Economic and Social Council

Economic Commission for Africa
Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development
Ninth session

Niamey (hybrid), 28 February–2 March 2023
Item 5 (b) of the provisional agenda[*]
Plenary round-table panels on national and subnational actions and reviews to speed up and scale up implementation in Africa: voluntary subnational reviews and peer learning to bolster local action

Information and guidelines for the plenary round-table panel on voluntary subnational reviews and peer learning to bolster local action

I. Date, time and venue

1. The plenary round-table panel will be held on 1 March 2023, from 9 to10.30 a.m., in the Plenary Hall, Mahatma Gandhi International Conference Centre.

II. Introduction

2. Governments of such subnational entities as cities, towns, municipalities, counties and districts are uniquely placed to accelerate implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, of the African Union. Actions at the local level are crucial to localizing the two agendas and mobilizing the effective engagement of local communities, which are at the front line and the beneficiaries of action to implement the two agendas. Moreover, action at the local level easily lends itself to integrated implementation to bring about real, tangible change to people's lives and environments, thereby ensuring that no one is left behind.

3. The Economic Commission for Africa, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Cities and Local Governments of Africa and other key partners have therefore teamed up to support voluntary local reviews in Africa. This includes through the development and roll-out of Africa-specific guidelines for voluntary local reviews and a corresponding template. To date, more than 20 localities in Africa have carried out or are carrying out a voluntary local review. The reviews have proven benefits: they raise awareness, localize and strengthen the engagement of various stakeholders and boost local action to implement the two agendas. They also represent grass-roots approaches to adopting the tenets of the two agendas and can be adapted to the needs and priorities of the localities undertaking the reviews.

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[*] ECA/RFSD/2023/1.

4.   Given the slow progress made in implementing the two agendas, voluntary local reviews will be key to deepening the localization and scaling up the implementation of the two agendas and to promoting action-oriented intervention and investment that deliver measurable results for the lives of the people and the planet.

III. Objectives

5.   The objectives of the round-table panel are as follows:

(a)   To facilitate and showcase the benefits of peer-to-peer learning and identify ways to strengthen and roll-out voluntary local reviews at all subnational levels to drive local and national implementation amid the various crises that have taken place;

(b)   To identify and build on links between national and local review processes, stakeholders and policies;

(c)   To reflect on and make recommendation at both the 2023 high-level political forum on sustainable development and the Sustainable Development Goals Summit to strengthen the review of, follow-up to and support for voluntary local reviews.

IV. Guidelines

6.   The following guidelines will apply to the plenary round-table panel discussion:

(a)   The Chair will outline the aforementioned objectives of the discussion and introduce the moderator and panel members listed in section V. The Chair will then yield to the moderator, who will guide the discussion among the panellists and other participants;

(b)   The moderator will invite each panellist to speak for no longer than five minutes in response to one or more of the following questions:

(i)   What are some of the good practices and lessons learned from the review of and follow-up to voluntary local reviews?

(ii)   What are some of the local-level policies and programmes that have been designed or reformulated since the voluntary local review to localize the two agendas and speed up their implementation in your city or locality?

(iii)   What are the roles of local governments and authorities in driving progress towards the two agendas?

(iv)   What are the guidelines and tools that you have used to carry out or support reviews in your city or locality, and what priority support measures do you believe are needed to enhance the effective application and roll-out of the guidelines and tools?

(v)   What measures and changes do you recommend should be raised during the 2023 high-level political forum on sustainable development and the 2023 Sustainable Development Goals Summit to strengthen voluntary local reviews so that they better address the various crises and accelerate the delivery of sustainable development?

(vi)   What mechanisms exist to involve grass-roots stakeholders in ensuring progress on sustainable development? What best practices have been applied in voluntary local reviews to

incorporate grass-roots stakeholders into the process? What improvements need to be made?

(vii) Since voluntary local reviews have focused mainly on progress in implementing the 2030 Agenda at the local level, what opportunities do voluntary local reviews provide to monitor performance on other global and regional agendas, such as: Agenda 2063; the Paris Agreement on climate change; the International Decade for Action, "Water for Sustainable Development", 2018–2028; and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030?

(viii) How have the voluntary local reviews contributed to the national data landscape and what measures should be taken to improve the evidence base to better inform policies and better monitor the two agendas?

(c)   The moderator will guide an interactive discussion among the panellists and will give representatives of the countries and localities conducting voluntary local reviews in 2023 the opportunity to pose questions to representatives of localities that have previously participated in the review process;

(d)   The moderator will invite questions and comments from the floor;

(e)   At the end of the discussion, the moderator will summarize the key policy messages, including the recommendations made, before yielding to the Chair, who will conclude the round-table panel discussion.

V.   Chair, moderator and panellists

7.   The chair, moderator and panellists for the round-table panel discussion will be as follows:

Venue: Plenary Hall, Mahatma Gandhi International Conference Centre

Chair: Chair of the Bureau of the ninth session of the Forum

Moderator: Regional Director for Africa, United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), Oumar Sylla

Panellists:

- Mayor, Bassila, Benin, Tassou Zachari;

- First Vice-President, Niamey City Council, Habiboulaye Zanga;

- Founder, *Gold Ribbon* Initiative, and member, Local2030 Coalition, Esther Muiruri;

- Chief Executive Officer, Brikama Area Council, the Gambia, Modou Jonga;

- Founder, *Black Girl's Dream* Initiative, Karimot Odebode;

- Regional Representative, East Africa Regional Office, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Marcel Akpovo.

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