

Report of the Regional Exchange Workshop on African National Human Rights Institutions' Engagement in Sustainable Development Processes and engagement in the Africa Regional Sustainable Development Forum, 2020

22 to 28 February 2020, Victoria Falls Town, Zimbabwe



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I Executive Summary

This report outlines the key activities, recommendations and outcomes of three interlinked regional exchange and learning activities of African National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) on human rights and sustainable development.

1. A regional Exchange Workshop on African National Human Rights Institutions' Engagement in Sustainable Development Processes (22 and 23 February)¹
2. An induction training for NHRI use of the FUSE information-sharing and collaborative platform (25 February)
3. Agenda-setting work through NHRI engagement in the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (24 to 27 February)

These three activities were implemented under the 'SDG component' of the NHRI-EU capacity development project funded by the European Union's Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR). The project involves the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI); regional networks of National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) and is coordinated by the Danish Institute for Human Rights (DIHR) on behalf of GANHRI.

Overall, the objectives of the three activities under this initiative were to:

- Facilitate peer-to-peer learning and practical exchanges of experiences between NHRIs in order to gain new knowledge and methods to support work to ensure respect for human rights in national SDG implementation and monitoring;
- Create of a pool of African NHRI trainers on SDGs at the regional level to facilitate further engagements with other actors at the national level;
- Enhance capacity of the Working Group to support the strengthening of a human rights-based approach to development;
- Increase the dissemination and sharing of knowledge and experiences within and between NHRIs on a HRBA to sustainable development in the national context;
- Improve African NHRI engagement with national sustainable development processes as a result of increased application of available tools and methodologies; and
- Facilitate the meaningful participation of NHRIs in the UN Regional Sustainable Development Forums and highlight their key role in ensuring that no one is left behind.

The activities combined very practical training and exchange of information on the use of existing tools and methodologies, with exchanges of experiences, lessons learned and challenges between NHRI SDG Focal Points. This included specific holistic planning and strategic exercises aimed at supporting participants' reflection on concrete entry points and strategies for engagement. The initiative also supported NHRIs to undertake hands-on engagement and agenda-setting work within the context of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development.

¹ See Annexe (i) to this report for the workshop concept which includes a description of the project, and Annexe (ii) for the workshop agenda.

10 participants from different African NHRIs participated in the workshop. These were selected on the basis of existing experiences/engagements with sustainable development, collected through a questionnaire. The selection also ensured gender, regional and language representation across the continent, and that participants have specific roles related to SDGs within their institutions. The 10 NHRIs represented were: Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, South Africa, Togo and Zimbabwe.

As a result of the workshop, and engagements in the ARFSD, NHRIs outlined the recommendations.

II Recommendations

Based on the discussions at the workshop and associated activities the following recommendations have been made:

GANHRI and NANHRI should:

- Continue their work to ensure NHRIs have a seat at the table in terms of representation in regional and global mechanisms for SDG Follow-up and Review to facilitate follow-up on the inclusion of their observations and perspectives;
- Produce more detailed guidance for NHRIs on participation in VNRs;
- Produce more detailed guidance for NHRIs on mapping out the national SDG landscape, entry points for NHRIs and actors to work with to ensure a HRBA to SDGs;
- Provide more ongoing support to NHRIs to link sustainable development commitments with human rights; and
- Support NHRIs to create a platform for collaboration with African SDG monitoring mechanisms.

NHRIs should:

a) Internal capacity and planning

- Make sure participants at SDG-related workshops report back to their NHRIs more systematically, meet with their CEOs and chairperson to explain the importance of a more robust internal action plan on the SDGs;
- Designate a focal point on sustainable development to build NHRI internal capacity;
- Make recommendations to the NHRI Board to evaluate their 2020 work plan in relation to the SDGs;
- Train Commissioners on the linkages between SDGs and human rights;
- Include SDGs in their strategic planning; and
- Make use of available platforms for learning and exchange of experiences, e.g the GANHRI FUSE Platform

b) General engagement in national processes

- Promote and support parliamentarians to exercise the necessary oversight of government obligations through general engagements or annual reporting, media statements, etc;
- Map out the entry points and key actors in national sustainable development strategies and programmes where NHRIs can play a key role in ensuring accountability and a HRBA. Link human rights work with national SDG processes – human rights work is not standalone;
- Map out human rights gaps and risks in national SDG strategies and plans to guide their engagement with sustainable development processes;
- Engage with ministries of planning and finance – go beyond the ‘usual’ NHRI partners;
- Propose inclusion of SDGs in the national action plans for the promotion and protection of human rights;
- Train CSOs on a HRBA; and
- Train parliamentarians and government experts to draft laws and develop policies and action plans that incorporate the human rights-based approach.

c) Reporting

- Make concerted efforts to engage with VNRs and ensure human rights gaps and issues are adequately reflected, and that this analysis is brought to bear on national SDG implementation;
- Use the UNDESA handbook on VNR reporting to help them follow the VNR process and advise states on a HRBA in this context;
- Actively explore opportunities and provide advice to the state on how to ensure a HRBA is used in the process of drafting VNRs as well as in the reports themselves;
- Include a specific section in their annual reports on SDGs from a human rights perspective or make more cross-cutting references to SDGs that are linked to the specific human rights issues addressed in those reports;
- Adopt a multi-disciplinary approach to aligning SDG and human rights reporting and tag work plans for following up on human rights bodies’ recommendations with SDGs clearly identifying which actions focus on which targets and also identify gaps;
- Develop tools which are adapted to national contexts to enable follow-up on which human rights recommendations (and linked SDGs) are being implemented and also to enable NHRIs to document their own follow-up to recommendations or data;
- Develop tools to tag complaints with specific SDG goals or targets, to enable linking of complaints data to sustainable development processes, to inform policy work;
- Ensure referencing of the linkages between the human rights issues raised, and specific SDG targets, in their reports to international and regional human rights bodies. This will help to highlight the SDG linkages of human rights issues for international human rights bodies;

- Train civil society organisations on how to use the treaty bodies' recommendations and link them to SDG implementation and monitoring; and
- Infuse Agenda 2063 in the NHRI affiliate report to African commission.

d) Data

- Ensure that the principles of HRBA (Accountability, participation, non-discrimination, transparency and reflection of international standards and recommendations on human rights) should guide all NHRI involvement with SDG data and the advice they give to states;
- Identify key bodies that can support SDGs processes and engage proactively with them (e.g., inter-ministerial committees or other coordination mechanisms);
- Work directly with National Statistical Offices to identify data gaps, build mutual capacity for data collection in accordance with both statistical and human rights standards, and support to fill official data gaps;
- Where possible, develop joint Memorandums of Understanding and workplans with National Statistical Offices to make roles and responsibilities clearer;
- Provide legal expertise to support arguments for disaggregating data, and indicator design on human rights-related issues;
- Work with Ministries of justice or other relevant ministries to enhance legal expertise to feed into data work; and
- Use recommendations from human rights bodies to feed into identification of data collection priorities.

III Regional Exchange Workshop on African National Human Rights Institutions' Engagement in Sustainable Development Processes

The Regional Workshop was held on 22 and 23 February, 2020. Its objectives were:

- To enhance NHRIs capacity for NHRIs on how to anchor a human rights-based approach to the implementation and monitoring of the SDGs based on the principles of a human rights-based approach to development; and
- To promote African NHRIs' engagement with the annual sessions of the ARFSD.

It targeted key focal persons of NHRIs with the capacity to institute follow-up activities to strengthen capacities of practitioners at the national level.

The Agenda of the workshop² was split into four substantive sections focussing on NHRI experiences in different key areas of SDG implementation, monitoring and accountability:

1. The role of NHRIs in advising on and advocating for a human rights-based approach (HRBA) to SDG implementation;
2. Monitoring and reporting: aligning human rights and SDGs;
3. Data and indicators: A human rights-based approach; and

² See Annex (ii)

4. Strategies for NHRI engagement in regional mechanism for SDG Follow-up and Review.

The selection of the four substantive topics for engagement was based on the responses provided by African NHRIs to a questionnaire on their experiences with engagement with the SDGs.

Below is a summary of the discussions around these topics, key challenges, experiences and recommendations in each thematic area.

Session A. Role of NHRIs in advising on, and advocating for a Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA) to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in national processes

This session covered experiences of NHRIs in advising on and advocating for a HRBA to SDGs in national processes. It discussed the following areas of NHRI interventions: alignment of national frameworks and policies with the SDGs; institutional mechanisms for implementation; policy and legislation coherence and alignment; and leaving no one behind.

1. Experiences and challenges

Some of the **globally applicable challenges** for national implementation of SDGs that NHRIs also have to grapple with include:

- Translating a global framework into meaningful action and progress at national level;
- Adaptation to national realities – different approaches depending on context;
- Policy and law – coordination and alignment – different in each country;
- Ensuring a human rights-based approach – accountability, non-discrimination, participation, transparency. Human rights risks of inadequate implementation and monitoring, inadequate process;
- Ensuring adequate mechanisms for coordination, oversight and accountability;
- Lack of data or inadequate data;
- Ensuring “no one is left behind”; and
- Negative human rights impacts associated with development initiatives.

Examples of actions undertaken and challenges faced by **specific African NHRIs** are as follows:

Country/ NHRI	Activities
Cameroon (CNDHL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in consultations organized by the Ministry of the Economy, Planning and Regional Development around the Contextualization Plan and prioritization of the SDGs in connection with existing national policies and strategies (2015-2017); • Advice on taking into account the human rights-based approach in the preparatory activities for the Voluntary National Review (VNR) Report on the implementation of the SDGs before the High

	<p>Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (February-April 2019);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advising the Government through the various reports to the State, written contributions to the reports to be submitted by the State as well as alternative NHRI reports to human rights monitoring mechanisms at international and regional levels; • Capacity building workshop human rights focal points in ministerial departments on taking the SDGs into account in the different sectors of public administration in Cameroon (December 2016); • Publication of a factsheet the level of consideration of persons with disabilities in the definition of indicators proposed for the Sustainable Development Goals (December 2016) – linked to the celebration of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities; and • Training workshop for law enforcement officials and other social workers to support child victims of violence, during which a module on the 44 SDG indicators directly related to children was presented (September 2018).
Ghana (CHRAJ)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CHRAJ is included as a member of the National SDG Implementation Coordination Committee through which it provides advice on integration of HRBA principles and localising the indicators within the national context; and • CHRAJ has provided analysis of budget allocation to various government departments in line with specific SDGs.
Kenya (KNCHR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KNCHR has developed a HRBA Guide for public policy makes at the national and county levels; and • The draft National Action Plan (NAP) on Business and Human Rights in Kenya is strategically aligned at high level with the SDGs, and the Third Mid-Term Development Plan (MTPIII) at the national level. This could include a monitoring framework to enhance accountability.
South Africa (SAHRC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SAHRC has been engaging with the National Commission on Planning and the National Statistical Office through which it provides advice on HRBA
Uganda (UHRC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UHRC is officially included in the National SDG Coordination Taskforce, the process of reviewing and validating the draft national roadmap on the SDGs, and the Technical Working Group on Planning and Mainstreaming.

More specifically, **some key common challenges facing NHRIs are:**

- Internal NHRI capacity, resources to align SDGs and human rights in their work is still a challenge;
- The multiplicity of action plans and national strategies which do not make a precise allusion to the SDGs and which involve several actors (lack of coordination and alignment);

- The difficult adaptation of the SDG targets and indicators to national policies and international requirements in a particularly complex security context (context unfavourable for monitoring the SDGs);
- Limited support for partners in popularizing and implementing the SDGs;
- Low levels of appreciation of the SDG subject within the institutions (SDGs are not prioritised);
- Appreciation of the SDGs by the authorities is only on the economic level and not on the human rights aspects; and
- Challenge of identifying, capitalising on strategic entry points in SDG processes for larger impact.

2. Lessons learned

Advising and coordinating with the state and others

- **National Development Planning Frameworks** provide a context from which to localise or align with SDGs – e.g., Kenya Vision 2030, Uganda Vision 2040, Long-term National Development Plan of Ghana 2018-2057, etc;
- **Alignment of development policy and programming with human rights standards** and recommendations is still largely a missed opportunity – **human rights laws and policies are not standalone**;
- National development strategies can be too focussed on economic matters and not on social and human rights issues and therefore NHRIs can play a major role in **advising state on institutional budgets** allocated for different SDGs through analyses of how much budget is allocated to each area;
- NHRIs' bridging role – there are some examples of facilitating better participation of rights-holders in SDG processes but there is scope for improvement;
- NHRIs need to **work with actors beyond the 'usual suspects'** – including through building their capacity. This means engaging with finance, development and other government bodies to ensure a HRBA and alignment of their actions with human rights obligations;
- **Aligning SDGs and human rights policy and planning** can mean more budget and more momentum behind actions to promote and protect human rights;
- Establishment of **coordination mechanisms** at the national level has enabled some NHRIs to work with CSOs and support feedback on SDG implementation and human rights at the same time;
- Using **NHRI data** from research, reports, complaints and other areas to **critically assess SDG reporting** is still largely a missed opportunity but can potentially have a great impact;
- **Surveys and investigations** on specific issues or groups of rights-holders by NHRIs have contributed to government budget being allocated to address those issues at national level, or to specific measures being taken to address the issues raised; and

- **Governmental commissions at national level** focussed on specific issues (e.g., rights of women, persons with disabilities, child, labour, etc) can also provide oversight of specific SDGs and therefore NHRIs should work with them closely;

Internal

- Including SDGs in **strategic plans** of NHRIs sets the tone for aligning their work and reporting to SDGs. NHRI should share workplans on engaging with SDGs to support each other’s work;
- There is need for **internal capacity, strategic direction** and a strong strategic understanding of how to influence SDG processes within NHRIs; and
- The need to move beyond typical NHRI focus on one policy or law and think about the broader picture by linking this work to broader development processes.

Session B. Aligning SDG and human rights monitoring and reporting

This session focussed on NHRI experiences of aligning human rights and SDG reporting and monitoring, using their existing reporting on human rights at national and international levels to ensure SDG references are included, and participation in Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) on SDGs. The importance of aligning monitoring and reporting for improving accountability for the SDGs, was a major focus of this session.

1. Challenges and experiences

Country/ NHRI	Experiences
Cameroon (CNDHL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CNDHL contributes to the annual report on human rights assessment which includes a review of human rights target in the SDGs; • SDGs are also included in the plan for popularizing and monitoring the implementation of the recommendations of the UN and African human rights monitoring mechanisms (integrated approach to following up implementation of recommendations; and • CNDHL has also been involved in monitoring adherence to human rights standards in large-scale projects as part of the ensuring that the National Business and Human Rights Action Plan takes SDGs into account
Ghana (CHRAJ)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CHRAJ has been involved in conducting workshops for CSOs on how the monitoring of SDG is a way of strengthening the role of CSOs in holding governments accountable and safeguarding the principle of participation.
Malawi (MHRC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MHRC has used information human rights mechanisms such as UPR, CRC, CCPR, CRPD, CEDAW in its SDG monitoring. It has also conducted research on critical human rights issues thereby generating a body of evidence that supports a number of advocacy, education and policy or programme review activities that can be fed into SDG programming.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MHRC's application of a multi-disciplinary approach bringing in personnel with different expertise, and the linking of SDG reporting to Human Rights reporting has improved follow-up and reduced reporting burdens.
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2. Lessons learned

- Most NHRIs are often not able to monitor all SDGs thus the need to make strategic decisions and prioritise what to focus on;
- More capacity strengthening is needed for African NHRIs to enhance common understanding of SDGs and how to align SDG and human rights reporting;
- The existence of many silos within NHRIs in relation to SDG and human rights reporting could be a hindrance systematic referencing of SDGs in their reports;
- Some NHRIs are more complaints-driven but this still leaves a great opportunity to develop complaints handling, tools that enable categorisation/tagging of complaints and relating them to specific sustainable development issues or processes. This can show the frequency of complaints that are related to various aspects of SDG implementation thus providing an important form of monitoring data;
- Parallel reports to treaty bodies are largely compiled on the basis of inputs from NHRI staff and therefore SDGs not referenced systematically if staff have not been trained;
- Monitoring and research on SDGs especially in the principle of Leaving no one behind is resource-intensive e.g., Conduct of budget analysis and expenditure tracking using HRBA, targets are theoretically achievable but difficult. NHRIs can benefit from pooling of resources through collaboration and partnerships with civil society organisations;
- There is need for NHRIs to do more to build capacities among state bodies through trainings and advice on how to use a HRBA in state VNR reporting; and
- NHRIs are not systematically included in VNR drafting processes or invited to give advice. Comments on VNRs from NHRIs are sometimes not reflected in VNRs which is a challenge that should be raised by them. It can also be difficult for NHRIs to influence which indicators states report on in the VNR process.

Session C. Data and indicators for monitoring

This session focussed on the use of human rights data and a human rights-based approach to data collection, disaggregation and indicator development as key means of enhancing SDG monitoring, filling large data gaps, and ensuring that disaggregated data is available on those groups furthest behind. NHRI experiences in generating data, advising on data collection and a human rights-based approach to data, and collaborating with national statistical offices, were discussed.

1. Experiences and challenges

A presentation followed by an interactive session, on HRBA to SDG data and indicators entailing opportunities and limitations in the global SDG indicator framework and strategies for filling the data gaps, outlined some of the limitations in the 2030 Agenda indicator framework and opportunities for NHRIs as follows:

Gaps and limitations	Opportunities for NHRIs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Serious data gaps exist in SDG monitoring; ▪ National Statistical Offices have limited capacity to gather all required SDG data; ▪ Limitations of outcome indicators for measuring progress and necessary laws, policies, and measures in place to achieve outcomes; ▪ Need for complementary national indicators adapted to specific national circumstances; ▪ NHRI data is not considered as official data; ▪ Need for statistical capacities for disaggregation to gather better data on those left behind; and ▪ Existence of data gaps which can be filled through partnerships with relevant entities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Serve as credible 3rd party data providers; ▪ Advise on nationalizing indicators; ▪ Ensure situation of vulnerable groups is captured through participation and/or disaggregation; ▪ Contribute to HRBA to data and data collection; ▪ Advise on data collection methodology and ensure it is in line with HRBA to data and human rights standards; ▪ Contribute to the measuring of structural aspects of SDG framework (laws, policies); ▪ Use their existing data and databases to provide qualitative explanations of statistical data; ▪ Highlight discrepancies in data; ▪ Help to 'translate' human rights recommendations to inform data collection needs and methods; and ▪ Infuse HRBA to data, e.g, self-identification, participation, disaggregation, transparency, accountability and privacy.

This was followed by a case study of Kenya on Working with National Statistical Offices on a HRBA to SDG data, and an interactive discussion on gaps in the availability of data, data existing in NHRIs and strategies to engage National Statistical Offices.

The KNCHR experience

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR) and the Kenya National Bureau of statistics (KNBS) in July 2017 for purposes of strengthening data collection, disaggregation, dissemination and analysis in light of human rights and the 2030 Agenda. These institutions are now working together to develop a human rights-based methodology and tools for data collection, disaggregation and dissemination on four indicators under SDG Goal 16, to ensure that data collection is not only based on human rights standards but is also in compliance with international statistical and human rights standards and methodologies.

At a joint OHCHR-KNBS-KNCHR workshop in 2017, participants identified a total of 26 groups in Kenya at risk of being left behind. Based on their MoU, KNCHR and KNBS have therefore also been working towards generating disaggregated data to measure the situation of specific groups at risk of being left behind in SDG implementation in Kenya

- As the country was in the process of conducting its national census, the KNCHR offered advice noting the particular vulnerabilities of intersex children, children from indigenous communities, and those who were stateless, the KNCHR asked that they were included in the census. For the first time the census tool included a third category of gender as opposed to the usual two of male or female: Intersex;*
- With respect to persons with disabilities, the KNCHR wanted to ensure that the Washington Group Short Set of Questions on Disability was used in the census in gathering data on disability. Persons with albinism are not included in these Short Set of. Collaborating with organisations of persons with disabilities, it ensured that they were included in the census;*
- The KNCHR also participated in the training of data collectors in order to inject a human rights-based approach to their work. For example, it asked whether there were interpreters available for those who were unable to speak and made recommendations in this regard; and*
- The KNCHR is now part of the national committee on the census, and a number of other technical working committees. It also receives invitations to KNBS meetings enabling it to provide a human rights-based approach to a wide range of organisations and institutions.*

Key actions taken by KNCHR to facilitate data collection include:

- Trainings of TOTS and Supervisors (Cascaded trainings);*
- Preparation of training modules for use by TOTS;*
- Reviewing of enumerators manual (the booklet that explains to field officer how to ask each of the questions);*
- Participation as supervisors and coordinators in data collection exercises to experience the realities and challenges on the ground;*
- Advising on other aspects of data such as privacy/confidentiality, relating to Oath of Office and Secrecy; and*
- Lobbying for fast-tracking of Data Privacy and Protection Laws and Policy in which the an advisory was shared with Government Ministry.*

2. Lessons learned

For NHRIs working with NSOs:

- Develop an MoU and action plan on the MOU: what will be done; by who; and when (timelines) to realise the objectives of the MOU;
- Have a schedule of coordination calls/meetings to check progress e.g quarterly;

- Have contact persons from both ends. This however should be institutionalised not ‘personalized’ to ensure continuity;
- Ensure buy-in by all staff involved on both ends, good faith and mutual respect;
- Providing technical support and capacity building on both ends;
- Ensure open communication;
- Provide legal analysis for grounds upon which to disaggregate data where necessary;
- Provide good training and guidance for data collectors; and
- Remember that statistical data does not always show the full picture. NHRIs have data in their own systems that can be used to fill the gaps and hold governments to account.

Session D. Regional mechanisms for SDG oversight and the role of NHRIs

The objective of this session was for NHRIs to better understand and engage with the regional Follow-up and Review mechanisms for the SDGs in Africa.

A representative of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa presented the various regional mechanisms for oversight of the 2030 and 2063 Agendas in the African region, as well as the agenda of the 2020 ARFSD. Based on the architecture mandated by the General Assembly follow ups happens at three mutually reinforcing levels, namely the Regional (RFSD), National (Voluntary National Review), and Subnational (Voluntary Local). The discussion covered the establishment, composition, mandate and processes of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (ARFSD). An emphasis was laid on Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) of SDGs in which the NHRIs can play a major role. Further the presentation delved into the structure of the Sixth Session of ARFSD and opportunities for the NHRIs to enhance their engagements.

This was followed by interactive exercises to strategize around participation in the Forum as well as to draft and discuss key messages that NHRIs wanted to bring to the Forum, structured and drafted around the 5 ‘Ps’ (Peace, Prosperity, Planet, People and Partnerships) that the Forum’s agenda was also structured around. This was an extremely effective way of engaging in a debate and not only improving NHRI participants’ knowledge of the regional mechanisms and the Forum itself, but also a good way of improving UNECA staff’s understanding of the role of NHRIs in the context of sustainable development processes.

The **Key Messages** developed during this session were subsequently refined into a document of NHRI key messages on the five thematic clusters of the Forum which was published by NANHRI and shared with ARFSD organisers, as well as through participation in the Forum itself (see Annexe (iv)).

IV Induction Training for the use of the ‘Fuse’ Platform

Participants were also trained on the use of the ‘Fuse’ platform which is aimed at improving sustained exchange of information and experiences. ‘Fuse’ platform is hosted

by GANHRI with the objective of helping its members stay connected and exchange information. NHRIs members use the community to share experiences, post relevant information, discuss approaches, and ask for assistance, advice and support from peer institutions and networks.

Following the training which involved practical sessions on the application of the platform, NHRIs outlined the following ways they intend to utilise the Fuse Platform in their work:

- Sharing and accessing important information on SDGs;
- Requesting for support when encountering challenges in SDG implementation and monitoring;
- Engaging youth in human rights education activities using FUSE;
- Sharing information and documents with working group members and having virtual meetings of the working group;
- Learning from other members on the platform; and
- Exchanging good experiences with other members of the community

V NHRI engagement with the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (ARFSD)

The last activity in this initiative was the NHRI engagement in the 2020 Africa regional Forum on Sustainable Development. This was aimed at:

- Supporting African NHRI representatives to engage strategically with the ARFSD process and relevant discussions and actors within that context;
- Sharing experiences with other actors on using human rights to accelerate progress for the most vulnerable, through a side event; and
- Engaging with key sustainable development actors in the region to identify strategic entry points for further work on sustainable development and human rights.

A. Activities

All NHRI participants from the exchange workshop went on to participate in the Forum in the following:

- Two 'Pre events' were organised in parallel on the day before the Forum began: A VNR workshop and workshop for Major Groups and other stakeholders. NHRIs whose countries are doing VNRs this year (Kenya, DRC and Malawi) participated in the VNR workshop and engaged directly with their own government representatives in this context. Others participated in the workshops simply to learn about the various processes concerned and highlight human rights issues where possible;
- Most of the second of the 3 days of the official Forum were structured around discussions on the 5 'Ps'. NHRIs participating divided themselves up to ensure

there was participation in each of these discussions – some of which were undertaken in parallel. In each of the ‘P’ discussions, the NHRIs reiterated or presented the relevant key messages they had drafted during the workshop, whilst also making more direct inputs to the discussions to ensure a human rights perspective was adequately incorporated.

NHRI representatives from Ghana, Kenya and Zimbabwe also spoke at a side event on “**using a human rights-based approach to accelerate progress for the most vulnerable**”, organised separately by DIHR.

B. Outcomes of participation in the Forum

Following their participation in the workshops on the 5 ‘Ps’, the Key Messages of the ARFSD 2020 reflected the relevance of human rights beyond only Goal 16. The following key messages³ from the Report of the ARFSD 2020 are **directly attributable** to the efforts of NANHRI and its member NHRIs, with support from DIHR:

- Under the Peace theme (Goal 16 only): reflection of importance of HRBA to Agenda as a whole (para. 68(a)); and need to address discrimination (para. 68 (a));
- Under the Prosperity theme (Goals 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11), recognition of importance of HRBA (para. 60(a)); and
- In the key messages from the MGOs workshop, reference to importance of protecting human rights defenders (para. 70(a)).

IV Annexes

- i. Workshop concept note
- ii. Workshop agenda
- iii. List of participants
- iv. NHRIs’ key messages to the ARFSD6

³ The ARFSD 2020 Key Messages and Victoria Falls declaration can be found here: https://www.uneca.org/sites/default/files/uploaded-documents/ARFSD/2020/arfsd-6_final_key_messages_and_victoria_falls_declaration_e2000473_english.pdf