



EFFECTIVE SRHR ADVOCACY USING THE 2030 AGENDA A YOUTH-FRIENDLY GUIDE

THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND THE SDGS

The **2030 Agenda** is a global roadmap for sustainable and inclusive development. The Agenda consists of 17 **Sustainable Development Goals** for implementation by all segments of society: from governments, private enterprises, to civil society organisations and young people. It is vital that young people remain meaningfully engaged in the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the SDGs. Because it is only by empowering young people that sustainable and inclusive development can be realised.

Also referred to as the 'Global Goals,' the SDGs are accompanied by 169 targets. The SDGs are the outcome of an extensive process that involved face-to-face interactions and online consultations at community, national, regional, and global levels. Member States of the United Nations (UN) negotiated the content of the goals, which resulted in the adoption of an ambitious global agenda to cover a broad range of social, economic and environmental issues. These goals, for example, contribute to improving health and education, reducing inequalities, realising gender equality, combating climate change, and ending poverty.



Working for a youth-led or youth-serving organisation? Impatient for change and improvements regarding your own (and other young people's) Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR)? Interested in anchoring your SRHR advocacy on the 2030 Agenda?

THIS RESOURCE WAS MADE JUST FOR YOU!

Importantly, the SDGs are universal. They apply to all countries, whether they are classified as 'low, middle, or high income.' Furthermore, the SDGs cannot be achieved by governments alone: NGOs, businesses, civil society and other stakeholders are key to the implementation, monitoring and review of the SDGs. The roles and responsibilities of governments and all other stakeholders are detailed in SDG 17: Partnership for the Goals.

SRHR-RELATED SDGS

Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) are fundamental to realising sustainable development for all. These rights maintain, for example, the freedom to choose if, when and how many children to have, and with whom to have children, as well as the freedom to decide on issues relating to one's own body. The SDGs on Good Health

and Well-Being (SDG 3), Quality Education (SDG 4), Gender Equality (SDG 5), and Reduced Inequalities (SDG 10), and several of their respective targets address these rights directly. In addition, SRHR can be linked to other goals and targets, such as SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation, and SDG 16: on Peaceful and Inclusive Societies.

IMPORTANT TARGETS RELATING TO SRHR

Click the SDG icons to access full list of targets.

3 ENSURE HEALTHY LIVES AND PROMOTE WELL-BEING FOR ALL AT ALL AGES



- 3.1** By 2030 reduce the global maternal mortality ratio to less than 70 per 100,000 live births.
- 3.7** By 2030 ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including for family planning, information and education, and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programmes.

4 ENSURE INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE QUALITY EDUCATION AND PROMOTE LIFELONG LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL



- 4.7** By 2030 ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship, and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development.

5 ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS



- 5.2** Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation.
- 5.3** Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation.
- 5.6** Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, and the Beijing Platform for Action, and the outcome documents of their review conferences.

10 REDUCE INEQUALITIES WITHIN AND AMONG COUNTRIES



- 10.3** Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard.

Information extracted from the [Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform of the United Nations](#).



WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TO BE INVOLVED?

Young people have a fundamental right to co-decide on issues that concern them directly. This right is guaranteed under articles 12 and 13 of the [Convention on the Rights of the Child \(CRC\)](#), the [ICPD Programme of Action](#), and [UN Resolution 58/133](#), amongst others.

While there are no specific SDGs or targets focusing on young people, the 2030 Agenda contains strong commitments to human rights, participation, and non-discrimination. To monitor practice, it also emphasises the need to separate data based on characteristics such as age, gender, etc. The 2030 Agenda provides a very important opportunity for young people, youth-led and youth-serving organisations to advocate for improvements in laws, policies, and programmes that affect young people's lives. International agreements, such as the 2030 Agenda, can have important implications for the day-to-day realities of young people as they provide guidance to government priorities, legal and policy decisions, and budgetary allocation. Unfortunately, young people are often excluded from the spaces where key decisions are being made. As such, the needs and realities of young people are often overlooked in policy-making exercises.

For the 2030 Agenda and its ambitious goals to be realised, it is vital that young people are meaningfully involved in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the SDGs, at all levels. Local and national governments should involve young people in determining government priorities and key actions for SDG implementation. And, young people should be given the opportunity to influence discussions in regional and global forums where SDG progress is assessed, gaps are identified, and next steps are discussed. It is important that a diverse and inclusive group of young people are meaningfully involved at all levels to ensure that the 2030 Agenda truly “leaves no one behind”.



TODAY'S GENERATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE IS THE LARGEST THE WORLD HAS EVER KNOWN. YET, THEY RARELY HAVE A SEAT AT THE DECISION-MAKING TABLE.

LET'S CHANGE THAT!

ADVOCACY FOR THE SDGs: ACCOUNTABILITY, MONITOR AND FOLLOW-UP

To monitor and review how governments are following through with their commitments to the 2030 Agenda, UN Member States have set in place accountability and consultation mechanisms at multiple levels: national, regional, and global. Ways to engage at each level are explained below.

To quantitatively measure progress, a list of [232 indicators](#) is tracked by National Statistical Offices in countries, and by technical UN Agencies (such as WHO, UN Women, UNFPA, UNICEF, etc.). Global progress on the indicators is captured in an [annual report](#) that is presented to the High-Level Political Forum. The [Inter-Agency and Expert Group](#) on SDG indicators – which meets a few times a year – is responsible for the constant refinement and development of indicators to improve measurement.





NATIONAL LEVEL

Advocacy for implementation, monitoring, review and follow-up of the SDGs starts at national level – with your own government!

Every year, UN Member States can choose to participate in a special process known as the **Voluntary National Review (VNR)**. The VNR is a government-driven, national process to assess 'own country' implementation of the SDGs, identify successes, gaps and challenges, and establish priorities for investment and attention. During the first year of the HLPF, 22 countries participated in the VNR; this number doubled in the second year: 43 states.

The VNR process could look quite different across countries: the UN provides little guidance, and governments can decide for themselves on how to conduct a VNR. Participating governments submit a report of about 50 pages around June: before the start of the HLPF. Reports include a review of where a country stands in terms of the SDG targets, and explain how and where its own government sets its priorities to ensure that targets are achieved by 2030. It is meant to be written in consultation with civil society, young people and other stakeholders in country. In countries where the government does not meaningfully consult with others, civil society and young people may choose to write a **shadow report** to show their own analysis of gaps and challenges.

The VNR process is an important opportunity for young people and civil society to take part in the national dialogue on development priorities. Through the VNR, you can influence your government's awareness of gaps and challenges in relation to young people's sexual and reproductive health and rights, and meaningful youth participation. When you effectively link this dialogue to your organisation's/ network's/ platform's advocacy priorities, the VNR can

WHAT DOES THE 2030 AGENDA SAY ABOUT THE VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEW?

- They will be voluntary and country-led.
- They will be open, inclusive, participatory, and transparent for all people. They will support reporting by all relevant stakeholders.
- They will be people-centered, and gender-sensitive, is respectful of human rights, and will have a particular focus on the poorest, and those who are most vulnerable and furthest behind.

Information extracted from Paragraph 74 of A/RES/70/1. [Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) (UN General Assembly, 2015).

offer opportunities to encourage your government to act on issues that have an impact on you; for instance, investments on comprehensive sexuality education, affordable and quality adolescent sexual and reproductive health services, and access to contraceptives.

The VNR report gives your government possibilities to document best practices and successes related to laws, policies, and programmes that contribute to realising the SDGs. For instance, if your government has recently adopted a strong new adolescent health policy, you may want to advocate for this to be mentioned in the report as well. In this sense, the VNR is not just a space to highlight areas for improvement, but also to showcase areas of success.





HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?

- ✓ Find out which civil society and/or youth coordination mechanism exists in your country for SDG monitoring, review and follow up. In many countries, civil society or multi-stakeholder SDG platforms already exist.
- ✓ Join or start a thematic sub-group within a larger SDG engagement mechanism, for instance on youth priorities, on health, or on gender equality. Actively seek out opportunities for collaboration with other civil society members in your country, specifically with those who work within the same thematic area.
- ✓ Organise or participate in (youth) consultations on priorities for the national implementation of the SDGs.
- ✓ If your country has opted to participate in the VNR process for the next HLPF, engage with your government to influence the national report, and use this as an entry point for dialogue to push your national advocacy priorities.
- ✓ If your government is not participating in the VNR process this year, encourage your government to do so for the next HLPF. Or, if your government participated during last year's VNR, examine your government's report and explore those actions that they have committed to.
- ✓ Develop a shadow report together with other youth and/or civil society members to show your analysis of progress in realising the SDG targets of your interest. Use your shadow report as an advocacy material to influence the policy directions of your government, ministries (i.e., Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, etc.), as well as UN agencies in your country. Through this report, you can provide recommendations for government priority setting and action taking. Try to link these, as much as you can, with your own national advocacy priorities.



**IT'S TIME TO ALLOW YOUR
BRILLIANCE TO RADIATE, AND TO
SET THOSE WHEELS FOR
CHANGE IN MOTION.**

TURN YOUR IDEAS INTO ACTION!

- ✓ Present yourself also as a partner of the government to achieve the SDGs: your organisation may be contributing directly to realising the SDGs in your country; for example, organisations that provide comprehensive sexuality education in schools are supporting the implementation of SDGs 3, 4, 5 and 10. Presenting yourself as a partner may open doors and allow you to engage in dialogue with your government about the policy improvements needed to support your work.
- ✓ Engage your national parliament and stimulate parliamentarians' role in monitoring progress in SDG implementation, and holding the government accountable for their actions or lack thereof.
- ✓ Engage your National Statistical Office (names may differ per country): the body tasked to report on the SDG indicators at national level. Advocate for the National Statistic Office to report on SRHR-related indicators, and if possible, offer your support in contributing to data collection and analysis.

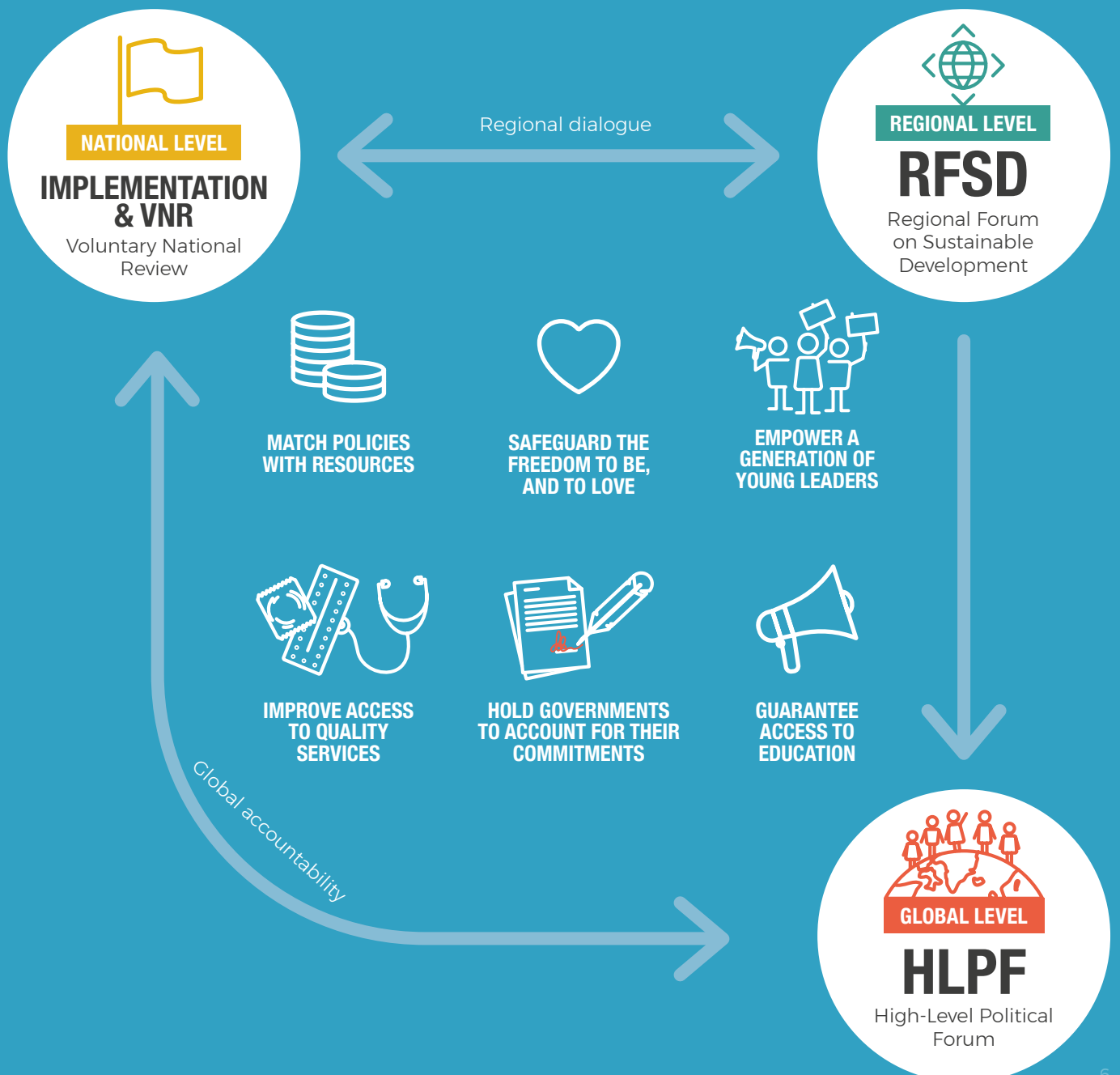




THE SDG ROADMAP OF ACCOUNTABILITY

AND SOME SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH & RIGHTS 'ASKS'

"KNOWLEDGE is POWER"! Familiarise yourself with the SDG roadmap of accountability to make the SDGs truly count. Remember... it all starts at home. That is, in your own country: where the SDGs are meant to be translated to concrete actions, including in the area of delivering to Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights. Regional and global mechanisms are simply there to keep your government accountable, and to stimulate national changes.





REGIONAL LEVEL

Every year, between April and May, each of the regional UN Commissions organises a Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (RFSD). The length, format and modalities of the Regional Forums differ so it is important for you to find out exactly how your own region's forum works, how civil society and youth engagement is organised, and how you can influence meeting outcomes.

Your own RFSD provides a space for regional dialogue between countries that often share a similar development context (economic, social, cultural). Therefore, the RFSD facilitates cross-learning and sharing. Compared to the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF), it is often a less crowded space. As such, it provides greater possibilities for civil society and young people engagement, as well as inter-governmental dialogue.

THE PRE-ASIA-PACIFIC FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (APFSD) YOUTH MEETING

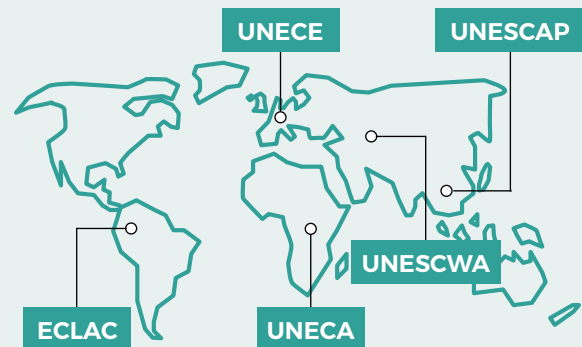
RHRN consortium member ARROW organised the first Pre-APFSD Youth Forum, in collaboration with the Youth Constituency of [APRCM](#), in March 2017.

The Forum brought together over 60 youth-led, youth-serving and youth-allied organisations. It provided a space to explore how youth issues, and young people can be meaningfully integrated into the SDG framework, paying attention to the global goals for review during the HLPF 2017. A special focus was given to young people from the Asia-Pacific countries that were participating in the VNRs.

The Forum resulted in a [call to action](#), which was presented during the Civil Society Forum convened by APRCEM. Key messages were presented during the opening of the APFSD.

DISCOVER YOUR REGIONAL UN COMMISSION

Click on the green blocks for more information



HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?

- ✓ The possibility to engage in the RFSD differs across regions. However, in most regions, civil society engagement mechanisms have been or are being set up. In the Asia-Pacific region, civil society mobilises for the Asia Pacific Regional CSO Engagement Mechanism ([APRCM](#)): a pre-conference where common positions and recommendations for the [APFSD](#) are generated.
- ✓ Organise a side event, together with other (regional) civil society organisations or networks, and/or your government, to create a dialogue and discussion on youth and SRHR in your region. Focus on best practices and lessons learnt, as well as gaps and challenges. Engage with relevant UN agencies and influential governments in your region.
- ✓ Influence your government's statements and inputs to the RFSD, by working with them well in advance. Find out which ministry is in charge, and who will be attending the RFSD on behalf of your country. Organise a pre-meeting with your government's representative, and share your national shadow report and your key recommendations. Help your government to also identify examples of progress that they can showcase.





GLOBAL LEVEL

The High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) is the UN forum mandated with the task of global monitoring, follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and the SDGs. Like the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and the Commission on Population and Development (CPD), the HLPF meets yearly to discuss a pre-determined theme. The HLPF takes place at the UN Headquarters in New York, organised by the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), and runs for eight days in July. Every four years the HLPF also comes together under the UN General Assembly (UNGA) in September.

HLPF YEARLY THEMES

- 2016** Ensuring that no one is left behind
- 2017** Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world (Goals 1, 2, 3, 5, 9 and 14)
- 2018** Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies (Goals 6, 7, 11, 12 and 15)
- 2019** Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality (Goals 4, 8, 10, 13 and 16)

The review process is currently in its first cycle (2016-2019). Within a cycle of four years, all SDGs are reviewed, except for SDG 17 (addressed as a thematic focus every year). At the end of the 'first cycle', the UN member states will agree upon the themes that will be tackled for the review in the next four years.

WHAT HAPPENS AT THE HLPF?

At the HLPF, UN Member States, civil society, and other stakeholders (such as private businesses, universities, etc.) gather to share best practices, lessons learnt, experiences, as well as gaps and challenges in the implementation of the SDGs.

During the first week, a selection of five or six SDGs is reviewed in detail (see section titled, Secure Strategic Opportunities to Contribute to the Thematic Review Process on p.10). During these days, civil society can

give oral contributions to the discussions through the Major Group System (see p. 10). In addition to these review sessions the outcome documents of the five Regional Forums on Sustainable Development (RFSD) are presented. Throughout the HLPF, many side events are organised. These side events are mostly related to that year's theme and/or the SDGs under review, and are hosted by governments, civil society or others (separate or jointly). They can take the form of panels, expert discussions, presentations, exhibitions, film showing, etc. Most of the sessions (with the exception of side events) at the HLPF take place in plenary: this means that they are open for all HLPF attendees, and can be followed live and online via [UN Web Tv](#).

The last three days of the HLPF are known as 'the Ministerial Segment'. During this time Member States that have signed up for the Voluntary National Review (VNR) process are given the space to present their national report. Each country gets about 15 minutes to present, and afterwards, Member States and civil society have the (limited) possibility to ask questions.

Towards the end of the HLPF activities, UN Member States agree upon a 'Ministerial Declaration': an inter-governmental-negotiated text on the implementation of the SDGs. The Declaration focuses particularly on that year's HLPF theme, and the SDGs under review. Generally, this text is negotiated in advance of the HLPF, and adopted on the last day of the Ministerial Segment. When there are still contentious points within the text, it is possible that these remain open for negotiation during the HLPF itself. Nevertheless, the scope of civil society influence on the Ministerial Declaration during the HLPF is extremely limited.

This Ministerial Declaration can be a helpful advocacy tool, as it contains formal agreements that can be used to hold governments accountable for putting their words into action. On the other hand, the



importance of the Ministerial Declaration should not be overestimated: this is because Member States have already agreed upon and committed to the SDGs until 2030.

Because the negotiations are an inter-governmental process, your entry point to influence the Ministerial Declaration is primarily through your own government delegation: at least a month in advance of the HLPF, when the first draft of the text, also known as the zero draft, is released. If a delegation is willing to include your issues in their input for the negotiated text, you have a much higher chance of them making it into the Ministerial Declaration. Note that most countries negotiate as a member of blocks (e.g., European countries often negotiate as one EU block).

Another strategy is for you to engage through the Major Group System to maximise your advocacy efforts by undertaking coordinated, and as such, more effective actions.



WE WON'T STOP UNTIL ALL YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE ACCESS TO QUALITY SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH SERVICES, AND THE INFORMATION THAT ALLOWS THEM TO MAKE INFORMED DECISIONS.

TOGETHER WE CAN MAKE CHANGE HAPPEN!



VIEW THE UN'S 90-SECOND VIDEO ON THE HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM SDG REVIEW PROCESS!



HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?

- ✓ To make optimal use of the HLPF space, start by taking meaningful action at national level. Prepare for the HLPF way in advance; at home, with your own peers, or by engaging with your government on the monitor, follow-up and review of SDG national implementation in your country.
- ✓ Find out who will represent your government delegation at the HLPF. Meet with your representatives in advance to orient yourself with the priorities they are presenting. Consider pitching your national advocacy priorities. Also, reach out to representatives of your country's Permanent Mission in New York, as they are likely to represent your country during the negotiations on the Ministerial Declaration.
- ✓ Provide your government, including your Permanent Mission in New York, with language input on the zero draft of the Ministerial Declaration upon its release (usually in May/June), and during actual HLPF negotiations.
- ✓ Connect and engage actively in HLPF preparations through one of the Major Groups, well in advance of the HLPF. The Major Groups often organise preparatory calls with their members in the run-up to the HLPF to prepare joint positions, shadow reports, and written and oral statements. They also organise face-to-face meetings during the HLPF.





AMPLIFY YOUNG PEOPLE'S DIVERSE VOICES AT THE HLPF!

TAKE COORDINATED ACTIONS THROUGH THE MAJOR GROUPS

Sustainable and inclusive development requires the active participation of all sectors of society. For this reason, nine **Major Groups** were set up in 1992 to facilitate the engagement of different sectors at the UN. The Major Groups represent nine sectors of society: women, children and youth, indigenous peoples, non-governmental organisations, local authorities, workers and trade unions, business and industry, scientific and technological communities, and farmers.

WOMEN'S MAJOR GROUP (WMG)

The official Major Group for civil society and activists that advocates for gender equality and women's rights, including Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, is the Women's Major Group (WMG). Communication and advocacy preparations are organised through the WMG's e-mail list. Register now to actively contribute to the discussions and information exchange, and to get the opportunity to participate in conference calls. Before and during the HLPF, the WMG comes together regularly to agree on joint strategies and next actions.

MAJOR GROUP OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH

The official Major Group for people under the age of 30, the Major Group for Children and Youth (MGCY), strives to represent the voices of children and youth from around the world at the UN. The MGCY has different internal working groups to manage internal and procedural matters, and external working groups to facilitate children and young people's input into UN processes, such as the HLPF. Its functions also include capacity building and the empowerment of children and youth.

If you want to pose a question, or read a statement during the HLPF, you will have to coordinate with the relevant Major Group. If you are an advocate of SRHR and gender equality, and/or meaningful youth participation, the most important Major Groups for your cause/s are the Women's Major Group (WMG) and the Major Group for Children and Youth (MGCY).

SECURE STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITIES TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE THEMATIC REVIEW PROCESS

Every year, a sub-set of five to six SDGs is reviewed intensively. Technical UN agencies prepare for the thematic review of the Global Goals relevant to their own scope of work.

The World Health Organization (WHO) prepares the annual thematic report of SDG 3 (also covering SRHR-relevant target 3.7 and linkage with 5.6), and provides a statistical analysis of SDG 3 and other health-related indicators. Before the actual dates of the HLPF (July), thematic progress on SDG 3 is already discussed during the World Health Assembly in May. This takes place in Geneva.

For SDG 5, and to ensure that an intersectional assessment of the status of and progress in realising gender equality is undertaken, UN Women takes on the lead.

Due to the cross-cutting importance of its work, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) provides input on SDG targets 3.7 and 5.6; both of which pertain to Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights.



The thematic review process provides you with an opportunity to engage governments, civil society, young people and other stakeholders in more in-depth discussions on, for instance, SDGs 3 and 5, and SRHR in particular. There are plenty opportunities to organise side events at the RFSD in your region, or during the HLPF, to gather more support for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights. As such, these processes offer a great avenue to influence the debates around goals or targets of your interest, share best practices, lessons learnt, gaps and challenges.



HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?

- ✓ Co-write a thematic shadow report with civil society or youth networks at global level, and share this with the relevant UN Agency that works on your theme, such as WHO for Health, UNFPA for SRHR, UN Women for gender equality, etc.
- ✓ During your region's RFSD, work within the civil society engagement mechanism to influence statements on the themes under review.
- ✓ During the HLPF, you can do the same. But make sure you link up with the Women's Major Group or the Major Group on Children and Youth.
- ✓ Consider organising a side event on the theme under review during the RFSD and the HLPF. Invite prominent stakeholders as speakers to share best practices, lessons learnt, gaps and challenges on particular SDGs or targets (for instance SDG 3.7 and 5.6).

TOGETHER WE CAN MAKE CHANGE HAPPEN!

The 2030 Agenda and the 17 SDGs offer a wide-range of opportunities to reform policy, legal and financial frameworks at national, regional and global levels. The far-reaching commitments enshrined by the 2030 Agenda, and adopted by the world's leaders and heads of state, offer the promise of equitable and sustainable transformations.








The framework is there. The commitments captured on paper. Now it is up to us to be vigilant, and to remind our governments of the commitments they have made to achieve before 2030.

You can claim your space at the decision-making table, and make a stand for youth-friendly SRHR policies, laws, and investments. Sustainable development can only be realised if we bring out the full potential of young people, and make sure their rights are fulfilled.



ENGAGE MEANINGFULLY WITH RHRN PROGRAMME RESOURCES!

Click on the digital resources below.

-  [Commission on Population and Development](#)
-  [Commission on the Status of Women](#)
-  [Empowering Youth Voices: A Guide to Supporting New Advocates](#)
-  [Human Rights Commission](#)
-  [Making Each Voice Count! A Toolkit for Young People Running Consultations](#)
-  [SRHR Language: A Glossary](#)
-  [So, You're Going to the UN!](#)
-  [The Advocate's Guide to UN Language](#)







RIGHT HERE RIGHT NOW

Right Here Right Now (RHRN) is a five-year global strategic partnership programme (2016-2020) that is active in ten countries across Africa, Asia, and Latin America, including the Caribbean sub region. Our partnership envisions a world where all young people are able to access quality and youth-friendly health services, and are not afraid to openly express who they are, and who they love. We believe that young people, everywhere, have the inalienable right to make their own choices, and lead happy and healthy lives.

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ABOUT THIS FACTSHEET

This fact sheet was developed by CHOICE for Youth & Sexuality, and Rutgers. It forms part of a series of Right Here Right Now (RHRN) Strategic Partnership resources, which seek to demystify international advocacy processes, and make these more accessible to young people.

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