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Update 2030 Agenda and EU 2020



Federal Council for Sustainable Development (FRDO-CFDD)

In the spotlight

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- [Sustainable Development Goals](#)
- [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#)
- [SDG Knowledge Hub](#)
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Belgium Presents its VNR in New York

The [High-Level Political Forum](#) (HLPF) is to be held between 10 - 17 July in New York. An interim review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 ASD) is given each year at the HLPF. This review also covers the now familiar [17 SDGs](#) (Sustainable Development Goals). This year's theme is "*Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world.*" At the HLPF, two types of evaluation are made. On the one hand, an assessment in line with this year's theme, with particular focus on SDGs 1,2,3,5,9, and 14. [A memorandum](#) has been drafted for each of these SDGs. On the other hand are the [Voluntary National Reviews](#). This year, 44 countries will present their VNRs. VNRs are a way for countries to present a progress report on their implementation of the 2030 Agenda. This year Belgium will be one such country.

The [Belgian VNR](#) was published at the end of a particularly intensive process during which the federal and regional services processed a huge volume of incoming information. A document summarising the [main messages](#) was also drawn up. The report gives, by way of introduction, a description of the institutional context in which our country's sustainable development policy is rooted. It then gives an overview of the country's various current initiatives and actions. A chapter

on cross-cutting initiatives is also included. The report also includes a statistical appendix.

A group of federal and regional consultative councils, co-ordinated by the FRDO-CFDD, was requested to draw up an opinion on the draft report for the VNR.

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Opinion on the Report for the VNR

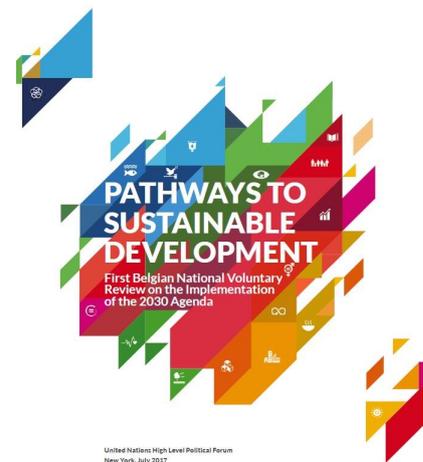
On 30 May, the FRDO-CFDD approved an [opinion](#) on the draft report for the Voluntary National Review (VNR).

The opinion applauds the efforts which have been made to draw up the VNR and hopes that these efforts will contribute to the implementation over the

next few years of a synergistic collaboration between authorities at various levels with a view to an ambitious sustainable development policy.

Moreover, the opinion stipulates that the VNR report pays disproportionate attention to listing the various initiatives

and often too little attention to any kind of critical evaluation of results actually obtained by Belgium with regard to SDG fulfilment.



Stakeholder Contribution via the FRDO-CFDD

Over the last few months, considerable work has gone into preparing the presentation of Belgium's [Voluntary National Review](#). It was particularly challenging to transform the contributions from authorities at various levels into a coherent report, and to a short deadline. The various stakeholders insisted being directly involved in it. This involved three different initiatives coordinated by the FRDO-CFDD.

Firstly, FRDO members had the opportunity to give prior input. A summary document was drawn up. Largely giving an overview of the initiatives undertaken by the members themselves, this

document was used to draw up the VNR report.

An opinion was then drafted. It



proved difficult to write up an opinion in just one month whilst coordinating with the various different consultative councils. Because of this short deadline,

not all the invited councils were ultimately able to collaborate on or approve the opinion. The councils were nevertheless insistent that they continue to be sufficiently formally involved in the process, particularly through the [national sustainable development strategy](#).

Finally, the FRDO-CFDD organised a roundtable on 20 June, in association with the representatives of the various different regional and federal bodies, devoted to the subsequent implementation of the SDGs (*see photo*).

“It is no longer just an agenda from the north for the south. It is a universal agenda, comprising targets and actions to be taken both in the developed countries and in the developing world.”

(Herman Van Rompuy and Marc Dubrulle)

What will happen at the HLPF?

The [High-Level Political Forum](#) is due to take place between 10-17 July in New York. Read this [policy brief](#) for an overview of HLPF events (you can also consult the [SDG Knowledge Hub](#) for background information). Daily coverage of HLPF events are published in the [Earth Negotiations Bulletin](#).

The Secretary General of the United Nations has issued a [‘progress report’](#) for the HLPF. A summary of international progress is given for each SDG. There

are numerous positive developments, but a lot of work still remains to do in many areas. The report is based on the [indicators](#) which were approved by ECOSOC on 7 June and which form the basis of SDG implementation monitoring for the various countries.

SDGs and the Future of Progressia

The aim of the SDGs is to implement an integrated sustainable development policy which will promote legitimate prosperity within the limits of what the planet can sustain. Should economic development be allowed to continue at the expense of environmental protection? Should you have to choose between greater equality or a better environment? Or can you achieve an inclusive approach which encompasses different objectives within a coherent overall vision?

Progressia is a fictional country situated in southern Africa. How could this country balance growth with implementation of the SDGs? This [dedicated website](#) created by the ODI explores these issues.



Newsflash

How can negotiators integrate sustainable development into trade and investment agreements? This [toolkit](#). | [10 interesting facts](#) about the global labour force. | A [report](#) on how stakeholders view their engagement in voluntary national reviews and the implementation of the SDGs. | The [G7 environment ministers](#) have reaffirmed their commitment to the 2030 Agenda. | A brochure on [decent work](#) as the key to the 2030 Agenda. | A report on [social protection](#), migration and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. | The European Commission is setting up a [multi-stakeholder platform](#) on the implementation of the SDGs in the EU. | The [private sector](#) is getting active in the SDG

fund. European Commissioner Mimica says that the private sector has a [key role](#) to play in fulfilling the SDGs. | A UNDP report lists [6 megatrends](#) which will determine progress on the SDGs. | How are European companies engaging on the SDGs? Business leaders [share their views](#).



The FRDO-CFDD Survey of the SDGs

The FRDO-CFDD put out a bid for tender to conduct a survey on the SDGs. The implementation of the SDGs is still a relatively new process. The SDG framework is sometimes used as an excuse to repackage old ideas and actions as new policies. However, SDGs can sometimes lead to the adoption of genuinely different and more integrated working methods. The main aim of the study is to take an in-depth look at examples in other countries whereby the SDG framework has already or will lead to actual change in their

political practices. The study will be conducted by [HIVA](#) and should be ready by the end of 2017.

“Lots of talk of monitoring and reporting against the SDG indicators, and as far as I can tell, no attempt to establish whether the SDGs (rather than other factors) are responsible for changes to those indicators.”

([Duncan Green](#))

EU Tables a Strategy

What action will the European Union take to implement the 2030 Agenda? Thus far, the situation has been rather confusing. On 20 June, the Council adopted several [conclusions](#) on the strategy to be followed. Specifically, a detailed implementation strategy needs to be drawn up for mid-2018 and this strategy needs to include timelines, objectives and concrete measures. The appropriate indicators still need to be developed in line with this. The Council has requested that the Commission present a Voluntary Review of the European imple-

mentation of the 2030 Agenda during the HLPF in 2019.

SDG Watch has [responded positively](#) to the conclusions of the Council but still had some critical points to make. For example, there is a lack of clarity on the role of civil society in implementing the 2030 Agenda.





FRDO CFDD

Federal Council for Sustainable Development

*This newsletter is produced under the responsibility of the administrative office of the **Federal Council for Sustainable Development (FRDO/CFDD)**. The FRDO/CFDD advises the Belgian government on the federal policy on sustainable development. The council moreover organises activities to enhance the base for sustainable development.*

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The Youth Contingent Prepares for New York

Representing the youth organisations, Herlinde Baeyens (left) and Anne-Sophie Dubrux (right) will be part of the Belgian delegation attending the HLPF in New York.

Interview

What are your priorities for New York?

In Berlin we drew up a comprehensive plan along with other United Nations' European youth organisations. Our key objective is to get more young people in on the HLPF, get young people more closely involved in VNR processes and in implementing SDGs at national level. Moreover, we continue to promote increased awareness and quality education and training.

Are young people going to organise special activities?

Yes, we will be organising our own side event at the Belgian Mission on July 12. This event focuses on the importance of getting young people involved in the HLPF itself and in the VNR/SDG processes. To achieve this, we will be using modern technologies such as virtual reality. Moreover, we will be putting on an even larger-scale side event on 19 July, devoted to involving young people in VNR processes. In addition to that, we are setting up as many meetings as possible to draw attention to the importance of SDGs for our generation.

What are you expecting from Belgium?

Most of the work has now been done. The VNR report has been written. We hope that Belgium will be open to

the criticisms and suggestions of other countries. The main objective must be a dialogue around implementation. We hope that these positive examples will encourage political decision-makers to make decisions with the future in mind. What happens after the HLPF is important. The VNR report is only the start of a long process.

