



ECLAC Community of Practice of Caribbean countries presenting their Voluntary National Review (VNR) in 2020

Date 14 Abril 2020

Participants

Belize, Jamaica, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, and ECLAC.

Objective of the meeting

This community of practice is an informal space for exchange among peers and sharing of good practices with regards to SDG reporting in general and the preparation of VNRs in particular; and aims to provide a space to communicate regularly with peers. The goal of this session was to discuss the impact of COVID-19 in the subregion and its implications on the VNR process and the overall implementation of the SDGs and to share ECLAC's most recent analysis on the COVID-19 crisis.

Presentation

- ECLAC's analysis on the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 in the region and a trend analysis of 72 SDG indicators in the region.
- ECLAC shared the recently launched [COVID-19 Observatory in Latin America and the Caribbean](#), its latest [Report on the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19](#), and the report ["The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the new global and regional context: scenarios and projections in the present crisis"](#).

Key messages from the discussion

Belize: appreciates the presentation as a good insight about the current situation and future outlook. Belize faces severe challenges as the support of the UN system was not ensured, but have taken measures, nevertheless. The VNR process has progressed and stakeholder engagement before the COVID crisis was ensured, but the ongoing engagement has stalled due to the crisis. Belize is also preparing reports on Human Rights, and Gender, among others. A one-month national quarantine due to the emergency has been imposed, which makes it very difficult to comply with the dates of the VNR process. Inquires whether there could be an extension of the deadline.

ECLAC: indicates the dates of the HLPF have not changed (7-16 July) and will inquire with the DESA / HLPF Secretariat if flexibility may be given to countries to submit their VNRs in light of the COVID-19 crisis.



Trinidad & Tobago: requested further information with regards to completion dates of SDG indicators that would not be met by 2030 (due to the corona virus crisis, among others)

ECLAC: clarified that each indicator has its own trend, and that the attainment of the SDGs depends on policy interventions. Therefore, the numbers presented are not deterministic, as the trend could change depending on the actions taken by governments.

St. Vincent and the Grenadines: shared the difficulties faced due to COVID-19, such as being unable to reach stakeholders through face-to-face discussions. A questionnaire was developed to be sent by e-mail to stakeholders, which will be followed by a series of online discussions.

ECLAC: encouraged countries to continue to engage stakeholders beyond the VNR process. The HLPF is a milestone, a moment to report on the progress of the 2030 Agenda, but as discussed during the regional workshop in Santiago in February 2020, there is a need to think beyond the VNR. The COVID pandemic us an opportunity to strengthen partnerships and think post July 2020.

ECLAC: The trends discussed are similar across the Caribbean: most places are on lockdown, with chaotic schedules, difficulties to reach partners and stakeholders, and cancelations of missions.

Trinidad & Tobago: has faced similar challenges as Belize in terms of stakeholder engagement and is in the process of conducting an online survey but had to cancel remaining face-to-face discussions with key groups. Requests consideration to the deadlines as verification by stakeholders may be delayed due to priority shifts in this difficult time.

ECLAC: This crisis could be an opportunity to change the development model in the region. The crisis has made the faults of the model very apparent, as many are being left behind.

Belize: both the stakeholder engagement as well as data gathering have become a challenge. As much as the government is recommending people to work from home, many can't for a variety of reasons. Feedback is not forthcoming in a timely manner and in the case of a developing country, survival supersedes any report. In addition, technology is not readily available for online consultations, surveys and questionnaires in all sectors, hence the difficulty to be inclusive and reach everyone. The initial aim of consultations is also to sensitize stakeholders about the SDGs and to gather data. This is more difficult in the current circumstances.

St. Vincent and the Grenadines: the government has outlined a stimulus package to support persons that are severely impacted by COVID-19. To this extent a supplementary estimate was prepared.

Trinidad & Tobago: appreciates the exchange and the information provided. This crisis has created another aspect to the report that created a dynamic that impacts the VNR preparation.

ECLAC: stands ready to continue assisting countries, including through the new [COVID-19 Observatory](#) and other analytical products. Invites countries to review country profile in the Observatory and alert ECLAC whether data is not up to date.

Next Steps

- The next meeting of the Community of Practice will take place on **12 May 2020 at 12:00 pm (Chile time)**.
- ECLAC will convey to the HLPF Secretariat the request of VNR deadline flexibility due to the COVID crisis.
- Countries are invited to suggest topics for future meetings of the communities of practice.