



# **Voluntary Local Reviews and Voluntary Subnational Reviews Days**

*Advancing the local implementation of the SDGs*

14 - 16 July 2021  
High-Level Political Forum

## **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 VSR are powerful tool to advance the localization of the SDGs. They are not only a monitoring and reporting tool to assess Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) advancements at the local level but over the past years have also demonstrated to be stimulating and driving local action to implement the SDGs. The VLR and VSR processes strengthen coordination, accountability, transparency, cooperation (horizontal and vertical), participation and awareness of the Goals, significantly contributing to boost local efforts to solve urgent local issues, create partnerships, and advance priorities related to equity and sustainability.

VLRs and VSRs are drivers of innovation. No standardized review process exists, and implementation is not enforced by any agency. VLRs and VSRs are an innovation by and for the cities to advance progress on their local priorities. VSRs contribute to empower local and regional governments associations to support local ownership.

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.

Examples of cooperation between VLRs, VSRs and Voluntary National Reviews (VNR) exist. National governments worldwide have cooperated with local and regional governments in the process leading to their VNR and/or included VLRs in the national review document. But there is a long way to go. There is



the need to clearly identify how to capture the value that VLRs-VSRs and VNRs can add to one another, creating co-ownership by local authorities and stakeholders of national reporting, and vice versa.

The relevance of VLRs is increasingly recognized. VLRs are being included and recognized in key official documents. For instance, the draft resolution of the UN General Assembly for the revision of the High Level Political Forum mechanism mentions VLRs and encourages Regional Commissions to include cities and VLRs in the Regional Forums. UNDESA's Handbook for VNR also includes reference to VLRs.

VLRs and VSRs do not have an official role in the HLPF yet. VLRs are not recognized as official tools to report on the progress of SDGs at the level of HLPF and do not have a place for presentation and discussion in the official agenda of the Forum. Nevertheless, the issue of local action has gained increasing importance in the Forum through key political events such as the Local and Regional Governments Forum. This mainly thanks to the tireless work of partners such as UCLG, UNDESA, UNDP and UN-Habitat.

UN-Habitat and UCLG have been working together to support VLRs and VSRs. The two institutions have joined forces to provide local governments and stakeholders with cutting-edge knowledge and exchange opportunities on VLRs. Building on this alliance, UN-Habitat and UCLG are organizing the VLR-VSR Days to discuss most recent developments related to VLRs and VSRs, bringing together key partners from the globe. The results of the discussion will directly feed into the organization of the World Urban Forum taking place in June 2022, as the main UN Forum on the local implementation of the SDGs and VLRs.

## **Purpose of the VLR-VSR Days**

The objective of the VLR-VSR Days is to provide a space for exchange, mutual learning and common reflection for all governments and stakeholders engaged in advancing the localization, monitoring and reporting of the SDGs.

Specifically, the VLR-VSR Days aim at:

- Presenting and discussing the most recent advances on VLRs and VSRs;
- Fostering exchanges and identifying innovations in the development and use of the VLR-VSR tool;
- Presenting and discussing the most recent advances in terms of VLR related guidelines and tools;
- Creating momentum and raising awareness about VLRs-VSRs and SDG localization;
- Providing opportunities for partnership building among stakeholders;
- Raising awareness about the importance of local action vis-à-vis national governments and international institutions.

The results of the discussions will help to create a roadmap towards the 11<sup>th</sup> edition of the World Urban Forum as the main UN Forum on SDG localization and VLRs. WUF 11 will take place in June 2022 in Katowice (Poland).



## Tentative Agenda

UN-Habitat and UCLG will organize key joint events along the three days of discussions. Other side events will be organized based on the engagement and interest of respective partners, jointly or independently.

Days/Time (CEST)	July 14	July 15	July 16
<b>Morning</b>		<b>11.00am – 12.30pm</b> <i>Metropolises and VLRs: Launch VLR Metropolitan City of Florence</i>	<b>11.00am – 12.30pm</b> <i>Data and Indicators in VLRs and VSR processes</i>
<b>Afternoon</b>	<b>4.00pm – 6.00pm</b> <i>Launch of the VLR Guidelines Vol.2</i> + <i>Launch of VLR Communique'</i>	<b>3.00pm – 5.00pm</b> <i>Voluntary Subnational Reviews Session</i>	<b>4.00pm – 5.30pm</b> <i>Social Inclusion and participatory processes in VLR and VSR</i>