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UCLG
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REPORT

# Towards a new generation of Voluntary Local Reviews

## Connecting VLRs and VNRs

EXPERT GROUP MEETING
February 23rd &24th, 2021

DECADE
OF
ACTION

IMPLEMENTING
THE NEW
URBAN AGENDA

# ÍNDICE

# Expert Group Meeting on Voluntary Local Reviews

# Report

(Event time is fixed according to CET / GMT+1)

**DAY 1 _23 February 2021**

**OPENING SESSION**

**Carmen Sanchez-Miranda**, Head of UN-Habitat Country Office in Spain highlighted the importance of aligning the policy making to the 2030 agenda. VLRs are changing how we think about the localization of the SDGs, supporting multi-level and multi-stakeholder connections.

### OPENING REMARKS

- **Maimunah Mohd Sharif,** UN-Habitat Executive Director

Maimunah Mohd Sharif assured that cities are making a great effort to recover from the pandemic but this recovery must be anchored at the local level. We need development strategies and policies that not only seek recovery, but are aligned with the SDGs. The global community has embraced VLRs and at UN-Habitat considerates them a very powerful tool to advance in the localization of the SDGs and connect citizens with decision-making. We are seeing unprecedent investment in city data and VLRs facilitate collaboration across different levels and administrations to manage it. VLRs provide the mechanisms for structural dialoge to build a strong commitment to better instiunial cooperation and share better information.

- **Emilia Saiz,** UCLG Secretary General

Emilia Saiz explained that VLRs are very important in terms of monitoring and triggering the process. SDGs are still a very important and useful framework but capacity needs to be further developed at the local level. The new urban agenda is a very important and forgoten piece. It doesn't matter how many VLRs we have if there is no dialogue. The forums are tools for localization in each country and we must ensure that these forums can help to create reports and change the policies of the future. She also stressed the importance of creating a link between local and national exams beyond the roles of each administration.

- **Santiago Saura Martínez,** Councillor for International Affairs and Cooperation of Madrid City Council

Santiago Saura explained that the focus of this meeting is crucial to align the efforts of the cities to a common goal in the fulfillment of the agendas. He also assured that a VLR will be carried out in Madrid taking into account national and European efforts. It is intended to work with all the actors involved to build a shared vision and promote cooperation between the different levels and departments. In this context, one of the main problems that limits monitoring is the lack of

structural links in which there are mechanisms for the integration of the national government with local governments. For this reason, Madrid has decided to set up a strong and solid association that has multi-level actors to monitor the process and reinforce the power of the local government.

## Session 1: LESSONS LEARNED AND NEW CHALLENGES: Towards a new generation of VLRs

- **Aissata M.B.Camara**, Deputy Commissioner for Operations and Strategic Partnerships in the Mayor's Office for International Affairs, New York

Aissata M.B.Camara assured that the city of New York was the first to submit its report in 2018 during the high-level political forum. Since then, thousands of global actors have joined the commitment to the strategy to meet the SDGs. The VLRs are more than a report, they allow listening to the different actors to have a strategic plan and demonstrate how the SDGs impact people's lives. We want to invite other local governments to join this movement. When VLRs began all the information, tools and technical support that can be found today was not available. She also explained the intention to create exchange platforms to ensure that all people feel the impact of our interventions.

- **Dirk Temmerman**, Director of International Relations, City of Gent

Dirk Temmerman explained that VLRs are a strong communication tool. One of the main challenges for VLRs is getting them to be long term process keeping all actors active. Another of the great challenges is data, for which it is needed more capacity building for local administrations.



Left: **Maimunah Mohd** Sharif; Right: **Emilia Saiz**

- **Natasha Primo**, Head of Policy & Research, Strategic Development Information & GIS, City of Cape Town

Natasha Primo highlighted the efforts put into developing indicators. The focus has been placed not so much on the data but on the participation and production of VLRs and the limitations that arise. Localization focuses on internal capacity building and participation at the international level. She highlighted the importance of links between national and local governments and that regional governments take the lead and take responsibility for the VLRs.

- **Mariana Cammisa,** SDG officer, City of Buenos Aires

Mariana Cammisa remarked that the VLRs are a process and a structural dialogue and open the possibility of mapping where we want the city to go. It also allows all decisions during the process to have been made based on specific data. To get this data it is necessary to work with many actors and make the VLRs more accessible to anyone. She also highlighted that VLRs have demonstrated their ability to adapt to different circumstances during the pandemic.

**DISCUSSANT:**

- **Alice Siragusa,** Project Leader, European Commission Joint Research Centre

Alice Siragusa highlighted that VLRs are the most powerful tool to fill de gap between the SDGs and the everyday of cities and life. To that end, two of the most important areas that VLRs facilitate are data collection and citizens engagement. Local governments are beginning to receive recognition for their important role in these processes, but their voice needs to be heard more. The next generation of VLRs must engage the different levels of the administration and have greater citizen participation and at the same time be based more on data and objective facts. She also highlighted the importance of having quality VLRs that can play a fundamental role in the development of VNRs.

- **Marlène Siméon**, Director of Operations, Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) – UCLG Europe

Marlène Siméon explained that VLRs are a multistakeholder experimentation and a dynamic process. Citizens have to be the target and they have to be userfriendly in terms of data accces. They are a very good communication tool and are able to trigger different process on municipalities. She remarked the fundamental role of local associations and the importance of building a European movement with European priorities. They must also have a clear link with VNRs, so that they work together and collaboratively to join forces. For this, it is necessary to break silos between different levels and departments.

## Session 2: JOINING THE DOTS: Linkages between VLRs and VNRs

**The case of Finland**

- **Riina Pursiainen, Project Coordinator, Prime Minister's Office**

**Riina Pursiainen underlined that to carry out these processes it is necessary to take into account the entire government and the entire society. Local processes can help other countries assess their own SDG compliance processes, hence local efforts have a clear impact on a global level. In that regard, peer to peer review is a very useful tool for information exchange. The exchange of information must also occur between the different levels of government to achieve the greatest possible coordination and cooperation. Indicators are key to guiding decision-making, but they**

should not saturate administrations with work.

- **Mia Malin, SDG Programme Officer, City of Helsinki**

**Mia Malin highlighted that cities have been quite active in producing VLRs in Finland. The cooperation has been very active although sometimes in an informal way. VLRs should be less structured and more flexible, giving the freedom to choose the best way to carry them out and to communicate them. VLRs represent the collaboration and support of the national and local governments, being very important the co-creation and cooperation for the production of the VLRs. During the process in Helsinki, the support received from the Prime Minister has been very important and the foundations have been laid for the work of other cities.**



Left: **Natasha Primo**; Right: **Aissata M.B.Camara**

**The case of Japan**

- **Aya Yoshida, Director, Global Issues Cooperation Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs**

**Aya Yoshida stated that in order to realize a society that leaves no one behind we need to spread SDGs widely throughout the world and to this end it is important to incorporate SDGs into strategies and the politics not only of the national government but also of the local governments. Promoting SDGs in a local government also helps revitalization of local economies, community approaches and contributes to resolving the local challenges.**

- **Hitomi Shimizu, SDGs Ambassador, Shimokawa Town**

**Hitomi Shimizu highlighted the importance to the Shimokawa process of the alignment with the Japanese government. The VLRs must ensure that no one is left behind and this requires the participation of as many actors as possible. Another important factor in the development of the VLRs is the awareness of citizens, disseminating and teaching what is being done. The VLRs also allow the SDGs to be used as a tool for city planning and regional revitalization with a sustainable community.**

**The case of** Spain

- **Gabriel Ferrero, Director General of Sustainable Development Policies, Ministry of**

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**Foreign Affairs.**

**Gabriel Ferrero explained that in Spain, the work that the Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces has carried out has been fundamental. It is important to accompany support for localization with support at the global level through government collaboration and an articulation of governance not so focused on reporting but on how to develop the 2030 agenda. He also underlined the importance of knowledge exchange between peers and the challenge of being able to involve not only the big cities but the rest of the territories.**

- **Jonan Fernández Erdozia, General Secretary for Social Transition and 2030 Agenda, Basque Government**

**Jonan Fernández emphasized the importance of dissemination of the 2030 agenda in society to create awareness and greater commitment. There is a tendency to consider how to connect what is already being done with the 2030 agenda but what needs to be addressed is how the agenda transforms or changes what was already done. Governments committed to the SDGs are an asset for the implementation of the agenda and should have a greater presence in its governance. Local reports should gain strength and weight to demonstrate local commitment. The reports should respond to the knowledge of the agenda and pay attention to the change in the content of the policies.**

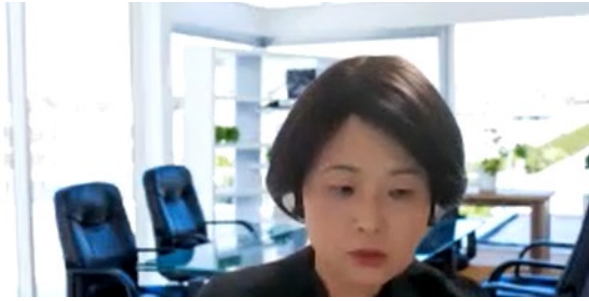- **Carmen García, Manager Director CIEDES, Málaga City Council**

**Carmen García explained that one of the first steps in the process is to observe what is happening on the international scene in order to learn from other experiences. It is essential to identify lever policies and ensure a good monitoring and evaluation system based on an international framework. In addition, awareness, information, and involvement of society is necessary so that no one is left behind in the knowledge of the agenda. For an effective and efficient implementation, it is essential to align the strategies and funds for their fulfillment and to establish a follow-up on how the investment is achieving or not the established objectives.**

**DISCUSSANT:**

- **Curt Garrigan,** Chief, Sustainable Urban Development, Environment & Development Division, UNESCAP

Curt Garrigan highlighted the importance of the national-local dialogue however formal or informal it may be. Data and structure issues are important but the most prominent challenge is the dialogue between national and local governments. Co-creation and collaboration are fundamental in these processes, which should allow local actors to play a relevant role in their development. VLRs should not be a standalone exercise but a social contract among different stakeholders.

Left: **Aya Yoshida**; Right: **Gabriel Ferrero**

## DAY 2 _24 February 2021

## OPENING

### RECAP OF DAY 1 CONCLUSSIONS AND INTRODUCTION TO DAY 2

- **Andrea Ciambra,** Lead Researcher of Guidelines for VLRs Vol.2

Andrea Ciambra highlighted the importance of taking into account the specificities of the process of each city, committing locally and globally. She highlighted the growing interest in best practices for learning from successful models. VLRs aim to connect actors and involve citizens more. In addition, she stressed that smaller cities must be more involved. In Spain, the activities of the associations are establishing institutional frameworks and are becoming catalysts for these initiatives that have a snowball effect that increases the visibility of the municipalities involved. This shows that the work of the people on the ground is very valuable.

## 14:40 _ Session 3: A NEW GENERATION OF VLRs IN THE MAKING: exploring diversity of reviewing approaches worldwide

**Eduardo Moreno,** Director of Knowledge & Innovation Branch, UN-Habitat, remarked that diversity can bring new approaches and help each other learn. He also stressed that VLRs and VNRs must coordinate and support each other. The VLRs are a process, they are small schools of democracy so that the parties involved can connect and learn. Cooperation allows cities to get involved in the debate, not only as recipients but as an active part of the process. He also stressed the importance of evaluation and accountability in order to improve over time.

- **Nicolas Gharbi**, Principal Advisor, Madrid City Council

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Nicolas Gharbi stressed that a very important aspect of localization in VLR production is the need for an institutional commitment that goes beyond political parties to ensure continuity. He also remarked that the VLRs fulfill a double objective: on the one hand, they allow progress in the achievement of the SDGs at the local level by promoting coherence in policies, developing capacities at the municipal level for the elaboration of evidence-based policies and strengthening participation. of the different actors in the city, and on the other hand, they are a tool to highlight the capacity of governments and local actors to contribute to achieving the objectives at the national, regional and global levels.

- **Akram Khraisat**, Director of Amman Urban Observatory, Greater Amman Municipality
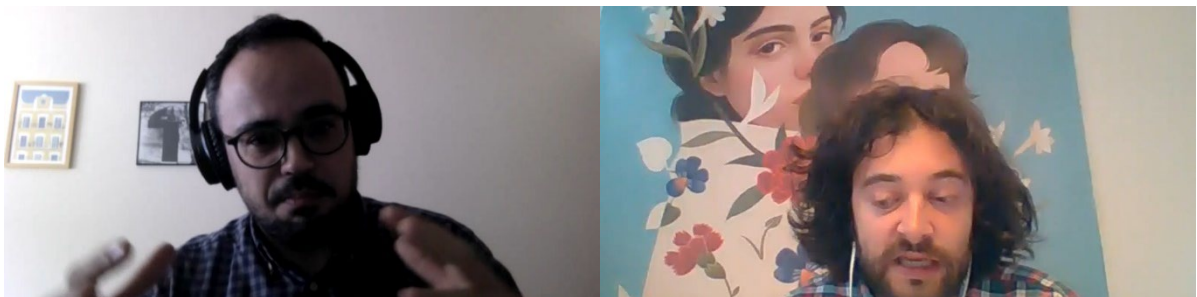
Akram Khraisat explained the experience of the city of Amman, where they are working with indicators that, although they do not reach the neighborhood level, are very detailed. It is very important to create links with the different local actors such as the academia and different associations so that they can contribute their perspective and lead the change. He also highlighted the intention for it to be compatible with the VNR so that they can coordinate and join forces to achieve the SDGs.

- **Pedro Bejarano**, Undersecretary of Investment Planning, City of Bogota

Pedro Bejarano explained that the VLRs are not an end in themselves but a vehicle to advance in the fulfillment of the SDGs that is made available to interested parties. It must draw up a roadmap that takes into account the development of multi-stakeholder agendas, and the characteristics of each territory in detail. Focusing efforts better allows to obtain better results and a greater impact at a lower cost. The development of the VLR is a dynamic adaptive process that has the capacity to adapt to crises.

- **Annie SyazrinBinti Ismail**, VLR Focal Point, City of Shah Alam

Annie SyazrinBinti highlighted that more commitment is needed from all stakeholders to be able to address these VLRs and start working knowing what challenges we are facing. It is important to understand that it is a process, and that more creativity is needed in the way of collaborating. VLRs need to have continuity guarantees to be effective and silos must be broken to work together including district level agencies and politicians and their citizens. The problem of communication and data collection is something that almost all governments face, so it is important to collaborate to share knowledge.



Left: **Andrea Ciambra**; Right: **Nicolas Gharbi**

**DISCUSSANT:**

- **Edlam AberaYemeru,** Chief of the Urbanization Section, UNECA

Edlam AberaYemeru remarked that much of the efforts of aligning planning to the SDGs has been at the national level rather than the local scale. This is a major gap, because development tools take place at local scale and local scale is critical in achieving the SDGs and hence alignment in local planning, local reporting, and local monitoring are very important. VLRs are a great tool for that purpose. The VLRs are not a product but a process and for cities it represents an opportunity to generate alliances with the private sector and other actors in society. There is a lot of diversity but there has to be a certain level of homogenization in order to compare, draw conclusions and learn.

- **Jean Pierre Elong Mbassi,** Secretary General of UCLG Africa

Jean Pierre Elong Mbassi explained that in Africa these initiatives are seen as a way to align local stakeholders with the collective logic of the UN member states. The SDGs provided a lot of hope, but the set of indicators has come to place an overwhelming burden on many governments. Data is very important but it is necessary to simplify the process so that you can work with people.

- **Eduardo Moreno**, Director of Knowledge & Innovation Branch, UN-Habitat

Eduardo Moreno stressed that the VLRs should not be affected by political changes. He also added that each city has its own history and this VLR exercise must be aligned and adapted to each context, without implying a total absence of homogenization to know that we are in tune. There must be more integration between administrations and he recalled that the VLRs are focused on policy development. The SDGs and global agendas must be a tool for equality, dignity and the right to the city and attack the problems of poverty. It is not just about creating reports but about seeing the importance of the process.



Left: **Eduardo Moreno**; Right: **Jean Pierre Elong Mbassi**

**Amson Sibanda**, Chief of the National Strategies and Capacity Building Branch, UNDESA, affirmed that one of the main contributions of the VLRs is to provide an innovative understanding regarding the role of municipalities. They also become a key tool for collaboration with national governments. The cost of not locating the 2030 agenda is very high because the challenges are very complex.

- **Curt Garrigan,** Chief, Sustainable Urban Development, Environment & Development Division, UNESCAP

Curt Garrigan highlighted the importance of integrating VNRs and VLRs so that they reinforce each other. They must be articulated in a way that responds to the context in the most specific way possible. Collaboration with mayors and other partners is essential not only to actively incorporate them into the process but to improve their capacities.

- **Edlam Abera Yemeru**, Chief of the Urbanization Section, UNECA

Edlam Abera Yemeru highlighted the importance of political will in the development and promotion of VLRs. It is an opportunity to move forward and be part of a larger movement. He also highlighted the importance of collaboration between the national and local levels in the case of Uganda and that the goal is for cities to occupy their space of relevance.

- **Sukaina Al-Nasrawi,** PhD, Social Affairs Officer, Sustainable Urban Development Lead, Gender Justice, Population and Inclusive Development, ESCWA

Sukaina Al-Nasrawi stressed that these processes can only be carried out with comprehensive people-centered policies. Governance plays a fundamental role and must be brought together with the municipal structures, which must take command of the joint work. Raising awareness and communicating is another of the great challenges for VLRs to generate greater commitment from society. The link between VNRs and VLRs must be strengthened and capacities must be strengthened to ensure close collaboration mechanisms.

- **Gulnara Roll,** Secretary to the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management, UNECE

Gulnara Roll stressed that local governments are making a great effort to improve collaboration both among themselves and with national governments. The VLRs must stop being a tool to assess the SDGs to be a tool to strengthen connections, alliances and collaboration between national and sub-national governments. The methodology for preparing VLRs is very different between different regions and work must be done to create a clear and detailed methodology that facilitates the work of local governments and allows some homogenization to be able to compare and learn from other experiences. Capacity development by local authorities is key to the development of evidence-based VLRs.

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- **María Ortiz,** Deputy Coordinator, Office of the Executive Secretary, UNECLAC

María Ortiz stressed that the VLRs should be a tool so that no one is left behind and try to bring together as many actors as possible because dialogue is essential in cities. The exponential interest that these VLRs are awakening is just one expression of the commitment that is being generated with the SDGs. Information exchange is crucial for the development of methodologies that simplify processes. These processes will be different in each country but must be based on the same structure.

**DISCUSSANT:**

- **Shipra Narang Suri,** Chief of Urban Practices Branch, UN-Habitat

Shipra Narang Suri highlighted that there is a recognition of the cost of not locating the SDGs. We are not going to achieve the SDGs without localization and, for this, the VLRs are emerging as a common language between city regions and at the national level. Local governments are important actors and are crucial for the participation of different stakeholders at different levels. They should not be just a tool to promote, but to nurture collaboration and attract funding. Work is underway to develop a monitoring framework to create a set of unified indicators, which should not be a template to follow but rather a guide that allows modifications.

Left: **Shipra Narang Suri**; Right: **María Ortiz**

## EGM WRAP UP

**Presentation of the VLR Comuniqué: Towards a new generation of VLRs**

- **Martino Miraglia,** Programme Officer, Urban Practices Branch, UN-Habitat

Martino Miraglia highlighted the strengthening of ties between VLRs and VNRs. Local governments must be co-owners and data must play a central role in the decision making processes.

**EGM CLOSING SESSION**

- **Emilia Saiz**, Secretary General, UCLG

Emilia Saiz remarked that the government system that we need must be much more multi-colored than the ones we have now. The VLRs are a declaration of commitment to the New Urban Agenda. It's about transforming the government and regaining the trust of the population. The next generation of VLRs will be driven by participation and will be more democratic. These processes must be supported even when they do not have sufficient capacities to obtain data.

- **Rafael Tuts,** Director Global Solutions Division, UN-Habitat

Rafael Tuts highlighted that the community of experts working on this issue is growing, which shows the growing commitment to the SDGs. Among the most important challenges facing the next generation of VLRs is the integration of VLRs and VNRs. Close relationships must be built between the different levels of government, recognizing the essential role in the implementation of all levels.

- **Santiago Saura Martínez,** Councillor for International Affairs and Cooperation of Madrid City Council

Santiago Saura thanked everyone for their participation in the event and closed the day.

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# Towards a new generation of Voluntary Local Reviews

## Connecting VLRs and VNRs

EXPERT GROUP MEETING
February 23rd & 24th, 2021

# Voluntary Local Reviews

In January 2020, Secretary General of the United Nations António Guterres outlined the Secretariat's priorities for the year and referred extensively to the Decade of Action: a call for accelerating sustainable solutions for the world's biggest challenges within the remaining ten years left to fulfil and achieve the 17 Sustainable Development Goals that lie at the heart of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, the ambitious 2030 Agenda provides a common blueprint for a new partnership built on peace and prosperity for the people and the planet. The Agenda's 169 global targets and 234 indicators will be monitored for the period 2015–2030, and are designed to balance the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. The 2030 Agenda urges Member States to "conduct regular and inclusive reviews of progress at the national and subnational levels, which are country-led and country-driven".[1]

As a result, one of the numerous mechanisms used to track the progress of the SDGs are Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs), presented annually by Member States at the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF).  These voluntary, state-led Reviews aim to assess national SDG progresses, facilitate the sharing of experiences for accelerating the implementation of the Agenda 2030, seeking to strengthen policies and institutions of governments, and to mobilize multi-stakeholder support and partnerships for the implementation of the SDGs. [2]

One of the key issues affecting the monitoring and implementation of urban related SDGs at the national level is the lack of structured links and collaborative mechanisms between national and local government levels. [3] Consequently, LRGs have initiated to voluntarily assess their own progress of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs through a tool known as Voluntary Local Review (VLR). Through VLRs, local and regional governments can share experiences, challenges, and lessons learnt as well as to open their door for new partnerships, filling the gap of means of implementation for their local vision. At the HLPF 2018, the first "Local and Regional Government Forum" was organised by UN-Habitat, UN DESA and United Cities & Local Government (UCLG) as the official space for the Local and Regional Governments (LRGs) constituency to showcase successful experiences in implementing the SDGs and to establish multi-level, institutionalised dialogue between national, local, and regional governments. At this event, the city of New York launched the first Local Voluntary Review[4],

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[1] TRANSFORMING OUR WORLD: THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

[2] Voluntary National Reviews Database

[3] SDG 11 SYNTHESIS REPORT HIGH LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM 2018

[4] Voluntary Local Review: New York City's Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

alongside Kitakyushu City's launch of the Sustainable Development Goals Report[5]. Though there is no official recount available, UCLG and UN-Habitat acknowledge that more than 60 Voluntary Local Reviews have been published and recorded to date.

The preparation of a Voluntary Local Review entails additional benefits for cities and local governments. Those opportunities are linked to specific elements of the VLR elaboration process, such as identification of institutional gaps, public participation, or urban planning capacities among others:

- Enhancing city departments coordination: The VLR process enhances coordination among city departments, breaking silos and stimulating information sharing.

- Strengthening of a shared vision of development: through participatory approaches, the VLR process facilitates citizens and territorial stakeholders' involvement into decision-making and development processes.

- Fostering strategic local planning for sustainable development: The VLR process allows cities and Local and Regional Governments to assess achievements and bottlenecks and to foster strategic planning for development.

- Enhancing visibility and positioning at the international level: The VLR global movement have contributed to strengthen the voice of LRGs in the international arena.

At the beginning of the SDG global monitoring process, the Office of the UN Secretary General published standardized guidelines to assist national governments draft their Voluntary National Reviews. These guidelines have been used as reference for several VLRs, while others have come up with their own working methodology and review format. Indeed, no official or universal template exists for VLRs, so there is no common document to which all VLRs may be referring as a unique legitimate source. UNDESA has recently tried to fill this void by publishing the Global Guiding Element for VLRs that should facilitate harmonization of formats. Second, there is no institution in charge of compiling a registry or providing legitimacy to the reviews that local governments are producing. While several local governments are quite aware of the process that has taken place over the past months and aptly branded their documents as 'voluntary local reviews', many others have compiled spontaneous reports that refer directly to either the 2030 Agenda or any other national or local mainstay sustainable development strategy, vision or action plan.[6]

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[5] Kitakyushu City the Sustainable Development Goals Report

[6] STATE OF THE VOLUNTARY LOCAL REVIEWS 2020 —Local Action for Global Impact in Achieving the SDGs— (2020)

# UN-Habitat and UCLG: Connecting VLRs and VNRs

In an effort to find common denominators for VLRs, many institutions have produced analysis, research and guidance on the VLR topic (UNDESA; UNESCAP; EC JRC; Brookings Institution; IGES etc.). In this ecosystem, UCLG and UN-Habitat have decided to join forces to support the VLR global movement through the development of normative resources and partnership opportunities. This alliance, called the **UCLG UN-Habitat VLR Series**, aims to:

- Provide cities and LRGs with cutting-edge knowledge and practical guidance on VLRs;

- Promote knowledge sharing between LRGs;

- Promote the global debate on monitoring and reporting on the SDGs at the local level;

- Facilitating multilevel cooperation and the integration among VLR and VNR processes.

The Volume 1 of the UCLG-UN-Habitat Guidelines on VLRs was launched at HLPF 2020, providing local and regional governments with the basic concepts, resources and guidance they needed to approach the local review as a tool to create and exchange information on SDG localization

The second volume, that represents the conceptual basis of the EGM, takes a step further. It explores the VLRs and the institutional setting that surrounds them in order to locate them in their relationship with national governments and voluntary national reviews. Volume 2 studies the effect of local reviews on the institutional balance within a country, i.e., to what extent the engagement and inclusion of local governments in national reviews and development strategy have changed because of their ability to collect information, align local policies, engender social mobilization, and — ultimately — localize the SDGs.

In order to do so, Volume 2 of the VLR Guidelines focuses on a few core elements:

a) **Mechanisms of coordination.** How the emergence of the VLRs has changed or improved the institutional space in which local and national levels are able to communicate, share information and practices, and establish joint initiatives of collaboration. Have the VLRs created more demand for a shared 'enabling environment'? Have they triggered institutional creation or innovation, re-shaping the cross-level channels that existed before the alignment with the 2030 Agenda?

b) **The VLR-VNR link.** How the drafting processes of local and national reviews have affected each other: how the locally-produced information was eventually included in national reviews; how national reporting empowered local governments to fully engage with localization; and how countries that are reporting in 2021 have been affected by the

fledgling VLR movement and have changed their propensity to include local governments, their data and their experiences in national reviews.

c) **A thematic analysis on the impact of a changing local-national link**. Besides the technical cooperation and approximation in VLRs and VNRs, the local-national link in the framework of SDG implementation has affected policymaking in a number of ways. The report studies how this mutual support and balancing was essential for mainstreaming the SDGs and bring about a 'whole-of-society' approach to alignment; for the construction of indicators that are valid, adaptable and reliable also at the local level and for the sourcing of disaggregated and truly local data; for the mobilization of social attachment to the SDGs and their localization in communities and territories; and to enable local governments as key players in the global conversation on the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs as a new paradigm for policy and social organization.

## Madrid 2030 Strategy and the road to the VLR of the City

Since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015, the city of Madrid has committed to overcoming the challenges posed by the Agenda and the SDGs. Through awareness and socialization initiatives, the city has acted as a driver of transformative actions for the localization of the SDGs. To this end, Madrid City Council has developed the Madrid 2030 Strategy, currently in its finalization stage for approval, a document that aims to guide the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in the city of Madrid and align municipal public policies with the SDGs.

The document includes, within its communication strategy, the elaboration of a Voluntary Local Review to be presented at the High Level Political Forum in order to share both Madrid 2030 Strategy and its progress.

In this context, Madrid City Council and UN-Habitat have been collaborating since 2018 in a set of activities focused on developing the capacities of urban actors, related to the 2030 Agenda and its implementation mechanisms in general, and on urban monitoring frameworks and reporting mechanisms linked to the progress of the objectives.

Madrid City Council has been actively participating in the wider UN systematic process for the development of urban monitoring frameworks, which is currently being developed by UN-Habitat and the SDG Cities Programme. Organizing and participating in, among other activities, an Expert Group Meeting (EGM) on the creation of a global urban monitoring framework in the United Nations System to measure SDG progresses and the NUA, held in July 2020, and an EGM to lay the foundations for a Global Urban Safety Monitoring and Indicators Tool, held in October 2020.

Madrid City Council and UN-Habitat have expanded their longstanding collaboration agreement with the aim of developing a framework and methodology for the development of Madrid's Voluntary Local Review, while supporting the global VLR movement. This EGM is being organized in the framework of this goal, with the aim of paving the way for a new and improved generation of Voluntary Local Reviews, especially seeking to explore and strengthen the connections between VLR and VNR processes.

## The Expert Group Meeting

The EGM is organized by Madrid City Council and UN-Habitat in partnership with United Cities Local Governments (UCLG), while connecting perspectives, work, and resources of the different institutions – national, regional, international – that have engaged in the VLR process.

**The objective of the EGM is to pave the way towards a new, improved, generation of Voluntary Local Reviews, especially looking at strengthening connections between VLRs and VNRs.**

The EGM feeds into the work of the *VLR Series*, the global process on VLRs led by UN-Habitat and UCLG. Cities and partners are invited to provide direct inputs to the development of the second Volume of the Guidelines for VLRs exploring the relation between VLRs and VNRs. The Vol.2 of the Guidelines, currently being drafted, represents at the same time the conceptual basis of the EGM.

In an effort to promote coherence and cooperation, the EGM also builds on (and feed into) the work that other UN Agencies are advancing on VLRs, including  UNDESA, custodian of the VNR process, and the United Nations Regional Commissions (UNECE; UNESCAP; UNECA; UNESCWA), key actors in fostering the multilevel connection between VLRs and VNRs.

Specifically, the EGM aims to:

- Strengthen the multilevel dimension of SDG reporting – looking at connecting the VLR and VNR processes.

- Facilitate dialogue between local governments and national representatives on reporting mechanisms and processes.

- Spotlight lessons learned and challenges in developing VLRs until present times, especially looking at the existing literature and guidance.

- Explore how to mainstream SDGs into local strategies and plans – with a look to alignment with national frameworks.

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- Identify specific technical niches in the development of VLRs - participatory process, data collection, alignment with city plans and visions, and synergies with the New Urban Agenda among others.

The EGM is expected to produce the following outcomes:

- Information and understanding of multilevel coordination on SDG reporting – connection between VLR and VNR –is improved through the sharing of concrete experiences.

- Opportunities for improving VNR-VLR articulation are identified.

- Insights for the development of the Vol.2 of the Guidelines are collected with the aim of supporting local and national governments to improve their joint work.

- Learning opportunities for cities on how to develop a VLR are created.

## Structure and Agenda

The EGM will take place over two days, on February 23 and 24 2021. Meetings will take place virtually on zoom.

The EGM is directed to local and national governments, national governmentsas well as to local stakeholders and communities, international organization and UN Agencies, academia and think thanks, civil society organizations and businesses.

The EGM will count on the participation of high-level representatives of the organising institutions, of Mayors and city leaders and of representatives from National Governments, civil society and academia.

## Day 1 – February 23

| Time (CET) | Session |
|---|---|
| 14:30 – 14:50<br><br>20 min | **Opening Session**<br><br>Opening from the organizing institutions |
| 14:50 – 15:50<br><br>60 min | **1. Lessons learned and new challenges: towards a new generation of VLRs.**<br><br>Guiding Questions: |

| | What are the main lessons learned from the VLR global movement? What was the process and how the publication of several VLR Guidelines support LRGs? What is still missing? How can LRGs be further supported? |
|---|---|
| 16:00 – 17:30<br><br>90 min | **2. Joining the dots: linkages between VLRs and VNRs.**<br><br>Guiding Questions:<br><br>How to improve articulation between VNRs and VLRs? Which elements define this coordination? What are the existing experiences telling us on this matter? |
| 5 min | **Wrap up** |
| 5 min | **Closing Day 1** |

## Day 2 – February 24

| Time (CET) | Session |
|---|---|
| 14:30 – 14:40<br><br>10 min | **Highlights of Day 1** |
| 14:40 – 15:50<br><br>70 min | **3. A new generation of VLRs in the making: exploring diversity of reviewing approaches worldwide.**<br><br>Guiding Questions:<br><br>How are new cities approaching the VLR tools and processes? Which is their experience and what have they learned from previous cities? Are they facing the same challenges or new ones are emerging? How have they learned from peer learning and capacity building opportunities such as those offered by the UN and UCLG? Which changes and processes the VLR is triggering at the local level? |
| 15:50 – 16:50<br><br>60 min | **4. What is next?  Main challenges towards a new generation of VLRs and the VNR connection.**<br><br>Guiding Questions:<br><br>How Regional Commissions involve local governments in the Regional Forums' |

| | |
|---|---|
| | process? What are the most important challenges ahead? Why is the VNR-VLR articulation important? What elements are needed to further develop the VLR tool and how to foster multilevel connection with VNRs? Which is the Regional Commissions' role in this context? How can UN-Habitat and UCLG support? |
| 16:50 – 17:05<br>15 min | **Closing** |

## About UN-Habitat

UN-Habitat is the UN Agency mandated to work with local and regional government. It holds a central role in the VLR international ecosystem as it is the intermediary body between cities and the UN System. UN-Habitat offers technical support to cities interested in undertaking the VLR exercise – such as Moscow and Florence – and partners with the most relevant organisation in the production of content and normative material related to VLRs. With UCLG, the Agency recently launched the VLR Series to support cities with cutting-edge knowledge and partnership opportunities on VLRs. The first volume of the UCLG-UN-Habitat Guidelines for VLRs was launched in July 2020 during the High Level Political Forum while the second volume will be released in the second quarter of 2021.

## Resources

- UCLG-UN-Habitat : VLR Guidelines Vol.1 : A Comparative Analysis of Existing VLRs

- UNDESA: Global Guiding Elements for Voluntary Local Reviews

- UNESCAP: Asia-Pacific Regional Guideline on Voluntary Local Reviews

- UCLG & Partners: SDGs Learning Module 3: Reporting to national & local reviews

- European Commission Joint Research Centre: European Handbook for VLRs

- IGES: Shimokawa Method for Voluntary Local Reviews

- Brookings: Cities Taking the Lead on the Sustainable Development Goals - a Voluntary Local Review Handbook for Cities, Enabling sustainable development at the local level through voluntary local reviews (VLRs)

- Cabot Institute for the Environment/ Bristol: VLR Handbook

- United Nations: Voluntary Local Reviews

- Local 2030, Localizing the SDGs: Voluntary Local Reviews

# Expert Group Meeting on Voluntary Local Reviews

## Programme

(Event time is fixed according to CET / GMT+1)

**DAY 1 _23 February 2021**

**14:30 _ OPENING SESSION**

MC: **Carmen Sanchez-Miranda**, Head of UN-Habitat Country Office in Spain

**OPENING REMARKS**

- **Maimunah Mohd Sharif,** UN-Habitat Executive Director
- **Emilia Saiz,** UCLG Secretary General
- **Santiago Saura Martínez,** Councillor for International Affairs and Cooperation of Madrid City Council

**14:50_ Session 1: LESSONS LEARNED AND NEW CHALLENGES: Towards a new generation of VLRs**

Moderator: **Edgardo Bilsky**, Chief of Research Unit of UCLG

**SPEAKERS**

- **Aissata M.B.Camara**, Deputy Commissioner for Operations and Strategic Partnerships in the Mayor's Office for International Affairs, New York
- **Dirk Temmerman**, Director of International Relations, City of Gent
- **Natasha Primo**, Head of Policy & Research, Strategic Development Information & GIS, City of Cape Town
- **Mariana Cammisa,** SDG officer, City of Buenos Aires

**DISCUSSANT:**

- **Alice Siragusa,** Project Leader, European Commission Joint Research Centre
- **Marlène Siméon**, Director of Operations, Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) – UCLG Europe

**15:50 _ BREAK (10 min)**

## 16:00 _ Session2: JOINING THE DOTS: Linkages between VLRs and VNRs

Moderator: **Shipra Narang Suri,** Chief of Urban Practices Branch, UN-Habitat

### SPEAKERS

#### The case of Finland

- **Riina Pursiainen**, Project Coordinator, Prime Minister's Office
- **Mia Malin,** SDG Programme Officer, City of Helsinki

#### The case of Japan

- **Aya Yoshida,** Director, Global Issues Cooperation Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- **Hitomi Shimizu,** SDGs Ambassador, Shimokawa Town

#### The case of Spain

- **Gabriel Ferrero**, Director General of Sustainable Development Policies, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- **Jonan Fernández Erdozia,** General Secretary for Social Transition and 2030 Agenda, Basque Government
- **Carmen García**, Manager Director CIEDES, Málaga City Council

### DISCUSSANT:

- **Curt Garrigan,** Chief, Sustainable Urban Development, Environment & Development Division, UNESCAP
- **Bernadia Irawati Tjandradewi,** Secretary General, UCLG ASPAC

## 17:30

### CLOSING DAY 1

- **Carmen Sanchez-Miranda, Head of UN-Habitat Office in Spain**

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## DAY 2 _24 February 2021

## 14:30 _ OPENING

MC: **Shipra Narang Suri,** Chief of Urban Practices Branch, UN-Habitat

### RECAP OF DAY 1 CONCLUSSIONS AND INTRODUCTION TO DAY 2

- **Andrea Ciambra,** Lead Researcher of Guidelines for VLRs Vol.2

## 14:40 _ Session 3: A NEW GENERATION OF VLRs IN THE MAKING: exploring diversity of reviewing approaches worldwide

Moderator: **Eduardo Moreno,** Director of Knowledge & Innovation Branch, UN-Habitat

### SPEAKERS

- **Nicolas Gharbi**, Principal Advisor, Madrid City Council
- **Akram Khraisat**, Director of Amman Urban Observatory, Greater Amman Municipality
- **Pedro Bejarano**, Undersecretary of Investment Planning, City of Bogota
- **Annie SyazrinBinti Ismail**, VLR Focal Point, City of Shah Alam

### DISCUSSANT:

- **Edlam AberaYemeru,** Chief of the Urbanization Section, UNECA
- **Jean Pierre Elong Mbassi,** Secretary General of UCLG Africa

## 15:50 _Session4: WHAT IS NEXT? Main challenges towards a new generation of VLRs and the VNR connection

Moderator: **Amson Sibanda**, Chief of the National Strategies and Capacity Building Branch, UNDESA

### SPEAKERS

- **Curt Garrigan,** Chief, Sustainable Urban Development, Environment & Development Division, UNESCAP

- **Sukaina Al-Nasrawi,** PhD, Social Affairs Officer, Sustainable Urban Development Lead, Gender Justice, Population and Inclusive Development, ESCWA

- **Gulnara Roll,** Secretary to the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management, UNECE

- **María Ortiz,** Deputy Coordinator, Office of the Executive Secretary, UNECLAC

- **Edlam Abera Yemeru**, Chief of the Urbanization Section, UNECA

**DISCUSSANT:**

- **Shipra Narang Suri,** Chief of Urban Practices Branch, UN-Habitat

## 16:50 _ EGM WRAP UP

**Presentation of the VLR Comuniqué: Towards a new generation of VLRs**

- **Martino Miraglia,** Programme Officer, Urban Practices Branch, UN-Habitat

**EGM CLOSING SESSION**

- **Emilia Saiz**, Secretary General, UCLG

- **Rafael Tuts,** Director Global Solutions Division, UN-Habitat

- **Santiago Saura Martínez,** Councillor for International Affairs and Cooperation of Madrid City Council

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# Expert Group Meeting on Voluntary Local Reviews

# Biographies

## Carmen Sánchez-Miranda Gallego, Head of UN-Habitat Office in Spain

Carmen has over 20 years of experience in the fields of Development and International Cooperation, of which ten have been dedicated to programmes management in Latin American countries such as Guatemala, El Salvador and Ecuador. She has a degree in Economics from the University of Salamanca, in Spain, a Master's Degree in Political Science from FLACSO in Ecuador and is Gender Studies Graduate from the University Rafael Landivar in Guatemala. Before joining UN-Habitat in 2012, Carmen has worked at the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Spanish Agency for Multilateral Cooperation (AECID), several foundations such as the Club of Madrid, and various international consulting institutions. She has specialized in Development and Multilateralism, Democratic Governance and Sustainable Urban Development. She has published numerous articles and reports and has lectured in several universities in Spain.

## Santiago Saura, Councilor for International Affairs and Cooperation of Madrid City Council.

Santiago Saura became a member of Citizens–Party of the Citizenry (Cs) in 2006, while he was working as lecturer at the University of Lleida. Saura holds a PhD in forestry engineering from the Technical University of Madrid and obtained a chair as full professor in Forestry Engineering at the Polytechnic University of Madrid. He worked for three years for the European Commission in the scope of environmental sustainability and protected natural areas. Based in Northern Italy working for the European Commission, he returned to Spain and was elected as member of the Madrid City Council. In 2019, Saura was appointed as Councillor-President of the districts of Retiro and Hortaleza. He was soon dismissed from the latter position, as he was in turn charged with the delegated portfolio for Internationalisation and Cooperation.
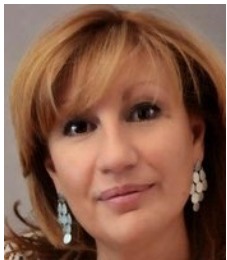
## Ms. MaimunahMohd Sharif, UN-Habitat Executive Director

Ms. MaimunahMohd Sharif is the Executive Director of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat). Ms. Sharif is currently Mayor of the City Council of Penang Island, Malaysia. Prior to her appointment as Mayor, she was the first woman to be appointed as President of the Municipal Council of Seberang Perai in 2011. As mayor of a local authority, she leads Municipal Council of Seberang Perai to achieve its vision of a "cleaner, greener, safer and healthier place to work, live, invest and play". Ms. Sharif began her career as a Town Planner at the Municipal Council of Penang Island in 1985. In 2003, she was promoted to Director of Planning and Development, a position she held until November 2009. She holds a Bachelor of Science with Honors in Town Planning Studies from the University of Wales Institutes of Science and Technology, United Kingdom and a Master of Science in Planning studies from the Malaysia Science University.

## Ms. Emilia Saiz, UCLG Secretary General

Emilia Sáiz studied European Studies and Law specializing in international law with a master's degree in local governance in the information society.
She has worked in the founding organization of UCLG, IULA, since 1997. She has lead programmes dedicated to institutional capacity building, women empowerment and decentralized cooperation. She is currently Deputy Secretary General of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) and Co-Chair of the Gender Programme of Cities Alliance. She also facilitates the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments for Post-2015 Development Agenda towards Habitat III and inputs of the constituency to the UN process.

## Edgardo Bilsky, Chief of Research Unit, UCLG

Director of programs and research at the World Secretariat of United Cities and Local Government (UCLG) in Barcelona. Born in Argentina, he undertook his university studies in France, taking a Masters in contemporary history at the School for Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences (1984). He began his professional career teaching history and social sciences at the University of Buenos Aires and the Universities III and V of Paris, during which time he produced a number of published works. In the early 1990s he joined the cooperation agency of the World Federation of United Cities - WFUC - where he was responsible for programs in Central America and then Latin America. In May 2004, he participated in the creation of the World Secretariat of UCLG, taking on, in 2006, the coordination of its Global Report on Local Democracy and Decentralization (GOLD).

## Aissata M.B. Camara, Deputy Commissioner for Operations and Strategic Partnerships in the Mayor's Office for International Affairs, New York

Aissata M.B. Camara is Deputy Commissioner for Operations and Strategic Partnerships in the Mayor's Office for International Affairs. Prior to becoming Deputy Commissioner, Aissata served as the Strategic Relationships Manager and Program Director for NYC Junior Ambassadors. Before joining the Mayor's Office, she co-founded There Is No Limit Foundation and worked as the organization's Vice President of Programs and Partnerships, developing and managing programs focused on empowering poor and ultra-poor people through entrepreneurship, education, water, sanitation, hygiene, and the eradication of gender-based violence. Aissata previously worked at The Rockefeller Foundation and Grameen America. She graduated from Bernard M. Baruch College (CUNY) with a B.A. in International Relations and Social Policy and went on to earn an MPA in International Public and Nonprofit Management and Policy at the New York University Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service.

## Mr. Dirk Temmerman, Director of International Relations, City of Gent

Dirk Temmerman has a Master of Arts in Moral Sciences (University Ghent). Professionally he started as a coordinator local poverty planning in a medium sized city in Flanders. The next step was joining the Flemish service responsible for supporting the Flemish municipalities in tackling poverty in their community and improving well-being for its citizens. Gradually his focus shifted to urban development and governance. Since 2002 he works for the Ghentian city administration, first as head of the service 'urban policies' with a policy related focus on strategic planning, participation, monitoring, international cooperation, urban renewal and setting up support programs, in close cooperation with the Flemish, Belgian and European 'la politique des grandesvilles". Between 2009 -2014 he joined the staff of the Flemish minster at that time in charge of the Flemish urban policy. Afterwards he returned to Ghent and took the position of head of international relations and networking.

## Mariana Cammisa, SDG officer, City of Buenos Aires

Mariana Cammisa holds a Bachelor's Degree in International Relations and Affairs from the Catholic University of Cordoba and a Master's Degree in International Peace Studies from the University for Peace. She is the SDGs Officer at the Buenos Aires City Government. Prior to that she worked as a junior professional at the General Secretariat and International Relations of the Buenos Aires City Government and as an intern at the United Nations Office at Geneva

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**Natasha Primo,** Head of Policy & Research, Strategic Development Information & GIS, City of Cape Town

Natasha Primo holds a Bachelor's Degree in Geography from the University of the Western Cape and a Master's Degree in Regional Planning from the University of Massachusetts. Additionally, she is Ph.D. in Urban Planning from the University of California, Los Angeles. She is currently the Head of Organisational Research, Policy & Strategy Department. Prior to that she was a Trainer in the strategic application of ICT tools for social justice programming and advocacy and a National ICT Policy Advocacy Coordinator for the Association for Progressive Communications. She was also Project Manager and Executive Director of Women'sNet.

**Alice Siragusa,** Project Leader, European Commission Joint Research Center

Alice Siragusa is the team leader of the JRC project on Localising SDGs. She works at the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission since 2015. In the Territorial development Unit, she focuses on the knowledge support to urban policies and she has been co-editing and co-authoring "the Future of Cities" report and the "European Handbook for SDGs Voluntary Local Reviews". At the JRC, she has also been working for the Global Human Settlement Layer project contributing to the Human Planet 2016 and 2017 Atlases. In the past, she has been collaborating with the Italian National Planning Institute (INU) on several activities related to the Sustainable Development Goals and public space. She co-led the Habitat III Policy Unit 6 on Urban Spatial Strategies: Land Market and Segregation. She has been visitor scholar at the Columbia University in New York City. She holds a PhD in Regional and Urban Planning from Sapienza University of Rome, and a Master cum laude in Architecture and Urban Design from the University of Roma Tre.

**Marlène Siméon,** Director of Operations, Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) – UCLG Europe

Marlène Siméon holds a Master's Degree in International economics from the Université Panthéon Assas and a PhD in Economics from the Université Panthéon Assas. She is currently the Director of Operations of The Council of European Municipalities and Regions. Prior to that she was the Director of PLATFORMA, the pan-European coalition of local & regional governments and representative national/European/global associations and Policy officer in charge of South region - Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, and R/D project

manager at Factea.

## Ms. Shipra Narang Suri, Chief of Urban Practices Branch, UN-Habitat

Dr. Shipra Narang Suri is an urban planner with a Ph.D in Post-War Recovery Studies from the University of York, UK. She coordinates UN-Habitat's Urban Planning and Design Branch. Shipra has extensive experience in advising national and local governments, as well as private sector organisations and networks, on issues of urban planning and management, good urban governance and indicators, livability and sustainability of cities, urban safety, women and cities, as well as post-conflict/ post-disaster recovery. She is the former co-Chair of the World Urban Campaign, a platform that brings together a large array of global organisations to advocate for sustainable urbanisation, and the former Vice-President of the General Assembly of Partners, a platform established to bring stakeholder voices to Habitat III and in the drafting of the New Urban Agenda. She is also a former Vice-President of ISOCARP, the International Society of City and Regional Planners.

## Riina Pursiainen, Project Coordinator, Prime Minister's Office of Finland

Riina Pursiainen holds a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science and a Master's Degree in Political Science and International Relations from the University of Turku. She is the Sustainable Development Coordinator at the Prime Minister's Office of Finland. Prior to that she worked as a project assistant for the Criminal Sanctions Agency in Finland and Desk officer for Water- and Sanitation Policy and HLPF Coordination at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland

## Mia Malin, SDG Programme Officer, City of Helsinki

Mia Malin is an Environmental Engineer from the LAB University of Applied Sciences. She is the SDG Programme Officer at the City of Helsinki, where she has also worked as Project Planner and Environmental Planner. She is also Co-founder of Visia Cooperative where she is an Environmental Colsuntant. Additionally, she was a Research Assistant at the University of Helsinki.

## Aya Yoshida, Director, Global Issues Cooperation Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
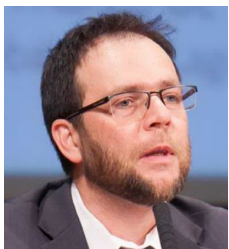
A diplomat, currently in charge of facilitating international cooperation for sustainable development. Main issues of coverage includes domestic and global implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), disaster risk reduction (DRR), Education, Gender, as well as Innovative Finance for Development. Previously served as Head, Asia Pacific and Partnership Division at the International Energy Agency (IEA) in Paris (Aug 2016-July 2019), working for enhancing The relationship between IEA and the growing economies in Asia, including India, China, Indonesia, Thailand and Singapore.

## Hitomi Shimizu, SDGs Ambassador, Shimokawa Town

Hitomi Shimizu is the SDGs Ambassador of Shimokawa town. From her half year internship experience in Shimokawa town, not only has she made "Shimokawa SDGs Map" for SDGs localization, but has vigorously invited citizens to take action on achieving the SDGs to make a more sustainable town, and is attracting attention as best practices. From the academic field, she is currently in her master's degree at Keio University Graduate School of Media and Governance, interested in the localization of SDGs, and international policy. She also takes concrete action globally to enhance the presence of small-scaled municipalities, and presented on behalf of Shimokawa town at APFSD. Shimokawa town being one of the leading municipalities in Japan, and currently the only town in the world to have published the VLRs, she strives to further emphasize the role of small-scaled municipalities so that no municipality will be left behind. Hitomi is also vice president of SDGs-SWY, inviting youth to take action on the SDGs.

## Gabriel Ferrero, Director General of Sustainable Development Policies, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Gabriel Ferrero is Currently Director General of Sustainable Development Policies at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Spain. He is a senior professional working on sustainable development and international cooperation for more than 20 years. Former member of the Office of the UN Secretary General´s team for the 2030 Agenda and Climate Change 2012-2017 and UN High Level Task Force on Global Food Security. Previously, Deputy DG for Development Policies in the Spanish MFA 2007-2011. Additionally he is a professor at the Polithechnic University of Valencia and continues researching and publishing

## Jonan Fernández Erdozia, General Secretary for Social Transition and 2030 Agenda, Basque Government

Jonan Fernandez Erdozia is the General Secretary for Social Transition and 2030 Agenda of the Basque Country. Prior to that he has been the Secretary General for Human Rights, Coexistence andCooperation, Director of the BAKETIK Center, General Coordinator of ELKARRI (Social Movement for Peace), Coordinator of LURRALDEA and Councilor at the TOLOSA City Council.

## Carmen García, Manager Director CIEDES, Malaga City Council

Carmen García is the Manager Director of the CIEDES Foundation since 2011 and its Secretary since 2007. Coordinator of the Malaga Strategic Plan since 2001 and its technician since 1994. She is a member of the Scientific Committee of the Training Center for Authorities and Leaders (CIFAL) of the UNITAR Agency of the United Nations in Malaga.She has a degree in Economics and Business Studies, specializing in Regional and Urban Economics from the University of Malaga and a Master in Business Administration and Management (MBA Plus Executive), by the Institute of Business Practice (IPE). Director of the Mediterranean Knowledge Transfer Center in Methodologies and Good Practices of Strategic Planning for Sustainable Development, of the MEDCITIES Association. She has participated in the design, management and evaluation of multiple European projects (Ecos Ouverture, INTERREG, SUDOE, MED, ENPI, 7th Framework Program).

## Curt Garrigan, UNESCAP, Chief, Sustainable Urban Development, Environment & Development Division

Mr. Curt Garrigan is Chief of the Sustainable Urban Development Section for the Environment and Development Division of UN ESCAP. Before joining UN ESCAP, Mr. Garrigan served as Cities and Buildings Programme Manager for UN Environment based in Paris, France. He led UN Environment's efforts to plan, along with major building sector stakeholders, the first 'Buildings Day' at COP21, and to launch the Global Alliance for Buildings and Construction, which has mobilised 24 countries and more than 70 organisations to scale up building sector climate actions. He also coordinated UN Environment's efforts to assist countries in Southeast Asia to develop Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs) for the building sector. Prior to UN Environment, Mr. Garrigan served more than 20 years in many operational and

management roles for the Metropolitan Government of Nashville, Tennessee USA including as Deputy Mayor. Mr. Garrigan holds a Bachelor of Science in Architecture degree from Temple University in Philadelphia, and a Certificate of Advanced Studies in Environmental Diplomacy from the University of Geneva.

## Bernadia Irawati Tjandradewi, Secretary General, UCLG ASPAC

Dr. Bernadia is the first woman Secretary General of UCLG's regional section. She has been working in urban development and related fields for more than 15 years. Beginning her career at Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and afterward CITYNET in Yokohama, Dr. Bernadia is also a visiting professor at several universities in Japan and has written various papers. In 2015, she was appointed as a member of the Advisory Group on Gender Issues (AGGI) of UNHABITAT. Her interests focus strategic urban planning, climate change, disaster management, water management, women empowerment, and local governance. Dr. Bernadia received her PhD in urban engineering from the University of Tokyo, and two master degrees in Atmospheric Physic from Nagoya University, Japan and in Public Policy from National University of Singapore.

## Andrea Ciambra, Lead Researcher of Guidelines for VLRs Vol.2

Andrea Ciambra holds a PhD in International Studies from the School of International Studies, University of Trento, Italy. In April 2013 he defended a thesis on the 'policisation' of the EU's discourse on energy policy, analysing the case-studies of the wind-power and energy-efficiency developments at the EU level. He holds a BA in International Relations and Politics (2006) and an MA in EU Governance (2008) from the University of Catania, Italy. His research interests include public policy-making at the EU level, discourse analysis, and the external relations of the European Union. His recent works, in particular, deal with the theoretical sustainability of a common EU energy policy. He is currently adjunct professor at the Faculty of Law of Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB), carrying out research on social science methodology, energy policy, and data analysis. From January 2015, he will work as a researcher at the Institute of Law and Technology of the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB), within a Spanish nation-wide project about technology development and democracy consolidation.

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## Eduardo Moreno, Director of Knowledge & Innovation Branch, UN-Habitat

Eduardo López Moreno is the Director of Research and Capacity Development at UN-Habitat, where he previously served as Director of City Studies. Prior to this post, he was Chief of the Global Urban Observatory (2002-2008) and Senior Technical Adviser in the Bureau of Africa and the Arab States, UN-HABITAT (1999- 2001). He has over 25 years of academic and professional experience in housing and urban development policies, institutional analysis, global monitoring, and equity and urban poverty issues. His qualifications include a Ph.D. in Urban Geography from the University of Paris III-Sorbonne in France and a Master's degree in Urban Sociology from the same University. He also has a B.A. in Architecture from the University of Guadalajara, Mexico.

## Nicolas Gharbi, Principal Advisor, Madrid City Council

Nicolas Gharbi is an urban planner and anthropologist. He has been the Policy Coordinator for Multilateral Urban Affairs at the European Commission responsible for the multilateral dimension of EU urban policies, as well as contributing to the analysis, design and implementation of the urban and territorial dimension of EU policies and European Multi-annual Financial Framework. After that, he joined the Madrid City Council where he's Principal Advisor for International Affairs

## Pedro Bejarano, Undersecretary of Investment Planning, City of Bogota

Pedro Bejarano is an economist from the University ofthe Andes and and holds a Master's in Public Policy from the University of California, Berkeley. He has more than 19 years of professional experience in which he has served as General Director of IPSE, an entity attached to the Ministry of Mines and Energy; Deputy Director of Operational Analysis Management at DIAN; Deputy Director of Financing of Other Entities and Advisor to the Macroeconomic Policy Directorate of the Ministry of Finance and Public Credit; Head of the Planning Advisory Office in the Unit for Comprehensive Attention and Reparation to Victims; Undersecretary of Investment Planning and Director of Development Plans and Local Strengthening in the District Planning Secretariat, among others.

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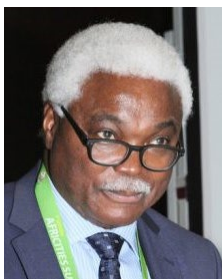### Annie Syazrin Binti Ismail, VLR Focal Point, City of Shah Alam

Annie Syazrin Ismail is the Senior Assistant Director cum Sustainable Development Officer in Shah Alam City Council (SACC). She is a passionate practitioner of sustainable development and instrumentally involved in various programs, both at local and international level. In 2020, she was the coordinator for six paperwork, submitted to UNDP for the World Urban Forum (WUF) session. She is now leading the SACC team in preparing the Shah Alam VLR Report together with Urbanice Malaysia. She holds a Bachelor Degree in Town & Regional Planning (Hons) and Masters Degree in Heritage and Conservation Management. She is a Chartered Town Planner with the Malaysia Board of Town Planners and a Council Member of Malaysian Institute of Planners (MIP).

### Edlam Abera Yemeru, Chief of the Urbanization Section, UNECA

Edlam Abera Yemeru is currently the Chief of the Urbanization and Development Section at the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA). In this capacity, she leads the delivery of technical assistance to African member States in support of policies and strategies to leverage the potential of urbanization for economic diversification and inclusive growth. This involves strengthening linkages between spatial planning and economic, national and sector policy priorities and investments, including through long-term program and project prioritization. A particular focus of this work aims to better connect urban and industrial policies in Africa. Previously, she led a number of normative and operational programs to promote sustainable urbanization at UN-Habitat, where she also co-authored several editions of the Global Report on Human Settlements. Edlam holds an MPhil in Development Studies from the University of Cambridge and a PhD in Human Geography from the University of London.

### Jean Pierre Elong Mbassi, Secretary General of UCLG Africa

The General Secretariat includes the Secretary General and staff based at the headquarters in Rabat and regional offices of UCLG Africa. The Executive Committee appoints the Secretary General on terms and conditions, which it determines at its sole discretion as adopted during the Extraordinary General Assembly on November 13, 2016 in Marrakech, Morocco. The Secretary General is the General Manager accountable for the accountancy and administration of UCLG Africa. In this capacity, the Secretary General has overall responsibility for the management of the organization and is accountable to the Executive Committee. Powers assigned to the Secretary General are defined by the Constitution and those delegated to him

specifically and periodically in writing by the Executive Committee. As well as leading the General Secretariat, the Secretary General has responsibility for overseeing the regional offices of UCLG Africa including the administering of the organization's administrative, technical, financial and judicial role, including representations before the courts of justice and implementation of the organization's activities and programs.

### Amson Sibanda, Chief of the National Strategies and Capacity Building Branch, UNDESA

Dr. Amson Sibanda is the Chief of the National Strategies and Capacity Building Branch, in the Division for Sustainable Development Goals, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Prior to his appointment in January 2020, he was the Chief of the Social Policy Analysis Section in the Division for Inclusive Development, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Dr. Sibanda has published widely on African demography, migration and employment, children's schooling, fertility trends, HIV/AIDS, child marriage, household structure, poverty and inequality. He holds a PhD and a Master's Degree in Demography from the University of Pennsylvania and a Master's Degree in Population Studies from the University of Zimbabwe.

### Sukaina Al-Nasrawi, PhD, Social Affairs Officer, Sustainable Urban Development Lead, Gender Justice, Population and Inclusive Development, ESCWA

Sukaina Al-Nasrawi is a Social Affairs Expert leading sustainable urban development portfolio at the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA). She has in depth expertise in technology for sustainable development, statistical analysis, gender sensitization and women socio-economic empowerment. She published book chapters and technical papers and co-authored regional studies on various development issues including prospects of Information and Communication Technologies for achieving gender equality and the impact of the 4th industrial revolution on development including gender equality. Sukaina received different awards noting her distinguished contributions to the research community and in fostering gender equality in the digital era. One award to mention is the United Nations Gold Award for Advancing Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. Sukaina holds a PhD in Information Technology focused on Smart Sustainable Cities.

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### Gulnara Roll, Secretary to the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management, UNECE

Senior Expert in Environmental Policy, Urban Planning, Sustainable Development with an extensive experience of managing networks, teams and projects. Experience of work at the UN since 2009 with supporting international cooperation, including through organisation of intergovernmental meetings and conducting international negotiations; preparing studies; managing projects and teams; and fundraising. Hold PhD. in Human Geography and Environmental Sciences. Currently work at United Nations Economic Commission for Europe and study at the International Organizations MBA at University of Geneva.

### Martino Miraglia, Programme Officer, Urban Practices Branch, UN-Habitat

Martino Miraglia holds a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science and Communication from the Università degli Studi di Firenze and a Master's Degree in International Relations and Affairs from the Université libre de Bruxelles. He is Programme Officer of the Urban Practices Branch at UN-Habitat technical leading Voluntary Local Reviews Portfolio and of SDG Localization and the Decentralization and Local Governance Portfolio. Prior to that he was a Development Cooperation Expert and Project Manager At UNDP.

### Rafael Tuts, Director of the Global Solutions Division, UN-Habitat

Rafael Tuts is Director of Programme Division of UN-Habitat, based at its Headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya. He is overseeing the work of UN-Habitat's seven thematic branches and four regional offices. From 2012 to 2016 he was coordinator of the Urban Planning and Design Branch of UN-Habitat, promoting compact, integrated and connected cities that are inclusive and resilient to climate change. From 2014-2016 he was also overseeing the Housing and Slum Upgrading Branch of UN-Habitat, with a focus on the 'Housing at the Centre' approach and the Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme. Earlier assignments for UN-Habitat include his tenure as Manager of the Localising Agenda 21 Programme, the Global Campaign on Urban Governance and Chief of the Training and Capacity Branch. Following the Rio+20 Conference, he coordinated UN-Habitat's engagement in the formulation of the Sustainable Development Goals. Before joining UN-Habitat, he worked for the Department of Architecture, Urbanism and Planning of the University of Leuven and the Housing Research and Development Unit of the University of Nairobi. He authored and co-edited several publications on a wide range of sustainable urban development topics.