



## THE 2021 UNITED NATIONS High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development Goals Primer

### The 2021 United Nations High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development Goals

*A short primer to help activists working on **Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, and Sex Characteristics** make the most of your experience.*

#### WHAT?

The High Level Political Forum (HLPF) is a United Nations (UN) conference that meets annually under the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and every four years at the UN General Assembly at UN headquarters in New York. It reviews and follows up on the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development. The HLPF is tasked with tracking the international implementation and progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Although SDGs are rooted in and interlinked with human rights, it is a development space with its own language and advocacy entry points as such.

The forum brings together representatives from UN Member States (sometimes referred to as countries or States), civil society organizations, UN entities, and other stakeholders, to discuss progress and best practice in the achievement of the SDGs, and to produce a Ministerial Declaration regarding the progress on an annually-chosen theme. This year's theme is:

*"Sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic that promotes the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development: building an inclusive and effective path for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda in the context of the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development".*

#### WHEN?

From Tuesday, 6 July, to Thursday, 15 July 2021.

#### WHERE?

In light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and expected limitations on in-person meetings and international travel, **HLPF 2021** will be held online. View this year's [Programme for the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and the High-Level Segment of ECOSOC](#)

#### REGISTRATION

This year, due to the virtual nature of HLPF, there are no registrations required. All are able to follow the meeting through [UN Web TV](#) or YouTube.

## ENGAGEMENT

UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs has created a 'Stakeholders' page which is accessible from the HLPF 2021 navigation bar. It contains information on how to engage with and participate at the 2021 HLPF. For more information on engaging in the Voluntary National Reviews (VNR) sessions during the HLPF, please click [here](#).

## Stakeholder Perspective - Official Thematic Session

Major Groups and Other Stakeholders (MGoS) are the main channels through which broad participation is facilitated in UN activities related to sustainable development. There are currently 21 Major Groups and Other Stakeholders which coordinate the participation and voice of countless organizations at HLPF.

The Major Groups and other Stakeholders (MGoS) Official Session is listed in the 2021 HLPF Programme on Friday, July 9, 3-5pm EDT (New York time). The title of the session is: *Vision and priorities of civil society, the private sector and other major groups and stakeholders: realizing the SDGs during the COVID-19 recovery*. The session is organized by the MGoS Coordination Mechanism. You will be able to view the session on [UN Web TV](#) or YouTube.

## Thematic Review of the HLPF

Following this year's theme on "*Sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic that promotes the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development: building an inclusive and effective path for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda in the context of the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development*", HLPF 2021 will explore various aspects of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the international cooperation that should be carried out to respond to the pandemic and its impacts and put the world back on track to achieve the SDGs by 2030, within the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development.

It will also discuss Sustainable Development Goals 1 on no poverty, 2 on zero hunger, 3 on good health and well-being, 8 on decent work and economic growth, 10 on reduced inequalities, 12 on responsible consumption and production, 13 on climate action, 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions, and 17 on partnerships in depth. The Forum will also consider the integrated, indivisible and interlinked nature of the Sustainable Development Goals.

## A Brief History

The HLPF is the successor to the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), which commenced after the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in 1992. The HLPF first convened on September 24th, 2013 and is designed to continue the CSD's work in following up with an international agenda for sustainable development. The HLPF monitors the progress in the implementation of the **Rio Declaration on Environment and Development** and the SDGs and also supports the realization of the **Johannesburg Plan of Implementation**.

## The Sustainable Development Goals and 2030 Agenda

**The SDGs**, otherwise known as the Global Goals, are a set of 17 interconnected goals for UN Member States that aim to end poverty, achieve gender equality, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity. **The Agenda 2030** is the UN plan of action to implement these goals. It provides clear

guidelines and targets for all countries to adopt in accordance with their own priorities and the environmental challenges of the world at large. The Agenda 2030 is an inclusive framework with a central commitment to “leave no one behind.”

Do you know all 17 SDGs? [Watch this short video »](#)



## HLPF Processes

### THE MINISTERIAL DECLARATION

Before this year’s HLPF, UN Member States began negotiating the Ministerial Declaration. It will be adopted during the Opening Session of the HLPF. The Ministerial Declaration provides a platform for political leadership, guidance and recommendations for follow-up and review of the SDGs and reinforces the commitments of countries to the implementation of the SDGs. This year’s Ministerial Declaration draft can be found [here](#).

### VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEWS

At the HLPF, States present “Voluntary National Reviews” (VNRs) which are reports on progress toward the SDGs that they submit to the forum. These are meant to track the economic, social, and environmental dimensions of development in national and international contexts. VNRs are voluntary, state-led, undertaken by countries at every level of development, and provide a platform for partnerships, including through the participation of Major Groups and other Stakeholders. Each year the States which do a VNR vary, depending on their own commitment to do a review. VNRs allow the sharing of experiences and aim to accelerate the implementation of the Agenda 2030. VNRs are prepared by governments in a process that is supposed to be consultative, inclusive, and participatory and aims to involve all Major Groups and other Stakeholders. This is supposed to include all sectors and levels of government, civil society, private sector, members of Parliament and other institutions. VNRs also provide a space where States can comment on the gaps and challenges to achieving Agenda 2030, taking into consideration each country’s capacity to implement policy and infrastructure changes to progress development.

During the Voluntary National Reviews, Major Groups and other Stakeholders are also invited to ask States questions and give statements in regards to the VNR process and country level progress.

[View the VNR database »](#)

For information about how to prepare VNRs, see this [guideline](#) (in English)

## Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Intersex Issues at HLPF

The “leave no one behind” principle of the SDGs mandates the inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people. In addition, the SDGs, unlike prior development goals, apply to all nations. Additionally, it is important to recognize that achieving a world free from poverty, where everyone is able to attain their fullest abilities, and where human rights and gender equality is prioritized, can only be accomplished when everyone is accounted for. In short, the SDGs must be inclusive of all people regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, and/or sex characteristics.



[Fact Sheet »](#)



[LGBTI 2030 Agenda »](#)

As a result of the advocacy of UN Member States, UN entities and LGBTI civil society, SOGIESC have become increasingly visible throughout the HLPF program.

To gain a better understanding of the SDGs and how they relate to LGBTI persons, this background paper focused on SDG 3 on health and wellbeing and the supplementary fact sheet provides concrete recommendations that link the health and well-being of LGBTI people directly to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. This resource can be useful for civil society to find entry points to input into the VNR process when focusing on health issues.

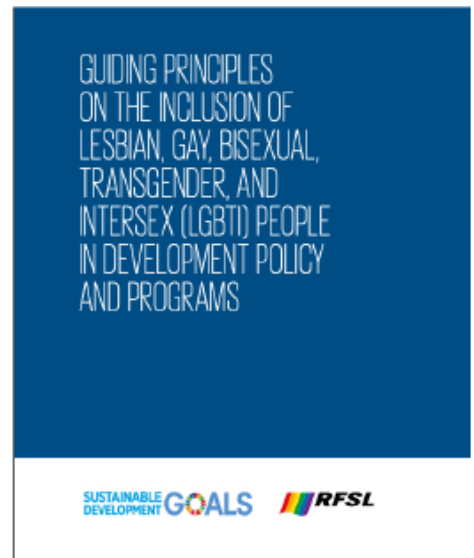
In 2019, RFSL launched the **“Guiding Principles on the Inclusion of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex People in Development Policy and Programs.”** These guiding principles are meant to serve as a tool for all stakeholders in designing, implementing and monitoring international, national, and local development activities related to LGBTI people, with a vision to achieving the United Nations Agenda 2030 and other development priorities.

### CIVIL SOCIETY AND STAKEHOLDERS AT HLPF

Civil Society Organizations play a unique consultative role at the HLPF through the “Major Groups and Other Stakeholders” function, which is built into the structure of the forum. In implementing the SDGs at the national level, UN Member States are also mandated to seek maximum stakeholder involvement and transparency, and participation from Civil Society can help to facilitate this. Although the HLPF is an intergovernmental forum, civil society has access to all meetings and documents. Additionally, civil society can submit documents and make recommendations and interventions through these groups.

Within the Major and Other Stakeholders Groups system there are twenty-one UN-formalized “sectors of society,” which act as the main channels through which Civil Society participation is facilitated in UN activities related to sustainable development. These are officially called “Major Groups and Other Stakeholders” (MGoS) and include the following sectors:

- Women
- Children and Youth
- Indigenous Peoples
- Non-Governmental Organizations
- Local Authorities
- Workers and Trade Unions
- Business and Industry
- Scientific and Technological Community
- Farmers



[See Report »](#)

Other Stakeholders include groups focused on:

- Persons with Disabilities
- Volunteers
- Ageing
- Education and Academia
- Sendai (Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction)
- Asia Pacific RCEM (Regional Civil Society Engagement Mechanism)
- LGBTI

**2019 HLPF was the first session when the LGBTI Stakeholders Group was a formally recognized entity within the MGoS structure.** Since then, the LGBTI Stakeholder Group has been engaging with all other MGoS, civil society organizations, activists, human rights defenders and development practitioners present at HLPF to maximize our opportunities to visibilize LGBTI issues at the HLPF

To register as part of the LGBTI Stakeholder Group listserv, use the following link:

<https://www.lgbtistakeholdergroup.org/>

## COVID-19 Statement of LGBTI Stakeholder Group

In 2020 the LGBTI Stakeholder Group published a statement, where the group urges governments to adopt strong and inclusive policies and measures that effectively consult and engage communities, including:

- Consistently and strongly holding service providers, law enforcement, and policymakers accountable for discrimination and human rights violations;
- Fully funding community-led monitoring and reporting initiatives for LGBTI human rights at the national, regional and international levels to assist with accountability and other program improvements;
- Meaningfully including LGBTI people in all decision-making processes concerning them;
- Amplifying the needs of LGBTI people in social protections and welfare programs;
- Fully funding community-based and LGBTI-led organizations to strengthen over taxed and under-capacitated public health systems;
- Implementing self-care health interventions in health systems, such as self-collecting of samples for sexually transmitted infections and HIV self-testing kits; and
- Enacting efforts to realize Universal Health Coverage.

[Click here for the full statement »](#)

## Side Events at HLPF

Organizations can host formal side events during the HLPF that explore issues relevant to the theme and focus goals of the HLPF. Due to space restrictions, often multiple organizations will host a collective side event, this also helps provide varying perspectives and information. Official side events take place with co-sponsorships by UN Member States and UN Agencies.

These events offer vital opportunities for civil society to contribute to the overall dialogue, even if their areas of expertise and focus are not included in the current HLPF theme or outcome. Building solidarity is a critical part of the mission of HLPF. As a recognized MGoS, the LGBTI Stakeholder Group is always afforded one side event during the HLPF, though this is not part of the HLPF program.

This year all Side-events and Exhibitions will be held virtually. Further information can be found under **Other Events** on the [HLPF 2021 website](#).

## Making the Most of your HLPF

### BEFORE THE HLPF

1. Identify national organizations who are doing work around the SDGs.
2. Identify ministerial and inter-ministerial responsibility for SDGs in your government.
3. Send them questions regarding:
  - Their SDG priorities
  - Your countries' Voluntary National Review
  - LGBTI/SOGIESC inclusion in both
4. Identify and advocate for the inclusion of best practice examples that include LGBTI people for your government' VNR.
5. Map regional CSO consultations and arrange meetings with relevant stakeholder groups.
6. Find out about the HLPF delegation and key priorities and positions / priorities for the Ministerial Declaration.
7. Join the LGBTI Stakeholders Group and/or other Major and Other Stakeholders Groups.

### DURING THE HLPF

1. Always relate your advocacy back to the SDGs and development.
2. Align your advocacy with the 2021 entry points.
3. Familiarize yourself with the VNRs that will be presented.
4. Contact your New York based UN Mission representatives (the UN Bluebook for contact information is available).
5. Send them questions regarding:
  - Their SDG priorities
  - Your countries' Voluntary National Review
  - LGBTI/SOGIESC inclusion in both

### FURTHER READING

Main HLPF Website: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf>

List of Inputs by Major Groups and VNRs: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/inputs/>

Major Groups: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/mgos>

For All: The Sustainable Development Goals and LGBTI People:

[https://www.rfsl.se/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/FINAL\\_FORALL\\_RFSL\\_2019.pdf](https://www.rfsl.se/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/FINAL_FORALL_RFSL_2019.pdf)

### HISTORY OF THE HLPF

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/intergovernmental/csd>

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/rio20>