



**United
Nations**

High-Level Political Forum
on Sustainable Development

HLPF 2025 SIDE EVENT

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN IN THE FINAL FIVE YEARS OF THE 2030 AGENDA: TERRITORIALIZATION AND THE ROLE OF VOLUNTARY LOCAL REVIEWS (VLRs) TO ACCELERATE PROGRESS TOWARDS THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs) UNTIL 2030

Concept Note

Virtual Event

Monday, 21 July 2025

1.00-2.30 pm EST

BACKGROUND

In 2025, ten years after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and five years before the deadline for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), progress toward achieving the Goals in the region of Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), as well as in the rest of the world, is not as expected. Projections based on the latest available data presented in [ECLAC's eighth report on regional progress and challenges of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Latin America and the Caribbean](#) indicate that only 23% of the goals are expected to be achieved by 2030 in the LAC region. 41% of the goals are moving in the right direction, but at an insufficient pace for achievement by the deadline, while the progress toward achieving 36% of the goals is either stagnant or declining compared to 2015.

Progress hugely varies among the SDGs: For Goal 1 (No poverty), Goal 2 (Zero hunger), Goal 10 (Reduced inequalities), Goal 13 (Climate action) and Goal 16 (Peace, justice and strong institutions), none of the targets are on track for achievement by 2030, and several have regressed significantly. For Goal 6 (Clean water and sanitation), Goal 12 (Responsible consumption and production) and Goal 17 (Partnerships for the Goals), fewer targets are off track, with some showing progress. Goal 7 (Affordable and clean energy) and Goal 14 (Life below water) have the most even split between targets that are on track and targets that are off track. Most of the indicators under Goal 4 (Quality education), Goal 5 (Gender equality), Goal 8 (Decent work and economic growth), Goal 9 (Industry, infrastructure and innovation) and Goal 11 (Sustainable cities and communities) are moving in the right direction but at an insufficient pace. Targets under Goal 3 (Good health and well-being) and Goal 15 (Life on land) display no discernible trend, be it positive or negative. Institutional fragility, tight financing and fiscal space, low economic and trade growth, structural inequalities and environmental vulnerability remain core constraints to accelerate progress towards the SDGs, exacerbated by post-pandemic recovery setbacks and geopolitical turbulence.

Despite all odds, the great majority of countries of the region remain committed to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, taking ownership of the SDGs as a State commitment in close cooperation with a wide range of stakeholders, including civil society, youth, the private sector, academia, parliamentarians and local authorities, among others. Between 2016 and 2024, 32 of the 33 countries in Latin America and

the Caribbean reported their progress in the ownership, monitoring and implementation of the SDGs with the presentation of at least one Voluntary National Review (VNR) at the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) in New York. Of these 32 countries, 20 countries have presented a VNR on more than one occasion. The 65 VNRs submitted by the countries of the region to date constitute a repository of information, knowledge, good practices and lessons learned along the road to 2030. VNRs have been evolving into a tool for analysing complex national realities. Increasingly, they examine the 2030 Agenda as a whole, integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development, include a specific section on the pledge to leave no one behind, facilitate decision-making and follow-up to public policies, and propose solutions for challenges identified in previous reports. In a number of cases, VNRs have become catalysts for the implementation of the SDGs at the national level and reinforced coordination among the various government ministries and society as a whole, as well as among different levels of government, while highlighting the particular importance of taking action at the local level.

Although the SDGs are global, their achievement will depend on our ability to make them a reality at the local, territorial, and subnational levels, including towns, cities, and regions. The 2030 Agenda acknowledges the crucial role of local authorities and communities in achieving these global objectives. Local and regional governments are at the core of the 2030 Agenda and have a key role to play in its fulfilment. Their responsibilities touch upon most of the Goals' targets and indicators, and this is especially true of their role in delivering basic services. The growing interest of local and subnational governments in supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and in monitoring progress in that respect comes as no surprise in Latin America and the Caribbean (one of the most highly urbanized regions in the world, where over 80% of the population lives in cities), and that interest is reflected in their readiness to undertake Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs). While VNRs continue to be the main mechanisms for reviewing the progress and challenges in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the national level, the emergence of VLRs complement national monitoring and review efforts. In order to territorialize the SDGs, subnational governments in the region have worked to strengthen their capacities and adapt the goals, targets and indicators proposed in the 2030 Agenda to the reality of their communities, the availability of human and monetary resources, and established priorities. In addition, they have started to learn about the possibility of combining the efforts of local governmental and non-governmental stakeholders, thereby benefiting from their spatial proximity. They have also initiated multilevel coordination processes to ensure the coherence of national, intermediate and local government proposals linked to the SDGs.

ECLAC remains strongly committed to strengthening subnational governments' capacities for formulating and improving the quality of their VLRs as important accelerator of the SDGs and has developed a variety of tools that provide guidance to the territorialization process, including the regional guide: [Territorialization of the Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\) in Latin America and the Caribbean: A Manual for Implementation of Voluntary Local Reviews at the Subnational Level](#) and a [virtual training course](#) based on the forementioned publication, which will be launched at the global level on this occasion. Furthermore, the UN Regional Commission is closely working together with Member States, other UN entities and funds, and subnational and local authorities to advance the territorialization in the region, with several initiatives being highlighted in this event.

PARTICIPANTS

Participants in this event will include national and local authorities from the Latin American and Caribbean region who have been involved in efforts to territorialize the SDGs, as well as in the preparation of the Voluntary Local and National Reviews. Resident Coordinators of the United Nations system and

representatives of their offices, and other officials from the United Nations system, particularly from DESA and ECLAC, as well as other stakeholders, including civil society and academia.

GOAL OF THE WORKSHOP

The main goal of the event is to foster dialogue, exchange of best practices and peer learning on the opportunity of the process of territorialization and the elaboration of VLRs for strengthening intersectoral, multi-level, multi-stakeholder, and long-term governance in the region of Latin America and the Caribbean and accelerate the SDGs until 2030.

OUTCOMES

- Launch ECLAC's new training course on the territorialization of the SDGs in Latin America and the Caribbean and the development of VLRs at the subnational level
- Showcase diverse best practices in the territorialization and VLR elaboration from the region of Latin America and the Caribbean, including **Argentina, Brazil, Mexico and Saint Kitts and Nevis**.
- Share good practices and experiences, as well as innovative approaches to overcome the challenges faced in the formulation and preparation of VLRs for implementing and monitoring the 2030 Agenda at the local level, and improve vertical integration at the local, national, regional, and global levels.

FORMAT AND LANGUAGE

The event will be held in virtual format via the WEBEX platform in English language without interpretation.

PROGRAMME

Moderator – Mareike Eberz, Economic Affairs Officer, Office of the Executive Secretary, ECLAC

01:00 – 01:05	Welcome and opening remarks Jose Manuel Salazar-Xirinachs, Executive Secretary, ECLAC
01:05 – 01:15	A global perspective on the VLR landscape with a focus on Latin America and the Caribbean Jurgen Gafke, Senior Programme Management Officer, Division for Sustainable Development Goals, UN DESA
01:15 – 01:25	Global launch of ECLAC's training course on the territorialization of the SDGs in Latin America and the Caribbean Valeria Torres, Head of the Public Management and Open Government Department, ILPES, ECLAC
01:25 – 01:35	Measuring the achievement of the SDGs at the local level – ECLAC's local data and statistics initiative in various territories in Argentina Romain Zivy, Officer in charge, ECLAC Office in Argentina
01.35 – 01.45	The first VLR from the Caribbean – The experience of Saint Kitts & Nevis Kerese Elliott, Member of the UN Youth Advisory Group for the Eastern Caribbean and Blue Planet Alliance Global Ambassador for St. Kitts and Nevis
01.45 – 01.55	Experience of developing a VLR in Aguascalientes, Mexico Guillermo de la Torre Sifuentes, Secretary of Planning, Participation and Development, Aguascalientes, Mexico

01.55 – 02.05	The role of cities and VLRs and localization of the 2030 Agenda in Brazil Lavito Bacarissa, Executive Secretary, National Commission for the SDGs (CNODS), General Secretary of the Presidency of the Republic, Brazil
02.05 – 02.15	SDG Municipalization Strategies in Brazil: Partnerships between Civil Society and Government in localizing the SDGs Igor Pantoja, Representative of the Institute for Sustainable Cities in Brazil
02.15 - 02.25	Interactive dialogue between all participants Sharing of best practices and lessons learned around the territorialization and VLR process
02.25 – 02:30	Final reflections and closing remarks Javier Medina Vasquez, Deputy Executive Secretary, ECLAC