EQUITY-FOCUSED AND GENDER-RESPONSIVE EVALUATION: AN EVOLVING PRACTICE IN REPORTING VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEWS
EQUITY-FOCUSED AND GENDER-RESPONSIVE EVALUATION:
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**Keywords**

- Governance
- Methods
- Evaluation
- National gender frameworks
- Leave no one behind
- Looking ahead
Since the launch of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015, countries have committed to presenting their Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) at the High-level Political Forum to demonstrate their progress in implementing the SDGs.

The core principles of the 2030 Agenda are human rights, gender equality and a commitment to leave no one behind. As part of the research effort that the EvalGender+ and EvalSDGs networks initiated, countries in Asia, Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa were selected for a review on their VNRs. These reviews examined whether equity-focused and gender-responsive evaluative evidence has been integrated into the VNRs and the extent to which these states have integrated gender equality and equity into their national policies and systems.

This report highlights the main results of the review of the 2022 VNRs conducted and suggests recommendations for enhanced integration of equity-focused and gender-responsive evaluative evidence in implementing the SDGs and preparing VNRs.
METHODOLOGY AND CRITERIA

The review covers a sample of 13 VNRs from 2022 in Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and sub-saharan Africa. The selection of the sampled VNRs took into account the language in which they were presented, as the reviewing group had a limited understanding of various languages. The sampled VNRs covered three regions and included the following countries:

- DOMINICA
- GRENADA
- JAMAICA
- SURINAME
- GHANA
- LIBERIA
- MALAWI
- SOMALIA
- JORDAN
- PAKISTAN
- PHILIPPINES
- SRI LANKA
- UAE

PPGA 504 Group Project — Latin America & Caribbean VNR Report
The criteria for this review builds on a previously developed framework by the EvalGender+ and UN Women to guide the annual review of VNRs. For this 2022 review, evidence was analyzed on the use of equity-focused and gender-responsive evaluation in the VNRs and the integration of gender equality and equity into national policies and systems. The framework examined eight domains:

**Keyword:**
This domain examined the extent to which specific words were used in VNRs, such as evaluation, assessment, monitoring, review, follow-up, impact, gender, gender-sensitive, gender-transformative, sex-disaggregated data, logical framework, evaluation matrix, sexuality, inclusion, disability, refugees, violence, abuse, gender equity, gender-inequality, gender-analysis, marginalized, rural, women, female, men, boys, youth and elderly.

**Governance:**
This domain reviewed whether VNRs clearly explained how the assessment of SDG implementation had been managed; whether a high-level body in the country had been assigned to supervise implementation of the SDGs; the nature of this responsibility; and what monitoring and evaluation frameworks and practices were adopted by these bodies to manage SDG implementation. This section also studied whether national women’s machineries had participated in consultations on preparing the VNRs.

**Methods:**
This domain reviewed evidence of methodological framework usage when assessing SDG implementation. It examined the extent to which the VNRs integrated elements of gender-responsive assessments (gender-specific objectives, using sex-disaggregated data for all SDGs, some or just SDG 5 (Gender Equality)). This section also assessed the extent to which VNRs provided evidence on whether countries are integrating gender equality issues into national monitoring and evaluation (M&E) policies and systems and whether the use of evaluation is referenced in these systems.

**Evaluation:**
This domain examined the extent to which countries considered the role of evaluation and use evaluation and gender-responsive evaluative evidence in managing the SDGs and preparing VNRs, and their use and incorporation of such evidence. It also looked at whether VNRs highlighted the best performing SDGs and whether progress on SDG 5 (Gender Equality) was included. In addition, this section studied whether Voluntary Organizations for Professional Evaluation (VOPEs) and other bodies (i.e. statistics institutes, universities, and research institutions) were part of VNR preparation process.
National gender frameworks:
This domain looked at whether VNRs referred to international frameworks or policies related to gender, such as CEDAW. It also examined evidence of countries developing and activating national gender equality strategies and priorities. In addition, it examined the extent to which countries integrated gender-equality issues and the needs of vulnerable groups into national plans, and demonstrated examples of the positive impact such policies have in support of gender equity.

Leave no one behind:
This domain examined the extent to which VNRs demonstrated evidence of the leave no one behind principle, including considering the perspective of marginalized voices and the efforts made to ensure that all national policies, plans and programmes reached the most marginalized and left no one behind.

Looking ahead:
This domain assessed whether VNRs demonstrated future plans for the regular review of SDG implementation progress at the national level. This domain also examined recommendations on how evaluative evidence for gender-equality and -equity considerations could be strengthened in future reviews.

Overall summary:
The review criteria concluded with an overall summary domain that highlighted the main findings and observations of Asian, Latin American and Caribbean and sub-saharan African countries, with comments on the VNR structure.
FINDINGS

Specific findings across the different domains of the review are outlined on following pages.

Overall, all thirteen countries referenced SDGs in their VNRs and demonstrated their intention of meeting these goals. However, none fully reported those SDGs that were the theme-focus of the High-level Political Forum for 2022, while providing a general overview of the remaining SDGs. The theme-focused SDGs this year were Goal 4 Quality Education, Goal 5 Gender Equality, Goal 14 Life Below Water, Goal 15 Life on Land, and Goal 17 Partnerships for the Goals. The High-level Political Forum theme for 2022 was "building back better from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development." While countries cited adverse impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic, specific policies to 'build back better' from the pandemic or advancing the full implementation of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development were not present.

In general, the review of 2022 VNRs showed that despite the effort to increase focus on gender-related policies at the national level, there is still a need to implement specific, concrete and measurable policies and programs, increase access to sex-disaggregated data; as well as the employment of intersectionality lens by consulting with women in local communities and integrating marginalized communities such as the LGBTQI+ communities.
Focusing on language usage, it appears some states are committed to establishing a strong framework for M&E of the SDGs, and incorporating gender-inclusive approaches in the implementation of their goals.

Asia

Jordan and UAE had no mention of sexual orientation or LGBTQI+, the Philippines had no mention of gender analysis, minorities or gender inequality. While Pakistan focused on Impacts and mentioned women and girls as well as trans-gender, there was no mention of evaluation matrix or framework.

Latin America and the Caribbean

Dominica and Jamaica focused heavily on gender equality and gendered impacts; but there is less acknowledgment of LGBTQI+, no mention of patriarchy, and few mentions of sexual violence in Suriname and Dominica.

Sub-saharan Africa

Somalia and Malawi utilized more direct keywords to refer to gendered groups such as “Woman/en” over thirty times in both reports. Ghana and Liberia were prone to using terms such as “Monitoring” and “Evaluation” when referring to gender policy or oversight of gendered communities. Collectively, the Sub-saharan countries paid little to zero attention to LGBTQ and disabled individuals within their reports. The only mention of the LGBTQ population was in the Liberian VNR which mentioned “men who have sex with men” while discussing the AIDS epidemic.

Though a number of countries show commitment to M&E of the SDGs, some showed a need to establish mechanisms and clear plans for action. Generally, M&E, gender, women, youth, and disability were mentioned by most countries, but gender analysis, stereotypes, minorities, sexual orientation, refugees, and patriarchy were scarcely mentioned.

Further VNRs could benefit from paying more attention to these vulnerable groups, as their positionality and intersection with gender could be disproportionately affecting the level of support they receive from the community and the government. Going forward, future VNRs could specify other keywords for communities which intersect with gender identities such as Sexual Orientation, Disabled and Rural individuals to amplify how gender policies in each country are affecting sub-groups within the larger gender community. Moreover, future reports could be enhanced by providing more precise gender-responsive frameworks.
GOVERNANCE

As shown within the VNRs, all states demonstrated a concerted effort to monitor the implementation of SDGs into their national frameworks, by employing national performance M&E systems. The VNRs showed that progress has been made within governance and that each state has proposed an expected timeline for self-accountability. Overall, countries have made the initial steps in governance and monitoring of SDG policies. Future reports would benefit from more precise and specific language on which government bodies and stakeholders are responsible for monitoring each SDG and the successes and challenges they face. Further, gender-responsive data should be incorporated into the VNRs to amplify existing gender policies and data reported in the countries.

Asia
The VNRs provided a clear description of how preparation of the VNRs was managed, and how the SDGs were assessed. The VNRs showed that high-level governmental working groups and committees observed the overall process. In Sri Lanka, while there are policies that could increase availability of validated data and contribute to SDG progress measurement, a key priority remains a more robust process. Jordan focused on the recovery from the pandemic and progress with 2030 Agenda. Despite having made progress in the enrolment rate of girls in education, there is a significant level of gender gap. In UAE, there is a National Committee that engages a wide range of governmental and non-governmental stakeholders in the annual reporting on SDGs. In Pakistan, the NEC is mainly responsible for the implementation of SDGs, and the NEC sub-committee was established to handle important issues and strengthen the implementation on SDGs.

Latin America & the Caribbean
In general, most reports provided a clear description of how the VNRs were prepared, while all VNRs showed how the SDGs were assessed in these countries. However, not all VNRs clearly illustrated whether there was a methodological framework to evaluate progress towards the SDGs or whether monitoring and evaluation responsibilities were managed by a specific national body. Jamaica’s VNR report included multiple timelines and ‘roadmap’ elements proposing a route of action for aligning their national policy with the SDGs, and are well on their way. Grenada and Suriname included progress and commitment on aligning national policies to the SDG goals through its National Sustainable Development Plan. Grenada acknowledges its shortcomings and remains committed to establishing appropriate mechanisms. Dominica is still in the process of developing formal mechanisms and databases. While all four countries indicated commitment, they all recognize room for improvement, especially in establishing lasting and specific governmental mechanisms.

Sub-saharan Africa
The 2022 VNR suggest that Liberia currently holds the largest centralized governance framework to implement the SDGs. This flows from the commitment of the Liberian government to align its National Development Plans with SDGs, as well as its emphasis on evidence-based data from multiple sources for generating their VNRs. Malawi, Ghana and Somalia still operate under a decentralized framework to assess the progress of SDGs. VNRs from these nations do not specify the extent to which data is collected and gender policies are implemented effectively. Ghana relies on the High-level Ministerial Commission, an Implementation Coordinating Committee and a Technical Committee for primary oversight of data and monitoring of the SDGs. Moreover, Ghana relies on collaboration from the WHO Secretariat for oversight of certain SDGs such as Goal 3. They refer broadly to “Women’s Groups” as stakeholders in the consultation process for the governance of gender policy but do not specify who these groups and the agendas that they promote. Somalia also has a decentralized system and refers to the Ministry of Women for consultation on Gender Policy and Governance.
They ‘Methods’ section of our analysis addresses the structure and components of the VNRs monitoring and evaluation component. Special attention has been paid to gender components of monitoring and evaluation such as gender-responsiveness strategies and the use of sex-disaggregated data to assess the extent to which the various Goals are being met for the samples.

**Sub-Saharan Africa**

Malawi and Ghana appear to lag behind Liberia and Somalia. The VNR reports for both countries demonstrate a clear overall framework in which each SDG is addressed separately and in their corresponding order. However, the framework in both reports is poorly defined and fails to implement gender-responsive assessments and gender-specific data. Both Malawi and Ghana mention the terms ‘monitoring’ and ‘evaluation’ throughout the report but there is no specific evidence of the implementation of such policies. Somalia’s VNR report demonstrates a slightly more gender-aware approach in its methodological framework for assessing SDG progress. The use of gender-responsiveness assessment comes through in Somalia’s analysis of progress in Goal 5 and sex-disaggregated data is used when exploring the intersection between infant mortality rate and maternal mortality. Liberia has gone a step further and distinguished itself from the other countries in this regional analysis for its commitment to gender mainstreaming in its VNR report. Liberia’s methodological framework consists of a stakeholder assessment, an inquiry into institutional arrangements and an evaluation of the capacity of government officials to go through with different aspects of SDG implementation. Throughout the report, Liberia flags the importance of gender-specific objectives and issues and uses sex-disaggregated data to contextualize how issues are affecting the more vulnerable groups across the country.

**Asia**

Sri Lanka and Pakistan have extensive monitoring and Evaluation of gender-related topics, though seemingly futile due to a lack of gender-disaggregated data. For Jordan, there are no specific details of any methodological frameworks used for assessing the SDGs implementation. In UAE, although significant work is being done in promoting gender equality policies and achieving gender balance across sectors, the report does not seem to have specific attention on SDG 5 but gives an overall and holistic approach to methods of evaluating the 17 SDGs. The Philippines suggests monitoring as a part of methods to implement policies, however, there is mention of evaluation is not found in the report.

**Latin America & the Caribbean**

The VNRs indicated that all states’ M&E systems include at least some elements being looked for within the methodological assessment, but were limited by the actual capacity of such systems. For example, evaluating Suriname’s M&E system is difficult because the VNR report only discusses four SDGs, while Dominica’s system is heavily reliant on government agencies and Ministries, limiting their perceived scope. Conversely, Jamaica and Grenada both admitted a need for improvement in the future, lacking extensive M&E systems and failing to mention them in-depth within their report.
Evaluation refers to the systematic collection and analysis of information to make judgments about the extent to which policy goals and initiatives are being achieved or not. In this analysis, we are particularly interested in the intersection between evaluation and gender and the extent to which gender has been taken into consideration in each of the country’s evaluation strategies.

Asia
There was a lack of acknowledgement and emphasis on the importance of evaluation. For instance, Sri Lanka and the Philippines hit bare minimum of recognizing inadequacies in evaluation process such as the lack of data and the lack of a robust national to sub-national M&E is vital for more consistent impact and approach and fine-tuned capacity-building efforts, but lacks evaluation. In Jordan’s VNR, many bodies engaged in evaluation is unclear. Pakistan monitors progress on indicators and goals using SDGs indexes, which is closely monitored; however, likewise with other countries, the report does not mention a specific evaluation program or process. UAE was the only country that considers evaluation, through Global Compact Network UAE (GCN-UAE).

Latin America & the Caribbean
The VNRs indicated that Voluntary Organizations for Professional Evaluation were absent in all states’ efforts. All VNRs mention monitoring and evaluation, but only some describe efforts to incorporate gender-responsive evaluative evidence. For example, Jamaica mentions evaluation methods and strategies throughout its report in a general sense. Dominica does not discuss the significance of evaluation in-depth, nor mention gender-responsive evaluation processes. Various reports failed to show that the role of evaluation in M&E frameworks was significantly considered in preparing for the SDG review, and as a result, many have highlighted the need for stronger monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

For Grenada, the role of evaluation in M&E frameworks are not significantly considered in the VNR, while Dominica acknowledges strategies for improving M&E processes for the future. Suriname has institutions to help monitor and evaluate the SDGs have been established by the government. However, they lack professional M&E and the mechanism and methodologies of the M&E processes are not clear.

Sub-saharan Africa
Somalia, for example, acknowledges in its VNR report that proficient monitoring has not taken place yet and has monitoring goals in place to address this. Liberia, on the other hand, has developed a framework before conducting the 2022 VNR which is based on a comprehensive analysis and assessment of the last VNR submitted by Liberia in 2020. This updated framework has been integrated into all ministries to focus on the progress of SDGs and its National Plan titled ‘Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development’ (PAPDs). Ghana and Malawi have a long way to go to achieve this level of application of evaluation strategies. Although evaluation is mentioned throughout both reports, it is unclear how evaluation is being used and there is a lack of specificity regarding the methods and criteria. In Ghana’s report, in particular, evaluation is mostly mentioned in the phrase “monitoring and evaluation” which fails to distinguish between these two practices and address how each is used. Liberia’s report recognizes that there are clear gaps in the monitoring and evaluation relating to the challenges faced by data processes in the country when attempting to assess the national performance of the SDG implementation process.
The ‘Gender Policies’ section of our analysis addresses the national frameworks, strategies and policies mentioned in the VNR. Special attention has been paid to national gender equality strategies and their implementation in each country.

Asia
Pakistan has taken action to increase women's political participation, while also working towards protecting transgender rights. Sri Lanka acknowledges the importance of financial and political empowerment in promoting gender equality. Jordan has implemented measures to address violence against women and promote human capital development. The Philippines has made advances in reducing violence against women by establishing specialised services to promote gender equality and women empowerment. The UAE successfully drove legal reforms to narrow gender disparities, achieve gender balance in the public sector, and bring to fore needs of marginalised groups. These countries’ progress serves as a testament to their unwavering commitment to creating equitable and inclusive societies where women can participate fully and thrive.

Sub-Saharan Africa
All four countries have implemented national gender policies aimed to address the specific challenges women are facing in their countries in line with Goal 5 in a variety of areas such as tackling teenage pregnancy, Female Genital Mutilation and improving women’s political representation. However, both Malawi and Ghana lack details on how these policies are being implemented and whether or not they are effective on-ground. The government of Malawi has implemented the ‘National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security’ but the discussion around national monitoring and evaluation strategies for this is vague and does not prioritise gender equality. Similarly in Ghana, the ‘National Gender Policy’ is flagged as a vital step to achieving gender equality but the VNR report does not discuss the policy in detail. The UAE successfully drove legal reforms to narrow gender disparities, achieve gender balance in the public sector, and bring to fore needs of marginalised groups. These countries’ progress serves as a testament to their unwavering commitment to creating equitable and inclusive societies where women can participate fully and thrive.

Latin America & the Caribbean
The VNRs indicated that for all states, equity-focused and gender-responsive evidence were not strongly present nor prioritized. The VNRs heavily referenced national strategies and policies, however provided little to no data as evidence to support claims being made. Dominica and Jamaica both mention the implementation of five different national gender equality strategies which align with various SDGs. However, in both cases, there is a lack of data to support the achievement of these targets. Grenada has set National Gender Equality strategies and/or priorities that align with existing SDG goals, however, information in the VNR report is overall generalized.
The ‘Leave No-One Behind’ section analyses whether countries have sufficiently considered the perspectives of marginalized voices while preparing the VNRs. This is especially important when considering improving the level of gender equality in the region, as without inputs from women and other marginalized identities, SDG Goal 5 is unlikely to be met.

Asia

There have been many strategies and policies that make the LNOB very inclusive in Sri Lanka, including women’s issues, people with disabilities issues, refugees issues. Likewise, the Philippines has good progress on LNOB principles. UAE takes into account the voices of marginalized communities but only for UAE citizens. Most VNR countries did not address LGBTQ2+, with Pakistan being the only country that mentioned the community in its report. Pakistan has made remarkable strides in raising awareness on transgender rights.

Latin America & the Caribbeans

Each state mentions Leave No One Behind (LNOB) initiatives and identifies regionally-specific marginalized groups. Dominica includes significant gender-responsive policies that aim to promote gender equity and the socioeconomic well-being of vulnerable groups across economic and climate-resiliency sectors. A few recurrent themes are found throughout these VNRs – first, while states do identify and consider some vulnerable groups within their strategies to achieve the SDGs, marginalized perspectives are overwhelmingly absent from each respective report. As a result, it is unclear to what extent certain vulnerable groups have been consulted. Moreover, some vulnerable groups – especially the LGBTQI+ community – are absent from the VNRs.

There is a lack of mention of vulnerable and diverse groups in the report for Dominica, Grenada and Suriname. Jamaica considers and mentions marginalized groups, but fails to incorporate the perspectives of these groups into the VNR. Moreover, Jamaica maintains a focus on heterosexuality with regard to the spread of HIV, and refers to homosexual men as “men who have sex with men.” Mentions of religious minorities and LGBTQI+ communities are absent.

Sub-Saharan Africa

There is mixed evidence regarding the LNOB principle in the regional context. Both Malawi and Ghana mention that they have considered the perspectives of marginalized groups, but do not specify how and to what extent these groups were consulted during the VNR process. Liberia goes further to mention specific frameworks that include marginalized groups in the planning and development process of its National Plans and the making of its VNR. Similarly, Somalia also mentions ‘inclusive participation’ by marginalized groups including ‘Internally Displaced Peoples (IDPs), women from rural areas, youth and male gender advocates and religious leaders.’ Overall, although efforts have been made to include voices from marginalized groups, it is clear that there is room for improvement in the domain.
The final section assesses the future plans for a regular and annual review of the SDGs implementation progress at the national level. In addition, it examines if the VNR includes recommendations on how evaluative evidence for gender equality and equity considerations will be used to strengthen future reviews.

**Looking Ahead**

Asia

While Jordan, UAE and the Philippines vaguely site national plan for assessment, Sri Lanka and Pakistan’s plans remain unclear. While Jordan provides recommendations of SDG 5 and discusses funding for improvement, it lacks specificity and assessment, M&E. While UAE has done significant work on achieving gender balance and women representation across government and private sectors, it still does not fully approach the report through the gender-evaluative lens as many SDGs do not have a disaggregated data and represent general population.

Latin America & the Caribbean

Overall, each country includes general plans to complete annual assessments of the progress toward SDG implementation at the national level. However, there is a lack of specificity towards including evaluative evidence to strengthen gender equality and equity considerations in future annual reviews. Dominica explicitly mentions the key goal of establishing a national assessment and provides some strategies to strengthen evaluative evidence for gender equality & equity, lacks specific metrics to enhance monitoring and capacity. Jamaica will undertake the annual assessment of SDG progress through 2030 Vision Jamaica. While Suriname does not mention annual/regular assessments, there is a mention of assessments for national and SDG goals.

Grenada addresses a need for greater financial and human resources in order to complete necessary assessments or empowerment of marginalized groups. While all countries demonstrate plans to complete annual assessments, and some mention gender-responsive assessments, there is a greater need for specificity on the methodologies for improving evaluative evidence for gender equality and equity considerations. Jamaica includes gender-responsive budgeting and considerations with no listed strong or concrete recommendations.

Sub-Saharan Africa

Although all countries have implemented national framework tools related to achieving SDG 5, there is a lack of detail on how governments plan to improve gender-responsive data and evaluations. All countries except Somalia failed to outline recommendations on how evaluative evidence for gender equality and equity considerations can be strengthened in reviews annually. Recommendations to improve gender inequalities also do not mention how often the strategies would have to be used. These recommendations also lack details on how to implement them effectively in the future. This presents a relatively bleak picture in terms of achieving SDG 5 by 2030 in the region.
MAIN CHALLENGES

Similar to the VNR reviews for 2018-2021, the 2022 VNRs suggested two primary challenges in monitoring the progress of the SDGs. First is the infrequent use of country-led evaluation to inform planning and managing implementation of the SDGs. Second is the unavailability of sex-disaggregated data to provide nuanced information on SDG progress.

Country-led evaluations
The VNRs lacked specificity in their policies and programs. There was little evidence of the effects of the policies and/or programs, and their objectives lacked measurable and actionable policies and/or interventions.

It is clear when reading the VNRs that each country’s approach is very top-down, failing to fully include affected communities and organizations which could lead to a more effective and nuanced approach such as minority communities, women’s organizations, or Voluntary Organizations for Professional Evaluation.

All sampled states lacked sufficient inclusion of marginalized perspectives within each respective VNR and lacked sufficient acknowledgment and inclusion of LGBTQI+ communities within SDG achievement strategies.

Access to sex-disaggregated data
Acknowledging that many countries conducted their first VNRs in 2022, a portion of the reports shed light on the lack of human resources, access to disaggregated data, and national funding.

Rather than identifying specific metrics and improvements for evaluation moving forwards, the VNRs lacked specific policy action.

Adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic
Recognizing that COVID had an adverse and severe impact on the respective states, the VNRs at times showed a propensity for using COVID as a way to avoid accountability after having failed to meet preset standards or goals.
CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the 2022 VNR review, this analysis highlights the following conclusions:

**HIGHLIGHT 1**
There is a commitment to establishing a strong framework for monitoring and evaluation of the SDGs, and incorporating gender-inclusive approaches in the implementation of their goals; however, there is a lack of acknowledgement of LGBTQI+ and patriarchy.

**HIGHLIGHT 2**
All states demonstrated the implementation of SDGs into their national policies using national performance M&E mechanisms and specified timelines of action.

**HIGHLIGHT 3**
Access to disaggregated data by sex and other variables such as age and disability to monitor the SDGs continues to be challenging. Gender, education and health targets are often the only data disaggregated by sex.

**HIGHLIGHT 4**
The engagement of women machineries in preparing VNRs was generally unclear; however, there seems to be a general improvement in this area from previous years.

**HIGHLIGHT 5**
The engagement of Voluntary Organizations for Professional Evaluation is still a major challenge – these organizations were almost absent in preparing the VNRs and supervising implementation of the SDGs.
RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on this review of the 2022 VNRs, the following recommendations are proposed for a more robust demonstration of the use of equity-focused and gender-responsive evaluative evidence in implementing the SDGs and preparing VNRs.

01 — Standardize metrics
VNR participants should include specific and standardized metrics to measure progress on the achievement of SDGs

02 — Collaboration with the UN
The United Nations should collaborate with participating states in order to assess and provide the funding needed to facilitate effective monitoring and evaluation processes.

03 — Accountability & Inclusion
Hold states accountable to include marginalized communities’ perspectives in a separate section; require an intersectional analysis that includes social norms, historical legacies, and cultural heritage, plus disabilities, gender, sex, racial/ethnic class and socioeconomic conditions.

04 — Going Little by Little
Acknowledge the slow process of marginal change when creating lasting improvements (a concept that has only been vindicated in OECD countries)

05 — Task force
UN women to use grants to help finance a task force for establishing gender-focused statistical monitoring teams, including local, grassroots-level women’s groups
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