



Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) Offer Opportunities for Ambitious Action for Sustainable Transport

Partnership on Sustainable Low Carbon Transport

April 5, 2017

Version April 2017

This analysis is a living document and will be updated based on progress in the High Level Political Forum process.

List of Abbreviations

DSD	Division for Sustainable Development
DUCA	District, Urban, and Community Access
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
HLPF	High Level Political Forum
IAEG-SDGs	Inter-agency and Expert Group on the Sustainable Development Goal Indicators
MGoS	Major groups and other stakeholders
ReCAP	Research for Community Access Partnership
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SLoCaT	Partnership on Sustainable, Low Carbon Transport
UN	United Nations
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
VNR	Voluntary National Review

Executive Summary

On 1 January 2016, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by world leaders in September 2015, officially came into force. The 2030 Agenda is a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with 169 targets stimulating actions to shift global development onto a more sustainable and resilient path.

Although sustainable transport is not represented by a standalone SDG in the 2030 Agenda, it is mainstreamed in a direct or indirect manner into many SDGs. The 2030 Agenda has set path for the transport sector to be more sustainable to minimize road injuries and fatalities, provide sustainable infrastructure for urban, rural, passenger and freight transport, increase access to public transport and eliminate fossil fuel subsidies. In short, without sufficient sustainable transport infrastructure and services across the world's regions, at least half of the SDGs are at risk of not achieving their potential.

The High-level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development is the United Nations' central platform for the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda. As the first session after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, HLPF 2016 was convened with 22 countries¹ presenting their Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) to review their progress on SDG implementation.

The Partnership on Sustainable, Low Carbon Transport (SLoCaT) has prepared this document to assess the treatment of sustainable transport in the 22 VNRs submitted in 2016. The analysis shows that although 64% of the VNRs submitted in 2016 contain references to transport, there is still great potential to raise the profile of sustainable transport in this ongoing review process:

Key findings

- 2016 VNRs have helped to establish the linkage between transport and a number of SDGs and its targets and indicators, most notably SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure) and SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), while building new linkages with SDG 14 (Life below water) through freight and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) with the call for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the transport sector.
- Fewer references are made to other transport topics such as road safety, renewable energy and energy consumption, mitigation, adaptation, and economic development.
- The case to support the contribution of transport to the overarching theme of the 2030 Agenda to alleviate poverty, enhance food security, ensure social equity, and “Leaving No One Behind” within the VNRs is weak with nearly no reference to it. The missing link is due in part to the lack of references to rural transport and its critical role in implementing a number of SDGs.
- The case is the same for the lack of reference to fossil-fuel subsidies, which has a direct linkage to SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) through the indicator 12.c.1 on amount of fossil-fuel subsidies per unit of GDP.
- VNRs have also provided opportunities for countries to identify good practices and actions

¹ The 22 countries that presented VNRs to the HLPF 2016 were: China, Colombia, Egypt, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Madagascar, Mexico, Montenegro, Morocco, Norway, the Philippines, Republic of Korea, Samoa, Sierra Leone, Switzerland, Togo, Turkey, Uganda, Venezuela. The full list of submitted VNRs is available at: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/vnrs/>

in various transport sub-sectors to address a number of environment and sustainability issues, such as mitigation and GHG emissions reduction, access and mobility, connectivity and economic development, financing, road safety, and adaptation.

- The greatest number of transport references focuses on passenger and public transport from VNRs submitted by European countries

A secondary purpose of this document is to serve as a supportive document for SLoCaT's advocacy for sustainable transport to country VNR coordinators and other relevant stakeholders in the SDG process. The SLoCaT Partnership will actively advocate for the inclusion of sustainable transport in the 2017 VNRs with the following aims:

- Establish a stronger case of how transport contributes to the overarching goal of the 2030 Agenda on poverty alleviation, food security, social equity and "leaving no one behind";
- Increase country references to sustainable transport;
- Establish stronger connections showing the contribution of transport to achieve SDG indicators, particularly 9.1.1 on rural access and 12.c.1 on fossil fuel subsidies which are missing in the VNRs submitted in 2016;
- Increase references to transport sub-sectors that were missing or weak in the VNRs submitted in 2016, such as rural transport, fossil fuel subsidies, rail transport, freight, and transport policy and planning;
- Seek to shift references on transport from *descriptions* of the importance of sustainable transport to *specific targets, concrete measures, and best practices* in the transport sector.

Although VNRs are submitted and presented by national officials, the process values broad consultation and coordination ranging from inter-ministerial coordination to the wider inclusion of civil society and public consultations. There are thus considerable opportunities for the sustainable transport community to voice their opinion on the next round of VNRs to be presented at the HLPF 2017 in July. Examples of specific channels to influence the VNR process include: 1) Expert Group Meetings and Regional Preparatory Meetings to the HLPF and 2) direct outreach to the VNR focal points.

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I. Introduction

A. The 2030 Agenda and Voluntary National Reviews

On 1 January 2016, the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) adopted by world leaders in September 2015, officially came into force. The 2030 Agenda is a set of [17 Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\) with 169 targets](#) stimulating actions to shift the world onto a sustainable and resilient path (Figure 1). As one of the most important roadmaps to guide policy actions for sustainable development in the next 15 years, the 2030 Agenda mobilizes efforts to end all forms of poverty, fight inequalities and tackle climate change, while ensuring that “no one is left behind.”²



Figure 1. 17 Sustainable Development Goals under the 2030 Agenda

The [High-level Political Forum \(HLPF\) on Sustainable Development](#) is the United Nations central platform for the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda. Beginning in 2016, the HLPF provides an annual platform to provide policy guidance and recommendations on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and offers opportunities for countries to share how implementation of SDGs have been integrated in their national policies, strategies, and development plans.

As the first session after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, HLPF 2016 was convened with 22 countries³ presenting their [Voluntary National Reviews \(VNRs\)](#) to review their progress on SDG

² <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>

³ The 22 countries presented VNRs to the HLPF 2016 were: China, Colombia, Egypt, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Madagascar, Mexico, Montenegro, Morocco, Norway, the Philippines, Republic of Korea, Samoa, Sierra Leone, Switzerland, Togo, Turkey, Uganda, Venezuela. The full list of submitted VNRs is available at: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/vnrs/>

implementation. These countries reported on the achievement of the SDGs from their national perspectives, including a consideration of their national priorities and approaches, and outlined how they have included the SDGs into national development plans and strategies.

Starting from 2017, the Forum will review the SDGs under the following schedule:

- 2017: Goals 1, 2, 3, 5, 9 and 14 (Transport relevance: rural transport, air pollution and public health, transport equity, sustainable transport infrastructure for all);
- 2018: Goals 6, 7, 11, 12 and 15 (Transport relevance: transport energy efficiency, urban transport, rural transport and food waste);
- 2019: Goals 4, 8, 10, 13 and 16 (Transport relevance: access to education and employment, climate change).

Box 1: Voluntary National Reviews

As part of its follow-up and review mechanisms, the 2030 Agenda encourages member states to "conduct regular and inclusive reviews of progress at the national and sub-national levels, which are country-led and country-driven" (paragraph 79). These national reviews are expected to serve as a basis for the regular reviews by the HLPF, meeting under the auspices of ECOSOC. As stipulated in paragraph 84 of the 2030 Agenda, regular reviews by the HLPF are to be voluntary, state-led, undertaken by both developed and developing countries, and involve multiple stakeholders.

The VNRs aim 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 mobilize multi-stakeholder support and partnerships for the implementation of the SDGs.

An online review platform of the VNRs has been set up at <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/vnrs/>.

B. Transport and Sustainable Development Goals

Although sustainable transport is not represented by a standalone SDG in the 2030 Agenda, it is mainstreamed in a direct or indirect manner into many SDGs, especially those related to poverty alleviation; food security; access to health services, clean water, education, and employment; gender equality; energy; infrastructure; cities and human settlements; energy and food consumption, and climate change. Transport services and infrastructure are essential to achieving most, if not all, SDGs.

1. Direct and Indirect Transport SDG Targets

The 2030 Agenda states that "sustainable transport systems, along with universal access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy services, quality and resilient infrastructure, and other policies that increase productive capacities, would build strong economic foundations

for all countries” (para 27). The text includes five targets that are *directly* related to the transport sector and seven other targets that are *indirectly* related to the transport sector.

The targets on road safety (Target 3.6); energy efficiency (Target 7.3); sustainable infrastructure (Target 9.1), urban access (Target 11.2), and fossil fuel subsidies (Target 12.c) emphasize that sustainable transport is not needed solely for its own sake, but rather is essential to facilitate the achievement of a wide variety of SDGs.

Transport also indirectly contributes to other SDG targets on poverty reduction (Target 1.2), climate resilience of poor communities (Target 1.5), agricultural productivity (Target 2.3), air pollution (Target 3.9), sustainable cities (Target 11.6), urban-rural linkages (Target 11.A), reduction of food loss (Target 12.3), climate change adaptation (Target 13.1), and climate change mitigation (Target 13.2).

In addition, safe, affordable, and reliable transport services and infrastructure in remote and rural areas is an enabling element to facilitate access to health services (Target 3.8), access to education (Target 4.5), Equality for women and girls (5.4), access to safe drinking water (Target 6.1), economic growth (Target 8.1), and access to employment (Target 8.5). It helps to achieve the overarching principle of the 2030 Agenda to “Leave No One Behind” by helping the poor and vulnerable groups to access jobs, health facilities and educational opportunities while providing better supply chain to ensure that crops are delivered efficiently to prevent food loss and enhance economic growth.

2. Transport-related SDG indicators

The [Inter-agency and Expert Group on the Sustainable Development Goal Indicators \(IAEG-SDGs\)](#) has been tasked to develop a [solid framework of indicators](#) and [statistical data](#) to monitor progress, inform policy and ensure accountability of all stakeholders.

Five SDG indicators are directly related to transport in the final list as shown in Table 1:

Table 1. Transport-related indicators of the 2030 Agenda

SDG Indicators of the 2030 Agenda	
3.6.1	Death rate due to road traffic injuries
9.1.1	Proportion of the rural population who live within 2 km of an all-season road
9.1.2	Passenger and freight volumes, by mode of transport
11.2.1	Proportion of population that has convenient access to public transport, by sex, age and persons with disabilities
12.c.1	Amount of fossil-fuel subsidies per unit of GDP (production and consumption) and as a proportion of total national expenditure on fossil fuels

The 2030 Agenda has set path for the transport sector to be more sustainable to minimize road injuries and fatalities, provide sustainable infrastructure for rural, passenger and freight transport, increase access to public transport and elimination of fossil fuel subsidies. In short, without sufficient sustainable transport infrastructure and services across the world’s regions, at least half of the SDGs are at risk of not achieving their potential.

C. Analysis Objective

The Partnership on Sustainable, Low Carbon Transport (SLoCaT) prepares this document to review the treatment of sustainable transport in the 22 VNRs submitted in 2016. The analysis aims to answer the following questions:

1. How are the transport references in VNRs linked to the SDGs under the 2030 Agenda?
2. What are the transport sub-sectors included in the VNRs?
3. How do the transport references relate to themes and topics on environmental (e.g. GHG emissions, mitigation, adaptation) and sustainability issues (e.g. road safety, mobility and access, sustainable growth)?
4. What are the specific targets and measures mentioned in the VNRs?

A secondary purpose of this document is to serve as a supportive document for SLoCaT's advocacy for sustainable transport to country VNR coordinators and other relevant stakeholders in the SDG process. In this context, this document aims to provide recommendations on:

1. How to raise the profile of sustainable transport in the VNRs submitted in HLPF 2017 and beyond;
2. What the sustainable transport community can do to promote sustainable transport in the HLPF process.

3. Transport References of the VNRs

The VNRs offers a unique opportunity to increase ambitious actions in the transport sector to implement the 2030 Agenda. Among the 22 VNRs submitted in 2016, 14 VNRs (64%) make direct reference to the transport. While these transport references help to establish linkages with 8 out of the 17 SDGs, the majority of these references are descriptive statements on the importance of sustainable transport. Only a minority (18% of all VNRs submitted in 2016) have set specific targets for sustainable transport development and the number of concrete policy actions and measures in the VNRs is also limited.

A. Linkages with SDGs

Among the VNRs submitted in 2016, 27% of transport references are linked to SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure) and 23% are linked to SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities). 13% of transport references are made on SDG 3 (Good health and well-being) and SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), with 10% of reference related to SDG 13 (Climate Action) and 7% of references made to SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) (Figure 2):

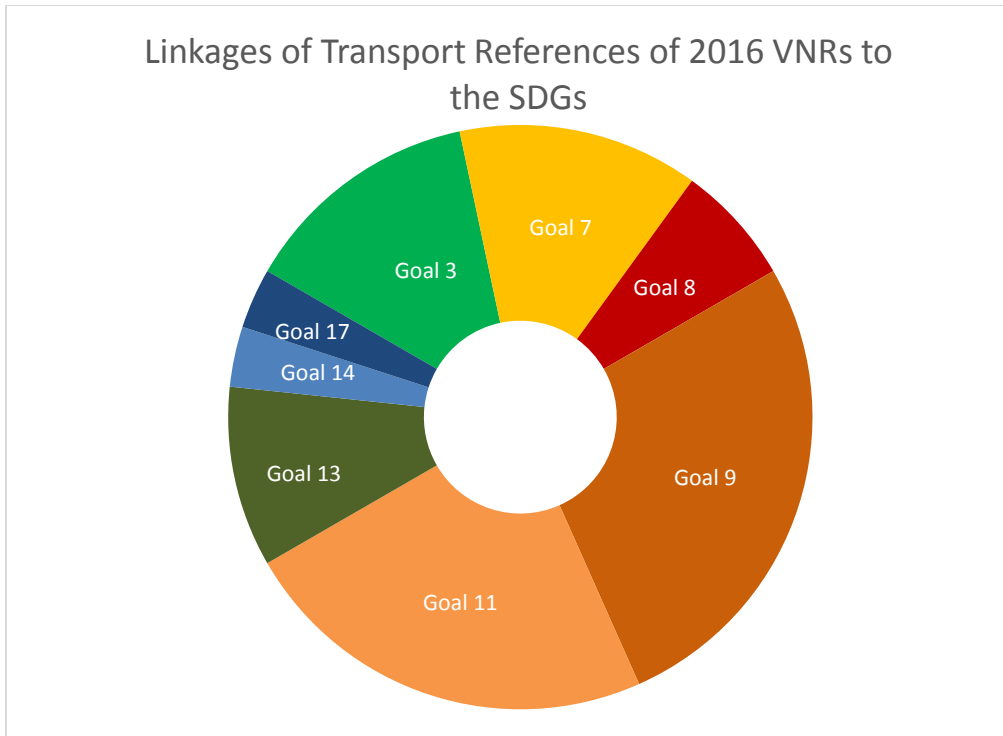


Figure 2. Linkages of Transport References of 2016 VNRs to the SDGs

These references are also directly linked to the transport indicators on road safety (3.6.1 Death rate due to road traffic injuries), sustainable infrastructure for all (9.1.2 Passenger and freight volumes, by mode of transport), sustainable transport for all (11.2.1 Proportion of population that has convenient access to public transport, by sex, age and persons with disabilities).

VNRs have also helped to build linkages between sustainable transport with SDG 14 (Life below Water) and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals), which are not commonly seen as transport-related. Norway, being depend on ocean-based industries for food, income, energy sources, trade, and tourism, indicates that research and innovation for new technologies in transport (shipping) and other ocean-related sectors is encouraged to protect marine life and sustainable growth. Samoa states that attracting foreign direct investment (FDI) to the transport is essential for the country to implement the 2030 Agenda, which is linked to the indicator on FDI under the SDG Target 17.3 to mobilize additional financial resources for developing countries from multiple sources.

However, none of the VNRs connects transport to all of the previously mentioned SDGs. The majority of VNRs refer only two to three SDGs to transport. Further, the critical role of transport in implementing the 2030 Agenda has not been established fully as many of the indirect transport targets are not mentioned in each respective VNR as shown in Table 2:

Table 2. References to transport-related SDGs, targets, and indicators

SDGs	Transport-related Targets (Direct and Indirect)	Transport Indicators	Countries
1 No Poverty	1.2 Poverty Reduction	N/A	No reference

SDGs	Transport-related Targets (Direct and Indirect)	Transport Indicators	Countries	
	1.5 Climate Resilience of Poor Communities	N/A	No reference	
2 Zero Hunger	2.3 Agricultural Productivity	N/A	No reference	
3 Good Health and Well-being	3.6 Road Safety	3.6.1 Death rate due to road traffic injuries	Colombia, Georgia	
	3.8 Access to Health Services	N/A	No reference	
	3.9 Air Pollution	N/A	No reference	
4 Quality Education	4.5 Equal Access to Education	N/A	No reference	
5 Gender Equality	5.4 Equality for Women and Girls	N/A	No reference	
6 Clean Water and Sanitation	6.1 Access to Safe Drinking Water	N/A	No reference	
7 Affordable and Clean Energy	7.3 Energy Efficiency	N/A	Montenegro, Norway, Estonia, Germany, Korea	
8 Decent Work and Economic Growth	8.1 Economic Growth	N/A	Uganda, Montenegro	
	8.5 Employment for All	N/A	No reference	
9 Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure	9.1 Sustainable Infrastructure for all	9.1.1 Proportion of the rural population who live within 2 km of an all-season road	No reference	
		9.1.2 Passenger and freight volumes, by mode of transport	Estonia, Egypt, France, Germany, Korea, Norway, Samoa, Switzerland, Togo, Turkey, Uganda	
11 Sustainable Cities and Communities	11.2 Sustainable Transport for All	11.2.1 Proportion of population that has convenient access to public transport, by sex, age and persons with disabilities	Estonia, Egypt, France, Germany, Korea, Norway, Samoa, Switzerland, Togo, Turkey, Uganda	
		11.6 Sustainable Cities	N/A	Egypt, France, Norway
		11.A Urban-Rural Linkages	N/A	No reference
12 Responsible Consumption and Production	12.c Fuel Subsidies	12.c.1 Amount of fossil-fuel subsidies per unit of GDP (production and consumption) and as a proportion of total national expenditure on fossil fuels	No reference	
		12.3 Food Loss and Waste	N/A	No reference

SDGs	Transport-related Targets (Direct and Indirect)	Transport Indicators	Countries
13 Climate Action	13.1 Climate Change Adaptation	N/A	Colombia, Estonia, Germany, Norway, Switzerland, Turkey, Uganda
	13.3 Climate Change Mitigation	N/A	France, Montenegro, Norway, Finland
14 Life below Water	14.1 Marine Pollution	N/A	Norway
17 Partnerships for the Goals	17.3 Financing for Development Countries (not directly/ indirectly related to transport)	17.3.1 FDI, official development assistance and South-South Cooperation as a proportion of total domestic budget	Samoa

One main reason for the missing linkages is because all transport references made in the VNRs are in the urban context of SDG 11 and contribution of rural transport to the SDGs has not been well presented. Improved rural transport drives sustainable rural development and national growth by promoting connectivity and social cohesion, driving commercial activities as well as accessibility to health facilities, education, and other essential services necessary to counteract poverty, isolation and social exclusion (Goal 1, 3, 4, 6, and 8). Access to markets and employment opportunities through better rural transport infrastructure and services is also an essential pre-condition to generating rural income and thus reduce poverty (Goal 1 and Goal 8). Improving rural access can also lead to lower costs for farm inputs and lower transport costs for marketed outputs; it also contributes to more efficient supply chain to transport agricultural output, thus enhancing food security and avoiding food loss (Goal 2 and Goal 12). With improved road and transport services, women and girls living in rural communities can also travel longer distance with shorter time to attain employment opportunities, education, and participate in social and political activities (Goal 5). Rural transport is also directly related to SDG indicator 9.1.1. on the proportion of the rural population who live within 2 km of an all-season road.

In addition, transport references in the VNRs submitted in 2016 also did not consider the issue of fossil fuel subsidies, which contributes to implement Goal 12 on Responsible Consumption and Production with a direct transport indicator on the amount of fossil-fuel subsidies per unit of GDP (production and consumption) and as a proportion of total national expenditure on fossil fuels (12.c.1). Therefore, it is necessary to raise the profile especially for rural transport and fossil fuel subsidies in the 44 VNRs to be submitted in 2017 in order to establish a more complete picture linking sustainable transport with the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

B. Transport Subsectors

A range of transport sub-sectors have been mentioned in the 14 VNRs with transport references, including passenger transport, public transport, urban transport, walking and cycling, electric mobility, freight transport and transport demand management (Figure 3):

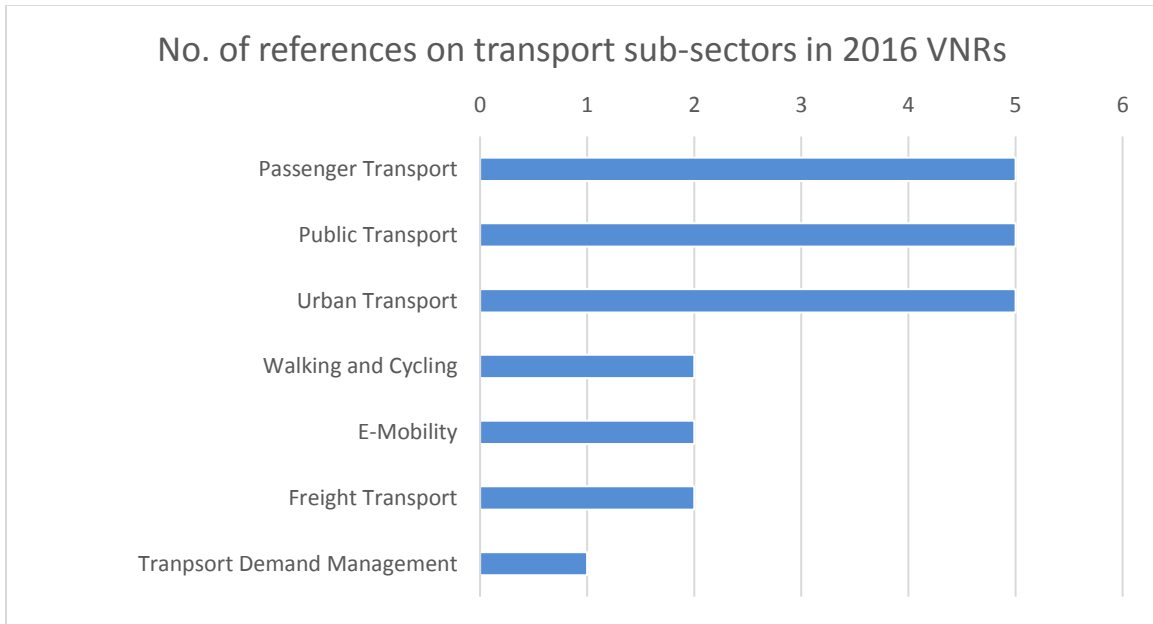


Figure 3. Number of references on transport sub-sectors in all VNs submitted in 2016

The most number of transport references are on passenger and public transport from VNRs mostly from European countries (e.g. Estonia, France, Germany, and Norway) with the exception of Togo from the Africa region. References to urban transport are also primarily mentioned by European countries overlapping with references to public transport (e.g. Estonia, France, Germany, Norway, and Turkey). France and Germany have included walking and cycling in their VNR. Estonia and Germany presents how their policies on renewable energy will contribute to increase electric mobility and they both include freight transport as an issue in their VNRs. Lastly, Turkey is the only country mentioning the use of ICT in transport demand management in the VNR.

Although VNRs submitted in 2016 covers both passenger and freight transport along with other subsectors, several key subsectors in transport, including rail transport, and transport-oriented development/ land-use planning have not received any attention among the VNRs submitted in 2016.

C. Themes on Environmental Impacts and Sustainability Issues

1. Mitigation and GHG emissions

Among the 14 VNRs with transport references, four of them recognizes the need for emission reduction and mitigation actions taken in the transport sector. Transport is recognized as one of the key emitting sectors contributing to climate change and environmental issues by a number of European countries. France indicates that most of the GHG emissions generated in the country comes from transport, residential, agricultural, commercial, and industrial activities. Economic players in France enter into voluntary commitments to tackle climate change, especially in the road transport industry through the “Objective CO2” charter and the road builders’ convention on voluntary commitments to conserve nonrenewable resources and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Montenegro emphasizes that there is a need that transport development is “more favorable to the environment” with well-defined and strong enforcement

of incentives and measures to minimize the adverse impacts of transport activities to the environment. Norway indicates that the government is working to develop its transport systems with the goal to limit its adverse environmental impacts and contribute to making the country a low-emission society. Finland presents how members of its National Commission on Sustainable Development and the Development Policy Committee implement the 2030 Agenda in their work and gives the example of the “Ecohome” web course by the Martha Organisation which teaches the general public on reducing environmental footprint of their transport habits and other day-to-day activities.

There is a strong need for a transition to clean, renewable energy and new technology in the transport sector in order to address energy consumption reduction and GHG emission mitigation within the sector. Montenegro states that applying new technologies to lower the emissions and fuel consumption of vehicles as well as alternative fuels is important for such transition. In Norway, the share of renewable energy in the country’s total energy consumption, including the transport sector, is around 69%. The country is working to secure a continual transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy through policies targeting at both the supply and consumption sides. Estonia stresses on the importance to encourage the production and consumption of biomethane in support of electric mobility development.

Germany also takes up action to develop its renewable energy industry and to promote e-mobility and alternative mobility forms. Its Federal Transport Infrastructure Plan emphasizes that decarbonization of energy supply in the transport sector requires “not only the expansion of renewables and the development and promotion of electricity-based fuels, but also the development of alternative forms of mobility. To better track the growth of clean vehicles, Korea is also reviewing to include an indicator for registered environmentally-friendly automobiles under its Second Master Plan for Public Transport.

2. Access and Mobility

Transport also plays a critical role in providing access and enabling people from all walks of lives to attain essential social services. Norway states that almost all those living in urban areas have access to public transport, adequate housing, safe drinking water, basic sanitation and drainage, and sustainable energy. Switzerland indicates that it is necessary to ensure appropriate coverage of transport infrastructure. The Strategy for the Development of Samoa prioritizes the provision of efficient and sustainable transport system and networks as a key outcome of their strategy.

Majority of transport references in the VNRs are associated with passenger and public transport. Egypt’s future urban agenda will encourage the development and proliferation of transport facilities in the context of “friendly, well-managed cities.” Local authorities in France are also encouraged to apply solutions to development efficient public transport networks funded by the Energy Transition Fund, which has a three-year budget of €350 million to “promote a low-carbon footprint and green urban areas, and to tackle social-spatial segregation.” Germany’s Federal Transport Infrastructure Plan has also placed an emphasis on local public transport systems development. Korea, citing its Second Master Plan for Public Transportation, states that an indicator on mode share to public transport is currently under review as a way to track its progress to implement the SDGs. Norway also states that there is need to provide sufficient public transport and support sustainable urban planning in order to reduce traffic congestion

and air pollution. Togo indicates that improvement of transport infrastructure and development of public transport is one of the major emphasis for its development plan for 2005 to 2030.

Provisions of safe infrastructure and services for non-motorized transport, including cycling and bikesharing, are key enabling elements to improve mobility and access as well as reducing GHG emissions of the transport sector. In addition to developing public transport systems, major French cities are placing substantial investments on soft mobility initiatives to build cycle paths and bikesharing schemes. Germany's Federal Transport Infrastructure Plan also put emphasis on encouraging the public to use cycling as a mobility option. Second Master Plan for Public Transportation of Korea is also currently reviewing an indicator on the total length of bicycle routes (km).

3. Multimodal connectivity and economic development

It is critical that transport is being developed as a multi-modal, interconnected network instead of a stand-alone infrastructure project. Switzerland points out that an efficient, affordable, and environmentally friendly transport network with multi-modal options operating at optimum occupancy level is essential to satisfy travel needs. The Estonian government has set goal to facilitate "decent flight and maritime connections" and also improve the quality of the road network. These are essential steps to ensure "free movement of goods and people in an accessible, comfortable, fast, safe and sustainable manner." Turkey also utilizes information technologies and intelligent transport systems in transport demand management to enhance the performance and quality of its transport network as a whole.

Sustainable transport development is not only key to improve access and promote growth and development on the individual and city level; it is also a key driver for economic development and national growth. Including transport and specific measures on road network development as one of the key focuses, Uganda's infrastructure development plan has the overall aim to increasing competitiveness and spurring growth in the country. Montenegro also indicates that improved transport and other infrastructure are prerequisites for development. Colombia emphasizes the role of logistics and freight in facilitating territorial integration and trade development as it contributes to reduce travel times between production and export and also transport operating costs.

4. Financing

In terms of financing, Samoa states that it has taken effort to mobilize domestic and private sector resources to implement the SDGs, although external support is still needed. There is "determination" in critical sectors such as transport, infrastructure, information and communication technologies, and sustainable energy to attract FDI in order to accelerate sustainable development. France also indicates that substantial investments have been made in major French cities to develop accessible public transport and mobility initiatives promoting the use of non-motorized transport.

5. Road Safety

While there is a direct transport SDG target on Road Safety (3.6), Colombia and Georgia are the only submitting country which report on the issue in its VNR. The number of traffic accidents in Colombia has grown by 9% from 5704 in 2010 to 6,263 in 2015. The phenomenon occurs predominantly with men. Georgia sets a target to reduce the number of deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents by 2020, which is in line with the SDG target 3.6.

6. Climate Adaptation

Half of the 14 VNRS with transport references recognizes adaptation as an important action in the transport sector and among them, only Estonia, Germany, Norway, and Uganda make specific reference to both mitigation and adaptation in the transport sector. The need to increase climate resilience and reduce the risk of existing and future transport infrastructure to climate disasters is highlighted by Uganda, Norway, and Switzerland. Uganda specifically indicates that construction and rehabilitation of national roads is one way for the country to ensure climate resilience of transport infrastructure. Colombia, Estonia, and Germany have developed strategic plans for adaptation in transport sector, while Turkey and Uganda both call for the strengthening of implementation mechanisms to reduce disaster risks and vulnerability.

7. Transport Targets and Measures

To highlight the role of the transport sector in implementing the SDGs, a few number of countries have set specific goals and targets on public transport, energy consumption, access, and road safety (Table 3):

Table 3. Examples of Transport Goals and Targets in VNRS submitted in 2016

Issue Area	Country	Goals and Targets
Public Transport/ Walking and cycling	Estonia	50% share of people in larger cities using public transport, bicycles or walking to work on a daily basis
Public Transport/ Access	Germany	Increase in land covered by housing and transport infrastructure; Increase in access to high-quality local public transport
Road Safety	Georgia	By 2020, reduce the number of deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents in Georgia (By 2030 baseline is reduced by 25-30%)
Road Safety	Uganda	Increase safety of transport services
Energy Consumption	Germany	Final energy consumption in the transport sector is to be reduced by around 40% by 2050 compared to 2005 levels; Decarbonize energy supply in the transport sector; Reducing final energy consumption in freight and passenger transport

VNRS have provided opportunities for ambitious actions on sustainable transport. With the aim to share experiences and strengthening national policies and institution to support implementation of the SDGs, countries are invited to highlight examples, good practices, and innovations on how to advance their implementation. Specific measures and actions on sustainable transport development have been highlighted in a small number of VNRS, covering issues such as road infrastructure, renewable energy, electric mobility, freight, water transport, regional connectivity, and institutional capacity (Table 4):

Table 4. Examples of Transport Measures in VNRS submitted in 2016

Issue Area	Country	Transport Measures
Road Infrastructure	Uganda	Construct and rehabilitate national and regional roads Rehabilitate and maintain the District, Urban, and Community Access (DUCA) road network Construct new and rehabilitate old bridges

Renewable Energy	Estonia	Support measure for the production and consumption of biomethane in transport sector
E-mobility	Estonia	Establish a network of quick chargers for electric vehicles across the country with the support of the ELMO programme
Freight	Colombia	Improve provision of infrastructure and logistic services by reducing travel times between production centers and ports by 30% and reducing vehicle operation costs up to 20%.
Water transport	Uganda	Develop inland water transport with special emphasis on hard-to-reach island areas
Regional Connectivity	Estonia	Development of runways, ports, their hinterland connections and international connections
Institutional Capacity	Uganda	Establish a National Road Safety Authority and a Multi-sectoral Transport Regulatory Authority

4. Raising the Profile of Sustainable Transport in the VNR Process

SLoCaT’s review of the VNRs shows that 64% of the VNRs submitted in 2016 contain references to transport, there is still great potential to raise the profile of sustainable transport in this SDG implementation and review process.

A. Overall observations from VNRs in 2016

The transport references of the VNRs have helped to establish the linkage between transport and a number of SDGs and its targets and indicators, most notably SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure) and SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), while building new linkages with SDG 14 (Life below Water) through freight and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) with the call for FDI in the transport sector.

Fewer references are made on road safety, renewable energy and energy consumption, mitigation, adaptation, and economic development. While they help to establish the linkage of transport with SDG 3 (Good health and well-being), SDG 7 (Affordable and clean energy), SDG 8 (Decent work and economic growth), and SDG 13 (Climate action), it can be further established by shifting the nature of these references from merely *describing* the importance of transport to offering *more specific and concrete targets and policy measures*.

The case to support the contribution of transport to the overarching theme of the 2030 Agenda to alleviate poverty, enhance food security, ensure social equity, and “Leaving No One Behind” is weak with nearly no reference to it. The missing link is due to the lack of references to rural transport and its critical role in enhancing agricultural production, driving sustainable rural development, and promoting connectivity and social cohesion by providing access to market, employment opportunities, health facilities, education, and other essential services for the rural poor.

The case is the same for the lack of references to fossil-fuel subsidies, which have a direct linkage to SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) through the indicator 12.c.1 on fossil-fuel subsidies per unit of GDP.

VNRs have also provided opportunities for countries to identify good practices in various transport sub-sectors to address a number of environment and sustainability issues, such as mitigation and GHG emissions reduction, access and mobility, connectivity and economic development, financing, road safety, and adaptation.

The greatest number of transport references is on passenger and public transport from VNRs submitted by European countries. It is necessary to create a more comprehensive picture for sustainable transport's contribution to implementing the 2030 Agenda by promoting the inclusion of transport subsectors that have not been mentioned or have weak references, including rail transport, freight, and transport planning.

B. Role of Transport Sector to the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda and other global agreements

It is crucial to recognize that implementation of SDGs under the 2030 Agenda is not the only mandate countries have committed to achieve on sustainable development. A number of agreements on the global level have been adopted in recent years with the purpose to move the world towards a more sustainable and resilient future. These global agreements include the [Paris Agreement on climate change](#),⁴ the [New Urban Agenda \(NUA\)](#),⁵ the [Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development](#),⁶ the [UN Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011-2020](#),⁷ the [Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030](#),⁸ and [the Nairobi Mandate](#) adopted at the 14th United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).⁹ These various global processes, with strong emphasis to promote concrete actions on regional and national level, are likely to steer the developmental directions on sustainable development and climate change of countries in the next few decades.

Although these processes are created to address various issues, there are considerable cross-references and common emphases to achieve poverty alleviation, food security and social equity through improved urban/rural access and regional connectivity. In addition, these global agreements also share common concerns and urgency to address adverse environmental and sustainability issues such as climate change mitigation and adaptation, road safety and public health (Table 5):

⁴ United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. 2015. Paris Agreement. <http://bit.ly/2i5tQE8>

⁵ United Nations Human Settlements Programme. 2016. Adopted Draft of the New Urban Agenda. <http://bit.ly/2cQpBec>

⁶ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. 2015. Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development. <http://bit.ly/1MsNqU6>

⁷ World Health Organization. 2016. Resolution Adopted by the General Assembly on 15 April 2016: Improving Global Road Safety. <http://bit.ly/2ifmEWs>

⁸ United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. 2015. Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. <http://bit.ly/1Hz4I0j>

⁹ United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. 2016. Nairobi Maafikiano. <http://bit.ly/2iiktqS>

Table 5. Level of contribution of global agreements to six themes on access, environment, and sustainability

Themes	Poverty Alleviation & Food Security	Social Inclusion & Equity	Urban/ Rural Access/ Regional Connectivity	Climate Change Mitigation	Climate Change Adaptation	Road Safety
2030 Agenda	High	High	High	High	Medium	High
Paris Agreement	Medium	Low	Low	High	High	None
New Urban Agenda	High	High	High	High	Medium	High
Addis Ababa Action Agenda	High	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	None
Global Decade of Action on Road Safety	Medium	Medium	Low	None	None	High
Sendai Framework 2015-2030	Medium	Medium	Medium	None	High	None
Nairobi Mandate	Low	None	High	Low	High	None

Level of Contribution	
High	Low
Medium	None

Sustainable transport is a key driver and contributor to the implementation of these various global processes and, at the same time, these global agreements provide enabling conditions for sound legal and regulatory framework, capacity building and knowledge sharing, technology development, financing and investment, and mitigation and adaptation actions in the transport sector on the regional level. Hence, raising the profile of sustainable transport in the VNR process not only will benefit implementation of the 2030 Agenda but also the other global agreements as a whole.

C. Short-term actions to implement transport-related provisions of the SDGs and other global agreements on sustainable development and climate change

The emergence of global agreements on sustainable development and climate change have added a new level of urgency for to implement immediate, bold, and ambitious actions in the transport sector over the next 15 years. This section presents a series of [20 transport quick win actions](#)¹⁰ to address the needed technical, behavioral, and regulatory transformations in the transport sector in EST countries.

¹⁰ Peet, Karl, Cornie Huizenga, Gota, Sudhir and Mark Major. 2016. Quick Wins on Transport, Sustainable Development and Climate Change. <http://bit.ly/2IWzQAr>

Quick wins are those actions that can be taken immediately and which move the transport sector in the right direction toward long-term transformation. Taking needed steps to reduce emissions from transport in the pre-2020 period is essential to putting the sector on the required trajectory to meet long-term mitigation targets, and quick wins can make valuable contributions toward putting the transport sector on a “well-below 2DS” pathway.

Table 6 shows the relevance of the 20 transport quick win actions to the seven global agreements and indicates the Bangkok 2020 goals that are related to each quick win action.

Table 6. Relevance of 20 Quick Win Actions on Sustainable Transport to global agreements

Transport Quick Win Actions	2030 Agenda	Paris Agreement	New Urban Agenda	Addis Ababa Action Agenda	Global Decade of Action on Road Safety	Sendai Framework 2015-2030	Nairobi Mandate
Accelerate deployment of tighter diesel fuel quality standards to reduce emissions of black carbon and other short-lived climate pollutants							
Accelerate phase-out of fossil fuel subsidies							
Expand car and (e-)bike sharing systems in primary and secondary cities							
Expand city transport official training programs to build local capacity for sustainable transport in primary and secondary cities							
Expand sustainable freight recognition schemes to reward proactive carriers and shippers							
Expand use of ICT applications for real-time travel information and route planning for walking, cycling, public transport and car sharing							
Formulate Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMP) in primary and secondary cities							
Implement (ultra-) low emission zones, including car-free zones in city centers							
Improve freight efficiency (e.g. reduce empty load running by freight trucks) through route optimization, asset sharing between companies, and increased use of ICT solutions							
Implement zero-emissions (last-mile) urban freight through e-mobility and cycling solutions							
Increase quality, availability, reliability, frequency, and							

Transport Quick Win Actions	2030 Agenda	Paris Agreement	New Urban Agenda	Addis Ababa Action Agenda	Global Decade of Action on Road Safety	Sendai Framework 2015-2030	Nairobi Mandate
efficiency of bus-based transit.							
Introduce and scale up pricing for car-related travel options (e.g. congestion/road charging, parking pricing) in primary and secondary cities							
Introduce carbon pricing for the transport sector where (sub-) national carbon markets currently exist or are under development.							
Introduce car-free days and ciclovías (temporary street closures to encourage cycling and walking) in primary and secondary cities to build support for longer-term policies.							
Invest in rural road maintenance and modern supply chains to reduce global food loss and waste							
Legislate and enforce stricter speeding regulations by operational and technical means to reduce emissions and road crashes							
Modernize ageing rail fleets and traction systems to increase efficiency							
Provide and improve walking and cycling infrastructure (e.g. connected walking paths, protected cycle lanes), reallocating roadspace where necessary							
Ramp up charging infrastructure to encourage expansion of electric vehicle fleets in primary and secondary cities							
Tighten fuel economy standards for passenger vehicles							

These pre-2020 actions span policy, regulatory and operational solutions for both human mobility and freight movement, thus providing a balanced toolbox for EST member countries to ramp up needed actions across transport themes and modes, and structuring efforts in three directions:

1. Prompting decisions to expand the implementation of solutions which have already proven their efficiency at a smaller scale or with a less ambitious scope;
2. Halting existing practices and/or regulations that run in directions opposite to what is required to set the global transport sector on a lower-carbon trajectory;

3. Initiating without delay and at relatively low cost, actions or decisions preparatory to full implementation of a global decarbonization roadmap.

D. What would we like to see in the VNRs at HLPF 2017?

44 countries have registered to present VNRs in the upcoming HLPF in July 2017 for the review of SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), 3 (Good Health and Well-being), 5 (Gender Equality), 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure) and 14 (Life below Water). The SLoCaT Partnership will actively advocate for the inclusion of sustainable transport in the next round of VNRs with the following aims:

- Establish a stronger case for how transport contributes the overarching goal of the 2030 Agenda on poverty alleviation, food security, social equity and “leaving no one behind”;
- Increase country references to good practices, policy measures, and quick win actions on sustainable transport as a whole;
- Establish stronger connections showing the contribution of transport to achieve SDG indicators, particularly 9.1.1 on rural access and 12.c.1 on fossil fuel subsidies which are missing in the VNRs submitted in 2016;
- Increase references to transport sub-sectors that were missing or weak in the VNRs submitted in 2016, such as rural transport, fossil fuel subsidies, rail transport, freight, and transport policy and planning);
- Seek to shift references on transport from *descriptions* of the importance of sustainable transport to *specific targets, concrete measures, and best practices* in the transport sector.

In conclusion, SLoCaT is encouraged by the attention currently placed on sustainable transport in the VNRs submitted in 2016, though we strongly believe that there is still great potential and room to demonstrate the critical role of sustainable transport in this SDG implementation and review process. VNRs can create a more comprehensive vision of sustainable transport development if countries can take these recommendations and emphasize more prominently that transport is a vital, cross-cutting sector which enables all other sectors to implement the 2030 Agenda.

Annex I: Advocacy Opportunities

Although VNRs are submitted and presented by national officials, the process values broad consultation and coordination ranging from inter-ministerial coordination to the wider inclusion of civil society and public consultations. There are considerable opportunities for the sustainable transport community to voice their opinion and input to the next round of VNRs presented at the HLPF 2017 in July. Examples of specific channels to influence the VNR process include: 1) Expert Group Meetings and Regional Preparatory Meetings to the HLPF; 2) direct outreach to the VNR focal points; and 3) submission of sectoral papers to the Division of Sustainable Development.

A. Expert Group Meetings and Regional Preparatory Meetings

Expert group meetings bring together government officials, UN representatives, the [major groups and other stakeholders \(MGoS\)](#), civil society, and other non-state actors to share policy solutions, best practices and challenges in SDG implementation and to help identify major regional and sub-regional trends.

A series of regional preparatory meetings will be conducted in Thailand, Switzerland, Mexico, Morocco, and Ethiopia during April and May 2017¹¹ to provide an inclusive platform for state and non-state actors to discuss regional progress of SDG implementation through peer learning sessions and capacity building workshops on VNRs, thematic dialogues, and civil society consultation sessions.

Actions for SLoCaT Members and Partners:

At the [Expert Group Meeting on Enhancing MGoS Engagement in National Level Reviews](#) held in Bogota, Colombia in March 2017, Carlos Pardo from Despacio represented the SLoCaT Partnership to provide input on sustainable transport to the Expert Group Meeting based on key findings and recommendations of this analysis.

SLoCaT member and partner organizations can also help represent SLoCaT at the upcoming regional preparatory meetings. The SLoCaT Secretariat will provide background reference documents for such interventions. If your organization is interested in participating in the EGM process, please contact Cornie Huizenga at cornie.huizenga@slocatpartnership.org

B. Direct Outreach to VNR Focal Points

The [VNR database](#) provides contact information of the focal points of each country to coordinate the submission of VNRs. Out of the 44 countries, nearly half include email addresses of these focal points, with almost all countries including full name and designation of the individual.

¹¹ Information on the expert group meetings and regional preparatory meetings are available on the HLPF website at: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf>.

In the past, the SLoCaT Partnership has submitted letters on the critical role of transport to sustainable development in various global processes, including the Third Financing for Development Conference (July 2016) and Habitat III (October 2016). One opportunity to raise the profile of sustainable transport in the VNR process is to send advocacy letters directly to VNR coordinators to present key findings of this analysis and offer recommendations to better incorporate specific targets and actions in the transport sector for the implementation of the SDGs.

Actions for SLoCaT Members and Partners:

SLoCaT members are welcome to give their feedback and comments to this analysis on VNR transport references. The advocacy letter is also open for SLoCaT members' endorsement and will include the list of members and supporting organizations as an annex to the letter.