



Voluntary National Reviews Ver 2.0 A new approach

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**United
Nations**

Committee for
Development
Policy

Urgency for more ambitious response

140 targets

12% on track

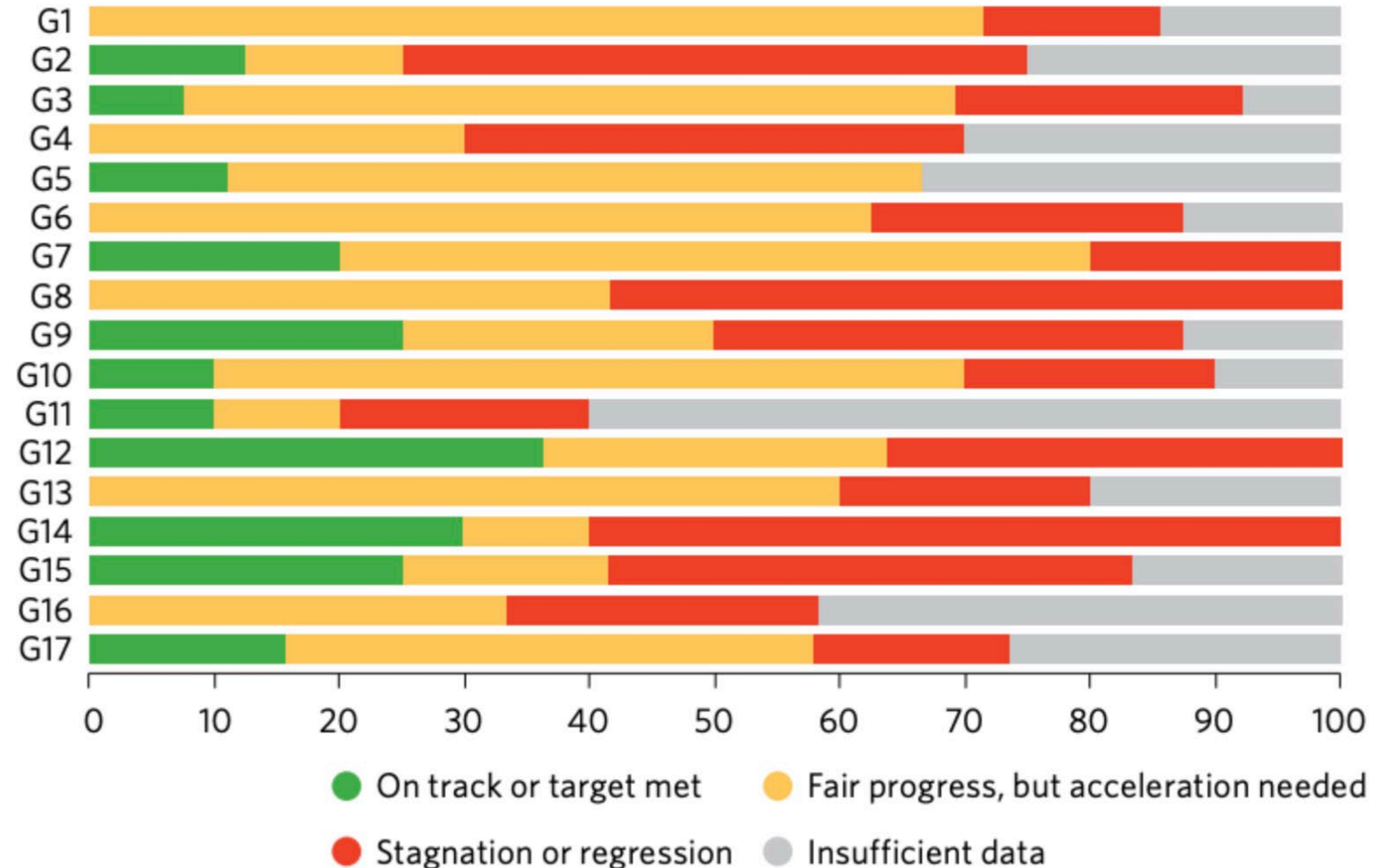
≈ 50% off track

30% stagnant or regressed

Mixed performance
predates crises:

2019 report "...it is abundantly clear that a much deeper, faster and more ambitious response is needed to unleash the social and economic transformation needed to achieve the 2030 goals"

Progress assessment for the 17 Goals based on assessed targets, 2023 or latest data (percentage)

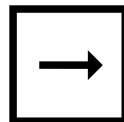
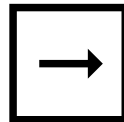


2023 SDG Progress Report: Towards a rescue plan

Not business as usual

2, 3: Social protection floors, access to essential services, job opportunities in care/digital/green economies, crisis in education, gender equality, climate action, public sector capacity, oversight and accountability, digital infrastructure, regulatory framework to align private sector governance with SD....

4: International action for Addis agenda: debt, long term financing for development, contingency financing, reforms of international financial architecture.....



Five key areas for urgent action

1

Heads of State and Government should recommit to seven years of accelerated, sustained and transformative action, both nationally and internationally, to deliver on the promise of the Sustainable Development Goals.

2

Governments should advance concrete, integrated and targeted policies and actions to eradicate poverty, reduce inequality and end the war on nature, with a focus on advancing the rights of women and girls and empowering the most vulnerable.

3

Governments should strengthen national and subnational capacity, accountability and public institutions to deliver accelerated progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

4

The international community should recommit at the SDG Summit to deliver on the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and to mobilize the resources and investment needed for developing countries to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly those in special situations and experiencing acute vulnerability.

5

Member States should facilitate the continued strengthening of the United Nations development system and boost the capacity of the multilateral system to tackle emerging challenges and address Sustainable Development Goals-related gaps and weaknesses in the international architecture that have emerged since 2015.

VNRs, a tool to rescue SDGs: v 2.0

2030 AGENDA AND THE SDGS

- **Scope:** Integrates environmental, social, economic development
- **Transformative:** Not just an acceleration but a shift in direction
- **Universal goals:** Not a North-South aid agenda

VNRs

...aim to facilitate the sharing of experiences, including successes, challenges and lessons learned, with a view to accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

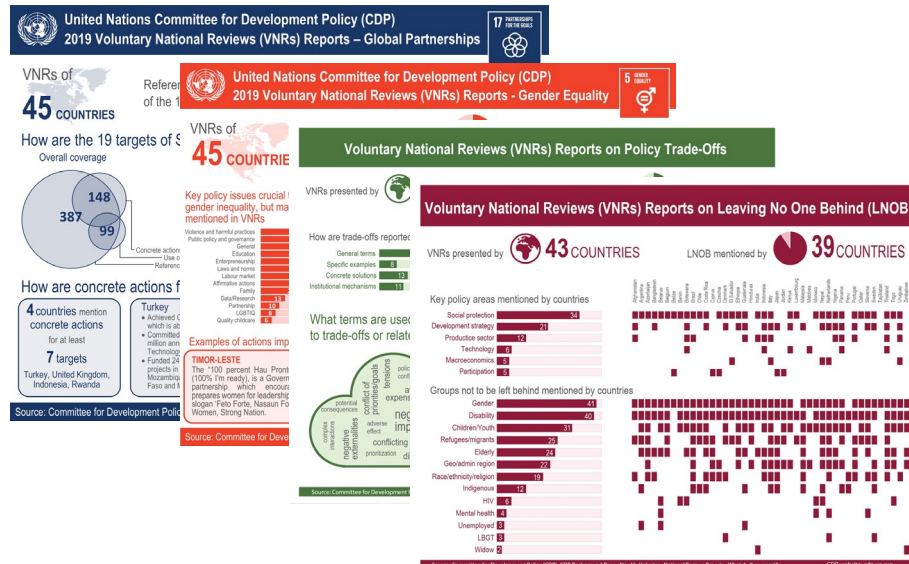
....to strengthen policies and institutions of governments and to mobilize multi-stakeholder support and partnerships for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

---contributes to 'answerability' in building accountability

CDP analysis 2017-2021 VNRs

CDP review of VNRs:

- Objective of the analysis:
 - Provide points for consideration by governments and other stakeholders participating in the VNRs.
 - Make recommendations for enhancing the role of the VNRs as effective instruments in accelerating SDG implementation.
- Content analysis (e.g. word searches, software-assisted contextualized word searches, focused analyses of specific sections of reports)
- Study of how the reports have considered, or failed to consider, selected cross-cutting principles, goals or targets.



Annual reviews on UN website

CDP background papers

2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023

<https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/voluntary-national-reviews.html>

Findings

The VNRs have been a success, but still have unrealized potential as vehicles for peer learning and SDG acceleration

- **The VNRs have been a success and countries have embraced the process.** The vast majority of MS will meet/exceed the original SG recommendation of presenting 2 reports
- The VNRs are **more descriptive than analytical**, with additional potential for sharing of lessons learned and policy insights
- Many reports **do not reflect the scale of effort needed** to reach the ambitious targets
- The concept of Agenda 2030 as an **interdependent and integrated agenda** is implicitly acknowledged in the VNRs, but the reporting of **strategies for implementation often do not reflect an integrated approach**
- In many countries there are unrealized synergies between the national review processes and other policy and planning mechanisms, with **additional potential for feedback and learning from implementation**

Findings: example - under-reporting

Annual reviews of VNRs: what do they (not) reveal?

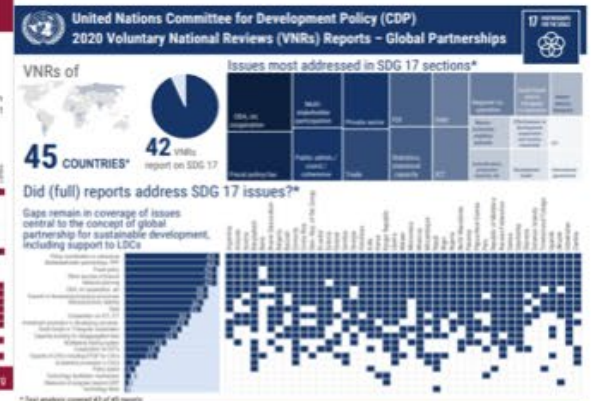
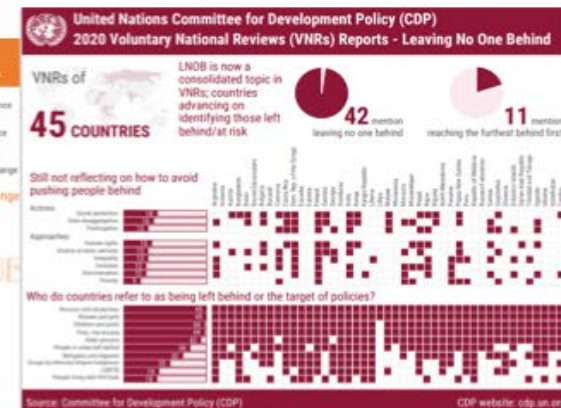
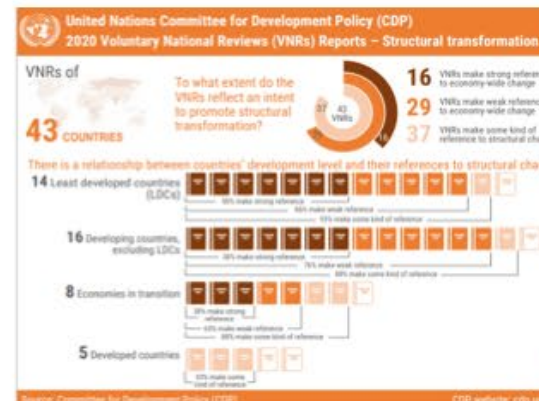
- ➔ Systematic **under-reporting** on environmental sustainability, inequality, LDCs, structural constraints
- ➔ Do not reveal the kind of **transformative action** needed to overcome the pandemic and meet SDGs
- ➔ Need for more substantive analysis, **diverse** perspectives

Number of VNRs addressing each SDG

➔ Goals closely related to the environmental dimension of sustainable development (6, 12, 13, 14, 15) and inequality (10) are least reported on



<https://bit.ly/CDPVNRs>



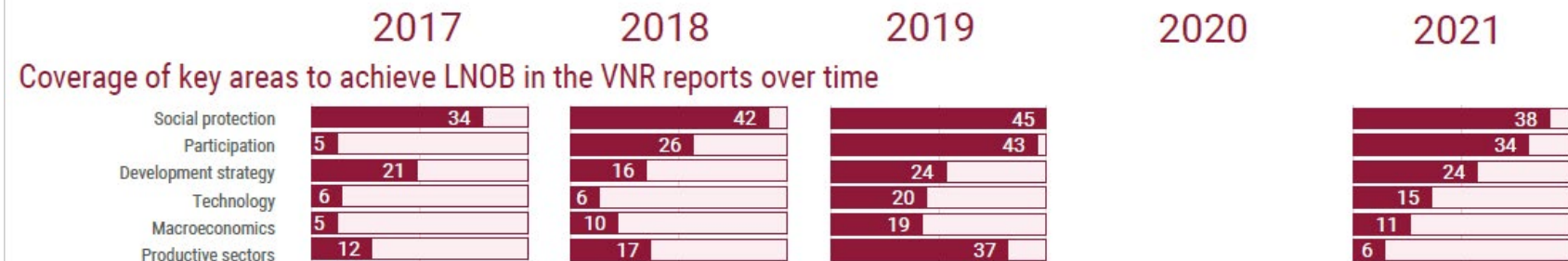
Findings:



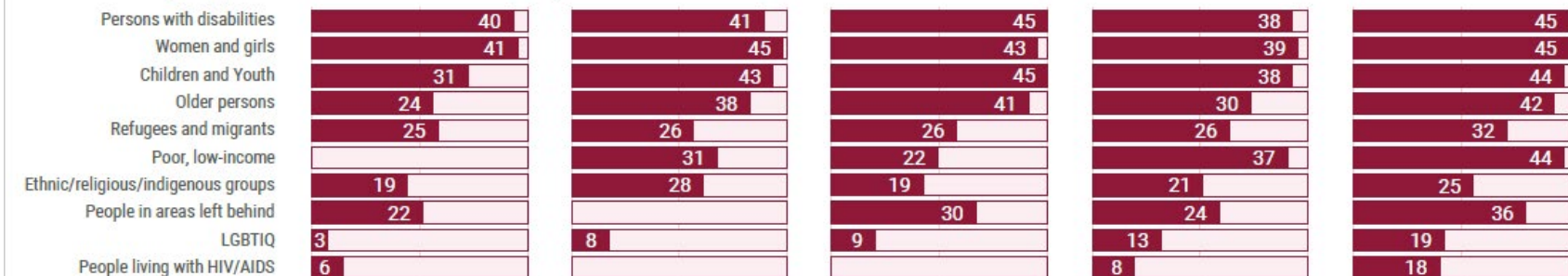
United Nations Committee for Development Policy (CDP)

2017-2021 Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) Reports - Leaving No One Behind

Improvement on reporting on LNOB in VNRs; pledge has been addressed or acknowledged in almost all reports



Vulnerable groups discussed in the VNR reports over time



Findings:

Good Practices

- Cabo Verde: Identified systemic racism, colonial legacy and harmful masculinity norms as risk factors to being left behind
- Antigua and Barbuda: Dedicated a section "Systemic Issues and Transformative Actions"
- Japan: Introduced the "SDG Award" given to actors and groups in society for their outstanding work on LNOB.



What's missing?

- Systemic causes of exclusion
- Reaching the furthest behind first
- Pushing no one behind
- Digital inclusion as a way of leaving no one behind
- Acknowledging and acting on the link between production structure and exclusion

Findings



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2017-2021 Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) Reports – Global Partnerships

17 PARTNERSHIPS
FOR THE GOALS



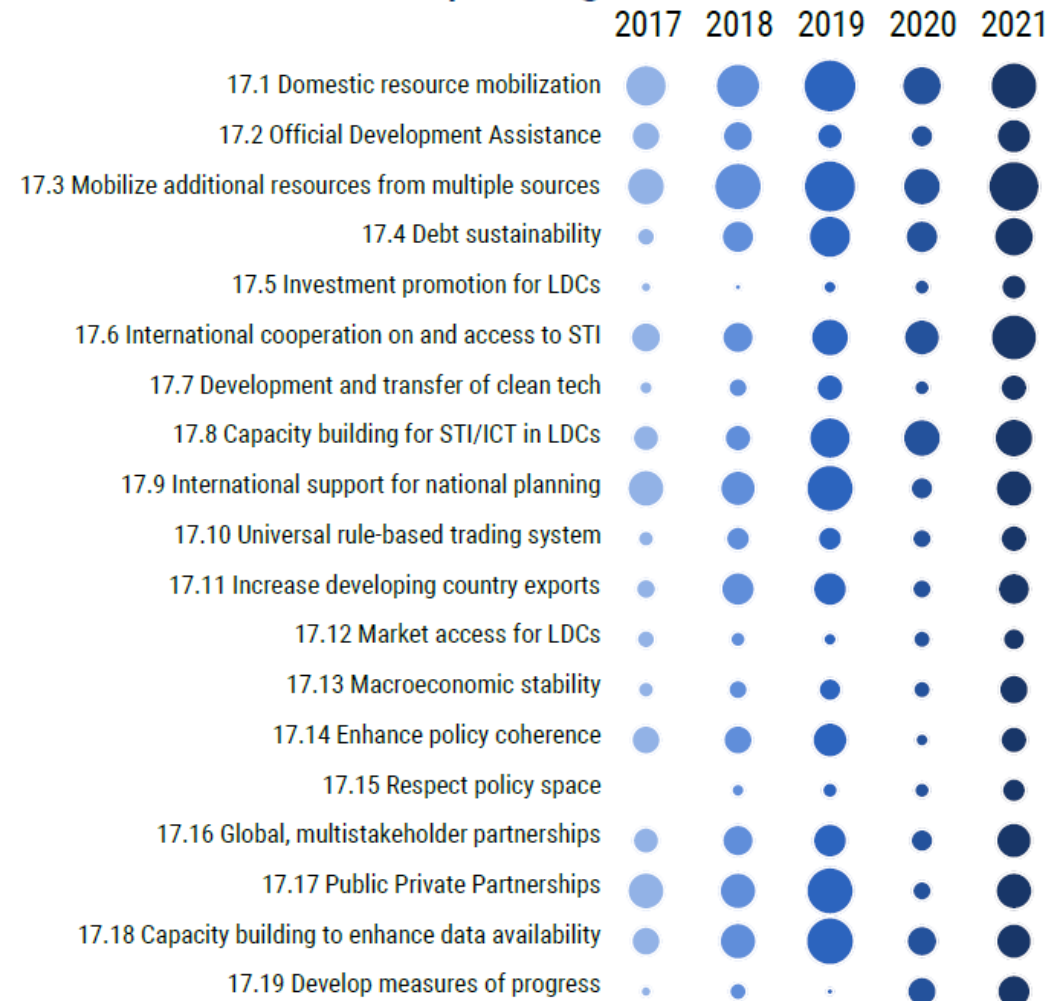
What targets have countries focused on when reporting on SDG17?

What targets have been reported MOST in the 2017–2021 VNRs?

Domestic (17.1) and international (17.3) resource mobilization are among the most reported targets. However, there is typically more focus on sources of financing than on assessing financing requirements of SDGs.

What targets have been reported LEAST in the 2017 – 2021 VNRs?

Targets which specifically support least developed countries, such as investment promotion (17.5) and market access (17.12) have remained among the least reported targets overall.



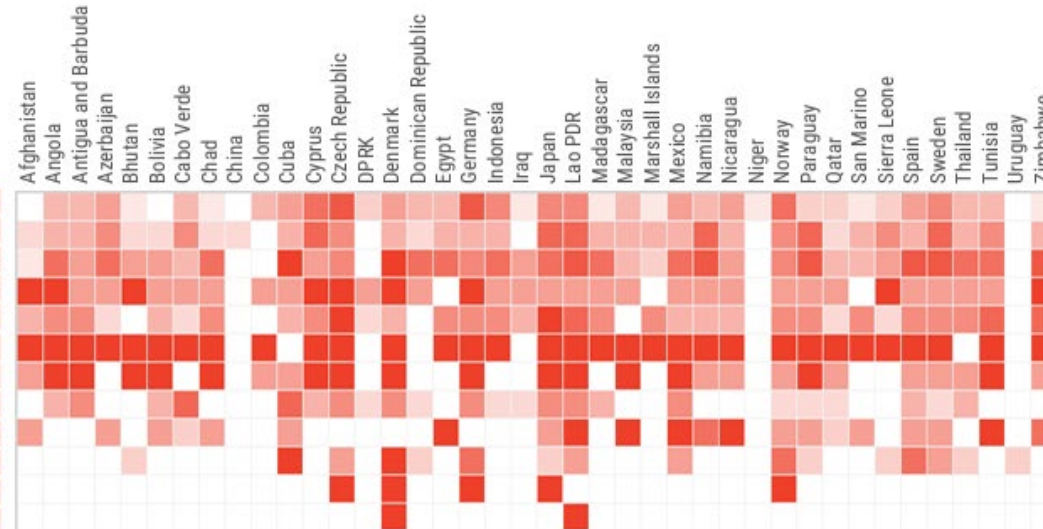
Findings



United Nations Committee for Development Policy (CDP) 2021 Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) Reports - Gender Equality



Key policy issues crucial to reduce gender inequality, but many still not mentioned in VNRs



Lao Peoples Democratic Republic

"The Lao National Survey on Women's Health and Life Experiences in 2014, produced by the Lao National Commission for Advancement of Women and the Lao Statistics Bureau, marks the country's first-ever national survey on violence against women. Based on nearly 3,000 interviews with women across the country, the report states that one in seven women have experienced physical or sexual violence from their partners at least once in their lifetime."

Sierra Leone

"In 2020, GoSL established the Sexual and Gender based Violence (SGBV) '116' toll-free hotline was to provide counselling and referral services to SGBV survivors, particularly during the pandemic."

Zimbabwe

"Thus, women's leadership initiatives were strengthened through the establishment and launch of the African Women Leaders Network (AWLN) Zimbabwe National Chapter in 2020 and a youth caucus to drive activities towards women leadership, peace and social cohesion."

* 40 VNRs were included in this analysis

Findings

Least frequently reported targets

Target	
11.c	Support least developed countries, including through financial and technical assistance, in building sustainable and resilient buildings utilizing local materials
2.b	Correct and prevent trade restrictions and distortions in world agricultural markets, including through the parallel elimination of all forms of agricultural export subsidies and all export measures with equivalent effect, in accordance with the mandate of the Doha Development Round
12.c	Rationalize inefficient fossil-fuel subsidies that encourage wasteful consumption by removing market distortions, in accordance with national circumstances, including by restructuring taxation and phasing out those harmful subsidies, where they exist, to reflect their environmental impacts, taking fully into account the specific needs and conditions of developing countries and minimizing the possible adverse impacts on their development in a manner that protects the poor and the affected communities
9.a	Facilitate sustainable and resilient infrastructure development in developing countries through enhanced financial, technological and technical support to African countries, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States
9.b	Support domestic technology development, research and innovation in developing countries, including by ensuring a conducive policy environment for, inter alia, industrial diversification and value addition to commodities
10.a	Implement the principle of special and differential treatment for developing countries, in particular least developed countries, in accordance with World Trade Organization agreements
11.a	Support positive economic, social and environmental links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas by strengthening national and regional development planning
15.b	Mobilize significant resources from all sources and at all levels to finance sustainable forest management and provide adequate incentives to developing countries to advance such management, including for conservation and reforestation
15.c	Enhance global support for efforts to combat poaching and trafficking of protected species, including by increasing the capacity of local communities to pursue sustainable livelihood opportunities
1.b	Create sound policy frameworks at the national, regional and international levels, based on pro-poor and gender-sensitive development strategies, to support accelerated investment in poverty eradication actions
6.b	Support and strengthen the participation of local communities in improving water and sanitation management
8.a	Increase Aid for Trade support for developing countries, in particular least developed countries, including through the Enhanced Integrated Framework for Trade-Related Technical Assistance to Least Developed Countries
8.b	By 2020, develop and operationalize a global strategy for youth employment and implement the Global Jobs Pact of the International Labour Organization
12.a	Support developing countries to strengthen their scientific and technological capacity to move towards more sustainable patterns of consumption and production

10.1 Achieve and sustain income growth of the bottom 40 per cent

10.2 Promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all

10.3 Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome

10.4 Adopt policies and progressively achieve greater equality

10.5 Improved regulation and monitoring of global markets and institutions

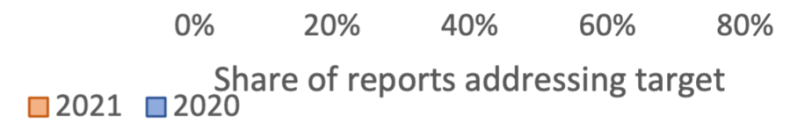
10.6 Enhanced representation for developing countries

10.7 Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility

10.a Implement the principle of special treatment for developing countries

10.b Encourage official development assistance and financial flows

10.c Reduce transaction costs of migrant remittances



Conclusions and Recommendations: elements of VNRs v.2

RECOMMENDATION: Pursue a new approach to the reports – VNR version 2.0

- Rebalance VNRs **from descriptive to analytical** to further facilitate peer learning and policy insight
- Enhance **focus on key challenges** including obstacles to progress that are structural and difficult to change
- Include assessments of **the core transformative elements** of the 2030 Agenda including the means of implementation and policy coherence
- Conduct a participatory process at the country level that has **transparency**, recognizes the role of civil society, and creates space for their contribution to identifying priorities;
- Institute a national learning process with **feedback loops to policy debates**; and
- **Include civil society shadow reports in the HLPF** and other international review process such as regional meetings.