

COMMUNITY ACTION ALERT: How to Get Involved in the UN's The High-Level Political Forum on the Sustainable Development Goals

This alert provides basic information for advocates about the High-Level Political Forum ([HLPF](#)) on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and avenues for involvement. An Action Alert developed by ICASO and the International Women's Health Coalition is also available in [English](#)/[Español](#)/[Français](#)/[русский](#)

Do not hesitate to contact MSMGF Senior Policy Advisor, Stephen Leonelli, at sleonelli@msmgf.org if you have further questions or inquiries.

The HLPF is a new entry point for civil society to monitor State commitments and advocate for equitable, evidence-based, and sustainable HIV and human rights responses in development. Gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men, transgender people, and the LGBTI community at large are often overlooked in development initiatives, but the SDGs are meant to be comprehensive and “leave no one behind.” MSMGF is closely following the HLPF, particularly State reporting on HIV within SDG 3, *Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages*.

Key dates for advocates:

- June 11: HLPF Registration Deadline
- June 12: Sign-up for the HLPF Coordinating Mechanism Email List for Major Groups
- June 28: HLPF Ground Pass Deadline
- July 10 – 19: HLPF in NY

Background on the High-Level Political Forum

When: Monday, July 10 – Wednesday, July 19, 2017

Where: UN Headquarters, New York, USA

Convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council, the annual High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) is the UN central platform for follow-up and review of [the 2030 Agenda](#) and SDGs. A different thematic review of the SDGs is implemented each year at the HLPF, including discussion of SDGs relevant to the theme and Voluntary National Reviews (VNR) of the thematic SDGs by some Member States.

The July 2017 HLPF theme is *Eradicating Poverty and Promoting Prosperity in a Changing World*, and the following SDGs will be discussed and reviewed:

- [Goal 1](#): End poverty in all its forms everywhere;
- [Goal 2](#): End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture;
- [Goal 3](#): Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages;
- [Goal 5](#): Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls;



- [Goal 9](#): Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation;
- [Goal 14](#): Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development; and,
- [Goal 17](#): Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development (to be reviewed at every HLPF).

A draft [schedule](#) is already available and contains information about what the different components to the HLPF include, such as the Voluntary National Reviews (VNR), thematic reviews, side events, learning courses, and general debates. Additionally, a Ministerial Declaration (MD) is expected to be adopted at the end of the HLPF on July 19.

Ministerial Declaration (MD)

The [2016 HLPF Ministerial Declaration](#) was weak, without specific language. However, the co-facilitators this year, the Permanent representatives from Austria and Jamaica, have expressed interest for a stronger text and have committed to offering several informal consultations with civil society through the [Major Groups and other Stakeholders](#).

Below are the full day informal consultations with representatives from Major Groups in New York, where the MD will be reviewed:

- First reading: Thursday 15 June – Friday 16 June
- Second reading: Wednesday 21 June – Thursday 22 June
- Final reading: Thursday 29 June – Friday 30 June

MSMGF will be following the Ministerial Declaration negotiations closely and providing inputs to UNAIDS, Member States, and other UN agencies as often as possible to ensure that HIV, LGBTI human rights, active engagement of civil society, among other relevant issues, are included as much as possible in the outcome document.

Partners in New York and individuals following the Ministerial Declaration negotiations in capital are welcome to contact Stephen at sleonelli@msmgf.org for increased engagement.

Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs)

44 countries will participate in Voluntary National Reviews at the 2017 HLPF. These States include: *Afghanistan, Argentina, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Botswana, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Maldives, Monaco, Nepal, Netherlands, Nigeria, Panama, Peru, Portugal, Qatar, Slovenia, Sweden, Tajikistan, Thailand, Togo, Uruguay, and Zimbabwe*

On July 17-19, these States are expected to share about progress and challenges in achieving the Goals under review (listed above). Main messages from some States' VNR have already



been released on the HLPF [website](#) (see Voluntary National Reviews, sorted by 2017), but a preliminary analysis shows that only 3 States mentioned HIV/AIDS. This is despite the fact that representatives from 14 of the above countries mentioned key populations, including gay, bisexual men and other men who have sex with men and transwomen, at the High-Level Meeting on Ending AIDS last year—you can view these video statements [here](#). **We must ensure that States continue to meet their commitments to HIV, the human rights of LGBTI people and people living with HIV/AIDS, and civil society engagement in VNRs.**

The full **VNR reports will be released on Friday, June 16**, and will be made available on the HLPF [website](#). MSMGF is interested in tracking Member States' reporting on HIV and human rights for LGBTI people in the VNRs, and we encourage partners to join us in efforts to provide supplemental and alternative data to complement VNR reports; these data can be utilized to comment on VNRs through the Major Groups and other Stakeholders, as well as friendly Member States, July 17-19.

At the 2016 HLPF, eight countries specifically referenced LGBTI and/or sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics in their VNRs. This year, States participating in VNRs are meant to report on progress in the Goals under review listed above, including Target 3.3 on ending AIDS, which includes Target 3.3.1 (Number of new HIV infections per 1,000 uninfected population, by sex, age and key populations).¹

We strongly encourage gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men and trans advocates from the 44 countries named above to review their country report and identify gaps. Please contact Stephen at sleonelli@msmgf.org if you are interested in participating in monitoring your State's VNR.

Registration for the HLPF

Registration for representatives from civil society must be completed using the CSO Net online events registration system. In Accordance with General Assembly resolution 67/270, registration is open for two categories of NGOs to participate: organizations in consultative status with ECOSOC and organizations on the Commission for Sustainable Development (CSD) roster. The deadline for registration is **Sunday, June 11, 2017**. Click [here](#) to register.

In addition to registering through the above link, grounds passes are additionally required for the HLPF. Passes should be requested as soon as possible, but no later than **Wednesday, June 28**. ECOSOC accredited organizations may request 9 temporary grounds passes at a time, in

¹ According to the 2015 UNAIDS Terminology Guidelines, key population groups “often suffer from punitive laws or stigmatizing policies, and they are among the most likely to be exposed to HIV.” Key populations include gay men and other men who have sex with men, sex workers and their clients, transgender people, people who inject drugs, and prisoners and other incarcerated people. See more at http://www.unaids.org/sites/default/files/media_asset/2015_terminology_guidelines_en.pdf.



addition to 7 annual grounds passes. Passes must be requested through the Integrated Civil Society Organizations System (iCSO). More information is available [here](#).

Side Events

The deadline to submit side event proposals was May 10, and over 200 applications were submitted for approximately 80 slots. The announcement about which proposals have been accepted will be made soon.

Global Forum on MSM & HIV and OutRight Action International applied to host a side event on several targets in SDG 3, *Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages*, which must be implemented at the national-level in order to improve the health and well-being of LGBTI people and realize Agenda 2030's ambition to 'leave no one behind.' Co-sponsored by Argentina and UNDP, the event will feature main findings from a forthcoming paper published by MSMGF, OutRight Action International, and other members of the Global Platform to Fast Track the HIV and Human Rights Responses with Gay and Bisexual Men. The paper reviews available data on health disparities of LGBTI people and barriers faced when accessing health services, and calls on Member States to collect and include relevant data on LGBTI people's health and wellbeing in SDG reporting.

Major Groups and other Stakeholders (MGoS)

Major Groups and other Stakeholders ([MGoS](#)) play a role engaging intergovernmental processes at the UN on sustainable development, and their coordination is led by [UNDESA](#)/Division for Sustainable Development (DSD).

The HLPF Coordination Mechanism (see the Coordination Mechanism's Terms of Reference [here](#)) will be transitioning to a new mailing list, where all participants will be fully registered, to foster transparency and information sharing among stakeholders. The new list will be operational on **12 June, so sign up as soon as possible if you are interested in receiving updates**. A link to sign up is available [here](#).



WHAT YOU CAN DO

In order to ensure that key advocacy points are heard and carried into the HLPF in July, you can help by:

1. **Determining how your government is planning to participate in the HLPF in July;**
2. **Contacting your mission representatives in NYC directly and asking them if they are engaged;**
3. **Lobbying your government now on HIV-related issues of concern for gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men, the human rights of LGBTI people and people living with HIV/AIDS, and civil society participation in SDG and VNR processes.**

There will be additional opportunities for advocates to engage in the lead-up to and during the HLPF in July. We will continue to provide updates on these opportunities, and would appreciate hearing your perspectives on strategies to influence the process.

Please communicate your feedback and any questions/concerns you may have to Stephen Leonelli, Senior Policy Advisor, at sleonelli@msmgf.org. We thank you kindly for your much-appreciated engagement with this critical process.

