Mainstreaming the Right to Development in Voluntary National Review (VNR) Reporting for Realizing the Sustainable Development Goals

Online Workshop

28 and 29 November 2023
(1400 GMT – 1700 GMT)

Application Deadline: 15 November 2023

Lead Instructor:

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The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the University for Peace are jointly offering an online workshop comprising two half-day sessions (3 hours each) to train stakeholders on mainstreaming the right to development in Voluntary National Review (VNR) reporting for realizing the Sustainable Development Goals.

Description of the Workshop

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development aims to make sustainable development a lived reality for everyone, everywhere. To realize its objectives, the Agenda incorporates 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which are accompanied by 169 targets to be achieved by 2030. The 2030 Agenda reaffirms the right to development (RTD) and is informed by the 1986 United Nations Declaration on the Right to Development. Its implementation presents a significant impetus in terms of operationalizing this right in implementing the SDGs, with a view to realizing both the RTD and the SDGs in a mutually reinforcing manner. The Expert Mechanism on the Right to Development (EMRTD) has highlighted this symbiotic relationship and has explained that operationalization of the RTD in all aspects of and processes for realizing the SDGs is indispensable to ensure success of the Agenda because this right moves away from a charity-based model of development (including development cooperation) to one based on development understood as a human right of all individuals and peoples, and one which also entails the duty of international cooperation on States.
The 2030 Agenda commits States to engaging in systematic follow-up and review of its implementation through a “robust, voluntary, effective, participatory, transparent and integrated” framework to help States maximize and track progress in implementation. It enumerates several principles that guide the follow-up and review processes at all levels. At the global level, the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on sustainable development meeting under the auspices of the ECOSOC plays a central role in overseeing those processes and builds on the Voluntary National Reviews undertaken by States. These regular reviews by the HLPF are voluntary, state-led, undertaken by both developed and developing countries, and involve multiple stakeholders.

In this regard, detailed guidelines have been published under the auspices of the HLPF as well as by non-governmental organizations. As the EMRTD noted, many of the principles therein, including multi-stakeholder engagement and free, meaningful and active participation, as well as leaving no one behind, are inherent to the RTD. In these guidelines, countries are exhorted to be specific about the main challenges and difficulties they face in implementing the SDGs and encouraged to provide an analysis of the causes of these challenges and difficulties and how they foresee overcoming those barriers. In particular, the guidelines recommend that review processes should include a discussion on how the 62 means of implementation targets separately identified in the 2030 Agenda are mobilized, what the difficulties encountered are and what additional resources are needed to implement the 2030 Agenda, looking at the full range of financing sources (public/private, domestic/international) and non-financing means of implementation, such as capacity development and data needs, technology, and partnerships. The EMRTD has exhorted States conducting VNRs to ensure that obstacles to the mobilization of the means of implementation that emanate from the failure of States to discharge their duty to cooperate individually or collectively are also identified and reported. The thematic reviews conducted by the HLPF can consider cross-cutting obstacles to mobilization of the means of implementation only if VNRs adequately identify and report them.

A review of the VNRs thus far submitted have, however, not demonstrated a systematic and widespread operationalization of the normative principles of the RTD in the related preparation, elaboration and review processes. The RTD itself is explicitly referred to in only a few VNRs. As a result, information and knowledge necessary for overcoming the obstacles to the realization of the SDGs are not adequately generated. This workshop therefore aims at identifying good practices necessary for operationalizing and mainstreaming the RTD in all aspects of the VNR processes to support a better realization of the 2030 Agenda.
Modalities

The workshop will be led by an instructor, joined by invited experts, and will be delivered over a period of 2 half-days on 28 and 29 November 2023, to around 125 participants involved in the preparation, elaboration or review of the VNRs, including representatives from Governments, the UN system, NGOs, NHRIs, academia, students and others. It will involve examination of case studies to identify good practices on different dimensions of operationalizing and mainstreaming the RTD in VNRs.

Participants successfully attending the full workshop will receive a certificate from the organizers.

Who Should Apply

The workshop is intended for staff members of governmental, intergovernmental, and nongovernmental organizations, development practitioners, human rights practitioners and defenders, academics, students, and others engaged in the preparation, elaboration or review of VNRs.

Course Fee

This course is offered free of charge.

Application Procedure

To enrol, candidates must fill up the application form at https://www.upeace.org/specialforms/rtd-vnr. The deadline for submission of applications is 15 November 2023. Candidates will be selected on a first-come-first-served basis, combined with merit taking into account professional, geographical, and gender diversity. For any additional information, please write to hrc@upeace.org.