

Preparation for VNR – Guidelines, Experiences and Good Examples

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Principles of Voluntary National Reviews

Voluntary

encourage reporting and include developed and developing countries

State-led

country driven reviews of progress at national and sub-national levels

Platform for partnerships

including through the participation of major groups and other relevant stakeholders

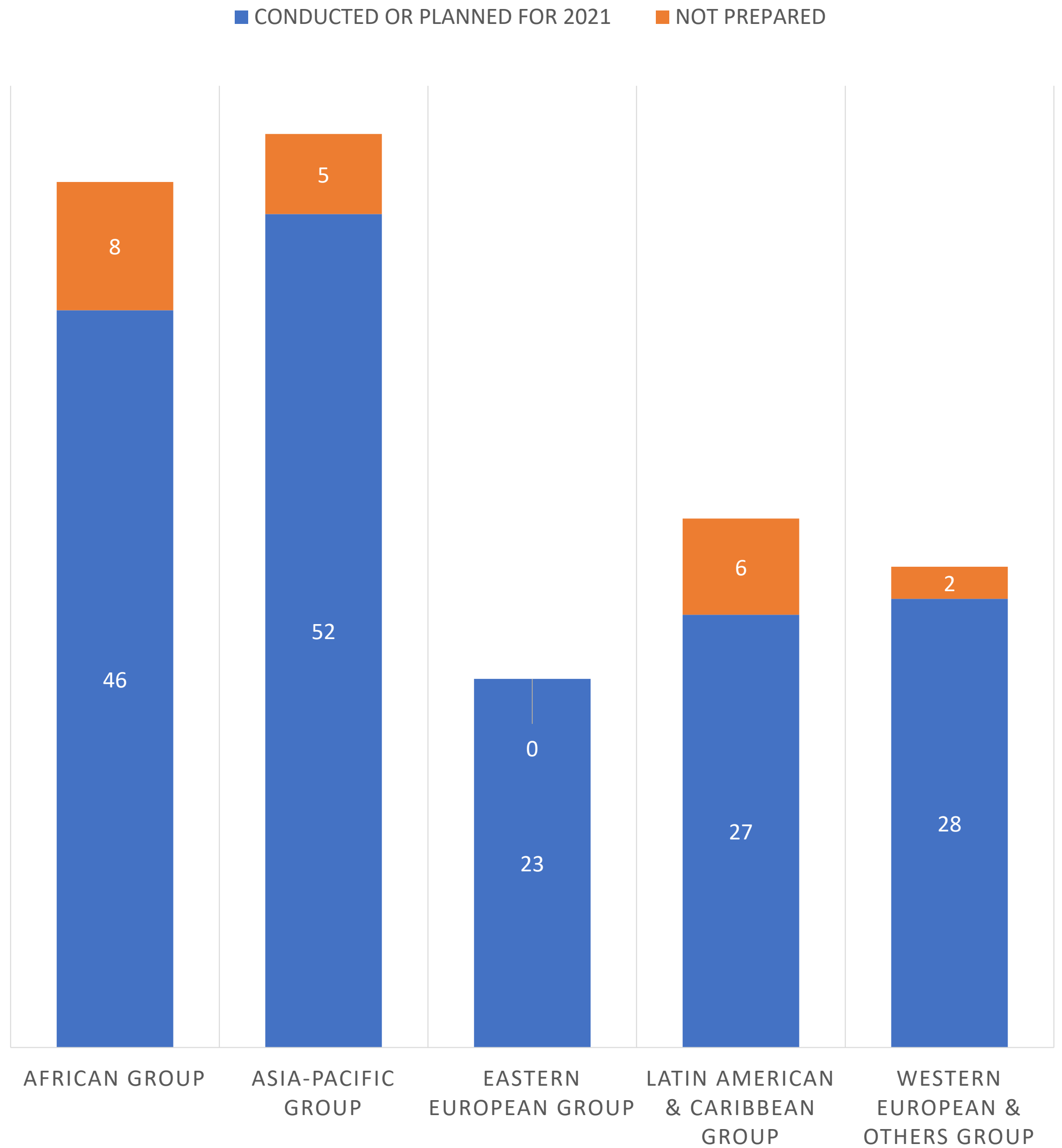
Learning experience

facilitate the sharing of experiences, including successes, challenges and lessons learned, part of a process

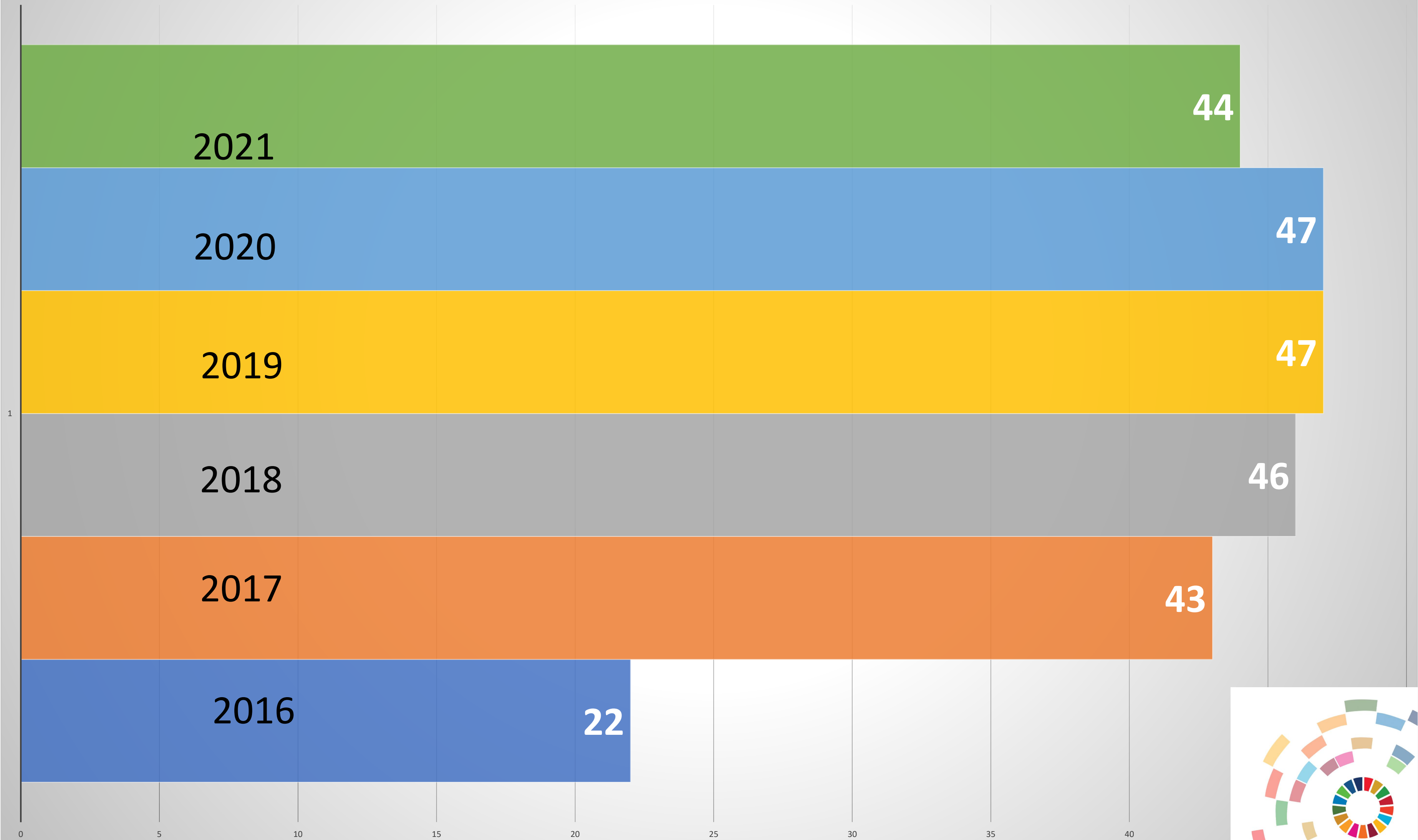
National circumstances

reviews in accordance with national circumstances, policies and priorities, together with relevant partners

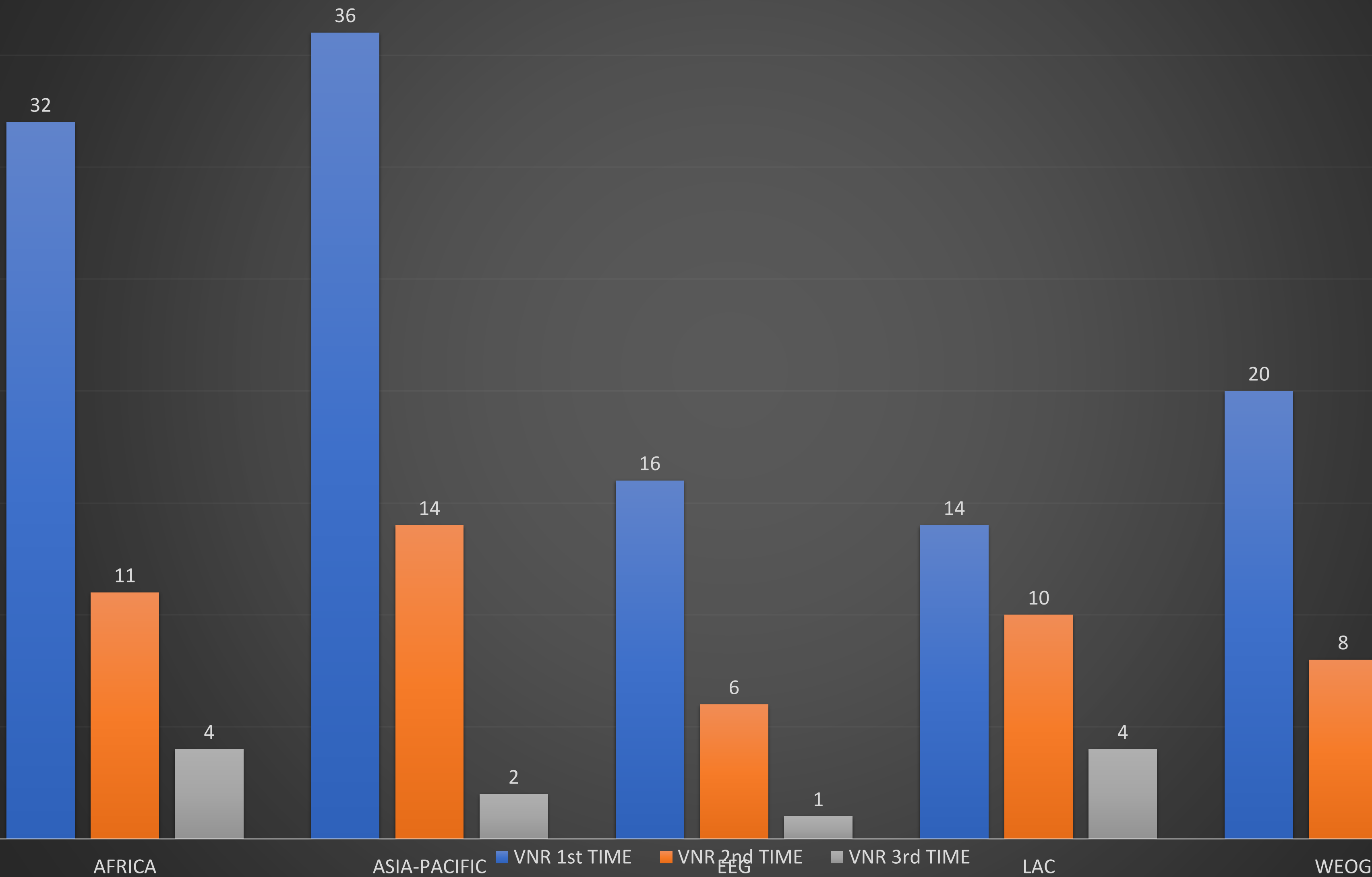
NUMBER OF COUNTRIES THAT HAVE PRESENTED OR WILL PRESENT IN 2021



NUMBER OF VNRs PER YEAR 2016 - 2021



VNRs 1st, 2nd, 3rd Time Presenters by REGION 2016 to 2021



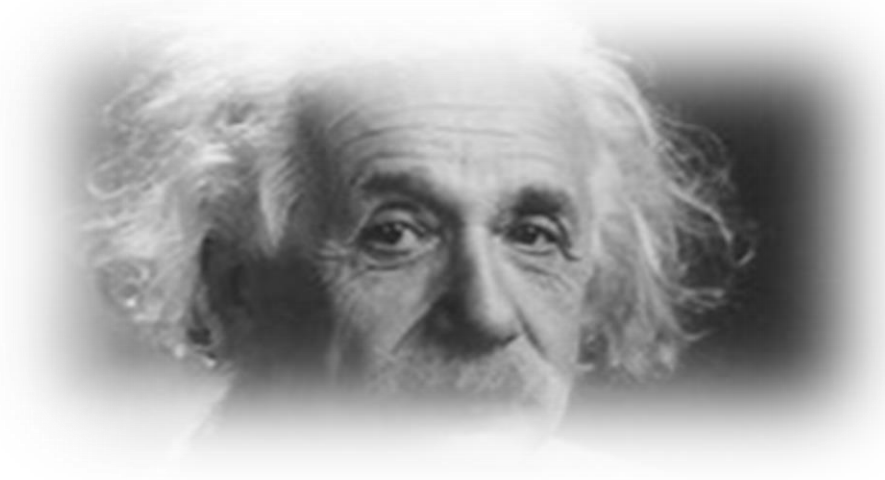
2021 VNR COUNTRIES – 44

9 – 1st timers; 25 – 2nd timers; 10 – 3rd timers



NUMBER OF TIMES PRESENTING	AFRICA	ASIA PACIFIC	EASTERN EUROPE	WESTERN EUROPE AND OTHERS	LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN
First timers	Angola	DPRK Marshall Islands Myanmar		San Marino	Antigua and Barbuda Bolivia Cuba Nicaragua
Second timers	Cabo Verde Chad Madagascar Namibia Niger Tunisia Zimbabwe	Afghanistan Bhutan China Iraq Japan Lao Malaysia Saudi Arabia Thailand	Czech Republic	Cyprus Denmark Germany Norway Spain Sweden	Bahamas Dominican Republic Paraguay
Third Timers	Egypt Sierra Leone	Indonesia Qatar	Azerbaijan		Colombia Guatemala Mexico Uruguay

WHY UNDERTAKE A VNR?



The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results

- **CHANGES MINDSETS** – transformative actions
- **CATALYZER** –meaningfully engaging all relevant stakeholders in SDG implementation through “Whole of Society” approach
- **“WHOLE-OF-GOVERNMENT” APPROACH** –obtaining buy-in from civil servants and creating incentives for integrated policy-making and service delivery
- **STOCKTAKING** – mapping existing policies and their compatibility with the SDGs, and identifying implementation gaps, data availability, establishing baselines and assessing capacity of national statistic systems for data collection and use
- **COORDINATION** –institutional arrangements made for VNRs have proved useful for SDG implementation and have made institutions stronger and embedded VNRs into institutions reporting to other mechanisms and conventions
- **INTEGRATION** – integration of SDGs into national development plans, aligning with budgets and identifying financial frameworks, integration of all three dimensions of sustainable development
- **IMPLEMENTATION** – chance to assess progress and strengthen M&E including through parliaments and supreme audit institutions

WHY UNDERTAKE A VNR? (cont)

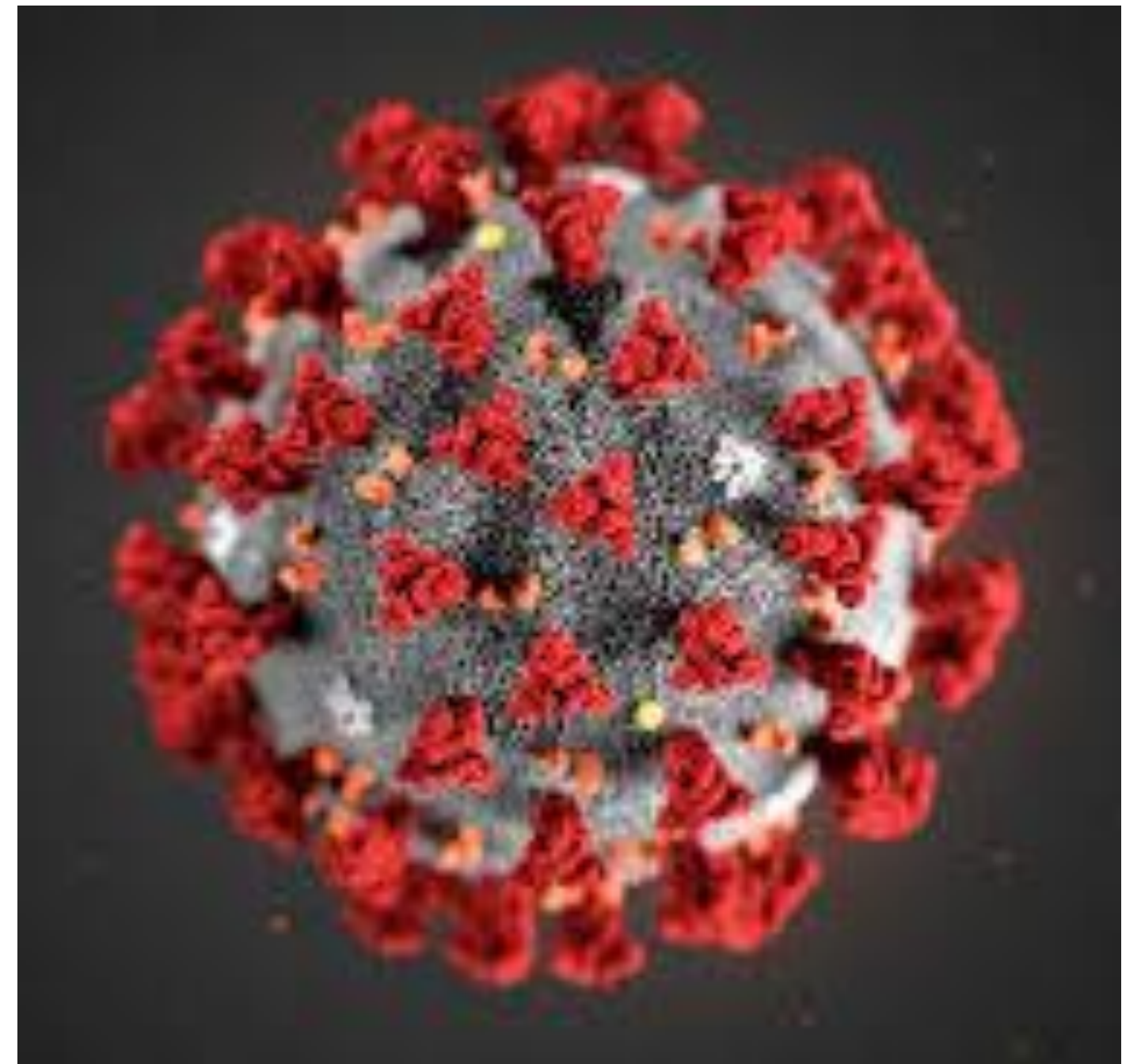
- **RECOVERY FROM COVID** – space to take stock of measures implemented for sustainable recovery and accelerated actions
- **SUPPORT** –tool for identifying and communicating the areas in which the country requires additional support for implementation
- **PARTNERSHIPS** – the VNR process can be a great opportunity to forge partnerships at all levels, including with other countries and actors
- **ACCOUNTABILITY TOOL** – provide accountability to its citizens
- **COMMUNICATION TOOL** of the agenda to citizens, civil society, academia, sub-national and local governments, private sector etc.
- **FOLLOW-UP AFTER VNR** - strengthen follow up by implementing lessons learned from other countries at HLPF and stimulate continuous national discussion

Main challenges faced in the preparation of the VNRs

- **Timeframe in preparing the VNRs** can be challenging, especially for meaningful stakeholder engagement and in current context also **COVID-19 pandemic**
- **The role of innovation** using online questionnaires to collect information in a short timeframe.
- **SDG mainstreaming and established institutional framework** lacking in some countries
- Need to strengthen the **contributions of stakeholders**
- **Lack of baseline data** and standardized and disaggregated data sources
- **Coordinating inputs and collecting data** from multiple sources
- **Striking balance between quantitative and qualitative information** – contextualizing data
- **Strain on the institutional capacity** to gather and analyze information
- Vital to have **strong internal structures** in place, especially in the refinement phase of the report
- **Countries emerging from conflict underscored the difficulty to invest in all SDGs** as the need to finance reconstruction and the requirements of transitional justice required to focus on a selection of goals
- **Mobilizing resources and financing gap** for the VNR process was deemed difficult

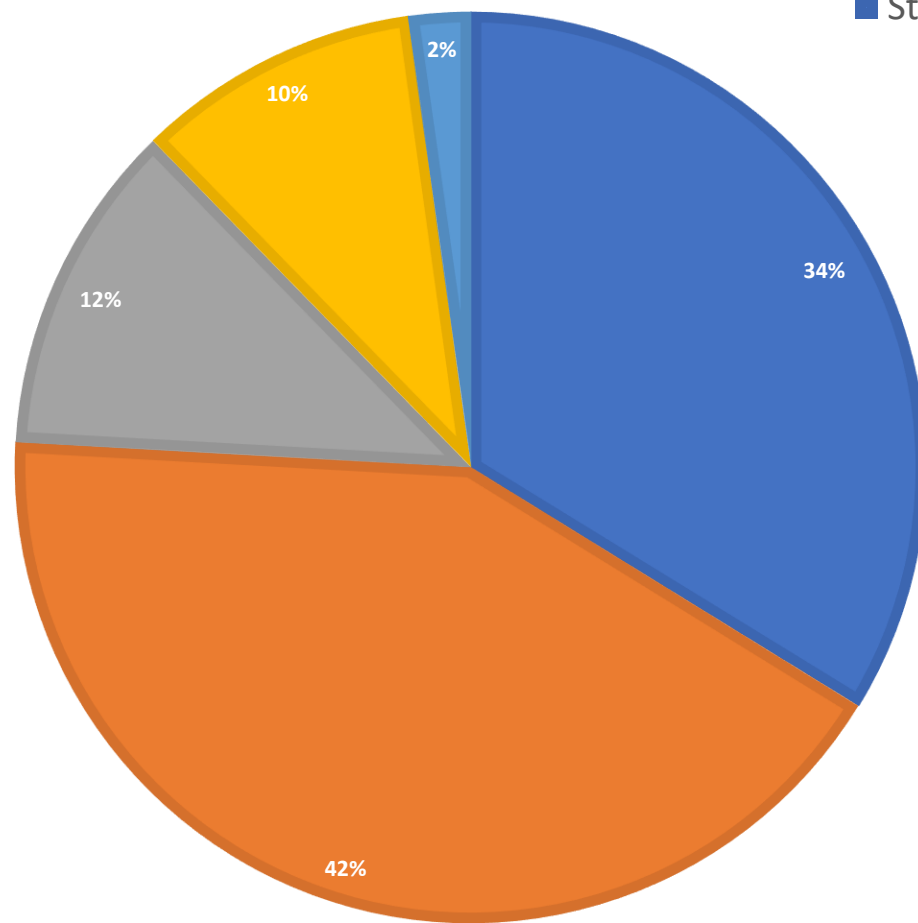
Impact of COVID-19 on 2020 VNR preparations

- Can adversely impact progress in implementation of SDGs and disrupt development efforts and progress achieved
- Need expressed for international assistance based on global solidarity especially for developing countries and least developed countries
- Need for a coordinated approach and cooperation by all stakeholders in the society
- Health and socioeconomic measures undertaken to combat the pandemic are described.
- Impact on preparation of VNRs especially consultations with stakeholders are described

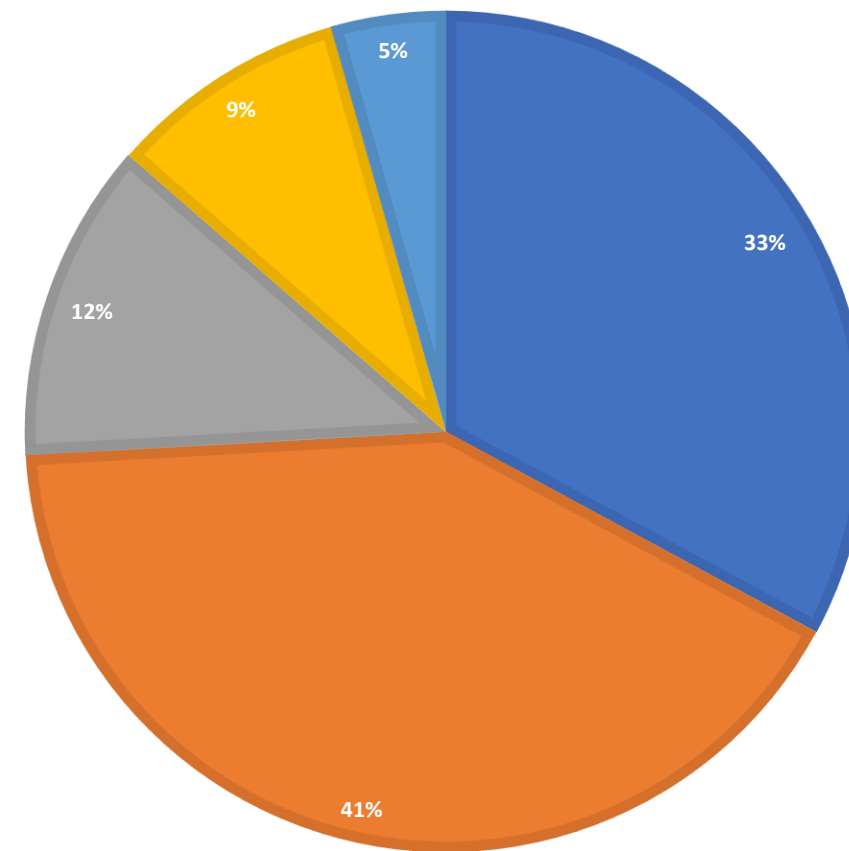


Feedback on the VNRs from 2019 HLPF questionnaire (234 responses from all stakeholders)

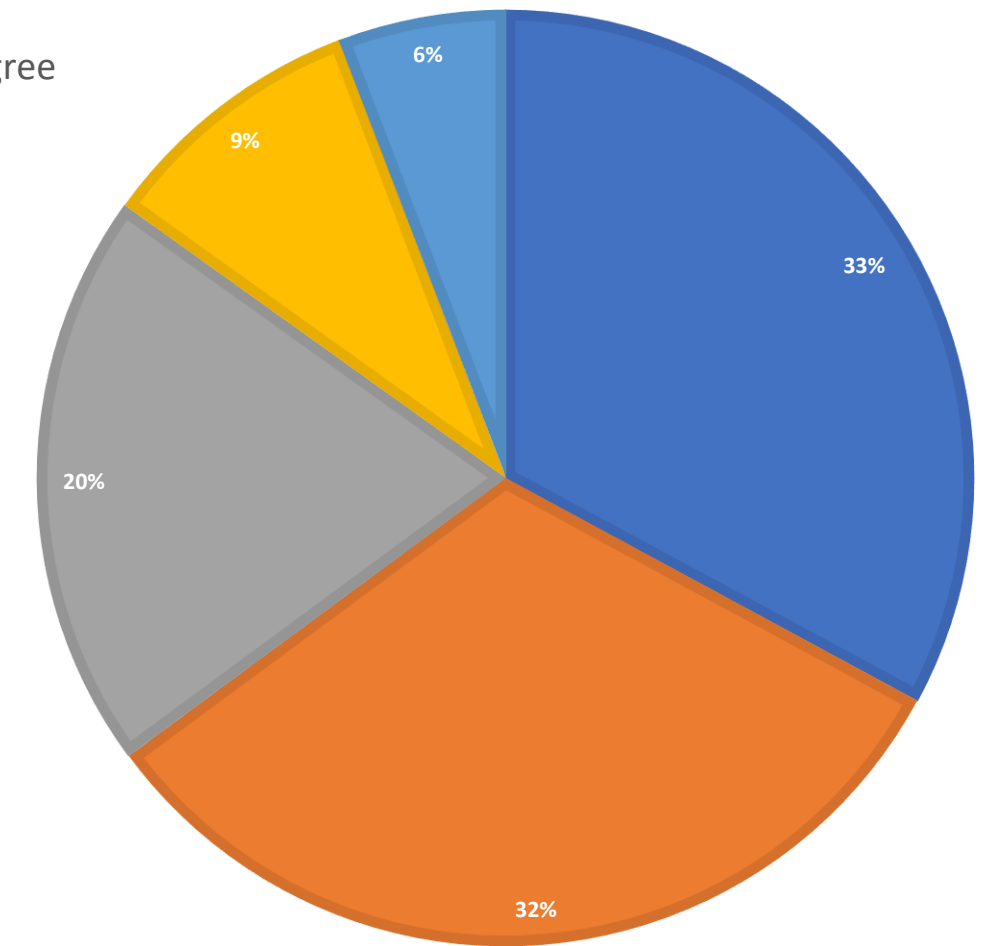
VNRS HAVE BEEN USEFUL FOR SHARING LESSONS LEARNED & EXPERIENCE GAINED



VNRS HAVE BEEN USEFUL FOR SHARING SDG IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES

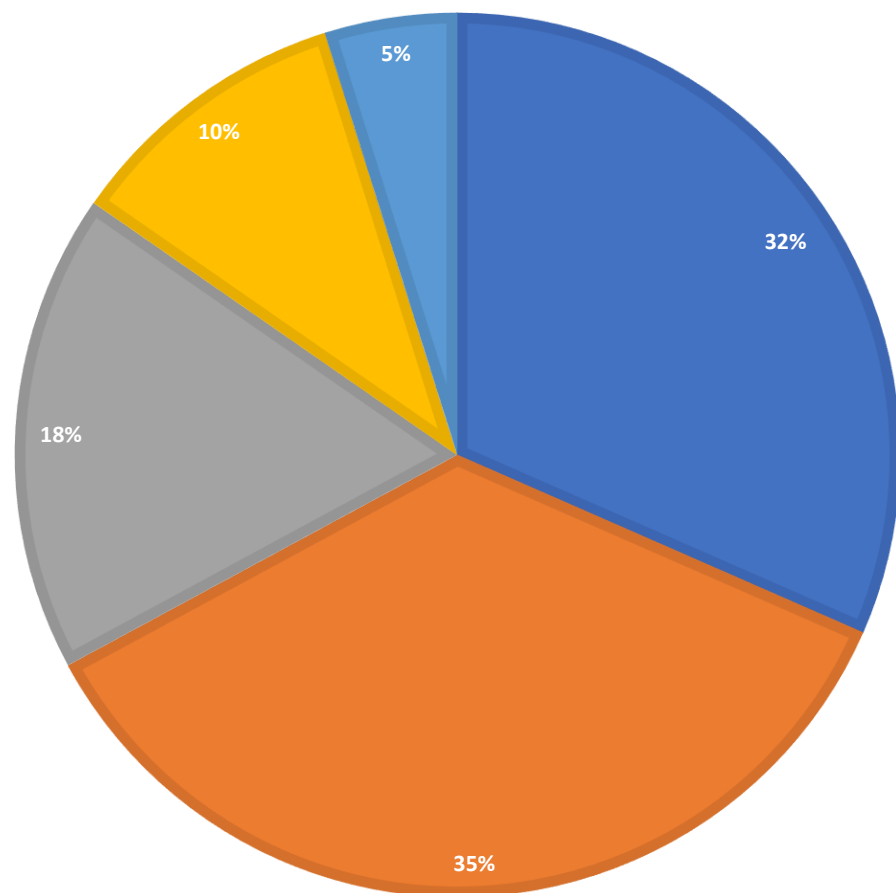


VNR PRESENTATION STRENGTHENED SDG AWARENESS & IMPLEMENTATION IN MY COUNTRY

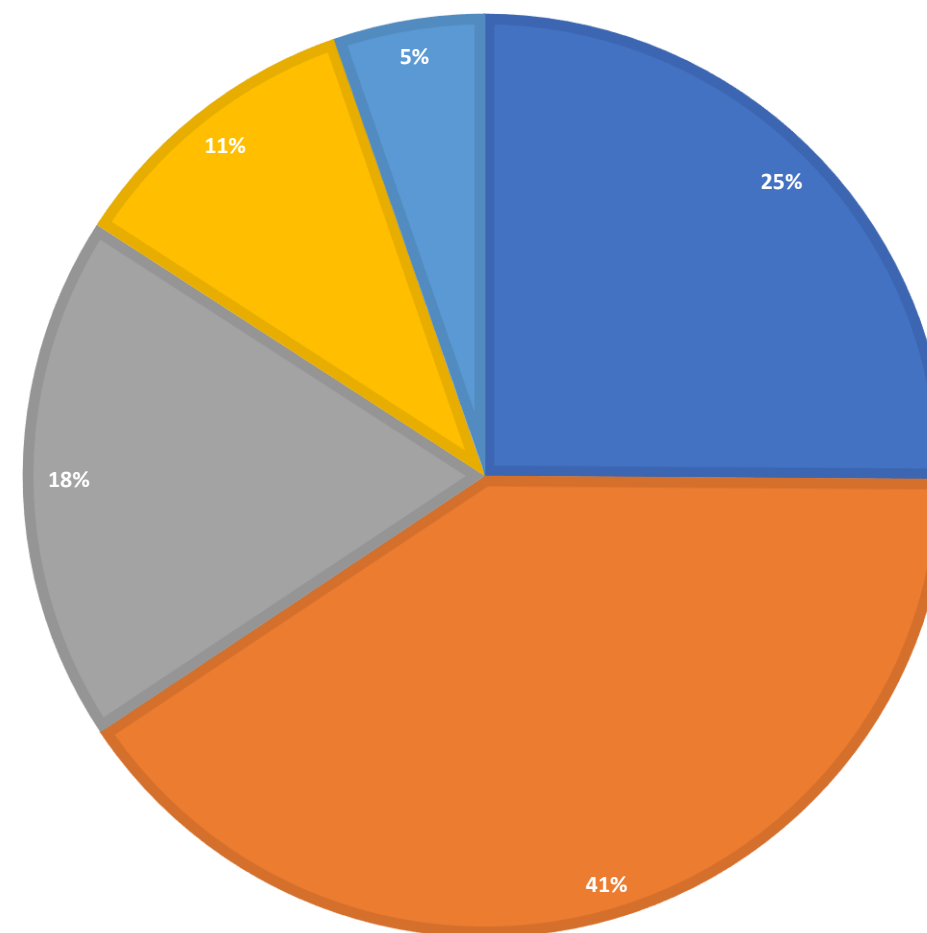


Legend: Strongly agree (dark blue), Somewhat agree (orange), Neither agree nor disagree (grey), Somewhat disagree (yellow), Strongly disagree (light blue)

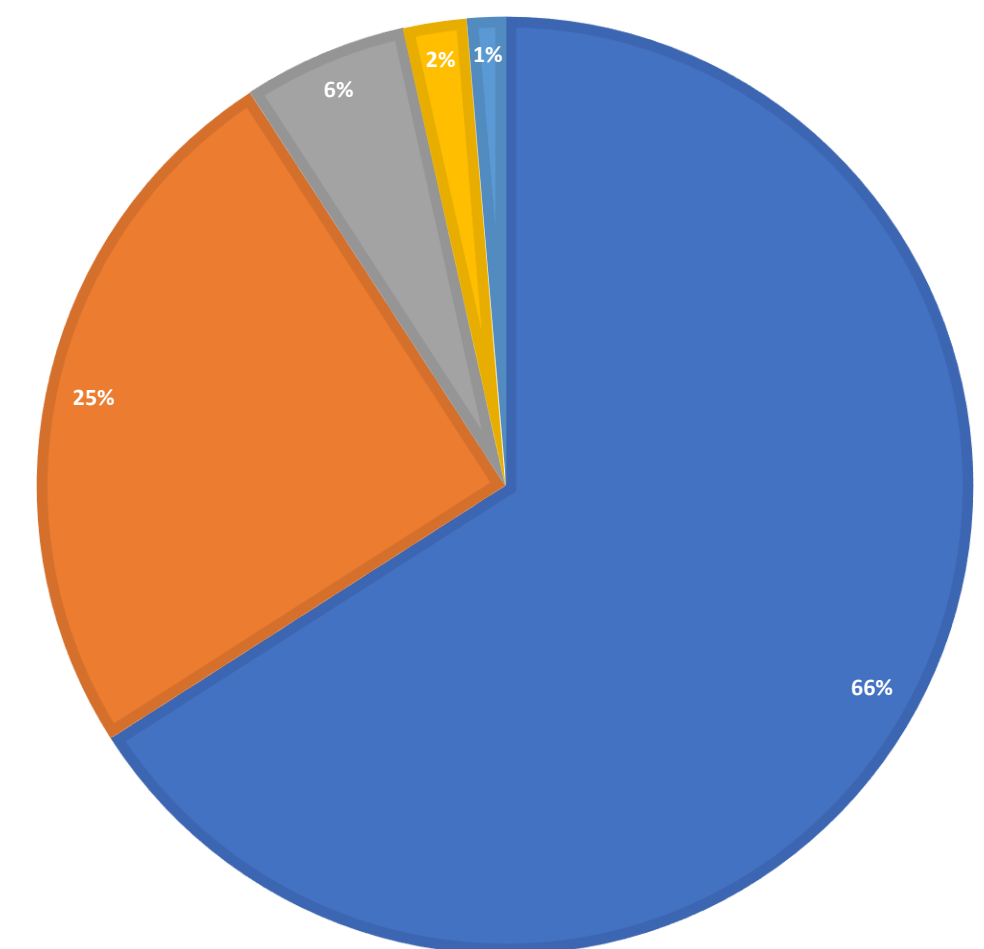
PREPARATION AND PRESENTATION OF VNRS ADVANCED NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION



VNRS HAVE BEEN USEFUL FOR MOBILIZING PARTNERSHIPS



MORE SPECIFIC GUIDANCE NEEDS TO BE PROVIDED ON THE PREPARATION, CONTENT, & APPROACH OF VNRS



QUOTES FROM COUNTRIES

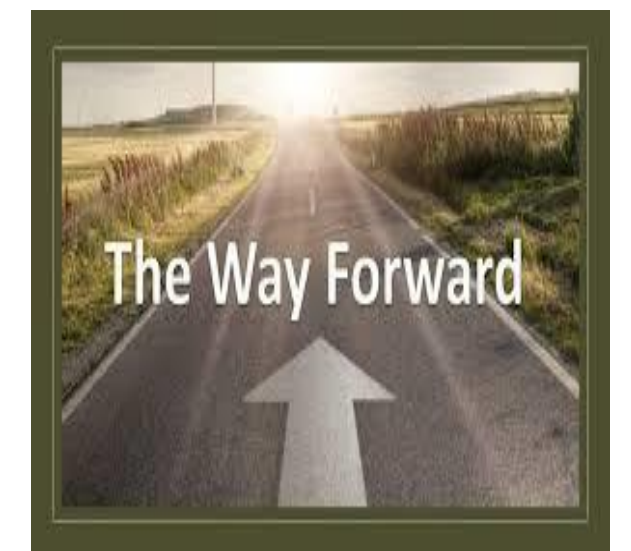
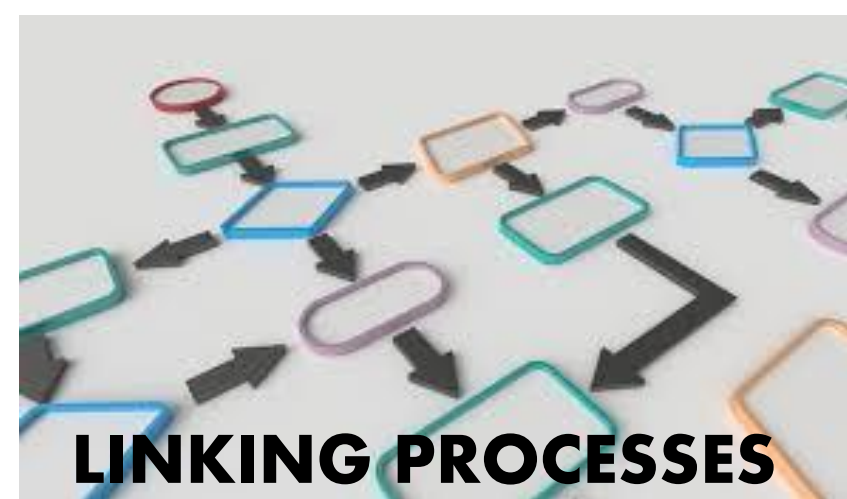
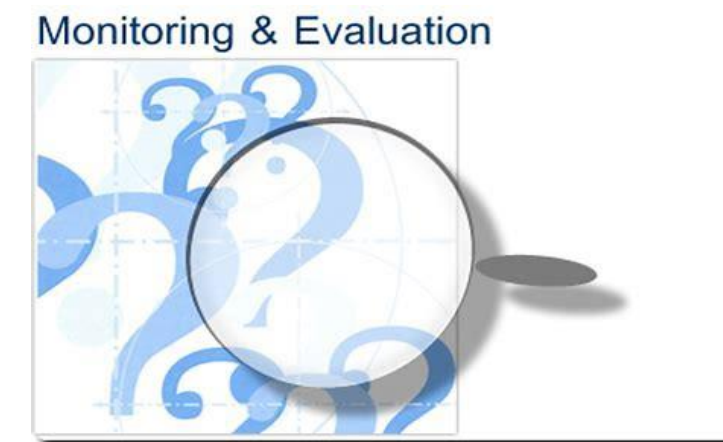
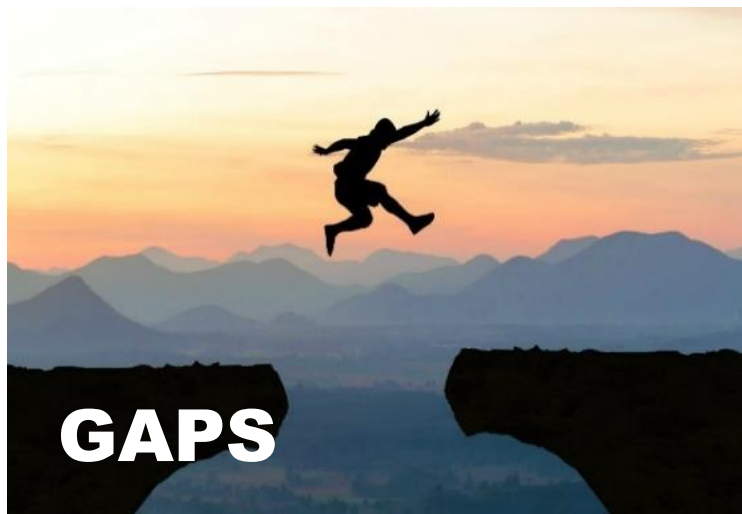
- *“The VNR process has allowed us to re-assess our development patterns, specifically the policy and institutional mechanisms since the 1990's, whether they are conducive to sustainable development and build stakeholder engagement around it.”*
- *“The usefulness of designing different instruments to collect information from different actors, according to their competences was extremely useful. Also, we found value in using different tools, such as web questionnaires and online polls to gather information quickly.”*
- *“The main benefits of attending VNR preparatory meetings was to learn from other countries on their experiences, it also helps us determine if we are on the right track and what pitfalls we can avoid.”*

SCOPE AND CONTENT OF THE VNR REPORT

NATIONAL SDG REPORT ON ALL SDGs



Sustainable Development Goals
Image: Global Goals www.globalgoals.org



Institutions

Three tier structure: political (political will); implementation (deciding on strategies and policies); and technical (programmes and projects)

Engagement of other parts of government (parliament, judiciary)

Engagement with local governments (capacity building, resources)

Coordinating mechanisms – whole-of-society approach

National level

- Strengthening national ownership including through capacity building and whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach and through preparing the VNRs by national team using international assistance when needed
- Linking the VNRs to reporting to other mechanisms and conventions
- Strengthening monitoring and oversight including through parliaments and supreme audit institutions, strengthening cooperation among all branches of government
- Explaining the impacts of strategies and policies on national level implementation of the 2030 Agenda
- Being honest in showing progress, but also gaps and challenges
- Identifying areas where support is needed
- Using VNRs as accountability tool
- Preparing a strategy how to maximize benefits of the VNR process for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda after VNR presentation at the HLPF
- 2nd and subsequent VNRs to build on previous ones and have a roadmap for VNR implementation until 2030

**WHAT could be improved:
recommendations bearing in mind voluntary and flexible nature of VNRs**

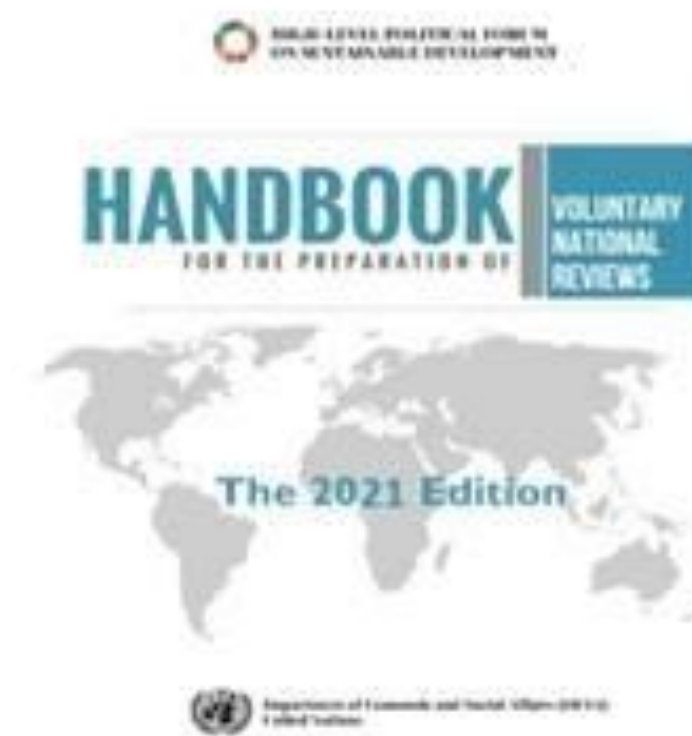
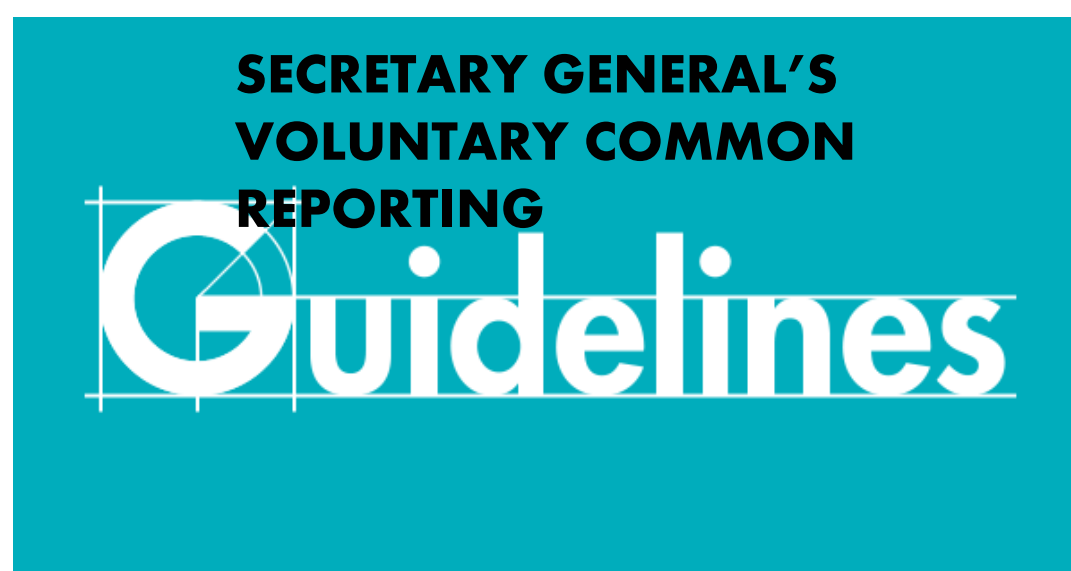
**WHAT could be improved:
recommendations bearing in mind voluntary and flexible nature of VNRs**

Global level

- Using SG voluntary common reporting guidelines to increase comparability, but also to improve overall quality of reports over time by learning from good practices and reflecting these by updating periodically the guidelines
- Focusing VNR presentation at HLPF on explanation of impact of policies and strategies, lessons learned and peer learning that can be of benefit to all countries
- Strengthening of interactive discussion including through providing more time for Q&A and getting recommendations
- Strengthen the role of HLPF as a platform for peer learning and exchanging of experiences
- Strengthen HLPF to serve as a broker and matchmaker for partnerships in the follow-up after the VNRs through looking at areas where countries need support

RESOURCES

Global and regional VNR preparatory workshops (October – July)



https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/27024Handbook_2021_EN.pdf

Thank you.



Q&A

