

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 12th, 2017

**Regional governments launch brief report on their participation on
Voluntary National Reviews during the High-Level Political Forum**

*Recommendations and cases on the implementation of SDGs at sub-national level will be
presented at the launching event*

On 13 July, 2017, at 6pm, the Network of Regional Governments for Sustainable Development (nrg4SD), organizing partner of the Local Authorities Major Group, together with the Governments of Flanders and Catalonia, is organizing the parallel-event “*Regional Governments in the 2030 Agenda*”, during the first week of the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) for Sustainable Development. The event will focus on implementation of the SDGs by regional governments, and especially their involvement and inclusion in national processes, and the creation of regional governments own plans and strategies. During the opportunity, the nrg4SD, in partnership with ORU-Fogar, will launch a brief report on the participation of regional governments in Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs), including recommendations for future VNR countries to engage with regional governments.

In 2015, the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Summit adopted the 2030 Agenda, a document that contains a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets. The SDGs cover a broad range of themes aiming to balance the economic, social and environmental dimensions towards sustainable development. With the promise not to leave anyone behind, the SDGs implementation will require action at all levels, and especially at the subnational level, based on the actions of regional governments.

With clear direct competences on planning, legislation and decision-making over their territories, regional governments are fundamental contributors to the success of national efforts to achieve the SDGs. Particularly when it comes to “*Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world*”, regional governments’ role in the provision of basic services, such as water and sanitation, health, education and food security, makes them a necessary partner to achieve all the related goals and targets.

Several regional governments have already begun to put in motion actions to pursue the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in their territories. As an example, the government of Wales took the lead as the first government ever to commit to the implementation of the SDGs through legal enforcement. Moreover, the county governments of Kenya are fully aligned to the national efforts on the SDGs, through the Council of Governors, they are receiving training to build capacities and ensure the mainstreaming of the SDGs in their own development plans.

During the HLPF, voluntary Member States will take the floor to present a report of the national progress on the SDGs. In this framework, it is important to understand to what extent they are including regional governments in their implementation initiatives, as well as in the elaboration of the VNRs.

For that purpose, nrg4SD has carried a consultation with regional governments in different VNR countries, as to understand the extent of their participation and contribution to the national process of review. Based on those, a report of this consultation will be launched during the side-event and, as an outcome, a series of recommendations on how VNR countries could include and collaborate with subnational governments will be shared.

Flanders and Belgium, for instance, can be considered as a unique case of vertical integration, since the national report was fully inclusive of the three regional governments that form the country, building on the existing federalist model. Delivering a thorough revision of their own efforts to implement the SDGs, Flanders has directly contributed to the elaboration of Belgium's report.

This event will serve as an opportunity to explore and debate valuable alternatives to ensure the inclusion of sub-national experiences in national reviews of the SDGs; present the creation of sub-national Plans that ensure regions continue engaged with implementation of the 2030 agenda; compare experiences and share best practices.

Highlights of the event:

- The launch of a brief report by nrg4SD on the participation of regional governments in VNRs, including recommendations for future VNR countries in terms of engaging regional governments;
- Discussions on the participation of regional governments in national efforts for the follow-up and review of SDGs;
- Experience of Flanders and Belgium as an example of vertical integration and collaboration between national and regional governments, with the common goal of achieving the SDGs;
- Debates on how the UN, its Member States and the international community can support and contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the sub-national level;
- Present methods, initial mechanisms, and initiatives regional governments have adopted to the localization and implementation of the SDGs in their territories.

The Report: “SDGs at the Subnational Level: Regional Governments in the Voluntary National Reviews”

The nrg4SD, in collaboration with ORU-Fogar, will launch the report “SDGs at the Subnational Level: Regional Governments in the Voluntary National Reviews” On 13 July, 2017, at 6pm, at the Flanders House. Based on a consultation with 12 regional governments and associations, spanning from eight out of the total 44 countries presenting Voluntary National in the 2017 HLPF, the report highlights important findings and recommendations on how regional governments have been and should be included in the national reviews on the SDGs.

The report also introduces considerations on how regional governments can be enabled to play its potential as drivers of implementation, but also of monitoring, follow-up and review of the SDGs. Whether it is through the collaboration and alignment with the national strategies, or through their own plans and projects, the SDGs can only be achieved at the subnational level with the direct support and contribution of regional governments.

The information and positions included in the report also builds on nrg4SD active engagement in the UN Sustainable Development agenda, and especially since the Rio+20. As the Organizing Partner of the Local Authorities Major Group and member of the Global Task Force, nrg4SD facilitates and collects the input of regional governments committed to this agenda for many years.

As countries prepare to present their Voluntary National Reviews during the 2017 HLPF, many of the reports submitted make clear mention and recognition to the role and actions of regional governments. Nevertheless, the report informs that the modalities, and especially the communication, for inputting into the VNR processes should be improved.

Among other elements, the report also emphasizes:

- Challenge of data remains key to monitoring the SDGs progress & role of regional governments in disaggregation. This could alleviate the burden of national governments, strengthen national data systems and address inequalities within countries;
- Although 75% of respondents confirmed to be aware of VNRs, only 50% informed to be able to input to the national reviews. Responses demonstrated that understanding of the VNR process and way of contributing is still mostly unclear. Committees, working groups and commissions should be established to coordinate input and improve inclusiveness;
- 75% of respondent regional governments told to already have in place initiatives on the SDGs, while only 58% have mechanisms to review and monitor implementation. It is urgent that regional governments are further supported and involved with strategies to implement the agenda and review the SDGs progress;
- Cases of Kenya and Belgium are recommended for benchmarking of VNRs. Considering the responses from those governments and further analysis of the mechanisms in place to the review the SDGs implementation in those countries, it is praised the level of inclusivity and engagement of regional governments.
- The role of international and national associations of regional governments is crucial for disseminating and strengthening the commitment to achieving the SDGs at the subnational level. The activities of nrg4SD directly contribute to that, by facilitating the exchange of experiences and peer-review among members.

Quotes

Flanders

**Mr. Matthias De Moor, International Policy Advisor, Government of Flanders
nrg4SD Co-President for the North Liaison**

“As a federated State, Belgium works on the basis of close coordination between the federal and regional governments for the implementation of the SDGs, in which all play an important role based on their respective competences. This strong vertical integration enables us as Flanders to continuously coordinate and collaborate on coherent efforts in the 2030 Agenda, at the same time allowing tailor-cut actions for the specific circumstances of the Flemish territory, working together with cities and local authorities. Building on our Sustainable Development Strategy, the Visie 2050, we have provided inputs for the elaboration of the Belgian VNR. Moreover we are improving our governance structures to ensure the further integration of different ministries to properly address the Agenda 2030, to which we remain fully committed”.

nrg4SD

Mr. Rodrigo Messias, Policy Officer, nrg4SD Secretariat

“Regional governments have fundamental competences for achieving the SDGs. For example, through territorial planning, regional governments are key to building infrastructure and to the provision of basic services, like health, education, water and sanitation. Therefore, they can ease the burden of national governments, ensure efficient action and further involve civil society and local stakeholders. As emphasized in the report, the contribution of regional governments could be particularly helpful in the elaboration of VNRs, ensuring subnational data and input for more comprehensive reports. Hence, they need to be better informed and further included in the VNR processes.”

Kenya

Mrs. Jaqueline Mogeni, Chief Executive Officer, Council of Governors of Kenya

"The County governments play a critical role in service delivery and are responsible for delivery of various functions related to the SDGs. The Council of Governors of Kenya Secretariat led a process that engaged counties to generate reports on the progress of SDGs implementation as an input to the national Voluntary National Review (VNR). The country progress focused on the following key areas: progress in implementation of SDGs including statistics where available; measures planned for the attainment of SDGs, areas for cooperation between counties and national government and between county to county. The input from the county governments is to be incorporated in the VNR report. Further, County governments will be involved in validation of the report before final submission."

Side Event "Regional Governments in the 2030 Agenda"

13 July 2017 - 6 pm – 8 pm

Venue: The Flanders House, The New York Times Building, 620 Eighth Avenue, 44th Floor, New York, NY 10018

Download the full report: ["SDGs at the Subnational Level: Regional Governments in the Voluntary National Reviews"](#)

Registration: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/regional-governments-in-the-2030-agenda-tickets-35798257552>

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About nrg4SD

The [Network of Regional Governments for Sustainable Development](#) (nrg4SD) was established in 2002, and currently has over 50 members from 30 countries in four continents. The Network acts in three main fields: sustainable development, biodiversity and climate change; and has two main working lines: on the one hand, it seeks to convey a common voice of regional governments at a global level, especially following the UN agendas on these three thematic areas; on the other hand, it promotes cooperation among regional governments from across the world to ensure the engagement and implementation of these agendas, fostering the exchange of information, knowhow and best practices. In the field of Sustainable Development, nrg4SD acts as the Organizing Partner of the Local Authorities Major Group, and contributed to the whole intergovernmental process, bringing the perspective of subnational government. Since the approval of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development, nrg4SD works with members to support the subnational implementation of the SDGs, and to encourage their engagement in national processes of implementation, follow-up and review.

For more information: nrg4sd.org | @nrg4SD | #Regions4SDGs

About ORU Fogar

The United Regions Organization / Global Forum of Regional Associations (ORU Fogar) brings together regions from all over the world acting as their voice before the international organizations, promoting a global policy of balanced development and territorial cohesion. Its main objective is to seek the intermediate governments' recognition as major players in the global governance. It defends that the decentralization of the national states' power towards

other actors accelerates development; consequently fostering democracy by the proximity between these new actors and the citizens. ORU Fogar promotes a model based on a strong regional government, with capabilities and legally recognized powers and budgets. The organization has regional governments and regional networks from all five continents as members.

For more information: regionsunies-fogar.org | @ORUFOGAR