**The involvement of organisations of persons with disabilities in the Voluntary National Reviews for HLPF 2017**

**9:30 - 11.00 AM EST, Tuesday, 9 May, 2017**

***full unedited captioning of session***

>> Good morning, everybody. We will be starting in a few more moments. Thank you very much.

(voice in the background).

(beeps).

>> Hi [inaudible] on‑line.

>> Talin?

>> Hello, Jose.

>> Hello. Are we ready to start? Or should we wait for a few minutes more?

>> So we have quite a few people here already. It's 9:30. I think we can start. I am recording the session as well, so people can access it later on after the session. I think we can start.

>> All right. So good morning, everyone. Welcome to our third webinar. It's a pleasure for us to have you all here to keep discussing about how to ensure that persons with disabilities and their representative organizations can participate in the SDGs, the sustainable development goals, for the agenda 2030.

Before we start, I would like to thank you, thanks very much to all the captioners and the sign language interpreters, who will do a great job, I hope they can understand me and persons that are using closed captioning or sign language interpretation can also participate in the same way as others. Also I would like to thank Talin from International Disability Alliance, who is providing us all the technical support we need to make sure that this webinar goes well. And of course, a big thanks to all of you for taking your time to participate in this webinar.

Let me briefly share with you what is the intention of this webinar, what would be our goals throughout the next 60 minutes that we will be sharing together.

As you know, the sustainable development goals, the agenda 2030, it is a very important political commitment that many governments have subscribed, and therefore we need the representative organizations of persons with disabilities, we need to make sure that our voice is heard within the context of the agenda 2030.

To that end, we have planned to develop certain number of activities, certain number of activities related to a train or to share some knowledge around the SDGs and the agenda 2030, particularly this webinar will try to address one specific complement of the agenda 2030 which is the so‑called voluntary national review. It is a tool through which the countries which have committed themselves to implement the agenda 2030 are able to use to share with other governments and other interested parties what they are doing in term of ensuring that the agenda 2030 is taking place at the national level. So the goal of this webinar is to share with you what is the voluntary national review process is about, and how we, persons with disabilities and our representative organizations, can work together in alliance with the government to ensure that our demands, our needs are fully included and considered. Well, the signing, implementing and monitoring the agenda 2030 ‑‑ while designing, implementing and monitoring the agenda 2030. So if we all agree that our goal today is to be more aware of what the VNR, the voluntary national review process is all about, we can certainly start by briefly explaining where the VNR fits into the whole context of the agenda 2030.

As you may know, the agenda 2030, it has been adopted in September, 2015 by the U.N. General Assembly, and it is as I said a political commitment that all governments or most of the U.N. state, member states, have ratified in order to improve the lives of persons independently of where they live, who they are, or what needs they have. This agenda 2030, it is such a normative tool for development because it recognizes that when we talk about development, we are not just talking about, for example, development for developing countries or for a certain social group.

We rather are talking when we talk about development, that it is a human right, and it must cover all persons independently of their age, race, sex, religion, disability and other different variables.

This agenda 2030, which is human rights based, was adopted in September, 2015 by the U.N., and it is one of the section that the documents called transforming our world, which is the main document that guides the implementation of the agenda 2030, one of the sections which is called follow‑up includes two elements which I think are very important that we keep in mind.

One element is what we call the voluntary national review process, and the second element, and it's again a decision that the countries made when adopting the SDGs for the agenda 2030 was what they called the high level political forum which before the adoption of the agenda 2030, the high level political forum or HLPF was already taking place, but the innovation after the final adoption of the agenda 2030 is that during the HLPF, which usually takes place in July in New York at the U.N. headquarters, during the HLPF there will be one segment called, ministerial segment, where countries could have the opportunity to share on a pair basis approach with other governments what they are doing to promote the national implementation of the SDGs.

These two elements, the VNR and the HLPF are crucial for us, I mean DPOs, disabled people organizations, and other stakeholders, because it is the way that we can monitor throughout the years, the implementation of the agenda 2030. When I said it is the right way or it is at least the most appropriate way to monitor the implementation of the agenda 2030, it is because both the HLPF and the VNR allows us as DPOs to make sure that we work in alliance with our government to ensure that our needs, our demands are included in the agenda 2030.

It is important to keep in mind that the agenda 2030, it has clear references to persons with disabilities, but at the same time, it is a universal tool that means it requires national adaptations to be implemented in each country. Right? So, it is a list of 17 goals with a universal perspective, but distinctively it needs a local adaptation to the, to each national context.

Therefore, it is crucial for us to be engaged as much as we can in both processes, the VNR and the HLPF, to make sure that our voice is heard.

Let's start by the second element, which is I would say the explanation I can give, the HLPF is more informative, because it is a global event, that happens once a year. This HLPF, as I said, usually takes place in July in New York at the U.N. HQ, where there are basically two segments. One is what we call the thematic debates segment, and the second segment, as I said, is a ministerial segment. In the thematic debate segment, we usually are able to participate in thematic panels where different goals are addressed and experts, governments representative and civil society representatives have the opportunity to share their views about each goal which is discussed. Actually, for the 2017 HLPF, in the thematic segment, goals number 1 through, 1, 2, 3, 5, 9 and 14 will be addressed. So in the first five days, we will have the opportunity to hear from government representatives, U.N. agencies representatives, and experts plus civil society representatives, what can we say about, for example, gender, which is goal number 5.

This thematic debate can be followed by Internet, and it is very important and we strongly encourage to access to this information, because it's not only top level discussion, but it's a good opportunity to know what experts, governments and other relevant actors think about different topics.

The second segment of the HLPF, the high level political forum, is what we call the ministerial segment. Here, it comes into account the second, the second element, the VNR, the ministerial segment is a three‑day meeting where governments who voluntarily decided to report to their colleagues, to their other state members of the U.N., governments can report what they are doing in terms of implementing the agenda 2030.

So in this three days meeting, we usually, we attend, you can follow again through the Internet, meetings where government representatives have the opportunity to present what they call a national report, a national report is a document that it should be produced in collaboration between the government and the other interested actors, to basically highlight the advancement and challenges in implementing the agenda 2030.

So, after the government representatives have the opportunity to present this national report, a segment question and answer is opened where representatives from other governments plus civil society representatives and other interested parties can formulate questions to the government to help both the government and the other interested parties to approve the implementation or I would say the expected implementation of the agenda 2030.

It is important to always keep in mind that the SDGs framework has been adopted based on a human rights approach, and that is definitely a piece very important to consider, because as disability community, among others, we do have a convention that it is a clear advantage when trying to enter to the SDGs world the CRPD, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, it is a clear advantage if we use the CRPD as a tool to enter and to participate and to get engaged in the SDGs framework.

But the thing that basically what the HLPF is about very briefly, it is a global meeting, I would say that the other element and I would say the most important element is the VNR. The VNR, the voluntary national report or review process is again contained in the document called transforming our world, in the section follow‑up, and it basically provides the government who has subscribed the agenda 2030 to have the opportunity to report and to share what actions they are developing to improve the implementation or to secure the effective implementation of the SDGs. So if you can see, the HLPF takes place at the global level, while the VNR process, although it is connected to the global level, through the second segment in the HLPF, the ministerial segment, the VNR is more of a national process than a global level action.

This distinction, it's very important because the VNR, the voluntary national review process is a way to accurately ensure that our organizations can participate in the implementation of the SDGs.

Why I'm saying this, because if we can organize our thoughts in a step by step document, we can say that a government who has committed itself to implement the agenda 2030, the next steps after the global, the international commitment to implement the agenda 2030, is to start to design a national plan to implement the SDGs, what we call a national SDGs implementation plan or strategy.

Furthermore, each government should designate what we call a focal point, which always, which in many cases is the planning, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or the Ministry of Social Development, it's a focal point that it is responsible to design, implement and to monitor the SDGs' effective implementation strategy.

So again, going back to this picture of a step by step document, after the adoption of the political commitment of the SDGs, a government usually designates this focal point, and they should start to develop a national SDGs plan.

Here is the first moment where DPOs should be invited, and in case that they are not invited, we should ask to be invited, we should promote our participation in the design of the national, SDGs national plan.

So, the next steps usually is, first of all, it is important to clarify that this next step is not mandatory. The government voluntarily can or cannot decide to report to the U.N., but they usually do, right, because it's politically correct to report to the U.N. and to the rest of the countries, right, to what they are doing in the term of implementing the SDGs. So the next steps after the design and implementation of the SDGs national plan is usually to report to the U.N. about the level of implementation of the SDGs.

And that is exactly what we call the VNR, the voluntary national review process. Again, it's a process through which government who have voluntarily decided to report to the U.N. have to produce what I already said, a national report, containing the most relevant advancements and challenges that these governments has faced during a certain period of time, in implementing, designing and implementing and monitoring the SDGs national plan.

So, this VNR process, again, has two legs, the national component, because it's basically, reviews what is happening at the national level, but it is connected to the global level in, within this segment where they report to the U.N. about what they are doing in implementation of the SDGs.

But why I'm saying all this, because I really need all participants to be fully aware of where the VNR fits in the whole context of the SDGs. And when the VNR takes place, how a VNR process starts and what is the first decision that the government has to take in order for a VNR process to start, and more important, how can we participate in this VNR process.

As I said, it is a voluntary decision. It is not mandatory. It is important to keep in mind that generally, the SDGs, it is a political commitment, so it's not a legally binding instrument like for example the CRPD. Since then, the adoption of the SDGs, as a political commitment, we have to make sure that our organizations are involved, especially in the VNR process.

Although it is a political commitment, so probably some people think that it is a more weak instrument than for example a human right treaty body, some information could tell us that although it is a political commitment, many governments are willing to report to the U.N. and to the rest of the international community about what they are doing for implementing the SDGs.

Last year, in the first HLPF after the adoption of the SDGs, where we had the first segment directed to report about what was happening at the national level in term of implementation of the SDGs, 22 countries voluntarily decided to report about the SDGs. And this year, 2017, 44 countries have decided again on a voluntary basis to report on what they are doing at a national level to implement the SDGs.

So, this number of countries reporting to the U.N. tell us that countries are at least politically committed to report and to share what they are doing to ensure the effective implementation of the SDGs.

And furthermore, there are already five, sorry, four countries, who voluntarily decided and they have politically said that they will be reporting in the next year HLPF. We have one country, for example, who already have reported about the SDGs last year, and this year again they are willing to report to the U.N. about what they are doing for the implementation of the SDGs.

So this, it is very important information to have a picture, to have a test of what governments are trying to do at the international level. But again, it is important to find out the connection between the national level and the international level. As I said, I always like to define the VNR as a tool like an instrument. It is connected to the international level, but it's more related to the national level.

Why is connected more to the national level? Because the VNR process will give us the chance to exactly know what is happening in our countries with regard to the implementation of the SDGs, because countries usually have the opportunity to prioritize the goals they want to work in, right? You know the 17 goals is a long list of goals, it is important to keep in mind that besides the 17 goals, the agenda 2030 has 169 targets, and almost 240 indicators, so it is a long path to walk through. It is a big commitment.

It is a enormous challenge. But countries have the opportunity, have the option to say what their priorities are. Right? So, probably one country could say, well, the 17 goals, are interested, or are urgent matters, are related to goal number 1, related to poverty, goal number 2 related to hunger, goal number 8 related to employment and economic growth, goal number 10 related to reviews and equality within and between countries and so on and so forth.

So since the governments have the right to choose which goal to concentrate in, we have to keep ourselves very active to make sure that we are in the right place and at the right moment when this process takes place, to ensure that national implementation reflects our needs and our demands.

Going back a little bit to the VNR process, we already have said the importance of this process, and how it is connected between the global and the national level. However, we always say that in many cases, in many occasions, countries do not do their best to ensure that persons with disabilities along with other social groups are included when designing, implementing and monitoring international instruments.

So the agenda 2030 has introduced a other tool to ensure that this VNR process reflects not only the view of the government, but the views of all interested parties. This tool is called national consultation. What is national consultation? It is the tool through which the government can receive inputs from civil society and other interested parties about the implementation of the SDGs at the national level. So going back to this image of step by step structure, once the government decides to report to the U.N., once the government decided to start the VNR process, there are one outcome that the government should produce which is the national report, this report is usually shared at the international level. But in order to have this outcome, there is a process that the government must undertake, and it's called the national consultation.

National consultation usually can take different, can be implemented differently. In some cases, they have, the government usually hold, I don't know, like monthly meetings with different interested parties. On some other occasions, governments basically do not hold any national consultation. But among the different options or the different ways governments implement the national consultation, it is important for us to know that the national consultation, it is part of the substantive content of the SDGs, and it's part of the political commitment that governments have subscribed when adopting the SDGs.

So we have the right and government have the let's say political commitment to hold national consultation, in order for us to contribute to this outcome of the VNR, which is the national report. However, we know from the practical life, from the practical perspective, that national consultations in many cases don't exist, or if they exist, in many occasions, they are not accessible for persons with disabilities and their representative organizations.

So again, we come in as a community, as a disability community, very active for making sure that we are engaged in the national consultations which will lead the government to produce the national report, which will be distributed at the international level and presented at the HLPF during July in New York at the U.N. HQ.

So, to sum up, we have the HLPF as an international moment, we have the VNR as a two direction instrument, national and internationally, we have the national consultation process, and we and here the most important, we do have to be active in order to ensure that our voice is heard, internationally but more important nationally.

We are very convinced and we want to share this part with you, that beyond the HLPF, which is a global instance where governments get together and discuss with other interested parties what they are doing for the SDGs implementation, the most important part is what we are doing between the HLPF. What do I mean by that? I mean that the most critical and important crucial component of our advocacy work in terms of SDGs is what can we achieve at the national level between the 2017 HLPF and the 2018 HLPF.

Why I'm saying this? Because this is the only way that we will be able to measure progressive implementation of the SDGs.

So, saying this, let me briefly jump into two actions that I, International Disability Alliance and other organizations, international organizations of persons with disabilities are doing. The U.N., along with all these tools that I have just described, has identified different interested parties that can participate or they should participate in this SDGs process. One of these interested parties is what we call the major groups and other stakeholders.

And here, the disability community is present. So we are in alliance with IDA and other international disability and disability consortium members and global organization, we are, we form the group of persons with disabilities, which is part of this bigger group called major groups and other stakeholders, which participates in the, not only in the HLPF, but again through the years, to promote the implementation of the SDGs at the national level.

So, to that end, and in order to ensure that the VNR process is as accessible as we can and it is as participatory as we can, and it includes the views of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations, we are, I mean this group of persons with disabilities, we are doing a set of activities or we are developing a set of actions to basically know what is happening at the national level.

So again, it is very important and sorry to insist but I would strongly like to highlight the need to be connected between national DPOs and international disabled people organizations, because we need to know what is happening out there. We would like to know what is happening in country X, we would like to know if in country Y the national consultations are not accessible. We need to know if in country Z persons with disabilities are left behind, and they have been left out from any national consultation.

And why? Because we need to work in these two directions. We need national organizations of persons with disabilities to be active, to push, to put pressure on their governments to be included in the SDGs process, but of course if we know about these different issues or these different problems, we can always support your work to make sure that you and your organizations are included in the SDGs. And how can we support you? Well, there are several actions, training actions or technical support actions that can provide you with practical tools to ensure that you and your organizations are involved in the national consultation and moreover in the national SDGs implementation.

But again, to that end, I mean basically to have a group knowledge or the better knowledge possible about what is happening at the national level, the group of persons with disabilities working in the SDGs at the international level has decided this year to conduct a global study. This is something that took place last year, and it helped us a lot to identify barriers, advancements and challenges of what is happening at the national level with regards to the SDGs.

Right? Remember that we have to work collaboratively with our government, so we are not aiming at judging government, saying who is doing what and who is doing right and who is doing wrong. We are through this global study conducted last year, and I'm sure that many of you have participated in the last year global report of persons with disabilities with regards to SDGs, the lesson, the most important, the biggest lesson we learned is that that global report allowed governments, stakeholders and other interested parties to know what was going on about the SDGs and persons with disabilities.

So, based on last year's experience, we have challenged ourselves actually, and this year we are going for a bigger global study. This year's international global study, sorry, global study or global report, it will be the result of two surveys. So we are expecting to have answers from national organizations in two moments, when we call the phase 1 survey, which has been already launched and many of you are already working in filling out that survey, and the second phase survey which will be, we will be launching soon, and we expect to have more information from your organizations.

But let me briefly share with you the objective of these two phases of the global study, and then we can discuss a little bit more about what are we expecting to do with the results of the surveys, and how are we going to compile all that information into one global report, and how we can distribute it and participate and share the results.

As I said, we have decided to have a two phases survey. The first survey, it's already under the filling out process, many of you have already filled out and we thank you for that. This first survey is structured in four sections let's say. One first section is about general information. We need to know who you are, and who do you represent, right? So in the first section of the survey, the first phase survey, you will see that questions are directed to know who you are, and who you represent.

The second section, called procedural questions, is aimed at knowing what your government has been doing around SDGs. For example, we would like to know through the second section of the first survey, for example, if your government has adopted or has designed a national SDGs plan. And of course, if in this plan persons with disabilities and their representative organizations were present.

For example, here we have a clear question about what I explained a few minutes ago which is a national consultation. So we are in this second section, the procedural question, we are asking questions like, are you participating in the national consultation? If not, what are the barriers you identify to participate in this national consultation? And what advocacy measures have you undertaken to ensure that you and your organization can fully participate in the national consultation process.

So this second section aims at having the accurate information about what is going on at the national level with regards to the SDGs.

A third section, which is called substantive questions, aimed at gathering knowledge or general information about your country and persons with disabilities. So here in this third section, we ask questions such as, what is the population of your country, what is the percentage of persons with disabilities living in your country. So general but substantive questions for us to know what is currently the most important information you can provide us with regard to persons with disabilities in your country.

And the fourth and final section, it's called follow‑up question, and those questions are intended to know what specific policies, programs or laws are implemented to respect, protect and fulfill all rights, all human rights of persons with disabilities. Here for instance we ask you about the level of coverage of social protection programs for persons with disabilities, because here we would like to know what your country, what your governments are doing to ensure not only that the SDGs are effectively and efficiently taking place, but for example, what are the linkages between the SDGs and the CRPD or other human rights treaty body.

So, with this first survey, what we are trying to measure, what we are trying to know is basically what is happening at the national level with regard to the SDGs. We want to know, we want you to tell us a first holistic picture of what your government is doing in relation to the protection and fulfillment of all human rights by persons with disabilities and in particular with connection to the SDGs.

So, this first survey which has been already launched and many of you have already answered, we are expecting to receive this survey completed no later than May 20, so it is important that you can put on your calendar this deadline, May 20, to receive filled out questionnaire. We can, for those who do not have the survey, we can certainly circulate it to you, and we can actually provide some support if needed in case you don't understand questions, or if any support that we can provide you, we are more than welcome to do so.

After we have received all the answers, especially we are more interested in receiving answer from the 44 countries that will be reviewed this year, remember that I mentioned that 44 countries will be reviewed this year, the list of countries can be also easily accessed to, you can find the whole list of countries in the U.N. SDGs website, or we can also provide that information. But I'm sure you already know if your country will be reviewed this year.

So it is, and it's more related to a technological issue, we expect to have as many surveys as possible. It is highly recommended that this survey can be filled out in alliance between all the organizations in the country. Remember that it's much easier for everyone, even for you, not just for those who are going to compile information, but it's even easier and more representative if we can all agree in one answer, rather than having 11, 12, 20 different answers. So we strongly recommend you to fill out one survey on behalf of all the national organizations of your country, ensuring that all sectors of the disability community are represented.

So with that information, we expect to draft a first part of the global report, this global study, where we basically, we are thinking doing this global report on what we call a country based structure. We expect according to the number of answers we receive especially from those countries coming initially this year, we expect to compile the information in one chapter per country, highlighting the findings that you could provide us through completing the survey.

So we expect to have information from what your governments are doing to ensure the implementation of the SDGs, if DPOs have participate in the national consultation process, and what were the barriers you have faced, and what are the positive and negative aspects with regard to the implementation of the SDGs in your country.

Why are we doing this? Because through this first part of the global report, we expect to share this global report, probably even after the HLPF, because as I said, it is more important what is going to happen after the HLPF and not just in the HLPF, we expect that this global report is used to highlight positive aspect in the participation of our organization in the SDGs, and what challenges we are facing and how can we improve the participation of our organization in the SDGs.

So again, it is very important for us, the persons who are going to compile information, to receive accurate representative and reliable information through the first phase survey.

But as I said in the beginning of the presentation, 44 countries are aiming at reporting this year. And part of the reporting process, they must submit a national report to the U.N., and then they should present the report in at the HLPF.

So we are expecting to have those national reports by the end of May, beginning of June, although the U.N. has encouraged governments to submit the national report by the middle of May. We know that practically we might be receiving some national reports or I should say countries will be sending national reports to the U.N., and therefore, the U.N. will publish those national reports early June. After those national reports are delivered, are published by the U.N., are delivered by governments and published by the U.N. we are planning to launch a second phase survey with very specific and reduced number of substantive questions.

What our goal is with this second phase survey is to exactly measure how or what is the level of presence of persons with disabilities and their relevant issues and their health issues in these national reports.

The experience of last year, in that substantively many countries have mentioned persons with disabilities in their national report and even in their presentation at the HLPF. Many countries have identified or have at least mentioned issues related to persons with disabilities. So again, this year we want to know, out of the 44 countries hopefully, what have been the level of presence of issues that DPOs have identified and the countries have included in their national report.

So this is an invitation to be very active, to be very dynamic, when your national report comes out, we need to for this second phase survey, and through the questions that we are expecting to ask, which again I say are very substantive and concrete questions, to measure how present or what is the level of engagement that our organization and persons with disabilities in general have had to the national consultation process, but more specifically, in the national report.

So, with the first part of the global report which I already have explained, plus this second component, looking at how present we are in the national report, we will compile all that information into one global report, which we expect you can use it as a way to collaborate with your government to ensure that persons with disabilities are included, both national and internationally.

Most important, and I would say the biggest commitment, the largest commitment we can have as a group of persons with disabilities working at the international level, is to help national organizations in their advocacy work through the production of this global report that can be used again by you and your organization in your national advocacy work to collaborate with your government to ensure that our voice is included, is heard in the SDGs implementation. And how this global report links to your advocacy work is because this global report aims at compiling all useful information with practices, main challenges, most important barriers, key issues and so on and so forth, in terms of the implementation of the SDGs with the inclusion of persons with disabilities.

(voices in the background).

To conclude and to open up for question and answer, the aim of this global report is to provide you with a practical tool that can support and guide your advocacy work to ensure that persons with disabilities are included in the SDGs national implementation.

So I will stop here. Thank you again for your time and for your attention. Thank you for the sign language interpretation and the closed captioning. If Talin can help me and can assist me in the question and answer session, it will be fantastic. So thank you.

>> Thank you, Jose. If you have a question, if you can raise your hand, your microphones are all unmuted, so you can speak. Do we have any questions? Go ahead.

>> This is Albert from Bangladesh. Thank you very much, nice presentation. It was really summative for us. I want to tell you one question, you mention in the presentation that you prepared a global report last year. So could you please let me know, after production of the global report, do you share, officially share the findings of the report to the countries? This is question number 1. Can I repeat the question again?

>> Do you have more than one question?

>> Yes. I have two questions.

>> Go ahead with the second question.

>> Second question, as you already mentioned that the countries, they will send a report, country reports to United Nation. Is there any way to send the report to the DPOs and is there any way to submit that report to the [inaudible]

>> Those are your questions?

>> Yes.

>> Thank you. Should we pick up two more questions, Talin, please? And then I can answer them all.

>> Sure. Are there any more questions? Raise your hand.

>> Hi, Jose, from Morocco, so we understand that the second survey, the countries which have reviewed last year are not obliged to take the second survey.

>> Okay, right. So thank you for the three questions. I will try to answer them.

So I will, the global report conducted last year, it is, it has been already published, and it's, you can I'm sure find it on the website of the International Disability Alliance. We can send it by E‑mail. Basically, what we use this global report for was to basically discuss with other interested parties, especially government, in highlighting the level of engagement of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations in the last year process of the SDGs implementation.

The last year's global report was a little bit different. We didn't have this country structure. It was more I could say like a thematic structure, where we highlighted the most critical issues. But yes, all the information was again provided by DPOs to different surveys, two surveys, last year, we conducted two surveys last year. And the results, the findings were compiled in this government report which as I said was used mainly to share our thoughts and our concerns with government.

That is the first question.

The second question, if I remember correctly, from our colleague from Bangladesh, it referred to the second phase survey, and how can we get the national report. As I said, the national report theoretically, they should have been produced in alliance between the governments and the civil society representatives. Right? So, and the process, let's say the formal process is that the government, once they finish the national report, they submit it to the U.N., and the U.N. officially published that report, that national report, and we can have full access to that report once it has been published on the U.N. website.

But again, we should be, and actually in this month, in many of the 44 countries under review this year in this month national consultations are still taking place. So although we should be able to access to those national reports, the most important is that we should be participating in the national report or we should be at least advocating, either to be included in the elaboration of the national report and in those cases where the national report has been already finished, and we were not present, we were not engaged, we should be advocating for, to be included in the next VNR process, right? Remember that VNR process usually takes place on a year basis, and sometimes we could or not, it's up to them, it's optional for them to report. But we should be doing this two direction advocacy effort to access to the national report, but making sure that we also participate in the deliberation of the national report.

To the question of our colleague from Morocco, if I understood correctly your question, it's the global report this year is mainly intended for those countries, for those 44 countries coming into revision this year. Actually, and I should be very honest with you all, we do not expect to cover the 44 countries, we will need a team of hundreds of people working to compile all the information from the 44 countries. But at least we would like to have enough information to make sure that our global report covered most of the issues we have as a disability community, and we try to include as many countries as we can. Of course, especially and mainly out of the 44 countries coming into revision this year.

>> Thank you, Jose. We have a question in the chat box.

>> Salam. Thank you for your presentation, Jose. I have one question. You can remember this deadline for this process, I'm very concerned about this, how guarantee the participation of DPOs in this process, because you tell this in this presentation, they will have possibilities of good work between government and it's very complicate working together with government instance. So I'd like to know the times for make it possible, the strategy for representative DPOs in the countries. Thank you, Jose.

>> Thank you, Salam, Jose, to add to that, the question from Mia is similar, she is asking will the global reports on whether our issues are addressed because even if we are involved in the consultations, the issues we raise may not be addressed in the VNR or the priorities.

>> Thank you, Mia and Salam. Let me quickly again tell you that some of the important deadlines, HLPF is taking place from July 10 to July 17 this year, of course. Countries are expected to submit their national report to the U.N. by the end of May, beginning of June, I would say. We as a group of persons with disabilities, we are expected to receive the phase 1 survey by May 20, and we expect that the second survey will be out right after the national report are published. And we expect that you can fill out the second phase survey within ten days period. Of course, you will need to kind of be familiar, to read the national report of your country, and try to answer it to the second phase survey based on the information provided or contained in the national report.

Then with those information, we will be able to compile the second part of our global study. And again, going to Mia's question, yes, I think you are completely right, and actually the objective of this global report, it's basically to measure exactly or as much as we can what has been the real level of participation of persons with disabilities in the SDGs. It is important to keep in mind that all these efforts are not just to know what governments are doing to ensure that persons with disabilities are included, but I would say that our main objective is to provide you as local leaders, as strong representatives of persons with disabilities, with practical information about how or what is the level of engagement we have with regard to the SDGs. And why is that? Because we need to learn how to better advocate to be included in the national level implementation of the SDGs.

As Salam mentioned, it is very hard, and we do know that it is not an easy task to interact with the government in many occasions, actually furthermore it's really hard. And we need to work harder for a inclusive and effective SDGs implementation. So this global report with your support will be an objective study, but more important, a practical tool to know exactly what or where are we in term of engagement and participation of our organization in the SDGs process.

And from that on, from that perspective with this report we can certainly redefine our advocacy strategies when interacting with government for the effective implementation and inclusive implementation of the SDGs.

>> Thank you, Jose. Now we have a question from Terry who is going to be ‑‑ Rebecca, I need you to put on your microphone.

>> Hello, I'm here. Can you hear me? I can't see Terry. I'm hoping Ramon can.

>> I'm going to put him on right now. Are you able to see him? (background noise).

>> Can you see Terry?

>> Yes.

>> Okay. Great.

>> Go ahead, Terry.

>> The video is very slow. It's better to type the question, because his Internet connection is too slow. So Terry is just typing now. So a question from Ramon to Terry, please type your question, and Rebecca will read it out for you. He is describing where the chat function is on the go‑to meeting control panel.

Already typed it. The question should be there. If we can go up slightly in the chat function.

>> Yes. Okay. Terry's question was (overlapping speakers) UK disability groups ‑‑ okay, the UK disability groups will be submitting a report to the U.N. Geneva in August, and the time limit is very tight, example in June its report, the DPOs respond in two weeks ready for the Geneva meeting. Would our reports cover what you are looking for or is there something in addition? The Geneva process is different compared to the HLPF. Geneva process is more in depth and more professional focus. HLPF is a political process with much more time limited presentation and Q and A.

Do you want to add to that, Jose?

>> No.

>> Okay.

>> We can rectify this if you have any more questions after the session. Are there any more questions?

(voice in background).

>> Go ahead.

>> Thank you very much, Jose. Thank you, everyone, for attending this webinar. It's really wonderful to see this format and Jose did a brilliant job. I want to emphasize one thing, which was a very good question from Mia, a issue that it's possible that (overlapping speakers) requesting from governments will not be addressed in the government report and the outcome what the government is presenting at the HLPF. Further, the global report is going to (overlapping speakers).

(distorted audio).

>> I'm sorry to interrupt. Jose, I think it might be your ‑‑

>> No, it's not mine.

>> No, okay, no worries. I'm so sorry. Go ahead.

>> It's a very good question. Yes, we will be asking in the second phase of questionnaire, what was that the DPOs at the national level asked governments to include or address in their report, and achieved or not. We will be asking this question, to know whether you were successful advocate with your government, or there is something that we can help move ahead at the global level, because that is the role of this exercise, in addition what Jose explained, that we connect your advocacy request and give more emphasis to that at the global level.

I hope this helps. Thank you.

>> Thank you. Are there any more questions? I don't see anyone with their microphones on or with their hands up.

>> Talin, if we don't have any more questions, so we don't have any more questions, right?

>> No more questions, Jose.

>> Can I, before we close the session, thanks again all the participants for your time and for your efforts. It is important to recognize that this exercise that we are inviting you to do, actually that many of you have already started doing it, is just to highlight the need to have good strategies and to improve our advocacy work related to the SDGs, as a way to implement the CRPD and other human rights treaty bodies, but more important is that how can we connect the global level effort with the national level effort.

We are more interested in supporting the work that you are doing at the national level, of course through all the efforts that we can undertake at the global level. But let me close this session by sharing with you a clear example of this connection that we are pushing, we are actually very hard at this, we are trying to have.

Last year, one country was reporting to the U.N. about the SDGs, and the group of persons with disabilities had a representative from that country in the last year HLPF. And that country was not that active and was not a very inclusive of persons with disabilities, but since we have the opportunity to have one person with a disability from that country at the HLPF, and interacting with high level representatives from that government in this HLPF, this year we got to know that in the opening session of a very important meeting, the representative of the government who attended to the last year HLPF clearly referred to persons with disabilities because he got to know or he had the opportunity to interact with one person with disability in the last year HLPF.

So, this example gives me two lessons that I want to share with you. One is that we are doing our best at the global level to support the work that you are doing at the national level, especially with regard to the advocacy strategy you have for the SDGs implementation.

Secondly, and please don't get me wrong in terms that the global level work is more important than the national level, but it's the other way around, that work that you are doing at the national level allows us to advocate at the global level to ensure that persons with disabilities are included in the national plans in your countries.

So it is very important that through the surveys that you are going to send us, and through all the information that you can provide us with, it will basically help all of us, you at the national level and some of us at the international level to make sure that persons with disabilities are included in the SDGs.

I will leave if you want to add something before we close the session and thanks again to all of you for participating.

>> Thank you, Jose. I didn't want to add anything. Just to let everyone know that I have put in the link to this meeting in the chat box, also available from IDA front page where you can access the recording of the meeting, also the captions on there, and the signed interpretation will also be recording, the questionnaire is also on there, the link to it, in our Word document and the deadline for that is the 20th of May.

That is all from me, Jose.

>> Okay, thank you. We formally close the session. I hope you had enjoyed the time together with us today. We look forward to working with you all in the future. Thank you. Bye‑bye.

(end of webinar at 9:53 a.m. CST)

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