Engagement in Sri Lanka’s SDG Implementation

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Introduction

• The Government of Sri Lanka completed the Voluntary National Review (VNR) in June 2018
  – The Government sought the views of academia and scientists on certain sections of VNR;
  – The National Academy of Sciences Sri Lanka (NASSL) reviewed the VNR after offering its services;
  – NASSL proposed an inter-agency forum to provide guidance as an ongoing exercise.
Follow-up on the Initiative

• NASSL could not form the inter-agency forum largely due to lack of funds and the Ministerial changes;
• However, the Members of NASSL continue to provide assistance as and when necessary in their personal capacities;
• NASSL encourages such engagements

Voluntary Peoples’ Review

• NASSL was also engaged with the Sri Lanka Stakeholder SDG Platform in discussions on the Voluntary Peoples’ Review;
• Issues relating to ‘Science Indicators for Policy Development’ by the Government;
• Inadequate progress in linking science and technology and building a knowledge society in national implementation of SDGs
Current engagement

- In terms of the provisions in the Sustainable Development Act No. 19 of 2017, the Sustainable Development Council has been established;
- The Council proposes to prepare follow-up to VNR by preparing strategies for implementation of SDG;
- NASSL will be included in the Working Groups to provide expertise.

Potential Areas of Engagement

- Voluntary Peoples’ Review found very low action on:
  - Awareness amongst general public, educators, Parliamentarians, local authorities & Private Sector;
  - Institutional coherence and Inter-agency coordination;
  - Policy coherence and national SDG framework;
  - Integrating Economic, Social and Environment.
- Some of these are potential areas for Academy’s engagement.
Lessons

• NASSL had to proactively engage with the Government in SDG implementation; it relied more on Government’s scientific institutions rather than independent fora such as NASSL;
• Whilst NASSL is best placed in assisting scientific indicators, it will need its own funding for such engagement;
• However, demonstration of available expertise can influence Government thinking on engaging the Academy.
• Positioning of the Academy (honest broker?; Civil Society player? Pro Government?)