, as well as children from marginalized and vulnerable groups, have made progress in relation to the SDGs based on statistical data. It should identify the factors of success or failure to achieve progress for children and note any specific areas where children are at risk of being left behind.

- **On new and emerging challenges** – The report should highlight the impact of various challenges – including rising living costs, food insecurity, migration, conflict, the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, discrimination and inequality, and other relevant issues – on children’s lives and well-being, as well as specific measures taken to mitigate their negative effects on children.
- **On the integrated, indivisible and interlinked nature of the SDGs** – The report should highlight how goals and targets relevant to children have been pursued in a manner to accelerate implementation and avoid trade-offs that would compromise achieving all of the SDGs for children.
- **On the principle of leaving no one behind** – The report should highlight overarching approaches to address children as a vulnerable group generally, as well as specific strategies to address the situation of marginalized and vulnerable groups of children.
- **On examples of good practices and lessons learned** – The report should highlight measures that have a transformative potential for children, including social protection measures such as cash transfers, which can – when combined with a package of essential and accelerating services – positively impact children’s health, mental health, nutrition, learning outcomes and safety.
- **On examples of challenges encountered** – The report should highlight any challenges encountered in relation to children, including challenges in ensuring children’s meaningful, inclusive, effective and safe participation in SDG implementation and review processes.
- **On national initiatives that need support** – The report should highlight any national initiatives that need support to accelerate progress for children on the SDGs, including in terms of finance, capacity-building, policy advice, data gathering and analysis, technology and partnerships.



Good Practices:

- **Bangladesh’s** 2020 VNR report states that vulnerable people, particularly women, children and people with disabilities, have been given priority under its National Social Security Strategy.
- **Austria’s** 2020 VNR report notes that the inclusion of young people in the implementation process is vital and encouraged through a wide variety of participatory programmes and projects. There are also targeted measures to improve the living conditions of young people and children.
- **Zambia’s** 2020 VNR report discusses progress in relation to children’s nutrition and health – with disparities between rural and urban areas highlighted – as well as key interventions for children.
- **Mozambique’s** 2020 VNR report outlines challenges for children including child poverty and rising crime.
- **Cambodia’s** 2023 VNR report highlights progress in reducing stunting in children but notes that further efforts are needed to reduce wasting in children, which remained unchanged between 2014 and 2022.
- **Guinea’s** 2024 VNR report highlights measures in favour of children including the establishment of a standard community-based child protection system, the first national forum on childhood, and the National Policy for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights and Well-being of Children.
- **Solomon Islands’** 2024 VNR report highlights notable efforts made to address the high prevalence of unintended teenage pregnancies, included through government collaboration with stakeholders.

3 Introduction

The Guidelines state that the introduction may describe "...whether and how existing national reports to regional and international mechanisms have been used." Given the near-universal ratification of the CRC and its significant overlap with numerous SDG targets, the introduction should describe how national reports to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, as well as Concluding Observations from that Committee, have been used in preparing the VNR. Similarly, countries should describe how information on children from national reports or recommendations related to other international human rights mechanisms, such as the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), have been used. The introduction should also outline how reports to and recommendations from regional children's rights bodies, such as the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, have been used in preparing the VNR.



Good Practices:

- **Bulgaria's** 2020 VNR report states that it takes into account recommendations from its periodic reports to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.
- **The Federated States of Micronesia's** 2020 VNR report identifies its CRC Country Report 2017 as a relevant document in relation to SDG 5, with an excerpt from that report on the issue of child marriage cited.
- **Indonesia's** 2021 VNR report refers to recommendations from the Committee on the Rights of the Child, as well as recommendations from other international human rights mechanisms including the UPR and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).
- **Madagascar's** 2021 VNR report states that it used the "Single Report of Madagascar" of 2018 – covering its periodic reporting obligations on the CRC and its Optional Protocols – in preparing its VNR report.
- **Ireland's** 2023 VNR report refers to the Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child in relation to its tax policies and the inadequate provision of mental health services for children.

4 Methodology and process for preparation of the review

This section should identify whether the process to prepare the VNR involved the participation of national children's rights institutions⁴, non-governmental representatives for children such as child-focused CSOs or NGOs, international agencies such as UNICEF and/or children directly. In particular, this section should highlight any social platforms used to engage children, for example, UNICEF's U-Report tool, which empowers and connects young people around the world to engage with and speak out on issues that matter to them.⁵ Subsequent VNR reports should also address how the previous VNR helped to raise awareness of the 2030 Agenda among children at the national and local levels.

In terms of children's participation, the details of engagement with children and the mechanisms used to ensure their meaningful, inclusive, effective and safe participation should be outlined including:

- The frequency, nature and level (national or local) of engagement or consultations with children;

- The age groups of the children involved, including identifying whether children were included in any consultations or initiatives involving 'youth' or 'young people';
- The participation of children from marginalized or vulnerable groups, identifying, where appropriate, the specific groups involved;
- How children were empowered and supported to participate in VNR preparations including through opportunities or training to build their capacity and skills for engagement;
- The methods used to engage or consult with children including:
 - The form of consultation (e.g. in-person or online surveys, face-to-face workshops, focus groups, online platforms, written comments on the draft VNR report, etc.);
 - The type of materials used (e.g. child-friendly and/or age-appropriate materials);
 - How safe and child-friendly spaces and facilities were ensured; and
 - How financial, linguistic, logistical and other barriers to children's meaningful participation were addressed, including for vulnerable groups such as children with disabilities;
- How children's views and priorities were taken into account and reflected in the VNR report; and
- Plans for follow-up with and feedback from the children who participated in the VNR process.



Good Practices:

- As a result of providing a draft of its VNR report to stakeholders, including UNICEF, **Andorra's** final 2018 VNR report includes a section on children's rights with comments from the Andorran Committee of UNICEF.
- Several 2019 VNR countries highlight consultations with children in preparing their VNR reports including **Ghana, Lesotho, Mongolia, the Philippines, Serbia** and **Sierra Leone**. As a result, many of these reports include the direct views and reflections of children on SDG progress. Similarly, several 2021 VNR countries including **Czech Republic, Guatemala, Indonesia, Paraguay, Sierra Leone** and **Sweden**, discuss consultations held with children and adolescents as part of their VNR preparation process.
- **Mozambique's** 2020 VNR preparation process involved national consultations – facilitated by World Vision – with children and adolescents who have been affected by natural disasters.
- **Uganda's** 2020 VNR process was informed by consultations with stakeholders including youth organizations and school children. Notably, 23,324 young people and children (15-30 years old) participated in the U-Report survey, with their views on various issues provided in the final report.
- **The Gambia's** 2020 VNR process involved the use of the U-Report platform to assess young people's understanding of the SDGs and the VNR process, as well as focus group discussions with youth and children, with their views included in the final VNR report. **The Gambia's** 2022 VNR report discusses how its VNR process consulted children and youth at regional levels, as well as how the country conducted post-VNR consultations with children and youth at national, regional and community levels after its first VNR in 2020.
- **Montenegro's** 2022 VNR preparation process involved consultations with members of the network of Golden Advisers to the Ombudsman for the protection of the rights of the child – children and young people under 17 years old, including from vulnerable groups. Their opinions are outlined in the report.
- **Ireland's** 2023 VNR report discusses a youth-led consultation for the VNR, which was organized for 84 young people from 10-24 years old with a conscious effort made to include minority groups.

- **Romania's** 2023 VNR report includes a separate *Children's Report for Romania's Voluntary National Review on the Sustainable Development Goals*, which was designed and written by children and summarizes the views, ideas and proposals of 55,000 children on the implementation of the SDGs in Romania.
- **Viet Nam's** 2023 VNR report notes that its VNR preparation process involved designing its draft VNR in a user-friendly format with diagrams and images for children so that they could provide inputs.
- **Belize's** 2024 VNR report discusses hosting the National Children and Youth Conference in 2024 to engage young persons from communities across the country in the VNR process, which resulted in the establishment of a youth-led action plan on the SDGs, which is reproduced in the VNR report.
- **Zimbabwe's** 2024 VNR report discusses VNR consultations involving 353 children across five provinces, including various categories such as junior parliamentarians, councillors, those in residential care, refugees, children at-risk of irregular migration, children with disabilities, and children living with HIV.

5 Policy and enabling environment

(a) Ensuring ownership of the Sustainable Development Goals and the VNRs

The report should outline how children have been continuously involved in and contributed to the implementation and review of the 2030 Agenda, including measures taken to facilitate their direct engagement. As critical agents of change, children are key stakeholders to achieve the SDGs and sustain progress well beyond 2030. Child participation is also a core principle of the CRC to which nearly all countries are legally bound. In particular, this section should address how children – including children from marginalized and vulnerable groups and those living in fragile contexts – have been:

- **Informed of the 2030 Agenda** – The report should highlight actions to raise awareness of the SDGs, promote sustainable development education and disseminate child-friendly and age-appropriate information about the SDGs among children, including information on how children of different ages, capacities and abilities can participate in SDG implementation and review.
- **Involved in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda** – The report should identify effective and adequately resourced mechanisms, platforms, forums and institutions that are available to and can be used by children to contribute to SDG implementation – both in relation to specific goals or targets, as well as for awareness-raising activities, data collection and generation⁶, policy development, decision-making and budgeting. Examples of mechanisms may include children's parliaments, children's councils or advisory groups⁷, and SDG bodies with child representatives.
- **Involved in the review of the 2030 Agenda** – The report should outline actions to facilitate and support children's participation in reviewing progress on the SDGs at national and local levels through different formal or informal means, including child-friendly consultations, citizens' hearings, online and offline surveys, etc.

Countries preparing subsequent VNRs should also discuss how children's ownership of the SDGs has evolved since the first VNR, indicating efforts to sustain or mainstream children's participation and ownership, and how this has impacted the government's engagement with children. Boxes may be used to highlight children's involvement in SDG implementation and review.



Good Practices:

- **Sweden's** 2017 VNR report highlights the campaign #FirstGeneration, which seeks to create engagement, strengthen communication and broaden popular support for the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs among young people around the world. **Sweden's** 2021 VNR report also covers child participation in SDG implementation and review extensively with the importance of children's and young people's perspectives and/or their participation emphasized throughout the report, including in reviewing SDGs 7, 9, 13, 14, 16 and 17.
- **Ireland's** 2018 VNR report notes that it has established a national SDG Stakeholder Forum to provide a mechanism for key stakeholders – including youth – to be engaged on an ongoing basis in the national implementation of and reporting processes on the SDGs.
- **Ghana's** 2019 VNR report provides a detailed section on "Children and Youth Engagement and Participation in SDGs Implementation Processes in Ghana", which considers the ways in which children and youth are involved in SDG advocacy, implementation, monitoring and reporting.
- Several 2018 and 2019 VNR countries – including **Mauritius, Romania, Slovakia and Tunisia** – highlight initiatives to raise awareness of the SDGs and/or gain young people's perspectives on sustainable development through workshops, competitions, debates or projects in schools.
- **Bulgaria's** 2020 VNR report highlights the Council of Children, which enables children – including children of different ages and those from vulnerable and marginalized communities – to express their opinions and participate in drafting legislation and formulating policies that affect them.
- **Finland's** 2020 VNR discusses the roles and activities of the 2030 Agenda Youth Group, which was established to better integrate the voices of children and youth in national SDG implementation.
- **Cyprus'** 2021 VNR report notes that it has an annual meeting of the children's parliament to allow young people to participate in dialogues on the SDGs and include them in decision-making processes.
- **Spain's** 2021 VNR report discusses its consultation with children, with their concerns integrated into its 2030 Sustainable Development Strategy, resulting in the 2020 Manifesto for Children and Adolescents. Similarly, **Andorra's** 2022 VNR report notes the process of consultation and participation of relevant actors – including children and adolescents – in developing its future National Plan for Childhood and Adolescence.
- **Chile's** 2023 VNR report states that children and adolescents participated in dialogues for the design of its Strategy for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for the period 2023-2030, as well as the 2023 VNR.
- **Iceland's** 2023 VNR report discusses its SDGs Youth Council who meet annually with the government and have a representative on the Sustainability Council, with the Youth Council's priorities published in a chapter in the report. The production of seventeen short television shows for children, which aired on the Icelandic National Broadcasting Service to raise awareness of the SDGs among children, is also highlighted.

(b) Integration of the Sustainable Development Goals in national frameworks

This section of the report should outline how the integration of goals and targets relevant to children into national and sub-national frameworks – including legislation, policies, plans, budgets and programs – has helped with the successful implementation of the SDGs for children. For example, the report could discuss how incorporating the commitment to end hunger, achieve food security and improve

nutrition (SDG 2) into national legislation, policies, plans, budgets and/or programs, has helped to accelerate progress to end child hunger and malnutrition, as well as improve children's outcomes in others key areas such as health, education and ending violence against children. In particular, this section should outline how national development plans and poverty reduction strategies have integrated SDG targets to improve maternal, infant, young child and adolescent nutrition and health.

This section should also highlight major efforts by non-State actors to implement the SDGs in relation to children, including civil society initiatives to build a stronger nexus between development, humanitarian and peace-building interventions that benefit children.⁸ It should also outline the benefits of multi-stakeholder partnerships in contributing to SDG implementation for children such as the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement, the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN), the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health, and the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children.



Good Practices:

- **Mexico's** 2018 VNR report states that the 2030 Agenda provides a framework for structuring other development goals in different sectors and cross-sectoral systems, citing the example of the policy "25 by 25: National Objectives on the Rights of Children and Adolescents," which uses the SDGs to establish national goals for this demographic segment.
- **Peru's** 2024 VNR report states that the SDGs were integrated into its "National Multisectoral Policy for Girls, Boys and Adolescents to 2030", appearing in its 5 priority objectives, its guidelines and its services.
- **Nepal's** 2024 VNR report discusses the different iterations of its Multi-Sector Nutrition Program (MSNP), noting that these plans are guided by the World Health Assembly 2025 and SDG 2030 targets, the UN Food Systems Summit Commitment 2021 and the Nutrition for Growth (N4G) Summit Commitment 2021.
- **Lao PDR's** 2024 VNR report discusses the adoption of the Noi Framework as a national response to address the challenges facing adolescent girls, focusing on advocacy, programming, and evidence generation to ensure their needs are integrated into the Lao Government's SDG implementation plans.
- **Croatia's** 2023 VNR report states that the National Plan for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion for the period 2021–2027, through its specific objective no. 2 "Prevention and reduction of child poverty and social exclusion", improves the availability of free meals for children at risk of poverty and social exclusion. The report also provides examples of successfully implemented projects of Civil Society Organisations that contribute to achieving SDGs, including in relation to education for sustainable development for children.
- **Estonia's** 2020 VNR report highlights measures of the non-governmental sector in relation to the well-being of families with children, children's physical and mental health and violence against children.
- **Liberia's** 2020 VNR report outlines achievements in positively shaping the enabling environment for the implementation of its nutrition program, including the Scaling Up Nutrition movement. Similarly, **Liberia's** 2022 VNR report highlights the UN-REACH movement, which is aimed at improving multi-sectoral nutrition governance for addressing child undernutrition through the partnership and coordinated actions of UN agencies, civil society, donors and the private sector, under the leadership of national governments.
- **Barbados'** 2022 VNR report highlights the #ActOnFacts – *The Food in Schools Matters* campaign to promote nutritious food in Caribbean schools, which is spearheaded by the Healthy Caribbean Coalition (HCC) and brings together a raft of different partners including UNICEF and the Jamaica Youth Advocacy Network.

(c) Integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions

This section should provide an analysis of the interlinkages between SDG targets that are relevant to children and outline how policies and institutional arrangements address these targets in an integrated manner. For example, unconditional cash transfers to young girls in Africa can reduce poverty, keep girls in school, reduce unwanted teen pregnancies and decrease HIV transmission by as much as two-thirds. Thus, a social protection intervention can advance goals related to poverty, education, health and gender equality.⁹ Key areas of sustainable development that should be considered include poverty, food security and nutrition, health, education, gender equality, equality and violence against children.

In particular, countries should highlight the interlinkages between ending child hunger and malnutrition and other SDGs and targets, given the negative impact of intergenerational child hunger and poor nutrition on other goals including poverty eradication, health, education, gender equality, employment, economic growth and peaceful and inclusive societies.¹⁰ Countries should also outline the integrated policies or strategies to address hunger and malnutrition, for example, a national coordinating framework that provides a mechanism for integrated planning, communication and action across different government ministries and levels of government¹¹, as well as among civil society and other actors – including children – to improve maternal, infant, child and adolescent nutrition.



Good Practices:

- **Cyprus's** 2017 VNR report highlights its National Youth Strategy which establishes an integrated, cross-sectoral mechanism for designing, implementing and monitoring all policy areas that are inter-related and directly affect young people, including in relation to education and training, employment and entrepreneurship, health and wellbeing, and social inclusion, among others.
- **Fiji's** 2019 VNR report notes that as child protection cuts across the activities of many agencies, Fiji has established a National Coordinating Committee on Children (NCCC), which is mandated to monitor and coordinate the implementation of child-related laws, policies and programs.
- **Honduras' 2020 VNR** report outlines its Strategy of Integral Policies regarding Adolescent Pregnancy, which includes priorities related to education and training, food and nutrition security, income generation, social assistance, health and gender-based violence. **Honduras' 2024 VNR** report identifies the linkages between its National Policy on Early Childhood, Childhood and Adolescence 2024-2033 and the SDGs.
- **Indonesia's** 2021 VNR report states that the National Strategy for Stunting Reduction, which is coordinated by the Office of the Vice President and Bappenas, involved 20 line ministries or agencies in 2020.
- **Lao PDR's** 2024 VNR report discusses the transformation of food systems (SDG target 2.1) and its interlinkages with SDGs 1, 2 and 3 (including its impact on children), while **Azerbaijan's** 2023 VNR report identifies the interlinkages of SDG target 2.2 with SDGs 1, 3, 4, 8 and 12.
- **Nepal's** 2024 VNR report provides detailed information on how its Mid-Day Meal (MDM) program, which aims to improve the nutritional status of school children, increase school enrolment and attendance, and enhance overall educational outcomes, contributes to the implementation of SDGs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 10 and 17.

(d) Leaving no one behind

In support of the principle that follow-up and review processes at all levels will “...have a particular focus on the poorest, most vulnerable and those furthest behind”, this section should include a focus on children as a vulnerable group generally, as well as children from marginalized or vulnerable groups, recognizing that vulnerability has become more diverse and includes a wider range of situations in a post-pandemic world.¹² In addition to nationally relevant groups of children, marginalized or vulnerable groups of children include: girls, children with disabilities, children living in poverty, children from ethnic, linguistic, racial or religious minorities, Indigenous children, migrant, refugee and displaced children, children without parental care, children living in remote, rural or urban areas, children living or working on the street, children in conflict with the law, children of single parents, boys and LGBTQI children. Specific attention should be paid to the situation of these groups of children in relation to SDG implementation generally, as well as in the context of ongoing challenges such as rising living costs, climate change, conflicts and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

In particular, this section should provide the following information:

- **The status of children** – The report should discuss the situation of children in relation to the SDGs, including marginalized or vulnerable groups, based on current disaggregated data;
- **Progress achieved** – The report should discuss progress on the SDGs for children, including marginalized or vulnerable groups, with rationale as to why progress has or has not been made;
- **Measures targeting children** – The report should outline the overarching strategies, policies, laws, programs, budgets and actions to fulfill the rights of children generally, as well as measures targeting specific marginalized or vulnerable groups of children;
- **Challenges** – The report should identify any challenges or barriers to achieving the SDGs for children, especially marginalized or vulnerable groups, including those related to the means of implementation (e.g. a lack of statistical data or financial investment in children); and
- **Children’s participation** – The report should highlight the actions taken to facilitate children’s involvement, including marginalized or vulnerable groups, in SDG implementation and review.



This section should also discuss national and sub-national efforts to ensure a child rights-based approach to implementing the SDGs¹³, which would allow countries to meet both the objectives of the 2030 Agenda and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in an efficient and effective manner. A child rights-based approach to SDG implementation – guided by the CRC and its Optional Protocols – can ensure that all children, including those from marginalized or vulnerable groups, are prioritized.



Good Practices:

- **Ethiopia's** 2017 VNR report includes a dedicated section on leaving no one behind with a comprehensive sub-section focused on children's rights and welfare.
- **Jamaica's** 2018 VNR report identifies groups of children at risk of being left behind including children living in poverty, children with disabilities, children living with and affected by HIV/AIDS, children in state care, children deprived of familial care and living in state institutions, children working and living on the streets, children who are victims of all forms of abuse, adolescents and youth, and unemployed youth.
- **Turkey's** 2019 VNR report includes a section on leaving no one behind, with a sub-section on children that provides a detailed snapshot of policies and practices for children and youth.
- **Bulgaria's** 2020 VNR report states that it works to integrate the rights of the child in all aspects of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.
- **Eswatini's** 2022 VNR report notes progress to assess child well-being from a child rights-based approach, including undertaking a stock-taking of performance against 44 child-related SDG indicators.
- Half of **2022 VNR countries** note the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on vulnerable groups including girls, children with disabilities, children from low-income or poor families and rural areas, unaccompanied minors and internally displaced children, boys, Roma children and children affected by conflict.
- **Ireland's** 2023 VNR report discusses its Access and Inclusion Model (AIM), which supports children with disabilities to take part in the Early Childhood Care and Education programme in mainstream settings.
- **Rwanda's** 2023 VNR report's section on "Leaving No One Behind" discusses its commitment to child development, rights and protection, including national legislation for promoting children's rights and Rwanda's ratification of regional and international conventions and treaties on children's rights.

While the marginalized or vulnerable groups of children under this section will vary depending on the national context, all countries should address the situation of children living in fragile contexts given that this particular group of children is at the greatest risk of being left behind by SDG progress. In particular, countries affected by fragility should discuss the impacts of fragility and insecurity on children in relation to the SDGs, as well as measures taken to support them. Countries not directly affected by fragility should outline measures – including international development cooperation – to support SDG implementation for children living in fragile contexts, especially in relation to child poverty, child hunger, food security and nutrition, child health, education, gender equality, equality and child protection.¹⁴



Good Practices:

- **Hungary's** 2018 VNR report outlines international support for children in fragile contexts including financial assistance for new schools for internally displaced children in Iraq, a youth centre in Za'atar refugee camp in Jordan and an educational project in the Democratic Republic of Congo.
- The 2019 VNR reports of **Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic** and **Cote d'Ivoire** highlight the impact of insecurity and conflict on children's education. **Burkina Faso's** 2023 VNR report also notes that the security crisis primarily affects women and children, who represent 84% of internally displaced persons.
- **Finland's** 2020 VNR report notes support for the rights and participation of children and young people in fragile states, with Finland preparing a National Action Plan on Youth, Peace and Security.
- **Nigeria's** 2020 VNR report highlights the impact of fragility, insecurity and conflict on children in relation to girls' education, gender-based violence, child abuse and sexual violence against minors, and child soldiers.
- **Mali's** and **Somalia's** 2022 VNR reports discuss sexual and gender-based violence against girls in relation to conflict and/or Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs).
- The **European Union's** 2023 VNR report outlines humanitarian funding for nutrition, including for severely malnourished children in Sudan, as well as children and women in other countries including Syria. The deployment of humanitarian and development funding to address the food and nutrition crisis in the Sahel and Lake Chad regions of Africa, as part of a humanitarian-development-peace approach, is also outlined.
- **Croatia's** 2023 VNR report highlights its financial contributions to a WFP School Feeding Project in Syria and a UNICEF project in Egypt to improve primary healthcare services for Syrian refugee women and children.
- **Mauritania's** 2024 VNR report highlights the government's efforts, supported by partners, to ensure access to education for more than 6,000 refugee children living in the Mbere camp.
- **Yemen's** 2024 VNR report discusses the impact of the war in Yemen on child malnutrition, child and neonatal mortality and education, with the *Current Path* and a *Development Push* scenario outlined. The exacerbation of already-entrenched gender inequalities and its impact on woman and girls is also discussed.

(e) Institutional mechanisms

This section of the report should outline how the country's institutional framework has evolved in order to make or review progress on the SDGs for children. Countries should highlight how existing institutions – including national human rights institutions, children's commissioners or ombudspersons, and parliaments – have been adapted or strengthened to facilitate or review progress on the SDGs for children and/or to support children's participation in SDG implementation and review processes.

The report should also outline the creation of new institutional mechanisms to facilitate, monitor and review progress on the SDGs for children, for example, a national coordinating committee for SDG implementation that coordinates policies and actions among different ministries, levels of government and other stakeholders. Countries should identify whether such bodies provide for child representation or participation, as well as outline how they interact with governmental and non-governmental bodies responsible for representing children and their rights.

Importantly, this section should describe how the views and priorities of children and their representatives – including child-focused CSOs and NGOs – are considered by existing and new institutional mechanisms responsible for SDG implementation and review. For example, systematic and meaningful two-way consultation and communication through child and youth advisory groups can be an effective means for governments to demonstrate their accountability for the SDGs to children.¹⁵



Good Practices:

- **Chile's** 2017 VNR report highlights efforts to strengthen existing institutions such as the System of Guarantees for the Rights of the Child, the Undersecretary of Childhood and the Children's Ombudsman.
- **Ethiopia's** 2017 VNR report discusses the creation of the 'Public Wing', the main coordination mechanism for SDG implementation, which provides a platform for government organs and stakeholders – including youth associations – to participate in discussions on the SDGs.
- **Armenia's** 2018 VNR report discusses how UNICEF is supporting the government to achieve SDG 16, including by establishing a Child Rights Unit under the Human Rights Defender (Ombudsman) to ensure that all government policies that affect children are in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Similarly, **Paraguay's** 2018 VNR report highlights a Memorandum of Understanding with UNICEF to provide technical support to incorporate a child-centred focus in the work of Paraguay's 2030 SDG Commission.
- **Malawi's** 2020 VNR report notes the creation of a National Children's Commission to facilitate multi-sectoral coordination of child-focused programmes, including monitoring domestic and development aid allocations.
- **The Gambia** and **Zambia's** 2020 VNR reports highlight youth representation on the National SDGs Steering Committee (The Gambia) and National Development Coordinating Committee (Zambia).
- **Spain's** 2021 VNR report discusses the State Council for Child Participation, where children can be consulted and participate in state policy, as well as other local councils and advisory bodies for child participation.
- **Iceland's** 2023 VNR report notes that a member of the SDGs Youth Council has a representative on the Sustainability Council, while **Turkmenistan's** 2019 VNR report discusses the 17 Young Ambassadors of SDGs who were appointed to ensure the participation of youth in the SDG process and to serve as a bridge between the government and young people in the country.
- In reviewing SDG target 16.2, **Guinea's** 2024 VNR report notes that it has established a Children's Parliament, as well as an Office for the Protection of Gender, Children and Morals (OPROGEM).
- **Peru's** 2024 VNR report discusses the creation of the "Permanent Multisectoral Commission for Monitoring the Implementation of the National Multisectoral Policy for Girls, Boys and Adolescents to 2030", as well as the creation of Regional Councils for the Rights of Girls, Boys and Adolescents.
- **Sierra Leone's** 2024 VNR report notes that the establishment of governance institutions such as the National Commission for Children and other child protection institutions, which coordinate efforts to ensure the safety and well-being of children, has strengthened the overall child protection system in the country.



6 Progress on Goals and targets and evaluation of policies and measures taken so far

This section should review all 17 SDGs in a balanced manner in order to provide a comprehensive and holistic review of progress for children generally, as well as marginalized or vulnerable groups of children. In reviewing goals and targets relevant to children, the following information should be provided:

- **The status of children** in relation to the goal or target, noting disparities in outcomes between different groups of children based on statistical disaggregated data by income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other relevant characteristics;
- **Progress** on the goal or target in relation to children, including marginalized or vulnerable groups, noting trends, successes, solutions and/or good practices, as well as succinct rationale as to why progress has or has not been made since the last VNR report;
- **Measures** such as strategies, policies, legislation, plans, programs and budgets to achieve the goal or target in relation to children, including measures targeting the groups who are the furthest behind. Efforts to address the findings of previous VNR reports should also be noted.
- **National (or sub-national) SDG targets for children**, including short, medium and long-term targets, as well as national (or sub-national) targets for the groups who are the furthest behind;
- **Existing gaps and/or challenges** to achieve the goal or target in relation to children, how these will be addressed and whether additional advice or support from others is required;
- **Emerging issues or areas of concern** in achieving the goal or target in relation to children, including marginalized or vulnerable groups; and
- **Next steps and/or future actions** needed to accelerate progress on the goal or target in question, in order to achieve it for all children by the 2030 deadline.¹⁶

Countries should consider including the reflections, perspectives, opinions and views of children on SDG progress in reviewing specific goals and targets. Countries should also consider reviewing the SDGs through the lens of an official government assessment and an independent civil society assessment, as the latter assessment can provide a more balanced view of progress and challenges for children across the SDGs, as well as assist in identifying key recommendations to accelerate progress for children.



Good Practices:

- **Guatemala's** 2017 and 2019 VNR reports review goals and targets related to children in a comprehensive manner, noting disparities in outcomes among different groups of children and identifying short, medium and long-term national targets for children.
- **Lao PDR's** 2018 and 2021 VNR reports, **Viet Nam's** 2018 VNR report and **Mozambique's, Panama's** and **Uganda's** 2020 VNR reports are notable for highlighting disparities in children's outcomes across a range of SDGs and targets, including based on detailed disaggregated data.
- **Senegal's** 2018 VNR report provides detailed coverage of children's issues including child poverty, nutrition, health, child labour and birth registration, with rationale as to why progress has or has not been made.
- **Timor-Leste's** 2019 VNR report includes a "leaving no one behind" section on for each SDG reviewed, which highlights the situation of different groups. Similarly, **Trinidad and Tobago's** 2020 VNR report includes a section on "leaving no one behind" for each SDG reviewed, with key measures for vulnerable groups outlined. **Nepal's** 2024 VNR report also provides a "leave no one behind" analysis for children's issues including child malnutrition, access to education, and birth registration, with graphs with statistical data that identify the rates of progress for those furthest behind, those furthest ahead and the national average.
- **Egypt's** 2021 VNR report discusses the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the government's response for each SDG reviewed, providing insight into its management of the pandemic in relation to children.
- **Denmark's** and **Norway's** 2021 VNR reports and **Iceland's** 2023 VNR report review progress on all 17 SDGs through an official government assessment and independent civil society assessment.
- **Brazil's** 2024 VNR report provides a helpful snapshot of progress for each SDG target and global indicator, indicating the evolution of the indicators and the target assessment.
- In reviewing the SDGs, a number of VNR countries include the views and perspectives of children, youth or young people in their reports including: the 2019 VNR reports of **Guatemala, Iceland, Lesotho, Mongolia, Serbia** and **Sierra Leone**; the 2020 VNR reports of **Malawi, the Republic of Moldova, Slovenia** and **Uganda**; the 2021 VNR reports of **Guatemala, Indonesia, Sierra Leone** and **Sweden**; the 2022 VNR reports of **Lesotho, The Gambia** and **Montenegro**; and the 2023 VNR reports of **Ireland** and **Romania**.

In reviewing specific areas of relevance to children, the following key points should also be addressed:

On child poverty:

- Provide disaggregated data on extreme, national and multidimensional poverty among children, as well as children at-risk of different forms of poverty, including those not traditionally captured by household surveys such as children in institutional care and children living on the street;
- Provide disaggregated data on social protection coverage for children and describe efforts to ensure the provision of child-sensitive social protection for all children, including vulnerable groups;
- Discuss child-focused or family-based social protection measures – such as conditional or unconditional cash transfers, financial assistance, aid or grants, child benefits, family allowances, subsidies, in-kind transfers, health insurance or other types of support – that directly or indirectly

address child poverty, food security and nutrition, health, education and/or child protection, especially when delivered as part of a package of essential and accelerating services; and

- Outline measures to address child poverty in national poverty reduction strategies, policies or programs and/or in a dedicated strategy or national action plan to end child poverty.



Good Practices:

- **Bhutan's** 2018 VNR report discusses its Child Multidimensional Poverty Index (CMPI) in detail including statistical data on the rates of child poverty, the consequences of child poverty, the need for a child-focused approach to end poverty and measures to address child poverty.
- **Spain's** 2018 and 2021 VNR reports both provide a comprehensive focus on child poverty with statistical data and measures to address child poverty including national and other strategies, the creation of a High Commissioner for Child Poverty, budget credits to benefit children and 2030 targets on child poverty.
- **New Zealand's** 2019 VNR report discusses child poverty in detail, with a range of measures outlined including the *Child Poverty Reduction Act 2018*, which requires successive governments to measure and report on child poverty and set intermediate and long-term targets.
- **Lesotho's** 2019 VNR report addresses child and adolescent multidimensional poverty in detail, including disaggregated data and a summary of child poverty by dimension of deprivation.
- **Burundi's** 2020 VNR report provides excellent coverage of child poverty, with data on monetary and multidimensional child poverty, as well as measures and mechanisms to address child poverty.
- **Japan's** 2021 VNR report addresses child poverty in a comprehensive manner, with multiple measures discussed including Japan's "General Principles of Policy on Child Poverty."
- **Malaysia's** 2021 VNR report outlines a number of social protection measures to improve the nutritional status of malnourished children and children from poor families and Indigenous communities (Orang Asli).
- **Mali's** 2022 VNR report describes the Government's efforts, in cooperation with UNICEF, to develop a five-year program to target the multidimensional deprivations faced by children at each stage of their life cycle.
- **Argentina's** 2022 VNR report provides detailed information on a range of social protection programs benefitting children, as well as statistical data on the level of social protection coverage for children.
- **Portugal's** 2023 VNR report discusses its National Child Guarantee Action Plan 2022-2030, which aims to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty and social exclusion by ensuring access by all vulnerable groups of children to a set of essential services.
- **Timor-Leste's** 2023 VNR report discusses the universal coverage of its Bolsa de Mae-Jeresau Foun programme, which has been designed to enhance social protection for pregnant women and children, particularly targeting health, nutrition and education outcomes.

On children's food security and nutrition:

- Provide disaggregated data on the prevalence of undernourishment, moderate and severe food insecurity, stunting, wasting, underweight and overweight/obesity among children, micronutrient deficiencies and anemia among children, adolescents and women (including pregnant and lactating women and women of reproductive age), and breastfeeding;
- Outline the key actions taken to improve maternal nutrition and children's nutrition at all ages – including infancy, early childhood, middle childhood and adolescence – based on the World Health Organization's 2019 updated Essential Nutrition Actions¹⁷;
- Discuss measures to end child hunger and malnutrition such as school meal programs, food and cash assistance, micro-nutrient supplementation, gender-based transformative programs, support for community health workers, regulation of the production, marketing and distribution of food and beverages to children, and social and behaviour change to improve nutrition literacy;
- Describe how national development strategies and policies, as well as dedicated food security and nutrition strategies and policies, address child malnutrition in all its forms;
- Identify domestic and global financial or political support for national nutrition policies and actions plans that have targets to reduce child malnutrition, as well as support for a global nutrition fund and the Nutrition for Growth (N4G) policy and financing agenda; and
- Describe efforts to facilitate children's participation in policies, decision-making, budgeting and interventions related to hunger, nutrition and food security at all levels.



Good Practices:

- **Lao PDR's** 2018 VNR report provides good coverage of children's nutrition including statistical data, the underlying causes of undernutrition and strategies to improve children's nutrition.
- **Ireland's** 2018 VNR report addresses the issue of overweight and obesity among children – with statistical data and measures outlined – as well as food poverty among children under five years old. Ireland's actions to improve children's food security and nutrition globally are also outlined. Similarly, **Ireland's** 2023 VNR report highlights its pledge of an additional €850 million for nutrition by 2026.
- **Timor-Leste's** 2019 VNR report provides comprehensive coverage of children's nutrition, with disaggregated data, key issues, challenges and measures to improve nutrition addressed. **Timor-Leste's** 2023 VNR report discusses its strategic approach to addressing malnutrition and food insecurity including the establishment of a dedicated Stunting Unit and the application of nutritional budget tagging.
- **Papua New Guinea's** 2020 VNR report addresses children's nutrition extensively including data, disparities, measures, gaps, challenges and next steps. The economic costs and impact of child malnutrition and the need for nutrition-sensitive investments across sectors are also discussed.
- **Nicaragua's** 2021 VNR report highlights the Comprehensive School Nutrition Program, which provides 1.05 million children with school meals and has been recognized as one of the best food initiatives in the world. Similarly, **Croatia's** 2023 VNR report discusses its School Scheme to promote healthy eating habits.
- **Chile's** 2023 VNR report describes its Law on Food Advertising, which restricts the advertising of unhealthy foods aimed at children under 14 years old, as well as the advertising of breast milk substitutes.

- **Columbia's** 2024 VNR report discusses the consequences of childhood hunger and malnutrition at the early stages of life. It emphasizes the need to strengthen nutrition programs targeting pregnant women, young children and vulnerable groups, including conditional cash transfer programs and school feeding programs.
- **Nepal's** 2024 VNR report notes that its Multi-Sector Nutrition Program (MSNP) – MSNP-III (2023-2030) – is guided by various agreements including the Nutrition for Growth Summit Commitment 2021.

On children's health:

- Provide information and disaggregated data on child health at all ages – including maternal, newborn and child health, early childhood, middle childhood and adolescent health – and address specific health issues impacting children including sexual and reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, mental health, substance abuse (drug, alcohol and tobacco use), non-communicable diseases, and the physical and mental health consequences of violence against children;
- Discuss progress to achieve Universal Health Coverage (UHC) for all children, women of reproductive age and pregnant and lactating women, including efforts to integrate the WHO's essential nutrition actions into service delivery as part of a comprehensive approach to UHC;
- Identify the proportion of GDP invested in the national health sector budget, including the proportion of funding allocated to primary health care plans and nutrition; and
- Outline progress to achieve health workforce staffing at primary health care levels, per WHO guidelines, as well as support for Community Health Workers to deliver essential nutrition services.



Good Practices:

- **Guinea's** 2018 VNR report provides comprehensive data and information on children's health, including noting disparities between different groups and addressing maternal, newborn and child health, adolescent fertility, HIV, malaria, chronic respiratory diseases, smoking, and water, sanitation and hygiene.
- **Romania's** 2018 VNR report provides excellent coverage of children's health – on a target-by-target basis – including maternal and child mortality and policies and measures to improve children's health.
- **Cote d'Ivoire's** 2019 VNR report provides comprehensive information on children's health including addressing maternal mortality, skilled birth attendance, newborn and child mortality, HIV and adolescent fertility in detail. Challenges in relation to SDG 3 are also identified.
- **Niger's** 2020 VNR report identifies disparities in children's health outcomes based on disaggregated data by urban or rural area, region, maternal education, maternal age and income.
- **Panama's** 2020 VNR report provides comprehensive coverage of children's health with disaggregated data, disparities, progress, numerous measures and challenges outlined.
- **Turkmenistan's** 2023 VNR report outlines numerous measures, including as part of its National Strategy "Healthy Mother – Healthy Child – Healthy Future", to improve maternal and child health.
- **Timor-Leste's** 2023 VNR report highlights its pro-health taxes on sugar and confectionery products, as well as sugar-sweetened beverages, to align with global recommendations and improve health behaviours.
- **Belize's** 2024 VNR report includes the views of children and young people on SDG 3, who identify expanding access to healthcare facilities and outreach programs, improving mental health support in rural areas, and deploying relevant human resources and outreach programs, as key solutions.

On climate change and disaster risk reduction:

- Discuss the impacts of climate change on children as a vulnerable population;
- Outline how national and local disaster risk reduction (DRR) strategies and national adaptation plans prioritize children, as a vulnerable population, and describe how these strategies and plans embrace child nutrition-sensitive approaches;¹⁸
- Discuss the promotion of climate change and DRR education among children; and
- Outline measures to involve children in climate change adaptation (CCA) and DRR, including efforts to ensure their meaningful participation in undertaking climate and disaster risk assessments, planning and implementing CCA and DRR, and raising awareness of climate risks and solutions.¹⁹

**Good Practices:**

- **Canada's** 2018 VNR report provides a case study on the Foundation for Environmental Stewardship (FES), which aims to educate children and youth on the climate crisis and empower them to take action on solving climate change in their local communities.
- **Guyana's** 2018 VNR report notes the work of the Office of Climate Change in institutionalizing climate change awareness and education through a School Outreach Programme in primary, secondary and tertiary institutions across the country, benefitting more than 5,000 students.
- **Armenia's** 2020 VNR report discusses the "Adolescents as agents of climate action in their communities" project, which aims for adolescent girls and boys and communities to take action on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning.
- **Brunei Darussalam's** 2020 VNR report notes that a group of 51 youth representatives from different sectors of Brunei Darussalam were invited to participate in reviewing the draft Brunei National Climate Policy (BNCP), in order to gain insights from a youth perspective.
- **Ireland's** 2023 VNR report states that it supports the Glasgow Work Programme on Action for Climate Empowerment covering education, training, public awareness and participation for children and youth.
- **Honduras'** 2024 VNR report highlights a training model for children, adolescents and youth at the municipal level to implement adaptation and mitigation activities to address the adverse effects of climate change.
- **Palau's** 2024 VNR report emphasizes that disaster risk reduction and preparedness require considering the needs of vulnerable populations including child and family protection before, during, and after disasters.
- **Zimbabwe's** 2024 VNR report notes the impact of climate change on children's livelihoods, health, education, nutrition and food security, increasing their vulnerability to psychological stress and conflicts. Several recommendations to mitigate the impact of climate change on children's rights are outlined.

On ending violence against children:

- Address ending all forms of violence against children²⁰ in reviewing SDG targets 4.a, 5.2, 5.3, 8.7, 11.2, 11.7, 16.1 and 16.2, and address birth registration in reviewing SDG target 16.9, given that a birth certificate is a child's "passport to protection";
- Ensure that girls are considered explicitly in reporting on progress, measures and challenges to address gender-based violence against women and girls;
- Identify legislation prohibiting violence against children, including legislation that bans all forms of violence against children in all settings;²¹

- Outline measures to prevent and respond to violence against children, including existing proven and effective solutions such as the INSPIRE strategies;²²
- Provide information on domestic public spending, budget allocations and other financial investments – including ODA – to end violence against children;
- Discuss efforts to address harmful social norms and practices that condone violence; and
- Report on new initiatives or commitments to end violence against children including participation in the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children.



Good Practices:

- **Uruguay's** 2017 VNR report discusses violence against children including gender-based violence, child abuse, sexual abuse, child marriage, psychological and physical punishment, child labour, trafficking, homicides and adolescent violence, as well as measures to address violence such as the Comprehensive System for the Protection of Children and Adolescents against Violence.
- **Paraguay's** 2018 VNR report refers to its country action plan to achieve target 16.2 and its role as a pathfinder country in the Global Partnership to End Violence against Children. Notably, 10 achievements related to Paraguay's pathfinder status are outlined.
- **Indonesia's** 2019 VNR report addresses violence against children extensively, noting that the protection of children, women and marginalized groups is a national priority for Indonesia. Similarly, **Indonesia's** 2021 VNR report discusses violence against children in detail including in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Iraq's** 2019 VNR report provides excellent coverage of violence against children, including data on different forms of violence and a detailed discussion on the development of its National Policy for Child Protection.
- **Kenya's** 2020 VNR report has a detailed annex on violence against children (VAC) with extensive data, programmes and activities, and the legal and policy frameworks to address VAC outlined.
- **Eswatini's** 2022 VNR report provides statistical data on different forms of violence against children including child victims of homicide, physical punishment and/or psychological aggression by caregivers, child labour and child trafficking, with some disaggregation by age, geographic location and/or region.
- **Montenegro's** 2022 VNR report outlines children and young people's opinions on violence against children from UNICEF's U-Report poll and the Golden Advisors to the Ombudsman.
- **Jamaica's** 2022 VNR report highlights the National Plan of Action for an integrated response to Children and Violence (NPACV), which provides a structured, multi-sectoral approach to addressing key issues relating to children as victims, perpetrators and witnesses of violence and abuse.
- **The European Union's** 2023 VNR report highlights its new *Strategy for a Better Internet for Kids*, which aims to ensure that children are protected, respected, and empowered online, while its *Strategy on the Rights of the Child* commits to make EU supply chains free of child labour and strengthen labour inspection systems.
- **Mongolia's** 2023 VNR report notes that it has joined the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children and is working to implement the INSPIRE strategies to end violence against children. It outlines a range of measures to ensure the protection of children in the online environment.
- **Lao PDR's** 2024 VNR report notes its historic ban on corporal punishment across the country in April 2024, making it the 66th country worldwide to fully protect children from all forms of violent punishment.

7 New and emerging challenges

This section should describe new and emerging challenges impacting children directly or indirectly – such as rising living costs, hunger and food insecurity, migration, conflict, fragility, climate change and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic – and how countries are adapting their efforts to achieve the SDGs for children in light of these challenges. In particular, this section should analyze how new and emerging challenges are affecting children's existing vulnerabilities, as well as whether they are creating new groups of vulnerable children or enhancing the marginalization of children already at risk of being left behind. In addition, this section should describe how new and emerging challenges are exacerbating existing challenges to achieve the SDGs for children, including in relation to nutrition and food security.

Importantly, this section should describe how the country is recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic from a children's rights perspective, with the following issues discussed:

- The direct and indirect effects of the pandemic on children's lives and well-being in relation to the SDGs, including its short-, medium- and long-term impact on poverty reduction, food security and nutrition, health (including mental health), education, gender equality, ending violence against children (including child marriage and child labour), inequality and children's participation in SDG implementation and review;²³
- The policies and measures being taken to recover from the effects of the pandemic on children, including targeted measures to address the situation of marginalized and vulnerable groups of children who may be at risk of being further marginalized due to the effects of the pandemic;
- Efforts to consult with children and young people in order to ensure that their voices are heard and considered in designing child-sensitive strategies to recover from the pandemic;²⁴ and
- The preventative actions needed to ensure progress on the SDGs for children and strengthen children's resilience in the context of future pandemics, crises or calamities.



Good Practices:

- The 2020 VNR reports of **The Gambia, Kenya, Morocco, Nepal, Nigeria** and **North Macedonia** discuss the impact or potential impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on children in relation to food security and nutrition, health, education and/or violence against children, with the impact on vulnerable groups highlighted.
- **Mozambique's** 2020 VNR report discusses the economic and social impact of COVID-19 – including as a child rights crisis – with its potential effects on child poverty, education, health and income highlighted.
- **Peru's** 2020 VNR report describes the impact of COVID-19 in relation to children including deaths of children, adolescents and youth due to COVID-19, the suspension of face-to-face classes, the increased use of a hotline for family violence and sexual abuse, and the potential impact on nutrition and education.
- **Georgia's** 2020 VNR report notes measures to protect children's rights in response to the COVID-19 pandemic including a separate hotline for children and the provision of "teleschool" education, which offers TV lessons to school children who do not have access to the internet or a computer.
- **Micronesia's** 2020 VNR report emphasizes the need to develop Educational Contingency Plans (ECPs) in the case of future school closures due to disasters and emergencies.

- **Bhutan's** 2021 VNR report discusses the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on children, with response measures related to social assistance, food security and nutrition, health, education and child protection outlined.
- **Indonesia's** 2021 VNR report addresses the negative impacts of and response to the pandemic on children in relation to poverty, food security and nutrition, health, education, violence against children and employment. Notably, the views of youth and adolescents on the pandemic's impact are also outlined.
- Civil society's assessment of SDG 3 in **Denmark's** 2021 VNR report notes the impact of lockdowns in increasing the risk of loneliness and physical and mental dissatisfaction among children and young people, with recommendations to develop an action plan to address their loneliness, mental health and wellbeing.
- **Jamaica's** 2022 VNR report includes a comprehensive annex with a special report on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on education, the labour market, tourism and social protection – and thus a wealth of information on children – with the Government's and stakeholders' responses to the pandemic outlined.
- **Ecuador's** 2024 VNR report identifies the need to improve public policies on school feeding and inter-institutional coordination to reduce child malnutrition as a new and emerging challenge.
- **Honduras'** 2024 VNR report discusses its significant malnutrition situation caused by prolonged crises including the drought in the Dry Corridor, the COVID-19 pandemic, hurricanes, the war in Ukraine and Tropical Storm Julia. The recent migration crisis has also imposed an overload on the country, reducing its capacity to provide comprehensive nutritional care to children, pregnant and breastfeeding women.

8 Means of implementation

The report should discuss the means of implementation – including financing, data, capacity development and partnerships – that are needed to achieve the SDGs for children.

In relation to financing, countries should provide detailed information on public spending, budgeting and investment in areas that benefit children – including poverty eradication, social protection, nutrition, health, education and child protection – in order to demonstrate their level of financial commitment to achieve the SDGs for children. Achieving the SDGs for children cannot succeed without sufficient financial resources being mobilized, allocated and spent effectively and equitably on children, including the most vulnerable groups. Countries should endeavour to identify child-related investments that address the whole child in a cross-sectoral approach since children's nutrition, health, education and safety are all interdependent.²⁵ Countries should also identify whether child-related investments are child-specific (directly and solely aimed towards the welfare of children) or child-benefitting (broader investments that have significant indirect benefits for children, for example, by strengthening infrastructure and services affecting children).²⁶ Countries preparing subsequent VNRs should discuss whether public spending in relation to children has increased or decreased since the last VNR.

In particular, countries should:

- Discuss government spending that prioritizes children in a dedicated section on public investment to achieve the SDGs, including efforts to undertake child-responsive budgeting;
- Provide information on the proportion of domestic government spending on social protection, nutrition, health, education and child protection, relative to GDP and total government expenditure, in reviewing the SDGs and targets relevant to children;
- Provide information on the proportion of government spending to support children to achieve the SDGs globally, including the level of international development cooperation or Official

Development Assistance (ODA) dedicated to children²⁷, as well as financial support for specific global initiatives or programs that benefit children, such as a new global nutrition fund;

- Identify financial commitments to address the situation of children affected by fragility; and
- Outline efforts to facilitate children’s meaningful participation in budgeting processes.



Good Practices:

- **Spain’s** 2018 VNR report discusses the creation of a special fund to combat child poverty and finance social intervention programs for families with dependent children suffering from severe material deprivation, noting that there have been significant increases in the fund in recent years.
- **Paraguay’s** 2018 VNR report states that an objective of its National Policy on Childhood and Adolescence is to ensure sufficient resources for investment in children and adolescents in all areas of the state. Through the initiative “Accountability for Children and Adolescents”, public authorities also provide information in an accessible manner to children and adolescents on the way in which public resources have been used for the implementation of policies and plans that affect them.
- **New Zealand’s** 2019 VNR report states that there is new legislation that requires governments to outline how official budget decisions will impact child poverty.
- **Croatia’s** 2019 VNR report highlights international development cooperation projects including psycho-social rehabilitation of Ukrainian children from conflict-affected areas and improvements to Camp Learning Environments in Jordan, including the construction and reconstruction of playgrounds for five primary schools and kindergartens in Azraq and Za’atari refugee camps.
- **Burundi’s** 2020 VNR report discusses investment in children including a study on the “Investment Framework for Adolescents in Burundi.” The importance of investing in children to consolidate gains, maintain momentum and accelerate progress to achieve the SDGs is emphasized.
- **Columbia’s** 2021 VNR report discusses the Joint Program Roadmap for an Integrated National Financing Framework in Colombia (INFF), including its joint work with UNICEF to identify budgetary and financing gaps for the SDGs in relation to children.
- **Germany’s** 2021 VNR report provides detailed information on its global financial contributions to health and education, noting that it was the world’s largest bilateral donor to education in 2018 (EUR 2.1 billion).
- **Argentina’s** 2022 VNR report outlines the amount of public expenditure allocated to each SDG – as a percentage of primary expenditure and GDP – with spending disaggregated by SDG target, where possible. Information on financial spending for programs benefitting children is also provided throughout the report.
- **Kazakhstan’s** 2022 VNR report highlights the development of a mechanism for budgeting for children, which will be used when conducting an assessment of child well-being in the country.
- **Bosnia and Herzegovina’s** 2023 VNR report discusses the value in investing in early childhood development, highlighting the return on investment in health and nutrition, education and social protection.
- **Ireland’s** 2023 VNR report states that it has pledged an additional €850 million for nutrition by 2026, with an emphasis on addressing wasting among children under five, €60 million to the Global Partnership for Education for 2021-25 and €18 million over the 2023-26 period to support Education Cannot Wait in providing education to children in emergencies and protracted crises.
- **Timor-Leste’s** 2023 VNR report discusses the use of Nutritional Budget Tagging in its planning and budgeting system since 2023, which identifies, classifies, and tracks public expenditures on nutrition, thus providing insights into resource allocation for nutrition interventions for children.

In relation to data, countries should outline efforts to improve the collection, analysis and dissemination of statistical disaggregated data in a sub-section on data, given that national-level data is, on average, only available for half of the child-related indicators for the SDGs.²⁸ In particular, countries should:

- Provide information on the level of disaggregated data currently available for SDG indicators;
- Identify any gaps or challenges in relation to data on children;
- Outline measures to improve the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable disaggregated data;
- Identify any external support needed to achieve the full disaggregation of data, as required by the 2030 Agenda; and
- Discuss next steps to improve data generation in relation to children, including plans to ensure that data collection efforts capture groups of children traditionally excluded from household surveys – such as stateless and refugee children and children living on the street – as well as plans to make children more visible in global and national data on food security and nutrition.



Good Practices:

- **Belgium's** 2017 VNR report outlines specific plans to address gaps in data collection in relation to children by conducting surveys on migrant children and children in public institutions.
- **Paraguay's** 2018 VNR report provides useful information on its statistical capacity assessment, which included evaluating the possibility of disaggregating indicators by criteria such as income, geographical area, sex, age, disability, ethnicity, race, migratory status and other areas.
- **Indonesia's** 2019 VNR report identifies the availability of adequate, up-to-date and disaggregated data and information as a challenge, with various efforts to improve the availability of disaggregated data outlined. Notably, the report highlights the Central Bureau of Statistics' (BPS) work with UNICEF and BAPPENAS to support the development of SDGs Baseline Data on Children.
- **The United Kingdom's** 2019 VNR report discusses the issue of data disaggregation extensively, including its current coverage, its importance to leaving no one behind and the UK's commitment to the full disaggregation of data. Global support for data disaggregation is also covered in detail.
- **Costa Rica's** 2020 VNR report addresses the issue of data disaggregation, with information on the number of indicators disaggregated by SDG and type of disaggregation, challenges and plans to strengthen data generation in order to better characterize the groups that are lagging behind.
- **Bhutan's** 2021 VNR report states that in order to provide timely data for improved policy decisions and effectiveness of school-based feeding programmes, a real-time and integrated nutrition, health and education monitoring and evaluation system has been developed and rolled out in all schools.
- **Thailand's** 2021 VNR report highlights collaboration between the National Statistics Office and UNICEF to extend the National Disability Survey, which has led to better identification of children with disabilities.
- **Timor-Leste's** 2023 VNR report stresses that it is crucial to address data gaps and improve disaggregation efforts for SDGs 1, 2, 4, 5, 6 and 8, with specific attention to disability and children with disabilities.

The report should also outline specific **capacity development needs** to deliver the SDGs for children effectively and equitably, such as increases in the supply of qualified health workers – including community health workers who are trained to deliver essential nutrition services. The contribution of multi-stakeholder partnerships to achieve the SDGs for children, such as the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement and the Global Partnership to End Violence against Children, should also be highlighted.



Good Practices:

- **Romania's** 2018 VNR report highlights the work of World Vision Romania's partnerships to deliver community development programs where adults and children, including the most vulnerable children, are contributing, sharing ideas and implementing activities.
- **North Macedonia's** 2020 VNR report highlights its pledge to join the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children. In support of this commitment, the Government has recently adopted the National Strategy for the Prevention and Protection of Children from Violence (2020-2025) and Action Plan to Reduce any Form of Violence against Children (2020-2022).
- **Timor-Leste's** 2023 VNR report states that the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement, which it joined in September 2020, exemplifies policy coherence in action to tackle malnutrition in Timor-Leste.
- **Honduras'** 2024 VNR report highlights the World Food Programme (WFP)'s Nutritional Care Program for Vulnerable Groups, which includes specific training programmes for institutional and voluntary health staff to improve their knowledge and skills to address the health and nutritional needs of vulnerable populations.



9 Conclusion and next steps

This section should outline the concrete steps that will be taken to accelerate progress on the SDGs for children generally, as well as for children from marginalized or vulnerable groups. In particular, actions to end child poverty, end child hunger and nutrition, realize Universal Health Coverage for all children, end violence against children, ensure children living in fragile contexts are not left behind, and support child-centred disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation should all be highlighted. This section should also discuss how accelerated actions for children will be achieved in recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic and whether any specific support is needed.

In addition, countries should outline their plans to disseminate the findings of the VNR among children in a timely, age-appropriate and child-friendly manner and how it will involve children in implementing and reviewing the SDGs at national and sub-national levels in the future.



Good Practices:

- The conclusion of **Ghana's** 2019 VNR report states that its youthful population requires that the nation invest meaningfully in sustainable child development and reduce child poverty, with urgent action required from stakeholders to tackle the root causes of multidimensional child poverty.
- **Bangladesh's** 2020 VNR report's next steps include involving youth in the SDGs through the concept of 'by the youth' and 'for the youth'.
- The final chapter of **Spain's** 2024 VNR report outlines several priorities related to combating child poverty.
- Despite noting that improving child nutrition is difficult in the current conditions characterized by repetitive food crises, inadequate social behaviors and persistent vulnerability, the conclusion of **Mauritania's** 2024 VNR report identifies areas in which action is needed including implementing the roadmap for the development of nutrition presented at the Nutrition for Growth Summit in Tokyo in 2021.

10 Annexes

Given the importance of data to monitor progress on the SDGs for children, countries should include a statistical annex with data on the global SDGs indicators and any relevant regional or national indicators. The statistical annex should include as much disaggregated data as possible in order to assess progress on the SDGs for children generally, as well as children from marginalized or vulnerable groups.

Countries should also consider including an annex with independent contributions from stakeholders – including children – in their VNR report. Contributions from children could be in the form of comments on the country's VNR report, children's views on progress, challenges and emerging issues in implementing the SDGs or children's own contribution to SDG implementation. An annex with independent contributions from children should be in addition to, rather than a substitute for, any consultations held with children at national and sub-national levels to prepare the VNR report.

Where not addressed elsewhere in the report, countries should also include an annex detailing the nature and results of any consultations with children and their representatives, including a list of the specific child-focused organizations and/or groups of children consulted.



Good Practices:

- The **Netherlands'** 2017 VNR report and **Denmark's** 2017 and 2021 VNR reports include annexes with contributions from stakeholders including civil society, the private sector, academia, sub-national governments, municipalities and youth. Notably, both of Denmark's VNR reports include a chapter written by the Danish Youth Council, an umbrella organization of 80 children's and youth organizations.
- One of the annexes of **Ecuador's** 2018 VNR report includes the results of consultations with children and adolescents on their views of cities, in the context of the UN Habitat III conference.
- The inclusion of a detailed statistical annex in **Rwanda's** 2019 VNR report provides valuable information on issues that are not addressed in the report's narrative, including child poverty and violence against children.
- **Burundi's** 2020 VNR report has an annex on key SDG indicators relevant to children, including in relation to social protection, health, nutrition, education, child protection, and water, hygiene and sanitation.
- **Kenya's** 2020 VNR report contains a detailed annex on 'Violence against Children (VAC) in Kenya (2016-2019)', with extensive data and information on programmes, activities and legal and policy frameworks to.
- **Germany's** 2021 VNR report includes an annex with the "Position papers of major German stakeholders" including Germany's Youth Delegates for Sustainable Development.

11 Making presentations at the HLPF

The Guidelines state that countries should consider a number of measures or options when conducting their presentation at the HLPF including "provide space for stakeholders such as civil society, youth and the private sector to share their contributions to the VNR and their views on SDG progress." Accordingly, countries should seek to provide space for children to present their views on the SDGs



during VNR presentations, as well as at side events during the HLPF. Innovative and virtual approaches to bring children's views and voices to the HLPF – including through using videos, video-conferencing and social media – should be utilized in order to maximize opportunities for children's participation.

In addition, countries should support the participation of child and youth representatives – including from marginalized or vulnerable groups – in their official delegation to the HLPF. In all cases, countries should establish child-friendly, age-appropriate and safe modalities, including adhering to a detailed child protection policy to ensure children's meaningful and safe participation at the HLPF.

Conclusion and Next Steps

As key stakeholders and critical agents of change in relation to the 2030 Agenda, all UN Member States must ensure that children are *considered, included and visible* in preparing their VNR. The above guidance and illustrative examples from other VNR reports can support countries to consider children's rights, including children's participation, as they prepare for their national review at the HLPF.

To further support Member States, a useful checklist for including children in VNRs is provided as an annex to this paper. This checklist may be used as a practical tool to prepare VNR reports, as well as an assessment tool to measure the extent to which countries have considered children, including children from marginalized and vulnerable groups, in their draft VNR report and other preparations.

ANNEX: A Checklist for Considering Children in Voluntary National Reviews at the HLPF

The following checklist is provided as a practical tool to support Member States in considering children's rights, including children's participation, in Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) at the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF). Member States should consider children as a group generally, as well as specific groups of marginalized and vulnerable children, in preparing their VNR.

1. Opening statement:

- What is the current status of SDG progress for children?
- What outcomes and results have been achieved for children?
- What steps have been taken to implement the SDGs for children since the last VNR?
- What steps will be taken to accelerate progress on the SDGs for children?

2. Highlights:

- On previous VNRs* – What have been the most significant changes for children since the last VNR?
- On the review process* – Have children participated or been consulted in preparing the VNR?
- On the status of SDG implementation* – Have children made progress in relation to the SDGs? What are the factors of success or failure in achieving progress for children? Are there any specific areas where children are at risk of being left behind?
- On new and emerging challenges* – What has been the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and other challenges on children? What measures have been taken to mitigate their effects on children?
- On the integrated, indivisible and interlinked nature of the SDGs* – How have goals and targets relevant to children been pursued in order to accelerate implementation and avoid trade-offs?
- On leaving no one behind* – What are the overarching approaches to address children as a vulnerable group? What are the specific strategies to address marginalized and vulnerable groups of children?
- On good practices and lessons learned* – What practices have had a transformative impact on children?

- *On examples of challenges encountered* – What have been some of the challenges in relation to children?
- *On national initiatives that need support* – What support is needed to accelerate progress for children?

3. Introduction:

- Have reports related to the Convention on the Rights of the Child been used and, if so, how?
- Have reports from regional children's rights bodies been used and, if so, how?
- Have reports from other international human rights mechanisms been used and, if so, how?

4. Methodology and process for preparation of the review:

- Have national children's rights institutions, non-governmental representatives for children or international children's agencies such as UNICEF participated in the process to prepare the VNR?
- Have children participated or been consulted in preparing the VNR? If so:
 - What were the frequency, nature and level of consultations with children?
 - What age groups were consulted?
 - Did children from marginalized or vulnerable groups participate in consultations?
 - How were children empowered and supported to participate in VNR preparations?
 - What methods were used to ensure meaningful, inclusive and safe consultations with children?
 - Were any social platforms – including the U-Report tool – used to engage children?
 - How were children's views and priorities taken into account and reflected in the VNR report?
 - What plans are there to follow-up and engage with children following the VNR presentation?
- How has the VNR helped to raise awareness of the 2030 Agenda among children?

5. Policy and enabling environment

(a) Ensuring ownership of the Sustainable Development Goals:

- What actions have been taken to inform children of the 2030 Agenda including the SDGs?
- What mechanisms and platforms are available to children to contribute to SDG implementation?
- What actions have been taken to facilitate and support children to review progress on the SDGs at national and local levels?
- How has children's ownership of the SDGs evolved since the first VNR? What efforts have been taken to sustain or mainstream children's participation and ownership? How has this impacted the government's engagement with children?

(b) Integration of the Sustainable Development Goals in national frameworks:

- How has the integration of goals and targets relevant to children into national and sub-national frameworks – including legislation, policies, plans, budgets and programs – helped with the successful implementation of the SDGs and targets for children?
- What are the major efforts of non-State actors to implement the SDGs in relation to children?
- What benefits have arisen from participating in multi-stakeholder partnerships that contribute to SDG implementation for children?

(c) Integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions:

- What are the interlinkages between targets that are relevant to children?
- How do policies and institutional arrangements address these targets in an integrated manner?

(d) Leaving no one behind:

- ❑ Does this section include a focus on children including marginalized and vulnerable groups?
- ❑ What is the overall status or situation of children in relation to the SDGs based on current data? What is the status or situation of children from specific marginalized and vulnerable groups?
- ❑ What progress has been made for children, including marginalized and vulnerable groups, in relation to the SDGs? Why has progress been made or not made?
- ❑ What are the overarching strategies, policies, laws, programs, budgets and actions targeting children generally? What are the measures targeting marginalized or vulnerable groups of children?
- ❑ What are the challenges or barriers to achieving the SDGs for children, especially children from marginalized and vulnerable groups?
- ❑ What is the level of disaggregated data available in relation to children? Are there any gaps in data?
- ❑ What actions have been taken to facilitate children's participation, including children from marginalized and vulnerable groups, in SDG implementation and review?
- ❑ What efforts have been made to ensure a child rights-based approach to SDG implementation?
- ❑ What measures have been taken to address the situation of children living in fragile contexts?

(e) Institutional mechanisms:

- ❑ How have existing institutions been adapted or strengthened to make or review progress on the SDGs for children and/or to support children's participation in SDG implementation and review?
- ❑ What new institutional mechanisms have been created to facilitate, monitor and/or review progress on the SDGs for children? Do these mechanisms provide for child representation or interact with governmental and non-governmental bodies responsible for representing children and their rights?
- ❑ How are the views and priorities of children and their representatives considered by existing and new institutional mechanisms responsible for SDG implementation and review?

6. Progress on Goals and targets and evaluation of policies and measures taken so far:

- ❑ What is the status of children in relation to the goal or target under review? Are there disparities in outcomes between different groups of children based on disaggregated data?
- ❑ What progress has been made for children, including marginalized or vulnerable groups, in relation to the goal or target under review? Why has progress been made or not made?
- ❑ What are the strategies, policies, legislation, plans, programs and budgets taken so far to implement the goal or target for children? What are the specific measures targeting the groups of children who are the furthest behind? What measures have been taken to address the finding and challenges relevant to children from the last VNR?
- ❑ What are the short, medium and long-term national SDG targets for children as a group generally, as well as the specific groups of children who are the furthest behind?
- ❑ What are the existing gaps and/or challenges in implementing the goal or target in relation to children? How will these be addressed? Is any advice or support from other countries or institutions required to address these gaps or challenges?
- ❑ Are there any emerging issues or areas of concern – such as recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic – in implementing the goal or target for children, including for marginalized or vulnerable groups?
- ❑ What steps and actions will be taken to accelerate progress on the goal or target for children in order to achieve it for all children by the 2030 deadline?
- ❑ Have children's views been included or considered in reviewing the goal and/or target?
- ❑ Has an independent civil society assessment of progress on the goal or target been included?

7. New and emerging challenges

- What new and emerging challenges are impacting children? How are efforts to implement the SDGs for children being adapted to address these challenges?
- How are challenges affecting children's existing vulnerabilities? Are they creating new groups of vulnerable children or enhancing the marginalization of children already at risk of being left behind?
- How are new and emerging challenges exacerbating existing challenges to achieve the SDGs for children?
- What have been the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on children's lives and well-being?
- What policies and measures have been taken to recover from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on children, including marginalized or vulnerable groups of children?
- How have children been consulted in designing strategies to recover from the pandemic?
- What actions are needed to ensure progress for children in the face of new challenges?

8. Means of implementation:

- What means of implementation are needed to achieve the SDGs for children?
- What is the nature and level of domestic public spending to implement the SDGs for children?
- What is the nature and level of public spending to achieve the SDGs for children globally?
- Are there child-related investments that address the whole child in a cross-sectoral approach?
- What financial investments have been made to support children affected by fragility?
- Have efforts been made to facilitate children's meaningful participation in budgeting processes?
- What is the level of disaggregated data currently available for all child-related SDG indicators?
- What measures have been taken to achieve the full disaggregation of data?
- What are the challenges or gaps in data in relation to children? How will these be addressed and what additional support is required?
- What capacity development is needed in order to achieve the SDGs for children?
- What multi-stakeholder partnerships are contributing to achieving the SDGs for children?

9. Conclusion and next steps:

- What steps will be taken to accelerate progress on the SDGs for children?
- What support is needed to accelerate action for children in recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic?
- What plans are there to disseminate the findings of the VNR among children?
- How will children be involved in implementing the SDGs and reviewing progress in the future?

10. Annexes:

- Is there a statistical annex with disaggregated data on children?
- Is there an annex with independent contributions from stakeholders including children?
- Is there an annex on the nature or results of consultations with children and/or their representatives?

11. Making presentations at the HLPF:

- What formal or informal spaces will be provided for children to present their views on SDG progress?
- What virtual approaches will be utilized to bring children's views and voices to the HLPF?
- Will child and/or youth representatives be included in the official delegation to the HLPF?

ENDNOTES

¹ United Nations (2015). *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, General Assembly Resolution A/RES/70/1, United Nations, New York, 25 September 2015, paras. 51 and 74(d) and (e).

² The most recent version of the voluntary common reporting guidelines is available at: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/27171SG_Guidelines_2021.final.pdf.

³ Globally in 2022, 149 million children under five years old were estimated to be stunted (too short for age), 45 million were estimated to be wasted (too thin for height) and 37 million were overweight or living with obesity. See: World Health Organization (WHO) (2024). "Malnutrition." 1 March 2024. Available at: <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/malnutrition>.

⁴ National children's rights institutions may take different forms including National Children's Commissioners, Children's Ombudspersons and/or Representatives for Children and Youth.

⁵ For more information, see: U Report: Voice Matters. Available at: <https://ureport.in/>.

⁶ There is a growing body of evidence that indicates that child-led research provides promising opportunities to engage children and young people in shaping policies and practices, ultimately creating changes that lead to better lives for them. For further information, see: World Vision International (2019). *Child-led Research: From participating in research to leading it* <https://www.wvi.org/stories/child-participation/child-led-research-participating-research-leading-it>.

⁷ For information on and examples of child advisory groups, see: World Vision International (2024). *2023 Global Report on Child Participation in Decision-Making*. Available at: https://www.wvi.org/sites/default/files/2024-04/2023%20Global%20Report%20on%20Child%20Participation%20in%20Decision%20Making_External.pdf.

⁸ For more information on building an effective nexus among humanitarian, development and peace approaches, see: World Vision International (2019). *A Brighter Future for Children: Our approach to fragile contexts*. Available at: <https://www.wvi.org/publications/brighter-future-fragile-contexts>.

⁹ UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) (2023). *Handbook for the Preparation of Voluntary National Reviews: The 2024 Edition*, p. 20. Available at: <https://hlpf.un.org/sites/default/files/2024-01/VNR%20Handbook%202024%20EN.pdf>.

¹⁰ In addition to poor cognitive development and health outcomes, hungry and malnourished children – especially girls – are more likely to drop out of school, negatively impacting their education, future employment and contribution to economic growth. They are also more vulnerable to different forms of violence against children including child labour and child marriage.

¹¹ Many countries struggle with inadequate coordination mechanisms to address existing nutrition challenges and there are often inconsistencies between policies at the national level and programs being implemented at provincial or district levels.

¹² For example, children of different age groups may be considered more vulnerable depending on the context, as illustrated by the challenges faced by school-age children in terms of social isolation and mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic.

¹³ For information on how to ensure a child rights based-approach in the implementation of the SDGs, see: United Nations Office of the High Commissioner (2020). "Child Rights and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Accelerated action and transformative pathways: realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development." Available at: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/26130Child_Rights_2030_Agenda_HLPF_2020.pdf.

¹⁴ For more information on children living in fragile contexts, see: World Vision International (2019). *A Brighter Future for Children: Our approach to fragile contexts*. Available at: <https://www.wvi.org/publications/brighter-future-fragile-contexts>.

¹⁵ World Vision International (2024). *2023 Global Report on Child Participation in Decision-Making*.

¹⁶ For guidance on key areas to accelerate progress for children, see: World Vision (2019). "Time to pick up the pace for children: The 6 commitments Member States must make to accelerate action and progress." Available at: https://www.wvi.org/sites/default/files/2019-09/WV%206%20commitments%20asks%20on%20SDGs%20Acceleration%20Actions_Sep3-FINAL.pdf.

¹⁷ World Health Organization (2019). *Essential nutrition actions: mainstreaming nutrition through the life course*. Available at: <https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/326261/9789241515856-eng.pdf?ua=1>.

¹⁸ These strategies and plans should identify the short and long-term risks faced by children in a changing climate, recognize children's unique needs, vulnerabilities, rights and capacities, identify child-centered disaster risk reduction (DRR) and climate change adaptation (CCA) targets, and address food security and nutrition, health, education, child protection and social protection needs for children.

¹⁹ For more information on child-centred disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation, see: The Children in a Changing Climate Coalition (2016). *A View from 2016: Child-Centered Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. Available at: <http://www.childreninachangingclimate.org/a-view-from-2016.html>; and: The Children in a Changing Climate Coalition (2015). *Child-centered Adaptation: Realizing children's rights in a changing climate*. Available at: <http://www.childreninachangingclimate.org/realising-childrens-rights-in-a-changing-climate.html>.

²⁰ Violence against children includes physical, sexual and mental violence, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, harm or abuse – in-person or online – including gender-based violence, domestic violence, commercial sexual exploitation, child trafficking, child labour, harmful practices such as female genital mutilation/cutting and child marriage, the recruitment or use of child soldiers, physical punishment or psychological aggression, bullying, peer violence, gang violence and child homicides.

²¹ World Vision International (2019). *Small Cracks, Big Gaps: How governments allow violence against children to persist*. Available at: <https://www.wvi.org/sites/default/files/2019-07/Small%20Cracks%20Big%20Gaps.pdf>.

²² INSPIRE is a set of seven strategies that have shown success in reducing violence against children. Developed by experts, INSPIRE places a strong emphasis on prevention through a multi-sectoral response, with strategies that include health, social welfare, education, and finance and justice sectors. For more information, see: http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/inspire/en/.

²³ For more information on the COVID-19 pandemic in relation to children, see the following 2020 publications by World Vision International: *COVID-19 Aftershocks: Deadly Waves*; *COVID-19 Aftershocks: Secondary impacts threaten more children's lives than disease itself*; *COVID-19 Aftershocks: A Perfect Storm*; *COVID-19 Aftershocks: Out of time*; and *COVID-19 Aftershocks: Access Denied*. Available at: <https://www.wvi.org/publications/report/coronavirus-health-crisis/covid-19-aftershocks-deadly-waves>.

²⁴ For information on children's views and recommendations on the COVID-19 pandemic, see: World Vision International (2020). *Experiences and recommendations of girls and boys on the impact of COVID-19*. Available at: https://www.wvi.org/sites/default/files/2020-11/WV-GLOBAL-ActNowReport-Final_small.pdf.

²⁵ World Vision International (2024). *Putting Children First for Sustainable Development: The return on investment from child-related Official Development Assistance*, p. 17. Available at: <https://www.wvi.org/sites/default/files/2024-04/Putting%20Children%20First.pdf>.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 10.

²⁷ Regrettably, only a fraction of ODA (12%) currently targets children despite them accounting for 46% the population of ODA-receiving countries, with 5% of ODA allocated to child-specific interventions and 7% to child-benefitting interventions. See: Ibid., p. 5.

²⁸ UNICEF (2023). *Progress on Children's Well-Being: Centring child rights in the 2030 agenda*, p. 3. Available at: https://data.unicef.org/resources/sdg-report-2023/?_gl=1*1a2c150*_ga*MTg3MzQyNjk4Ni4xNzlyMjAwMTA2*_ga_9ZKVYH4DTE*MTCyMjg4OTQxMi4xLjAuMTCyMjg4OTQxMi4wLjAuMA..*_ga_ZEPV2PX419*MTCyMjg4OTQxMi41LjAuMTCyMjg4OTQxMi42MC4wLjA

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