



VLR/VSR
DAYS | JULY 14-16
2021

1ST EDITION - HLPF

VLR–VSR Days
Advancing the Local Implementation of the SDGs

HLPF 2021
July 14–16, 2021

Report

UN HABITAT
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

 **UCLG**
United Cities
and Local Governments



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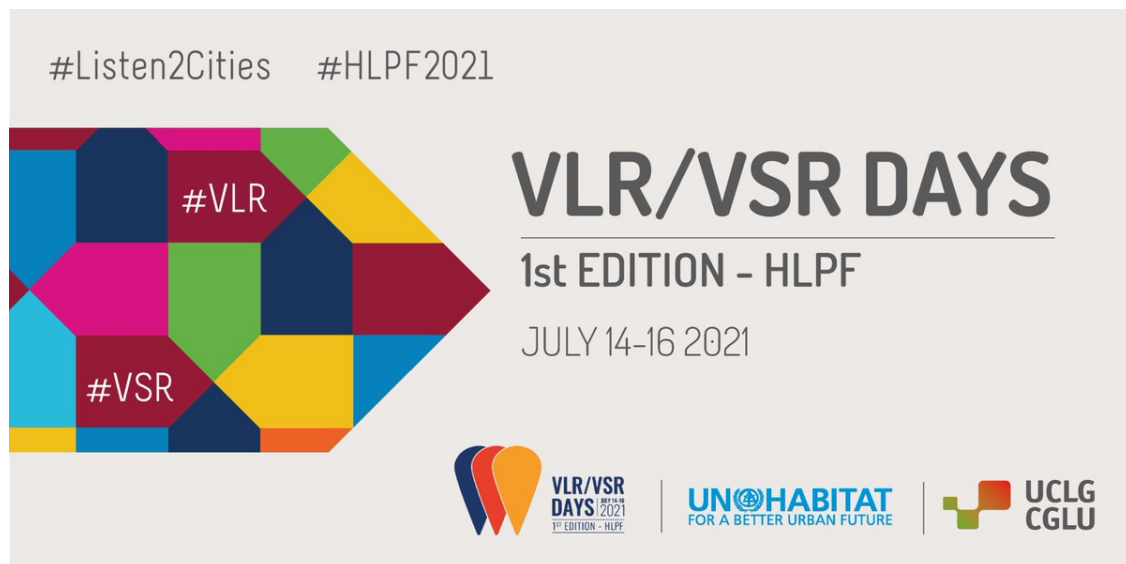
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Introduction

During the 2021 High Level Political Forum, UN-Habitat organized a series of high-level side events focused on advancing the localization of the Sustainable Development Goals. The **VLR-VSR days**, co-organized between UN-Habitat and United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), comprised of three days of engaging discussions dedicated to Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) and Voluntary Subnational Reviews (VSRs). VLRs and VSRs are powerful tools to accelerate the localization of SDGs, as they are not only used for monitoring and reporting, but have the potential to facilitate many dimensions local action.

With the presence of 474 participants, these sessions brought together 68 speakers representing over 29 countries to discuss their experiences and perspectives on VLRs-VSRs and the localization of the SDGs. The discussion illustrated how VLRs are changing the dynamics between local and national spheres of government and facilitating multi-level dialogues on practices for a more sustainable future. Speakers and audience members had the chance to share their experiences using VLRs and VSRs to drive innovation, increase accountability and local ownership of development processes, and promote institutional interaction between government spheres.



#Listen2Cities #HLPF2021


#VLR


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 UN-HABITAT FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

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Launch Vol.2 and VLR Communique

July 14, 4–6pm CEST

[Access the session recording here](#)

Main topic of the session

The first session of the VLR–VSR days was the occasion for the Launch of the [Second Volume of the UN–Habitat–UCLG Guidelines for VLRs: *Towards a New Generation of VLRs: Exploring the Local–National Link*](#). This event introduced the main findings of the guidelines along with presentations by central and local government actors that contributed to the process of their development. The Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) and Voluntary Subnational Reviews (VSRs) global community has been growing at an encouraging pace. The presentations illustrated how VLRs are changing the dynamics between local and national governments and facilitating multi-level dialogues on practices for a more sustainable future.

UN–Habitat and UCLG, together with the partners that took part to the Expert Group Meeting on VLRs organized in February 2021, have elaborate the [Voluntary Local Review Communique](#) that recognizes the added value of connecting VLRs to the national SDG review process. The VLR Communique was also launched at the end of the session.

Several important outcomes and recommendations to different tiers of governments were drawn from this session. There was a general agreement that the successful implementation of the SDGs depends on local action and leadership. At the same time, it was recognized that VLRs are becoming increasingly central in local government's work. However, different levels of government should be better aligned in reporting on the SDGs. In this line, the link between VLRs and VNRs can be a turning point for the enhancement of collaborative and multi-level dialogue and show how ready local governments have been contributing as peers to SDG alignment and implementation. Likewise, it was also highlighted the need for guidelines and methodologies adaptable to the different kinds of LRGs to foster wider ownership of the 2030 Agenda.

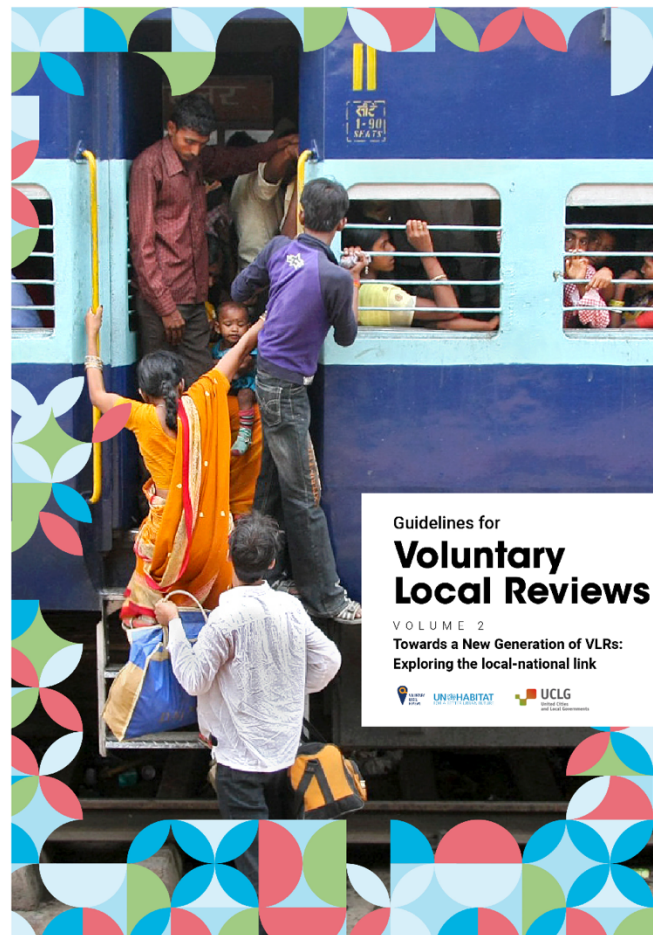
OPENING REMARKS

Maimunah Mohd Sharif, Executive Director, UN–Habitat

Maimunah Mohd Sharif highlighted that the interconnection across the various levels of governance is the key for the success of the 2030 Agenda. In facing a combination of current crises, we need to rethink our governance systems in a way that our communities are at the center of this process. She stated that VLRs and SDG localization, together with housing and climate change, are the priorities for 2021 and 2022.

Emilia Saiz, Secretary General, UCLG

Localization has become a movement. VLRs–VSRs as solutions to address contemporary challenges at the local level. Beyond being a reporting tool, they are a test of the political will to contribute to the change we need to trigger to make our planet sustainable. Volume two of the VLR Guidelines seek to inspire to achieve the global goals.



Front page of the Volume 2 of the Guidelines for Voluntary Local Reviews

PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS AND CASE-STUDY

Martino Miraglia, Human Settlement Officer and SDG Localization, UN-Habitat; Ainara Fernández, Research Officer, UCLG

Martino Miraglia and Ainara Fernández presented a brief summary of the Volume two of the VLR Guidelines highlighting the underlying motives for the guidelines, the process, as well as four main findings and four recommendations.

Sami Pirkkala, Secretary General of Finnish National Commission on Sustainable Development

Sami Pirkkala remarked particularities of the VNR that provide evidence its inclusivity: assessment to the 17 SDGs by the government and civil society, chapters are written by institutions as well as by cities and regions, peer dialogue with other governments. Among them, he particularly stressed the interaction between local and national authorities.

Mia Malin, Project Manager SDG at City of Helsinki

Mia Malin explained the engagement of Finnish cities in VLR and the promotion and support at the Prime Minister's office. Relevant cooperation networks and projects were described. She then focused on Helsinki's second VLR which benefited from international and national cooperation.



Left: Presentation of the Volume 2 of the VLR Guidelines by Martino Miraglia and Ainara Fernández.

Right: Presentation of the Finnish VNR case-study by Mia Malin and Sami Pirkkala.

PANEL DISCUSSION

Moderator: Edgardo Bilsky, Head of Research, UCLG

The Moderator opened the panel discussion with the first question:

How is organized the dialogue between the different levels of government and stakeholders to support the VNR process in your country? How local reporting (VLRs and VSRs) have been taken into consideration in the national reports?

Alfredo González Reyes, Head of the 2030 Agenda, Mexican National Government

Alfredo González Reyes pointed out that it was created a commission with different sectors of civil society organizations. They had several sessions to follow up on the national reporting process, as well as rounds of review to integrate inputs from every sector.

Hüseyin Keskin, Mayor of Sultanbeyli

Hüseyin Keskin highlighted the principle of participation and alignment of targets at national, local and international levels. Consultation with public institutions and NGOs at local level were carried out as well.

Stefan Wagner, Head of Department of International Affairs, City of Bonn, Germany

Stefan Wagner stressed that dialogue between the national and local levels develops in Germany. Besides, many cities signed the Agenda Declaration. However, there is room for improvement and that national goals do not necessarily match with local goals.

Jonan Fernández Erdozia, General Secretary for Social Transition and 2030 Agenda, Basque Country, Spain

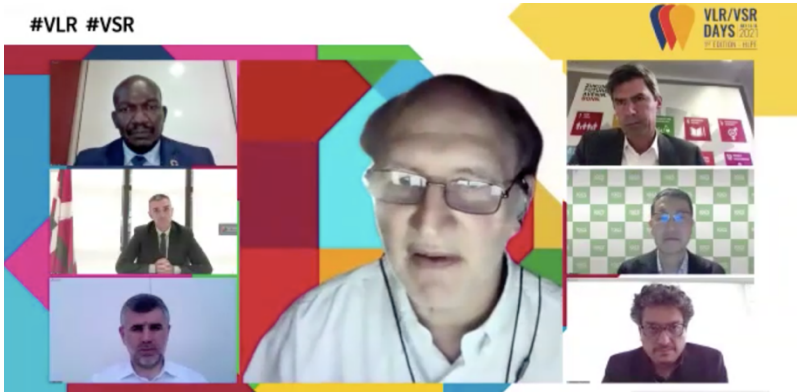
Jonan Fernández Erdozia highlighted that all autonomous communities in Spain need to move forward to have better coordination and autonomy towards the central government. The Basque Country has power and competences in terms of public policies directed to the implementation of SDGs.

Ken Oluoch, Senior Programme Officer, Sustainable Development Goals Unit Council of Governors, Kenya


Ken Oluoch asserted that for the 2020 VNR process, the Council of Governors had an inter-agency technical committee that played a critical role. Whole of government approach that gave the opportunity to measure the progress on SDG achievement at the local level.

Junichi Fujino, Programme Director, Integrated Sustainability Center, IGES, Japan

Junichi Fujino brought forward the SDG Future Cities Program in Japan that started in 2018 and now gathers 124 SDG Future Cities. The Japanese government holds roundtables to discuss the VLRs where representatives share lessons learned from the process.



The six panelists of the session and the Moderator in the center.



The Moderator, Edgardo Bilsky, Head of Research at UCLG launches the second question of the panel discussion:

What is needed by LRGs to expand VLRs? What national governments, international institutions and local governments networks can do to support local reporting processes?

Alfredo González Reyes, Head of the 2030 Agenda, Mexican National Government

Alfredo González Reyes singled out three aspects to answer the question. Firstly, bringing information to the new government; secondly, guidelines are important, but they must be in tandem with the academia; thirdly, more agile strategies to finance and elaborate local reports.

Hüseyin Keskin, Mayor of Sultanbeyli

Hüseyin Keskin stated that interagency coordination is necessary, as well as a standard monitoring tool offered to all LRGs. He remarked that VLR guidelines are instructive, but the fact that UN targets are at a national level makes it difficult to align SDGs to the local level.

Stefan Wagner, Head of Department of International Affairs, City of Bonn, Germany

Stefan Wagner highlighted that cities in Germany need solid legal and financial frameworks to implement SDGs. He asserted that support programs exist, but they need better coordination. The national level will support cities to be part of the VLR movement.

Jonan Fernández Erdozia, General Secretary for Social Transition and 2030 Agenda, Basque Country, Spain

Jonan Fernández Erdozia identified that subnational governments need space, voice and co-decision at the national and international level. He affirmed that we need to be more demanding with the 2030 Agenda and urged to combat ignorance of the 2030 Agenda.

Ken Oluoch, Senior Programme Officer, Sustainable Development Goals Unit Council of Governors, Kenya

Ken Oluoch focused on the need to strengthen capacities for data management and statistics. Multilevel engagement, community dialogue and strengthening partnerships with institutions will allow to intensify data capacities at the country level.

Junichi Fujino, Programme Director, Integrated Sustainability Center, IGES, Japan

Junichi Fujino highlighted three ideas. Firstly, develop a web version of the Guidelines to make the process accessible. Secondly, cities need more incentives to develop a VLR. Thirdly, strengthen knowledge and synergy between national and local reviews as well as working with international partners to share information.

LAUNCH OF THE VLR COMMUNIQUÉ

Carmen Sanchez–Miranda Gallego, Head of Office UN–Habitat Spain

Carmen Sanchez–Miranda Gallego highlighted that the communiqué is the result of fruitful discussions within the EGM. The emergence of the VLRs is changing the approach to the national reviews. They are even changing the way we think of SDG localization. There was also a clear commitment regarding UN support to create the link between local–national–regional–global.

Santiago Saura Martínez, Councilor for International Affairs and Cooperation of Madrid

Santiago Saura Martínez explained that it was approved in Madrid a comprehensive localization strategy with many targets and indicators to monitor progress towards 2030. A variety of actors that have contributed with additional targets and indicators were involved. He stresses the double role of VLRs in achieving the SDGs at the city, national and global levels.



Presentation of the VLR Communiqué by Carmen Sanchez–Miranda Gallego and Santiago Saura Martínez



CLOSING

Mehmet Duman, Secretary General, UCLG–MEWA

Mehmet Duman asserted that multilateral cooperation is essential to face today's challenges. VLRs have a large transformational potential, since they are political processes capable of influencing national reporting process and essential for evidence-based policy making. He then concluded claiming that to scale up the reach of this process and role of LRGs, local actions must be acknowledged in reporting processes at national level.

Metropolises and VLRs: Launch of the VLR of Metropolitan City of Florence

July 15, 11am–12.30pm CEST

[Access the session recording here](#)

Based on the example of the VLR of the Metropolitan City of Florence, this session discussed the role of metropolis in achieving the SDGs and on the particularities of their reporting and monitoring process through the VLR tool. Metropolises around the world are at the very center of global development, from an economic, demographic, environmental and cultural point of view. The session aligned with joint work between UN–Habitat, UCLG and Metropolis to examine the role of metropolises in implementing the SDGs. After the official presentation of the VLR of the Metropolitan City of Florence, the session hosts a panel of distinguished international speakers from New York, Buenos Aires, Barcelona and Surabaya, moderated by Metropolis.

The fruitful discussion and active engagement of speakers led important take-aways. It was highlighted that SDGs are global goals, but their implementation is predominantly local. Metropolises and metropolitan governments have important mandates to foster economic development, sustainability, social cohesion, gender equality and quality of life. Specifically, metropolises have become a key battleground for reducing inequalities, especially in the aftermath of the pandemic. For that, the relevance of metropolitan leadership to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and implement the New Urban Agenda has been widely recognized in recent years. Finally, the launch of the VLR of the Metropolitan City of Florence advances the Italian national strategy for sustainable development.



Left: VLR of the Metropolitan city of Florence. **Right:** Session of Metropolis and VLR: Launch of the VLR of Metropolitan City of Florence

OPENING REMARKS

Letizia Perini, Councilor for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2030 of the Metropolitan City of Florence

Letizia Perini highlighted that the core principle of the Florence VLR is to leave no-one behind and include most vulnerable groups. She assured that the implementation of Agenda 2030 requires an innovative governance approach between all levels of government and public and private actors.

Serena Spinelli, Councilor for Social Policies, Public Housing and International Cooperation, Region of Tuscany

Serena Spinelli remarked that the implementation of the SDGs requires putting territories at the center. What is more, they must reflect communities themselves. The region of Tuscany embraced participatory process and inclusion of partners' support to localize the SDGs.

Anna Calvete, Research Officer, UCLG

Anna Calvete recognized metropolitan areas as frontrunners in the SDG localization process. She illustrated the contributions of VLRs and VSRs in localizing the SDGs, like the improvement of multi-level coordination, LRGs' commitment to the 2030 Agenda or their ability to tackle inequalities between and within territories.



Left: Letizia Perini, **Center:** Serena Spinelli, **Right:** Anna Calvete

PRESENTATION OF THE VLR OF METROPOLITAN CITY OF FLORENCE

Moderator: **Oscar Chamat, Policy and Research Officer, Research Unit, Metropolis**

Mario Biggeri, University of Florence

Mario Biggeri presented key ideas of the Florence VLR like creating a baseline for sustainability development priorities, strengthen communication and transparency by local governments among others. The concept of sustainable human development and its implications were highlighted.

Andrea Ferrannini, Coordinator Local Development Unit, ARCO (Action Research for Co-development)

Andrea Ferrannini complemented the presentation of the VLR of Florence by describing its structure, the starting point and its methodology. The VLR followed a mixed-method research design: comparative international experiences, systematization of quantitative data and indicators at metropolitan and municipal levels, and participatory activities.



The slide is titled "METROPOLITAN VISION" and features the coat of arms of the Metropolitan City of Florence. It includes a small map of the metropolitan area and a quote from the "Strategic Plan 2030 - Metropolitan Renaissance": "A new era of change, a sort of intellectual, economic and social rebirth imbued with ideals of civil ethics, pragmatism, exaltation of active life". Below the quote, it lists three components: 1. Universal accessibility, 2. Widespread opportunities, and 3. Lands of well-being.

METROPOLITAN VISION

RINASCIMENTO METROPOLITANO

Strategic Plan 2030 - Metropolitan Renaissance

A new era of change, a sort of intellectual, economic and social rebirth imbued with ideals of civil ethics, pragmatism, exaltation of active life

3 components:

1. **Universal accessibility**, as an indispensable condition for participation in social life and for the usability of spaces and services;
2. **Widespread opportunities**, as a manifesto for the activation of multiple and varied resources / opportunities present throughout the metropolitan area;
3. **Lands of well-being**, as an essential asset for the integrated development of the territory.

Slide from the presentation VLR of the Metropolitan City of Florence

PANEL DISCUSSION

Aissata Camara, Deputy Commissioner for Operations and Strategic Partnerships, New York City

Aissata Camara reaffirmed the need for deep engagement with stakeholders. She shared that 122 local governments participating in the VLR declaration, and welcomed all governments across the world, regardless of recourse to join and collaborate to create a better world and better life. She highlighted that metropolis play a critical role on that.

Miquel Rodriguez Planas, Commissioner for Agenda 2030, Barcelona

Miquel Rodriguez Planas shared what has been done in Barcelona to reach the 2030 Agenda based on three pillars. Firstly, localize and adapt the Agenda to the local reality. Secondly, implement the agenda and engage citizens. Thirdly, share the experience of VLRs with the community.

Mariana Cammissa, Strategic Coordination and Monitoring Manager, Buenos Aires, Argentina

Mariana Cammissa underlined that the last VLR process in Buenos Aires introduced lessons learnt from the 2019 VLR. She put forward that the process began by redefining government priorities in the face of COVID-19, digital transformation and the new social contract.

Farah Andita Ramdhani, Head of International Cooperation Section, Surabaya City Government, Indonesia

Farah Andita Ramdhani affirmed that the SDGs are introduced in community strategies in Surabaya. The SDG Multistakeholder Forum serves as a platform to include all stakeholders in the SDGs. He stressed the goals that the VLR pursued, acknowledged the role international Guidelines have played, and described challenges faced.



Panel discussion with international speakers

CLOSING

Loredana Magni, Senior Development Cooperation Adviser at the Directorate General for Development Cooperation, Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Loredana Magni acknowledged that the VLR of the Metropolitan City of Florence advances the Italian national strategy for sustainable development. She shared reflections from the work of the Italian G20 Presidency on territorial development, stressing that cities play a crucial role in the pandemic response, and the urgency to elevate local authorities in the G20 agenda.

Voluntary Subnational Reviews

July 15, 3–5pm CEST

[Access the session recording here](#)

New modalities of local and regional government involvement in monitoring and reporting are being developed. Eight countries prepared Voluntary Subnational Reviews (VSRs) in 2021: Cape Verde, Germany, Indonesia, Mexico, Norway, Sweden, Tunisia and Zimbabwe. In total, fifteen VSRs have been elaborated in two years.

VSRs are led by local and regional governments' associations and provide a country-wide analyses of subnational efforts to align the SDG with local development plans. This session presented the main findings of these VSRs and allowed representatives from national governments and partners organizations to engage in dialogue about lessons learned, best practices and future for VLR–VSR implementation.

The session provided a robust and engaging overview of the countries' VLR processes and highlighted the importance of multi-level dialogues and stakeholder engagement for SDG implementation. Speakers discussed the need for increased decentralization and coordination between local actors and national governments to plan and report on SDG progress, and all affirmed their commitment to expanding the VLR and VSR processes.

OPENING REMARKS

Carlos Martinez, Mayor of Soria, Special Envoy of UCLG for the New Urban Agenda

Carlos Martínez remarked on the urgency to progress in decentralization and shifting power to state governments. He encouraged multi-level horizontal actions where citizens actively engage and affirmed local governments are the UN's best allies in avoiding the risk of regressing to centralization.

Maimunah Mohd Sharif, Executive Director of UN Habitat

Maimunah Mohd Sharif recognized that VSRs have contributed to the evolution of local governments and their association in the national reporting process. She reaffirmed the importance of coordinating between VLRs–VSRs–VNRs to build sustainable resilience and recover from the pandemic.

July Moyo, Ministry of Local Government and Public Works, Zimbabwe

July Moyo discussed the importance of linking VLRs to VNRs and the key role data collection can play in this process. He acknowledged the impact that sharing

knowledge and best practices between governments can have on the VLR process and commended UN-Habitat and UCLG for working to forge these linkages between national and local levels.



Voluntary Subnational Reviews' session opening speakers

PRESENTATION OF VSRs


Zimbabwe

Alderman David Guy Mutasa, President of Zimbabwe Local Governments Association (ZILGA) presented Zimbabwe's VSR and highlighted the importance of spreading awareness of SDGs at the local level. This awareness is key to catalysing action on the SDGs and gaining commitment from local officials to align policy with the SDGs. Capacity building is also a key priority due to limited citizen engagement and a developing systematic institutional framework for SDG localization.

July Moyo, Ministry of Local Government and Public Works, Zimbabwe, responded to the presentation and emphasized how Zimbabwe's constitution makes sure that local authorities are the governments nearest to the people and have been given power through legislation on devolution and decentralization. This agenda works through three levels: Metropolitan councils, local authorities divided into urban and rural authorities, and communities like chieftainships and traditional leadership. Through this system, local governments are being empowered to lead the SDG process with support from the central government.

Norway

Bjoern Arild Gram, President of the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS), discussed how their VSR was formed with a survey and other data collection as well as feedback from international partners and Norway's VNR team.



However, lack of policy cohesion can be a major obstacle to achieving sustainability, and local and regional authorities must reach out to citizens to create local ownership to drive SDG progress. Norway must consult local and regional authorities and provide additional support mechanisms local governments to prioritize SDGs, mobilize stakeholders, invest in knowledge and better utilize existing tools.

Mr. Nicolai Astrup, Minister for Local Government and Modernization, responded to the presentation and highlighted the importance of input to the process from all sectors of society. Local and regional authorities set political priorities at those levels and are familiar with local challenges. They are also responsible for the social and fiscal infrastructure that influences people's lives, making their input and actions crucial to reaching the SDGs by 2030.

Cape Verde


Herménio Fernandes, President of the National Association of Municipalities of Cabo Verde (ANMCV), discussed the dynamic approach local and national governments are taking to accelerate the process of achieving the SDGs. He noted that obstacles to the process include a low level of SDG integration into planning and implementation at a local level and limited capacity for funding and prioritizing action on the SDGs. To assist with these issues, greater cooperation between central and local governments will be necessary.

Gilson Gomes Pina, Director of National Planning Department, responded to the presentation and emphasized the steps that Cape Verde is taking to decentralize some government functions. He discussed how a planning matrix is being used to illustrate how municipalities have the potential to achieve the SDGs and to engage more citizens in the process.

Indonesia

Bima Arya Sugiarto, M.A., Mayor of Bogor City and President of the Association of Municipalities of Indonesia (APEKSI), spoke about the work done in outlining the roles and participation of local governments in SDG implementation. Multi-level governance has been identified as a key method to overcome institutional barriers and increase participation. There are challenges with awareness and capacity of local authorities, necessitating support programs that make local governments more aware of SDGs and their alignment with policy and provide assistance in implementing and engaging stakeholders and at a local level.

Vivi Yulaswati, Head of the National SDGs Secretariat of Bappenas (Ministry of Planning), responded to the presentation and highlighted the inclusivity and strong participation in this year's VLR – the process included representation from the public sector, private sector, academia and media. The importance of Including SDGs



in planning and budget document and having robust M&E and reporting processes was also outlined as a way to ensure a bottom up, whole-of-society of approach.

Mexico

Sergio Arredondo, the Secretary General of FLACMA, discussed the challenges faced in the VSR process due to Mexico's complex political system and the difficulties of multi-level coordination. However, he highlighted the successes seen at the municipal levels in planning and establishing platforms for sharing progress, leading to increased knowledge sharing between states. He recommended increasing the number of fora available for dialogue on the SDGs and strengthening public-private partnerships to generate citizen engagement and train workers.

Alfredo González Reyes, Responsible for the Agenda 2030 of Mexico, Government of Mexico, emphasized that the VSRs have generated concrete results and allow the government to put forth recommendations and identify future goals and actions. The VSRs are processes that trigger exchanges and innovations on all levels and innovation and across state governments, which is valuable in a highly diverse society like Mexico. In Mexico, there are clear divisions between national and local governments, and so the VSR and VNR processes create valuable opportunities for dialogue and cooperation.

Sweden

Carola Gunnarson, Mayor of Sala, Vice-President of the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR), discussed Sweden's long history of decentralization and local decision-making and the importance of involving local governments in SDG planning, as they are closest to the citizens and best know their needs. VLRs and other reporting mechanisms therefore provide key information on the state of human rights, democracy and sustainable development at the local level. SALAR has played a key role in this process through helping connect local, national and international governments; manage data and M&E; and integrate work on sustainable development and SDGs in policymaking.

Mia Crawford, Deputy Director at the Global Agenda Department, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, emphasised the importance of centring Agenda 2030 in the policymaking process in Swedish municipalities. This helps facilitate the exchange between VNRs, VLRs and VSRs and highlight the working being done locally to implement a whole-of-society approach to sustainable development. Local reviews provide learning opportunities that do not end with a report, as they are important mechanisms for building trust, dialogue and coordination.

Tunisia

Adnen Bouassida, Mayor of Raoued, President of the National Federation of Municipalities of Tunisia (FNCT), discussed that that priorities for SDG localization going forward include increased local–local and local–national dialogue and improved integration of municipalities into national frameworks. A key focus will be to increase the participation of the private sector, civil society and citizens in the VLR process.

Mokhtar Hammami, Former Minister of Local Affairs, highlighted how the political crisis has increased the calls for decentralization throughout the country. Greater analysis regarding the country’s gaps and hurdles to meeting the SDGs is needed going forward, including a system to monitor and report on all indicators.

Germany


Sabine Dress, Department of European and International Affairs, German Association of Cities (Deutscher Städtetag), discussed how the municipal review is an integral part of the VNR and the steps taking to make data on the SDGs more harmonized and accessible. The SDG portal was launched in December 2020 and is open to all cities with over 5000 people. The portal allows tracking and reporting on the state of SDG implementation in German municipalities, reviews of enabling environments at the local level, SDG and sustainable development progress in municipalities, SDG monitoring activities, and VLRs of German cities and best practices.

Marc Wolinda, Manager Transfer and Scale, Bertelsmann–Stiftung, responded to the presentation and highlighted the success of the SDG portal, which has already been adopted by Italy and will be used by Morocco in the future. Despite, the general success of the portal, there is still a lack of data–driven indicators, especially on SDG 13 (climate) and SDG 17 (partnerships and goals) due to inadequate measurement concepts. Overall, because Germany is a federal and multi–level system, the state and local authorities must share responsibility for achieving the goals of the 2030 Agenda.

CLOSING

Emilia Saiz, Secretary General of UCLG, emphasized the power of VSRs as tools for policy alignment and facilitation of multi–level dialogue and coordination. She affirmed commitment to make VSRs and VLRs cornerstones in national strategies that will help achieve the SDGs.

Carlos Martinez, Mayor of Soria, Special Envoy of UCLG for the New Urban Agenda, closed the session by reflecting on the growth of city networks and the importance



of local action in implementing the SDGs. He emphasized the need for an international perspective to enable coordination and cooperation, greater horizontal government, and enhanced civil society and citizen engagement with the SDG process.

Data and Indicators in VLR and VSR processes

July 16, 11am–12.30pm

[Access the session recording here](#)

The introduction of the formal mechanism for the management and analysis of quantitative data usage for monitoring the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs have been put forward since its adoption in 2015. A must-do for an agenda which is naturally transversal and all-encompassing. Since the earliest moment, however, the system has posed several challenges in terms of data accessibility for other tiers of governance and subnational authorities, despite the key role they play in fulfilling the global commitment. This mismatch urges to foster the debate for improving the disaggregation of data and indicators at the local level. In this context, VLRs act as accelerator tool that allow to complement existing information at national level with city level data. Through the participatory process involving local communities and stakeholders, cities are also able to collect non-traditional and qualitative data, often filling the gaps left by national datasets.

The city representatives present at this session have advanced their challenges, ways of management of mixed data, and their recommendations for the accurate collection, analysis and management of qualitative and quantitative data. Furthermore, a presentation of UN-Habitat and UCLG approaches to data have been made through three different interventions. The meeting provided an insight where the cities are right now and how they are approaching the localization and modification of the indicators. City representatives presented the challenges faced to have accessible data to achieve SDG localization.

Several positive outcomes emerged from this session. Even though the production of, and access to, local reliable data is still complex and not feasible everywhere there was a general agreement that VLRs have proved fruitful for local governments to introduce new indicators. Likewise, it was stressed the need to have a balance between qualitative and quantitative data. Different city representatives and experts emphasized the need for good coordination of different levels of governments and effective multi-level governance in terms of data and indicators to gain an accurate snapshot of the existing reality. Furthermore, tracking SDG achievements enhances transparency and accountability and improves the policy making process at the local and regional levels.

OPENING REMARKS

Shipra Narang Suri, Chief Urban Practices Branch, UN-Habitat

Shipra Narang Suri assured that localization has never been so central as it is now due to COVID-19 pandemic. The discussion on data consistency is crucial as the VLR process gains momentum. She pointed out at three existing ways of data management for reporting based on defining indicators, non-traditional data through participatory process, and enhancing coordination with national counterparts.

Edgardo Bilsky, Research Unit Coordination, UCLG

Edgardo Bilsky reiterated the importance of data availability for gaining a snapshot of existing reality. Reflected on the amount of indicators governments are developing to track progress. He highlighted that VLRs have proved fruitful for local governments to introduce new indicators and the need to have a balance between the qualitative and quantitative data.



Data and Indicators in VLR and VSR processes' session

PRESENTATION OF UN-HABITAT AND UCLG APPROACHES TO DATA AND INDICATORS FOR SDG LOCALIZATION AND VLRS

Dyfed Aubrey, SDG Cities flagship coordinator: UN-Habitat approach to data and indicators for SDG localization

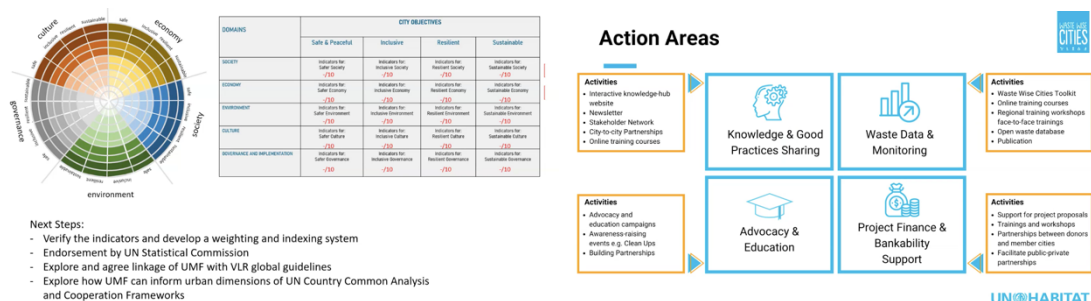
Dyfed Aubrey brought forward the need for a common system-wide strategy for sustainable development in which harmonized data that can be comparable. He presented the Urban Monitoring Framework (UMF) as a practical tool to support VLR and to accelerate SDG achievements.

Nao Takeuchi, Waste Management Expert, UN-Habitat

Nao Takeuchi illustrated the global challenges regarding waste and the lack of access to waste collection services. The Waste Wise Cities program helps municipality on waste management and it is a key tool on waste data and monitoring. She showed what has been done in Nairobi and highlighted that currently UN-Habitat is applying WaCT to 37 cities.

Maria Luz Ortega Carpio, Director, Andalusian Agency of International Development Cooperation (AACID): Report presentation on Comparative Study on SDGs monitoring systems at local and regional level

Maria Luz Ortega Carpio mentioned that the comparative study on SDG monitoring systems at local and regional levels developed by AACID, UCLG and UNDP is based on the premise that one of the weaknesses in localizing the SDGs was measuring the existing situation and progress made. The study found out that the production of, and access to, local reliable data is still complex and not feasible everywhere. She presented the objectives of the report and five strategic recommendations.



Slides from the presentations displayed in the session. **Left:** SDG Cities flagship coordinator: UN-Habitat approach to data and indicators for SDG localization. **Right:** Waste Wise Cities. **Center:** Comparative Study on SDGs monitoring systems at local and regional level

PANEL DISCUSSION

Moderated by **Ainara Fernandez, Research Officer at UCLG**

Bruna Starling, Advisor of Multilateral International Affairs and City Networks, Municipal Government of Sao Paulo, Brazil

Bruna Starling explained the institutionalization of the Agenda 2030 in Sao Paulo and that the VLR was the result of cooperative efforts to bring the Agenda 2030 to reality. She remarked that their project serves for improving the disaggregated data to develop a more inclusive society and reiterated the importance of horizontal cooperation between cities.

Frida Leander, Agenda 2030 Sustainability Strategist, City of Malmö, Sweden

Frida Leander underlined that their VLR concludes with a discussion on the availability of data and some recommendations for economic, social and political inclusion. She also reflected on Malmö's access to datasets and brought an example of the city-wide pilot project based on interviews among the Malmö residents.

Angela Kim, SDG Program and Data Manager at Mayor's Fund for Los Angeles, City of Los Angeles, USA

Angela Kim highlighted that indicators have flexibility to fit the needs of the city. Part of the localization has been to define what it means to leave no-one behind. For this, it is necessary data disaggregation and complementing the data with qualitative information from the residents.

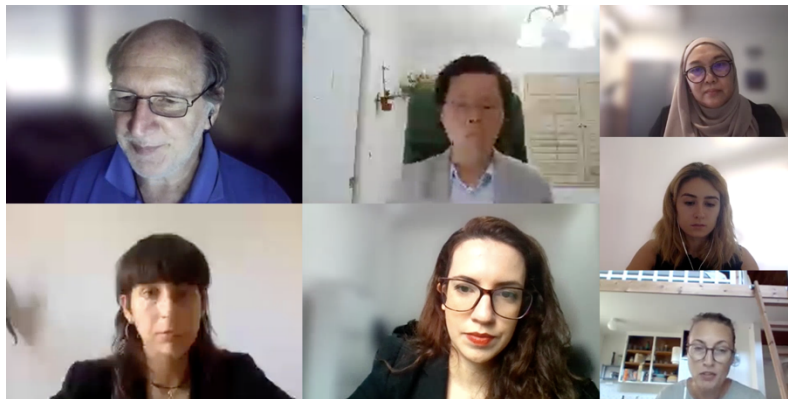
Norliza Hashim, Chief Executive, Urbanice Malaysia

Norliza Hashim mentioned the VLR, VSR and VNR they have submitted, as well as the launch of the Malaysia SDG Cities framework. She emphasized the importance to change the national into local language, and the combination of quantitative and qualitative city indicators. She shared some of the challenges Malaysia experiences in localizing the SDGs and stressed the relevance of a bottom-up approach.

CLOSING

Martino Miraglia, Human Settlement Officer and SDG Localization

Martino Miraglia concluded the session by stressing that creating new sources of data is key to adapt our policies to make them transformative, relevant and socially responsive. We have more challenges than opportunities ahead, but also lots of experiences, tools and resources emerging.



Data and Indicators in VLR and VSR processes' international panel speakers

Social Inclusion and Participatory Processes in VLRs and VSRs

July 16, 4–5.30pm CEST

[Access the session recording here](#)

Through participatory and inclusive processes, VLRs and VSRs have the potential to bring communities, vulnerable and traditionally excluded groups closer to decision-making at local level, making development responsive to communities' needs and priorities. The session on Participation and Social Inclusion in VLR and VSR Processes allowed stakeholders working on VLRs and VSRs to share best practices in community engagement through different stages of the review. The session facilitated exchanges of best practices and discussion of the importance of community involvement in the VLR process through a Q&A session with the audience, proving inspiration for participants looking to drive their own VLR–VSR journey.

From this session several learning and recommendations emerged to enhance inclusion and participation in the VLRs and VSR processes. VLR participatory processes have the potential to enhance transparency and accountability of local governments vis-à-vis local communities, hence contributing to strengthen the social contract. This has in turn the potential to make local government processes more transparent, more accessible, and more accountable to a greater number of people. It was emphasized that universal goals that have to be contextualized for their implementation. One of the recurrent problems highlighted in the VLR process is the fact that general awareness of SDGs is quite low among the society.

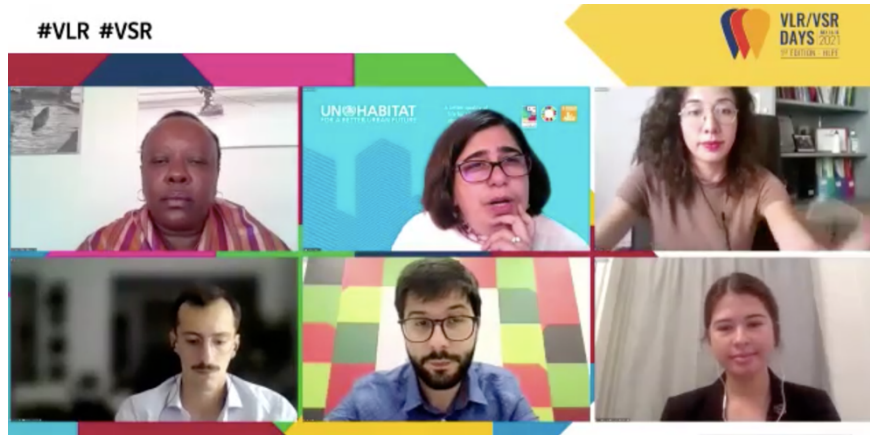
OPENING REMARKS

Shipra Narang Suri, Chief Urban Practices Branch, UN–Habitat

Shipra Narang Suri opened the session stressing the potential VLR and VSRs present to include communities, territorial stakeholder and marginalized groups to achieve SDGs and ensure a recovery process that is sustainable and people centered.

Amanda Flety, Coordinator of the UCLG Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights

Amanda Flety highlighted that bringing people into the VLR–VSR processes has promoted bottom–up mechanisms. Cities were better able to develop COVID–19 responses at the local level through stakeholder involvement. She stressed the importance of having cities that care for their communities to build back better.



Social inclusion and Participatory Processes in VLR and VSR processes' session

PANEL DISCUSSION

Moderator: Angela Mwaii, Chief, Human Rights and Social Inclusion Unit

Laura Kam, Network Manager, Hawai'i Green Growth

Laura Kam shared the experience of the Hawaiian VLR stressing the collaboration between the local government, the civil society sector, public-private partnerships and individuals to advance social and environmental goals. She brought forward innovative participatory mechanisms.

Allan Macleod, Operations and Stakeholder Manager, Bristol City Office

One city approach of the Bristol VLR as a way of engaging stakeholders and ensure social participation in the VLR process. At the same time, this has been central to COVID-19 recovery. The SDG alliance is a cross-sector stakeholder network of 170 members.

Christian Hübel, head of the Strategic Management Department of the City of Mannheim, Germany

Christian Hübel remarked that participation is in the city's DNA, as it is reflected in the Mannheim Declaration. It was suggested to look at new ways to get everybody involved, reflecting diversity in discussions. He reaffirmed the strive for innovation to better engage with society.

Luis Sáenz, National Coordinator, Red Ciudades Como Vamos Colombia

Luis Sáenz presented the mission of the network organization and their contribution to the development of effective and open local governments. The SDG target tool

helps cities using local data, and it is a usable tool to understand how the cities work towards the implementation of the SDGs.

Anna Koledova, VLR Specialist, UN-Habitat

Anna Koledova stressed the importance of participatory processes in the Moscow VLR. She emphasized important remarks about stakeholder’s involvement, the engagement with tools and key learning, problems found in the process and ways to inform and reach out to people.

The panel discussion was followed by a Q&A section in which participants actively engaged with panelists asking questions about the inclusion of stakeholders and other participatory processes, and shared best practices from their own experience.



Social inclusion and Participatory Processes in VLR and VSR processes’ international panel speakers

CLOSING

Martino Miraglia, Human Settlement Officer and SDG localization, UN-Habitat

Martino Miraglia provided a reflection on the outcomes of the first edition of the VLR–VSR days and the rampant growth of the VLR–VSR movement. He thanked local leadership for their experiences with participatory processes and support with regards to SDG localization, VLRs and VSRs.

Amanda Flety, Coordinator of the UCLG Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights

Amanda Flety wrapped up summarizing the inputs presented by each speaker. Encourages those engaging with VLR process to highlight social inclusion and to decrease social and economic inequalities.

Edgardo Bilsky, Head of Research, UCLG

Edgardo Bilsky reaffirmed that the VLR–VSR movement is recognized in an increasing number of countries. The strategic alliance has shown the strength to advocate for local governments in the localization process.



Closing remarks. Left: Amanda Flety. Center: Edgardo Bilsky. Right: MArtino Miraglia

Annex

Session 1: Towards a New Generation of VLRs: Exploring the Local-National Link.
Launch of the Second Volume of the UN-Habitat-UCLG Guidelines for VLRs and
Launch of the VLR Communiqué

Background

The Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) and Voluntary Subnational Reviews (VSRs) global community has been growing at an encouraging pace. When it was published, in July 2020, the first volume of the UCLG-UN-Habitat Guidelines analyzed just 37 VLRs available, while the second volume lists more than 67 full-fledged documents — this is rapid progress, in the span of just a few months. Local Governments Associations in nine countries have developed VSR in 2021, joining the movement initiated in 2020 by 6 countries.

VLRs and VSRs are changing the local-national dynamic. The VLR-VSR movement has increased the demand for institutional interaction between the local and national level. Several countries have established inter-institutional and cross-level mechanisms for different levels of government to work together, exchange data, practices, and techniques on the implementation of the SDGs. Demand for an effective multi-level dialogue and cooperation has been essential to expand the centrality and effectiveness of SDG localization.

VLRs and VSRs have revamped multi-level dialogue and have made national governments more aware of localization and the impact of local data and initiatives on national reviews, policy-making and long-term vision. VLRs have also shown how ready local governments have been to contribute as peers to SDG alignment and implementation.

Central governments have open new opportunities for engagement with local and regional governments, though new dialogue channels or direct support including resources or technical cooperation around the SDGs. VLRs and VSRs are having a major role in accelerating these processes.

UN-Habitat – UCLG VLR Series

Building on the long-standing existing partnership on advancing the localization of the SDGs, UN-Habitat and UCLG have further join forces to support the VLR and VSR global movement. To do so the two institutions have engaged in a process of research to offer local, regional and central governments with the most updated and cutting-edge information on VLRs and VSRs and key opportunities for exchange and peer learning: *the VLR Series*.

As part of the VLR Series, and following the publication of the first volume of the Guidelines for VLRs in July 2020, UN-Habitat and UCLG have developed a second volume exploring the relation between VLRs and VNRs. The second volume looks into the

existing multilevel connections between national and local SDGs reviews, and more largely for SDG localization. The guidelines hence propose a thematic analysis on some of the key dimensions or VLRs, looking at them through a multilevel governance perspective: ii) mainstreaming the SDGs; ii) data and indicators; iii) participatory process; iv) means of implementation. Moreover, the guidelines propose an overview of the existing international ecosystem supporting VLRs and VSRs, including the central role of UN agencies and the Associations of Local and Regional Governments. The guidelines conclude by proposing a series of recommendations to both local and national governments to strengthen their collaboration, specifically around the VLR and VNR processes.

Along with the second volume of the guidelines, UN-Habitat and UCLG, together with the partners that took part to the [Expert Group Meeting on VLRs organized in February 2021](#), have elaborate the [Voluntary Local Review Communiqué](#). The Communiqué is a recognizing the value of VLRs and their contribution to the national SDG review process, calling for national governments to work closing with their local counterparts, enhancing dialogue, resources and cooperation.

Objective of the event

The session will be the occasion to launch the second volume of the UN-Habitat-UCLG guidelines for VLRs entitles *Towards a new Generation of VLRs: Exploring the Local-National Link*. Along with the guidelines, the partners will also share the *VLR Communiqué*.

Throughout the session, the main findings and recommendations of the guidelines will be presented along with interventions from some of the key local and central governments that have inspired the research.

Agenda

Master of Ceremony: Shipra Narang Suri , Chief Urban Practices Branch, UN-Habitat	
Time CEST	Session
4.00 – 4.15pm	Opening Session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maimunah Mohd Sharif, UN-Habitat Executive Director • Emilia Saiz, UCLG Secretary General
4.15 – 4.45pm	Launch of the Vol.2 of the Guidelines for VLRs Martino Miraglia , Human Settlements Officer, SDG Localization and Local Governments, UN-Habitat & Ainara Fernández , Research Officer, UCLG <i>Finland – VLR-VNR live laboratory</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sami Pirkkala, Secretary General of Finnish National Commission on Sustainable Development ○ Mia Malin, Project Manager SDG at City of Helsinki
4.45 – 5.30pm	Panel Discussion Moderator: Edgardo Bilsky , Coordinator of UCLG Research Unit



	<p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alfredo González Reyes, Head of the 2030 Agenda, Mexican National Government, Mexico • Hüseyin Keskin, Mayor of Sultanbeyli, Turkey • Stefan Wagner, Head of Department of International Affairs, Bonn, Germany • Jonan Fernández Erdozia, General Secretary for Social Transition and 2030 Agenda, Basque Country, Spain • Ken Oluoch, Senior Programme Officer, Sustainable Development Goals Unit Council of Governors, Kenya • Junichi Fujino, Programme Director, Integrated Sustainability Center, IGES, Japan
5.30 – 5.45	<p>Launch of the VLR Communiqué</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carmen Sanchez-Miranda Galleo, Head of Office UN-Habitat Spain • Santiago Saura Martínez, Councillor for International Affairs and Cooperation of Madrid City Council, Spain
5.45 – 5.50	<p>Closing and Wrap-up</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mehmet Duman, Secretary General of UCLG-MEWA • Shipra Narang Suri, Chief Urban Practices Branch, UN-Habitat

Session 2: Metropolises and Voluntary Local Reviews: Launch of the VLR of the Metropolitan City of Florence

Background

Definition of metropolitan spaces vary depending on legal, administrative, political, economic or cultural criteria in the respective countries and regions. In March 2020, the UN Statistical Commission endorsed a global definition of cities to facilitate international comparison, looking at metropolitan spaces as a city and its commuting zone, which consists of suburban, periurban and rural areas economically and socially linked to the city.

In 2020 there are 1934 metropolises with more than 300,000 inhabitants representing approximately 60% of the world’s urban population. At least 2.59 billion people live in metropolises in 2020 which is equivalent to one third of the global population. 34 metropolises have surpassed 10 million inhabitants, and 1355 of 300,000 to 1 million. Despite Italy counts for 32 cities with more than 300,000 inhabitants, from an administrative perspective, Italian metropolitan cities (*città metropolitane*) have been formally established by law in 2014. The law defines 14 metropolitan spaces, including the Metropolitan City of Florence.

Metropolis around the world at the very center of global development, from an economic, demographic, environmental and cultural point of view. Hence, as the world continues to urbanize, sustainable development depends increasingly on the successful management of urban growth, and specifically of metropolis.

Globally, metropolitan governments have key responsibilities strictly linked to the promotion of territorial development and the implementation of the SDGs. In Italy, for example, metropolitan governments are responsible for the design of the development plan of the metropolitan spaces, for the coordination of public services, the promotion of social and economic development and the coordination of digital and information services. Moreover, metropolitan governments are becoming more and more key interlocutors with regional and national governments, hence completing the multilevel governance chain.

With this in mind, the Metropolitan City of Florence, with the scientific support of the University of Florence, ARCO (Action Research for CO-development) and Avventura Urbana, and with the technical assistance of UN-Habitat, has developed its very first Voluntary Local Review. The VLR was based on an extensive data analysis and participatory process that involved stakeholders from the different spaces and municipalities composing the Florence Metropolitan City. In addition, the VLR is set to define the context and the priorities that will inspire the Metropolitan Agenda 2030 (*Agenda Metropolitana 2030*), the strategic development plan of Florence Metropolitan City towards the implementation of the SDGs.

The session falls into the joint work that UN-Habitat, UCLG and Metropolis are conducting on the role of metropolises in implementing the Global Goals, with a particular look to Voluntary Local Reviews.

Objective of the event

Based on the example of the VLR of Florence Metropolitan Area, the session will be the occasion to discuss the role of metropolis in achieving the SDGs and on the specificities of their reporting and monitoring process through the VLR tool.

Agenda

Master of Ceremony: Shipra Narang Suri , Chief Urban Practices Branch, UN-Habitat	
Time CEST	Session
11.00 – 11.20am	Opening Session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letizia Perini, Councilor for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2030 of the Metropolitan City of Florence • Serena Spinelli, Councilor for Social Policies, Public Housing and International Cooperation, Region of Tuscany • Anna Calvete, Research Officer, UCLG
11.20 – 12.20am	Moderator: Oscar Chamat , Policy and Research Officer, Research Unit, Metropolis Presentation of the VLR of Metropolitan City of Florence (20 min) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mario Biggeri, University of Florence • Andrea Ferrannini, Coordinator Local Development Unit, ARCO (Action Research for CO-development) International Guests (40 min)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aissata Camara, Deputy Commissioner for Operations and Strategic Partnerships, New York City • Mariana Cammisa, Strategic Coordination and Monitoring Manager, Buenos Aires, Argentina • Miquel Rodriguez Planas, Commissioner for Agenda 2030, Barcelona • Farah Andita Ramdhani, Head of International Cooperation Section, Surabaya City Government, Indonesia
	Q&A
12.20 – 12.30pm	Closing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loredana Magni, Senior Development Cooperation Adviser at the Directorate General for Development Cooperation, Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Session 3: Voluntary Subnational Reviews

New modalities of local and regional government involvement in monitoring and reporting are being developed. Eight countries prepared Voluntary Subnational Reviews (VSRs) or Local Governments Voluntary Reviews in 2021: Cape Verde, Germany, Indonesia, Mexico, Norway, Sweden, Tunisia and Zimbabwe. These reports build on the experiences of the six countries in which VSRs were developed in 2020. In total, fifteen VSRs have been elaborated in two years, since Ecuador has prepared two VSRs. The VSRs', which are led by local and regional governments' associations, advance an innovative approach to SDG monitoring and reporting. This innovative approach differs from Voluntary Local Reviews in that VSRs provide country-wide analyses of subnational efforts and challenges to localize the SDGs. VSRs analyse the efforts of local and regional governments to align the SDGs with local development plans and present an assessment of the extent to which institutional environments enable SDG localization—which includes the evaluation of the means of implementation available to support these localization processes. VLRs and VSR are revamping the dialogue between LRGs, their associations, national governments and international institutions.

The aim of this session is to present the main findings of the VSR developed in 2021, and to allow representatives from national governments and partners to share their first reactions to the reports.


Agenda

Master of Ceremony: José Álvarez , Policy and Advocacy Officer	
Time CEST	Session
15.00 – 15.15am	Opening Session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carlos Martinez, Mayor of Soria, Special Invoice of UCLG for the New Urban Agenda • Maimunah Mohd Sharif, Executive Director of UN-Habitat • July Moyo, Ministry of Local Government and Public Works, Zimbabwe

15.15 – 16.50am	<p>Moderator: Edgardo Bilsky, Head of Research, UCLG</p> <p>Zimbabwe</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr Alderman David Guy Mutasa, President of Zimbabwe Local Governments Association (ZILGA) <p>Norway</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr Bjoern Arild Gram, President of the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS) • Respondent: H.E. Mr Nikolai Astrup, Minister for Local Government and Modernization (video) <p>Cape Verde</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr Herménio Fernandes, President of the National Association of Municipalities of Cabo Verde (ANMCV) • Respondent: Dr Gilson Gomes Pina, Director of National Planning Department <p>Indonesia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr Bima Arya Sugiarto, M.A., Mayor of Bogor City and President of the Association of Municipalities of Indonesia (APEKSI) • Respondent: Dr Vivi Yulaswati, MSc. – Head of the National SDGs Secretariat of Bappenas (Ministry of Planning) <p>Mexico</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr César Garza Villarreal, Mayor of Apodaca, President of the National Conference of Municipalities of Mexico (CONAMM) and Co-President of FLACMA • Respondent: Mr Alfredo González Reyes, Responsible of the Agenda 2030 of Mexico, Government of Mexico <p>Sweden</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms Carola Gunnarson, Mayor of Sala, Vice-President of the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR) • Respondent: Ms Mia Crawford, Deputy Director at the Global Agenda Department, Ministry for Foreign Affairs <p>Tunisia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr Adnen Bouassida, Mayor of Raoued, President of the National Federation of Municipalities of Tunisia (FNCT) • Respondent: Mr. Mokhtar Hammami, Former Ministry of Local Affairs <p>Germany</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms Sabine Drees, Department of European and International Affairs, German Association of Cities (<i>Deutscher Städtetag</i>) • Respondent: Mr Marc Wolinda, Manager Transfer and Scale, Bertelsmann-Stiftung
16.50 – 17.00pm	<p>Closing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Edgardo Bilsky, Head of Research, UCLG • Emilia Saiz, Secretary General, UCLG

Session 4: Data and Indicators in VLR and VSR processes

Background



Since its adoption in 2015, the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs came with a formal mechanism of quantitative monitoring that built on a complex system of indicators, developed by the IAEG-SDGs. The system includes 232 statistical indicators. The Expert Group took on the challenge of providing each one of them with adequate methodological rigor and detail to be universally available — a must-do for an agenda which is naturally transversal and all-encompassing.

Since the earliest moment, however, the system has posed several challenges in terms of data accessibility for other tiers of governance and subnational authorities. Disaggregation of most indicators at the local level is either incomplete or unavailable in many local contexts across most regions of the world.

This mismatch — the fact that some 65% of the actual Goals and targets cannot possibly be achieved without the contribution of local and regional governments, and that the very system created to monitor this achievement cannot be fully accessed and adopted by local governments because it lacks actual data, disaggregation and technical knowhow — has been at the core of the debate on indicators and the implementation of the Agenda since its inception, and it substantially affects localization too.

This debate has become even more central with the growing application of voluntary local reviews. Though VLRs cities and local governments have advanced reflections around data environments at local level, not only in terms of defining appropriate indicators to measure SDG progresses, but through the increased coordination with national counterparts – and specifically national statistical offices. VLRs allowed to complement existing information at national level with city level data. Though the participatory process involving local communities and stakeholders, cities were also able to collect non-traditional and qualitative data, often filling the gaps left by national datasets.

With this in mind, UN-Habitat has been traditionally engaged in supporting data environments at local level – with initiatives such as the City Prosperity Index. More recently, UN-Habitat has been tasked by the UN General Assembly to lead the development of a harmonized set of indicators to track the progress of the SDGs and the New Urban Agenda at the local level - **the *Global Urban Monitoring Framework (UMF)***. Developed in consultation with a wide range of partners, the UMF harmonizes existing indexes, while incorporating rural-urban linkages and the principle of leaving no one behind.

The UMF is at the basis of UN-Habitat’s approach to data and indicators for SDG localization, and specifically of the Agency’s work on **Voluntary Local Reviews and SDG Cities flagship initiative**. In addition, the UMF is being digitized through a partnership

with the Global CEO Alliance into a data entry and indexing system that allows cities to measure development performance. This is piloted through the SDG Cities Initiative and will be rolled out worldwide once the UMF is formally endorsed by the UN Statistical Commission in the first half of 2022.

As a core set of urban indicators, the UMF is envisaged to be efficient – not be a burden on cities; effective – able to assist cities to track how they are progressing in their efforts to meet the SDGs and New Urban Agenda commitments and inform action; and, harmonised – data should be comparable. It can be complemented with additional sets of indicators allowing deeper thematic analysis, and with geo-spatial and local perception indicators to understand differences experienced at district and sub-district levels of cities.

In complementarity with the UMF, and in support of VLR and SDG Cities, UN-Habitat developed the **Waste Wise City Tool: Step by Step Guide to Assess City Municipal Solid Waste Management Performance** through SDG 11.6.1 indicator monitoring. It consists of a rapid city waste assessment tool that can help cities to track progress against the Waste Management related SDGs (SDG 11.6.1, 12.3.1.b, 12.5.1). The tool quantifies Municipal Solid Waste generated, collected and managed in controlled facilities by the city together with waste composition. The tool allows cities not only to monitor and report on SDG 11.6, but on 12.3.1.b food waste loss and 12.5.1 recycling rate. A strong linkage was made with another tool called Waste Flow Diagram developed by GIZ, that estimates the plastic leakage from municipal solid waste management systems. With application so far in Nairobi and Mombasa, Kenya, UN-Habitat now aims to scale up its approach to help 50 other cities—including Lagos, Karachi, Manila, Jakarta, Dar es Salaam, Santo Domingo, and Lima—as they develop plans for improved municipal solid waste collection. Using the concept of SDG 11.6.1, UN-Habitat and UNEP will also soon publish a global modelling of marine litter hotspot cities that require urgent waste management intervention.

To contribute to the debate on the state of art of the localization of the indicators, a **Comparative study on SDG monitoring systems at local and regional level** developed jointly by different partners (Andalusian Agency of International Development Cooperation, the Provincial Government of Barcelona, UNDP and UCLG), will make the point of the progress made by different initiatives in different countries.

Agenda

Time CEST	Session
11.00 – 11.15am	Opening Session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shipra Narang, Chief Urban Practices Branch, UN-Habitat • Edgardo Bilsky, Research Unit Coordinator, UCLG
11.15 – 11.40am	Presentation of UN-Habitat approach to data and indicators for SDG localization and VLRs

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dyfed Aubrey, SDGs Cities flagship coordinator: UN-Habitat approach to data and indicators for SDG localizations – SDG Cities-UMF-VLRs • Nao Takeuchi, Waste Management Expert: Waste Wise Cities Tool (WaCT): localizing waste SDG • María Luz Ortega Carpio, Director, Andalusian Agency of International Development Cooperation (AACID): Report presentation on Comparative Study on SDGs monitoring systems at local and regional level
11.40am – 12.30pm	<p>Panel Discussion</p> <p>Moderator: Aina Fernández, Research Officer at UCLG</p> <p>Speakers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bruna Starling, Advisor of Multilateral International Affairs and City Networks, Municipal Government of Sao Paulo, Brazil • Frida Leander, Agenda 2030 Sustainability Strategist, Agenda 2030 Sustainability Strategist, City of Malmo, Sweden • Angela Kim, SDG Program and Data Manager at Mayor's Fund for Los Angeles, City of Los Angeles, USA • Norliza Hashim, Chief Executive, Urbanice Malaysia <p>Q&A</p>

Session 5: Social Inclusion and Participatory Processes in VLRs and VSRs

Background

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development commits to *leave no-one behind*. The development of Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) and Voluntary Subnational Reviews (VSR) is an ideal opportunity to strengthen and translate this principle into reality. Through participatory and inclusive processes, VLRs and VSRs have the potential to bring communities, vulnerable and traditionally excluded groups closer to decision-making at local level, making development responsive to communities' needs and priorities.

VLRs and VSRs collect a wealth of information on policies, practices and initiatives with which local communities have advanced significantly in the achievement of the SDGs in their territories. Each of these contributions provides knowledge, lessons and relatable experiences that may also guide more and more local governments as they approach the 2030 Agenda and look to be part of a larger constituency of like-minded institutions. The VLRs, however, also contribute a lot of information in terms of process and examples; the way in which the community, the residents, the associations and all the local stakeholders were involved in the creation of the review, its adoption and approval, or its diffusion and promotion, are as important as the knowledge on the initiatives that these groups have undertaken in their cities and regions.

VLR participatory processes have the potential to enhance transparency and accountability of local governments vis-à-vis local communities, hence contributing to strengthen the social contract. Moreover, by consulting and including civil society and territorial stakeholders, the VLR-VSR process contribute to create and

access nontraditional and qualitative data, often filling the gaps left by missing data and statistics. UN-Habitat and UCLG recognize that data collection, monitoring and reporting as a key processes to amplify the experiences and voices of everyone, *leaving no-one behind*.

Objective of the session

The session will be the occasion to allow stakeholder that are working on VLRs and VLRs to share best practices in community engagement throughout the different stages of the review, sharing the processes and results of their participatory and inclusive process. The exchange of best practices will be enriched by a question and answer session in which cities interested in undertaking VLRs can learn on how to meaningfully engage community members in developing and implement the VLRs and VSRs.

Agenda

Time CEST	Session
16.:00 – 16:15pm	<p>Opening Session</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shipra Narang Suri, Chief Urban Practices Branch, UN-Habitat • Amanda Flety, Coordinator of the UCLG Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights
16:15 – 17:20pm	<p>Session</p> <p>Moderator: Angela Mwaii, Chief, Human Rights and Social Inclusion Unit</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christian Hübel, head of the Strategic Management Department of the City of Mannheim, Germany • Laura Kam, Network Manager, Hawai'i Green Growth • Allan Macleod, Operations and Stakeholder Manager, Bristol City Office • Luis Sáenz, National Coordinator, Red Ciudades Como Vamos Colombia • Anna Koledova, VLR Specialist, UN-Habitat <p>Q&A</p>
17:20 – 17:30pm	<p>Closing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amanda Flety, Coordinator of the UCLG Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights • Martino Miraglia, Human Settlement Officer and SDG Localization, UN-Habitat