

PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS, PRESENTING THE VNR TO THE PUBLIC, AND STRENGTHENING GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

WHAT IS IT?

Awareness-raising is a process that seeks to inform and educate people about a topic with the intention of influencing their attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs towards the achievement of a defined goal. It can mobilize the power of public opinion in support of an issue and influence the political will of decision-makers.

In increasing public awareness of a VNR, and thereby strengthening government accountability to its findings, it is important to ensure as broad and inclusive of an audience as possible.

Language(s) used, as well as the authenticity, manner, and channels chosen to share, communicate, and promote VNR messages should be considered.

In supporting such processes, a few actions, suggestions and points to keep in mind are:

- Awareness-raising campaigns tend to be more successful when conducted by a network or coalition, particularly if partners can bridge national and subnational levels.
- Know your target audiences and their interests. Select messages from the VNR should be relevant, clear, and authentically articulated, along with opportunities for follow-up.
- Schedule events around other major events to leverage publicity – such as leaders' summits and UN days, with reference to SDG 16 to increase reach and message impact.
- Ensure wide dissemination of the VNRs. Countries and other stakeholders should consider presenting the VNR and conducting awareness-raising in various municipalities and locales, in addition to more nationally oriented communication.
- Consider sharing the VNR and lessons learned at the regional level.
- Simplify the VNR and key findings for public consumption.
- Consider the means of communication, i.e., radio vs. TV, film, or social media.

Information may be disseminated through a range of different channels, including:

- Radio;
- TV, video, film and documentaries;
- Internet, social media, and online forums;
- Mobile phones and SMS campaigns;
- Newspapers, newsletters, leaflets and posters; and
- The arts.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

VNR awareness-raising and information dissemination are critical to supporting an environment of accountability and participatory and inclusive processes for follow-up and review.

Awareness-raising can also build local and national ownership of SDG 16-related issues and the larger 2030 Agenda.

- For example, it can be used to promote understanding of existing laws in relation to the VNR and national and local planning, as well provide opportunities to participate in public consultations.

Media and civil society have a key role in making the language around SDG 16 and related issues accessible to the public and in ensuring that information on implementation is available to all.



Bottom Line: All people – including marginalized and vulnerable groups – should be aware of the commitments that their governments have made under the 2030 Agenda and how they can engage in VNR and SDG implementation and accountability processes.

HOW IS IT APPROACHED?

Through various strategies, methods, and tools, a range of post-VNR activities, projects and programmes can be pursued to raise awareness and publicize key findings.

These include: convening public meetings, conferences, workshops, debates, and briefings; producing and disseminating reports and publications; making written or oral submissions to parliamentary committees and other oversight bodies; and creating and contributing to educational materials.

Many examples are singular or ad hoc, such as SDG-themed workshops and conferences.

Example: Post-VNR Workshops Amidst Political Change, Guatemala

After Guatemala's 2019 VNR, the government conducted a series of post-VNR workshops with different stakeholders. The government also worked to generate data that was missing from the VNR, with a particular focus on disaggregated data to ensure that no one is left behind. The government also embedded the lessons learned from the VNR into the four-year national development strategy – translating long-term goals for the 2030 Agenda into short-term milestones. These priorities were then signed off by government representatives from all levels and across sectors, which the collaboration on the VNR helped make possible.

Other efforts include social media campaigns, platforms, and websites, as well as SDG training programmes targeting, in some cases, specific stakeholder groups, such as parliament, the private sector, and young people.

While limited, there are examples of mainstreaming efforts around the VNR through communication strategies, task forces, or advocacy teams.

Serbia's 2018 VNR highlighted plans to conduct a comprehensive public awareness-raising campaign, specifically on key findings and to help publicize and raise the visibility of the 2030 Agenda.