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# The Integrated Approach and the Environmental Dimension in the 2030 Agenda

The Voluntary National Reviews from Latin America and the Caribbean

(2016-2017)

# Contents

# Executive Summary

This document is the result of the review of the fourteen[1] Voluntary Reviews on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda submitted by the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean to the High-Level Political Forum in 2016 and 2017.

In particular, this analysis focuses on the achievement of incorporating an integrated approach to sustainable development in this monitoring and evaluation process and, specifically, how this has influenced the inclusion of the environmental dimension.

It is important to note that, being in the initial stage, the 2030 Agenda reports focus on the progress made for the establishment of the basis for its implementation, monitoring and reporting. The national reports, then, contain information on the institutional framework, the definition of baselines, the implementation, socialization and participa-

tion mechanisms, the definition of strategic priorities and the alignment of public action with the SDGs, among others. However, in general, they do not yet present substantive progress in the implementation of the SDGs and their targets, which are not the object of this document.

For this reason, the main variables of analysis include, firstly, the degree of comprehensiveness of the national reports and what progress has been made with respect to coherence between the National Development Plans and the 2030 Agenda. Subsequently, we look specifically at the institutional framework that the countries report having established and to what extent, and at what level, they involve the competent environmental authorities.

It also examines the inclusion of environmental considerations at the thematic level and in relation to the specific SDGs reported each year to identi-

fy aspects that integrate environmental considerations. Finally, given the importance of the means of implementation in the 2030 Agenda, special attention is paid to two issues and their implications for progress towards an integrated approach: the availability of information and the participation of stakeholders in the implementation and monitoring process of the 2030 Agenda.

The main conclusions reflect that, although there is an explicit reference to the need to link the three sustainable development dimensions, the logic of silos has not been overcome, nor is there a truly integrating vision. Some countries mention specific approaches that can help in this transition, but we have not seen evidence of their concrete application with respect to planning, participation, implementation and monitoring.

Regarding environmental issues, although they are integrated into all the SDGs at the level of formulating their targets, the environmental dimension appears only incipiently in the review of each one of them. Additional effort is required to integrate environmental sustainability in all areas of the national agendas, as well as explicitly reflecting the efforts that countries are already making for the implementation of Multilateral Environmental Agreements and other regional processes related to the environment.

Some of the more important recommendations that emerge from this review include the need to:

• Strengthen integrated approaches to sustainable development in the implementation process of the 2030 Agenda at the national level,

to be reflected on in subsequent national voluntary reviews.
• Move forward from reporting the degree of coherence of existing national development plans with the 2030 Agenda to providing road maps that define, in an integrated manner, the changes necessary for the transition to sustainable development.
• Include environmental authorities in the institutional framework created to coordinate and monitor the 2030 Agenda as a good practice to strengthen the integration of the environmental dimension. In addition, there is the need to expand the base of non-governmental stakeholders involved in the implementation and monitoring of the SDGs to strengthen this dimension.
• Take into account the advances in the implementation of the Multilateral Environmental Agreements and their contribution to specific SDGs´targets.
• Report the regional efforts for the implementation of the decisions of the Forum of Environment Ministers and the Latin American Initiative for Sustainable Development (ILAC) and use these areas to strengthen the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda, in both implementation and monitoring.
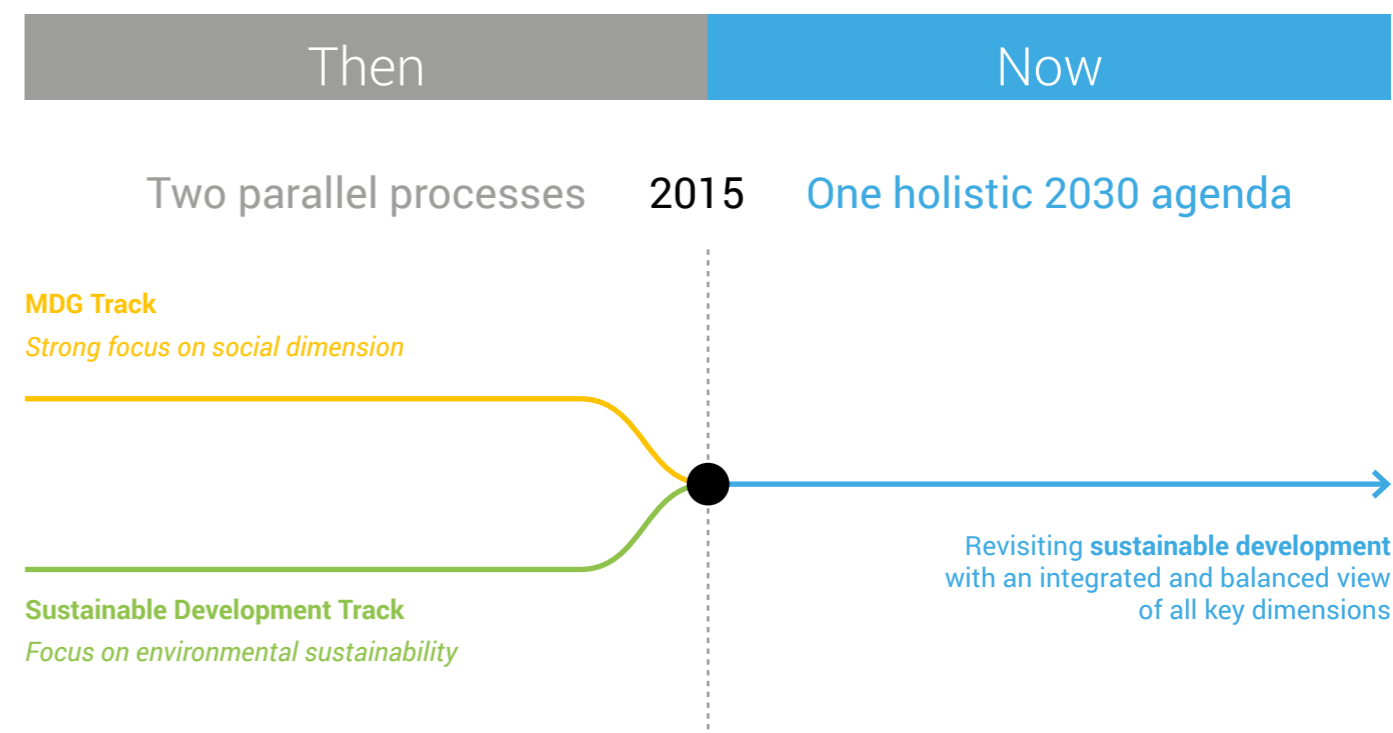
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1    It also takes into account the report by the Netherlands on Aruba, Curaçao and Sint Maarten.

# 1. The Integrated Approach to Sustainable Development in the 2030 Agenda

**Figure 1**

The confluence of the United Nations Millennium Development and Environmental Sustainability Goals
Source: UNITAR



| Then | Now |
| --- | --- |

Two parallel processes · 2015 · One holistic 2030 agenda

**MDG Track**
*Strong focus on social dimension*

Revisiting **sustainable development**
with an integrated and balanced view
of all key dimensions

**Sustainable Development Track**
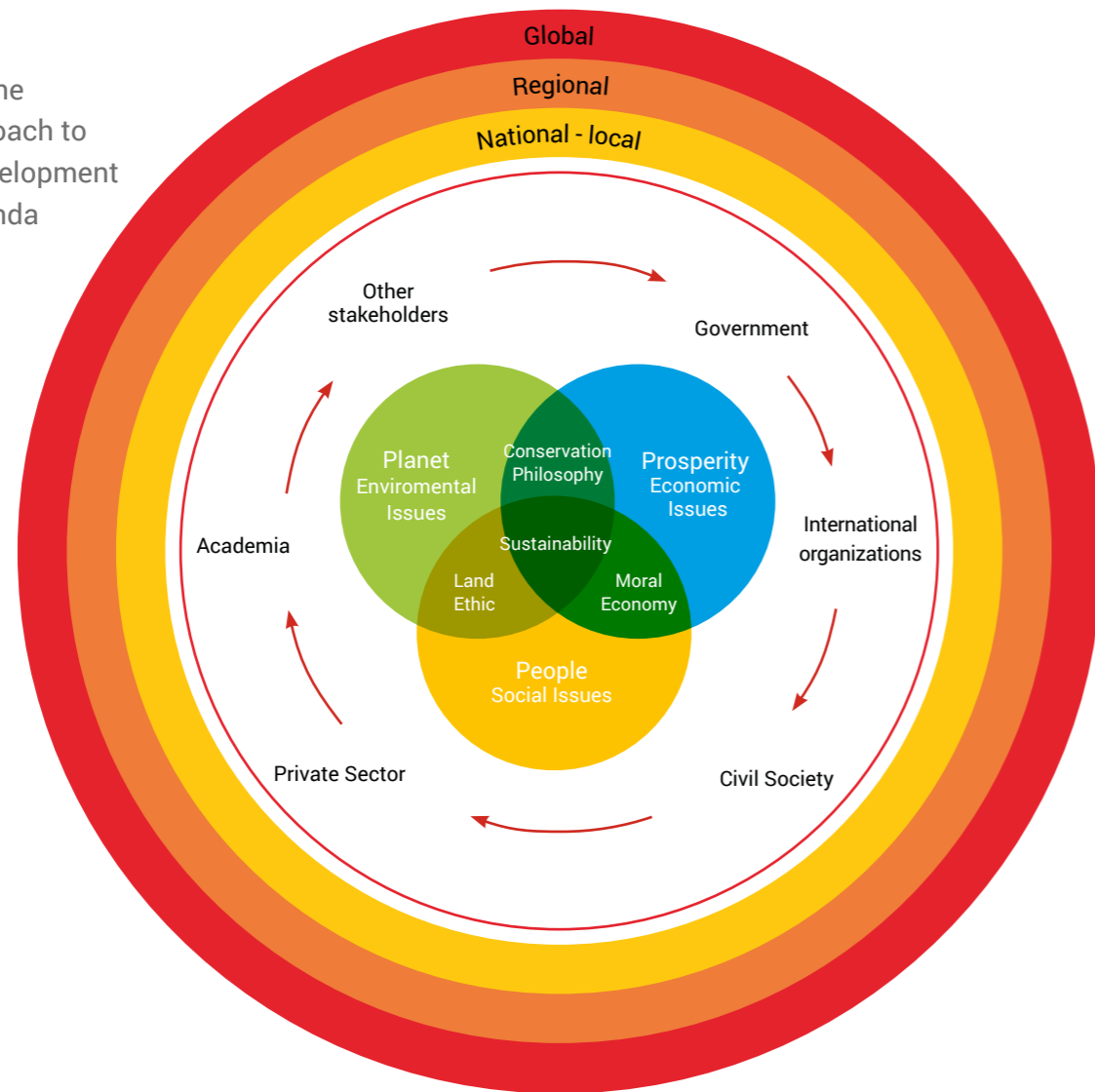*Focus on environmental sustainability*

The 2030 Agenda is considered by States as an expression of an "ambitious and transformative vision of the future" (United Nations, 2015: paragraph 7). This vision is articulated in the commitment to build an environmentally sustainable, socially just and economically productive world, where all people enjoy full respect for their human rights and no one is "left behind."

To this end, the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) bring together elements that were previously distributed across separate international negotiation processes (see Figure 1). An important step in this unification took place in the preparatory meetings of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Sustainable Develo-pment (Rio+20), with particular emphasis on the regional conference for Latin America and the Caribbean[2], where the governments of Colombia and Guatemala presented a joint proposal to define and agree on "a series of Sustainable Development Goals that would focus on a practical level." In this line, the document "The future we want," adopted at the Rio+20 Conference, included an agreement to move forward on certain SDGs that should "address and incorporate, in a balanced manner, the three dimensions of sustainable development and their interrelations" (United Nations, 2012: Art. 246)

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2    Santiago, September 7 to 9, 2011.

## Figure 2

Dimensions of the Integrated Approach to Sustainable Development in the 2030 Agenda

Source: the authors



## Figure 3

Structure of the 2030 Agenda

Source: the authors
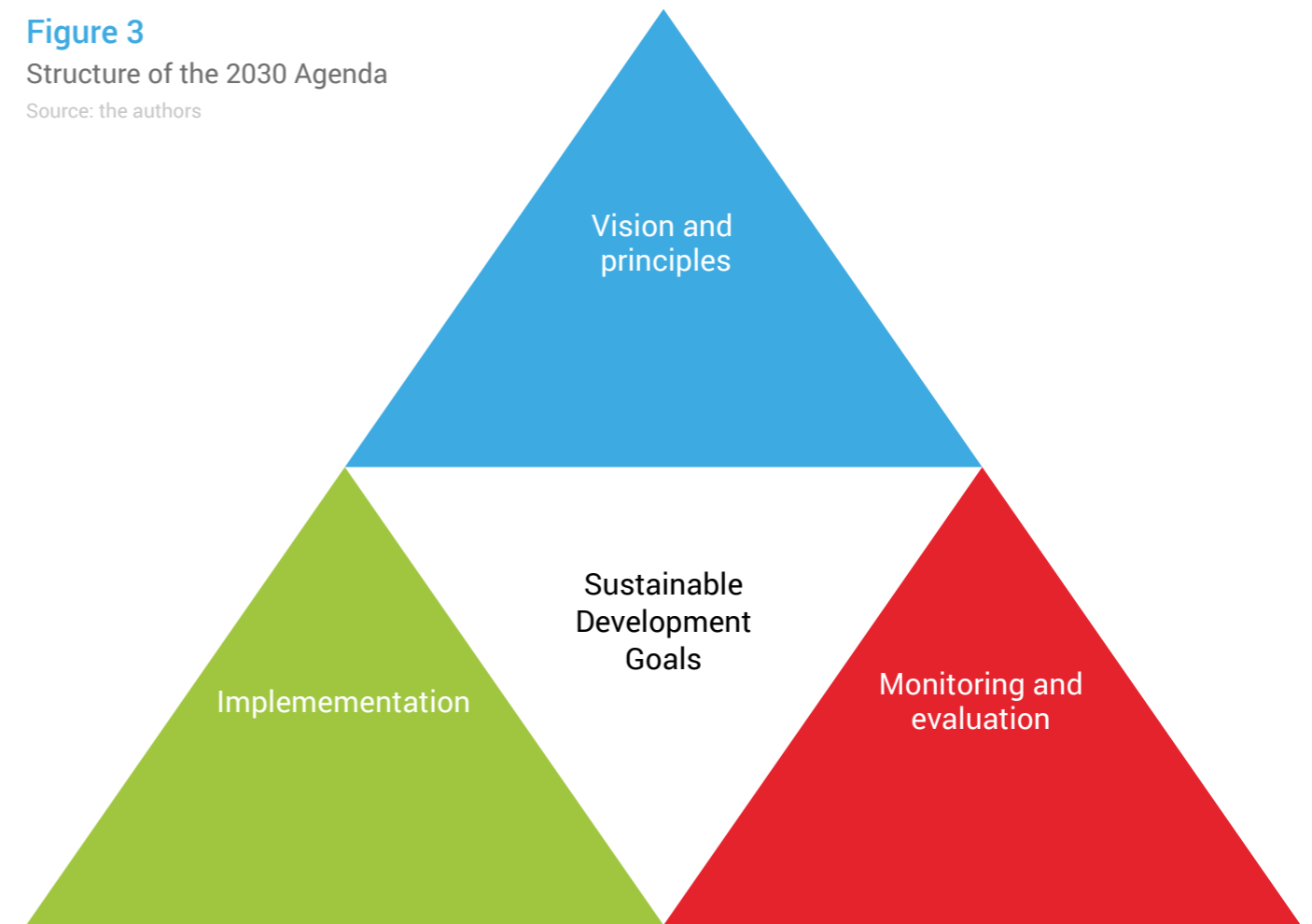


**Do not leave anyone behind Common but differentiated responsibilities Universality Interdependency**

**Global partnership for development strengthened Global, regional and national scales Forums of interested stakeholders**

**High Level Political Forum Regional platforms Forums of interested stakeholders**

At Rio+20, the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) was created. Its first meeting, in 2014, adopted a Ministerial Declaration[3], in which paragraph 16 highlighted the need for the "Post-2015 Agenda" to apply "a coherent approach that integrates, in a balanced manner, the three dimensions of sustainable development."

A year later, the global agreement on the 2030 Agenda reinforced sustainable development as a paradigm synthesizing the complexity of global cha-

llenges in five critical working areas: people, the planet, prosperity, peace and partnerships. In addition, it adopted an Integrated Approach to Sustainable Development, reinforcing, on the one hand, the interdependence between social progress, economic growth and environmental protection and, on the other, the need to ensure simultaneous and long-term benefits in all these areas (UN Environment, 2016a).

This is why the link between the economic, social and environmental spheres is only a part of the integrated approach to sustainable development. The 2030 Agenda, as seen in Figure 2, also applies to the necessary integration of stakeholders in joint

efforts (multi-stakeholder work), the tools available for action and the levels of action for sustainable development (local, national, regional and global).

On a practical level, this implies that the 2030 Agenda not only defines a vision included in the de-

claration, but also some SDGs and specific targets to be achieved by 2030, the means of implementation and a monitoring and evaluation system of multi-level and multi-stakeholder progress with a framework of indicators that was defined in 2016.

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3    Document E/2014/L.22−E/HLPF/2014/L.3.

# 2. Monitoring and Review of the 2030 Agenda

**An Integrated and Multi-Level Process of Learning and Transparency**

The established scheme for the monitoring and evaluation of progress worldwide focuses on the decisions of the countries where the HLPF:

Will facilitate the exchange of experiences, including successes, challenges and lessons learned, and provide political leadership, guidance and recommendations for monitoring and promote the coherence and coordination of sustainable development policies throughout the system. It will also work to ensure that the Agenda remains relevant and ambitious and focus on assessing the progress and achievements made, and obstacles encountered, by developed and developing countries, as well as new and emerging problems (UNGA, 2015, paragraph 82)

The HLPF efforts are supported by four types of reports:

- An annual report by the UN Secretary General, in cooperation with the United Nations System, on the progress of the SDGs, using, as analytical references, the framework of global indicators for the monitoring of the SDGs, regional information and data from national statistical systems.
    The first two were presented in 2017 and 2018. Although both are demonstrably based on the integrated approach, neither make this explicit.
- A global report on sustainable development, carried out by independent experts, which should reinforce the relationship between scientific knowledge and the implementa-

tion of policies for sustainable development, published every four years and intended to orient progress in achieving the SDGs from a scientific perspective, identifying challenges and trends that may globally affect sustainable development.
- The thematic studies on the subset of SDGs that are selected for each HLPF session, the result of the transversal study of the global situation based on certain SDGs. The General Assembly Resolution 70/299 of August 2016 defined the topics to be analyzed during the first cycle "3+1" of the HLPF.
- The Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) produced by the Member States (analyzed in this document). Countries have the freedom to decide when to submit them, with the objective of sharing the advances and challenges that each State encounters in the 2030 Agenda implementation at the national level, as well as good practices and successful experiences. The Secretary General presented a "Proposal of common guidelines for the presentation of voluntary reports in relation to national voluntary reviews undertaken in the high-level political forum," including "the way in which they integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development (economic, social and environmental), as well as the way in which sustainable development policies are developed and applied with respect to this integration."[4]

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4   These proposals were included as an Appendix to the Secretary General's report *Critical milestones towards a coherent, efficient, and inclusive follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda at the global level* (A / 70/684), of January 2016.

## Table 1

HLPF: Mission statements and SDGs under thematic analysis, per year

Source: the authors

| Year of meeting | Mission statement | SDG under thematic analysis | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2017 | Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world. | 1 NO POVERTY / 2 ZERO HUNGER / 3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING / 9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE / 5 GENDER EQUALITY / 14 LIFE BELOW WATER / 17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS | | |
| 2018 | The transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies. | 6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION / 7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY / 11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES / 12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION / 15 LIFE ON LAND / 17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS | | |
| 2019 | The empowerment of people and the attainment of inclusion and equality. | 4 QUALITY EDUCATION / 8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH / 10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES / 13 CLIMATE ACTION / 16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS / 17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS | | |

## Table 2

Voluntary National Reviews submitted to the HLPF by Latin American and Caribbean countries (2016, 2017 and 2018)

Source: the authors

| Year of meeting | Countries that submitted a review | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2016 | Colombia | Mexico | Venezuela |
| 2017 | Argentina | Belize | Brazil |
| | Chile | Costa Rica | El Salvador |
| | Guatemala | Honduras | Panama |
| | Peru | Uruguay | |
| 2018 (Committed submissions, not yet made) | Bahamas | Colombia | Ecuador |
| | Jamaica | Mexico | Paraguay |
| | R. Dominicana | Uruguay | |

The countries bolded in blue text are submitting their second reviews.

Consistent with the need for integrated multi-stakeholder efforts, the 2030 Agenda emphasizes that all monitoring and evaluation schemes should be "open, inclusive, participatory and transparent for all people and support the submission of reviews by all pertinent stakeholders." (Paragraph 74.d).

Although still incipient, the submission of "shadow reports" or "spotlight reports" prepared by non-governmental stakeholders is becoming a practice as a complement to the national reviews.[5]

Below, we will discuss some of the results related to the incorporation of an integrated approach to sustainable development and, specifically, how this influences the consideration of the environmental dimension based on the advances of Latin America and the Caribbean, on national and regional levels, for the 2030 Agenda monitoring and evaluation process.

5   In the case of Latin America and the Caribbean, the civil society of Brazil submitted a Shadow Report of the 2017 national review, and the civil societies of Argentina and Chile reponded to the document of "Guiding questions to analyze the involvement of civil society organizations in the Voluntary National Review in the UN High-Level Political Forum," prepared by the Action4SD network. Available at: http://action4sd.org/tools-resources/

# 3. Environmental Considerations

**In the Voluntary National Reviews of Latin American and Caribbean Countries from the Perspective of the Integrated Approach to Sustainable Development.**

The analysis of the Voluntary National Reviews submitted by countries in the region to the HLPF in 2016 and 2017 allows for the identification of some essential elements for the consideration of the environmental dimension of sustainable development in the 2030 implementation and under the framework of an Integrated Approach.

In this chapter, we will first analyze the incorporation of the integrated approach in the national reviews and, subsequently, the institutional frameworks stablished. Following this, we will specifically examine the incorporation of environmental considerations at the thematic level and in relation to the specific SDGs reported each year. Finally, and given the importance of the means of implementation, special attention will be given to two issues and their implications for moving towards an integrated approach: the availability of information and the participation of stakeholders in the 2030 Agenda implementation and monitoring process.

It is important to note that, as they are still in the initial phase, the reports on the 2030 Agenda focus primarily on the progress made in establishing the basis for its implementation, monitoring and reporting. The national reviews, then, contain information on institutional arrangements, the definition of baselines, mechanisms for implementation, socialization and participation, the definition of strategic priorities and the alignment of public action with the SDGs, among others. However, generally speaking, they do not yet present concrete progress in the implementation of the SDGs and the achievement of their targets.

## 3.1 Approaches for the integration of the sustainable development dimensions

In their reports, all countries have referred to the need to adopt a perspective of integration that links the economic, social and environmental spheres (see Appendix, table A.1). However, in general, they do not specifically mention the Integrated Approach to Sustainable Development nor are there indications that it is applied in its entirety.

References to the balance between the three dimensions of sustainable development are reiterated and found in all the reports, defining different approaches to this end. For example, Belize advocates a "whole-system approach," while Peru, in a different line, uses the term "integrated approach to public policies."

Belize indicates that its Growth and Sustainable Development Strategy 2016-2019 uses this approach "to link economic, social and environmental policies at the national and subnational levels" (p. 5) integrating "elements of cultural and institutional sustainability, peace and good governance."

In the case of Peru, it recognizes that "achieving national development requires an integrated approach to public policies that is capable of articulating the actions of all of Peruvian society in the pursuit of national objectives" (p.57), and argues that the national processes aimed at fostering sustainable development are promoted through policies that must consider "the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development [and] be based on a comprehensive knowledge of reality based on the best available empirical evidence" (p. 9).

In this same line, the basis of Costa Rica's efforts to advance the implementation work is based on two parameters: the country's "structural gaps" and what it understands as the "multidimensional approach," which can be considered as an integrated approach to sustainable development with a strong orientation toward public policy planning.

On the other hand, there are countries like Panama that argue that the debate on the sustainable development approach still requires further elaboration at the national level. To this end, the Panamanian report asserts that the 2030 Agenda "contains a holistic, inclusive, ambitious, interdisciplinary and universal vision that leads to reflection on the type of approach necessary to achieve sustainable human development" (p. 76).

There is a group of countries that uses more than one expression to define their strategic focus. Among them are Honduras, Uruguay and El Salvador.

The report from Honduras is representative. Although it does not explicitly refer to the Integrated Approach to Sustainable Development, it does mention other approaches that are strongly related to it and, to a certain extent, express it: the multi-sectoral and multidimensional approach (p .8); the cross-sectoral, inter-institutional and multi-stakeholder approach (p. 10); the holistic approach (p. 31); the focus on integration (p. 35); and the mul-tidimensional integrated intervention approach (p. 50). There are also multiple references to the three dimensions of sustainable development.

The case of Uruguay is somewhat different, since it takes particular approaches to the different SDGs it addresses: it mentions the "rights-based approach" (p. 32) and the "rights and life cycle approach" (p. 50) to address SDG 1 (Ending poverty); the "rights, gender and generations approach" within the framework of SDG 2 (Zero hunger); the "public health and rights approach" (p. 106) with regard to SDG 3 (Health and well-being); the "gender approach" (p. 130) for SDG 5 (Gender equality); and the "ecosystem approach" (p. 178) for SDG 14 (Life below water). All of them are multidimensional approaches to the particular issues addressed by each SDG.

El Salvador takes an approach similar to that of Uruguay. While its report refers to a "whole-of-society approach," it applies only to the question of financing. Similarly, it identifies different approaches for each thematic area, such as the "broader development approach that goes beyond the income-based approach," the "broad environmental approach," the "comprehensive citizen security approach," the "rights approach," the "territorial approach" and the "gender equality approach." The only more general reference is related to a "broad approach" considered "necessary to improve people's living standards and to achieve sustainable and inclusive growth that addresses social inequalities and the heterogeneity that characterizes Middle Income Countries" (p. 63).

Despite these references, the countries of the region appear to be inclined towards transversality rather than integration as the basis for their national implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs.

This is the case with Mexico's "transversal approach to integrated public policies." The country asserts that "the level of ambition of the 2030 Agenda exceeds the commitments assumed under the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and includes transversal approaches for integrated public policies with respect to the three dimensions of sustainable development (social, economic and environmental)" (p. 6), complemented by the statement that "the focus on people, the planet, prosperity, peace and alliances must not be lost sight of, encouraging sustainable development that is inclusive and based on the three pillars: economic, social and environmental" (p. 52).

Along the same lines, the Panamanian report includes a chapter on the three dimensions of sustainable development which states that "the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development (economic, social and environmental) in policy design was carried out using transversal lines that cut across public policies and establish relations between them" (p. 31). These transversal lines include environmental sustainability, understood as "a way of organizing public policy, as well as daily life" (p. 32).

Colombia's approach is different and leans towards the multiple causality and multiple benefits related to the Integrated Approach to Sustainable Development. The report recognizes that "due to the complex network of causalities that exist between the objectives and targets, it is essential to identify the key interrelationships to strengthen the effectiveness of the results of the 17 SDGs as a whole (...) so that the competent institutions can overcome the focus of silos in the design, implementation and monitoring of their sectoral policies" (p. 4). Thus, for example, they link peace with different dimensions, including the environmental, as a requirement to balance the use and conservation "of natural resources [and to ensure] the preservation of the environmental functions of the regions" (p. 8).

It is worth highlighting the case of Costa Rica, which has the distinction of having defined three priority strategies for an integrated implementation of the SDGs: 1) poverty erradication; 2) sustaina-ble production and consumption; and 3) resilient infrastructure and sustainable communities (pp. 1-2). These central areas are expected to establish synergies between the SDGs as well as define integrated actions for their attainment.

In the choice between transversality and integration, Argentina represents a unique case. Its report places great importance on the process that the country is developing to adapt the SDGs to its national context, and points out that it follows "an approach [that is] politically guided by national priorities, centered on people, indivisible, comprehensive, participatory, efficient and monitorable" (p. 9).

To achieve this, it includes a double perspective, addressing thematic and transversal approaches and the need to start from the principle of indivisibility. The latter refers to the integration of social, environmental and economic aspects, while transversality refers to the preservation of the "rights-based approach, the gender perspective, the inclusion of people with disabilities, indigenous peoples and other vulnerable populations, a consideration of the life cycle, regionalism and statistical rigor" (p. 15).

Without mentioning the Integrated Approach to Sustainable Development explicitly, Brazil's report continuously refers to the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development. Furthermore, this report stands out for its strong call for fiscal responsibility as a strategic central axis: "in Brazil, we have learned, in practice, that it does not make sense to address social and environmental responsibility in the absence of fiscal responsibility" (p. 7). In this manner, Brazil addresses the relations between the three dimensions of sustainable development.

Venezuela also demonstrates a unique vision. In this case, framed in "eco-socialism," "a socialist model based on an alternative development that is respectful of Mother Earth, that is, Sustainable Development in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela" (p. 35).

Chile's report also has a unique characteristic, as it repeatedly mentions "sustainable economic and social development," omitting the environmental sphere, even though its report addresses it to a certain degree.[6]

These different references show that while some countries focus on an integrated approach, others emphasize tranversality as a general guiding framework. It is pertinent to point out that "integrated" and "transversal" are not synonymous.

Integration, in relation to planning policies for sustainable development, expresses the incorporation of each of the three dimensions in any consideration that involves the other dimensions and is directly related to a holistic perspective: all public policy needs to be conceived, designed, implemented and evaluated taking into account its impacts on the social, economic and environmental spheres, integrating sectors, as an indivisible whole, in the promotion of sustainable development.

Transversality, on the other hand, implies the coordination of different bodies (state or governmental and non-governmental) to respond to a problem (or set of public problems) that requires a multi-sectoral approach. Transversality can be divided into two main axes: vertical (joint work of different bodies within the same sphere) and horizontal (involving bodies from different spheres or levels). In the case of sustainable development, an approach can be transversal and still be articulated within a single sphere (for example, vertical transversality in the social area) or involve two spheres (horizontal

economic and social transversality, which does not address the environmental sphere).

Sustainable development requires transversality that is both horizontal and vertical and inclusive of the three spheres. As such, it would be a working tool emerging from an integrated approach (rather than a valid point of reference in itself) to meet the commitments assumed under the framework of the 2030 Agenda.

In any case, it is clear that the countries in the region are searching for strategies to ensure that the 2030 Agenda is coherent in the national scenario; whether through institutional arrangements (discussed below) or their adaptation to a national agenda for sustainable development.[7]

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6    For example, Chile provides specific information on how its environmental policy is implemented through a green growth strategy, aligned with the National Action Plan on Climate Change, the National Program for Sustainable Consumption and Production, the Recycling Law and the policy "Energy 2050," among other norms.

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7    Before concluding this summary, it is important to mention the case of Aruba, Curaçao and Sint Maarten, three Caribbean islands that are part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and that participated in the 2017 voluntary review submitted by that country.

It states that "Aruba is combining sustainable economic growth, social equality and environmental awareness with the goal of improving the quality of life and raising the standard of living of all Arubians" (p. 8) and that in Curaçao, "all sectors of society (...) have adopted a vision that combines economic growth, protection of the environment and the reduction of inequality" (p. 6).

It is also reported that Sint Maarten "has identified the provision of public goods and services and the government's capacity to cope with a changing natural environment as central challenges for governance" (p. 11).

The three countries argue that "alliances are essential for development" (p. 13).

Even though the information is sparse and quite limited, the inclusion of a successful experience entitled "The *Whole of Society* approach in Curaçao" (p. 37), with reference to SDG 17 (Partnerships for the goals), deserves to be highlighted.

## Table 3

Alignment between the main national documents for national development planning and the SDGs in Latin American countries that submitted Voluntary National Reviews in 2016 and 2017

| Country | National Development Document (year created) | National Development Document (year created) |
|---|---|---|
| Argentina | Government plan (2015) | It establishes eight government objectives, all of which are linked to different SDGs. A web tool was created to provide information on these links: http://www.odsargentina.gob.ar/VinculacionODS |
| Belize | Strategy for Growth and Sustainable Development 2016-2019 (2016) | Under analysis by the country. |
| Brazil | Multi-year Government Plan 2016-2019 (2016) | An analysis by the government shows that 86% of the objectives and 78% of the indicators of the SDGs are addressed under the Plan. |
| Chile | Government Program 2014-2108 | There is no study on the alignment between the plan and the SDGs. |
| Colombia | National Development Plan 2014-2018 "All for a new country" (2015) | 92 of the 169 SDG targets are incorporated in the National Plan. |
| Costa Rica | National Development Plan "Alberto Cañas Escalante" 2015-2018 (2014) | Costa Rica analyzed the alignment of its National Development Plan and the corresponding programs and projects under it, identifying 94 that are linked to 181 indicators and 169 SDG targets and that the goals with the greatest number of linked programs are SDG 3, 4, 15 and 16. |
| El Salvador | Five-Year Development Plan 2014-2019 "A productive, educated and safe El Salvador" (2014) | A preliminary technical study on alignment, based on the convergence of objectives and targets, showed that operational plans and programs and institutional implementation showed a high degree of alignment between the Plan and SDG 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 10, 16 and 17. |
| Guatemala | National Development Plan K'atun Nuestra Guatemala 2032 (2014) | An analysis showed that the National Plan is aligned with the 17 SDGs and with 129 of the 169 SDG targets. As a result of this analysis, in 2016 the country adopted a "Joint strategy for the adoption and monitoring of the SDG Agenda by the National Development Plan." |
| Honduras | Country Vision 2010-2038 and National Plan 2010-2022 (2010) | There is no study on the alignment between the plan and the SDGs. |
| Mexico | National Development Plan 2013-2018 (2013) | The country carried out a review of the alignment between its National Development Plan and the SDGs considering the axes and structural reforms defined in the former and the national public policies in execution, demonstrating a high degree of alignment. |
| Panama | Government Strategic Plan 2015-2019 (2015) | An analysis of the alignment between the Strategic Plan and the SDGs was carried out which revealed that the planning instruments and documents do not have a set of indicators that allow for monitoring and evaluating the progress of a number of the sustainable development goals, identifying the most significant deficiencies in the environmental area. As a result of this, the country adopted the "National Strategic Plan with State Vision: Panama 2030" aimed at closing the existing gaps. |
| Peru | "The Bicentennial Plan: Peru towards 2021" (2011) | This country began a new cycle of strategic planning in 2016 that includes the revision of the "Bicentennial Plan" and which has the objective, among others, of aligning policies and plans with the SDGs, with an emphasis on improving disaster risk management and the country's vulnerability to climate change. |
| Uruguay | National Development Strategy Uruguay 2050 (being developed) | There is no study on the alignment between the plan and the SDGs. |
| Venezuela | Country Plan 2013-2019 (2013) | A study carried out by the government indicates a 77.85% convergence between the strategic objectives of the Venezuelan plan and the SDGs. |

# 3.2

## The search for the coherence in the 2030 Agenda: the alignment of priorities and integrated policies.

The voluntary reviews submitted by the countries of the region also demonstrate that efforts have been made to either align the principal national development planning documents with the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs, or generate new strategic documents with a 2030 vision.

All of them advocate, in one way or another, a greater degree of integration in public policies to foster sustainable development. The case of Brazil is representative, as can be seen in its report, which states:

> The 2030 Agenda is essentially an action plan that serves as a strategy for economic, social and environmental development, which further highlights the interdependence and the need for a balance between these three dimensions in public policy planning and implementation worldwide. It leads to actions less centralized within the sector and allows for a more integrated link between public policies and the context of their execution (p. 72).

Several countries in the region already had National Development Plans in force when the 2030 Agenda was approved. In these cases, the option has been to align both documents. In the cases of Costa Rica, Panama and Peru, the environmental dimension is included as an axis that deserves special consideration.

# 3.3

## National institutional arrangements for the 2030 Agenda and the participation of environmental authorities.

In all the reports analyzed, the institutional framework constitutes the most important advance with respect to the 2030 Agenda implementation and monitoring strategies. In all cases, the main objective is to have sufficient institutional coordination to jointly address the challenges of this new global development agenda and thus consolidate, or improve, the coherence of existing policies.

In this sense, the definition of institutional arrangements and specific responsibilities adhere to a similar logic throughout the region, based on three major governance options at the national level (see Appendix, table A.2).

All these approaches have the ultimate goal of achieving the highest level of policy coherency for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Given that the institutional arrangements of the countries in the region have been described in detail (ECLAC, 2017), this summary explores the degree of involvement of the environmental authorities to position this dimension of sustainable development.

In this regard, the institutional frameworks presented in the national reports do not always include the highest-level environmental representatives and, when they do, they have different responsibilities that can lead to a heterogeneous integration of the environmental dimension in the planning, implementation and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda.

## Table 4

Participation of environmental authorities in the national institutional framework for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda among Latin American countries that submitted Voluntary National Reviews in 2016 and 2017

| Country | Highest national environmental authority | Highest institution for national implementation of the 2030 Agenda | Participation |
|---|---|---|---|
| Argentina | Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development | National Council for Social Policy Coordination | Yes |
| Belize | Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, Environment, Sustainable Development and Immigration | Ministry of Economic Development | No |
| Brazil | Ministry of Environment | National Commission for the Sustainable Development Goals | Yes |
| Chile | Ministry of Environment | National Council for the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development | Yes |
| Colombia | Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development | High Level Inter-institutional Commission for the preparation and effective implementation of the post-2015 development agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals | Yes |
| Costa Rica | Ministry of Environment, Energy and Telecommunications | High Level National Council on the Sustainable Development Goals | Yes |
| El Salvador | Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources | Mechanism for Political Coordination + Technical Mechanism - National Council for Sustainable Development (currently in development) | Yes |
| Guatemala | Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources | System of Development Councils, headed by the National Council for Urban and Rural Development | Yes |
| Honduras | Energy, Natural Resources, Environment and Energy Secretariat | General Secretariat of the Presidency and 6 sectoral cabinets (General Coordination of Government; Governance and Decentralization; Development and Social Inclusion; Economic Management and Regulation; Security and Defense; Economic Development) | Yes, but only through participation in one of the sectoral cabinets (Economic Development) |
| Mexico | Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources | National Council for the 2030 Agenda | Yes |
| Panama | Ministry of Environment | Inter-institutional and Civil Society Commission for the Support and Monitoring of the SDGs. | No |
| Peru | Ministry of Environment | National Center for Strategic Planning | No |
| Uruguay | Ministry of Housing, Regional Planning and Environment | - | - |
| Venezuela | Ministry of People's Power for Eco-socialism and Waters | Council of Vice Presidents | No |

In Argentina, for example, the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development participates in the National Council for Social Policy Coordination, the main national body for the implementation and monitoring of the SDGs. However, the methodology for adapting the goals to their particular context is organized through six commissions (education; social protection; housing, habitat, urban development and infrastructure; labor and employment; science and technology; and sustainable agricultural production) and the environmental authorities do not participate in the first two.

The Ministry of Environment is also part of the National Commission in charge of implementing the SDGs in Brazil. Chile's Ministry of Sustainable Development is part of the National Council for the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In Colombia, the High Level Commission for the Preparation and Effective Implementation of the Post-2015 Agenda and the SDGs involves the participation of all the ministers of the central government, including the minister of Environment and Sustainable Development.

In general, the broader the institutional arrangements for the 2030 Agenda, the more likely they are to include environmental authorities.

Mexico's report includes the creation, in 2015, of a Specialized Technical Committee on the SDGs, which involves numerous State entities, including the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources. After the presentation of the report, a Presidential Decree of April 24, 2017 created the National Council of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, made up of the Ministries of Fo-

reign Affairs; Economy, Development and Tourism; Social development; and Environment. Its main function is to coordinate the design, execution and evaluation of the strategies, policies, programs and actions for the fulfillment of the 2030 Agenda.

In the case of El Salvador, coherence in the implementation, progress and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda is ensured through a process "led and overseen at the highest level by the Presidency of the Republic" (p. 29) and structured through two mechanisms:

•   The political coordination mechanism: made up of the different Management Cabinets and those in which the environmental authorities participate, together with the rest of the national ministries; and

•   The technical mechanism: that uses, as facilitators of the process, the Technical and Planning Secretariat of the Presidency and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and those with no presence of the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources.

In other countries, the reports reveal a weakness in terms of the participation of environmental authorities who can more forcefully advocate, though not exclusively, for the integration of the environmental dimension in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

In the case of Honduras, leadership is exercised by the Secretariat of General Government Coordination, which has a Working Group to address the SDGs, composed of technicians from various presidential departments, and which interacts with the national sector cabinets. However, "the need to establish a High Level Commission and a Te-

chnical Committee for the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" is being considered (p. 16). The presence of the environmental authorities is dispersed.

The Ministry of Environment is not among the institutions with greater responsibilities for the implementation of the SDGs in Peru. Peru designated the National Center for Strategic Planning, the leading institution of the Peruvian National Strategic Planning System, as the "focal point to report on the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda" (p. 13). Heading the Center is a Board of Directors, in which there is no direct participation by the environmental authority.

Uruguay has decided not to create new institutions for the implementation and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda, and these actions are in the hands of the Planning and Budget Office, without a specific role for the environmental authorities.

The government of Panama created an Inter-institutional and Civil Society Commission for the Support and Monitoring of the SDGs, which includes Senior Management and a Technical Committee. However, there is no direct participation from the recently created Ministry of Environment in this scheme, although it does participate through the Social Cabinet, which is part of the Technical Committee.

In contrast, we can highlight the high position given to the Minister of Environment and Energy in Costa Rica, who represents one of the three entities that participate under the leadership of the President in the High Level Council for the SDGs. Also, in Guatemala, the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources is part of the National Council on Urban and Rural Development that heads the pre-existing system of de-

velopment councils (structured on the basis of regional levels: national, regional, departmental, municipal and community), upon whom the responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of the SDGs falls.

In Belize, the environmental dimension is the basis of social and economic development (p. 16). In fact, the country's voluntary review was conducted under the leadership of the Sustainable Development Unit of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Forestry, Environment, Sustainable Development and Immigration and the Ministry of Economic Development. However, the main institution responsible for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the national level is the Policy and Planning Unit, which is part of the Sustainable Development Unit of the Ministry of Economic Development.

This summary demonstrates the general concern with improving the coherence of development policies within the implementation and monitoring framework of the 2030 Agenda in national territories. For this purpose, they have adhered to different institutional strategies, granting, in the majority of the cases analyzed, direct participation to the environmental management leaders in the decision-making and planning bodies for the implementation of the SDGs.

# 3.4
## Integration of environmental considerations in the reviews of the SDGs.

The balanced integration of sustainable economic growth, justice and social protection, and care for the environment, is reflected in the 2030 Agenda. With respect to the environment, it means that this dimension is present in practically all the SDGs, with eighty-six targets specifically referring to environmental sustainability in connection with poverty, hunger, health, education, gender, water and sanitation, energy, economic growth, human settlements, sustainable production and consumption, climate change , the oceans and earth ecosystems.

The greater interrelation between environmental sustainability and the different goals and targets is based not only on the reduction of environmental damage, but also on the importance of natural resources and ecosystem services for human well-being, economic opportunities and social and ecological resilience.

This section examines the extent to which the voluntary reviews of the countries of the region incorporate these considerations when reporting on specific SDGs[8] (see table A.3, in

Appendix, with the SDGs reported by each country). The strategies followed have been considerably different.

One option has been to address environmental considerations almost exclusively in the SDG reporting, specifically referring to this question. For example, SDG 14 (Life below water), which was part of the HLPF selection for 2017, is one for which a number of countries provide specific information. This is the case of the reports from Argentina, Brazil and Chile, which, on the other hand, address other environmental issues in a more general manner outside the scope of the oceans theme.

In contrast, Uruguay devotes a large part of its report to analyzing different SDGs and their targets, including numerous references to environmental variables throughout the report and in relation to SDG 1, 2, 3, 5, 9 and, of course, 14. For example, with respect to SDG 1 (Ending poverty), it states that "this target [1.5[9]] will focus especially on the protection provided by the State for vulnerable populations facing environmental disasters" (p. 42). Under SDG 2 (Zero hunger) and SDG 3 (Health and welfare), the importance of the environmental determinants of health and nutrition is recognized and it identifies the need for the "coordination of actions with other

public policies that address the social and environmental determinants of health and nutrition" (p. 61).

This is not the only report that includes environmental considerations for SDG 2 and 3. Several mention the challenge of environmental vulnerability in the analysis of SDG 2 (Zero Hunger, and also target 2.4). For example, there is a mention that rural families in Guatemala tend to practice and reproduce subsistence production methods that do not prepare them for the dramatic changes in the natural and socioeconomic environment. Nevertheless, several reports highlight, above all, the need to increase the agricultural sector's resilience to climate change. In the case of Costa Rica, a number of multi-sectoral initiatives are highlighted in the analysis of this SDG, such as the National Low-Carbon Livestock Strategy and its Action Plan, aimed at encouraging the livestock sector's contribution to the fight against the negative effects of climate change, and the "NAMA-Coffee" Strategy that supports the mitigation and adaptation to climate change actions of the coffee sector and promotes the reduction of carbon emissions in coffee production.

Furthermore, the environmental determinants of health are considered in a number of reports. With respect to target 3.9[10], Belize mentions the Environmental Protection Law, approved in 2002. While Guatemala, in its analysis of the problem of cardiovascular diseases, cancer, diabetes and chronic respiratory illness, recognizes the link to "environmental contamination" (p. 115).

It is also worth highlighting the recognition of the relationship between poverty and the environment that is

found in a number of reports. This recognition occurs in different ways. In the case of Argentina, the report presents strategic guidelines "to attain zero poverty" (p. 64), and in the section entitled "Quality of life," the content "Healthy Habitat" appears, although it is not further developed. In a similar line, the Brazilian report emphasizes that: "poverty can be one of the main drivers of environmental devastation (and) high income and consumption tend to lead to the degradation of natural resources" (p. 51).

Following the same agenda, but in a more specific manner, Belize's report, especially with regard to target 1.5[11], highlights the vulnerability of the country's population to climate risks and emphasizes that, in 2013, it adopted its first integrated national strategy to address the impacts of climate change on social and economic development. However, what stands out most are the efforts to adapt income-based poverty measurement to a multidimensional system (p. 20), which involves the inclusion of environmental variables.

In fact, progress towards multidimensional poverty measurement appears as the most concrete opportunity for the incorporation of the environmental dimension in SDG 1, as this issue is also addressed in the reports of Chile, Guatemala and Panama. The latter, in particular, recognizes that the reduction of "exposure and vulnerability to extreme climate phenomena" is one of the most relevant actions for ending poverty in the country.

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were no specific recommendations on the contents of the reports. For the 2017 HLPF, the Secretary General proposed voluntary guidelines for the preparation of the reports, recommending that all the SDGs be addressed, covering the topics more thoroughly in each session of the Forum. However, the general practice in the region, in 2017, was not to report on all the SDGs.

9   "From now to 2030, foster the resilience of the poor and people who live in situations of vulnerability and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to extreme phenomena related to climate and economic, social and environmental problems and disasters."

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8   It is worth noting that Mexico, in 2016, and Honduras and Peru, in 2017, did not conduct specific SDG analyses. In addition, during the 2016 presentations there

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10   "By 2030, substantially reduce the number of deaths and illnesses caused by hazardous chemicals and air, water and soil pollution."

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11   "By 2030, promote the resilience of the poor and people living in vulnerable situations and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to extreme events related to climate and other economic, social and environmental crises and disasters."

**Table 5**

Inclusion of references to the Paris Agreement, climate change and its association with the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in the Voluntary National Reviews submitted by Latin American and Caribbean countries to the HLPF (2016 and 2017).

| Country (year of review submission) | Explicit reference to the Paris Agreement | Explicit reference to climate change | References to the association between the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and combating climate change |
|---|---|---|---|
| Argentina (2017) | No | Yes | No |
| Belize (2017) | No | Yes | Yes |
| Brazil (2017) | No | Yes | Yes |
| Chile (2017) | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Colombia (2016) | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Costa Rica (2017) | No | Yes | Yes |
| El Salvador (2017) | No | Yes | Yes |
| Guatemala (2017) | No | Yes | Yes |
| Honduras (2017) | No | Yes | No |
| Mexico (2016) | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Panama (2017) | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Peru (2017) | No | Yes | Yes |
| Uruguay (2017) | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Venezuela (2016) | Yes | Yes | Yes |

With respect to links with the economic dimension, there are several reports that identify synergies with SDG 8 (Decent work and economic growth) and SDG 9 (Industry, innovation and infrastructure). For example, in the case of Panama, there is a marked imbalance identified between the three dimensions of sustainable development, favoring the economic dimension: "Industry focuses its interest on the areas of knowledge and technology that generate higher economic returns (...) often distancing or ignoring the most important social and environmental needs" (p. 63).

In a more proactive manner, Chile identifies that, to achieve SDG 9, it is necessary to "develop integrated planning and management of water resources based on the sustainable management of watersheds, which allow for the incorporation of the social, economic and environmental dimensions of the resource over the long term, taking into consideration the effects of climate change" (p. 47).

Similarly, the efforts of Colombia, emphasized in its report, to link the pillars of sustainable development to each SDG, recognizes, in relation to target 8.4[12], for example, the "full awareness" of the Colombian government that the national economy "is on an unsustainable path, highly intensive in the use of natural resources" (p. 51). Thus, it underscores the adoption, in 2011, of the National Policy on Sustainable Consumption and Production and the green growth strategy included in its National Development Plan 2014-2018.

Regarding the issue of climate change, it is addressed in the various reports is different ways. In Colombia's report, SDG 13 (Climate action) dominates the content of a sub-chapter entitled "Environmental dimension," which points out the interrelations with SDG 1 (Ending poverty), SDG 3 (Health and well-being) and SDG 8 (Decent work and economic growth) (pp. 57-58). In contrast, in the case of El Salvador, the only direct reference to the environmental dimension appears in the

context of this SDG, and then only to affirm that the country contributes very little to global Green House Gases emissions, but suffers the negative effects of climate change.

Taken as a whole, less than half of the reports (six cases) mention the Paris Agreement, consider the climate change variable and integrate it in the analysis of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs. It is striking that, among these six countries, are the three countries that submitted a report in 2016, which implies that 10 of the 11 countries in the region that submitted a report in 2017 do not mention the Paris Agreement and, of those 10 countries, there are two (Argentina and Honduras) that did not integrate the climate change variable in their analysis of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Finally, it is worth highlighting the case of Brazil as the only country that includes references to the environmental dimension under SDG 17 (Partnerships for the goals). The environmental area is one of the strengths of the South-South Cooperation put forward by Brazil.

# 3.5
## Data to promote integrated monitoring and analysis

12   "Progressively improve, from now to 2030, the efficient production and consumption of world resources and work to decouple economic growth from environmental degradation, in accordance with the 10-Year Framework of Programs on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns, starting with developed countries."
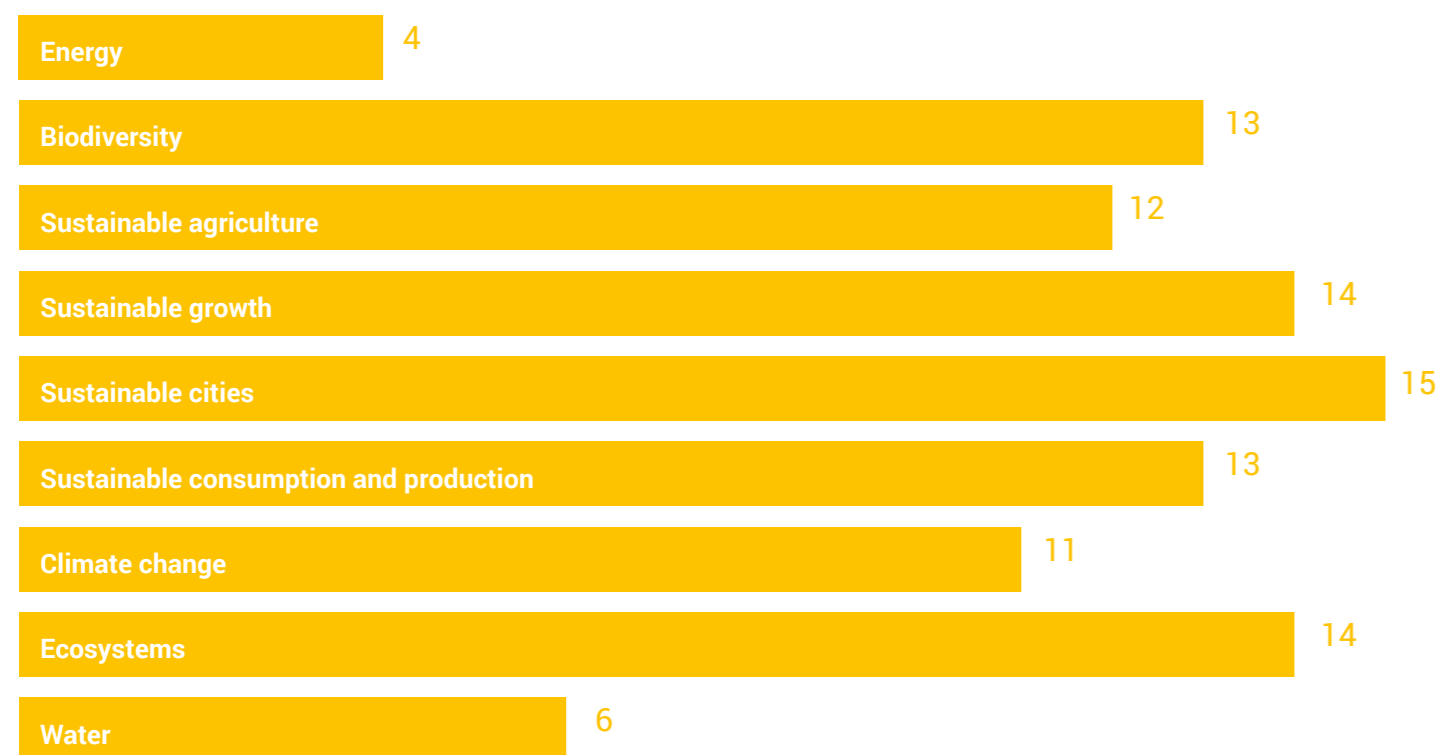
Obtaining reliable, timely, sufficient and disaggregated data is essential for monitoring the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and also for making public policy decisions based on evidence. Additionally, the availability and access to relevant information is crucial for public commu-

**Figure 4**

Number of Latin American and Caribbean countries that employed environmental variables when measuring and monitoring the SDGs (out of a total of twenty-six countries).
Source: CEPAL (2017b)

| | |
|---|---|
| Energy | 4 |
| Biodiversity | 13 |
| Sustainable agriculture | 12 |
| Sustainable growth | 14 |
| Sustainable cities | 15 |
| Sustainable consumption and production | 13 |
| Climate change | 11 |
| Ecosystems | 14 |
| Water | 6 |

nication purposes as well asfor the participation of society in the area of sustainable development.

All the reports submitted by Latin American and Caribbean countries mention challenges with respect to data. In all cases, they point out the insufficiency of available information, the need for support to improve the national statistical systems and the challenges this represents for middle-income countries.

This is also the case for environmental data. Although there is data on environmental ques-

tions, as reflected, in particular, in the monitoring of SDG 14 (Life below water) in 2017, there are few specific references to this type of data in the reports analyzed. In fact, these reports present more indicators and information on economic and social matters than environmental ones, reflecting the greater availability of data of these types (associated with the previous MDG agenda).

The limited references to environmental data reflect, once again, a common deficiency in the region: a survey conducted by ECLAC in 2015, to which twenty-six countries in

Latin America and the Caribbean responded, revealed the difficulties in developing environmental statistics.

Nonetheless, even recognizing that the networks of environmental analysis in the region present gaps in terms of frequency, scale and coverage, it is also true that there have been important advances in generating data for reporting to Multilateral Environmental Conventions. Despite this, the reports analyzed do not incorporate this information.

In general, the existence and availability of data related to the SDGs is treated as a statistical challenge. In the case of Peru, it is recognized that "it is essential to identify and obtain quality data that is accessible, timely, reliable and with a relevant level of disaggregation" (p. 18). The same applies to the reports of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia[13], El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico[14], Uruguay and Venezuela.

Panama emphasizes that it is carrying out an inventory of available indicators for the monitoring of the SDGs at the national level, noting that, currently, "the country has more data for the Poverty, Health and Marine Resources Goals" (p. 8) than presented in its report.

However, a number of countries report having reviewed all available indicators in relation to the SDGs and their targets. Guatemala reports having conducted a study of the country's capacity to ob-

tain data for the monitoring of indicators and notes that 18% of the environmental indicators are available to be employed, a percentage that increases to 27% if one considers indicators that can be generated using existing data sources (p. 42).

Costa Rica includes a reference to the carrying out of a "study on national statistical capabilities" that has determined both the strengths and the challenges for the National Statistical System, mentioning, among the challenges, the "construction of indicators for areas such as climate change, underwater life, water and sanitation, sustainable communities and sustainable production and consumption" (p. 23). Belize also specifically refers to environmental data, noting the lack of such as an obstacle to be overcome.

In conclusion, the reports analyzed in this document consider data and environmental information in conjunction with a general analysis of statistical capabilities and the development of indicators to monitor the 2030 Agenda.

However, the reports do not identify requirements with respect to the integration of data (economic, social and environmental) to allow for multidisciplinary analyses and the requirements and mechanisms needed to support decision making in sustainable development matters in a practical way, thus strengthening the dialogue between science and policy.

This is because the reports state that studies have been carried out (or are currently underway) on the deficiencies and weaknesses of these systems, without yet outlining, with few exceptions, structured plans to strengthen the national statistical systems that involve all the institutional stakeholders that generate data.

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13 In this case, we should highlight references to work involving different stakeholders to improve the production and management of statistical databases "among them, [those] involving the University of Minnesota, Universidad Externado de Colombia and the Universidad Nacional de Colombia, the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data and the Center for Strategic and International Studies" (p. 71).

14 Even when the VNR contains an extensive analysis of the situation of the country with reference to data in general.

# 3.6
## Stakeholder consultation and participation processes in the Voluntary National Reviews.

As we pointed out earlier in this document, the Integrated Approach to Sustainable Development must also be thought of as a framework for the integration of multiple stakeholders with an interest in development. The ambition and complexity of the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs require, for their success, the involvement of all interested parties in the search for solutions and synergies.

The final paragraph of Brazil's report reminds us that the implementation of the 2030 Agenda "demands a permanent effort to coordinate and integrate social, economic and environmental policies, as well as to promote interaction between the different levels of government, and between government and society" (p. 76).

In fact, all the reports presented by the countries in the region address horizontal and vertical articulation, at both the institutional level and with other stakeholders. However, the degree to which they tackle this issue is heterogeneous and the advances are still preliminary.

The experience of the involvement of social actors in the 2030 Agenda

and in the preparation of the voluntary reviews can be categorized in the following alternatives:

# A.

## Participation and/or provision of information for the elaboration of the Voluntary Reviews

Belize represents an exceptional case with regard to the involvement of the government with non-governmental stakeholders in the elaboration of its voluntary review. The writing of the report was conducted in an open and participatory process that was based on the experience of dialogue developed during the designing of the Sustainable Growth and Development Strategy. Key national development stakeholders were identified, as well as the roles they could play to achieve the goals set forth in the strategy.

A group of civil society consultants was made available to the Sustainable Development Unit of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Forests, Environment, Sustainable Development and Immigration, responsible for the report, to work on it through the Belize Enterprise for Sustainable Technology (BEST), a non-governmental organization with vast experience in the promotion of social participation for the formulation of development agendas in the country.

The Sustainable Development Unit served as a bridge between the team of consultants and the numerous non-governmental stakeholders, including United Nations experts and representatives

in Belize. With these inputs, the first draft of the Voluntary National Review was prepared, which was subsequently validated in meetings with multiple stakeholders, after which the final version of the text was submitted to the Presidential Cabinet for approval.

In this way, the Belize experience fully integrated different stakeholders who contributed their perspectives to provide content for the report.

Other countries also have mechanisms in place to gather information from non-governmental stakeholders for the elaboration of their reports.

Chile highlights the creation of "Commissions and Working Groups composed of public bodies, the private sector, civil society and academia, with the support of the United Nations System" (p. 2). The government reports having carried out a series of activities to gather opinions from different stakeholders as part of the elaboration process for their voluntary review. Among them, we can highlight commissions with open participation, the workshop organized by UNDESA, UNDP and ECLAC; and the creation of a working group on partnerships for sustainable development, focused on possible contributions from civil society, the private sector and academia to accelerate the achievement of the SDGs.

El Salvador, Uruguay, Panama and Peru also report organizing consultations with stakeholders for the elaboration of their voluntary reviews. In the case of Brazil, they mention that the government used an electronic form to gather inputs from civil society initiatives aimed at achieving the SDGs and that it invited stakeholders with experience in raising social awareness to contribute information for the process (p. 34).

Although still in the initial phase, the "shadow reports" or "spotlight reports" prepared by non-governmental

stakeholders are a complement to the national reports. In the case of Brazil, the Civil Society Working Group for the 2030 Agenda was responsible for the elaboration of a Spotlight Report as an alternative to the government report.[15] Similarly, Chilean civil society produced a brief alternative report to the official report.[16]

# B.

## Inclusion of non-governmental stakeholders in the coordination structures of the 2030 Agenda

There are a number of countries that recognize the importance of coordination between the State and other stakeholders, affirming that achieving the targets of the SDGs requires "multilevel and multi-stakeholder responses (national, provincial and municipal governments, citizens, civil society organizations, the private sector and the academic sector) and concerted public policy efforts for development that is sustainable, inclusive and in harmony with the environment and based on the rights approach" (Argentina Review, p. 28).

Argentina, Brazil and Mexico have already taken steps to formally include non-governmental stakeholders in the implementation and monitoring of

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15    Available at: https://igarape.org.br/en/spotlight-synthesis-report-the-2030-sustainable-development-agenda-in-brazil/

16    Available at: http://action4sd.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/CivilSocietyHLPFReport.Chile_-2.pdf

the 2030 Agenda, either by using existing structures or by including them in the inter-institutional structures created for this purpose. In Argentina, the participation of non-governmental stakeholders in the process occurs through the articulation that they have with the State via the National Council for Social Policy Coordination and institutions linked to civil society, such as the National Center for Community Organizations.[17]

The case of Brazil is remarkable, since half of the seats on the National Commission for Sustainable Development are reserved for non-governmental stakeholders (civil society, academia and the private sector).

Along the same lines, it should be noted that, in Mexico, one of the most important steps to involve non-governmental stakeholders in the implementation and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda occurred after the report was submitted. It recognizes that "the SDGs generate rights, but also obligations: sustainable development is the responsibility of society as a whole and it can only be achieved with the participation of everyone" (p. 37). However, it was not until 2017 that the National Council for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was created, with the participation of representatives from government, civil society and the private sector.

In Costa Rica, the approach to involving stakeholders was unique, since the country became the first in the world to sign a high-level commitment: the "National Agreement for the SDGs," supported by the three branches of government,

civil society organizations, faith-based organizations, public universities, local governments and the private sector.

# C.

## The role on prioritization and articulation of actions in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda

In the reports analyzed, there is a general recognition of the role of other stakeholders in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

Colombia presents the most concrete data in this regard, derived from a study that looks at the co-responsibility that is necessary to achieve the goals of sustainable development in the country: "135 [targets] are aligned with the tasks that the government entities carry out nationally, 110 require joint efforts with subnational governments, 34 could not be achieved without reaching agreements and actions in international scenarios and 88 require commitments from the private sector for their implementation" (p. 4). In fact, the government reports that it had "close contact with the private sector, academia and civil society organizations and foundations to identify opportunities for joint work" (p. 14). It is also analyzing possible responsibilities for civil society, the private sector and academia.

These approaches have also occurred in other countries as well. The report from Brazil, for example, points out the role of non-governmental stakeholders in the implementation of the SDGs, particularly when dealing with the positioning of the 2030 Agenda at the subnational

level, and highlights the creation of networks of members from civil society, the private sector and academia.

Without detailing participation mechanisms, El Salvador makes numerous references in its report to activities through which civil society, the private sector and academia support the implementation of the SDGs in the country.

Peru's report emphasizes the importance of integrating stakeholders in the SDG implementation and monitoring processes, for which the country undertook two fundamental efforts: the promotion of a broad social dialogue on the future desired for the country and the advancement of a technical process to provide valid and coherent proposals to build that future (p. 6).

Two other countries also report having had dialogues to define priorities. Guatemala emphasizes that the exercise of establishing priorities at the national level, defined in the first instance by the government, was followed by validation workshops involving the participation of diverse stakeholders. Similarly, and in this same line, an important element was the participation promoted in the formulation of the "Panama 2030 Plan," mentioned above. This occurred through the existing National Agreement Council for Development, a forum created in 2008 for dialogue and consultation, where consensus on relevant national issues is sought.

The report from Honduras reflects the government's concern to socialize the content of the 2030 Agenda, developing this process with non-governmental stakeholders. The focus on including stakeholders occurs throughout the first stage of definitions advanced by the Honduran government, perhaps being the most outstanding feature of this report.

In Venezuela, State management is presented as closely linked to the work of society in the di-

fferent regions, which is why the entire report contains references to institutional forums for the contributions of society.

The Uruguayan report highlights the relations between the State and society and it identifies the ongoing process of "Social Dialogue" as the country's greatest asset for creating the content of the report. Social Dialogue is "a process organized by the Presidency of the Republic, aimed at developing a series of participatory meetings that would allow for reflection on the future of Uruguay in strategic issues" (p. 23) involving multiple stakeholders and sectors. It was organized at the request of the Presidency of the Republic, and the work involved ten thematic groups associated with a different set of SDGs and three axes for discussion: development and international participation, social protection and transversal policies.

This summary confirms that work in multi-stakeholder schemes occurs throughout the region. Not in all cases have forums been created for the participation of non-governmental stakeholders in the process of constructing the Voluntary National Reviews, which leaves a pending task with regard to a more participatory monitoring of the 2030 Agenda.

It is also worth noting that civil society, the private sector and academia are the most cited non-governmental stakeholders, but a truly inclusive effort should include other stakeholders, such as trade unions and political parties. In the environmental area, the participation of local civil society organizations, local groups that face similar environmental challenges, indigenous peoples with interests or stakes in the region where action must be taken, and delegates from the business sector with operations that may affect the environment may be particularly relevant.

17  This National Center is part of the structure of Argentina's Ministry of Social Development. Its goal is to foster the participation of civil society organizations in the management of public policies, articulating between the State, civil society and the private sector.

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## The Regional Level: The Forum of Latin American and Caribbean Countries on Sustainable Development.

The Forum of Latin American and Caribbean Countries on Sustainable Development[18] deserves special mention for its expected relevance for the monitoring and reviewing of the regional progress of the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development[19], as well as for its ties to the HLPF.

This Forum was convened for the first time in April of 2017, headed by the States and with the participation of the private sector, civil society, regional blocs and United Nations system organizations. Following the debates, a document entitled "Conclusions and recommendations agreed upon between the governments"[20] was adopted, which again affirms that the SDGs "are of an integrated and indivisible nature and incorporate the three dimensions of sustainable development" (paragraph 1).

However, the analysis of the extent to which the Forum and its results adopt an integrated approach and include the environmental dimension contains few references to the environmental dimension and the importance of working with an IASD. The first is only mentioned in the framework of the regional demand for development measures

that go beyond GDP per capita (paragraph 7) and highlight the need for technology transfers (paragraph 11). The reasons for this weak environmental presence are difficult to determine, but they can be linked to the continuity of efforts that do not fully incorporate sustainable development in an integrated manner and to the continuing economic priorities under this framework.

The Forum was organized into three parts: 1) presentation of reports by ECLAC and its subsidiary bodies, including the report of the Regional Forum of Environment Ministers; 2) peer review; and 3) analysis of the three dimensions of sustinable development.

In the third part, it was agreed that the integration of the three dimensions is central to successfully carry out the 2030 Agenda[21] and the four main challenges that hinder an integrated perspective were identified:

- the concept of breaking with sectoral work;
- the technical challenge for identifying elements and interactions between the three dimensions and their points of articulation;
- overcoming the fragmentation and inertia of the institutions; and
- the challenge for evaluating the integration of economic, social and environmental policies.

The work in the last part was organized in three separate roundtables, one for each dimension of sustainable development. While the roundtables on the economic and social dimension made no (or few) references to environmental elements, the roundtable on the environmental dimension

did include an overview of economic and social issues, including the central concern with climate change and its consequences. This roundtable proposed the promotion of four transversal actions for all public policy: develop integrated programs; break the link between production and pollution (decoupling); move towards low carbon economies (decarbonization); and clean air, land and water. It also called for integration of the SDG monitoring indicators with the Sendai Framework indicators.

As an input for the regional debate, the United Nations Development Group for Latin America and the Caribbean gave a presentation entitled "Leaving no one behind in Latin America and the Caribbean: overcoming inequality to eradicate poverty". There it argued that the new development agenda requires a multidimensional approach to overcome fragmentation at the ministerial, sectoral and regional levels, promoting structural changes in the economic, social and environmental spheres as a requisite for leaving no one behind.

Additionally, civil society representatives underscored the importance of effective articulation between the different stakeholders, arguing that the challenges of sustainable development include interrelated environmental, economic, social and political components, which demand coordinated and participatory responses.

Strengthening the presence of the environmental dimension in Sustainable Development, particularly from economic and social perspectives, continues to be a challenge in the region. The meetings of the Forum of Environment Ministers should play a relevant role in this regard:

- As a main regional forum for dialogue and the construction of joint regional positions to be taken with multilateral organizations,

this forum could address specific issues for consideration by the Regional Forum for Sustainable Development and even organize activities within the framework of the meeting aimed at strengthening the presence of the environmental dimension in the debates.

- The promotion of environmental considerations requires the strengthening of this dimension in public policies, and this should be promoted by those responsible for their management. The Regional Forum of Environment Ministers could prepare reports on the ways in which this dimension is being (or should be) addressed in implementation processes, taking into account regional differences.
- Given the cross-border nature of environmental challenges, the political hierarchy of the participants of this Forum make it a privileged forum for coordinated policies to address common challenges, define priorities for regional actions and underline the impossibility of attaining sustainable economic and social progress without also considering environmental sustainability.
- It is an especially productive forum for strengthening the synergies between the fulfillment of the environmental commitments assumed in Multilateral Environmental Agreements and those under the 2030 Agenda and other international agendas, thus promoting the efficient use of resources and ensuring the coordination of responses from different countries in the region.
- The Forum could convene representatives of specific portfolios to its meetings in order to promote joint perspectives on a regional scale. This would also promote an Integrated Approach to Sustainable Development.

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18   Mechanism created with the adoption of resolution 700 (XXXVI) at the 36th session of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), which met in Mexico City in May, 2016.

19   Approved by resolution 2016/12 of the United Nations Economic and Social Council.

20   Available at: https://foroalc2030.cepal.org/2017/sites/default/files/1fororegional-conclusiones-recomendaciones_orig_3mayo.pdf

21   See the document "Summary of the Chair of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development", p. 7 onwards. Available at: https://foroalc2030.cepal.org/2017/en/documents/summary-chair-forum-countries-latin-america-and-caribbean-sustainable-development

# 4. General Conclusions

The countries of the region have demonstrated a strong commitment to the global mechanism for reviewing the progress of the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs. In its first two editions, fourteen countries in the region submitted reports, though most were from Latin American countries, with Belize being the only Caribbean country that submitted a report to the Forum.

From this summary, it is possible to identify some regional trends with respect to the topics of interest: the consideration of the Integrated Approach to Sustainable Development and the inclusion of an environmental perspective in the analyses.

## The linking of the three dimensions of sustainable development has not yet been sufficient to break the logic of silos and ensure the application of integrated approaches.

All the reports refer to the three dimensions of sustainable development and the need to link them. The countries repeatedly use particular denominations in their reports to refer to the integrated nature of the Agenda, the SDGs and the monitoring and implementation mechanisms, such as: multidisciplinary, multi-sectoral, multidimensional and holistic approaches.

However, this does not seem to translate into a truly integrated perspective, but rather, in general, it repeats a logic of gathering elements from each of these spheres to put them to work side by side, without breaking the logics of silos and allowing for the possible interactions. In this way, the implications of adopting an Integrated Approach to Sustainable Development, which is part of the 2030 Agenda, are not fully realized.

It is worth noting that some countries mention that they have already adopted concrete, transversal approaches that will result in the first steps towards a more integrated view of development

initiatives, including: the rights-based approach (Argentina, El Salvador and Uruguay), the gender equality approach or the ecosystem approach (Argentina and Uruguay).

## The processes for aligning the National Plans with the SDGs are a first step, but they are not a substitute for planning based on integrated approaches for sustainable development.

All the countries of the region have carried out (or are currently carrying out) exercises to analyze the extent to which the SDGs and their targets coincide with their own national development planning documents. In this process, the nationally defined priorities play an essential role and the adaptations to the unique contexts are an inescapable reference. *Although this is a very important first step, it should be followed by a new generation of national plans that adopt the integrated perspective of the 2030 Agenda to ensure a balance between the three dimensions of sustainable development. The adoption of integrated approaches, appropriate for each national context, will ensure that national and international processes are not simply formally aligned or omit fundamental parts of the framework assumed under the 2030 Agenda.*

## Despite the frequent citing of the environmental dimension, its integration is still limited in all areas of the reports.

In all the reports, we find approaches to the environmental dimension. However, its presence is not homogeneous: some countries devote entire chapters to the environmental dimension, while others

simply mention it repeatedly as a fundamental component of sustainable development; and others only include it as a conceptual reference in some sections, such as in prefaces, introductions, or messages signed by the President.

Taken together, the reports show that the degree of inclusion of environmental variables in the analysis of objectives and targets still has compartmentalized analysis structures.

As a consequence, the consideration of environmental issues mainstreamed in the SDGs is weakened, as is the case, for example, with respect to the role of biodiversity in achieving SDG 2 (target 2.5); property and control of land rights, and thus access to natural resources, which is part of SDG 1, 2 and 5; the role of pollution in achieving SDG 3 (target 3.9); or the issues of sustainable production and consumption and resilient housing that cut across several SDGs.

Generally speaking, the reports present three strategies for the inclusion of the environmental dimension:

- **Limited inclusion:** some countries only include a reference to the fact that the environmental dimension is fundamental for achieving the 2030 Agenda, but they do not show how it is integrated in the set of policies and strategies for national implementation of the SDGs.
- **Inclusion in specific SDGs:** certain environmental issues are related to specific SDGs, among which SDG 3 (Good health and well-being) and SDG 14 (Life below water) stand out.
- **Inclusion rooted in programs, initiatives and government actions:** in these cases, the en-

vironmental variable is mentioned as part of the policies carried out by national governments. Experiences are usually found in work aimed at achieving SDG 1 (Ending poverty), SDG 2 (Zero hunger) -especially when addressing targets in the agricultural sector-, SDG 3 (Good health and well-being) and SDG 14 (Life below water).
The second and third group may occur in combination.

## The reference and treatment of the global and regional environmental agreements is dissimilar and it does not reach an ambit of coordination of SDGs implementation priorities.

There is a tendency to name the environmental agreements or treaties ratified by the countries as a way to ensure a commitment to the international bodies on the matter. In particular, the reports analyzed mention the Paris Agreement and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. However, there are no references to possible synergies between the national implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs and the commitments and obligations assumed by ratifying these and other multilateral environmental agreements.

In fact, less than half of the countries have included specific commitments in their reports with respect to the environmental dimension, or mention these goals only as part of a qualitative approach.

However, it would be relatively simple to combine the commitments made under the Nationally Determined Contributions to combat climate change or the actions incorporated in the National Biodi-

versity Strategies and Action Plans with specific SDG targets.

However, as more reports are made and other SDGs prioritized by the HLPF are incorporated, other environmental themes will undoubtedly appear in the reports in relation to, for example, SDG 6 (Clean water and sanitation), SDG 11 (Sustainable cities and communities), SDG 15 (Life on land) or SDG 7 (Affordable and clean energy), among others.

## Participation of national authorities in environmental matters in the 2030 Agenda decision-making and monitoring bodies is uneven.

In general, the national institutions that address environmental questions participate in the bodies created to implement, monitor and evaluate the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs at the national level. This implies a qualitative change compared to the situation that existed for the implementation of the MDGs, in which they did not play predominant roles. *However, even today, when there is some kind of imbalance in the participation of policy makers from each of the three dimensions of development in the national implementation and monitoring of the SDGs, the environmental dimension is the first to be neglected.*
The Ministries of Environment currently play a very important role in the inter-institutional mechanisms responsible for the planning, execution and monitoring of sustainable development through (UN Envirnoment, 2016b):

a. Participation in the political schemes for cross-sectoral coordination, both on a national and decentralized level.

b. Support for the achievement of the SDGs, with specific action plans and the integration of specific targets in their sectoral plans.
c. Association with other key environmental and non-environmental stakeholders at national and local levels (civil society, communities and the private sector) and globally (for example, multilateral environmental agreement groups).
d. The creation of favorable conditions for more sustainable modes of production and consumption (sustainable public purchasing, eco-labeling and Research and Development, among others).
e. The gathering and utilization of information and analysis on the environment to ensure adequate decision-making in all sectors of development and coherent policies. This includes responsibility for the definition and monitoring of specific indicators.

The main challenge for the environmental sector, when participating in these forums, is to adopt a modern approach, applying competence in a visionary manner that breaks the molds of traditional approaches. This entails not only prioritizing the protection of ecosystems and minimizing the environmental impacts of economic activities, but also ensuring that environmental questions contribute positively to national priorities, showing the multiple benefits from effectively implementing an integrated approach.

## All countries report challenges with respect to data for monitoring the SDGs, including environmental data.

The national reports submitted contain more indicators related to the economic and social di-

mensions than the environmental dimension. Although several countries have identified gaps in available indicators, no specific strategies have been formulated to strengthen statistical systems and the effectiveness of different state actors involved in producing official data. Environmental data does not reflect the synergies with existing environmental information systems at the national level, nor with the reporting processes adopted under the Multilateral Environmental Agreements, which are an important source of information on many of the topics of the national and global environmental agendas.

**Coordination with non-governmental stakeholders is among the reported activities for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the national level, but there is still a long way to go.**

The involvement of other stakeholders in the 2030 Agenda at the regional level is occurring in all countries, with different scopes and impacts. Regarding the writing of the voluntary reviews, the most widespread practice has been to hold consultations to gather information. Concerning the prioritization, planning and monitoring of the SDGs at the national level, different approaches have been taken, with the inclusion of representatives of non-governmental stakeholders in the coordination mechanisms of the 2030 Agenda and the establishment of formal consultation processes considered a good practice. A key step for effective participation in these forums is to strengthen the availability of information for the national SDG monitoring process, in structures that are open to the general public.

There are still steps to be taken to achieve more active participation in both the processes of consultation and in the implementation of the SDGs. One is to widen the spectrum of stakeholders involved, from a participation mostly focused on civil society, the private sector and academia, to include other groups such as unions, political parties and representatives of ethnic minorities, among others.

# 5. Recommendations

With respect to the analysis carried out and the identified regional trends, it is possible to offer some practical recommendations aimed at strengthening the use of an Integrated Approach to Sustainable Development and to ensure the inclusion of the environmental dimension in future reports to the HLPF.

# 1.
**Voluntary reviews must move from the discussion of aligned development priorities to the formulation of policies that synergistically contribute to the achievement of the SDGs and that include the social, economic and environmental dimensions.**

Mentioning and working with the individual dimensions of sustainable development is not the same as integrating them. The identification of the elements in each area (or their absence) in the policies mentioned in the reports can be an effective tool for helping the country rethink its work strategies, seeking more synergies in the implementation of the SDGs and, at the same time, allowing for the sharing, in the international community, of the challenges that this process implies and receiving the necessary support to overcome these challenges.

# 2.
**It is necessary to strengthen integrated approaches to sustainable development in the processes of preparing the voluntary reviews, acting as the guiding principal in the reports.**

This is only possible if this integrated vision of sustainable development is present throughout the 2030 Agenda implementation and monitoring process at the national level. It is important to refer to the approaches adopted by the countries to streng-

then this integration so that, far from being simply a concept, it is reflected in the content and priorities.

# 3.
**The analyses of the extent to which national plans incorporate the SDGs could be more effective with the strengthening of the consideration of how different national and international objectives impact on a plurality of ambits.**

Analysis of the alignment between national development plans (or similar documents) and the SDGs should evolve towards a multidimensional view of reality that leads to the definition and implementation of integrated and holistic policies to fulfill the commitments assumed under the 2030 Agenda. In this sense, the reports could become key instruments in the monitoring process, linking the SDGs to national medium-term objectives. This would promote a continuous monitoring cycle in which the Voluntary National Reviews for the HLPF could report the degree of progress towards achieving each SDG within the periods established by national planning.

As a result of the application of this analysis of the medium term achievements, conflicts between policies would be made visible, which should strengthen the use of an Integrated Approach to Sustainable Development or other holistic approaches that countries decide to adopt to ensure the integration of the spheres of sustainable development, such as the "good living" or the "whole-of-society approach."

# 4.
**Incorporating more references to the synergies between national decisions and international commitments and obligations in environmental matters** could help foster a more integrated vision in the national reports and demonstrate the set of efforts be-

ing made by the countries. The national presence in international forums, where debate and efforts for sustainable development occur, is also part of the national policies of the States. In this way, including the targets and the implementation actions under the Multilateral Environmental Agreements would encourage progress in many of the SDG targets, given their multi-sectoral content.22 This is the case of the Nationally Determined Contributions in the area of climate change and the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans, among others.

With respect to the last point, the process of reviewing the Aichi targets, defined for 2020 and incorporated in the SDGs (for example 15.1, 15.2, 15.8 and 15.9), will be particularly relevant for the region. The post-2020 framework on biodiversity and its integration in the 2030 Agenda is an opportunity to strengthen the means of implementation focused on the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity as one of the foundations of sustainable development.

# 5.
**In order to make the environmental dimension more visible in the reports, it is also necessary to give more relevance to structures, platforms and regional environmental scenarios where both priorities and concrete actions are agreed upon. This is the case of the Forum of Environment Ministers of La-**

22   For more information on the link between the SDG targets and those of the Multilateral Environmental Agreements, please consult table 1 of the document: UN Environment (2016) Enhancing cooperation among the seven biodiversity related agreements and conventions at the national level using national biodiversity strategies and action plans. United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment), Nairobi, Kenya. (pp. 10-12) Available at: https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/9965/Synergies-and-NBSAPs.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

**tin America and the Caribbean, which could play an important role in:**

- The generation of consensus on priority environmental strategies for the region, their implementation at the national level and their positioning at the international level.
- The identification and monitoring of emerging environmental issues and their relation to the social and economic dimensions of sustainable development.
- The mobilization of technical, financial and technological resources for South-South and Triangular Cooperation.
- The integration of the region's environmental priorities in the recently created Regional Forum on Sustainable Development and its inputs in the HLPF.

Of particular relevance is the regional cooperation framework defined by the Latin American and Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development (ILAC). ILAC, which was reviewed to be in alignment with the 2030 Agenda at the 20th Meeting of the Forum, is an important platform for regional coordination, the sharing of experiences and the identification of sustainable development programs and projects.

# 6.
The efforts to strengthen the Integrated Approach to Sustainable Development and the consideration of the environmental dimension in equal measure with the economic and social dimensions in the reports should start from a change in the processes of implementation, monitoring and reviewing of the SDGs at the national level. **The inclusion of authorities of the environmental portfolios, or their representatives, in the forums for not only monitoring, but also political**

**decision making,** is a step in this direction. Another step forward is the inclusion of non-governmental stakeholders involved in environmental sustainability issues in the areas of access to information, decision-making and SDG monitoring.

## 7.

With respect to the statistical challenges for the countries of the region, an **analysis of the data that strengthens the presence of environmental variables in the construction of indicators** for SDG monitoring at the national level will foster an integrated approach. Ensuring that the reality that is translated into data is described with indicators for all dimensions of development will undoubtedly support decision making based on integrated information. This process could also be the source of an intra-regional sharing of experiences, given the progress that is already being made in a number of countries, such as Colombia, Mexico and Brazil.

In this sense, the ILAC monitoring indicators (which are environmental, social and economic) provide a balanced framework for the availability and access to comparable information at the regional level that can be integrated and strengthened in the SDG monitoring process.

## 8.

An integrated approach that does not include the integration of stakeholders is untenable. **Increasing the transparency of the content and the ways the State relates to non-governmental stakeholders** in the construction of reports and for the implementation and monitoring of the SDGs is an inevitable step for advancing the 2030 Agenda, and an opportunity to present the country to the world as an inclusive one. In this regard, there is

a very interesting opportunity for synergy in the region, given the recent agreement on access to information, public participation and access to justice in environmental matters.

## 9.

**At the regional level, the communication and sharing of experiences in the process of creating the voluntary reviews constitutes a favorable forum for South-South Cooperation in all areas.** This could be done by specifically including ministry representatives that are in charge of the social, economic and environmental policies of the countries in order to provide a perspective on the processes in each of the dimensions of sustainable development.

## 10.

Finally, it should be noted that the thematic set of SDGs to be analyzed by the HLPF in 2018 has a clear orientation towards the environment as a reference variable[23,] making it an opportunity to show how the environmental dimension is, at the same time, social and economic. **Adopting an integrated approach for the 2030 Agenda, starting from an environmental perspective, can result in a strengthening of this dimension.**

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23   Since it includes: SDG 6 (Clean water and sanitation); SDG 7 (Affordable and clean energy); SDG 11 (Sustai-

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# Appendix

## A.1

Expressions used to refer to approaches that integrate the three pillars of sustainable development.

| Country | Expressions used |
|---|---|
| Argentina | Universal approach, transversal approaches (including rights-based approach, gender approach, life cycle approach, regional approach and ecosystem approach) |
| Belize | Whole-system approach |
| Brazil | - |
| Chile | Sustainable economic and social development |
| Colombia | Cross-sectoral approach; Sustainable development approach; Transversal approach; Broad focus. |
| Costa Rica | Multidimensional approach |
| El Salvador | Whole-of-society approach; development approach that goes beyond the income-based approach; broad environmental approach; integrated approach to citizen security; rights-based approach; regional approach; gender equality approach. |
| Guatemala | - |
| Honduras | Cross-sectoral and multidimensional approach; Cross-sectoral and inter-institutional and multi-stakeholder approach; Holistic approach; Integrated approach; Multi-dimensional integrated intervention approach. |
| Mexico | Transversal approach to integrated public policies |
| Panama | Human Development Approach; Integrated approach; Holistic approach |
| Peru | Integrated approach to public policies |
| Uruguay | Broad rights-based approach; integrated approach; rights and life cycle approach; rights, gender and generations approach; public health and rights approach; gender approach; ecosystems approach. |
| Venezuela | Eco-socialism |

## A.2

Institutional models for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs in Latin American and Caribbean countries that submitted reports in 2016 and 2017.

| Concentration | | Transversalization | Continuation |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Brazil** National Commission for the SDGs. Year created: 2016 (Presidential Decree 8892). | **Chile** National Council for the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Year created: 2016 (Supreme Decree No. 49). | **Argentina** National Council for the Coordination of Social Policies. Year created: 2002 (Presidential Decree 357/2002). | **Uruguay** Planning and Budget Office + Uruguayan Agency for International Cooperation + National Statistics Institute. |
| **Colombia** High-level Inter-institutional Commission for the preparation and implementation of the Post-2015 Agenda and its SDGs. Year created: 2015 (Presidential Decree 280). | **Costa Rica** High Level National Council on the SDGs. Year created: 2016 (Executive Decree). | **Guatemala** System of Development Councils. Year created: 2002 (Presidential Decree 11/2002). | **Peru** National Center for Strategic Planning + National System for Strategic Planning. |
| **Mexico** National Council for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Year created: 2017 (Presidential Decree of April 24). + Specialized Technical Committee for the Sustainable Development Goals. Year created: 2015 (Agreement 8/V/2015). | **Panama** Inter-institutional and Civil Society Commission for the Support and Monitoring of the SDGs. Year created: 2015 (Executive Decree No. 393). | **Honduras** Secretariat of General Coordination of Government (Decree Law No. 266-2013) and Sectoral Cabinets. Year created: 2014 (Executive Decree PCM 001/2014). | **Belize** Policy and Planning Unit, Ministry of Economic Development; Sustainable Development Unit. |
| | | **Venezuela** Council of Vice Presidents. Year created: 2009 (Presidential Decree 6939). | |

**El Salvador***

Mechanism for Political Coordination + Technical Mechanism [National Council for Sustainable Development, being created].

Source: the authors

* In the case of El Salvador, the current regime adheres to the transversalization group, but a new institution is in the process of being created that would move it towards the concentration group. For this reason, it occupies a position between both.

The "Concentration" model is characterized by the creation of a new institution under which the specific task of promoting the implementation and monitoring of the SDGs at the national level is assigned.

These institutions are of the highest political level and are organically located in importance areas in the governmental structure, in most cases depending directly on the Presidency of the Nation.

The "**Transversalization**" model uses an institution, or scheme of pre-existing institutions, which are assigned specific coordination functions between different government bodies and interested third parties to promote the SDGs.
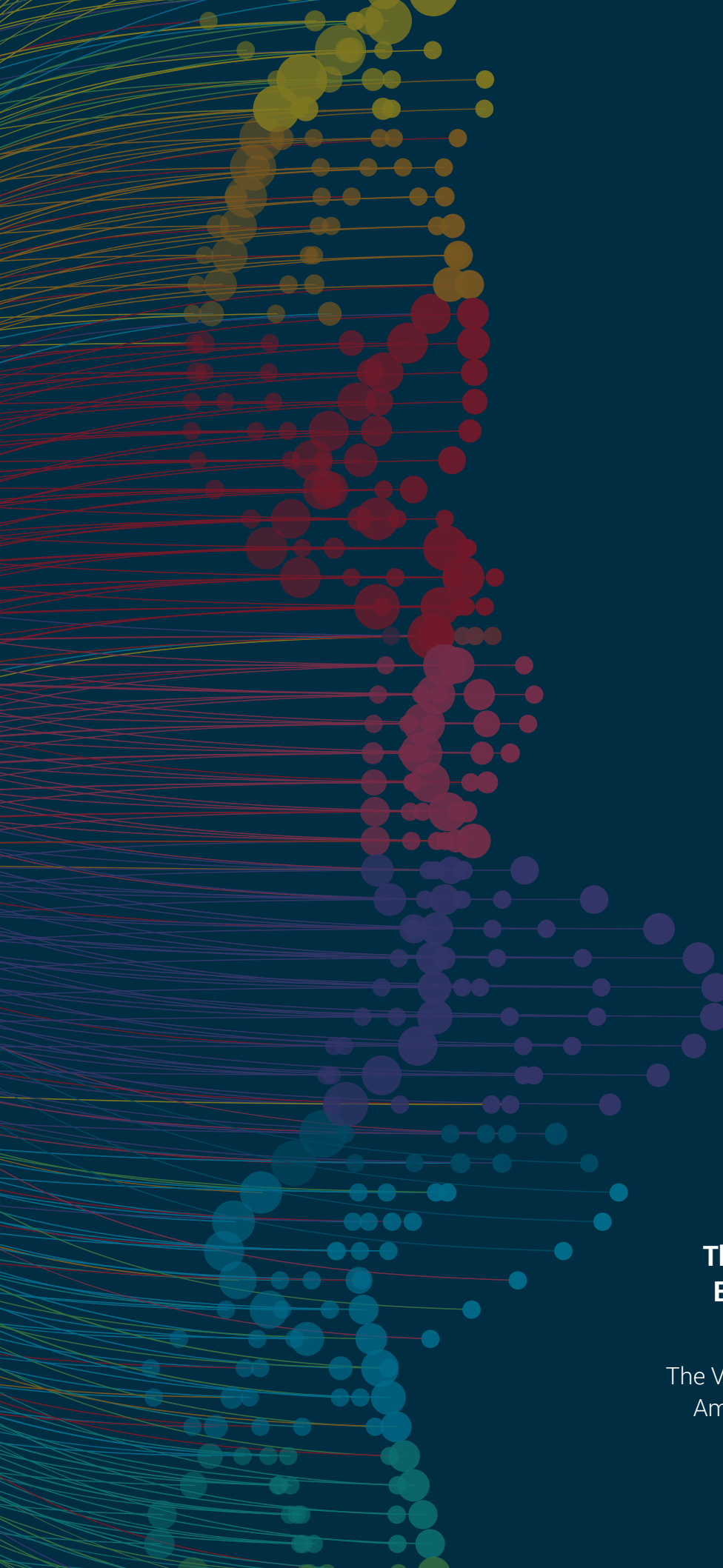
As in the previous case, these institutions are located in high-level areas within the governmental structure. In all of them, we can highlight the task as coordinating body for the activities of the different management areas involved.

The "**Continuity**" model reflects the situation of countries that have decided to move forward in their implementation without effecting institutional reforms or assigning new missions to existing institutions. In these cases, governments have understood that the existing institutional framework is capable of providing the necessary structure to undertake the tasks of implementation, monitoring and reviewing at the national level.

## A.3.

SDGs analized in the VNRs presented by Latin American and Caribbean countries in 2016 and 2017.

| Country (year of review submission) | SDGs analyzed in the VNR |
|---|---|
| Argentina (2017) | 1 No Poverty, 2 Zero Hunger, 3 Good Health and Well-being, 5 Gender Equality, 9 Industry Innovation and Infrastructure, 14 Life Below Water, 17 Partnerships for the Goals |
| Belize (2017) | 1 No Poverty, 3 Good Health and Well-being, 5 Gender Equality, 14 Life Below Water |
| Brazil (2017) | 1 No Poverty, 3 Good Health and Well-being, 5 Gender Equality, 14 Life Below Water, 17 Partnerships for the Goals, 9 Industry Innovation and Infrastructure, 14 Life Below Water, 17 Partnerships for the Goals |
| Chile (2017) | 1 No Poverty, 2 Zero Hunger, 3 Good Health and Well-being, 5 Gender Equality |
| Colombia (2016) | 1 No Poverty, 3 Good Health and Well-being, 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth, 13 Climate Action, 17 Partnerships for the Goals |
| Costa Rica (2017) | 1 No Poverty, 2 Zero Hunger, 3 Good Health and Well-being, 5 Gender Equality, 9 Industry Innovation and Infrastructure, 14 Life Below Water, 13 Climate Action, 16 Peace Justice and Strong Institutions, 17 Partnerships for the Goals |
| El Salvador (2017) | 1 No Poverty, 2 Zero Hunger, 3 Good Health and Well-being, 4 Quality Education, 5 Gender Equality, 6 Clean Water and Sanitation |
| Guatemala (2017) | 1 No Poverty, 2 Zero Hunger, 3 Good Health and Well-being, 5 Gender Equality, 9 Industry Innovation and Infrastructure |
| Honduras (2017) | No analysis of specific SDGs. |
| Mexico (2016) | No analysis of specific SDGs. |
| Panama (2017) | 1 No Poverty, 2 Zero Hunger, 3 Good Health and Well-being, 5 Gender Equality, 9 Industry Innovation and Infrastructure, 14 Life Below Water, 17 Partnerships for the Goals |
| Peru (2017) | No analysis of specific SDGs. |
| Uruguay (2017) | 1 No Poverty, 2 Zero Hunger, 3 Good Health and Well-being, 5 Gender Equality, 9 Industry Innovation and Infrastructure, 14 Life Below Water, 16 Peace Justice and Strong Institutions, 17 Partnerships for the Goals |
| Venezuela (2016) | 1 No Poverty, 2 Zero Hunger, 3 Good Health and Well-being, 4 Quality Education, 5 Gender Equality, 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth, 17 Partnerships for the Goals |

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