

# The 2018 United Nations High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development Goals

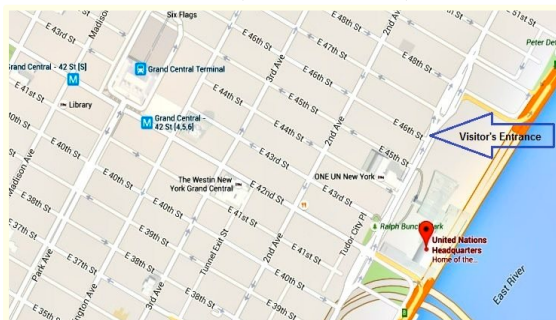
*A short primer to help activists working on **Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity and Expression and Sex Characteristics** make the most of your experience*

**What?** The High Level Political Forum (HLPF) is a United Nations (UN) conference that meets annually under the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and every four years at the UN General Assembly at UN headquarters in New York. It reviews and follows up on the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development. The HLPF is tasked with tracking the international implementation and progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The forum brings together representatives from UN Member States (sometimes referred to as countries or States), civil society organizations and UN entities to discuss progress and best practice, and to produce a Ministerial Declaration regarding the progress on an annually-chosen theme. This year's theme is:

***"Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies"***

**When?** July 9<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup> 2018

**Where?** 405 E 42nd Street (46th St & 1st Ave) NY, NY 10017



Accessible via public transportation from the 4 and 5 trains at Grand Central Station

**A Brief History:** The HLPF is the successor to the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), which commenced after the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in 1992. The HLPF first convened on September 24<sup>th</sup>, 2013 and is designed to continue the CSD's work in following up with an international agenda for sustainable development. The HLPF monitors the progress in the implementation of the [Rio Declaration on Environment and Development](#) and the SDGs and

also supports the realization of the [Johannesburg Plan of Implementation](#).

## The Sustainable Development Goals and 2030 Agenda

The SDGs, otherwise known as the *Global Goals*, are a set of 17 interconnected goals for UN Member States that aim to end poverty, achieve gender equality, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity. The Agenda 2030 is the UN plan of action to implement these goals. It provides clear guidelines and targets for all countries to adopt in accordance with their own priorities and the environmental challenges of the world at large. The Agenda 2030 is an inclusive framework with a central commitment to "leave no one behind."



## HLPF Processes<sup>1</sup>

**The Ministerial Declaration:** Before the HLPF begins, UN Member States will negotiate and agree on the Ministerial Declaration. This UN document provides a platform for political leadership, guidance and recommendations for follow-up and review of the SDGs and reinforces the commitments of countries to the implementation of the SDGs. It provides a space for States to discuss priorities as well as methods for implementation of each year's HLPF theme. Every year, seven specific goals are highlighted for the Ministerial Declaration.

This year the focus goals are:

(suggested access points for sexual orientation, gender identity & expression and sex characteristics (SOGIESC) highlighted in red)

- **Goal 6.** Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and **sanitation for all**
- **Goal 7.** Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

<sup>1</sup> <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf>

- **Goal 11.** Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
- **Goal 12.** Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
- **Goal 15.** Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss
- **Goal 17.** Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development

**Voluntary National Reviews:** At the HLPF, States present “Voluntary National Reviews” (VNRs) which are reports on progress toward the SDGs that they submit to the forum. These are meant to track the economic, social, and environmental dimensions of development in national and international contexts. VNRs are voluntary, state led, undertaken by both developed and developing countries, and provide a platform for partnerships, including through the participation of major groups and other stakeholders. VNRs allow the sharing of experiences and aim to accelerate the implementation of the Agenda 2030. VNRs are prepared by governments in a process that is supposed to be consultative, inclusive, and participatory and aims to involve all major groups and other stakeholders. This is supposed to include all sectors and levels of government, civil society, private sector, members of Parliament and other institutions. VNRs also provide a space where States can comment on the gaps and challenges to achieving Agenda 2030, taking into consideration each country’s capacity to implement policy and infrastructure changes to progress development.

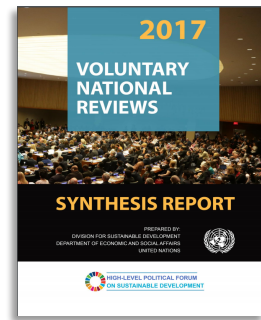
## Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity and Expression and Sex Characteristics (SOGIESC) at HLPF

The “leave no one behind” principle of the SDGs mandates the inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people. In short, the SDGs must be inclusive of all people regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, and/or sex characteristics.

As a result of the advocacy of UN Member States, UN entities and LGBTI civil society, SOGIESC have become increasingly visible throughout the HLPF program.

The 2017 Voluntary National Reviews Synthesis Report provides a comprehensive review of the inclusion of SOGIESC during the 2017 HLPF VNR process.

In 2017, OutRight, MSMGF, and The Global Advocacy Platform to Fast Track the HIV and Human Rights Responses with Gay and Bisexual Men published LGBTI-health-specific recommendations on Goal 3 for Agenda 2030:



### VNRs Report



### LGBTI Agenda 2030 Fact Sheet<sup>2</sup> LGBTI 2030 Agenda<sup>1</sup>



The background paper and fact sheets provide concrete recommendations that link the health and well-being of LGBTI people directly to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. These can be a useful resource for civil society inputs into the VNR process.

## Civil Society and Stakeholders at HLPF<sup>3</sup>

Civil Society Organizations play a unique consultative role at the HLPF through the “Major and Other Stakeholders Groups” function, which is built into the structure of the forum. In implementing the SDGs at the national level, UN Member States are also mandated to seek maximum stakeholder involvement and transparency, and participation from Civil Society can help to facilitate this. Although the HLPF is an intergovernmental forum, Civil Society has access to all meetings and documents. Additionally, Civil Society can submit documents and make recommendations and interventions through these groups.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.outrightinternational.org/content/agenda-2030-lgbti-health-and-well-being>

<sup>3</sup> <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/mgos>

Within the Major and Other Stakeholders Groups system there are thirteen UN-formalized "sectors of society," which act as the main channels through which Civil Society participation is facilitated in UN activities related to sustainable development. These are officially called "Major Groups and Other Stakeholders" and include the following sectors:

- **Women**
- **Children and Youth**
- **Indigenous Peoples**
- **Non-Governmental Organizations**
- **Local Authorities**
- **Workers and Trade Unions**
- **Business and Industry**
- **Scientific and Technological Community**
- **Farmers**

Other Stakeholders include groups focused on:

- **Persons with Disabilities**
- **Volunteers**
- **Ageing**
- **Education and Academia**

While there is not yet a formal LGBTI Stakeholders Group an informal international coalition of LGBTI civil society organizations, activists, human rights defenders and development practitioners work together to maximize opportunities for SOGIESC at the HLPF. To register as part of the listserv for this group contact:

Micah Grzywnowicz [micah.grzywnowicz@rfsi.se](mailto:micah.grzywnowicz@rfsi.se)

---

## Side Events at HLPF

Organizations can host formal side events during the HLPF that explore issues relevant to the theme and focus goals of the HLPF. Due to space restrictions, often multiple organizations will host a collective side event, this also helps provide varying perspectives and information. Official side events take place with co-sponsorships by UN Member States and UN Agencies.

These events offer vital opportunities for civil society to contribute to the overall dialogue, even if their areas of expertise and focus are not included in the current HLPF theme or outcome. Building solidarity is a critical part of the mission of HLPF.

---

## Making the Most of your HLPF

### Before the HLPF

1. Identify national organizations who are doing work around the SDGs.
2. Identify ministerial and inter-ministerial responsibility for SDGs in your government.
3. Send them questions regarding:
  - Their SDG priorities
  - Your countries' Voluntary National Review
  - LGBTI/SOGIESC inclusion in both
4. Identify and advocate for the inclusion of best practice examples that include LGBTI people for your government's VNR.
5. Map regional CSO consultations and arrange meetings with relevant stakeholder groups.
6. Find out about the HLPF delegation and key priorities and positions / priorities for the Ministerial Declaration.
7. Join the LGBTI Stakeholders Group and/or other Major and Other Stakeholders Groups.

### During the HLPF

1. Always relate your advocacy back to the SDGs.
2. Align your advocacy with the 2018 review goals.
3. Familiarize yourself with the VNRs that will be presented.
4. Contact your New York based UN Mission representatives (the UN Bluebook for contact information is available [here](#)).
5. Send them questions regarding:
  - Can we arrange a meeting?
  - Who is on the country's HLPF Ministerial delegation?
  - Who is the country's chosen representative on the CSO delegation?
  - What are the country's key priorities at the HLPF?

### FURTHER READING

Main HLPF Website: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf>

List of Inputs by Major Groups and VNRs: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/inputs/>

Major Groups: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/mgos>

### History of the HLPF

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/intergovernmental/csd>

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/rio20>