



THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA



SDG SECRETARIAT

OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER

THE HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM 2022
(A synthesis of key highlights of the HLPF 222 July 5-18, 2022)



Report

July 21, 2022

Introduction

1.1 Background to the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) 2022

The high-level political forum on sustainable development (HLPF) took place from Tuesday, 5 July, to Thursday, 7 July, and from Monday, 11 July, to Friday, 18 July 2022. This included the three-day ministerial segment of the forum from Wednesday, 13 July, to Friday, 15 July 2022, as a part of the High-level Segment of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). The HLPF 2022 was organized based on the fact that the world has entered the third year of the COVID-19 pandemic which has inflicted unprecedented human suffering and, with its combined social, economic, and health impact, has outpaced any other major crisis in recent history. The HLPF 2022 took stock of the impact of COVID-19 on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The HLPF will also provided political leadership, guidance and recommendations on how to advance the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda during the Decade of Action and Delivery, as part of ensuring sustainable, inclusive and resilient recovery from the pandemic. The HLPF in 2022 also conducted an in-depth review of Sustainable Development Goals 4 on quality education, 5 on gender equality, 14 on life below water, 15 on life on land, and 17 on partnerships for the Goals. The forum took into account the different and particular impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic across all SDGs and the integrated, indivisible and interlinked nature of the Goals. The forum will also start to discuss the preparations of the 2023 SDG Summit.

1.2 Uganda's participation in the HLPF 2022

Uganda is one of the first countries to adopt and integrate the SDGs its national development frameworks including the 3rd National Development Plan (NDP III). The country is now on a path to accelerate its efforts towards achieving the SDGs through supporting a new path towards the attainment of inclusive and sustainable economic growth with the pledge to 'Leave No One Behind'. Uganda is taking bold all-of-government policy steps, through its Ministries, Departments and Agencies under the overall government business leadership by the Office of the Prime Minister of Uganda, Local Governments, Private Sector, Civil Society Organizations, Think Tanks, and Academia to localize and fast track the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 SDGs.

Like all countries in the world, Uganda has been exploring ways in which it can 'build back better' after the ravages of the COVID-19 pandemic on communities and the economy. In this regard, the Government of Uganda convened a national consultation on SDGs and consulted with district leaders across the country, the private sector, civil society, traditional leaders, young women and men, and several other organized groups. This bottom-up process culminated in the first-ever Annual SDG National Conference in Uganda addressed by His Excellency the President of Uganda. Through this nationwide consultation, stakeholders deliberated on a diversity of effective models to attain the SDGs within the context of the post-COVID-19 epoch. Rich discussions were held, innovative solutions were discussed and recommendations were made and an outcome document that represents a national spirit to galvanize the SDG attainment in the post-Covid era was produced. As such, Uganda participated to not only share these experiences with the rest of the member states but also to learn from them especially on key models and Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs). Uganda

also organized a side event at the Uganda Permanent Mission to the United Nations which attracted participation of different stakeholders and member states.

1.3 Delegation

Uganda's delegation was led by the Rt. Hon Kasule Lumumba the Minister for General Duties and the Focal Point Minister for SDGs at the Office of the Prime Minister. The delegates also included the Hon Members of Parliament, technical officers from Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Water and Environment and the Office of the Prime Minister. This delegation was hosted by the Uganda Permanent Mission to the United Nations in New York which provided technical and procedural guidance from time to time. The Mission also facilitated the hosting of Uganda's side event on July 13, 2022

2.1 Key focus of the High-level Political Forum 2022

The programme of the 2022 HLPF assessed the global situation regarding the SDGs and the impact of the pandemic. The HLPF supported discussions and peer learning to identify policies, strategies and actions to overcome the pandemic and its impacts while triggering the deep changes and transition we need to accelerate the realization of the SDGs. It built momentum and inspired international solidarity and multilateral cooperation

The various sessions focused on;

- **Building back better and advancing the SDGs.** This session focused on the Secretary-General's SDG progress report. It allowed an exchange of experience on policies and integrated approaches that are being implemented to address the impacts of COVID-19 and achieve sustainable, resilient and inclusive recovery. This session was informed by the findings of the Voluntary National Reviews and the experiences of countries at various development levels, including middle-income countries and countries in special situation, experts and different actors. There were discussions on whether our response to COVID-19 is advancing sustainable development – economic, social and environmental dimensions and how it can be accelerated while leaving no one behind.

- **The session also focused on in-depth review and interlinkages of; *Quality education (SDG 4), Gender equality (SDG 5), Life below water (SDG 14), Life on land (SDG 15) and Partnerships (SDG 17)*.** The partnerships for goals were addressed throughout the programme in each SDGs session together with the SDGs reviewed, and through dedicated meetings on investing in SDGs, on mobilizing science, technology and innovation and strengthening the science-policy-society interface, and on other aspects of SDG 17 including capacity development and partnerships.

The discussions built on the outcomes of 2022 ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development follow-up, the Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the SDGs, and the ECOSOC Partnership Forum. On this basis, the HLPF addressed urgent measures to respond to the debt crisis and mobilize investment for a sustainable, resilient and inclusive recovery. The debate also focused on longer term measures to mobilize means of implementation for the SDGs and strengthen international cooperation and solidarity.

1.4 Uganda's Side event and other side events during the HLPF 2022

The Government of Uganda convened a side event at Uganda House in New York under auspices of the HLPF where the Country shared lessons and deliberated on a diversity of effective models to attain the SDGs within the context of the post-COVID-19. Rich discussions were held, innovative solutions discussed and recommendations made. The theme for the side event was in line with the 2022 ECOSOC HLPF theme, ***“Building back better from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”***.

The side event brought together participants including Hon. Ministers, high-level policymakers from other countries including members of parliament, as well as representatives from UN Agencies, Civil Society Organizations, Business and Industry Organizations, Academia and Research Institutions, Development Partners and Media. Key stakeholders that participated included those from Nigeria, Ghana, Liberia, Djibouti, AU-APRM Secretariat, UNECA. The side event shared lessons learned from other African countries that will support the SDGs fast-tracking in Uganda. The outcomes of the Side Event will contribute to and enrich Uganda's story with lessons from our African countries and also contribute to the preparation of Uganda's third Voluntary National Review process and report which will be presented at the 2023 High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. The side event has identified areas of convergence between different approaches to accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and achievement of the SDGs in the post-Covid-29 context and strengthened society's solidarity, build momentum, and leverage SDGs resources that will support SDGs fast-tracking initiatives in the decade of delivery (2020-2030).



Figure 1: Uganda's Side event ongoing at Uganda House on July 13, 2022

Key issues highlighted during the Side event included.

- ✓ The Minister for General Duties, the Rt. Hon Justine Kasule Lumumba shared and highlighted to participants, Uganda's journey of SDGs and the good progress that has been registered. She highlighted among others, the coordination framework that has supported cohesion between Government and non-state actors, the establishment of the Secretariat that has supported the coordination architecture and SDG localization and engagements efforts. The Minister further highlighted the inclusion and integration of SDGs into the national development frameworks. The minister also highlighted key strategies the government has employed to accelerate the SDG

implementation in areas of data production, development and implementation of programs and interventions to ensure no one is left behind in addition to continuous mobilization and engagement of the private sector, CSOs and other special groups to support SDG implementation.

- ✓ The continued good will and political support by the Government of Uganda to strengthen the coordination framework especially with the state including Parliament of Uganda and the non-state actors especially the private sector and Civil Society Organizations.
- ✓ The Minister also highlighted the proactive role of the SDG Secretariat that has not only coordinated SDG implementation but also built and sustained momentum with especially the private sector, Local Governments and the CSOs.
- ✓ Good practices on data production for SDGs and voluntary local reviews were also shared
- ✓ **Key Actions to be taken:** (i) With good practices shared and highlighted by Ghana and Nigeria during the side, participants recommended the need to benchmark on Ghana to learn and document key practices that have accelerated SDG implementation.
(ii) The need to fast track Local Governments especially in scaling up the Voluntary local reviews to complement the scheduled Voluntary national Review next year.
(iii) The AU-APRM also recommended the need for Uganda to integrate A2063 SDG process especially monitoring and reporting. This is due to the interconnectedness and similarities between A2063 and Agenda 2030.
(iv) The side event also highlighted the need to strongly highlight effectiveness and accountability issues during next year's VNR process
(v) The Side event also noted that Countries should cooperate not compete. This creates synergies for thinking together, finding solutions together and scaling together.

The Uganda delegation also participated in many other side events on invitation by the host Countries and institutions.

1.5 Participation in the HLPF Main sessions (VNR sessions and Ministerial Segments)

1.5.1 VNR Session: The VNR exercise creates means for knowledge sharing. VNRs also member states and their local communities to understand how they can “build back better”, including scaling up local initiatives to achieve the SDGs and adjusting national development policies and plans.

The delegates from Uganda participated in the main session of the forum starting with the opening session on July 5, 2022, and those that provided a detailed review of SDG 4, SDG 5, SDG 13, SDG 15 and SDG 17. The delegates also participated in the presentation of the Voluntary National Reviews for the 44 (11 first timers, 28 second timers, 3 third timers and 2 fourth timers) member states where 21 African countries presented their VNRs. This year, the VNRs show the continuing international commitment to the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). There has been continuing progress in efforts to implement and integrate the SDG into national policies and plans, including those aimed at the recovery from the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

African countries that reported this year also highlighted the potential to strengthen progress towards the SDGs across the region through integrating their implementation with Africa's Agenda 2063 (Côte

d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Guinea Bissau). Progress is also possible at the national level, through a focus on localization of the SDGs and the implementation of comprehensive plans for the way forward such as Solidarity Côte d'Ivoire, Vision Djibouti, African Beacon of Prosperity (Ethiopia), Malawi 2063, Transformation Acceleration Plan (Gabon), and Emerging Senegal Plan. During the VNR presentations, Uganda was requested by the Netherlands to interpose by asking a question. The question was asked by the Rt.Hon. Kasule Lumumba.

All VNRs provided a clear picture of the impacts of the global shocks felt around the world, which have caused setbacks in progress toward the SDGs. Countries described how the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the onset of multiple conflicts, have taken a toll on the economy, supply chains, energy, food security and people's well-being. As such, the data from the VNR reports will support in identifying potential growth areas and areas where urgent assistance is needed. The use of innovative platforms and the digitization of some public services during the pandemic have helped scale up use of technologies and promote further technological advances, not only for services such as education and other social services, but also in the use of data for VNRs and national policy making. Therefore, though the effect of the pandemic is still deeply felt, the momentum for advancing the SDGs has not been lost. **Key to note: Member states are coping with existing and emerging challenges while experiencing recurring global shocks due to the pandemic and other factors. Sustaining SDG progress from previous years and containing and addressing negative impacts on the SDGs has become difficult, while challenges are expanding and creating setbacks in multiple sectors**



Figure 2: Rt. Hon Justine Kasule Lumumba asking a question to the Netherlands after their VNR presentation

1.5.2 Ministerial Sessions:

Ministerial declaration of the high-level segment of the 2022 session of the Economic and Social Council and the 2022 high-level political forum on sustainable development was convened under the auspices of the Council, on the theme “Building back better from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Ministers and high representatives of member states met in New York at the high-level segment of the 2022 session of the Economic and Social Council and the 2022 high-level political forum on sustainable development and adopted the ministerial declaration committing to accelerate global action for sustainable development and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for



Figure 3: Rt. Hon. Justine Kasule Lumumba presenting a ministerial statement on behalf of Government of Uganda the ECOSOC ministerial segment

Sustainable Development¹ and its Sustainable Development Goals.

The ministerial declaration was developed from Country submissions on their commitments to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the associated SDGs. Uganda's ministerial statement (**see annex 1**) was read by the Rt. Hon Justine Kasule Lumumba, and she highlighted the Country's commitment to SDGs under review.

Key Highlights of the ECOSOC ministerial Statement

This year's Ministerial segment was organized against the backdrop of a fragile and highly uncertain global socioeconomic outlook, amid the ongoing coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and its consequences, the adverse impacts of climate change, biodiversity loss, desertification, pollution and other environmental degradation aspects, rising geopolitical tensions and conflicts with widespread effects on people, planet, prosperity and peace.

The member states noted the need to reaffirm their commitments to the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals, recognizing it as the blueprint for an inclusive, sustainable, and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and accelerating the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development, leaving no one behind. We reaffirm that the 2030 Agenda is guided by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, including full respect for international law, and it is grounded in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in international human rights treaties, the Millennium Declaration and the 2005 World Summit Outcome. It is informed by other instruments such as the Declaration on the Right to Development

Member states encouraged ambitious and action-oriented outcomes for the other major events, including the twenty-seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention (COP27) in 2022, the second part of the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP15), the Conference on the Midterm Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Decade for Action, "Water for Sustainable Development", 2018–2028, the high-level meetings on tuberculosis and universal health coverage, the midterm review of the Sendai Framework, the Sustainable Development Goals Summit in 2023, as well the Secretary-General's upcoming Transforming Education Summit and the Summit of the Future. We encourage all countries to participate in the September 2023 Sustainable Development Goals Summit at the highest possible level.

The last day of the ECOSOC High-level Segment was held on Monday, 18 July, following the conclusion of the HLPF. It included a session on "Future proofing multilateralism for a resilient and inclusive recovery". There was also a panel on possible scenarios and future trends related to the SDGs and the recovery from COVID-19 and its impact on world economies and societies.

Key Lessoned, observations and recommendations

- Like Uganda, many Countries have been affected by the covid-19 pandemic which has slowed the progress made on SDG achievement. These effects have been exacerbated by the ongoing global conflicts that continue to threaten and disrupt the global economy.
- With slowdown in the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been rejuvenated energies across the countries to fast-track SDG implementation. This was seen in this year's VNR presentation including those from African countries like Ghana. There is need to benchmark on such

Countries to study on some of the key accelerators/models being used for SDG implementation.

- The 2030 Agenda and the SDGs continue to call for multistakeholder involvement both at national and international levels. At the international level, the Government of Uganda should continue to establish partnerships that not only lift Uganda's image and commitment to SDGs but also support in accelerating the SDG implementation efforts. At the national level, there is need for the three arms of Government to cohesively work together. There is need to engage more the Legislative arm (Parliament) due to its core mandate of law making, oversight, budgeting, and representation of the people.
- Since Uganda is scheduled to present its third VNR next year, there is need to plan and have a more robust engagements with all stakeholders, correct more views from stakeholders and ensure the VNR report showcases the accountability perspectives in line with the 5 Ps of the 2030 Agenda.