

**From:** International Affairs Media

**Sent:** Tuesday, May 01, 2018 10:09 AM

**To:** International Affairs Media

**Subject:** MAYOR DE BLASIO AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS COMMISSIONER ABEYWARDENA ANNOUNCE NYC TO BECOME FIRST CITY IN THE WORLD TO PUBLISH LOCAL PROGRESS TOWARD GLOBAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
MAYOR'S OFFICE FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Tuesday, May 1, 2018

Contact: Megan MacInnes, [MMacInnes@cityhall.nyc.gov](mailto:MMacInnes@cityhall.nyc.gov), (212) 319-9437

**Mayor de Blasio and International Affairs Commissioner Abeywardena Announce New York City to Become First City in the World to Publish Local Progress Toward Global Sustainable Development Goals**

*-Voluntary Local Review will be released in July during annual sustainability forum at UN Headquarters-*

New York – Mayor Bill de Blasio and Commissioner of the Mayor’s Office for International Affairs Penny Abeywardena today announced that New York City will publish its progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals, making it the first city in the world to report to the United Nations on the status of efforts to achieve the global benchmarks to address poverty, inequality and climate change by the year 2030. The Voluntary Local Review (VLR) will highlight NYC’s achievements in sustainability since 2015 and be released in July during the annual High-Level Political Forum focused on sustainable development at the United Nations Headquarters in New York City.

“New York City is showing how localities across the country can implement the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals. Through OneNYC, we’re implementing a bold strategy to make our city more sustainable, equitable and healthier. Our approach is working: our air and waterways are cleaner than ever, we’re creating opportunity for New Yorkers across the city, crime is at an all-time low and we are tackling the challenge of climate change. We look forward to continue working with municipalities across the nation and the world to learn from them and share the strategies that have succeeded here,” said **Mayor de Blasio**.

In April 2015, the de Blasio administration launched OneNYC, a groundbreaking strategic plan for sustainable and inclusive growth. OneNYC charts a path forward to achieving goals such as lifting 800,000 New Yorkers out of poverty, expanding access to nutritious and affordable food,

and ensuring that those on the front lines of climate change—often the most vulnerable New Yorkers—are protected.

Months later, in September 2015, world leaders gathered at the United Nations in New York City and committed to 17 goals to end extreme poverty, fight inequality and injustice, and prevent the harmful effects of climate change by 2030. These Sustainable Development Goals, also known as the SDGs or Global Goals, are voluntary targets that provide a framework for all countries, including the United States, to work toward a common future of social and economic progress.

“Since 2015 – the year the global community agreed to the Sustainable Development Goals – New York City has been a pioneer in localizing the SDGs, from sharing best practices through the Global Vision | Urban Action program to engaging youth on global issues through the NYC Junior Ambassadors program. Given our strategic commitment to the SDGs, it is fitting that New York City is the first city to publish its progress through a Voluntary Local Review,” said **Commissioner for International Affairs Penny Abeywardena**. “By taking this historic step, we are connecting New Yorkers to a global conversation through the shared language of the Sustainable Development Goals. The Voluntary Local Review reflects our commitment to the values of fairness, inclusion and cooperation, especially at this critical time when our national government and some others are retreating from this urgent dialogue.”

The VLR is produced by the Global Vision | Urban Action program of the Mayor’s Office for International Affairs. Created in 2015, Global Vision | Urban Action shares NYC’s innovations in sustainability with cities and countries around the world using the lens of the SDGs. Through Global Vision | Urban Action, the Office hosts a series of events and site visits that bring together experts and thought-leaders working to advance the SDGs at the local level.

City participation is essential to the achievement of the SDGs. As of 2010, more than half the world’s population lives in cities, and that share is expected to reach two-thirds by 2030. Cities generate 80% of the world’s GDP, are responsible for 70% of global energy-related carbon dioxide emissions, and serve as hubs of technology and innovation.

"In 2015, New York City released OneNYC, the world’s first resilience strategy and a model for sustainable development at the local level,” said **Daniel Zarrilli, New York City’s Senior Director of Climate Policy and Programs and Chief Resilience Officer**. “By aligning our work with the Sustainable Development Goals, we have demonstrated the value of incorporating equity as a guiding principle for all of our work. We are proud that New York City will continue to lead by example by publishing our progress toward the SDGs as we work to achieve a more sustainable, more equitable, and more resilient city for all New Yorkers.”

The VLR compiles and presents existing NYC data and programs in a format that is accessible to the UN community as well as other stakeholders following the SDG process. The publication is being developed in close collaboration with relevant NYC agencies, informed by statistics from the Mayor’s Office of Operations and practical examples from city agency partners working on the implementation of OneNYC.

“The Mayor’s Office of Operations is responsible for supporting the Mayor’s equity and fairness agenda—which includes planning for a sustainable future,” said **Emily W. Newman, Acting Director of the Mayor’s Office of Operations**. “OneNYC is a critical tool for measuring our progress and aligning our goals with the international community. We’re proud of this work and eager to engage colleagues in municipal governments around the world.”

The VLR is modeled after the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs), which all countries are invited to voluntarily present every July at the United Nations High-Level Political Forum. In summer 2018, 47 countries will participate in the forum, focusing on their implementation of SDGs related to clean water and sanitation, affordable and clean energy, sustainable cities and communities, responsible consumption and production, and life on land.

The Mayor’s Office for International Affairs will release the VLR during the High-Level Political Forum scheduled to take place from Monday, July 9, to Wednesday, July 18, at UN Headquarters in Manhattan. The forum will include sessions dedicated to local government engagement, during which New York City will present the VLR as a model for other cities interested in mapping their local actions and reporting directly to the United Nations about their progress toward achieving the SDGs.

“As a distinctly global city it is critical and commendable that New York City will continue to lead as an exemplar for the Sustainable Development Goals in being bold, innovative, and inclusionary,” said **Darren Walker, president of the Ford Foundation**. “Mayor de Blasio and his team are laying out a path to create a more equitable city on a local level but with international significance.”

“Cities are key for the achievement of the global goals and we are thrilled that New York City is one of the pioneers to report on their contribution to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, improving the lives of New Yorkers and setting an example for thousands of cities around the world,” said **Emilia Saiz, Secretary-General, United Cities and Local Governments**.

“Congratulations to Mayor Bill de Blasio and the City of New York for their commitment to publish the first-ever Voluntary Local Review,” said **Tony Pipa, Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution**. “New York, through its efforts to achieve the goals set out in OneNYC, has been in the forefront of showing local leadership to contribute to global progress on the SDGs. By issuing such a report, the city’s leadership is taking the next step to demonstrate how seriously they value accountability to their citizens and the entire global community, providing a model and example to other cities.”

“Cities are at the forefront of confronting global challenges. Local leadership is essential in implementing the SDGs, and the Voluntary Local Review is an unprecedented opportunity for New York City to engage in global conversations about the best ways to achieve them. Critically, our efforts extend beyond words on paper. We also bring the world’s largest diplomatic corps out of the UN and into our communities to see firsthand how NYC is putting the SDGs into practice. Through a combination of innovative policy and practical examples, we hope to inform local and global efforts to attain these ambitious goals,” said **Alexandra Hiniker, Global Vision | Urban Action program manager**.

About the Mayor's Office for International Affairs

The [New York City Mayor's Office for International Affairs](#) works to foster positive relations and encourage collaboration between the international community and New York City's agencies and local neighborhoods. The Office is focused on sharing New York City's policies and best practices globally, as well as responding to requests from foreign governments, the United Nations, and the U.S. Department of State. For more information, follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), and on our [website](#).

###