



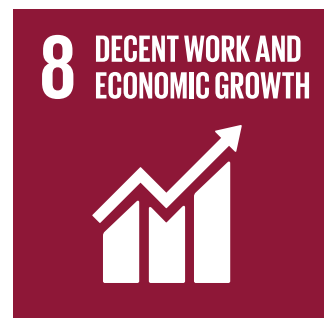
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OVERSIGHT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

GUIDANCE NOTE FOR THE STANDING COMMITTEES OF
THE PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS





Foreword from the Speaker of Parliament

The achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and meeting long-term national development objectives require engaged and committed parliaments in order to enable governments to act, while holding them accountable to their commitments. Building political willingness and maintaining SDG momentum in Fiji cannot be realised without the active participation, leadership and support of the nation's law makers who, in addition to serving as the legitimate representative of the people and their interests, can translate the SDGs into enforceable national laws that respond to Fiji's specific development priorities, monitor their implementation and ensure Government is accountable to the people for national progress on the SDGs and National Development Plan (NDP). In this regard, the Fiji Parliament's active committee system, through its various functions and powers, provides the ideal framework through which oversight of Government action on the SDGs can be undertaken.

As the Parliament of Fiji, we need to continuously ask ourselves what difference our work and actions make for the people. The day-to-day concerns of Fijians, such as jobs, education and healthcare are all related to the SDGs. Making progress towards achieving the SDGs translates directly in the improvement of the lives of Fijians. It is important to keep this in mind as we look at ways to strengthen the capacity of our Parliament to implement the SDGs to give our country the greatest chance of success.

In order for Parliament to become a full and active partner in the SDGs and NDP implementation, we need to make the SDGs and NDP central to the work of the Parliament, and in particular, the work of the Standing Committees. This requires in-depth knowledge and understanding of the SDGs and the role Standing Committees can play in providing oversight of progress in achieving the SDGs.

This Guidance Note is designed to do exactly that. It provides Standing Committees with the guidance needed to integrate the SDGs into their everyday work by mainstreaming the SDGs monitoring and oversight into the Committees' legislative and oversight functions. It highlights the importance of the SDG indicators and how Committees can use these to track progress towards the SDG and NDP targets as they scrutinise and review bills and annual reports, assess Government sector performance in their portfolio areas, monitor public expenditures, conduct site visits and engage with communities.

Monitoring the SDGs as well as ensuring accountability for their effective implementation is not just about measuring abstract data and numbers, but, in the end, is an opportunity to make sure we are on the right track to reach our country's full potential, in terms not only of economic growth, but also of improved human development, gender equity, environmental protection and enhanced democratic governance. It is my hope that this Guidance Note serves as a resourceful tool for the Standing Committees to successfully engage in oversight of SDG progress and attainment in Fiji.

Honourable Ratu Epeli Nailatikau
Speaker of Parliament
Parliament of the Republic of Fiji

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Part 1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Guidance Note

Effective Committee engagement can be a catalyst for accelerating progress towards the achievement of the SDGs and improving the lives of citizens in Fiji. This Guidance Note has been developed for the Parliamentary Committees as a tool to promote and improve Committee engagement in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The aim of this Guidance Note is to assist Committees in making the SDGs central to the work of the Parliament and in engaging effectively with the SDGs in all areas of Committee work. The Guidance Note starts with an overview of the SDGs and 2030 Agenda and why they are relevant to the Parliament of Fiji and its Committees. It offers practical guidance regarding specific entry points to proactively engage in the implementation and oversight of the SDGs and discusses specific methods, tools and innovative approaches that can be used by the Committees to actively monitor SDG implementation; including through the examination of SDG and NDP indicators that have been categorised according to the remits of the Standing Committees. Moreover, the Guidance Note includes a series of sample questions, checklists, case studies, step-by-step guides, examples of international case studies and a selection of useful resources.

The Guidance Note was developed as a direct follow up to the findings of Fiji's 2017 parliamentary SDG self-assessment report that recommends producing a simple, user-friendly toolkit for the Committees to undertake monitoring and assessment of the SDGs related to their respective subject areas. It builds on the feedback and comments gathered during a series of consultations with the Parliament of Fiji in November 2018.

1.2 Target readers

This Guidance Note is primarily addressed to the Committees of the Parliament of Fiji, and more specifically: the Committee Chairpersons and Deputy Chairpersons; other Committee Members; and Committee Staff. This Guidance Note focuses on Committees for which oversight of Government is a part of their mandate, namely the six Standing Committees: Social Affairs Committee; Economic Affairs Committee; Public Accounts Committee; Justice Law & Human Rights Committee; Foreign Affairs & Defence Committee; Natural Resources Committee. While it is designed as an easy-to-use reference point for Committee members and staff, it can help all development actors navigate through Parliament Committees' role in implementing the SDGs.

Part 2 Overview

2.1 The 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

‘Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development’ is a ground-breaking global commitment to end poverty and set the world on a sustainable path to inclusive development with the overarching message of ‘leaving no one behind’. It is the result of a three-year-long open, transparent, participatory consultation process inclusive of all stakeholders, including parliamentarians. It was endorsed by all 193 Member States of the United Nations on 25 September 2015.

Agenda 2030 builds on progress made since the Millennium Declaration was endorsed in 2000 and seeks to pick up where the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) left off, building on the lessons and successes while setting out a bold new framework to confront the new challenges of today for people and the planet. A set of 17 integrated and indivisible Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 actionable targets lies at the core of this ambitious agenda. They seek to address the full spectrum of development challenges facing countries and communities, cutting across three critical dimensions of sustainable development – the environmental, social and economic spheres. The goals range from eradicating absolute poverty to reversing climate change, and from achieving gender equality to changing consumption and production patterns. These global goals, collectively referred to as Agenda 2030, came into force on 1 January 2016 and have a target date for achievement in 2030. A global indicator framework has been designed to help track progress towards the goals and targets.

The comprehensiveness of Agenda 2030 is complemented by the fact that it is expressly stated to be universally applicable. Rather than focusing only on developing countries, Agenda 2030 recognises that in an inter-linked, globalised world, all countries must be proactive in addressing the challenges of sustainable development. While the SDGs are not legally binding, governments have assumed a moral commitment to implement them to the best of their capacities and in accordance with national priorities. Every country has a duty to implement the SDGs, and every country will be required to monitor their progress and regularly report back to the global community on their successes and challenges³.

2.2. SDGs localisation process in Fiji

The SDGs serve as a compass for guiding countries’ policies with their global commitments. They are intended to help focus and coordinate national policies towards a common vision for humanity. Countries are responsible for adapting the 2030 Agenda and tailoring / domesticating the SDGs to national, sub-national and local conditions, contexts and realities, incorporating them into their own development planning, marshalling the required resources and building the necessary partnerships for successful implementation. The concept stresses the importance of local ownership, which places the responsibility on each country to connect its national development planning to the international framework. To localise the SDGs, each country is required to identify its own priorities, as well as country-specific goals and targets - supported by locally relevant indicators in order to guide its national implementation, assess progress against national baselines and targets, and record results on the ground.

The Government of Fiji, through the leadership of the Ministry of Economy, has undergone this process by producing for the first time, both a 20-Year Development Plan (2017-2036) and a comprehensive 5-Year Development Plan (2017-2021). These plans work together, as the 5-Year Development Plan provides a detailed action agenda with specific targets and policies that are aligned to the long-term transformational 20-Year Development Plan. The NDP is aligned with global commitments including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. A total of 83 NDP indicators from the 5-year plan out of 181 have been linked to the SDGs (approximately 46 %) thereby ensuring that the SDG implementation and monitoring are tied to the NDP.

Moreover, the Government of Fiji has initiated a process of defining country-adjusted targets for the SDG indicators to help monitor the implementation of the 2030 Agenda goals at the national level. This work is led by the SDGs Taskforce within the Ministry of Economy with support from UNDP. National data and baseline information for the SDG indicators have been collected from central agencies, line ministries, statutory bodies and global databases, among other sources. To date : 76 out of the 244 SDG indicators have complete data; 73 out of the 244 SDG indicators have incomplete data; and 95 out of the 244 SDG indicators have no data collected.

Given that the collection of data is a work in progress, this Guidance Note should be considered as a living document that will be periodically updated to reflect the latest available data (targets and baselines) for the SDG indicators. Updates will also be made to reflect any changes in the Parliament standing orders and committee system.

2.3 Implementing the SDGs in Fiji: Why the Parliament should be engaged and how

The Parliament has an opportunity, and a constitutional responsibility, to play a significant role in supporting and monitoring SDG implementation in Fiji. The Agenda 2030 Declaration acknowledges the “essential role of national parliaments through their enactment of legislation and adoption of budgets, and their role in ensuring accountability for the effective implementation of our commitments.” Parliaments are highlighted in the SDGs themselves as part of a stand-alone goal that recognises the critical linkage between sustainable development and democratic governance. Goal 16’s targets demonstrate an understanding that effective, accountable and inclusive institutions including parliaments are not only important for their own sake, but are also crucial for the successful implementation of the entirety of the 2030 Development Agenda. By making laws and overseeing government policies and programmes - including enacting and scrutinising the government budget - and representing the views of their constituents, parliamentarians are valuable partners in ensuring the accountable, inclusive, participatory and transparent governance that is necessary to achieve the SDGs in Fiji. The SDGs do not replace the work that the Parliament is already doing in support of national development. Instead, they provide a framework and a renewed impetus to focus efforts at the national level on people’s prosperity and well-being. They are an opportunity for the Parliament to contribute to better development outcomes for the citizens.

2.4 Role of Parliamentary Committees in achieving domestic accountability and development

Parliament's oversight function is one of the cornerstones of democracy and oversight is a vehicle for holding the Executive to account – for its actions and for policy implementation in accordance with the laws and budget. Monitoring how effectively the Government implements its SDG commitments is a responsibility of Parliament.

The Committee is probably the most significant and agile instrument of parliamentary oversight. Committee oversight gives Parliamentarians an opportunity to assess in more depth whether policies, budgets and laws are effectively implemented in support of the SDGs and, if not, to make recommendations on how to improve implementation. Through the scrutiny of bills, reports, treaties and petitions that come before them, Parliamentary Committees have powers to call for written and oral evidence/submissions, ask for and examine Government documents, organise public hearings and site visits, and debate in greater depth the issues related to addressing the SDGs. Committees give Parliamentarians the opportunity to engage a wide cross-section of stakeholders in their deliberations. In this regard, Parliamentarians can play an essential role as a link between the State and the people, including the most marginalised and vulnerable, in terms of raising issues of concern relating to the SDGs on behalf of the people. When Committees proactively engage in monitoring and oversight they can be one of the strongest domestic accountability mechanisms available to make sure that SDG implementation stays on track.

CASE STUDY: The Belgium Parliament has established an “SDG Group of Friends” and has integrated relevant SDGs within the work of each Parliamentary Committee. In Denmark, the Parliament established a cross-party network bringing together Members from Standing Committees relevant to the 2030 Agenda. In Nigeria, to enhance the legislative and oversight roles of Parliamentarians on SDGs implementation process, two Select Committees on SDGs have been established in the Senate and House of Representatives. The National Legislative Assembly of Thailand has established a Sub-Committee on Monitoring the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goals. Zimbabwe created a Parliamentary Thematic Committee on SDGs. Other parliaments prefer to use existing structures. For example, in Sweden, the Riksdag reviews legislation and plans relating to the SDGs most frequently within the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Committee on Finance.

Source: *Compendium of national institutional arrangements for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* – UNDESA (2018)

Part 3 Making the SDGs your business: getting started

3.1 Using SDG indicator data to guide the work of Committees in overseeing progress in achieving the SDGs

The sectoral mandates of Fiji's Parliament Committees cover one or more of the SDGs. For example, the Social Affairs Committee covers SDGs 1, 3, and 4 related to health, education and poverty reduction; the Justice, Law and Human Rights Committee deals with issues pertaining to SDG 16 on inclusive institutions, peace and access to justice. While engagement with the SDGs may have been marginal to-date, the SDG indicators offer the Committees an opportunity to effectively track progress against national baselines and targets, allowing a more systematic and consistent oversight of the SDGs. For example, the Social Affairs Committee will already be considering some issues covered by SDG 3, which concerns good health and well-being. But often, the work may be focused on issues of immediate concern for Fijians, such as medical practitioner fees, or waiting times for operations, and not so much on other broader matters within the ambit of the development goal, such as health promotion, disease prevention, and national health improvement strategies. Similarly, the Committee will already be covering some aspects of SDG 4, which concerns quality education. But the emphasis of oversight may be on education sector salaries or class sizes, rather than longer-term strategies to eliminate gender disparities in educational outcomes. If the Parliament is to effectively mainstream oversight of SDG achievement through the existing Standing Committees, focus and scope need to be addressed. The SDG indicators (with the corresponding available national baselines and targets) for which each Committee is responsible should be clear. **Knowing which SDG targets fall under each Committee can lead to better overall oversight of SDG implementation.**

With this in mind, consideration has been given to reviewing the breadth of the mandate of Fiji's Committees as well as analysing the current SDG indicator data available in Fiji and categorising this data according to the remit of the 6 Standing Committees in a format that is easily understandable and accessible and that also includes linkages to the 5-year NDP indicators, targets and baselines. For example, the 2017-2021 NDP indicator "Percentage of population with electricity access (%)" has been linked to SDG Indicator 7.1.1 "Proportion of population with access to electricity". Highlighting these linkages will help Committees better identify the connection between the SDGs and Fiji's own National Development Plan and simultaneously track progress across these two frameworks, while at the same time recognising how progress on one supports progress on the another and vice versa. Pull-out sheets for each Committee with the comprehensive categorisation of SDG indicators within the Guidance Note (see Committee SDG Indicator Tool).

Some indicators are relevant to only one Committee, while others can be cross-cutting. For example Indicator 15.1.2 (Proportion of important sites for terrestrial and freshwater biodiversity that are covered by protected areas, by ecosystem type) falls under the purview of the Natural Resources Committee; whereas Indicator 15.b.1 (official development assistance and public expenditure on conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystems) can be of relevance at the same time to three Committees: Public Accounts Committee, the Natural Resources Committee and the Foreign Affairs and Defence Committees.



Once collected, the data for the SDG indicators provide evidence that can be used by Committees to analyse whether agreed upon development goals are being met and guide its action, depending on whether Fiji is on track to reaching its national targets or not.

For instance, if cardiovascular diseases and diabetes-related deaths (the two leading causes of mortality and major health concerns in Fiji) have not decreased (Indicator 3.4.1. Mortality rate attributed to cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes or chronic respiratory disease), the relevant Committee – i.e.: Social Affairs Committee – may want to urge the Government to take a more proactive approach to combat these Non Communicable Diseases, through better prevention and early identification programmes for example. If the percentage of girls attending secondary school has not increased (Indicator 4.1.1) the relevant Committee should consider what needs to be done to ensure the rate does increase, such as new or amended legislation, better enforcement or more funding.

The indicators and related data give a wealth of information that is helpful to inform a Committee's intervention. For example, when considering ways to tackle SDG 3.2 – action to reduce preventable deaths among children under age 5 – relevant Committees should first check if this goal is included in the country's national development plan. Then they should take systematic and continuous action on the legislative, budget, oversight and representational fronts to turn this aspiration into a reality. This might involve: requesting data from the national statistical office; consulting with civil society organisations on appropriate legislation or amendments; reviewing public spending; and conducting regular oversight of Government (see part 4 and part 5).

Sample questions illustrating how Committees can utilise SDG indicator data in the scrutiny of bills, annual reports and expenditure reports are elaborated in Part 4 of the Guidance Note, as well as entry points to use the indicators across the every-day work of Committees, to conduct more SDG-focused research and call for more SDG-specific evidence for instance (Part 5).

3.2 Data collection

Accurate and up-to-date data is critical for measuring progress against the SDGs and NDP indicators to inform the work of Committees. Access to disaggregated data (by gender, social groups, region etc.) is also important in order to ensure bills, budgets and programmes are effectively targeted at those most in need. To-date, only 76 out of the 244 SDG indicators have complete data information in terms of baselines and targets. 168 out of 244 indicators have incomplete or no data at all. This makes it difficult to track progress and to target policy at specific needs of vulnerable groups in society. The SDG Indicator Tool prepared for each Committee flags this issue, making it clear whenever indicator data in Fiji is missing or incomplete.

Committees, through their oversight function, verify that the necessary data related to progress in SDG implementation and the national development plan is collected, and address gaps in SDG data when conducting its scrutiny role. They contribute to developing national baselines where they do not yet exist for SDGs that fall within their remit, exert pressure on Government to make data available and collaborate with and push for strengthening the national statistics office systems as well as contribute to gathering information through their own mechanisms (conducting research; calling for written or oral submissions; holding public hearings and consultations; conducting field and site visits). Examples illustrating this are showcased in Parts 4 and 5 of this guidance note.



Where budget data is poorly collected and produced, Committee can work proactively with ministries and the National Statistics Office to identify gaps in current data collection and reporting and work on improving how information is collected, disaggregated and provided to Parliament. Committees can also work to access information about the people and the special needs they may have. Such proactive data collection can inform the work of Committees in setting priorities, feed into Committee reports, and help track progress against the SDGs.

CASE STUDY: Asking Government for data information on the SDGs

SDG example: Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere / Indicator 1.2.2: Proportion of population living below the national poverty line, by sex and age

In Sri Lanka in 2014, questions were addressed to the Minister of Finance and Planning for information on district poverty lines as follows:

“- Is he aware that the Department of Census and Statistics published the District Poverty Line every month based on the minimum expenditure per person per month to fulfil the basic needs?

-Will he inform the House of:

(i) the latest available official Poverty Line for Colombo District; and

(ii) the basic needs that are included in calculating the aforesaid poverty line?

-If not, why not? “

Collaborating with CSOs to collect, analyse and interpret data

To review whether the bills ‘leave no one behind’ and SDG targets are being reached - high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by factors– such as income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant to national contexts – provide critical evidence to inform the work of the Committees. Making such data available is in itself the focus of SDG 17, Target 18 and a key principle of SDG review at all levels. Committees will have a fuller, more nuanced picture of development if it receives information from CSO sources, in addition to that provided by Government and the national statistical system. Interpreting and presenting data is an important and much-needed skill civil society groups can provide to support Committee’s oversight of SDG implementation.

It is often very hard to obtain data and other sources of information can be of great value to parliaments. Qualitative data and traditional forms of knowledge are also critical for informing Committees. Through parliamentary consultation, local communities and minority organisations can present information on SDG policy and budget allocations. Citizen-generated evidence and contextualised local knowledge can provide a snapshot of progress in local contexts.

3.3 Incorporating the SDGs in Committees' SoP or action plans

To better mainstream the SDGs within their work, the Committees can choose to develop standard operating procedures (SOPs) and / or annual and strategic plans and incorporate the SDGs. Work plan activities can include site visits or public meetings around SDG-related issues, workshops with Government and International Agencies to provide updates on progress; Committee discussions/meetings scheduled on the SDGs progress report (Minister of Economy); methodologies for data collection, etc.

CASE STUDY: In 2015 the Parliament of Georgia introduced its first ever multiyear strategic action plans for parliamentary committees. Developed with active engagement of committee members and staff and in consultation with the government and civil society representatives, the action plans facilitate a structured approach to committee work and improve the effectiveness and efficiency of committees' oversight performance. The scope of committee action plans was expanded to take into account the SDGs, and the committees on healthcare and social issues, environmental protection and natural resources, and agriculture incorporated a special column in their action plans to indicate the relevant SDG goal in their area of responsibility with nationalised targets and indicators.

CHECKLIST: Ensuring a Committee's readiness to engage with the SDGs

- ☒ Is the Committee aware of which SDGs fall within its remit? Is the Committee familiar with which indicators and related data (targets and baselines) to track in order to ensure progress on the goals that fall within its remit? Have copies of the SDGs, 2030 Agenda, NDP and Committee SDG Indicator Tool been distributed to Committee members?
- ☒ What other tools or information would the Committee need to be able to take the SDGs into account more effectively?
- ☒ Has the Committee had a discussion / workshop / briefing session on the SDGs under its purview to highlight its commitment to achieving the SDGs and agree on how to engage with them?
- ☒ Does the Committee have a clear methodology for conducting research and analysis, and collecting information and data on the relevant SDGs under its purview?
- ☒ Has responsibility for the SDGs been assigned to a focal point within the Committee?
- ☒ What adjustments, if any, are necessary to the Committee's working methods to enable it to work more effectively on the SDGs?
- ☒ Does the Committee have an annual action or strategic plan to ensure that achieving the targets of the SDGs remains at the forefront of the Committee agenda?
- ☒ Does the Committee have SOPs to ensure that the SDGs are mainstreamed in the work of the Committee?
- ☒ Has the Committee held discussions with other Committees regarding cross-cutting SDG indicators and identified opportunities to work together (for example by conducting a joint public hearing)?

Part 4 Entry points for Committee involvement in the SDGs

A number of entry points leveraging on existing Committee oversight mechanisms and legislative processes have been identified to ensure the work of the Committees support SDG implementation. This section of the Guidance Note outlines the primary mechanisms available to Committees to engage within the SDG framework, to play a central role in overseeing whether the targets are being met in Fiji, and to facilitate an acceleration of progress towards these goals.

4.1 Scrutinising bills through an SDGs lens

Committees can play a key role in supporting the implementation of the SDGs by ensuring a legal framework that enables the goals to be achieved through laws that are, for example, sensitive to climate change, that foster employment and job creation, or address patterns of inequalities; laws that are grounded in respect for human rights and geared towards maximising human development. The breadth of SDG issues means that virtually all laws will have some relevance to the SDGs.

CASE STUDY: Making Goal 7 – affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all – a reality will require legislation to be put in place to speed up the roll out of renewables and increase electrification. Jordan's Parliament adopted a new law on Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency in 2012 to increase private-sector investment in renewable energy, including a zero tax rate on renewable energy-related products.

A Standing Committee to which a bill has been referred has an opportunity to bring the domestic laws and policies into line with the SDGs by assessing whether the bill is in compliance with the SDGs. It is crucial that Committees review all proposed legislation through a sustainable development lens. Translating the transformational promise of the 2030 Agenda and specific SDGs into actionable laws will require Committees to consider a range of social, cultural, gender, environmental, human rights, poverty and economic impacts. The SDG indicators provide a useful reference point for conducting an SDGs assessment of bills. They can help Committees identify which questions to ask and issues to pay attention to when checking whether a national bill is compliant with the SDGs.



Members of the Natural Resources Committee visit a quarry in Vanua Levu.

Example of SDGs assessment of a land bill – using the Committee SDG indicator framework

Relevant SDG Indicator: 5.a.2 - Proportion of countries where the legal framework (including customary law) guarantees women's equal rights to land ownership and/or control.

Possible questions to ask:

- Does the bill contain a clause on mandatory joint registration, or economic incentives for joint registration?
- Does the bill require spouse or partner consent for land transactions?
- Does the bill guarantee equal rights for sons and daughters to inherit and for surviving spouse to receive an inheritance share?
- Is there a provision in the bill which states that if customary land tenure is recognised in the legal and policy framework, women's land rights are protected?
- Are budgetary commitments specifically defined / addressed in the bill to strengthen equal rights for women regarding ownership and/or control of land?
- Does the bill provide for special measures including quotas for women's participation in land administration and management institutions?
- Are sanctions imposed for any breaches of the bill?

Committees should be proactive in facilitating public participation and gathering the views of citizens and interest groups which may be directly affected by eventual implementation of proposed laws. The ability of Committees to invite various stakeholders to appear before the Committees, and hearing from representatives of civil society and the citizens they represent increases the access of Parliamentarians to relevant and current information on important issues such as those inherent in the SDGs. Asking CSOs, academics, subject experts (e.g. doctors when addressing bills related to health care and vaccinations), and citizens with a stake in the issue to talk to Committees can lead to good ideas about possible new laws or amending current bills or laws. Expert groups feed in knowledge and skills on issues related to the given piece of legislation. Through these groups, CSOs can provide essential input from the vantage point of their unique expertise and experience.

Ideally, bills should explicitly identify whether and how they support Agenda 2030 and specific SDGs and their targets. This could be included in the explanatory note to the draft law. Committees can request Government to adapt the template of the explanatory note to reflect this. Committee reports should also contain a section on SDG impact to focus the minds of those in Government on the SDGs, and also provide the Parliament (and interested civil society organisations) with a valuable tracking device to monitor SDG-related legislation and progress toward SDGs in the country



Members of the Standing Committee on Justice, Law and Human Rights during their public consultation tour of the Western Division to hear from members of the public their views and opinions on the Adoption Bill (Bill No. 32 of 2018)

SAMPLE QUESTIONS TO ASK: Ensuring legislative compliance with the SDGs

- ☑ Does the bill contain an explanatory memorandum explaining whether and how it contributes to SDGs / NDP achievement?
- ☑ Did the ministerial speech introducing the bill explain whether and how it will progress the SDGs / NDP? Which SDGs and NDP objectives are related to the bill? Does the bill contain specific reference to the relevant SDGs / NDP (indicators) it relates to?
- ☑ Is the bill coherent in how it puts the relevant SDGs into practice? Does it respond, directly or indirectly, to the vision laid out in the 2030 Agenda and NDP? Does the bill set out to achieve the relevant SDGs targets and if not, how does the bill need to be amended to make sure that it does (i.e.: replace, amend or insert new clauses)?
- ☑ Has the Committee conducted an SDG analysis or assessment of the conformity of the bill with the relevant SDG/NDP goals and targets (using the Committee SDG Indicator Tool)? What are the existing gaps or loopholes? Are there any inconsistencies?
- ☑ Is the bill mindful of the inequalities between and within different groups in society, and of differential outcomes on such groups? Does the bill take into account underrepresented, marginalised and vulnerable groups? Does the Committee have access to disaggregated data and information on the economic and social conditions of vulnerable groups compared with the rest of the population when scrutinising the bill? Does the bill positively (or negatively) affect the interests and wellbeing of those furthest behind?
- ☑ Have SDG-related questions, including issues related to the impact of the bill on attainment of the SDGs, any inconsistencies with the SDGs and missing data, etc. - been sent to the initiating ministry of the bill or discussed with Government Officials during public hearings?
- ☑ Has the Committee reviewed the draft law through a participatory and open committee processes and engaged civil society (i.e.: individuals, community groups, NGOs, academia, interested groups, etc.) to make use of their feedback on real-life SDG implementation issues? Has the Committee invited submissions from experts on SDGs implementation (including what is and is not working)?
- ☑ Has the Committee gathered views directly from citizens on the impact that existing policy is having on making progress towards the SDGs and what legal improvements are needed?
- ☑ Has sufficient time, notification and an adequate opportunity been provided for public consultations and input in to the Committee's activities prior to proposing amendments to the bill?
- ☑ Have citizen perspectives and interests been integrated into the bill?
- ☑ Does the amended bill contain specific reference to the relevant SDGs / NDP goals it relates to? Will the proposed amendments allow the bill under consideration to impact positively on achieving the relevant SDGs targets?

CASE STUDY: Examples of laws that support the implementation of the SDGs (using SDG indicator data)

Source: 2018 / 2017 Country Voluntary National Review Reports on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Country	SDG	Indicator	Legislation
Australia	SDG 5 (Gender)	5.1.1 Whether or not legal frameworks are in place to promote, enforce and monitor equality and non-discrimination on the basis of sex	Adopted anti-discrimination and employment laws that prohibit differential pay
Australia	SDG 15 (Life on land)	15.2.1 Progress towards sustainable forest management	Implemented laws to promote legal and sustainable production of timber products; working with trading partners to support sustainable forest management and trade of legal timber products
Cabo Verde	SDG 12 (Responsible consumption)	12.7.1 Number of countries implementing sustainable public procurement policies and action plans	Public Procurement Code adopted in 2015 requires that public and private entities involved in procurement procedures give priority to those acquisitions, works, solutions and ecological actions understood to contribute most significantly to the reduction of negative environmental impacts
Cabo Verde	SDG 12 (Responsible consumption)	12.4.2 Hazardous waste generated per capita and proportion of hazardous waste treated, by type of treatment	Adoption of law on prohibition of import and use of non-biodegradable plastic bags
Canada	SDG 16 (Peace and justice)	16.10.2 Number of countries that adopt and implement constitutional, statutory and/or policy guarantees for public access to information	Legislation introduced in June 2017 seeking to strengthen openness and transparency by providing Canada's information commissioner with greater powers, improving the request-based system and legally entrenching proactive publication across government. Legislation also introduced to make political party fundraising activities more open and transparent
Poland	SDG 8 (Good jobs and economic growth)	8.3.1 Proportion of informal employment in non-agriculture employment, by sex	Introduced legislation to promote innovation including R&D allowances; granting the status of a research and development centre for smaller enterprises; as well as increasing the possibilities of financing innovative enterprises by venture capital enhancing collective forms of investment co-financed with public funds
		9.3.2 Proportion of small-scale industries with a loan or line of credit	
	SDG 9 (Innovation and Infrastructure)	9.5.1 Research and development expenditure as a proportion of GDP	
		9.5.2 Researchers (in full-time equivalent) per million inhabitants	

Country	SDG	Indicator	Legislation
Poland	SDG 8 (Good jobs and economic growth)	8.8.2 Level of national compliance with labour rights based on ILO textual sources and national legislation, by migrant status)	Provisions on employment of foreigners have been amended, taking into account the need to facilitate access to the Polish labour market, prevent the occurrence of abuses and to improve the management of economic migrations
Poland	SDG 16 (Peace and Justice) and SDG 5 (Gender)	5.1.1 Whether or not legal frameworks are in place to promote, enforce and monitor equality and non-discrimination on the basis of sex	The Electoral Code was amended in 2018 to introduce provisions concerning quotas on electoral lists (the shares of women-candidates and men-candidates - may not be lower than 35%)
Romania	SDG 10 (Inequality)	8.5.2 Unemployment rate, by (...) persons with disabilities 10.2.1 Proportion of people living below 50 per cent of median income, by sex, age and persons with disabilities	Romanian law specifies that companies with more than 50 employees must ensure that at least 4% of their staff are comprised of people with disabilities

4.2 Scrutinising annual reports through an SDGs lens

If it's not already the case, Committees can request that the executive branch report regularly to the Parliament – usually on a yearly basis, on progress achieved and challenges faced with the implementation of the National Development Plan and SDGs, by submitting a comprehensive annual report for Committees to review and debate. Of equal importance, the annual sectoral reports submitted by line Ministries to Parliament and referred to the appropriately-mandated Parliamentary Standing Committees is an excellent entry point to properly assess whether, how, and to what extent the policies and programmes of Government have contributed to SDG achievement over the past year. Each Standing Committee can use the annual reports to conduct a review of the SDG outcomes delivered by Government in each portfolio area, and consider performance against the relevant SDG goals and targets using the SDG Indicator Tool.

CASE STUDY: The Government of Finland published a report that was submitted to the Finnish Parliament in March 2017, which dealt with the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. All Parliamentary Committees discussed the Government's report on national implementation of the 2030 Agenda in spring 2017. The Committees heard from multiple stakeholders, such as Government officials, ministries, non-governmental organisations, scientific stakeholders and businesses. As a result, based on expert hearings, the Committees gave their reports and recommendations for the consideration and further action by the Government and Ministries regarding the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. These reports provided comprehensive analysis of the state, gaps and strengths of sustainable development in Finland and gave several strong guidelines and proposals to Government.



The Permanent Secretary for the Ministry for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation Jennifer Poole with a senior official presenting to a Standing Committee.

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE: SDG scrutiny of annual reports

1. Oversight preparation phase

- Ensure that Committee members have access to the previous year's Ministry's annual report so that they can make comparisons with previous performance in the area of SDGs.
- Ensure that Committee members have access to the previous committee report to assess if SDG-related recommendations have been taken into account by the Ministry.
- Compile any relevant reports from other oversight bodies or CSOs.
- Conduct a stakeholder analysis: identify stakeholders to engage with. Compile a list of subject experts and organisations with specialised knowledge that the Committee members can contact to get an outside view on the Ministry's performance in the past year.



2. Review of the report

- Read through the entire Government report.
- Check if the report complies with the prescribed format. Does the layout of the report facilitate understanding of SDG information? Does it clearly indicate which SDG and NDP goals the report relates to? If not, the Committee can consider providing SDG reporting guidelines to the Ministry for the annual reports.
- Consider the Ministry's performance in light of any SDG-related comments or recommendations that the Committee may have made in its previous report.
- Assess the Ministry's performance against relevant SDG targets and measure Government's sector performance in their portfolio areas against the SDGs using the relevant SDG indicators. In particular, examine:

- How well are the relevant SDGs and performance targets linked into the Ministry's overall aims?
- How effectively does the Ministry contribute to the delivery of SDG goals that fall within its mandate?
- To what extent has the Ministry met its SDG performance targets? What were the reasons for any failures?
- What examples are there of how the Ministry has delivered on the SDGs?
- Has Government spending in this sector contributed to SDG implementation?
- Does the annual report take into account underrepresented, marginalised and vulnerable groups? Is disaggregated data about the impact of the SDGs on these groups available?



3. Prepare questions

- Based on the analysis of the report review- identify any SDG-related issues.
- Prepare a list of targeted, priority questions on the issues that have come up for different stakeholders (i.e.: Government, community groups, CSOs, experts, think tanks, academia, National Statistics office, etc.). For example, if there is no information or incomplete information regarding action related to specific SDGs, the Committee can ask questions to clarify this. Similarly, the Committee can ask questions related to missing data to measure progress against the SDG targets.

4. Submit calls for written inputs & evidence and conduct oversight hearings

- Engage with and consult all key stakeholders including:
- Presentation from the Minister/ Government officials followed by a question and answer session;
- Submissions and presentations from subject experts or organisations (NGOs, academia, private sector) with specialised knowledge on the subject matter, followed by a question and answer session;
- Inputs from civil society and communities affected by Government's policies/ programmes.

5. Conduct site visits

- If the Committee's budget allows, engage more directly with communities including marginalised and vulnerable groups and identify which Government programmes worked and which failed to deliver SDG benefits especially to those in need; witness first-hand the impact of Government programmes and policies on the ground.

6. Oversight report-writing phase

- After the hearings, Committees will compile an oversight report incorporating the following issues:
- Findings of Committee's assessment: Comments on the adequacy of Ministry's programmes regarding the SDGs.
- Conclusions: overall assessment of how effectively the Ministry is contributing to the delivery of SDG outcomes and the extent to which SDG targets are being met.
- Key issues or concerns that the Committee would like to draw to the Ministry's attention as regards its performance on the SDGs.
- Policy, legal and programme recommendations to improve Government's action on the SDGs (i.e. New programmes/policies needed? Adjustments to existing ones? Adjustments in budget allocations?). Flag what action and steps need to be taken to ensure compliance with SDG targets.



7. Follow-up phase

- Ensure there is a system in place for tracking Committee reports and ensuring that they are brought to the attention of the relevant Ministers on a regular basis until the matter has been dealt with, or an adequate response has been received.
- Ensure the Minister tables a substantive response to the Standing Committee's report, including responses to SDGs issues raised.
- Debate the line Ministry's response in the Committee and agree on any follow-up action needed.
- Systematically keep track of the recommendations made by the Committee and the Government's response to these recommendations including assurances, promises and commitments made by Ministers.
- When reviewing the following report from Government, consider if Committee recommendations on SDG-related issues have fed back into Government policy processes.

CASE STUDY: Tracking government response to Committee recommendations

In India, Parliamentary Committees have a well-established system of tracking their recommendations by way of seeking an 'Action Taken Reply' from Government within three months followed by presentation of the 'Action Taken Reply' thereon and the laying of a final 'Action Taken Statement' thereon to parliament. In other countries, some parliaments have bodies that assist committees in tracking the government's undertakings. In Sweden, for example, the Parliamentary Evaluation and Research Unit follows up and evaluates the implementation of decisions and recommendations of the Riksdag (Parliament).

Example: SDGs scrutiny of the '2016 Annual Report of the Ministry of Employment, Productivity, and Industrial Relations' using the Committee SDG indicator Tool.

<http://www.parliament.gov.fj/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Ministry-of-Employment-Productivity-and-Industrial-Relations-2016-AR.pdf>

Relevant committee: Standing Committee on Economic Affairs

Overall Findings / Conclusions: The Ministry is making progress towards promoting productive employment and income and decent work for all, in line with SDG 8: 'promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all'. In particular, the Ministry has contributed to making progress towards SDG Target 8.5 (improving employment of marginalised groups), SDG Target 8.7 (efforts to end child labour) and SDG Target 8.8 (safe and secure working environments). However, a number of relevant SDG targets under SDG 8 remain unaccounted for. The Ministry's engagement with portfolio-related SDGs and contribution to the delivery of relevant SDG outcomes appears limited to-date.

Sample questions to ask the Ministry

Question 1:

- How is the Ministry supporting entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encouraging the formalisation and growth of micro, small and medium sized enterprises in line with SDG Target 8.3? There is no mention of this in the report.
- What is the proportion of informal employment in non-agriculture employment, by sex (SDG Indicator 8.3.1)? The data for this indicator is currently incomplete. If the Ministry does not have this information, can it ensure the data is collected?

Question 2:

- What is the proportion of jobs in sustainable tourism industries out of total tourism jobs (SDG Indicator 8.9.2)? There is currently no data for this indicator. If the Ministry does not have this information, can it ensure the data is collected?
- Does the Ministry have a programme in place to create jobs in sustainable tourism in line with SDG Target 8.9? If yes, what are the results so far and what is the budget allocated for this programme? If not, how does the Ministry plan to address this issue?

Question 3:

- Regarding SDG Target 8.5, (By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value) The Committee notes that the Ministry is committed to supporting the creation of employment for the marginalised unemployed population and improving working conditions, wages and productivity. It takes note of the positive results (i.e. increase in number of Fijians registered with the National Employment Centre who are finding jobs; organisation of technical skills trainings; launch of the project on Community Based Emergency Employment (CBEE) targeting women and people with disabilities in the three villages).
- Can the Ministry indicate the budget allocated for the CBEE project?
- The unemployment rate for female youth is 25.7% (SDG Indicator 8.5.2 - 2014 baseline data) and the unemployment rate for male youth is 13.9 % (SDG Indicator 8.5.2 - 2014 baseline data). What is the Ministry doing to tackle the high unemployment of male and female youth at the country-level in line with SDG Target 8.6 (substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment)? Is there a youth employment strategy or programme? If yes, what is the budget allocated to it?
- What is the unemployment rate of persons with disabilities in Fiji (SDG Indicator 8.5.2)? If there is no data available, can the Ministry commit to ensuring unemployment data is disaggregated to reflect the status of persons with disabilities?

Question 4:

The Committee welcomes the effective measure taken by the Ministry to meet SDG Target 8.7 (eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms) including: the reduction of child labour cases from 2011 to 2016 with 182 child labour cases from 2011 – 2016 returning to school or enrolling into technical and vocational trainings. Can the Ministry specify what is the proportion and number of children aged 5–17 years still engaged in child labour, by sex and age (SDG Indicator 8.7.1)? If this information is not available, can the ministry follow up to ensure the data is collected?

Question 5:

The Committee notes that the Ministry is on track regarding SDG Target 8.8 (Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment). In particular, the Committee takes note of the positive results: removal of the complaint against Fiji from the ILO Agenda; training and awareness programmes conducted to reduce workplace injuries and deaths; compulsory registration of industrial chemicals used at workplaces; conducting of occupational hygiene consultancies; vetting / inspections of plant/machinery designs to ensure their compliance with safety standards). However the report fails to provide any disaggregated data or information regarding how these policies are affecting the situation of migrant workers, in particular women migrants. In this regard, can the Ministry explain its plan of action and also provide data regarding the frequency rates of fatal and non-fatal occupational injuries, by sex and migrant status (SDG Indicator 8.8.1)? If this data is not available, can the Ministry ensure the data is collected?

Recommendations for the Ministry**First recommendation:**

The report does not make any reference to the SDGs or 2030 Agenda nor does it specify which SDGs it relates to. The Committee requests that the Ministry:

- Change the format/layout of the report to facilitate understanding of SDG information.
- Explicitly link results with relevant /priority SDGs and NDP goals and targets.
- Include a section explaining how the Ministry is prioritising action on the SDGs.

Second recommendation:

- The report reveals that the Ministry's policies and programmes have not adequately incorporated the SDGs. The Committee urges the Ministry to develop new or expand existing policies and programmes to support:
- A conducive environment for entrepreneurship, innovation, and the growth of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (in line with SDG Target 8.3);
- The employment of women, young people and persons with disabilities, including equal pay for work (in line with SDG Target 8.5);
- The rights of migrant workers (in line with SDG Target 8.8);
- The creation of jobs in sustainable tourism (in line with SDG Target 8.9).

Third recommendation:

- The financial statement does not allow for the tracking of spending on SDGs in the employment sector. The extent to which the budget information is detailed and disaggregated is limited. The Committee recommends that the Ministry make the financial statement more SDG-readable by mapping the Ministry's budget against the SDGs and NDP and including qualitative reporting in their main budget document, giving an overview on how the budget is linked to different SDGs. In particular, the Ministry can have detailed budget lines or identify expenditure categories that can be linked to SDGs sectors or targets.

4.3 Scrutinising expenditures through an SDGs lens

Committee oversight of budget expenditure is also important. It is the moment when Committees can analyse the effectiveness of Government's expenditure on SDG achievement. Committees can ask questions about how the budget is implemented to promote SDGs and track expenditure on SDG implementation. These questions may be sectorally focused, for example, expenditures related to SDG 3 (health sector) can be monitored by the Social Affairs Committee and also by the Public Accounts Committee which has the primary mandate to examine Government accounts at the end of every fiscal year, including specifically, the Auditor General's reports. A number of SDG targets identify action on specific aspects of the national budget with specific SDG indicators to track budgets and expenditures i.e. SDG Indicator 16.6.1 Primary government expenditures as a proportion of original approved budget, by sector (or by head, or by budget codes or similar); SDG Indicator 17.3.1: Foreign direct investment (FDI), official development assistance and South-South cooperation as a proportion of total domestic budget; SDG Indicator 9.5.1 Research and development expenditure as a proportion of GDP.

Behind Goal 16 – promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels – lies an understanding that greater budget transparency, stronger oversight, and accountability can contribute significantly to better development outcomes and lay the groundwork for the implementation of the entire 2030 Agenda. The Public Accounts

Committee and other Standing Committees have a key role to play in this regard.

While audit institutions can assist with assessing whether funding was spent in accordance with laws and regulations, performance audits are less common. One of the most challenging parts of budget oversight is tracking where the money was spent and the impact it had on people's lives, for good or for bad. In other words, Committees and the PAC in particular need to look at issues of both value-for-money and actual results for people, especially the most marginalised and vulnerable. SDG budget impact assessments can help Committees check if funding allocated for SDG achievement is effectively and accountably spent in a manner that produces sustainable and impactful results.

In the context of SDG budget monitoring specifically, another challenge that Committees face is the need for disaggregated data to assess the impact of spending in terms of achieving the overarching goals of the SDGs, namely to be "people-centered," and to particularly target efforts towards the needs of the marginalised and excluded.

CASE STUDY: In many countries, Supreme Audit Institutions are submitting reports on the SDGs to parliament or describe how its annual report takes the SDGs into account. In Brazil, the Federal Court of Accounts developed a framework to aggregate performance audit results to monitor and review the implementation of the SDGs at the national level. In India, the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General has scrutinised funding for SDG implementation, and planned an audit on the government's SDG preparedness.

Source: *Overview of institutional arrangements for implementing the 2030 Agenda at national level – UNDESA (2017).*

CHECKLIST: Making scrutiny of SDG expenditures more effective

- ☒ Does the Auditor-General submit reports on the SDGs (i.e.: an SDG audit of expenditures / audit of SDG-related policies and spending)?
- ☒ Does the annual expenditure report describe how it takes the SDGs into account or is done in a format that allows tracking of funding per SDG?
- ☒ Can the Auditor-General adjust its reporting template to better track SDG-related expenditures (i.e. indicate which budget lines are related to the SDGs? Identify expenditure categories that can be linked to particular SDGs or specific SDG targets)?
- ☒ What is the actual budget expenditure against the SDGs?
- ☒ Did the national budget deliver on SDG outcomes? Has it made an impact on making progress towards the SDGs?
- ☒ Has public spending targeted society's most marginalised groups?
- ☒ Are SDG-related policies outlined in the budget being implemented?
- ☒ Do the SDG-related expenditures represent good value for money? Have public funds been used properly and effectively?
- ☒ Does the Public Accounts Committee effectively interrogate Government Officials to properly assess: (i) the effectiveness of Government expenditures on SDG-related issues; and (ii) accountability for funds spent?
- ☒ Does the Public Accounts Committee undertake its own SDG budget impact assessments (e.g. through site monitoring visits) to assess whether SDG-related programmes have been effectively implemented and the resources correctly spent?
- ☒ Regarding international development financing in support of the SDGs - is foreign aid from both public and private sources (NGOs, foundations, etc.) properly accounted for in the expenditure report? How is oversight of these funds exercised?
- ☒ Has the Government provided an effective response to the reports and recommendations produced by the Public Accounts Committee?

CASE STUDY: Portfolio committees monitoring SDG related government expenditures in their subject area

Country Example: Sri Lanka, 2017

Indicator 4.c.1 Proportion of teachers in: (a) pre-primary; (b) primary; (c) lower secondary; and (d) upper secondary education who have received at least the minimum organised teacher training (e.g. pedagogical training) pre-service or in-service required for teaching at the relevant level in a given country

Minister of Education

(a) Will he state—

- i. whether the Ministry of Education organised teacher training programs in zonal levels on subject basis, in years 2015, 2016 and 2017; and
- ii. Separately, of the number of teacher training programs so organised, the subjects and the costs incurred?

(b) Will he also state —

- i. Separately, in respect of each school of the number of teachers in Minuwangoda Education zone of Western province by the date of 06.06.2016;
- ii. Separately, in respect of each subject, of the number of teacher training programs held and the costs incurred in years 2015, 2016 and 2017;
- iii. whether the number of teacher training programs conducted and the amount of money allocated are adequate;

(c) If not, why?

Part 5 Tools for conducting effective SDG Oversight

5.1 Engaging civil society

At the heart of a Committee's oversight function is its power to seek evidence from a wide range of individuals and organisations on the subject under consideration. Consultations allow for broad engagement regarding the effectiveness of Government policies at a grassroots level, which lead in turn to sound, evidence-based evaluation and pertinent recommendations. The benefits of public dialogue on the work of the Committees applies equally to SDG implementation. It is critical that the legal frameworks, policies and programmes established to achieve the various SDGs should be based on the insights and the perspectives of people who will be affected by, and who will benefit from, such changes. To this end, Committees need to proactively engage civil society and the public as they consider draft laws and review annual reports to find out the public's SDG priorities and to assess SDG implementation on the ground. Hearing directly from stakeholders including CSOs on the impact of Government programmes and policies, lessons learned and the needs and expectations of citizens gives MPs a fuller picture of how the SDGs are being implemented in the country and what needs to be done to improve this. Information and feedback received through civil society engagement makes Committees better equipped to engage on the SDGs.

The challenge for the Committees is to initiate and maintain a dialogue with citizens that is policy oriented. The objective is to seek the input of the people on an ongoing basis, to gain insight from their experiences and to ensure that the laws passed and the monitoring conducted by the Committees reflects such interests and concerns. Such consultations can range from the informal (such as public forums/meetings) to the more formal (e.g., public hearings); they can be technical (e.g., surveys) or can also come in the form of virtual engagement, including online feedback, surveys and social media - allowing for wider remote participation. Submissions can be either written or oral.

Although Government Ministers can outline Government policy in different sectors, there is a clear benefit for Committees in hearing directly the views and informed opinion of CSOs, civic groups, and relevant citizens regarding the reality on the ground in the country. By going directly to the people, Committees can identify gaps and weaknesses in SDG implementation that may not be caught in general Government reports or national statistics. It is important that Committees be aware of people's wider concerns. Consultations with civil society organisations, academic institutions, the private sector, and others can help to identify those concerns.

For example, if a bill relating to HIV and AIDS is under consideration, the Social Affairs Committee may want to hear directly the opinions of civil society organisations and citizens representing people living with HIV and AIDS, health professionals and other groups who may be directly affected by the proposed health legislation. Gathering the views of these stakeholders will assist the Committee in assessing the likely impact of the legislation and whether the proposed law will help to halt and reverse the spread of HIV and AIDS in the country and in accordance with SDG 3. It is critical to involve local authorities, working directly with stigmatised groups such as injecting drug users, and the most vulnerable particularly women and young people, and giving civil society a voice during the drafting of the HIV/Aids Bill.



The Fiji Women's Rights Movement (FWRM) Executive Director Nalini Singh (closest to camera) presenting her submissions before the Standing Committee on Justice, Law and Human Rights.

The SDG indicators provide guidance in terms of which segments of society to pay particular attention to and gather views from when considering a bill i.e. a social security bill / SDG Indicator 1.3.1 Proportion of population covered by social protection floors/ systems, by sex, distinguishing children, unemployed persons, older persons, persons with disabilities, pregnant women, newborns, work-injury victims and the poor and the vulnerable.

In addition to engaging key stakeholders, Committees should also seek to consult experts and CSOs with specialised knowledge on a subject matter under consideration and can make use of relevant SDG indicators to ask specific SDG-related questions.

CASE STUDY: In Serbia, the Environmental Protection Committee organised a public hearing after the 2014 floods to assess the floods damage on the environment. It resulted in an excellent collaboration with CSOs who committed to undertake a mapping of all the flood prone areas in Serbia to inform Parliament's prevention policy.

Benefits of engaging with CSOs

CSOs can support the work of committees by:

- Filling information, expertise or skill gaps.
- Providing access to the voices of citizens and facilitating feedback loops.
- Supporting Committee agendas and priorities.
- Supporting Committee oversight activities.
- CSO inputs, be it data, citizen testimonies, expert analysis, advocacy messages or educational materials - can raise the quality of SDG debates and scrutiny in the Committees.

In the UK, the NGO network Bond has been hosting the secretariat for the All-Party Parliamentary Group on the SDGs and provided policy briefings and recommendations to UK relevant committees on the implementation of the SDGs.

Find out more on Bond's website: <https://www.bond.org.uk/advocacy/sdgs>

To conclude this section, public consultations are among the most powerful tools available to a Committee in its efforts to gather relevant opinions, information, and evidence to examine SDG-related issues and the extent to which SDG targets are being met. Facilitating two-way feedback loops is essential in helping to collect data and gather information directly from people to feed back into larger national development planning and budgeting processes. Public engagement does not only support the evidence-gathering process and improve Committee operations, but also aids transparency of parliamentary processes and increases public trust. Civil society actors can provide inputs on how the 2030 Agenda and specific SDGs are being implemented. They can assist Committees to better understand the experiences on the ground: what works, what does not, and why. CSOs can also play a role in bringing affected people's perspectives into Committee deliberation, particularly those of marginalised and vulnerable groups. Lastly, in their capacity as watchdogs, CSOs may be able to provide data on how well the Government is performing from an early stage. CSOs can provide inputs to research commissioned by Committees that seeks an understanding of public opinion on a specific subject. Surveys are particularly helpful for gathering quantitative data to inform Committee deliberations. In these ways and more, they can enrich the Committees' understanding of the SDGs and complement information made available by the Government.

CHECKLIST: Effectively engaging the public and civil society in support of SDG implementation (CSOs, NGOs, private citizens, private sector, academia, international development partners and other key stakeholders)

Does the Auditor-General submit reports on the SDGs (i.e. an SDG audit of expenditures / audit of SDG-related policies and spending)?

- ☒ Does the Committee have a process by which public feedback is routinely provided to the Committee?
- ☒ What methods are used by the Committee to engage people and hear their concerns and ideas?
- ☒ How does the Committees engage the public as they monitor the implementation of SDG-related laws?
- ☒ Does the Committee hold regular and open dialogue on key issues that affect development, and in particular that relate to the issues addressed under the SDGs?
- ☒ Has the Committee identified / made a list of interested people, stakeholders, subject experts and civil society to provide written and/or oral submissions?
- ☒ Does the Committee make calls for public submissions in order to hear the views of interested groups and individuals (through written or oral evidence) regarding SDGs-related bills and annual reports that are under consideration by the Committee?
- ☒ Has the Committee engaged with and consulted the public on the content of a draft law or annual report?
- ☒ Does the Committee hold regular public consultations and hearings devoted to the SDGs?
- ☒ Does the Committee invite civil society representatives to participate in public hearings and / or to give evidence about their involvement in or their views on SDG implementation?
- ☒ Are consultations on SDG-related bills / reports held with marginalised and vulnerable citizens and communities in / from rural / remote areas?
- ☒ Does the Committee draw on such groups (CSOs, academic institutions, development partners or other SDG experts) to provide the Committee with briefings and / or technical advice on SDG issues?
- ☒ Has the Government provided an effective response to the reports and recommendations produced by the Public Accounts Committee?

5.2 Conducting site visits

Whilst asking CSOs and others to come before Parliamentary Committees to give evidence can be the most cost and time effective method of gathering information, a very effective oversight mechanism for gathering information on progress towards achieving the SDGs is for Committees to leave the precincts of the Parliament and undertake site visits in different regions to give more groups and people the opportunity to provide input and to see for themselves the impact that projects or policies are having on making progress towards the SDGs on the ground.

CASE STUDY: Gathering information on the impact that policies are having on making progress towards the SDGs by consulting the people that are directly affected by those policies.

In Cabo Verde – the Parliamentary committees undertook a series of field missions to promote a wider dissemination and knowledge of HIV/AIDS Law and also monitor the implementation of the HIV/AIDS Law which regulates all aspects related to the prevention, treatment and control of HIV/AIDS, assessing potential challenges and constraints and collecting feedback towards its improvement.

By visiting regions or communities that usually receive less attention than major urban areas, Committees can directly meet the people affected by Government policy and key service providers and get a first-hand look at the impact of SDG policies and legislation on those communities. The Committee may hear from a wider range of stakeholders than usual and gather information needed to consider bills. For example, if the Social Affairs Committee is considering a new law on health insurance, it may want to visit health facilities in a local community to meet with physicians, nurses, health care workers and patients and hear their perspective on the draft law.

In line with the 2030 Agenda's overarching objective of leaving no one behind, Committees should pay particular attention to hearing the concerns of and gathering feedback from the most marginalised and vulnerable groups of society on how SDG implementation is impacting on their lives. Marginalised and vulnerable groups (i.e. women, youth, persons with disabilities, the elderly, LGBTI etc.) are generally lagging behind national averages on measures such as per capita GDP, life expectancy, educational achievement, political participation, and their needs need to be taken into account in the work of Committees if the SDG's are to be fully realised. Conducting field visits allows Committees to bring the voices and perspectives of underrepresented or marginalised groups into parliamentary processes regarding SDG issues. Disaggregated population indicators of the SDGs can guide Committees in terms of which segments of society to focus on and meet with when conducting site visits.



Members of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs during their tour of the Northern Division

CASE STUDY: In Tonga – the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Fisheries conducted a field mission to review the current status, policies, opportunities and challenges for sustainable development in the agriculture and fisheries sectors in the island group of Ha’apai in line with SDG14 ‘Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development’ and SDG2 ‘(...) promote sustainable agriculture’. Primary production accounts for 16.8% of the country’s GDP, and agriculture and fisheries are employing 24% of the country’s labour force. Tonga is highly vulnerable to the impact of climate change and extreme weather events, and the Ha’apai group has been hit by two category 4 cyclones in recent years – TC Gita in February 2018 and TC Ian in January 2014. The committee wished to witness the development and resilience of these sectors, and consult their stakeholders.

CHECKLIST: Organising outreach or site visits focused on the SDGs

- ☑ Ensure that the aim of the visit is clear and specific, using the relevant SDG indicators linked to an annual report i.e. oversee implementation of a specific SDG and the impact of a specific SDG-related programme or policy on regions and communities.
- ☑ Draw up a clear itinerary for the visit.
- ☑ As part of the site visit, consider holding a public meeting to explain the purpose of the visit and for citizens to be able to raise issues of concern directly with the Parliamentarians.
- ☑ Compile a list of relevant local agencies, CSOs, NGOs and other stakeholders to be contacted and invited to attend a site visit on the subject matter. Obtain evidence from key witnesses which may include key stakeholders and experts on a site visits’ subject matter.
- ☑ Are specific efforts made to meet with marginalised, underrepresented, or vulnerable communities on SDG-related issues (e.g.: women, young people or poor people)?
- ☑ Prepare a list of key questions to be asked during the field visit, e.g. How is the Government policy being implemented? Is it effective? Are there enough resources to implement the law or policy? What further action is needed?

5.3 Engaging the Government

Committees have at their disposal formal tools which give them direct access to Ministries and Government bodies responsible for implementing policies and laws. When summoned by Committees, Government Officials are obliged to respond. Parliaments can exercise their right to question the actions of Government through a number of formal channels. Committees can call on Ministers to clarify or discuss policies during Committee sessions. Committees can ask questions in writing and face-to face during public hearings. During these sessions, Committees can ask Ministers directly about the effectiveness of their programmes and policies. In addition, Committees can request Government Ministries to provide them with up-to-date documentation and information where this is considered essential for oversight.

CASE STUDY: In Belgium, the External Relations Committee of the Belgian Chamber of Representatives invited the Minister for Sustainable Development, responsible for the national implementation of the 2030 Agenda, together with the Minister of Development Cooperation, responsible for the external aspects of the 2030 Agenda, for a meeting in March 2016. During this meeting, the Minister for Sustainable Development explained the Belgian's Government approach towards the 2030 Agenda. Another meeting was held in June 2016 between the Ministers and the Special Committee on Climate and Sustainable Development about the Parliament's follow-up on the 2030 Agenda. Both of these meetings were followed by a debate.

In Greece, the Government has periodically addressed Parliamentary Committees on national implementation challenges and strategies regarding 2030 Agenda, seeking parliamentary advice. The Minister of Environment and Energy informed the relevant Parliamentary Committee on the implementation of SDGs related to green economy, the promotion of renewable energy resources like photovoltaic and wind farms, and is seeking to engage parliamentarians in a multi-stakeholder dialogue so that proper action is designed with state and non-state representatives.


Source: *Country SDG VNR reports*

Regardless of which form of questioning is used, these engagement mechanisms can be extremely useful ways for Committees to raise an SDG issue of public interest and to demand an answer from the Government on what it is doing to respond. Committee questions can help obtain information, raise awareness of the SDGs and/or put pressure on the Government to accelerate progress towards achieving the SDGs.

Questions can examine SDG and NDP planning and implementation processes broadly (e.g.: What is the status of implementation of the NDP? When will the progress report be tabled in Parliament?), or can be much more specific and inquire about implementation of a specific SDG (e.g. What is the Government doing to address issues of inequality in accordance with SDG 10?). They can even question specific activities in relation to a target (e.g.: What is the Government doing to strengthen vocational skills in accordance with SDG 4, Target 4.4?). Committees can use the SDG Indicator Tool to guide the questions addressed to Government on SDGs which fall within their remit. See the box on the next page for examples.

CASE STUDY: Examples of SDG related written questions submitted to the Government of Sri Lanka

SDG	Indicator	Ministry & Year	Questions
 <p>Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels</p>	Indicator 16.3.1 Proportion of victims of violence in the previous 12 months who reported their victimisation to competent authorities or other officially recognised conflict resolution mechanisms	Minister of Women and Child Affairs, 2015	(a) Will she inform this House separately the number of complaints received by the Police, the Sri Lanka Women's Bureau and the National Child Protection Authority in connection with the abuse committed by closest relatives on children and women in years 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014, separately?
 <p>Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture</p>	Indicator 2.2.2 Prevalence of malnutrition (weight for height >+2 or <-2 standard deviation from the median of the WHO Child Growth Standards) among children under 5 years of age, by type (wasting and overweight)	Minister of Health, Nutrition and Indigenous Medicine, 2017	<p>(a) Will he inform this House—</p> <p>(i) out of the total child population in Sri Lanka, the number of children suffering from malnutrition;</p> <p>(ii) the methodology used to determine that number; and</p> <p>(iii) the number of malnourished children in Sri Lanka as a percentage of the child population ?</p> <p>(b) Will he also inform this House—</p> <p>(i) the number of children mentioned in (a) (i) above according to the levels of income of the society separately; and</p> <p>(ii) the number of malnourished children reportedly dying after being infected with diseases?</p> <p>(c) If not, why?</p>
 <p>Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all</p>	Indicator 4.a.1 Proportion of schools with access to (a) electricity; (b) the Internet for pedagogical purposes; (c) computers for pedagogical purposes; (d) adapted infrastructure and materials for students with disabilities; (e) basic drinking water; (f) single-sex basic sanitation facilities; and (g) basic handwashing facilities	Minister of Education, 2018	<p>(a) Will he inform this House of—</p> <p>(i) the number of schools maintained with minimum facilities in Sri Lanka which are in need of further development; and</p> <p>(ii) the measures taken by the government to develop such schools?</p> <p>(c) If not, why?</p>

SDG	Indicator	Ministry & Year	Questions
 <p>Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages</p>	Indicator 3.1.1: Maternal mortality ratio	Minister of Plantation Industries, 2012	a) Is he aware that the labourers in the privatised state plantations in Matugama, Agalawatta and Bulathsinghala areas in the Kalutara District are faced with grave health problems as those plantation companies have cut down the allocations on labour sanitation?
	Indicator 3.8.1: Coverage of essential health services (defined as the average coverage of essential services based on tracer interventions that include reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health, infectious diseases, non-communicable diseases and service capacity and access, among the general and the most disadvantaged population)		(b) Will he state— (i) the number of families of estate labourers living in the above areas; (ii) the health facilities made available for those labourers; (iii) the statistics relating to infant and maternal mortality, contraction of non-communicable diseases, unwanted pregnancies and malnutrition prevalent among the members of the estate labour community as at present; and (iv) whether arrangements will be made to provide the health and sanitation facilities required by those areas soon ? (c) If not, why?

CHECKLIST: Effective engagement with Government on the SDGs

- ☒ How does the Committee engage with Government to properly assess the effectiveness of Government action on SDG-related issues?
- ☒ Do Committees consult and liaise with any Government department falling within its category of affairs on the SDGs and NDP?
- ☒ Do Committees invite relevant Ministers to provide updates/ regular briefings on progress being made towards achieving the SDGs and NDP goals that fall under their purview?
- ☒ Do Committees submit written questions or summon relevant Minister(s) to attend Committee hearings related to bills and annual reports to give evidence, provide information and answer questions from Committees on SDG related issues?
- ☒ Do Committees request that Government / relevant line Ministries submit progress reports about the implementation of the SDGs and NDP goals that fall under their purview?
- ☒ Do Committees proactively oversee SDG implementation and access information from the Government on what is being done (and not done) by using the Committee SDG Indicator Tool to ask specific questions related to SDG targets?
- ☒ Have Committees asked for and received documents and data from Government on progress towards the SDG targets that fall under their purview? Is the data disaggregated by sex, age, geographical distribution and other relevant characteristics?

5.4 Conducting inquiries

The ability to initiate an inquiry into any specific matter of public interest is a valuable tool that Committees can use to draw attention to SDG issues of importance and investigate into progress towards achieving individual SDG goals.

CASE STUDY: In the Solomon Islands, the Environmental and Conservation Committee (ECC), the Health and Medical Services Committee (HMSC) and the Police, National Security and Correctional Services Committee (PNSCSC) conducted joint inquiries in the countries' outer islands areas, and specifically inquired into the quality of services provided by the state to the most vulnerable communities. The ECC investigated the impact of climate change, especially sea level rise in the low-lying islands; the HMSC inquired into the status and quality of medical services; and the PNSCSC inquired into the integrity and adequacy of the country's police forces, especially in relation to security threats at the country's eastern borders – in line with SDGs 3 (health); 13 (climate change); and 16 (combat crime, violence and promote security).

Inquiries allow Committees to effectively interrogate elected and appointed Government officials to properly assess the effectiveness of Government action on SDG-related issues, or asking CSOs and other stakeholders to provide information in writing, orally, or in electronic format to the Committee during the investigation.

CASE STUDY: In Italy, the Standing Sub-Committee on Implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals conducted a fact-finding inquiry between June 2016 and December 2017. The inquiry included hearings involving Government officials, international organisations and members of civil society participating in the Agenda's implementation process. The fact-finding inquiry monitored in particular the initiatives taken by the G7 countries (Italy held the G7 Presidency for the year 2017). The inquiry assessed initiatives, financial aspects and any possible relations with international institutions that may help to define Italy's position regarding the various issues and to identify the most appropriate ways of giving Italy's commitment to achieving the 2030 Agenda a greater visibility, especially in European contexts.

In Fiji, Standing Order 110 (1) indicates that Committees can scrutinise the Government departments with responsibility within the Committee's subject area, including by investigating, inquiring into, and making recommendations relating to any aspect of such a department's administration, legislation or proposed legislative programme, budget, rationalisation, restructuring, functioning, organisation, structure and policy formulation. According to this Standing Order, Committees can initiate studies, reports or inquiries to examine implementation of SDG-related programmes or policies that relate to their respective portfolio.

Part 6 Targeted actions

6.1 What can you do as a Committee Chair?

The role of the Committee Chair is key to determining the breadth and depth of the Committee's engagement on SDGs. Committee Chairs have a great deal of influence over how a Committee works. The Chair can:

- ☒ Provide strategic direction in terms of which issues to focus on / prioritise and ensure the SDGs are reflected in the Committee's agenda / work plan / SOP;
- ☒ Provide the Committee's public face in relation to the SDGs.
- ☒ Engage other Committee Chairs and coordinate joint Committee work especially on cross-cutting SDGs.
- ☒ Influence the level of commitment of the entire Committee to engage on the SDGs by organising Committee events / information seminars / awareness-raising activities on the SDGs for Committee Members and Staff aimed at building understanding and ensuring that all Committee members have the same baseline understanding of the 2030 Agenda, the relevant SDGs and their supporting targets.
- ☒ Influence the work that the Committee carries out in terms of conducting meetings, hearings, consultations, site visits on SDG-related topics that fall within the mandate of the Committee;
- ☒ Request information / data about SDGs during Committee proceedings including receiving briefings / inputs during consultations and submissions from civil society organisations, think tanks, academic institutions, development partners and other SDG experts;
- ☒ During Committee reviews of reports, bills, petitions, and treaties – he/she can propel a Committee toward consensus on SDGs-related provisions.

CASE STUDY: The Government of the United Kingdom has committed to embed the UN Sustainable Development Goals within Single Departmental Plans (SDPs). The aim is to enable progress against the SDGs to be reported publicly in departments' Annual Report and Accounts. Despite this commitment, in February 2018 - just two departments had mentioned the Goals in their plans. In light of this, the Chair of the Environmental Audit Committee took the initiative to address a letter to Secretary of State for Education, in which the Chair questioned why awareness of the UN's Global Goals was not being promoted in the Department for Education's Single Departmental Plan. The Secretary of State for Education responded to the letter and stated that the Department had no intention of including the goals in its plan. As a follow-up, the Chair of the Environmental Audit Committee sent another letter to the Minister for the Cabinet Office demanding clarity on this inconsistency. In the letter, the Chair also:

- i. Asks when the Government will begin the Voluntary National Review (VNR) of its progress against the SDGs that it has committed to completing in 2019.
- ii. Urges the Government to embed delivery of the Goals into any new contracts
- iii. Questions which departments sit on the cross-Whitehall Sustainable Development Forum, whether this is an official or ministerial-level body, and its activity to date.

Quotes from the letter: "The Global Goals provide the Government with a global model for promoting sustainability at home. The Government has spectacularly failed to honour its commitment to embed the SDGs throughout Government in its Single Departmental Plans. We want to see explicit inclusion of these goals in each relevant department's Single Departmental Plan as soon as possible".

6.2 What can you do as a Committee Member?

Committee Members also have a clear and specific role to play in championing the SDGs. The degree to which each individual Committee Member commits to addressing the SDGs influences the overall effectiveness of the Committee as a whole. Committee members can:

- Be involved in Committee agenda-setting and steer the direction of the Committee towards prioritising SDGs (when reviewing bills or reports for example) by proposing amendments, recommendations, objecting or voting;
- Contribute to the choice of topics related to the SDGs for public hearings, consultations, calls for submissions, or site visits and prepare thoroughly for these;
- Suggest people or organisations to consult / hear from especially members of communities that are directly concerned by the SDGs or CSOs/ experts who can provide knowledge, information, data about SDGs.
- Request research, briefings and analysis on SDG issues from Staff;
- Tracking SDG-specific recommendations made by Committees and the responses received from Government as follow-up is left to the initiative of individual Committee members. For example, if the Government has not provided a satisfactory response to any SDG-related issues in reports that are submitted by the Committee, an individual member of Committee can decide to raise the issue again during Question-Time.



6.3 What can you do as a Committee Staff Member?

Committee Members rely on Staff Members to deliver support and analysis that is required to do the detailed work of a legislator. Committees need well-capacitated Staff Members who have access to clear and strong information, data and evidence to be able to provide critical and timely advice to Committees. Without a strong Staff Member contingent, a Committee will not be able to fulfill its role in the implementation of the Goals. Staff Members should be fully aware of, understand, appreciate and become fully conversant on the SDGs; the SDGs should be at the top of the mind of Staff Members as they provide advice and work on a daily basis in the sector in which the Committee has jurisdiction. Committee Staff Members can:

- Ensure information about the SDGs (including this Guidance Note, the Committee SDG Indicator Tool, other SDGs educational resources, SDGs advocacy materials and relevant SDGs reports) is available for use by Committee Members and included in briefing materials such as packages prepared for Committee induction events or files prepared ahead of a public hearings;
- Keep up to date with emerging SDG issues in the Committee's sphere of influence through reading and additional research; receive and share updates on national and international SDG implementation issues with Committee Members. For example, identify future SDG or sectoral planning processes, in which Committee members should seek to be involved (i.e.: the Voluntary National Reviews).
- Help Committee Members obtain the knowledge, information and data required to substantively assess any given issue (report, bill, etc.) through an SDG lens by providing analysis to Committees on SDG issues;
- Collaborate with the Research Department; request in-depth research on SDG issues and data: Provide clear guidelines to conduct focused research based on the SDG indicators (consider sharing research templates reflecting the SDGs);
- Build networks with private sector, research bodies and academic institutions to try to multiply the knowledge available to the Committee / expand their network and directory of focal points and contact persons to quickly get information needed;
- Maintain a list of contacts for civil society organisations, academics and technical experts who can be asked to provide their views on SDG-related law reform issues when those issues come up in Committees;
- Commission external research including from CSOs to gather quantitative data to inform Committee deliberations;
- Suggest potential calls for submissions related to SDGs, including their scope and focus. Provide briefings, suggest questions and recommend stakeholders to consult in connection with the SDGs;
- When reviewing and preparing summaries on bills and annual reports, use the Committee SDG Indicator Tool to conduct an SDG assessment. Include findings and key issues of the SDG assessment in the summary brief; note issues and formulate questions connected to the SDGs;
- Bring Committee Members' attention to SDG-related issues by drafting suggested questions, outlining reports, and preparing bill amendments that incorporate and address the SDGs. Consider using reporting templates that incorporate the SDGs;
- Work across Committee teams on any cross-cutting SDG-related issues.

Deputy Secretary-General to Parliament, Jeanette Emberson (right) briefing Hon. Niumataiwalu on the use of electronic voting system in the Chamber.

Part 7 Coordinating the work of the Committees on the SDGs

The advantage of integrating the SDGs in existing institutional mechanisms in Parliament is that this allows them to be mainstreamed in all Committee deliberative processes. The Standing Committees will work on SDG issues relevant to the different goals and targets based on their mandate and conduct scrutiny of Government progress on the SDGs in their respective sectors. That being said, Parliament will need to ensure that overall progress toward achieving the 2030 Agenda as a whole is monitored, captured and communicated. A coordinating mechanism that can help Parliament to monitor overall progress toward national targets and provide leadership and focus to parliamentary work on the SDGs is needed.

As the Ministry of Economy will have primary responsibility for the SDGs and coordination of the National Development Plan, the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs can be given primary responsibility for overall oversight of SDGs progress and parliamentary scrutiny of the National Development Plan and its coordination across Committee sectors, including conducting regular/periodic public hearings with the Ministry of Economy as part of the oversight process to consider the extent to which NDP and SDG targets are being met.

Alternatively or in addition, a working group of Committee Chairs and Deputy Chairs can be established to coordinate the mainstreaming of SDGs within and across Committees; to facilitate regular information exchange on SDG implementation between the Committees; and spearhead parliamentary action on the SDGs and ensure a coordinated approach across Committees to the oversight of Government action on the SDGs. This coordinating group could also become parliamentary ‘champions’ for the SDGs as part of parliamentary outreach activities.

CASE STUDY: In South Africa, the Chairs of the Parliamentary Committees played a leadership role in coordinating Parliament’s overall action on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). A meeting with all the Chairs was held on Parliament’s role in implementing the MDGs in the beginning of 2011 - to review the direction of Parliament in monitoring the implementation of the MDGs focusing on the oversight role of Parliamentary Committees. It was recognised that Parliamentary Committees had been working independently to assess the progress made on the MDGs by departments and entities over which they had oversight. The Chairs of the Committees agreed that their respective Committees would report on their findings by the end of May 2011 and that these reports would then be collated into a consolidated report.

A “working group of Standing Committees” exists in Luxembourg.

In France a Committee called “Conference des présidents” meets every week, in which every Committee Chairs and Deputy Chairs meet with the minister in charge of relations with the Parliament, and tables the parliamentary agenda for every week, within the framework of a provisional programme for three weeks.

COMMITTEE ENGAGEMENT IN VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEWS

The High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) is the United Nation's primary forum for follow-up and review of Agenda 2030. This Forum is tasked with providing political leadership, guidance and recommendations on all aspects of Agenda 2030 implementation and follow-up, including by tracking progress, encouraging the formulation of more coherent policies informed by evidence and country experiences and addressing emerging issues as they become apparent. Each July, national leaders gather at the Forum to take stock of progress and recalibrate global efforts. A number of countries undergo Voluntary National Reviews for this occasion. Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) are critical elements of the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda as they are the main global mechanism through which national governments report on their implementation progress. VNRs are expected to be voluntary, state-led, undertaken by both developed and developing countries, and provide a platform for partnerships, including through the participation of major groups and other relevant stakeholders including civil society and the private sector.

The main objective of VNRs is to facilitate the sharing of experiences, including successes, challenges and lessons learned, with a view to accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The VNRs also seek to strengthen policies and institutions of governments and to mobilise multi-stakeholder support and partnerships for the implementation of the SDGs.

The role of parliaments in national progress reviews is specifically mentioned in paragraph 79 of the 2030 Agenda, which states: 'We also encourage member states to conduct regular and inclusive reviews of progress at the national and sub-national levels which are country-led and country-driven.(...) National parliaments as well as other institutions can also support these processes.'

An important entry point for Committees to exercise oversight of national progress on the SDGs may come from the voluntary reports that Fiji is invited to present to the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. In 2019, Fiji will carry out its first National Voluntary Review. Just as with the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) and other international monitoring processes, it is important for Committees to be involved in the preparation of progress reports, to consider the report before it is shared, and to be part of the delegation that presents the report to the HLPF. After the country has taken part in the HLPF review mechanisms and received international recommendations about further action on implementing the SDGs, Committees should ask for debriefings to take place afterwards with the Government, question the Government on how it plans to respond to any shortcomings, and discuss and follow up on recommendations emerging from the HLPF review. Committees should also inquire into progress on implementing the concluding observations of the HLPF when reviewing subsequent annual reports from respective Ministries.

Find out more about the VNRs on the following website: UN Sustainable Development Knowledge
: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/vnrs/>



We also encourage member states to conduct regular and inclusive reviews of progress at the national and sub-national levels which are country-led and country-driven.

Part 8 Annexes

Annex 1 - The SDGs

Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere

Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

Goal 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

Goal 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation

Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries

Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

Goal 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

Goal 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice

for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development

Annex 2 – Useful Resources

2030 Agenda and the SDGs

A/RES/70/1. Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E

(A/RES/71/313). Global indicator framework for the SDGs and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/Global%20Indicator%20Framework%20after%20refinement_Eng.pdf

A/RES/69/313. Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development. http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/69/313&Lang=E

United Nations Development Group (2015). Mainstreaming the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: Interim reference guide to UN Country Teams. <http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/MDG/Post2015-SDG/UNDP-SDG-UNDG-Reference-Guide-UNCTs-2015.pdf>

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<http://unsdsn.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/151211-getting-started-guide-FINAL-PDF-.pdf>

Parliaments and the SDGs

United Nations Development Programme, the Global Organisation of Parliamentarians Against Corruption and the Islamic Development Bank (2017). Parliament's Role in Implementing the Sustainable Development Goals: A Parliamentary Handbook.
http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/democratic-governance/parliamentary_development/parliament-s-role-in-implementing-the-sustainable-development-go.html

Inter-parliamentary Union & United Nations Development Programme (2016). Parliaments and the Sustainable Development Goals – A self-assessment toolkit. http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/democratic-governance/parliamentary_development/parliaments-and-the-sustainable-development-goals.html

UN SDG Action Campaign (2016). Guide for parliamentary engagement in implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the SDGs.
<https://sdgactioncampaign.org/sdg-parliamentary-manual/>

Together 2030 (2018). Engaging parliaments on the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs: representation, accountability and implementation. A handbook for civil society.
<http://www.together2030.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Engaging-parliaments-on-the-2030-Agenda-and-the-SDGs.pdf>

Hanoi Declaration. The Sustainable Development Goals: Turning words into action. Adopted by the 132nd IPU Assembly, Hanoi, 1 April 2015. <http://www.ipu.org/conf-e/132/rpt-gendebate.htm>

Placing democracy at the service of peace and sustainable development: Building the world the people want. Declaration adopted at the Fourth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament, New York, 2 September 2015. <http://www.ipu.org/splz-e/speakers15/declaration.pdf>

Fiji resources

Fiji Parliament. SDGs Self-Assessment Report (2017).
http://www.parliament.gov.fj/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/SDGs-Self-Assessment-Report-Draft_FINAL.pdf

Fiji Ministry of Economy (2017). 5-year and 20-year National Development Plan. Transforming Fiji.
<http://www.fiji.gov.fj/getattachment/15b0ba03-825e-47f7-bf69-094ad33004dd/5-Year--20-Year-NATIONAL-DEVELOPMENT-PLAN.aspx>

Parliament of Fiji. Standing Orders.
<http://www.parliament.gov.fj/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/final-upload-Extra-Gaz-20-Feb-Amended-Standing-Order-8-February-2017.pdf>

Useful SDG-related websites

United Nations Sustainable Development Knowledge Portal. <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/frameworks>

High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development Goals. <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf>

United Nations SDGs Action Campaign. <https://sdgactioncampaign.org/>

Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals. <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/owg.html>

United Nations Global Compact SDGs Briefs. <https://www.unglobalcompact.org/library/1401>

WorldWeWant. <https://www.worldwewant2030.org/>

Together 2030 – from policy to action.
<http://www.together2030.org/>

Useful parliaments and SDGs websites

Agora Parliamentary Portal SDGs pages.
<http://www.agora-parl.org/resources/aoe/sustainable-development-goals-sdgs-post-2015-agenda>

Inter-Parliamentary Union. <http://www.ipu.org>

Annex-3

ACTION PLAN OF THE HEALTHCARE AND SOCIAL ISSUES COMMITTEE OF THE PARLIAMENT OF GEORGIA (2017-2020) – selected examples of action items

The full Action Plan is available here:

http://parliament.ge/ge/ajax/downloadFile/81370/Health_AP_Eng

Committee Action Plan for Law-making Activities

STRATEGIC GOAL 1. Legislative activity, considering obligations imposed by the national strategies, the EU-Georgia Association Agreement, the UN SDGs and other international agreements

Action	Compliance with the UN SDGs	Responsible Person(s)		Other Stakeholders	Implementation Period	Indicator
		MP	Staff Member			
Request the report on the activities of MOLHSA and analyse it in relation to the government programme approved by the parliament	SDG 16: Target 16.6			MOLHSA	December 2017	Information has been received, document has been drafted
Hold a committee hearing on the implementation of the UN SDGs	SDG 1.3 SDG 3a; 3.5; 3.8; 3.9 SDG 6.2 SDG 8.5; 8.6; 8.8 SDG 10.2; 10.3 SDG 16.2; 16.6; 16.7			MOLHSA, interested parties, NGOs	December 2017	Hearing protocol
Prepare written questions and/or organise the committee hearing to monitor the execution of the recommendations to the executive government	SDG 16: Target 16.6			MOLHSA, Experts, NGOs	During budget execution period (2017)	Questions have been prepared; hearing has been held

Action	Compliance with the UN SDGs	Responsible Person(s)		Other Stakeholders	Implementation Period	Indicator
		MP	Staff Member			
Monitor the enforcement of the Law on Labour Safety	SDG 16: Target 16.6			MOLHSA, interested parties	2018	Sub-legislative acts have been adopted. Requires Regulatory Impact Analysis (RIA)
Monitor the enforcement of the Law on Tobacco Control	SDG 3: Target 3.a SDG 16: Target 16.6			MOLHSA, interested parties	Parliament's spring session (2019)	Requires Regulatory Impact Analysis (RIA)
Conduct committee hearing on the state budget execution reports for 2017, 2018, 2019 prepared by the State Audit Office	SDG 16: Target 16.6			Ministry of Finance, MOLHSA, State Audit Office	May (annually)	Hearing protocol, conclusion and recommendations have been developed

Committee Action Plan for Law-making Activities

STRATEGIC GOAL 1. Legislative activity, considering obligations imposed by the national strategies, the EU-Georgia Association Agreement, the UN SDGs and other international agreements

Action	Compliance with the UN SDGs	Responsible Person(s)		Other Stakeholders	Implementation Period	Indicator
		MP	Staff Member			
Consider and adopt the draft Law on Labour Safety and the resulting draft laws	SDG 8: Target 8.8			The International Labour Organisation (ILO), EU Technical Assistance Project (EUVEGE), social partners, the Public De-fender	December 2017	The law has been adopted. Requires Regulatory Impact Analysis (RIA) in 2018
Adopt the Law of Georgia on Tobacco Control	SDG 3: Target 3a			All interested parties	2017	The law has been adopted. Requires Regulatory Impact Analysis (RIA) in 2019

Action	Compliance with the UN SDGs	Responsible Person(s)		Other Stakeholders	Implementation Period	Indicator
		MP	Staff Member			
Assess the need for introduction of sanitary-hygienic norms and regulations	SDG 6: Target 6.2 SDG 3: Target 3.9			Ministry of Labor, Health, Social Affairs (MOLHSA) Experts, WHO, other donor organisations	Parliament's spring session (2018)	The document has been drafted
Draft/adopt a new Law on the Protection of Persons with Disabilities	SDG 10: Target 10.			MOLHSA, Ministries of Justice, Finance, Economy, Education and other relevant ministries, International Organisations and NGOs	Parliament's spring session (2019)	The law has been drafted/ adopted
Draft/adopt a new Law on Social Protection for 2017, 2018, 2019 prepared by the State Audit Office	SDG 10: Target 10.2			Relevant parliamentary committees, government agencies and other interested parties	Parliament's spring session (2020)	The law has been drafted/ adopted

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