

The 2020 United Nations High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development Goals Primer

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*A short primer to help activists working on **Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity and Expression and Sex Characteristics** to 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). Although SDGs are rooted in and interlinked with human rights, it is a development space with its own language and advocacy entry points as such.

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:

“Accelerated action and transformative pathways: realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development”

When? July 7th - 16th 2020

Where? In light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and expected limitations on in-person meetings and international travel, [HLPF 2020](#) will be fully held online.

Click here to view this year's [Programme for ECOSOC Integration Segment, High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and the High-Level Segment of ECOSOC](#)

Registration Registered participants will be able to attend the virtual meetings. Others will be able to follow the meeting through [UN Web TV](#) or YouTube. Further details on the process will be shared soon.

Engagement UN DESA has created a '[Stakeholders](#)' page which is accessible from the HLPF 2020 navigation bar. It contains information on engagement and participation at the 2020HLPF. For more information on engaging in the VNR sessions during the HLPF, please click [here](#).

Stakeholder Perspective - Official Thematic Session

The Major Groups and other Stakeholders (MGoS) Official Session is listed in the 2020 HLPF Programme on Tuesday, 7 July 2020 from 4 - 5pm EDT (New York time). The title of the session is: *Transformative pathways to realize the 2030 Agenda: a whole of society approach taking into account the impact of COVID19 (Stakeholder perspective)*. The session is organized by the MGoS CM. You will be able to view the session on UN Web TV or YouTube.

Thematic Review of the HLPF

The Division for the Sustainable Development Goals within the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA/DSDG) is organizing consultations on six topics for discussion during the planned July 2020 session of the UN High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF). The six sessions comprising this year's "thematic review" aim to enable discussion of implementation of the 2030 Agenda with a focus on synergies and trade-offs among the 17 SDGs and accelerating progress towards the aim of leaving no one behind.

In previous HLPF sessions, participants conducted "in-depth reviews" on several individual SDGs each year. This year, no SDGs have been selected for in-depth review, but rather the GSDR's six "entry points" for transformative action will provide a framework for thematic review. The review of each entry point will incorporate a set of closely related SDGs. All 17 SDGs are covered at least once in the course of the six sessions, and Goal 17 on means of implementation (partnership for the Goals) is covered in all six sessions.

This year the themes, which can be used as entry points of transformation, are:

- Human well-being and capabilities
- Sustainable and just economies
- Sustainable food systems and healthy nutrition
- Energy decarbonization with universal access
- Urban and peri-urban development
- Global environmental commons

Each theme has four levers:

1. Governance
2. Economy and finance

3. Individual and collective action
4. Science and technology

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 24th, 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](#)¹ and the SDGs and also supports the realization of the [Johannesburg Plan of Implementation](#)².

1

https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/generalassembly/docs/globalcompact/A_CONF.151_26_Vol.I_Declaration.pdf

2. https://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/documents/WSSD_POI_PD/English/WSSD_PlanImpl.pdf

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.”

[Do you know all 17 SDGs? Watch this short video](#)

HLPF Processes³

The Ministerial Declaration: Before this year's HLPF, UN Member States have begun negotiating the Political Declaration. It will be adopted during the Opening Session of the HLPF. The Ministerial Declaration 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.

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

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. Each year the States vary depending on their own commitment to do a voluntary national review. 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.

[You can view the VNR database here](#)

For information about how to prepare VNRs click see this [guideline](#) (in English)

To see 2019 VNRs by each country, please follow [this link](#)

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Intersex 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.

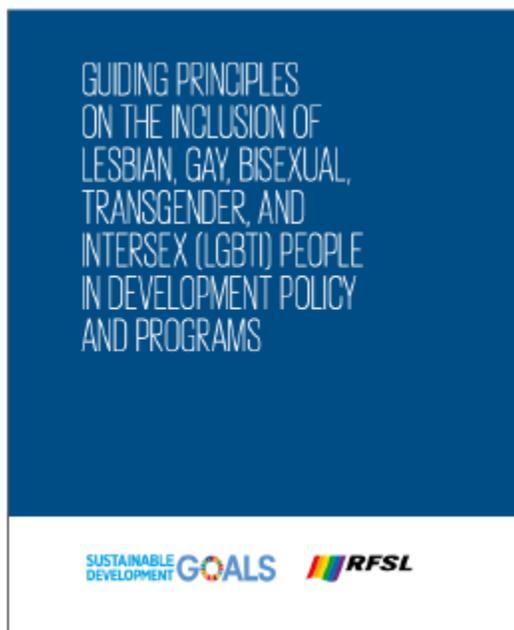


[Fact Sheet](#)



[LGBTI 2030 Agenda](#)

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.



[See Report »](#)

In 2019 RFSL launched the “Guiding Principles on the Inclusion of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex People in Development Policy and Programs.”⁵ These guiding principles are meant to serve as a tool for all stakeholders in designing, implementing and monitoring international, national, and local development activities related to LGBTI people, with a vision to achieving the United Nations Agenda 2030 and other development priorities.

Civil Society and Stakeholders at HLPF

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.

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” (MGoS) 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
- Sendai (Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction)
- Asia Pacific RCEM (Regional Civil Society Engagement Mechanism)
- LGBTI

2019 HLPF was the first session when the LGBTI Stakeholders Group was a formally recognized entity within the MGoS structure. Apart from working as a Stakeholder Group, we will continue engaging with all other MGoS, civil society organizations, activists, human rights defenders and development practitioners present at HLPF to maximize our opportunities.

To register as part of the LGBTI Stakeholder Group listserv, use the following link: <https://forms.gle/2J13MEnuqraENW6P6>

COVID-19 Statement of LGBTQI Stakeholder Group

This year LGBTI stakeholders published a statement, where the group urges governments to adopt strong and inclusive policies and measures that effectively consult and engage communities, including:

- Consistently and strongly holding service providers, law enforcement, and policymakers accountable for discrimination and human rights violations;
- Fully funding community-led monitoring and reporting initiatives for LGBTI human rights at the national, regional and international levels to assist with accountability and other program improvements;
- Meaningfully including LGBTI people in all decision-making processes concerning them;
- Amplifying the needs of LGBTI people in social protections and welfare programs;
- Fully funding community-based and LGBTI-led organizations to strengthen over taxed and under-capacitated public health systems;
- Implementing self-care health interventions in health systems, such as self-collecting of samples for sexually transmitted infections and HIV self-testing kits; and
- Enacting efforts to realize Universal Health Coverage.

[Click here for the full statement](#)

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.

This year all Side-events and Exhibitions will be held virtually. Further information can be found under [Other Events](#) on the HLPF 2020 website.

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' 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 and development.
2. Align your advocacy with the 2020 entry points.
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).
5. Send them questions regarding:
 - Their SDG priorities
 - Your countries' Voluntary National Review
 - LGBTI/SOGIESC inclusion in both

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>