



What did the 2020 Voluntary National Review (VNR) reports still *not* tell us?

UN Committee on Development Policy | Sub-group on VNRs

HLPF Side Event | Online
12 JULY 2021





Housekeeping Items

- This event is being recorded. The recording will be sent after the event.
- Please keep yourself muted while others are speaking.
- Please use the Chat window for general conversation and questions.
- The moderated Q&A will take place after the presentations.



Launch of CDP Analysis of 2020 VNRs

“What did the 2020 VNRs still not tell us?”

UN Committee on Development Policy (CDP)

Moderated by Barbara Adams
Comments by Roberto Bissio

PRESENTATIONS

- Overview of CDP report (Sakiko Fukuda-Parr)
- COVID-19 and pandemic preparedness (Sakiko Fukuda-Parr)
- Productive capacity (Kori Udovicki)
- Inequality (Rolph van der Hoeven)
- Gender inequality (Natalya Volchkova)
- Sustainable consumption and production (Leticia Merino)
- Leaving no one behind & SDG 17 (Marcia Tavares)



OVERVIEW OF CDP REPORT

CDP Subgroup on VNRs - S. Fukuda-Parr (chair) T. Hartzenberg, L. Moreno, K. Udovicki, R. van der Hoeven, N. Volchkova, with M.Tavares, A. Becker, H. Haddad, K. Ivanovic, L. Hadzi-Nikovic, I. Idjoski, M. Plakhtieva, E. Smorodenvoka, E. Rodriguez-Izquierdo and F. Lemus

Sakiko Fukuda-Parr
CDP Vice Chair
Professor of International Affairs,
The New School



Key Messages

Annual CDP reviews of VNRs - 2017-2021: What do they (not) reveal?

- Content analysis of all reports presented at HLPF.
- How do they report on transformative ambition of Agenda 2030: leave no one behind, partnerships, inequality, gender, productive capacity, sustainability, pandemic preparedness
- Goals and targets: favourites and orphans.

Recommendations:

- Promote more substantive, reflective analysis for learning lessons.
- Process: space to consider diverse perspectives and grapple with trade offs.
- Civil society: space for shadow reports.

Findings

- Disconnect between transformative ambition and national reporting.
- Neglect of inequality across the goals.
- Most do not reflect strategies for structural transformation of productive capacities of economies
- Orphan goals: Environmental sustainability, key targets for goal 17.
- Leave no one behind: improvement over the years but still used rhetorically or with target driven rather than transformative strategies.

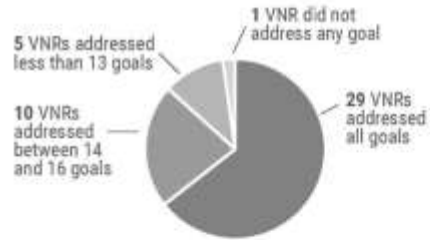


United Nations Committee for Development Policy (CDP) 2020 Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) Reports – Under-reported goals and targets

VNRs of

45 COUNTRIES*

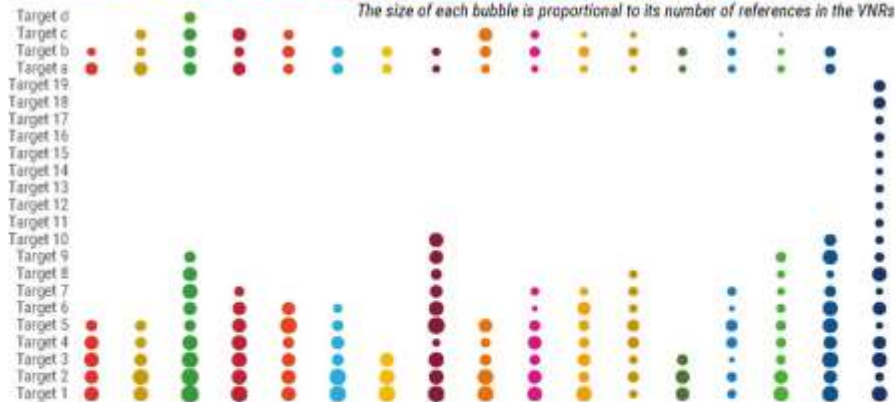
Did all VNRs address all SDGs?



Targets least reported on relate to the environmental sustainability; the representation of developing countries in international institutions; or support to LDCs.

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



Targets referred to by number in the VNRs (directly or indirectly) *

➔ Goals least reported on are also those in which the coverage of targets (referenced by number) was the lowest

→ Under-reporting:

Goals and targets related to environmental sustainability still under-reported.

* Target analysis covered 35 of 45 reports

COVID 19 AND PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS

Sakiko Fukuda-Parr

Pandemic of inequality

- Covid-19 deaths and illness - Social determinants of health and disproportionate incidence among marginalized groups.
- Socio-economic consequences of lockdown - income, access to services, unpaid care work.....
- Global recession - LDCs hard hit, lack of resources for fiscal stimulus/social protection
- Most VNRs focussed on economic effects, and public health responses, less on inequality and socio-economic issues.

Crisis as opportunity

- Peru - “97% of the electrical energy during consumed in the country in the quarantine period has been generated from renewable sources.”
- Bulgaria - Socio-economic policy response to pandemic support SDG agenda: support to public health, social protection for the vulnerable, employment retention, access to paid leave, support to the elderly and people with disabilities.

Highlights of VNR analysis gender

Argentina

“The pandemic showed the fragility of the tools we have to prevent another pandemic, that of gender violence. The suspension of the judicial system and the territorial complaint centres made it almost impossible for victims of violence to access justice and to implement protection measures against perpetrators. The confinement in homes, added to these measures, caused a 39% increase in calls to hotlines. There was an increase in femicides (the highest number of them within the home). We consider urgent the provision of specific funds to face this problem.”



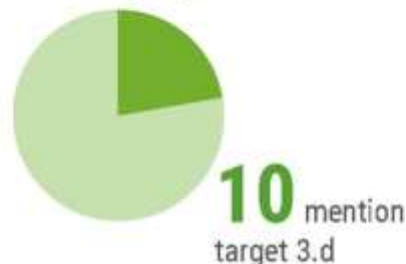
United Nations Committee for Development Policy (CDP)

2020 Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) Reports – Pandemic preparedness

VNRs of

45 COUNTRIES

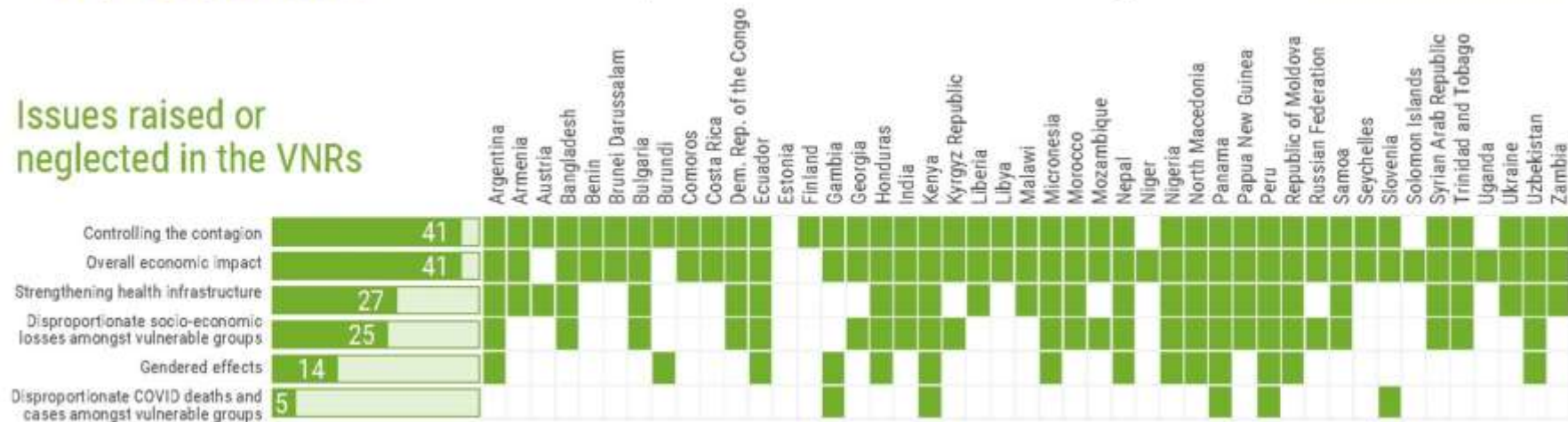
COVID-19's impact on achieving the 2030 Agenda discussed in most VNRs, but strengthening pandemic preparedness is missing in most



Target 3.d

Strengthen the capacity of all countries, in particular developing countries, for early warning, risk reduction and management of national and global health risks

Issues raised or neglected in the VNRs





PRODUCTIVE CAPACITY

Kori Udovicki

CDP Member

Former Deputy Prime Minister of Serbia

- **Assess:**
Intent to increase productive capacity by affecting structural transformation.
- **Method:**
 - Search for **terms**
(12, with sub-variants)
 - Analyze **contexts**
(8 contexts and 18 subcontexts).

SEARCHED TERMS

	Number of mentions
Structural transformation	16
Diversification/Diversify	105
Industrialization/ Development of industry	33
Industrial policy	2
Production/Productive structure	2
Structure(al) changes	2
Change of structure	0
Industry/Industrial composition/structure	1
Sectoral composition/structure/development	24
Sustainable production	15

VNRs with Contexts (37)

Economy-wide changes				Targeted (4)		Undetermined (4)	
Strong (16)		Weak (13)					
Broadly transformative policy documents	Investment in infrastructure & production factors	Diversification w/o clear connection to sector or economy-wide strategy	Industrialization as a goal per se	Specific sectors	Specific population groups	Aspirational or vague	Other policy documents- scope not identifiable
(11)	(6)	(19)	(4)	(20)	(13)	(21)	(19)

Example of strong quote:

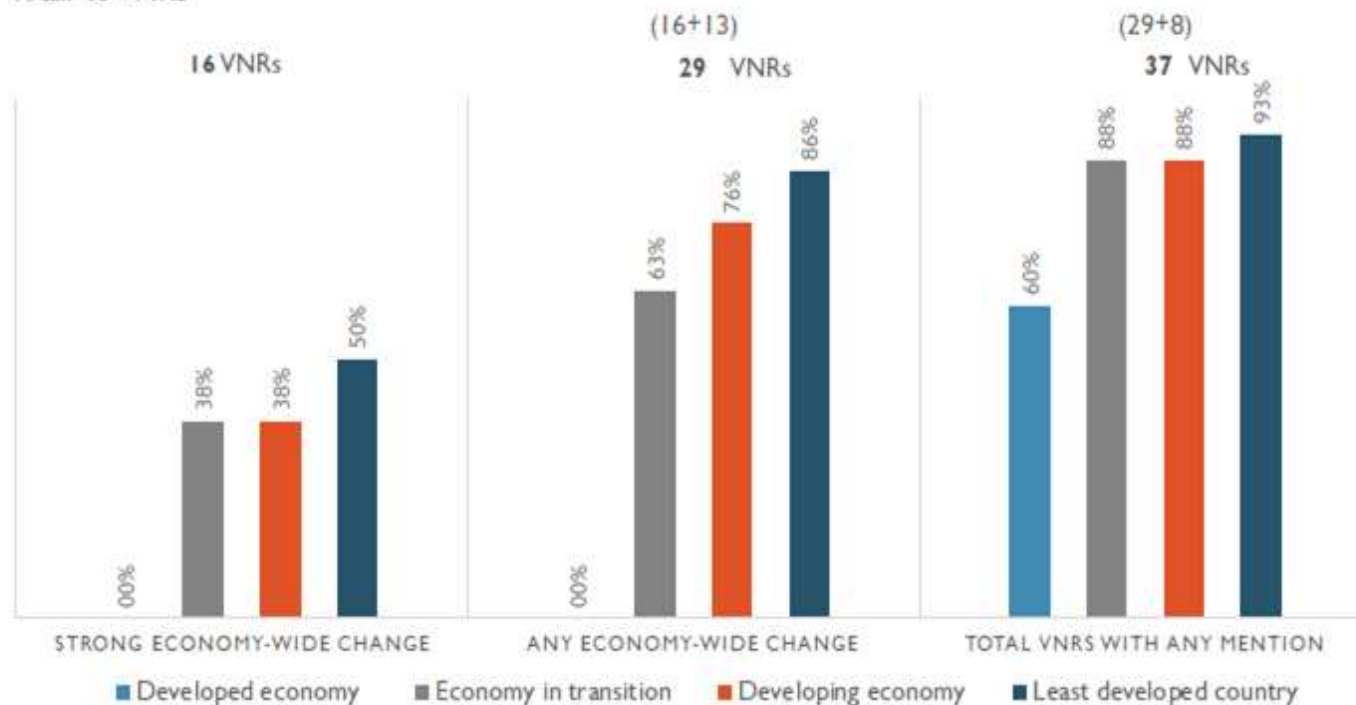
"The strategy is focused on making a transformative transition to 'clean, inclusive, sustained and sustainable growth'. The strategy document has identified 41 sectors – each mapped to the relevant SDGs"

Example of weak economy wide quote:

"To support economic diversification, Liberia has passed into law Special Economic Zones (SEZ) aimed at attracting investments to improve value addition on raw materials."

Figure: 2020 VNRs w References to Production Structure Change

Total: 43 VNRs



→ The number of references to structural change and their “strength” is inversely proportional development level



United Nations Committee for Development Policy (CDP) 2020 Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) Reports – Structural transformation

VNRs of

43 COUNTRIES

To what extent do the VNRs reflect an intent to promote structural transformation?



16 VNRs make strong reference to economy-wide change
29 VNRs make weak reference to economy-wide change
37 VNRs make some kind of reference to structural change

There is a relationship between countries' development level and their references to structural change

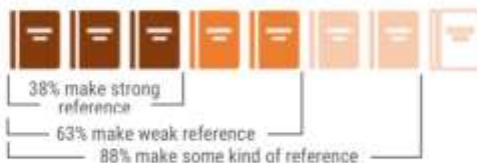
14 Least developed countries (LDCs)



16 Developing countries, excluding LDCs



8 Economies in transition



5 Developed countries





Reducing inequality should be our top priority during the COVID-19 pandemic—but it isn't

Rolph van der Hoeven

CDP Member
Professor, International Institute of
Social Studies (EUR-ISS), The Hague

Inequality

- Better reflected in 2020 than in 2019
- 40 VNRs refer to SDG 10
- 29 to numbered targets in SDG 10
- 22 to target 10.1 (increasing growth of the poorest 40% of the population faster than the rest) (*a poor target*)
- Targets that have a bearing on fostering structural changes to reduce income inequality:
 - 10.4 (improving fiscal, wage and social protection policies): 19
- **Indicator 10.4.1 (Labour share of GDP): 10**
- 10.5 (regulation of national and global financial markets) 12
- Least reported: 10.3 (eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation), possibly due to the indicators related to this target (% women in parliament and % ratification of ILO labour-standards)
- Fewer countries reported on the targets that refer to inequality between countries.

Analysis on the content of reporting on SDG 10

- Many countries that mentioned SDG 10 did not report on actual progress
- Others presented data without reference to a baseline or that was not comparable to previous years
- Several include details on SDG3, SDG4 and/or SDG5 to justify action on SDG10
- Many lack up-to-date data, used 2014-2016 as their most recent data.
- Strong disparities in the depth of treatment of SDG10

What does reporting on 10.1 and 10.2 say on the actual situation of inequality in these countries?

- At least 41% of the countries that report on these two targets acknowledge the need to further reduce income inequalities
- 10 countries reduced income inequality
- 12 countries increased income inequality:
- In 5 countries income inequality was reported to be stagnant
 - In Finland there was disagreement between the government and civil society reports



United Nations Committee for Development Policy (CDP) 2020 Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) Reports - Reduced Inequalities



VNRs of

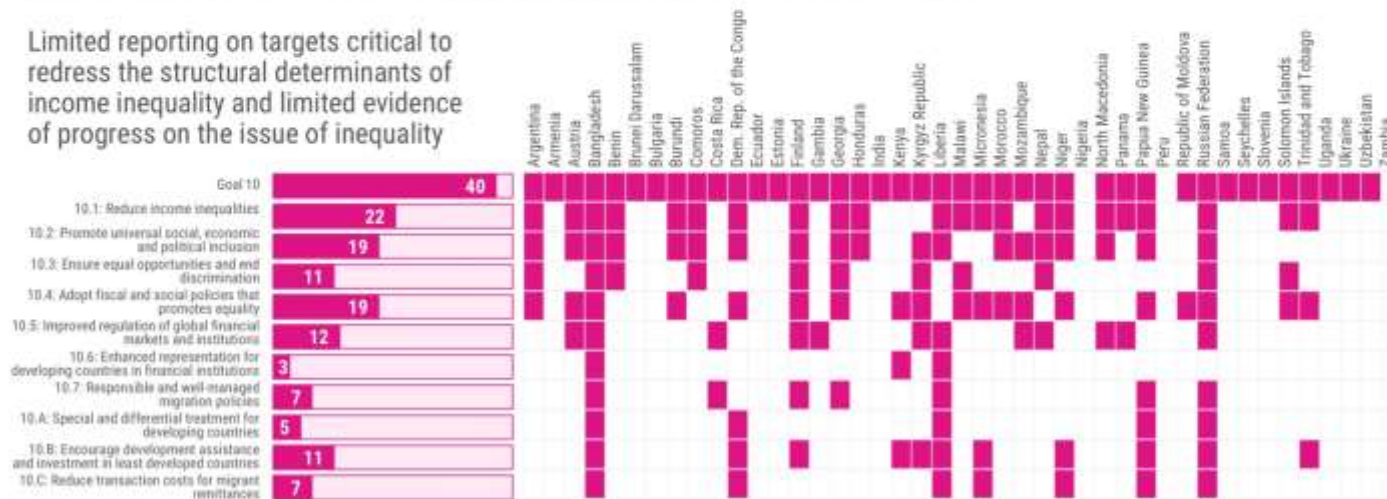


Is SDG 10 adequately covered in the VNRs?



Overview of references to SDG 10 and its targets or indicators by number*

Limited reporting on targets critical to redress the structural determinants of income inequality and limited evidence of progress on the issue of inequality



* Analysis covered 43 of 45 reports



GENDER INEQUALITY

Natalya Volchkova

Center for Economic and Financial Research at New Economic School, Director
Russian Foreign Trade Academy, Vice Rector



United Nations Committee for Development Policy (CDP) 2020 Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) Reports - Gender Equality

5 GENDER
EQUALITY



VNRs of

43 COUNTRIES



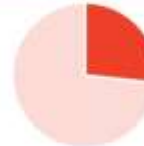
3 VNRs

Referencing **ALL** targets



28 VNRs

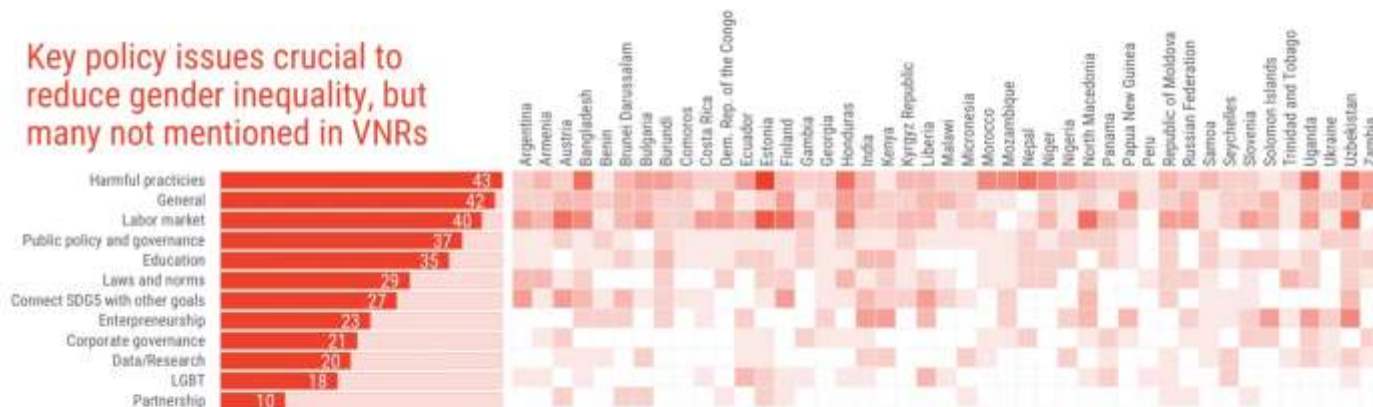
Referencing **SOME** targets



12 VNRs

Referencing **NO** targets

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



Impact of COVID-19 on achieving SDG 5

14

Countries indicated that the COVID-19
crisis is affecting achievement of SDG 5 or
reinforcing gender inequality

Honduras, North Macedonia, Burundi, Republic of Moldova, Panama, Argentina, Nepal, Kenya, Ecuador, India, Micronesia, Uzbekistan, Gambia, Peru

Implications of COVID-19 for gender equality

Implications of COVID-19 for gender equality documented by economic literature:

- Adoption of flexible work arrangements
- Potential for erosion of social norms
- Decrease in women's employment and increase in women's unemployment compared to men
- Increase in gender violence

Addressing the causes of gender inequality

Causes of gender equality documented by economic literature:

- Social norms and gender identity
- Gender differences in work experience, including shorter hours, lesser experience, workforce interruptions, etc.
- Motherhood
- Gender differences in hierarchy within firms
- Labor-market discrimination
- Gender differences in occupations and sorting across firms

Highlights of VNR analysis

- Only negative implications of the pandemic are mentioned by countries in VNR reports

Highlights of VNR analysis

- *VNR reports provide information on observed gender inequalities in various dimensions, i.e gender violence, gender wage gap, gender educational gap, etc.*
- There is a clear **gap between the policy scope and the underlying causes of gender inequalities** in different societies
- More efforts should be channelled toward identifying the true roots of gender inequality and designing policies to affect it.

Interesting policies mentioned in reports

Argentina: The Micaela Law establishes mandatory training on gender and violence against women for all workers who perform duties in the public service at all levels and hierarchies in the Executive, Legislative and Judicial branches.

Austria: The Act on Equality between Women and Men on Supervisory Boards (GFMA-G) requires listed companies and companies with more than 1,000 employees to have a minimum of 30 % women and 30% men on their supervisory boards.

Uganda: The Equal Opportunities Commission has organized training for district-level officials on gender and equity planning and budgeting.

Brunei: eBunda programme is aimed at women who temporarily interrupt their careers to give birth to children. This program helps women to continue learning by providing “access to e-learning opportunities to build awareness on issues such as health, environment, business and finance”

Estonia: The media campaign “Grow Together” was implemented at the end of 2017, the aim of which was to draw attention to the important role of the father in raising children, and to encourage fathers to take parental leave.



SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION & PRODUCTION

Leticia Merino
CDP Member



SG 12. Sustainable production and consumption

Sustainable management
Natural resources,
Planning for sustainability,
Chemicals and wastes
Transnational corporations
Food waste
Public awareness
Extractive economies
Fossil fuels
Impacts of tourism

Sustainable consumption and production

28 countries reported on SDG 12, 8 missed it

But on average countries reported only on 2 targets out of the 11 considered in SDG 12.

- Targets with potential to foster structural transformational changes:
 - 12.1 Planning for sustainability (10 years framework)
 - 12.2 Achievement of sustainable management and use of natural resources
 - 12.4 Achievement of environmentally sound management of chemicals and wastes
 - 12.6 Adoption of sustainable practice and reporting on them, by companies, in particular transnational corporations



Most & least reported targets

- 12.5 Reduction of waste through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse - 18 VNRs
- -12.2 Sustainable management and use of natural resources - 13 VNRs
- 12.4 Environmentally sound management of chemicals and wastes – 9 VNRs
- 12.8 Public procurement practices - 4 VNRs
- 12.6 Companies, especially transnational corporations adopting sustainable practice and integrating sustainability in their reporting cycles - 3 VNRs
- 12.a Public information and awareness on sustainability - 1 VNRs

- On SDG 12, VNRs reported mostly on processes of progress toward the achievement of some of the targets (35 actions of progress mentioned), few mentioned setbacks (5 reports) and two mention limitations to achieve sustainability, **none mentioned obstacles for the advancement towards sustainable production and consumption**
- Reports also refer to lack of information, absence of baselines that would enable countries to assess performance and need to create them


ON THE SDGS: While some of the targets mention the need of developed countries support to developing countries and LDC in their pursuit of sustainability, they do not mention the need to reduce the demand of the developed countries and emergent economies on raw materials and energy extracted in the developing countries and LDCs, with huge impact on ecosystems and people.

Interesting strategies reported in the VNRs:

Argentina, government's budget allocation to each of the targets and appointment of the ministries responsible of them.

India's Index and Dashboard for SDG 12, used to assess the performance of the country and sub-national entities

Malawi's translation into indigenous languages of SDG 12 and the Agenda 2030.



Initiatives towards sustainable production and consumption

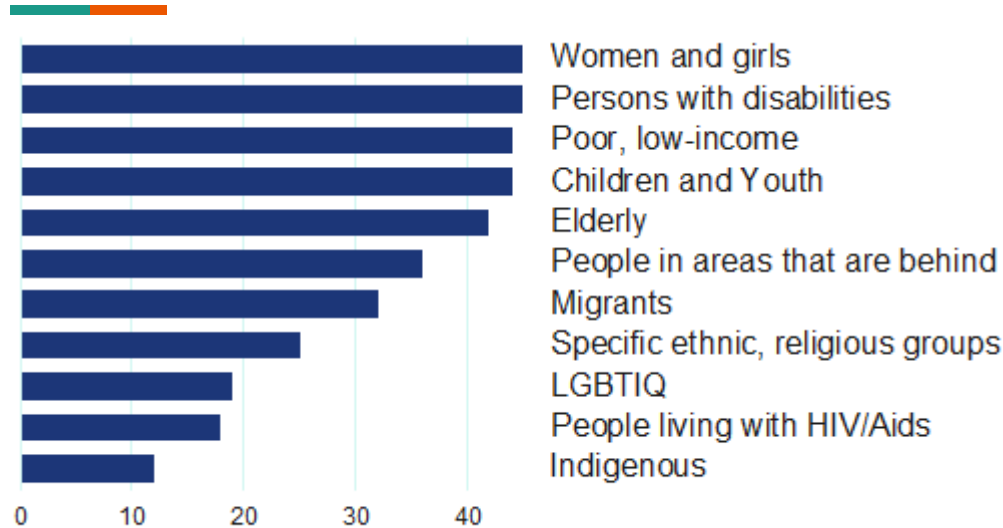
- **Samoa's ban of the importation of hazardous and radioactive wastes**, Mercury Level Inventory and zero CFC consumption targeted for 2040
- **Slovenia**: transition to a low-carbon circular economy by 2030, already with a lower footprint lower than the rest of the EU
- **Costa Rica: Food Bank Association** allocating food among the vulnerable population coming from food industry
- **Schyles Sustainable Tourism Label**, and **Blue Economy** 2030, aiming to help to improve the management of marine areas and fisheries and to strengthen fisheries value chain.
- **Austria, ecolabeling initiatives**



LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND

Marcia Tavares
CDP Secretariat

Who?



Experiences: identifying those left behind

- Argentina: human rights perspectives in indicator design
- Kenya National Commission on Human Rights + National Bureau of Statistics
- Panama: multidimensional poverty at township level
- Kyrgyz Republic: intersectionality of discrimination, geography, socio-economic status

What?

Poverty
Equality
Cohesion
Human rights
Social justice
Inclusion
Discrimination
Equity
Democracy
Peace and reconciliation

Policy/action



What's missing?

- Reaching the furthest behind first
- Not pushing people further behind
- LNOB and climate change/environmental degradation
- Structural determinants of exclusion
Link between production structure and LNOB



United Nations Committee for Development Policy (CDP) 2020 Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) Reports - Leaving No One Behind

VNRs of

45 COUNTRIES

LNOB is now a consolidated topic in VNRs; countries advancing on identifying those left behind/at risk

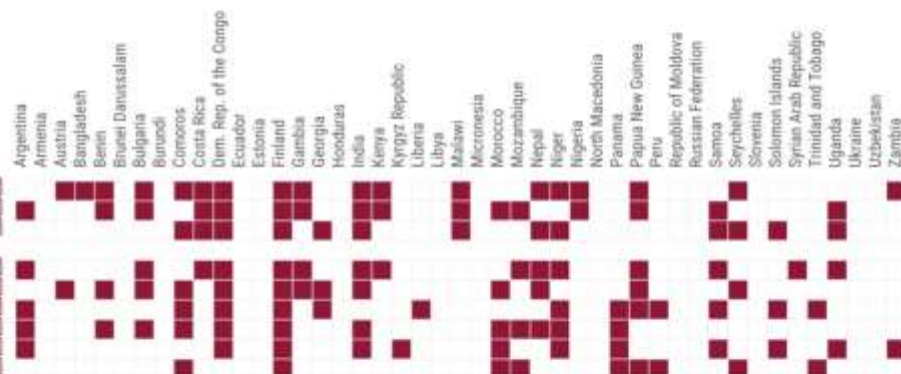


Still not reflecting on how to avoid pushing people behind

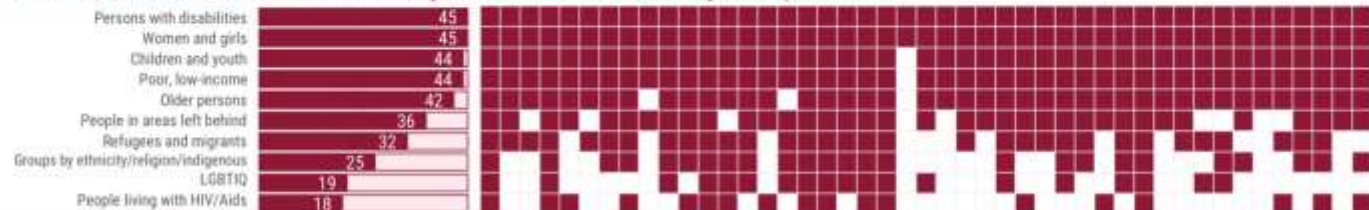
Actions



Approaches

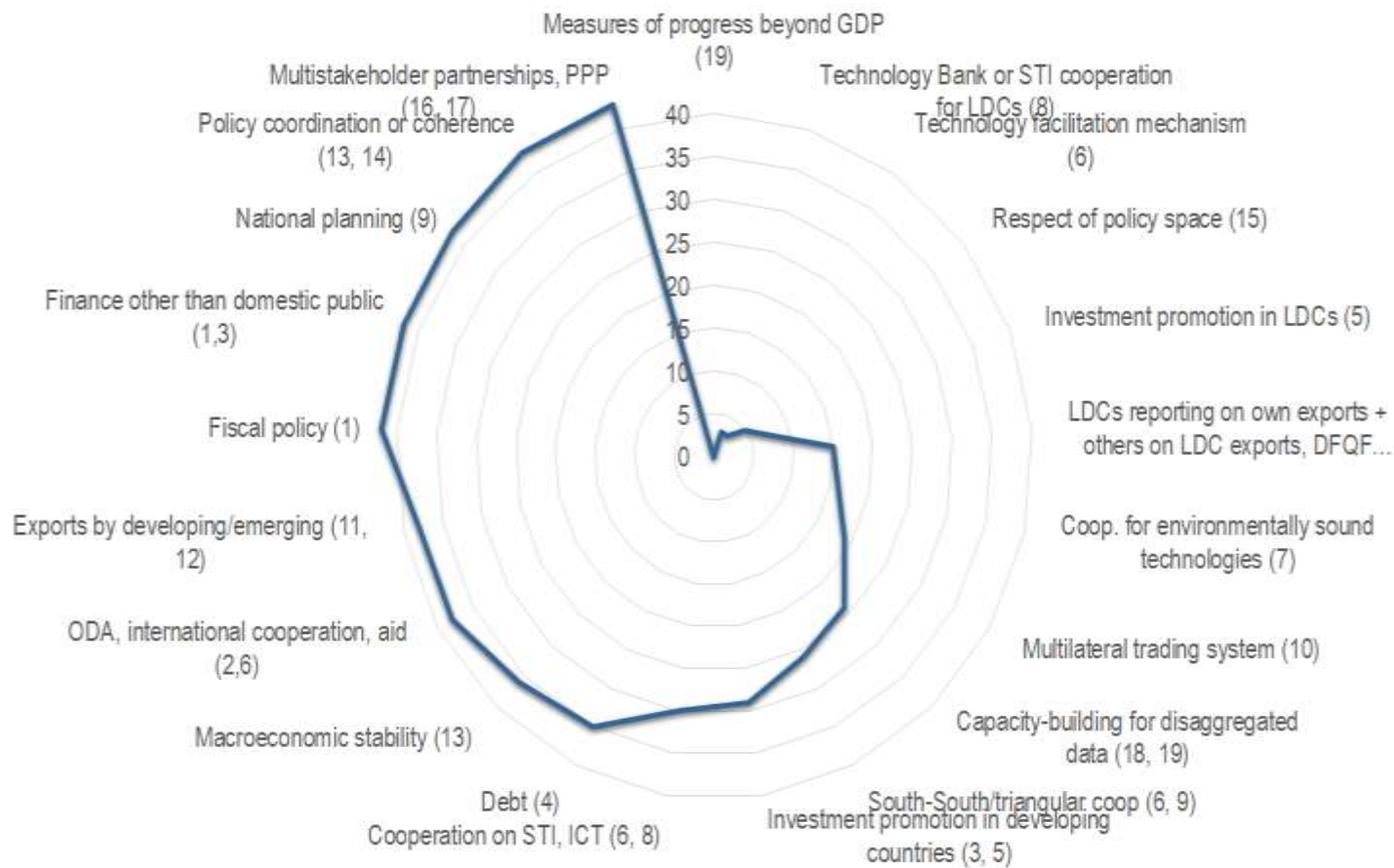


Who do countries refer to as being left behind or the target of policies?



SDG 17 - STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS

17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS





United Nations Committee for Development Policy (CDP) 2020 Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) Reports – Global Partnerships

17 PARTNERSHIPS
FOR THE GOALS



VNRs of



45 COUNTRIES*



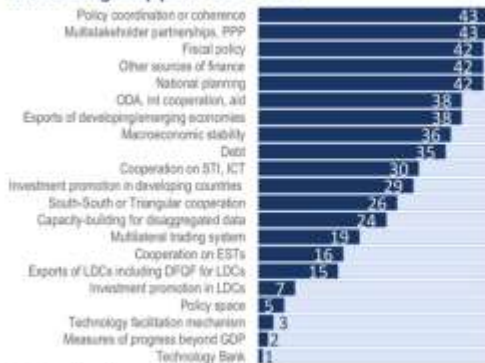
42 VNRs
report on SDG 17

Issues most addressed in SDG 17 sections*

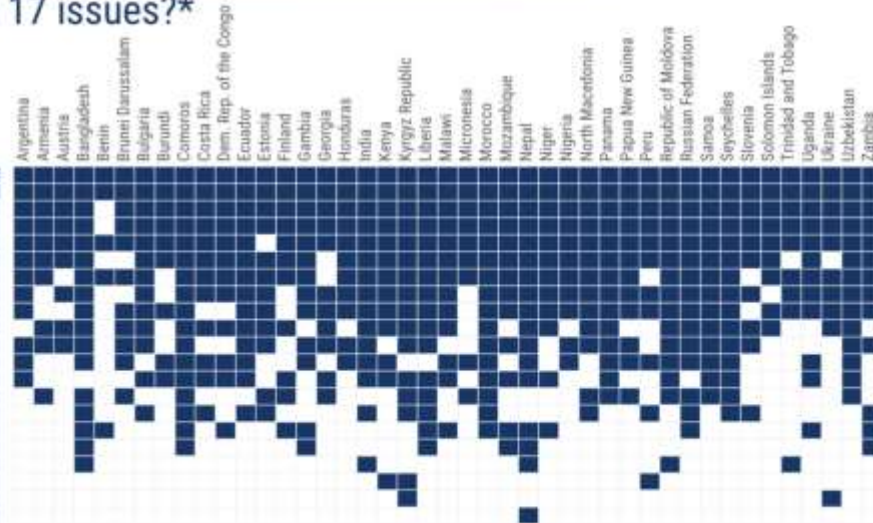
ODA, int. cooperation	Multi-stakeholder participation	Private sector	FDI	Debt	Regional co-operation	South-South and/or triangular co-operation	Humanitarian aid
Fiscal policy/tax	Public admin./ coord./ coherence	Trade	Statistics, statistical capacity	ICT	Macroeconomic stability/ policies	Effectiveness in development cooperation and country ownership	STI
					Diversification, productive capacity, etc	Development banks	International agreements

Did (full) reports address SDG 17 issues?*

Gaps remain in coverage of issues central to the concept of global partnership for sustainable development, including support to LDCs



* Text analysis covered 43 of 45 reports



WRAPPING UP

Final thoughts

- Improvements but persistent blind spots
- Transformative aspects of the 2030 Agenda still under-reported - especially issues related to environmental sustainability
- Treatment of leaving no one behind, inequalities, still target-driven, not addressing structural determinants
- Treatment of structural transformation/productive capacities insufficient compared to its role in enabling achievement of SDGs

Visit CDP website page on VNRs for 2020 VNR report, infographics and more

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

For more information about CDP and the recording visit here:

<https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/2021/2021-hlpf-side-event-voluntary-national-reports-on-the-2030-agenda-what-can-we-learn-for-a-post-pandemic-world/>

Q&A to follow—

Please add your questions in the chat box