2018

Voluntary national reviews (VNRs) of implementation of the 2030 Agenda

national circumstances. Despite limits to the comparability of the voluntary national reviews caused by the variety of formats used, analysing the information contained in the many reviews can yield important messages about the overall approaches to implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and reveal lessons learned and best practices that can both be of use to other countries and induce a process of healthy competition among countries.

In 2017, the Committee decided to initiate research on and analysis of the voluntary national reviews. The Committee analysis of the reviews complements the annual synthesis report provided by the Secretariat and the assessments by other organizations, examining how the voluntary national reviews address key principles and cross cutting issues, based on the diverse expertise of the Committee. The analysis aims at encouraging Governments to address critical challenges in promoting the necessary ambitious and transformative agenda. The work of the Committee is neither an analysis of national implementation of the 2030 Agenda nor a judgment of the voluntary national reviews, but an objective analysis of how they have approached selected cross cutting issues and principles.

The pilot analyses of all 43 voluntary national reviews presented to the high level political forum in 2017 covered, in particular, the key thematic challenges of leaving no one behind (see chapter II) and addressing policy trade offs through policy integration. 99. The analysis of leaving no one behind focused on reported policies and strategies aimed at implementing the principle with regard to individuals and population subgroups. The Committee found, in its analysis, that while almost all countries recognized this key principle, only 14 referred to specific comprehensive strategies implementing it. At the same time, many countries reported on strategies and policies in key areas associated with leaving no one behind. However, as set out in chapter II of present report, an effective implementation of the principle typically requires macroeconomic policies conducive to equitable growth, sectoral policies that expand productive capacities and universal social programmes in addition to targeted policies. Hence, voluntary national reviews that utilize a broad conceptualization of leaving no one behind may be particularly valuable for sharing best practices.

Most voluntary national reviews in 2017 provided few details on how and why strategies related to leaving no one behind were working. Hence, for the reviews to become an effective mechanism for sharing lessons learned, countries assigning high priority to this principle should include a more comprehensive discussion on their policy choices. Information on policies that proved to be ineffective and on difficulties in translating the principle into concrete strategies and polices would also be helpful. The Committee also noted that in the voluntary national reviews addressing the groups most at risk of being left behind, most countries emphasized women, people with disabilities and children, while relatively few gave special consideration to ethnic or religious minorities or the poorest of the poor. More information in the reviews on the ways in which the most marginalized and vulnerable groups are addressed would be beneficial.

An essential characteristic of the 2030 Agenda is its integrated nature, which demands that policy choices be considered on the basis of their multidimensional implications. It therefore requires policymakers not to only to identify and harness synergies between policy objectives, but also to address trade offs, where measures directed at one objective can have negative impacts for other objectives, different groups of people, other countries or futurefúðÀ 0