



THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA



SDG SECRETARIAT

OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER

Concept Note

The Third Voluntary National Review (VNR) 2024



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January 2024

1.0 Background

1.1 Introduction

In 2015, the United Nations adopted the agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development with its associated Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a global initiative to eradicate Poverty, protect the Planet and People, and ensure universal Peace and Prosperity by 2030 through global solidarity and Partnerships. Comprising 17 ambitious, transformative, and universal Goals, these SDGs consist of 169 targets and 232 indicators, providing a comprehensive framework to guide national and local development strategies.

The core principles of the SDGs emphasize the necessity of simultaneous progress in health, education, inequality reduction, economic growth, climate change mitigation, and the preservation of oceans and forests across the three dimensions of Economic Growth, Social Inclusion and Economic Growth. In this context, the SDGs emphasize sustainability as a central theme, recognizing the imperative of integrating environmental, social, and economic considerations.

The United Nations Member States governments are expected to take ownership and establish national frameworks for achieving the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Recognizing this, the Government of Uganda, under the leadership of the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) has,

- developed a coordination framework in 2016 to guide the implementation of the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda,
- submitted two Voluntary National Review (VNR) reports in 2016 and 2020, demonstrating its commitment to the SDGs,
- developed SDG Localization Guidelines and adopted the Voluntary Local Reviews,
- engaged civil society, youth, private sector, development partners under different umbrella platforms on the SDGs,
- mainstreamed the SDGs into the Comprehensive National Development Plans,
- developed SDG Progress Reports including the 2021 Progress Report and the 2023 Midterm SDG Progress Review Report.

In September 2023, Uganda's delegation led by the Rt. Hon Prime Minister participated in the United Nations SDG Summit and submitted Uganda's SDG National Commitments and SDG acceleration and transformation plan that had been developed and approved by Uganda's Cabinet in response to the UN Secretary General's call for a rescue plan, outlining its focus for the next seven years up to 2030. These commitments will serve as a guiding framework for inclusive and sustainable development. These Commitments include;

- Building resilience and Leaving No One Behind through the inclusive Parish Development Model,
- Accelerating inclusive actions for SDG Financing, Trade and Investments,
- Accelerating inclusive actions to leverage the advantages of Science, Technology, and Innovations,
- Accelerating inclusive economic and social development through climate change adaptation and mitigation,
- Accelerating Efforts to harness the full potential of data to improve the lives of all Ugandans and
- Accelerating the Strengthening of SDG Coordination and service delivery mechanisms.

1.2 The 12th Session of the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF)

In July 2024, the 12th session of the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) will convene in New York as the primary UN platform for monitoring and reviewing the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The HLPF serves as a crucial forum for providing political leadership, guidance, and recommendations to integrate the Economic, Social, and Environmental dimensions of sustainable development. Under the auspices of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (UN ECOSOC), the HLPF will take place from July 8 to July 17, 2024 under the theme **“Reinforcing the 2030 Agenda and eradicating poverty in times of multiple crises: the effective delivery of sustainable, resilient and innovative solutions.”** During this period, the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) will play a pivotal role in facilitating the exchange of experiences, including successes, challenges, and lessons learned, to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. These reviews aim to strengthen government policies and institutions while mobilizing multi-stakeholder support and partnerships for SDG implementation.

Among the 44 selected countries, Uganda will feature in the ministerial segment of the forum and present her third Voluntary National Review (VNR) Report at the HLPF in July 2024, a process that will enable the country identify special challenges, share best practices and benchmark solutions for the accelerated delivery on the SDGs through rigorous review of the local, national, regional and global dimensions on the effective delivery of sustainable, resilient and innovative solutions regarding the SDGs.

1.3 SDGs for an In-depth Review at the 12th Session of the HLPF in 2024.

This year's HLPF will focus on the following goals.

- i. **Goal 1:** End poverty in all its forms everywhere
- ii. **Goal 2:** End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture.
- iii. **Goal 13:** Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.
- iv. **Goal 16:** Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all, and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels.
- v. **Goal 17:** Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development.

Additionally, Uganda's third VNR 2024 will review all the 17 SDGs and the 2023 SDG National Commitments made at the UN Summit in September 2023.

1.4 Objectives of VNR 2024

The main objective is to provide Uganda's progress on SDGs and Government's commitment to accelerating delivery on the 2030 Agenda. Specifically, the VNR ;

- i. Will provide an in-depth analysis of progress of SDGs
- ii. Will showcase Uganda's actions and initiatives that address the Leaving No One Behind gaps and inclusive sustainable development.

2.0 VNR Methodology and Preparatory Process

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The third Voluntary National Review will provide a snapshot of the entire country focusing on the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and will build on the first and second Voluntary National Reviews. The data collection techniques will include use of secondary sources such as the existing National Data through Uganda Bureau of Statistics and the use of the SDG Progress Report 2023 on the Mid Term Review of the Progress made in the SDGs, Regional forums and National SDGs Conference reports, existing Voluntary Local Reviews, subnational, national, regional, and global reports. To facilitate wider and national and regional consultations, a VNR e-platform has been designed for online engagements with key stakeholders. This e-platform will also facilitate continuous engagement even after presentation of the report at the High-Level Political Forum.

In addition, primary sources of data will be used through stakeholder engagements and consultations. These stakeholder consultations will build on the efforts of the Regional SDG Forums, the National SDG Conferences, and the Voluntary Local Reviews. A participatory, inclusive and consultative approach will be adopted in the VNR preparation, to ensure a comprehensive and exhaustive engagement of all stakeholders. In addition, the whole-of-Government approach will be used to ensure participation of all key Ministries Departments and Agencies and all key players and stakeholders. As such, the Consultations will focus on the following stakeholders/institutions:

- **Legislature:** Parliament plays a significant role in mobilizing and allocating resources and in providing oversight in the implementation of the SDGs. In addition, due to their closeness to the people in their constituencies, Members of Parliament are advocates, mobilizers and ambassadors for the SDGs. The Legislature will be engaged through the Uganda Parliamentary Forum on the SDGs. The engagement with the legislature will center on fostering alignment between national policies and the SDGs. The aim will be to collaborate with the legislature to review, assess, and integrate key legislative frameworks in line with the SDGs, seeking their insights on effective policy measures and areas requiring improvement thus catalyzing accelerated implementation through cohesive legislative support and action.
- **Ministries, Departments and Agencies:** MDAs implement the SDGs and ensure that all plans, budgets and activities reflect relevant SDGs. They produce administrative data to inform SDG monitoring and progress reporting. These MDAs will be engaged through the Cabinet,

the SDG Policy Coordination Center, the Political Core team, the SDG Implementation Steering Committee, the National Taskforce and the Technical Working Groups on the SDGs. The engagement strategy with Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) will focus on fostering interagency collaboration, information exchange, and coordination. The intention will be to collaborate closely with MDAs to gather comprehensive data, insights, and experiences related to SDG implementation within their respective areas of expertise. By engaging MDAs, The aim will be to facilitate a collective review of successes, challenges, and lessons learned, fostering a robust understanding of the SDG landscape across sectors, identifying synergies, addressing gaps, and amplifying effective strategies. Whereas, all MDAs are being targeted, focus will be put on MDAs that chair the SDG technical working groups and those centrally charged with implementing the SDGs (1, 2, 13, 16 &17) under review this year.

- **United Nations and Development Partners:** The UN Agencies have been active in contributing to strengthening policy mechanisms, coordination structures and creating an enabling environment for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda through structures aligned to the national SDG structures. Development Partners including Danish Embassy, DFID, GIZ, and Norway, support sector/MDA interventions that contribute to SDG achievement. The United Nations Country Team will be Engaged through the UN SDG Technical Working Group which will coordinate the participation of the UNCT. The Development Partners will be engaged through the Local Development Partner Group (LDPG). The engagement with the United Nations and Development Partners will focus on collaborative knowledge exchange and resource mobilization. The aim will be to leverage their expertise, technical support, and financial resources to bolster our VNR efforts, seeking insights on best practices, innovative approaches, and lessons learned from other nations' experiences in advancing the 2030 Agenda.
- **Civil Society Organizations, Cultural and Religious Organizations/ Leaders:** The CSOs have a critical role to work with governments in implementing their agendas, delivering services, generating research and evidence, holding governments accountable to their commitment and acting as watch-dogs to the duty bearers. Cultural and religious institutions serve as influential platforms for promoting values, ethics, and social cohesion, playing a crucial role

in raising awareness, fostering community engagement, and advocating for sustainable practices that align with the principles of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The CSOs will be engaged through the CSO-SDG Core Reference Group under the Uganda National NGO Forum while the Religious Institutions will be coordinated through the Inter Religious Council in Uganda (IRCU). This engagement will harness community-based perspectives in aligning national strategies with the 2030 Agenda. By engaging CSOs, Cultural, and Religious Leaders, The aim will be to leverage their grassroots connections, moral influence, and community outreach to promote SDGs awareness, foster inclusivity, and mobilize local participation.

- **Private Sector:** Uganda's economy is private sector led. As such, the Private Sector plays a key role in shaping the policy discourse on the country's national development planning, supporting the coordination structure for SDG implementation, service provision, innovation and transformation. The private sector will be engaged through the Private Sector Platform on the SDGs. The engagement strategy with the private sector will emphasize collaboration and partnerships to harness private sector expertise, resources, and innovation in advancing the SDGs. The aim will be to involve the private sector in dialogues that focus on exploring mutually beneficial strategies, promoting responsible business practices aligned with the SDGs, and identifying opportunities for investment in sustainable development projects. The CEO Summit and PSFU will support in coordinating the participation and consultation with the Private Sector.
- **Academia:** The Academia, as think tanks and institutions for research and knowledge generation have a key role which is important to the implementation of the SDGs. Universities such as Makerere University especially the Makerere University School of Public Health under the SDG-CAP Project, Uganda Management Institute and Research organizations such as the Economic Policy and Research Center (EPRC) among others will be engaged. The engagement with academia will emphasize collaboration with think tanks and research institutions. The VNR Process will seek to leverage academia's expertise and research capabilities to analyze data, assess progress, and generate evidence-based insights crucial for effective policy formulation and implementation aligned with the SDGs.

- **Local Governments:** Local Governments are the key implementers of SDGs. They are at the forefront of implementing SDGs at the local level by addressing local challenges through service delivery. The Local Governments will be engaged through the existing organized groups of District/ City Planners, the Chief Administrative Officers/ City Clerks and the Uganda Local Governments Association (ULGA) and the Urban Authorities Association of Uganda (UAAU). The engagement with Local Governments will prioritize collaboration and knowledge exchange through involving Local Governments by facilitating forums for sharing best practices, identifying localized challenges, and seeking their insights on SDG implementation at the grassroots level.
- **Youth and Children:** Provided with the necessary skills and opportunities needed to reach their potential, young people can be a driving force for supporting development and contributing to peace and security. The Youth will be engaged through the Uganda Youth Coalition on the SDGs, the National Youth Council and the Uganda Parliamentary Forum on Youth Affairs. The children will be engaged through schools and organizations working directly on Children affairs such as World Vision Uganda, Plan International Uganda, Save the Children Uganda among others. Youth and children will be engaged on their role in the implementation of the SDGs and how meaningfully they have been engaged at both local and national levels.
- **Persons with Disabilities:** Persons with Disabilities are among the most disadvantaged and marginalized groups worldwide. The SDGs therefore considered Persons with Disabilities specifically within 11 specific targets to solve the under-representation and marginalization in all spheres of development caused by stigma, discrimination, lack of access to adequate services and negative attitudes towards Persons with Disabilities. The Persons with Disabilities will be engaged through the Ministry of Gender Labor and Social Development and organizations working on PwD affairs. Persons with Disabilities will be engaged on their unique challenges, their role in the implementation of the SDGs and how meaningfully they have been engaged at both local and national levels
- **Ethnic Minority Groups:** The Ethnic Minority Groups will be engaged through the Equal Opportunities Commission under the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development and through organizations such as the Minority Rights International. Ethnic Minority Groups

will be engaged on their unique challenges, their role in the implementation of the SDGs and how meaningfully they have been engaged at both local and national levels

- **Women:** Women and girls are critical to finding sustainable solutions to the challenges of poverty, inequality and the recovery of the communities hardest-hit by conflicts, disasters and displacements. The participation of women at all levels is the key to making Agenda 2030 transformational and inclusive. The Women will be engaged through the Uganda Gender Consortium on the SDGs, the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, the Women-led and women-focused CSOs, UN Women among others. The engagement with women and girls will focus on the aspects of gender equality and their inclusion, as beneficiaries and implementers, in the implementation of the SDGs. .
- **Media:** The role of the media in SDG implementation is to raise awareness about the global goals, focus on issues of sustainable development for the national media, and build and support a learning community. The media will be engaged through the Ministry of ICT and National Guidance which spearheads the technical Working Group on Communication and Popularization for the SDGs. The engagement with the media will focus on their unique challenges and contribution in fostering widespread public awareness and understanding of the SDGs' significance and impact on national development. The VNR process will also aim to collaborate closely with the media to disseminate comprehensive and accurate information regarding the VNR process.

This methodology aligns with the SDG Co-ordination framework of 2016, providing a structured and holistic foundation for involvement. Guided by the Voluntary Common Reporting Guidelines for Voluntary National Reviews at the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF), the process will adhere to recommended standards, promoting transparency and comparability in reporting. In addition, the preparation of the VNR will draw insights from the Handbook for the Preparation of Voluntary National Reviews 2023 edition. This will serve as a guide, offering elementary building blocks and essential, practical information on the procedural steps that Uganda will undertake in drafting VNR. The methodology for Participatory Approach in Developing the Voluntary National Review Report on SDGs by Uganda in 2024.

3.0 Post-VNR and HLPF Engagements

Uganda's third Voluntary National Review (VNR) will serve as a crucial mechanism to raise awareness of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the national level, especially among the general population. This will be done through; Public Engagement through information dissemination using the VNR report, extracts, publications, websites, social media, workshops among others; Education and advocacy since the VNR report will provide a comprehensive overview of SDG progress, challenges, and future plans. This information can be utilized by educational institutions, advocacy groups, and media outlets to develop educational materials, campaigns, and discussions to raise awareness about the SDGs, encouraging informed discussions and actions; Localization of SDGs: Uganda's third VNR will highlight specific national strategies, programs, and initiatives aligned with the SDGs. This helps to illustrate the local relevance of global goals, making them more relatable and understandable to people; Feedback and Dialogue given that Uganda's third VNR process will include public consultations and feedback mechanisms that will create endless opportunities for dialogue between policymakers and citizens, allowing for the exchange of ideas, concerns, and suggestions, fostering a culture of transparency, accountability, and responsiveness in SDG implementation.

Uganda will simplify the VNR Report so that all citizens understand it. It will also convene a press conference, a debrief meeting of the VNR Project team, a presentation to parliament and a cabinet meeting on the outcome of the presentation at the HLPF, summarize lessons learnt, actions proposed, task the responsible stakeholders to take action and follow up on implementation of the VNR recommendations.

4.0 Expected Outputs

4.1. VNR Report: Voluntary national review (VNR) is a process by which countries take stock and assess progress and challenges in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda. Since Uganda was chosen among the 44 countries to feature in the ministerial segment of the forum and present her third National Voluntary Review (NVR) Report at the HLPF in July 2024, a VNR process will be embarked on and a report produced. This VNR Report will be submitted in advance to the HLPF 2024 to inform a substantive interactive debate before,

during and after the HLPF. The VNR report will be also be presented in digital form for easy access and readership nationally and globally.

4.2. VNR Key Messages: Under the current modalities, the time provided for countries to present at the HLPF is limited. Therefore, Uganda’s presentation at the HLPF will highlight the key messages from her 3rd VNR Report and touch on critical issues in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The Rt Hon Prime Minister of Uganda will lead the presentation of the VNR at the HLPF.

4.3. The SDG Journey Video.

The SDG journey Video will serve as an informative and engaging medium to convey Uganda's experiences, successes, and ongoing efforts in the realm of sustainable development. It will be the audio-visual representation of the third VNR 2024. It will cast for 20 minutes (at most) about Uganda's journey and progress in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals.

The purpose of the Video will be;

- i. **Raise Awareness and Understanding:** The documentary aims to increase public awareness and understanding of Uganda's commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and its progress in their implementation. By providing an engaging and informative medium, it seeks to convey the importance of the SDGs and their impact on the nation's development trajectory.
- ii. **Showcase Successes and Ongoing Efforts:** The documentary will highlight successful initiatives, projects, and policies that have contributed to sustainable development. It will also spotlight the country's commitment to continuous progress and innovation in the realm of sustainability.
- iii. **Inspire Global Engagement:** The documentary is designed to inspire not only local but also global engagement in sustainable development. By sharing Uganda's experiences and dedication to the SDGs, it aims to motivate other nations, organizations, and individuals to take action and collaborate in achieving the goals outlined in the 2030 Agenda. Through this, it aspires to contribute to global initiatives for positive change and sustainable development.

5.0 Uganda's Delegation to HLPF

The delegation will be led by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Uganda, coordinated by the office of the Prime Minister, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with support from Uganda's mission to the UN. The delegations will also include members of the Political Team especially those charged with this year's SDGs under Review (Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries, Ministry of Water and Environment and the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs). Other delegates will include representatives from the Technical Working Groups, Civil Society, Private Sector, United Nations and Youth.

6.0 VNR Advisory Committee

As per the VNR 2024 guidelines, the development of the VNR report should be an incisive and participatory process. As such, a VNR advisory committee will be constituted to support in the technical formulation and validation of the VNR report. The Advisory committee will be chaired and coordinated by the Office of the Prime Minister (SDG Secretariat) and will comprise of key Government MDAs including those that chair (MOFPED, NPA, UBOS and MICT&NG) the SDG TWGs, the Ministries that are centrally mandated to implement programs on SDGs 1, 2, 13, 16 and 17, UN Agencies, CSOs, private Sector, Academia, Local Governments, and special groups. The VNR advisory committee will meet regularly to receive and validate the VNR draft reports and provide technical inputs in the analyses of data into the report.