



# Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General  
6 May 2024  
English  
Original: Arabic, English, French  
and Spanish

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## High-level political forum on sustainable development

Convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council  
New York, 8–12 and 15–17 July 2024

Item 2 of the provisional agenda\*

**Reinforcing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and  
eradicating poverty in times of multiple crises: the effective  
delivery of sustainable, resilient and innovative solutions**

## Compilation of main messages for the 2024 voluntary national reviews

### Note by the Secretariat

The Secretariat transmits herewith the main messages of voluntary national reviews presented by 37 States members of the high-level political forum on sustainable development at its 2024 meeting, in accordance with General Assembly resolutions [67/290](#), [70/1](#) and [70/299](#)\*\*.

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\* [E/HLPF/2024/1](#).

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## Armenia

[Original: English]

### Overview

Since the inception of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Armenia has been steadfast in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals through incorporating them into the national reform agenda. Currently, the Government is implementing the “Armenia Transformation Strategy 2050”, the 16 mega goals of which mainly correspond to the Sustainable Development Goals.

As a landlocked developing and middle-income country, Armenia has been facing many challenges in the effective implementation of the Goals. The continuing attempts to undermine peace and stability in the region, the ensuing humanitarian crisis and the land blockade by two neighbouring countries have made those strides even more complicated.

Although these factors retain their full impact to this day, Armenia has continued its transformative reforms towards strong economic development and democratic institutions, building a just, peaceful and inclusive society and achieving lasting peace in the region.

### Context of the third voluntary national review

As Armenia was finalizing its second voluntary national review in 2020, the country was already struggling with the consequences of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, which considerably weakened the progress of implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals worldwide.

Moreover, regardless of the call of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for global ceasefire, Armenia had to face the large-scale aggression of Azerbaijan against Nagorno-Karabakh in 2020, which claimed thousands of lives and resulted in the forcible displacement of 92,265 people from Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia.

Further aggressions by Azerbaijan and occupation of the sovereign territory of Armenia in 2021 and 2022, resulting in internal displacement and infringement of the fundamental human rights of border communities, added to the already complex humanitarian situation in the country.

The large-scale offensive by Azerbaijan on 19 September 2023, preceded by a 10-month-long inhumane blockade, resulted in ethnic cleansing of the entire Indigenous population of Nagorno-Karabakh, prompting the forcible displacement of more than 115,000 refugees, thus creating the worst refugee crisis in Armenia since its independence. The Government’s efforts and the solidarity of Armenian society were instrumental in responding to the life-saving needs of the refugees.

### Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals

Regardless of the past and emerging challenges, the democratic resilience of Armenia allowed it to deliver progress and build back better in an extremely fragile environment.

During the past four years, the economy of Armenia registered up to double-digit gross domestic product (GDP) growth (12.6 per cent in 2022), lifting tens of thousands above the poverty line. Owing to the strong macroeconomic policies, active inflation targeting, fiscal responsibility and effective oversight, the financial system maintained stability, despite the challenges of the past four years.

The transition to a greener and more sustainable energy sector is among the priorities of Armenia. The investments in the renewable energy system, aimed at increasing the share of solar energy production to at least 15 per cent, or 1.8 billion kWh, by 2030 contributed to the country's green energy transition. The biggest refurbishment of the country's nuclear power plant in conformity with international nuclear safety standards allowed for the steady growth of the energy sector.

Major reforms in the governance and judiciary system, the strengthening of democratic institutions and social protection, and the uncompromised fight against corruption have been the top priority for the country. Armenia has also been consistently promoting women's and girls' rights, empowerment and meaningful participation in decision-making processes. The employment and economic benefits for women reached up to 90 per cent. The proportion of seats held by women in the National Assembly is 36.45 per cent.

### **The way forward**

In its third voluntary national review, Armenia will present its experience of resilience, humanitarian action and steadfast efforts towards implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals against the backdrop of security, humanitarian and development challenges.

The experience of Armenia will reveal the need for reinvigorated multilateralism and joint action towards withstanding the humanitarian crisis, promoting peace and ensuring progress, development and human rights for all, anchored in the humanitarian-development-peace nexus and with strong emphasis on the most vulnerable.

Armenia will continue its consistent efforts towards implementing the 2030 Agenda, based on the development priorities of the country. Armenia will also continue to address the humanitarian and socioeconomic challenges of the refugees from Nagorno-Karabakh, ensuring an environment for the sustainable development of their livelihood.

### **Institutional arrangements**

To ensure an inclusive and participatory preparation process for the voluntary national review, the Government initiated four multi-stakeholder consultations on implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in Armenia, with members of parliament, development partners, civil society, the private sector and academia. Those consultations served as a platform for validation of the voluntary national review and created an opportunity to shape further joint actions for implementation of the Goals.

## **Austria**

[Original: English]

The second voluntary national review of Austria was compiled during multiple global crises, including the COVID-19 pandemic. In the global *Sustainable Development Report 2023*, Austria ranked fifth out of 166 countries for implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. However, the report also showed that action is still needed to achieve the 2030 Agenda, including additional efforts for Goals 12, 13 and 15. While Austria still consumes a high level of resources, efficiency gains in recent years offer a promising trend.

Thus, Austria has aligned its report along the question: “What transformations towards sustainability are needed to achieve the 2030 Agenda goals?”, with the following highlighted considerations:

- The “mainstreaming” approach of Austria to the Sustainable Development Goals has proven itself: a transparent and participatory multi-stakeholder process was continued through various cooperation formats over 15 months. Austria also advanced the collaboration with science: the interdisciplinary “UniNEtZ” project, involving around 300 scientists, presented 950 concrete measures for implementation of the Goals.
- A solid database from the national statistics office was developed, data gaps were closed with the support of universities, and data were positioned as a central element in the report.
- Three intersectional priorities for transformation were included throughout the voluntary national review: gender equality, the youth perspective, and the international dimension.

The common European framework and European Union guidelines are guiding principles for implementation in Austria. Following the three pillars of sustainability – environmental, economic and social – the report has three main topics:

#### **Leaving no one behind: social cohesion and solidarity in times of multiple crises**

- Anyone may experience a predicament, but people in vulnerable situations are hit harder by multiple crises than others. In Austria, people affected by poverty and social exclusion can rely on a well-developed welfare state. It encourages transformation through solidarity, inclusivity and equal opportunities so that “no one is left behind”.
- Families, children and young people are supported with the “*Frühe Hilfen*” and “*Schulstartklar!*” programmes.
- The second national action plan on disability paves the way for numerous measures implementing the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- “Gender budgeting” is promoted for gender equality. Additionally, measures tackling gender-based violence and online hate speech legislation were passed.
- To meet the increasing demand for long-term care, two comprehensive reform packages and “community nursing” were introduced.

#### **Skills for 2030: competencies for sustainable development**

- Skills that foster personal, interdisciplinary and interpersonal competencies are crucial for the envisioned transformations for implementation of the 2030 Agenda.
- Digital skills and media and information literacy – the foundation for sustainable, inclusive digitalization – create opportunities for the economy and the labour market.
- Companies play a key role in further training in “skills for 2030”.
- To address the shortage of skilled workers, the dual vocational training system is strengthened by increasing the training quality and training opportunities.
- Active labour market policies are improving employment opportunities for job seekers, providing target-group-specific training opportunities and creating employment incentives.

- Skills for “responsible business conduct” are essential for achieving the Goals globally.

### **Protecting the biosphere: sustainable development within planetary boundaries**

- Accelerated action in climate and environmental protection is a fundamental prerequisite for sustainable transformation. Austria has taken important steps by promoting climate protection and adaptation measures, as well as a wide range of measures for the energy and mobility transitions.
- An important basis for this is, inter alia, the implemented “eco-social tax reform”, which introduced both carbon dioxide pricing and a climate bonus.
- Ambitious targets and measures for renewable energy and the expansion of the electricity infrastructure were also adopted.
- Significant steps were taken to tackle the mobility transition, in particular the nationwide “climate ticket” for public transport and record investments in railway infrastructure.
- To secure the protection of nature and biodiversity in Austria, the “Biodiversity Strategy Austria 2030+” and the establishment of the Biodiversity Fund lay an important foundation.
- A key Sustainable Development Goal of the 2030 Agenda and goal of the Austrian circular economy strategy is the establishment of a climate-neutral, sustainable circular economy.

Through this voluntary national review, Austria renews its commitment to the 2030 Agenda and its goals. To achieve these, Austria intends to implement the above-mentioned transformations, which all depend on an indispensable, rules-based multilateral system as a foundation.

The partnership principle enshrined in Sustainable Development Goal 17 is a catalyst to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and overcoming challenges ahead. In this spirit of cooperation, Austria has significantly increased its funding for development cooperation, international climate financing and humanitarian aid.

## **Azerbaijan**

[Original: English]

### **Ownership of the Sustainable Development Goals and national priorities**

The commitment of Azerbaijan to the Sustainable Development Goals is deeply embedded within its national development agenda, notably outlined in “Azerbaijan 2030: National Priorities for Socioeconomic Development”, the country’s sustainable transformative long-term strategy. Key outcomes of the socioeconomic development model of Azerbaijan include the reconstruction and rehabilitation of its liberated territories, the strengthening of economic capacity and substantial enhancements in social well-being guided by principles of the 2030 Agenda.

### **Leaving no one behind**

Azerbaijan aspires to build a well-being society by pursuing sustainable growth drivers. Over the past decade, the minimum wage increased almost threefold, the average monthly salary increased twofold, and the minimum pension increased by a factor of 2.4, while the need criterion for granting targeted State social assistance to low-income households increased by a factor of over 2.2. Focus on inclusive growth prominently features in “Azerbaijan 2030: National Priorities for Socioeconomic

Development” and the “Strategy of Socioeconomic Development for 2022–2026”, in which a dynamic, inclusive society based on social justice is identified as one of the five priorities up to 2030.

### **Sustainable Development Goals financing**

Azerbaijan has advanced in the introduction of the integrated national financing framework and Sustainable Development Goals investor maps to scale up financing for acceleration to achieve the Goals. The country embraces investing in the Goals as a powerful tool for driving positive social and environmental change while generating financial returns. Notably, the tagging of State budget expenditures to the Goals for 2022 showed that 82.3 per cent of the consolidated budget expenditures are aligned with national goals and targets towards achieving the Goals, constituting almost 23 per cent of GDP for the same year.

### **Clean environment and green growth country**

Environmental sustainability is nested as one of the five pillars of the development strategy of Azerbaijan, underscoring the commitment to a clean environment and green growth. Energy transition is central to the country’s green transformation agenda, with the target of increasing the share of renewable energy to 24 per cent of the installed capacity for electricity generation by 2026, and to 30 per cent by 2030. In line with its nationally determined contributions, Azerbaijan aims to achieve a 40 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 compared to 1990. The country announced a voluntary commitment to create a “net zero emission” zone in the Karabakh and Eastern Zangazur regions liberated from 30 years of occupation.

### **Twenty-ninth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change**

The Government also recognizes the imperative of addressing global climate change through green technologies and the transition to clean energy sources, and by changing the traditional linear model of production, consumption, waste to a circular model, which puts resource efficiency, recycling and environmental regeneration at the centre. Inspired to deliver on its commitment to sustainable development, Azerbaijan is preparing to successfully host the twenty-ninth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in 2024. In this endeavour, Azerbaijan intends to play a pivotal role facilitating global dialogue and collaboration on potential deliverables at the session.

### **National sustainable development goal 18 on mine action**

Azerbaijan ranks among the most mine-contaminated countries, as a result of the nearly 30-year occupation of its territories by Armenia. Cities and villages were totally razed to the ground, and the historical and cultural sites were destroyed. The mine problem in Azerbaijan has an additional adverse impact on the environment. Initial estimates suggest that Armenia, during its occupation, planted over 1.5 million mines in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan. Recognizing the significant impact of mine contamination on the country’s sustainable development, humanitarian demining has been formally designated as the eighteenth national sustainable development goal in Azerbaijan.

## Next steps on challenges

### *Economic diversification and well-being*

Economic diversification and productivity gains are expected to accelerate sustainable and inclusive growth. Technology transfer and innovations, enhancement of access to finance and entrepreneurship, better trade integration and diversification of exports, and expanded investments in skills will remain a priority going forward.

### *Climate action*

Advancements in energy transition, the scaling up of green technologies, energy efficiency measures and the transition to circular economy will be key. Understanding climate change vulnerabilities and adaptation needs is important, while climate finance will be an enabler.

### *Improving data for green growth monitoring and reporting*

Data collection and reporting on “green growth” indicators will be amplified for evidence-based decision-making and accountability on environmental sustainability.

### *Sustainable Development Goals financing*

Efforts on the integrated national financing framework will continue to expand domestic resource mobilization and the effective use of budget resources. Building on the Sustainable Development Goals investor map, innovative financing instruments will be promoted to encourage private sector investment in the Goals.

## Belize

[Original: English]

### Context

The #planBelize Medium-term Development Strategy 2022–2026 sets out our ambition to transform Belize into a more democratic, inclusive, sustainable and resilient society in which all Belizeans must benefit. Belize is committed to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and continues to invest in the achievement of all of the Sustainable Development Goals. Our second voluntary national review was developed using a whole-of-society approach that respects the contribution of each citizen to national development and reflects our unwavering commitment to the international development agenda.

We acknowledge that our progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals has been challenged by exogenous shocks, limited development financing, debt, climate change, infrastructural constraints and unforeseen events. At the time of the 2017 voluntary national review, for example, there was inadequate cross-sectoral and interministerial planning, collaboration and coordination to support the targeted implementation of the Goals. Between 2020 and 2022, the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and Hurricane Lisa also necessitated a redirecting of national resources to initiate recovery efforts.

Belize has ensured, however, that strategic mechanisms guide its development ambitions. Our long- and medium-term national development plans, the Horizon 2030 National Development Framework for Belize 2010–2030 and the #planBelize Medium-term Development Strategy 2022–2026, have been designed to support countrywide development across sectors. During the 2023 national leadership and national Sustainable Development Goals partnership dialogues, the Government of

Belize further committed to resilience-building, reduced inequalities and poverty reduction, in line with the transformative promise of the 2030 Agenda to leave no one behind.

### Highlights

In 2017, our presentation to the high-level political forum was primarily informed by qualitative data. Conversely, the 2024 Belize voluntary national review has resulted from extensive stakeholder consultations and was informed by qualitative and quantitative data. Our main messages will highlight some of our notable achievements across the five pillars of the 2030 Agenda and introduce major challenges to our progress.

	<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Previous</i>	<i>Most recent</i>
<b>People</b> Goals 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5	Multidimensional poverty has decreased	36.5 per cent (2021)	26.4 per cent (2023)
	Proportion of students who complete their primary education within the prescribed time has increased	93.4 per cent (2017)	100 per cent (2022)
<b>Prosperity</b> Goals 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11	Renewable energy share in the total final energy supply has increased	30.4 per cent (2017)	36 per cent (2022)
	Unemployment rate has decreased	9.3 per cent (2018)	5 per cent (2023)
<b>Planet</b> Goals 6, 12, 13, 14 and 15	Forest cover under sustainable management maintains a constant proportion within legally established protected areas	56.81 per cent (2017)	56.81 per cent (2020)
	Degree of integrated water resources management has increased	20 per cent (2018)	32 per cent (2023)
<b>Peace</b> Goal 16	Number of victims of intentional homicide per 100,000 population by sex		
	Reported cases with male victims have decreased	117 (2019)	77 (2023)
	Reported cases with female victims have decreased	17 (2019)	10 (2023)
<b>Partnership</b> Goal 17	Foreign direct investment (FDI)/official development assistance/South-South cooperation		
	FDI/GDP has increased	1.1 per cent (2017)	4.9 per cent (2022)
	Public sector debt/GDP has decreased	78.1 per cent (2017)	71.4 per cent (2022)



## Challenges

Belize must contend with the inherent vulnerabilities of a small island developing State. Challenges in accessing development and climate financing mar our contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals. In the absence of quality data and a standardized, operational performance monitoring function, there has been insufficient monitoring and reporting on contributions by State and non-State organizations to the Goals. While we have integrated the 2030 Agenda, including the Goals, into our national frameworks, the combination of resource constraints and infrastructural challenges limits our capacity to effectively coordinate and monitor its implementation.

## Next steps

Belize remains committed to sustainable development and will actively invest in partnerships and innovation to accelerate its contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals. Our investments will prioritize the “leave no one behind” principle, to facilitate inclusive growth and improved living standards for vulnerable and marginalized segments of our population. We will place our peoples at the heart of our efforts to build resilient, inclusive communities and support national prosperity through food security, the scaling up of renewable energy, infrastructural development, greening approaches and technologies, poverty reduction and good governance. To support this trajectory, we will continue to facilitate cross-sectoral digitalization to strengthen our institutional infrastructure. We will use our carbon trading framework to access international funding for our nationally determined contributions and our contributions to the Goals. We also commit to public-private partnerships and the institutionalization of the Sustainable Development Unit for the enhanced monitoring of our progress.

## Brazil

[Original: English]

In 2023, Brazil reaffirmed its commitment to the 2030 Agenda. The country is recovering from the effects of the pandemic, science denial and attacks on the democratic State, which resulted in deaths, unemployment, misinformation, inflation and the resurgence of hunger in a country that was once admired worldwide for its innovative development policies.

Regarding the 2030 Agenda, in which Brazil has participated intensively ever since the beginning of its international negotiations, the previous period was also turbulent. The last voluntary national review dates back to 2017, and the National Commission for the Sustainable Development Goals was dissolved in 2019. Nevertheless, Brazilian society has embraced the Goals as strategic guidelines for creating alternatives and resistance.

In a course correction, the Federal Government reintroduced social participation as a governance method and recreated the Commission in 2023, a parity commission with participation from all ministries, state and municipal governments, and diverse civil society representations. It also reorganized internal priorities for monitoring and accelerating the 2030 Agenda.

In this voluntary national report, Brazil is committed to the principle of “leaving no one behind”, which has defined the choices and actions to address profound historical inequalities.

Brazil has resumed its active participation in international forums, promoting agendas aligned with the Goals, as demonstrated by the priority themes of its

presidency of the Group of 20: combating hunger and poverty; promoting the three dimensions of sustainable development; and engaging in the reform of global governance. The main goal underlying these priorities is the reduction of the inequalities within and between nations, which Brazil selected as an overriding aim of the 2030 Agenda.

Internally, the conditions for sustainable development have been rebuilt across the social, economic and environmental pillars.

In the social dimension, the “*Bolsa Família*” programme was refounded and expanded to enhance the effects of income transfers. Employment, in turn, recovered, promoting people’s purchasing power through reduced inflation and stimulating economic growth.

The historical commitment to combating hunger, poverty and inequalities is complemented by the pioneering proposal for the voluntary adoption of the eighteenth sustainable development goal, on ethnic-racial equality. Goal 18 represents the highest-level commitment of Brazil to addressing racism and ethnic-racial inequalities, assuming it as the central point of a sustainable development strategy. In line with Sustainable Development Goals 5 and 10, Brazil recreated the Ministry of Women and the Ministry of Racial Equality, and, for the first time in history, it established a Ministry for the Indigenous Peoples, led by an Indigenous woman.

In the environmental dimension, the priorities of Brazil include combating deforestation and addressing climate emergencies. A substantial decrease in deforestation in the Amazon in 2023 has been noticed, reversing the trend of previous years. Brazil recognizes, in the reconstruction of sectoral public policies, that the impacts of extreme weather events are felt primarily by socioeconomically vulnerable populations.

The Government of Brazil has integrated its actions aimed at mitigation and adaptation and its nationally determined contributions with the Sustainable Development Goals. In this line, we highlight the holding of the thirtieth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in 2025, in the Amazonian city of Belém, in the state of Pará, as well as actions related to water governance, sustainable cities, ocean protection and renewable energy use.

In the economic dimension, innovation and sustainability underpin the new industrial policy, which is tasked with promoting the bioeconomy, decarbonization and a just energy transition. The ecological transformation plan also aims for a just transition and proposes intersectoral partnerships with both State and non-State actors.

The Plurianual Plan 2024–2027, structured with extensive social participation, features indicators and goals that will allow the evaluation and monitoring of budget execution. It was approved as a federal law for the period between 2024 and 2027 and is entirely aligned with the goals and indicators of the 2030 Agenda. Thus, the Plurianual Plan strengthens the monitoring tools for the Sustainable Development Goals in Brazil.

The report reinforces that sustainable development cannot be achieved without social inclusion, solid institutions and full democracy. The coming years will pose significant challenges for the world and the 2030 Agenda. Brazil reaffirms its commitment to accelerating the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and their indicators, aiming to reach a more peaceful, just, prosperous and sustainable future for present and future generations.

## Chad

[Original: French]

Chad endorsed the Sustainable Development Goals in 2015 with a view to boosting its structural transformation and improving the living conditions of its people. The country's highest authorities have demonstrated their political will to effectively implement the Goals by incorporating them into the priorities of national development plans and relevant sectoral policies. This political will is also reflected in the country's commitment to draft and regularly submit to the high-level political forum on sustainable development voluntary national review reports on progress towards achieving the Goals, as it did in 2019 and 2021.

The 2024 voluntary national review was drafted in a context marked by the political transition that began following the death of the former President of Chad, Marshal Idriss Déby Itno, on 20 April 2021. Despite this huge shock, the country has made enormous progress in social cohesion and peacebuilding (Goal 16). The transitional Government's political outreach led to: (a) the signing of the Doha Agreement for Peace between the transitional Government and 43 political-military groups and movements; (b) the organization of an inclusive and sovereign national dialogue; (c) the organization of a referendum on the Constitution; and (d) the signing of the Kinshasa agreements.

With regard to economic growth, Chad recorded a real gross domestic product growth rate of 3.4 per cent in 2022, rising to 5.1 per cent in 2023.

Nevertheless, with the economic and social environment hit hard by the multiple impacts of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, border conflicts and the effects of climate change, the poverty rate (Goal 1) among the Chadian people in 2022 was 44.8 per cent, i.e. 7,762,632 poor people. Compared with the 2018 rate (42.3 per cent), the poverty rate increased by 2.5 percentage points. The prevalence of undernourishment (Goal 2) was also up, increasing by 2.4 percentage points between 2018 (39.6 per cent) and 2021 (42 per cent) according to data from the 2021 national food security survey.

To rectify this situation, the Government of Chad has drawn up a new national development plan for the period 2024–2028, aimed at accelerating the development and structural transformation of Chad in line with the Goals and enabling greater progress on environmental issues following the revision of the nationally determined contribution in 2021. The Government plans to address current challenges, such as building basic public infrastructure (including energy infrastructure and roads), revitalizing local and regional development, strengthening the country's economic, social and environmental resilience, and establishing robust, accountable and universally accessible institutions to ensure the country's sustainable development, by:

- Establishing a mechanism to stabilize the prices of basic goods and combat the high cost of living (Goal 1)
- Combating food insecurity resulting from the decline in production and climate-related hazards (Goals 2 and 13)
- Diversifying the economy and helping to build national industry (Goals 1, 8 and 10)
- Organizing free and transparent elections in 2024 (Goal 16)
- Planning development from the decentralized level to the centralized level (Goal 16)

- Improving the functioning of the monitoring and evaluation system (Goal 16)
- Strengthening stakeholder participation and ownership (Goal 16)
- Optimizing the management of human, material and financial resources (Goal 16)
- Strengthening partnerships and mobilizing funds (Goal 17)

As part of those efforts, the Government intends to carry out the necessary reforms to enhance the mobilization of domestic resources, both public and private, and to increase the effectiveness of development efforts. At the same time, however, strengthened, broadened and renewed partnerships will be needed to rise to the challenge of financing and implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In this respect, the 2024 high-level political forum on sustainable development is an opportunity for the country to reiterate its commitment and its plea to all partners for support in steering its national development plan for the period 2024–2028 along the path towards sustainable development.

## Colombia

[Original: Spanish]

In Colombia, 28 per cent<sup>1</sup> of households are in a situation of moderate or severe food insecurity, indicating a need for profound change in order to be able to uphold the human right to food for all Colombians. The fourth voluntary national review report submitted by Colombia evaluates the progress it has made in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and reflects on the complex situation the country is facing in its efforts to combat hunger, which is exacerbated by the negative effects of climate change and the armed conflict.

Prepared with the participation of various sectors, including representatives of civil society, the public sector, academia and international cooperation, the report proposes measures for inclusion, sustainability and respect for diversity, and calls for the human right to food to be upheld in Colombia through collective construction. The Department of La Guajira, one of the regions facing the greatest challenges, serves as a case study.

### Guaranteeing the human right to food

Food and nutrition insecurity has profound implications beyond a lack of adequate food and affects all areas of sustainable development. It severely undermines human rights, especially for vulnerable and historically marginalized population groups that, in addition to the negative impact on their right to adequate food, are vulnerable to extreme poverty, social and labour discrimination, natural disasters and extreme weather, violence and forced displacement.

Upholding the human right to food requires both targeted measures and systemic transformation to address underlying factors, and should include the eradication of poverty in all its dimensions with an emphasis on rural areas, adaptation to climate change and the achievement of total peace.

**Territorial dimension.** Colombia faces significant challenges in terms of food and nutrition security, with marked differences between regions, ethnic groups and socioeconomic sectors. Territorial heterogeneity, climate change and structural inequalities exacerbate the intersectional vulnerability of certain population groups, thus perpetuating cycles of poverty and malnutrition.

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<sup>1</sup> According to the national quality of life survey, through the Food Insecurity Experience Scale for 2022.

In this context, sociocultural dynamics and public policies play a crucial role. Policies that strengthen family farming, support agroecological production and implement systems that guarantee the right to food can help mitigate food insecurity. The promotion of sustainable agricultural practices, together with the promotion of local value chains and the creation of regional markets, are key strategies for increasing the resilience of agrifood systems in the light of the multifaceted challenges in Colombia.

**The life cycle and the impact of childhood hunger on other stages.** Food insecurity has profound and lasting consequences throughout the life cycle, especially during critical stages such as pregnancy and early childhood. These effects extend beyond individual health and adversely affect the country's socioeconomic development.

**Governance of agrifood systems.** The country's agrifood systems are experiencing multidimensional challenges, including gaps in production, distribution and access to good-quality food. Fragmented governance, a lack of cross-sectoral coordination and shortcomings in transparency and accountability limit the ability to respond effectively to food crises.

Agrifood systems must be overhauled in the direction of sustainability, diversification, decentralization and inclusion, with consideration for the internal and external conditions that affect them, through a systemic, coordinated and participatory governance approach.

**Social and community participation.** Social and community participation is fundamental to the success of policies dedicated to combating hunger. Empowering communities, in particular women and ethnic groups, not only increases the relevance and effectiveness of action but also promotes sustainable and equitable development.

### **How does public policy address these challenges?**

Colombia is moving towards a public policy approach that recognizes food as a human right and seeks to overcome the traditional welfare-based approach. This paradigm shift requires a restructuring of governance for agrifood systems, the adoption of a cross-sectoral approach to tackle poverty traps, local capacity-building and the support of the private sector through innovation and the creation of partnerships.

## **Congo**

[Original: French]

Following the official launch of the Sustainable Development Goals in 2016, their adaptation to the national context and the prioritization of 14 Goals in 2017, and their inclusion in national, sectoral and local planning documents from 2018, the Republic of the Congo submitted its voluntary national review report to the high-level political forum on sustainable development in 2019. This experience strengthened the Government's resolve, on the one hand, to take measures to accelerate the achievement of the Goals and, on the other, to continue to produce annually reports on the progress made by the Congo towards achieving the Goals.

The 2023 report differs from the previous ones, as it focuses solely on the three Goals with the most potential to accelerate the achievement of the other Goals, as identified by applying the Push Diagnostic tool to the six strategic priorities of the national development plan for the period 2022–2026. These are Goals 8, 9 and 11. The prioritization of these three Goals is a direct consequence of the chronic

difficulties faced by the Government in effectively and simultaneously pursuing the achievement of the 14 Goals that were prioritized previously.

An analysis of data relating to these three Goals revealed a dismal situation overall. Major progress has been made, but the Government still has many challenges to overcome.

**Goal 8.** Efforts to boost economic growth have produced mixed results. In the period from 2018 to 2022, the growth rate of real gross domestic product (GDP) per capita stood at -2.5 per cent owing to the economic and health crises. In the labour market, the contraction in real GDP meant that unemployment remained high, at a rate of 20.43 per cent for men and 22.46 per cent for women in 2022.

In the financial sector, the Congo has 10 global banks and a few microfinance institutions. The number of bank branches per 100,000 inhabitants remains low (2.48). The low national coverage of credit institutions, coupled with the inaccessibility of banking services for the majority of people, has led to an exponential rise in the value of mobile money transactions as a share of GDP, increasing from 6 per cent in 2018 to 47.23 per cent in 2022. To address this situation, the Government has adopted a resilience plan that incorporates the Goals for the period 2022–2024.

**Goal 9.** The value added by manufacturing as a share of GDP remained low overall, at less than 8 per cent. This indicator was at 6 per cent in 2015 and is supposed to reach 12 per cent by 2030. In 2022, the Congo recorded a rate of 6.56 per cent. Considerable efforts will be made by the Government and the private sector to reach a rate of 12 per cent by 2030. Owing to its small population and, in particular, its underdeveloped agricultural and industrial sectors, the Congo is a model country in terms of carbon dioxide emissions. In 2020, it emitted 11,392.41 tons of carbon dioxide, corresponding to 0.00189 tons per unit of GDP.

**Goal 11.** Cities are not very dense in the Congo owing to ineffective urban development planning. Government offices, shops and homes are generally far apart from each other. Cities have mechanisms in place to enable civil society to participate directly in their management and development. However, there are weaknesses in the functioning of these mechanisms. The proportion of the population that has convenient access to public transport is 98.6 per cent.

To progress more effectively towards achieving the targets of these three Goals, the country is taking steps to address a number of challenges, such as improving bank coverage and the business climate, drafting and implementing local development plans, mobilizing its own resources on a sustained basis, increasing the involvement of development partners and continuing to implement the national development plan for the period 2022–2026 and the resilience plan for the period 2022–2024.

The Republic of the Congo is in dire need of financial support from its partners, for it will be impossible to overcome these challenges by 2030 using its limited resources alone.

## Costa Rica

[Original: Spanish]

Costa Rica continues to be a leader in the promotion and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals during the decade of action, thanks to multidimensional and multi-stakeholder collaboration aimed at ensuring the well-being of all its citizens. Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has facilitated significant learning and a greater integration of the

Goals, especially in the public sphere and among other key sustainable development actors.

This progress is in evidence in the drafting of the country's third voluntary national review report, which is noteworthy for its participatory methodology, aligned with the governance model for the Sustainable Development Goals. The model promotes the inclusion of diverse social groups in decisions that foster sustainable development.

The report highlights the key achievements and good practices of various sectors of society in the implementation of and planning for the 2030 Agenda in Costa Rica during the period 2020–2024, thus continuing a process that was initiated in 2015 and presented in the second report, submitted in 2020. The report also details the methodology and process behind its preparation, including the national adoption mechanisms and the institutional frameworks for implementation and monitoring of the Goals.

The third review also examines the 2030 Agenda and its Goals as a national commitment based on the National Pact for the Sustainable Development Goals of 2016, with contributions from various sectors such as the public sector (executive, legislative and judicial branches), the private sector, local governments, academia and civil society organizations, including faith-based organizations and organizations of the United Nations system in Costa Rica. This approach has been strengthened with the recent relaunch of the National Pact for the Sustainable Development Goals in 2023.

The report also addresses the evaluation and accountability mechanisms implemented in Costa Rica, highlighting national ownership of the sustainable development approach through short-, medium- and long-term planning instruments such as the National Development and Public Investment Plan 2023–2026, the National Strategic Plan 2050 and various sectoral public policies. Costa Rica has also innovated in its implementation of the 2030 Agenda through its Strategy of National Targets for the Sustainable Development Goals, a specific planning instrument for the achievement of sustainable development by the year 2030.

Crucial information is provided on structural challenges, means of implementation and complementary processes such as the universal periodic review, the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development and cooperation with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

In addition, progress has been made towards sustainable development at the local level by establishing the national interest in localizing the Goals. The Network of Cantons Promoting the Goals has also been developed, which is the main strategy for tackling the 2030 Agenda at the local government level. The Network covers almost 50 per cent of municipalities and resulted in the submission of the first six voluntary local reviews on the Goals in 2022.

As in previous reports, this report presents advances in statistical capacity-building, a task led by the National Statistics and Census Institute. Such data are essential for monitoring progress towards the Goals through national targets and tracking indicators.

The report concludes with the main lessons learned in Costa Rica in relation to the 2030 Agenda and outlines the next steps in the ongoing effort to achieve inclusive sustainable development. These include appropriate follow-up of the Strategy of National Targets for the Sustainable Development Goals in order to be able to make decisions that promote sustainable development, scaling up programmes such as the Network of Cantons Promoting the Goals, strengthening intersectoral coordination, developing public policies that have a multidimensional and future-oriented

approach, and conducting strategic monitoring of institutional resources to ensure their effective implementation.

## **Ecuador**

[Original: Spanish]

At the midpoint of the period of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Ecuador would like to take the opportunity to present its third voluntary national review report in 2024, in which it identifies the remaining challenges and establishes accelerators for achieving sustainable development.

Under the Constitution of Ecuador, each government term must have a national development plan. The country has therefore drawn up the “National Plan for a New Ecuador 2024–2025”, which constitutes a road map for national planning and embodies the State’s vision, and strikes a balance between the social, environmental and economic dimensions. In addition, there is a strong emphasis on localization, through local government action that is in line with national planning and the 2030 Agenda.

In that connection, 94.3 per cent of the national development plan is aligned with the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals, thanks to United Nations collaboration and support, which has made it possible to create a framework for strengthening local partnerships and working together to achieve common goals.

The commitment of Ecuador is reflected in the alignment it has achieved with the Goals, linked to an institutional framework that facilitates their realization. A strategy has been designed for reorganizing the executive function of the public sector through sector-specific cabinets that correspond to each pillar of the national development plan and are responsible for its implementation. These cabinets are forums for reviewing, coordinating and harmonizing public policy, enabling short-, medium- and long-term sectoral policies to be adopted that provide a timely and effective response to the problems affecting the population and make it possible to narrow the gaps in terms of upholding rights.

At the country level, poverty indices show that one challenge is to improve the living conditions of the population, especially the most vulnerable, by, for example, providing and improving food security, and reducing gaps in access to health care, education and other limitations on the full exercise of the rights of children and adolescents, young people, women, peoples and nationalities, people on the move and other groups. To achieve this, the country will promote public policies that reduce the various social vulnerabilities and strengthen the social protection system, will prioritize action in the areas of citizen security and the eradication of violence, and will build partnerships at the local, regional and international levels, all with the aim of leaving no one behind in as it seeks to achieve development.

At the same time, as a megadiverse country, we have a responsibility to protect and maintain biodiversity and ecosystem services; to create tools that help to manage risks, to build more resilient infrastructure, to work towards sustainability and energy efficiency; and to strengthen connectivity.

The production sector has developed laws and strategies aimed at promoting the diversification of its production matrix and increasing the productivity of high-value-added goods, based on attracting private investment and public-private partnerships that help drive economic growth and the creation of decent jobs.

Ecuador, like other countries, faces the following challenges: strengthening the collection of statistical information to monitor results; prioritizing measures to



accelerate the pace of development; and achieving multilevel and multi-stakeholder coordination in order to contribute effectively to sustainable development.

The 2024 voluntary national review was prepared with the participation of public actors, academia, local governments, civil society, private companies and non-governmental organizations through workshops, ongoing dialogues and online forms. The United Nations Development Programme also provided ongoing support and assistance. As a result, Ecuador was able to demonstrate its progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals at the national and local levels.

Lastly, despite the challenges it is facing, Ecuador remains focused on fulfilling its national and international commitment to improve the well-being of its population and reaffirms its commitment and responsibility to achieve the Goals.

## Equatorial Guinea

[Original: Spanish]

The second voluntary national review report submitted by Equatorial Guinea presents the impact of the findings and initiatives to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals in people's lives and to leave no one behind.

### **Political and socioeconomic leadership consolidated in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with a 2035 target**

Equatorial Guinea is committed to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in a context of political stability, economic recession caused by the fall in the price of the barrel of oil, which is the main source of financing for the country's development, the effects of the war between the Russian Federation and Ukraine and the existence of margins for improvement in terms of human capital and social welfare.

At the third National Economic Conference, guidelines were established for diversified economic growth, social stability and environmental conservation. For this exercise, the national sustainable development strategy, Equatorial Guinea Agenda 2035, was aligned with the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want of the African Union and the lessons learned from the previous plan.

To achieve the goal of strong, inclusive and sustainable growth, the Government has focused on sectors with high growth and employment potential, considered and prioritized as the green economy, the blue economy, the yellow economy, the tourism economy and the digital economy.

Following a period of reforms based on good governance, great progress has been made in attracting investment to the country, with considerable reforms in the public finance sector. A number of measures were implemented to improve the country's business environment, within the framework of a National Commission created for this purpose.

### **Accelerated achievement of Goals 1, 2, 13, 16 and 17**

Equatorial Guinea has promoted localization of the Goals by integrating them effectively into local development plans such as Equatorial Guinea Agenda 2035, adopted by means of Decree No. 69/2021 of 29 April 2021.

Concerning poverty and hunger, the report emphasizes diversification of the economy, the promotion of employment and the improvement of basic social infrastructure, particularly for vulnerable persons.

To reduce poverty in all its forms, Equatorial Guinea is committed to updating and expanding the existing social protection system. The draft law on the regulation of the social protection system provides for the establishment of a social protection institute, which would complement the social protection work undertaken by the National Social Security Institute.

Equatorial Guinea has also taken urgent measures to put an end to hunger by launching a national food security programme; it has also increased the purchasing power of its citizens by diversifying alternative sources of production with greater potential in the country.

For the first time, one of the four strategic pillars of the country's agenda has been dedicated to environmental issues. Action has been taken on biodiversity conservation, forest protection and the responsible use of natural resources, and a ministerial department on environmental issues has been established.

In terms of governance, the country has doubled its efforts in recent years by establishing robust institutions and building staff capacities, and by creating supervisory and accountability entities for greater administrative transparency, such as the National Financial Investigation Agency, the Court of Auditors and citizen protection bodies such as the Ombudsman's Office and the Patient Protection Office.

The peace enjoyed in the country is the result of respect for institutions and natural and legal persons, which facilitates the empowerment of women and the private sector.

Lastly, with a view to boosting the country's growth, partnerships and participation at the subregional level have been enhanced. To foster trade relations, the Government has implemented a policy of free movement of people, goods and services for the citizens of all States of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community, with the adoption of the Community passport.

## **Eritrea**

[Original: English]

In the years since first pledging its commitment at the United Nations in 2015, Eritrea has exerted extensive and multifaceted efforts towards nation-building and the realization of the 2030 Agenda.

The second voluntary national review of Eritrea, prepared on the basis of a highly collaborative and participatory approach, reflects the country's deep and enduring commitment to advancing the 2030 Agenda and its developmental priorities. Based on the close interlinkages between Sustainable Development Goals 4, 5 and 6 and the other Goals, the availability of valid and accurate data, and the country's previous voluntary national review report, the second voluntary national review details progress towards Goals 4, 5 and 6.

Guided by the principles of social justice, equality and leaving no one behind, Eritrea continues to take strong and positive action through a plethora of initiatives and programmes to eliminate poverty and inequality, promote gender equality and empowerment, secure opportunities for all, eradicate all forms of stigma, discrimination, prejudice and ostracization, create a more inclusive, fair and just nation, and prioritize reaching those furthest behind first.

Despite being confronted by diverse challenges and a difficult regional sociopolitical climate, Eritrea has made important strides in the areas of education, women's and girls' empowerment, and water, sanitation and hygiene.

Education is one of the pillars of the development agenda of Eritrea and it is provided free of charge from the primary to the tertiary level. Within both urban and rural areas, hundreds of new schools, learning centres and libraries have been built at the same time as older ones have been markedly renovated or upgraded. The number of schools at all levels has multiplied from just over 500 in 1991 to nearly 2,300 in 2023, with many more currently under planning or in the process of being constructed. Parallel to these advances, the number of qualified teachers has increased and progress has been registered with regard to literacy and enrolments at all levels. Importantly, parity between boys and girls within primary education is close to being fully achieved (95 per cent), while gender disparities in secondary and tertiary education enrolment continue to be reduced (88.3 per cent and 89 per cent, respectively). Eritrea is also implementing multilingualism and aiming to expand access to education for students with disabilities. In addition, national curricula are regularly updated and enhanced, while technical and vocational education and training is being expanded to help develop skills and provide young people with a viable avenue towards employment and sustainable livelihoods.

Highly prominent among the list of the national priorities of Eritrea is advancing gender equality, the empowerment of women and girls, and the promotion and protection of their inherent human rights. Recognizing the differing life conditions and experiences of women and girls, and seeking to redress past inequities and historical disadvantages or discrimination, progressive and affirmative action measures have been enacted, most notably within the spheres of education, employment and public life. National proclamations on labour, citizenship and land reform have been passed and are strictly enforced to guarantee women equal access to citizenship, employment and fair pay, and allow them the opportunity to access and utilize land without discrimination. Rates of harmful traditional practices, such as early marriage and female genital mutilation, have been significantly reduced, while rates of literacy, enrolment and labour participation have risen. Girls and women are tangibly contributing within all areas of society and in many diverse, important ways, ultimately playing a vital role in families, communities and the nation's socioeconomic improvement.

Notably, the proportion of the population with access to safe drinking water has been increased in both rural and urban areas, while access to basic sanitation and hygiene facilities has been steadily expanding, with 93 per cent of villages nationwide declared and certified as open-defecation free. A number of vital steps have been taken in order to protect and restore water-related ecosystems, as well as combat land degradation, deforestation and climate change, including community afforestation and reforestation campaigns, the construction of thousands of kilometres of terraces and hundreds of dams, and the promotion of renewable energy sources for households.

At the same time, a number of challenges remain within these areas. Moving forward, Eritrea reaffirms its commitment to consolidating improvements, addressing challenges and driving forward progress towards forging a nation of sustainable growth and prosperity, social justice, harmony, inclusion, dignity, peace and environmental resilience, while leaving no one behind.

## **Georgia**

[Original: English]

Georgia remains strongly committed to the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by integrating its goals into policies at the central and local levels. The principle of “leave no one behind” is central to the approach of Georgia,

reflecting the Government's commitment to support disadvantaged and socially vulnerable groups.

Recognizing the vital importance of the Sustainable Development Goals to achieve a more sustainable future for all and keep our country and the entire planet safe for future generations, Georgia has systematically incorporated the 17 Goals into its development policy documents. In 2022, the Government adopted "Vision 2030 – the National Development Strategy of Georgia", ensuring that the global Goals are embedded within the country's overarching policy framework. The Government has also adopted a national strategy for the protection of human rights to reinforce its commitment to human rights.

To facilitate the economic, social and environmental transformations at all levels, the Government of Georgia commenced Sustainable Development Goals localization in 2021. Recognition of the unique needs and challenges of different regions within Georgia allows for the development of targeted interventions. Out of 64 municipalities in Georgia, 32 are actively engaged in Goals localization, and it is anticipated that all municipalities will gradually integrate this process by 2025.

Georgia prioritizes the whole-of-society approach in delivering the 2030 Agenda and coordinates the implementation of the Goals within the framework of the high-level inter-agency Sustainable Development Goals Council and four thematic working groups where stakeholders from various sectors are represented.

The third voluntary national review of Georgia, prepared in close cooperation with the above-mentioned stakeholders, evaluates progress since the second voluntary national review, of 2020, focusing on three main directions: economic development, social inclusion and human capital development, and democratic governance.

Despite the challenges of 2020, including the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, as well as tensions in the region, Georgia has made significant economic strides. Owing to prudent economic policies, the country overcame external shocks, maintaining stability and achieving impressive economic growth, reaching double-digit economic growth in 2021 and 2022 and sustaining a strong growth trajectory, with a 7.5 per cent economic growth rate in 2023. The Government prioritizes infrastructure development, including transport networks, energy and urban development. High economic growth, productivity enhancement, structural improvement of the economy and increasing employment represent the main factors creating market-based foundations for reducing poverty and inequality.

Fully realizing the severe consequences of the unsustainable use of natural resources and the impacts of climate change on the sustainable development of the country and the globe, Georgia is committed to environmental protection and decarbonization.

Access to education and the development of human capital at all levels are vital for the development and prosperity of Georgia. The country has undertaken substantial education reforms in recent years to modernize its education system, emphasizing inclusivity and aligning with international standards. Efforts include enhancing vocational education to meet workforce demands, with State budgetary allocations increasing annually.

Efforts continue to establish sound social protection mechanisms aimed at eradicating poverty. The Government supports vulnerable groups through targeted social programmes. With universal access to health-care services, covering 94.7 per cent of the population, the Government is improving service quality and alleviating the financial burden on citizens. Georgia is dedicated to ensuring decent work conditions and promoting local employment.

In recent years, collaborative efforts between partners have driven positive advances in democratic governance. The Government's dedication to public administration and open government reforms, as well as its emphasis on human rights, positions the country as a regional leader in democratic development. Achieving the historic success of European Union candidate status acknowledges the long-term dedication of Georgia to aligning with the European Union standards and regulatory framework, emphasizing its progress in building open and accountable institutions.

Russia's occupation and effective control of Georgia's Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions impedes full implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, violating the 2030 Agenda principle to leave no one behind. People on the other side of the occupation line face grave security, humanitarian and human rights challenges. The programmes of the Government of Georgia aim to improve humanitarian and human rights conditions, yet Russian occupation denies conflict-affected individuals access to Georgia's positive developments.

Georgia remains committed to an inclusive and whole-of-society approach to the 2030 Agenda, ensuring that no one is left behind.

## Guinea

[Original: French]

In 2015, the Republic of Guinea, like the other States Members of the United Nations, adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals. Three years later, in 2018, Guinea submitted its first voluntary national review, which was a milestone in its commitment to achieving the Goals.

With six years to go, the country is once again embarking upon a voluntary national review in 2024, with a view to taking stock of the progress made and challenges encountered since the first report in 2018. Through an inclusive and participatory approach, Guinea is seeking to conduct a thorough assessment of its efforts to achieve the Goals and to identify areas requiring particular attention. The 2024 voluntary national review report contains detailed information on the country's achievements, the difficulties encountered and priority areas for investment to accelerate progress towards achieving the Goals by 2030.

In recent years, Guinea has experienced significant economic growth, driven mainly by the mining sector. The national economic and social development plan and the interim transition programme have been essential catalysts for diversifying the economy and increasing employment opportunities. The integration of the Goals into all planning policies has made it possible to focus efforts on the most strategic targets for inclusive and sustainable development.

The predominantly young population of Guinea is a source of a huge potential for the country. Programmes to improve access to education and health care and reduce disparities are under way, as are initiatives to support girls' education, combat genital mutilation and tackle multidimensional poverty, which mainly affects young people and women.

Despite its challenges, Guinea is endeavouring to protect its natural resources and mitigate the effects of climate change. National strategies for biodiversity conservation and the sustainable management of water resources have been strengthened, highlighting the country's commitment to effective environmental management.

To accelerate progress towards achieving the Goals by 2030, Guinea has set the following priority areas for investment.

### **1. Sustainable economic growth**

Economic growth, which relates mainly to Goals 8 and 17, is the driving force behind the achievement of other priority Goals. Investing in agriculture and mining is crucial, as is improving infrastructure such as roads and ports. Other priorities include sustainable industrialization and the development of new technologies, together with sectoral policies to stimulate sustainable economic growth. Focus is also placed on the sustainable exploitation of maritime resources and the promotion of green and blue economies.

### **2. Good governance**

Strengthening the legal and institutional framework to ensure the transparency, accountability and efficiency of public services is essential. Investments are needed to enhance security, clean up the civil service database, modernize the civil records system and promote digital governance. The implementation of policies that guarantee access to public information and human rights will contribute to the achievement of Goals 16 and 17.

### **3. Human capital development – decent employment and employability**

Strengthening human capital depends on access to basic social services. Guinea is seeking to improve school enrolment, reduce infant mortality and increase youth employment. The Government is committed to promoting decent employment and entrepreneurship among young people through policies tailored to the labour market. This priority relates to Goals 1, 3, 4, 5 and 8 and establishes synergies among them.

Despite the obstacles it has encountered, Guinea remains committed to sustainable development. The 2024 voluntary national review demonstrates the country's desire to uphold transparency and work together with the international community to boost the achievement of the Goals.

We are convinced that, with the continued support of our global partners, Guinea will overcome its challenges and continue to make progress towards a more prosperous and inclusive future for all its citizens, while ensuring that “no one is left behind”.

## **Honduras**

[Original: Spanish]

### **Three dimensions, six transition areas and 10 State commitments**

The Government of Honduras reiterates its firm commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals and stresses the need to integrate the 2030 National Agenda for the Sustainable Development Goals in rebuilding Honduran society according to a democratic socialist model. The 2030 National Agenda and the voluntary national review report should be viewed as tools for ensuring the full development of individuals by means of collective development. It is important to take an inclusive approach to the 2030 National Agenda that reflects the commitment to building a more sustainable and equitable future in which all actors play a crucial role in progress towards shared goals.

The structure of the third voluntary national review report is based on the three dimensions (economic, social and environmental) of the 2030 Agenda, which serve as a framework for addressing the challenges and priorities of sustainable development in Honduras. As part of each of those dimensions, there are six transition

areas that are key to making progress towards the achievement of the Goals. The transition areas represent key points of action for accelerating progress towards the achievement of the Goals, and they are aligned with the 10 commitments presented by the Government of Honduras during the Sustainable Development Goals Summit held in New York in 2023.

In the report, the leading role of local development actors in promoting progress and accelerating the Goals is also highlighted. The first two voluntary local reports of Honduras, which cover the municipalities of San Nicolás and Intibucá and contain innovative features related to the six transition areas, are currently being drafted.

The third voluntary national review report, to be submitted by the Government of Honduras in 2024, is vitally important in the context of the political and social transition that the country has seen since 2022. It marks the beginning of a transition to full democracy in a process that aims at building a State that promotes equality, social justice and well-being for all Hondurans. This is reflected in the importance of gender equality, which can be seen at all levels and is being strengthened at the political level, in the labour market, in cooperation forums through initiatives of the Government of Honduras, in the areas of migration and human rights protection, and in the considerable efforts of the robust humanitarian network to reduce vulnerability to the effects of climate change, with a particular emphasis on groups that have been left behind.

In that light, the report is a pivotal opportunity to lay the groundwork for a new development path for Honduras. It has been recognized that it is necessary to move away from the neoliberal paradigm towards centralized planning, as established by the reforms introduced through Executive Decree No. PCM-05-2022, in which the restructuring of the State of Honduras is set forth. The restructuring, which includes the establishment of the Ministry of Strategic Planning, shows that the Government is committed to taking steps towards strategic and centralized planning for economic and social development at the national level. As part of the process, it is important to stress the need for a prompt transition to a development model that strengthens national production and that enables the gradual construction of a socialist economy that meets national needs and prioritizes the well-being of the population.

The main challenge facing the Government of Honduras when it comes to poverty reduction is directly related to the social dimension and to two transition areas: food systems, and employment and social protection. In this connection, government action to combat poverty can be seen in the establishment of a solidarity network programme to serve as a far-reaching social protection initiative. Targeting around 2,007 villages and 350,000 families, the network provides focused and priority attention with a view to ensuring that people can access basic development services (including food, education, health, housing, water and sanitation, and economic access).

All of the above shows that significant progress was made in reducing extreme poverty in Honduras by 2023, in particular in the response to the challenges posed by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. According to the National Institute of Statistics, approximately 250,000 households, or around 800,000 people, saw an improvement in their income, reversing the trend of extreme poverty that was exacerbated during the pandemic.

## Kenya

[Original: English]

### Background

The 2024 voluntary national review of Kenya was conducted in an open and inclusive manner with participation from a wide range of stakeholders from both the national and subnational levels. This is the third review of Kenya since 2017, demonstrating the country's commitment to implementing the 2030 Agenda. The 2024 voluntary national review report focuses on the assessment of the institutional and policy environment for implementing the Sustainable Development Goals, progress towards the 17 Goals, challenges and the cross-cutting theme of "leaving no one behind".

Kenya has established the necessary structures for implementing the Sustainable Development Goals, including a Goals road map, the Inter-Agency Technical Working Committee for the Goals, a mapping of Goals stakeholders with relevant Goals, and the formulation of a national indicator framework for the Goals.

Kenya has created an enabling policy environment for implementation and mainstreaming of the Sustainable Development Goals by integrating Goals into the national and subnational development frameworks through medium-term plans and County Integrated Development Plans. The Fourth Medium-term Plan and the County Integrated Development Plans are both aligned with the Government's Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda programmes, which focus on eradicating hunger, creating jobs, bringing down the cost of living and ensuring inclusive growth, among other things, all of which address the Goals.

### Progress in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals

In the 2024 voluntary national review report, Kenya has registered mixed results across the Sustainable Development Goals, with some indicators showing progress, while others are stagnating or regressing. Overall poverty, maternal mortality, under-five mortality and neonatal mortality declined. There is general improvement in access to health care and basic services (water and sanitation, hygiene and electricity) and the school enrolment and completion rate, with gender parity attained at all levels. However, overall poverty among the rural population, undernourishment and food insecurity worsened.

Overall, the country has made good progress on Sustainable Development Goals 3 (good health and well-being), 4 (quality education), 5 (gender equality), 6 (clean water and sanitation), 7 (affordable and clean energy), 12 (responsible consumption and production), 13 (climate action) and 15 (life on land). Goals 1 (no poverty), 2 (zero hunger), 8 (decent work and economic growth), 9 (industry, innovation and infrastructure), 11 (sustainable cities and communities), 14 (life below water), 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions) and 17 (partnerships for the Goals) are progressing at a slow pace.

### Leaving no one behind

The Government continues to demonstrate commitment to enhance inclusivity and equity through comprehensive policy frameworks and legislative measures to strengthen social protection programmes in different sectors, address disparities and ensure that no one is left behind. Through the financial inclusion funds and other affirmative action funds, the Government aims to cushion vulnerable persons against high-cost credit while reaching the most underserved or unserved populations.



Best practices that have advanced the principle of “leaving no one behind” in Kenya include a cash transfer programme to cushion vulnerable groups; the Kenyan national fertilizer subsidy programme to address food insecurity; Human Resource for Health Kenya, through which community primary health-care promoters are recruited; and the school meals programmes to improve education outcomes.

### **Sustainable Development Goals implementation challenges**

Global financial tightening has increased the cost of credit, limiting access to affordable financing for development. The graduation of Kenya to lower-middle-income status in 2014 meant reduced official development assistance and limited foreign aid and investment, resulting in reduced funding for the Sustainable Development Goals. Kenya has developed its first medium-term revenue strategy, aimed at increasing domestic revenue mobilization and improving fiscal space for delivery of the Goals.

Data quality (availability, reliability, accuracy, timeliness and verifiability) remains a key challenge in tracking implementation and reporting on the Goals. This calls for strengthening collaborations between stakeholders in the generation, analysis and dissemination of data.

Global shocks (the COVID-19 pandemic, geopolitical conflicts, exchange rate volatility and climate change effects) have disrupted and slowed down economic activities, thus impeding implementation of the Goals.

Limited awareness and poor comprehension of the Goals equally constrains their implementation, hence the need to continuously raise awareness and capacity levels.

### **Enhancing implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals**

The current Sustainable Development Goals implementation rate remains insufficient and weak to achieve any of the Goals by 2030. To accelerate implementation, Kenya is committed to strengthen institutional frameworks for implementation of the Goals at both levels of government; strengthen partnerships and collaborations with development partners and stakeholders; enhance awareness and capacity development in relation to the Goals; strengthen the national statistical system; and strengthen domestic resource mobilization for the Goals.

## **Lao People’s Democratic Republic**

[Original: English]

Passing through the midpoint of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the third voluntary national review of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic arrives at a critical juncture, coinciding with the country’s midterm review of the ninth Five-Year National Socioeconomic Development Plan (2021–2025) and the triennial review in 2024 by the Committee for Development Policy of the graduation of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic from least developed country status.

This third voluntary national review in 2024 focuses on both trend and track analysis, examining the progress and status of all 17 Sustainable Development Goals and one national sustainable development goal 18, “Lives safe from unexploded ordnance”, while analysing in more depth 11 key selected Goals, revolving around “Six transitions: investment pathways to deliver the SDGs”, a guide produced by the United Nations Sustainable Development Group. The main context of the voluntary national review reflects the national planning cycle, the assessment of the national

strategies, policies, plans and budgets in alignment with the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and key focuses for the country to accelerate the implementation as part of the decade of action and its recommitment at the Sustainable Development Goals Summit held in September 2023. This analysis not only guides the country's priorities, but also allows the Lao People's Democratic Republic to share best practices, practical policies and local interventions at the global level.

### **The 2030 Agenda and the smooth transition for graduation from least developed country status**

Graduating from the least developed country category in a smooth, quality and sustainable manner has been a long-term objective of the Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic. The 2024 triennial review by the Committee for Development Policy found the country to be eligible for graduation from the least developed country category for the third time, putting it on track for graduation by 2026.

However, the prolonged impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, exacerbated by the ongoing economic and financial difficulties and other crises, have posed significant challenges to the development aspirations of the Lao People's Democratic Republic and the realization of the 2030 Agenda. The Government sees the interlinkages between graduation from the least developed country category and implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and recognizes the need for its enhanced efforts and for the international community to enhance international support measures that meet the country's development needs, aimed at prioritizing essential investments and capacity-building.

### **Lessons learned and the way forward**

- **Ownership and commitment:** the primary responsibility for realizing development goals and strategies in the Lao People's Democratic Republic lies with its government at all levels. Multi-stakeholder engagement and whole-of-government and whole-of-society participation are crucial to make informed policies, translate commitment into actions and mobilize sufficient resources so as to drive progress and improvement in various sectors, such as education, health care, infrastructure and the economy.
- **Partnership for the Goals:** development partners should honour their commitment and further enhance support in terms of financial resources, technical expertise, knowledge-sharing and capacity-building. For the graduation of the Lao People's Democratic Republic from the least developed country category, international partners should provide necessary support during the transition period and across various fronts.
- **Financing for the Goals:** given the vulnerability of the Lao People's Democratic Republic to external shocks, such as climate change and economic downturns, international collaboration becomes even more critical. Development partners can help build resilience, mitigate the impact of shocks and adapt to changing circumstances. This should involve supporting climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts, providing financial assistance during economic crises and supporting disaster risk reduction.
- **Placing communities at the centre of sustainable development** entails their actions and participation in policymaking processes that affect their lives. As outlined in the 2030 Agenda, with its ambitious goals and targets, we can only achieve its transformative potential if it is fully realized at the local level. Thus,

local actions play a vital role in advancing the six key transition pathways crucial for delivering the Sustainable Development Goals.

- Localization of the Sustainable Development Goals recognizes that sustainable development is not a one-size-fits-all solution and that localized strategies are essential for addressing the diverse and complex challenges. Localization of the Goals goes beyond the realm of official authorities and requires the active engagement and participation of all segments of society at various levels. The localization of the Goals is essential for ensuring that no one is left behind in the pursuit of sustainable development. By prioritizing local development, we can work towards creating more inclusive and equitable societies where everyone can benefit from progress and prosperity.

## Libya

[Original: Arabic]

As part of its commitment to achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, Libya is submitting its second voluntary national report (2024), which demonstrates its determination to realize the 2030 Agenda. In the face of the challenges and difficulties facing implementation of the Goals, Libya has relied on the determination of its people and the will of its Government to strive for inclusive and sustainable development. It has adopted the Return to Life development and reconstruction programme, which includes implementation of numerous development projects in various sectors, including roads, water networks, infrastructure and other areas.

Compilation of the second voluntary report was the result of efforts by the Sustainable Development Committee at the Ministry of Planning in Libya. Its sustainable development teams were reconstituted and upgraded to the role of primary coordinator with the various sectors for following up achievement of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. This review was prepared through consultations that helped gather valuable insights on priorities and challenges, with various stakeholders taking part.

Libya is committed to integrating all aspects of the Sustainable Development Goals into national development strategies and plans, and is working to provide the budgets needed for their implementation. It has been decided not to grant Ministry of Planning approval for any development project across the sectors unless it contributes to achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Efforts are being made to provide extra-budgetary sources of financing, expand the role of the private sector, and promote investment for sustainable financing. The 2030 Sustainable Development Goals and targets will be major components of Libya Vision 2040, which is currently being worked on by the Ministry of Planning. The Ministry of Planning is also working through its statistics and census bureau to launch a census project, and will be conducting numerous surveys to collect the required data and information.

Libya is seeking to develop an effective social protection system for all Libyans that takes their civil rights into consideration, provides them with income sufficient to maintain dignity, and achieves social justice. It has adopted a national social protection strategy and launched numerous social protection initiatives and programmes. That includes granting loans to young people to help them marry, disbursing grants to wives and children, and activating a public health insurance fund to provide health insurance services to all Libyans.

Libya is working to develop employment policies, create decent job opportunities, diversify income sources, encourage investment and build small and

medium enterprises to help provide sources of income, expand the production base, promote a culture of rational consumption conducive to more sustainable and balanced consumption and production patterns, and increase the contribution of research, development and innovation to implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

The Libyan State leans towards environment-friendly solutions that diversify energy sources, reduce dependence on oil, invest in solar energy, and expand natural solutions. It has launched an initiative to plant 100 million trees across Libyan territory by 2030 to help reduce carbon emissions, combat climate change, increase green space coverage, roll back drought and desertification, address water shortages, restore environmental sustainability and achieve food security.

Libya has brought about a decrease in murder and violence rates, a reduction in the prevalence of crime in the community, and a stabilization of the security situation. It is building a society free of terrorism, and bolstering the rule of law with notable progress in the prosecution of criminal cases and other judicial procedures carried out by the Office of the Attorney General. It has also made progress on reducing corruption and bribery through the National Anti-Corruption Commission.

The Libyan State has tried to promote administrative decentralization to achieve balanced growth between municipalities by moving many ministerial authorities to the local level. It has enhanced the role played by municipalities in development and reconstruction. Development funds have been created in some of the municipalities affected by wars and natural disasters.

One of the most important challenges to achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals is illegal migration, which has negative repercussions for the economic, social, environmental and security situation. Libya is trying, through local efforts and regional partnerships, to regulate and control that phenomenon so that it does not negatively impact Libyan economic interests and national security.

Despite progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals thanks to Government efforts in recent years, the road is still long, and achievement of the Goals remains dependent on our ability to take on challenges. More efforts and resource mobilization are needed at the local level, as well as greater regional and international cooperation. In particular, there is an urgent need to provide the required political stability, which local and international efforts are aiming to achieve by holding free and fair elections in which the Libyan people will have their say in choosing their leaders on the way to realizing the peace and prosperity they desire.

## **Mauritania**

[Original: French]

The strategy of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania for accelerated growth and shared prosperity covering the period 2016–2030 was aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals through the prioritization of 58 targets. National ownership of the Goals has been achieved at all levels through an inclusive and participatory approach.

The participation of the President of Mauritania in the Sustainable Development Goals Summit in 2023 reaffirmed the country's firm political support for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the commitment of all stakeholders to achieving the Goals.

In 2020, after the first review in 2019, the economy was hit by the crisis caused by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, but economic growth gradually recovered, reaching 6.4 per cent in 2022. Growth prospects are promising, driven in particular by gas production and the move towards diversifying sources of growth.

Although income poverty has fallen, multidimensional poverty still affects more than 56 per cent of the population. Major investments have been made in social protection and social sectors to ensure that no one is left behind.

Ongoing programmes have helped to increase access to drinking water, reaching 72 per cent of the population in 2023, and access to electricity, reaching 53 per cent of the population in 2023. The share of renewable energies in the energy mix increased from 18 per cent in 2015 to 43 per cent in 2022.

Spurred by its natural gas reserves and the ongoing development of a hydrogen industry, Mauritania has begun its transition towards phasing out fossil fuels. The Government is striving to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 11 per cent by 2030.

Some progress has been made towards achieving Goals 3 (health) and 4 (education), but the results remain below expectations. The infant and child mortality rate has fallen by 28 points in five years. Between 2015 and 2020, maternal mortality fell from 630 to 424 deaths per 100,000 live births.

Efforts have been focused on widening access to universal health insurance, particularly for the most vulnerable people, through the creation in 2023 of the National Health Solidarity Fund to cover the informal sector and the implementation of programmes that have already covered 100,000 poor households. The proportion of the State budget allocated to health care tripled between 2000 and 2023.

The net primary school enrolment rate reached 57.4 per cent in 2019, compared with 54.9 per cent in 2014, with disparities between regions and genders. The net secondary school enrolment rate was 35.7 per cent in 2019, compared with 29.8 per cent in 2014, with persistent disparities between regions and genders. The adoption of the school mapping system and the provision of schoolbooks to children free of charge since 2022 should help to accelerate this progress over the coming years.

Faced with persistent food insecurity, the Government has launched programmes to support the agricultural sector and established mechanisms to protect poor households.

The issue of governance has not been overlooked, with a strategy for combating corruption adopted in 2022, following a participatory process. Several programmes are being implemented to improve the management of not only public resources and entities but also natural and environmental resources.

Despite some positive developments, challenges remain, including:

(a) The lack of reliable, disaggregated statistical data and assessments for effective monitoring of the Goals;

(b) Insufficient financial resources to support development and the achievement of the Goals. To achieve the Goals in the health, education, roads, water and sanitation, and electricity sectors, Mauritania needs to strengthen its partnerships and mobilize 19 per cent of gross domestic product, or \$2.5 billion, annually;

(c) The lack of capacity-building programmes for those responsible for achieving and monitoring the Goals.

In the six years left until 2030, Mauritania is firmly committed to taking advantage of its new economic opportunities and increased financial resources to implement a programme to accelerate the achievement of the Goals, with a thorough and effective monitoring mechanism.

## Mauritius

[Original: English]

The second voluntary national review of Mauritius is underpinned by our resolute commitment to accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It is rooted in the principles of good governance, respect for human rights and the imperative of reducing inequalities.

In 2019, Mauritius highlighted in its first voluntary national review report good overall progress in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. However, the COVID-19 pandemic eroded years of hard-won development gains as national resources were used to safeguard jobs, sustain livelihoods and enable a steady socioeconomic recovery.

Climate change, geopolitical tensions, food insecurity, the energy crisis and the increasing difficulty to integrate global value chains are among our most daunting challenges. Such strenuous constraints have dire consequences on small island developing States like Mauritius, due to our inherent vulnerabilities.

Despite the exogenous shocks and stressors, the second voluntary national review report of Mauritius, in 2024, highlights the enhanced resilience of the Mauritian economy while recognizing our limitations and challenges. The aspiration of Mauritius is to become an inclusive, high-income and green economy.

In 2023, the Mauritian economy grew by 7.1 per cent, and the unemployment rate fell to 6.1 per cent in the fourth quarter of 2023. The ratio of public debt to GDP decreased in September 2023, after a peak in 2021.

The robust regulatory frameworks, as well as institutional reforms implemented, foster trust and confidence among national stakeholders and international partners.

Mauritius continues to consolidate its welfare state and has enhanced its strategies to strengthen national resilience in key sectors. Despite overwhelming pressures on public finances following multiple crises, Mauritius is investing heavily in social protection, health and education. Gender mainstreaming has also progressed notably.

Bold reforms initiated in the national pension system in 2020 and our transition to a more progressive tax regime in 2023 have resulted in more equity and fairness.

Under the Paris Agreement, Mauritius submitted its revised nationally determined contributions in 2021 and is committed to reducing its greenhouse gas emissions by 40 per cent by 2030. The national commitments also include an increase of 60 per cent of energy needs from green sources and the phasing out of coal in electricity generation by 2030.

Marine pollution and microplastics are also serious concerns as Mauritius has a vast exclusive economic zone.

The cost of implementation of the nationally determined contributions, external debt levels and fiscal balance all play pivotal roles in determining the financial health of the economy.

As an adaptation strategy, Mauritius has adopted nature-based solutions, such as mangrove plantation and coral farming, as well as seagrass mapping and blue carbon evaluation.

Mauritius is witnessing extreme weather events which are more intense and frequent. Although the absolute financial losses may seem small compared to those of larger countries, the relative effects are immense.

The 2024 voluntary national review report mirrors the aspirations of Mauritius for a new programme of action for small island developing States to be adopted at the forthcoming fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States.

The voluntary national review process also highlighted the need for Mauritius to enhance stakeholder coordination and engagement, improve the monitoring and evaluation framework, and strengthen statistical processes and data collection capability.

The multi-stakeholder consultations that took place during the voluntary national review process were crystalized into a stakeholder engagement plan that fosters dialogue between and among the public and private sectors, academia and civil society. Such institutional arrangements are being consolidated further to accelerate implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Likewise, although a monitoring and evaluation framework already exists, it should have sufficient capacity to ensure that the actions on the ground are adequately monitored and that challenges are appropriately reported for remedial measures to be taken.

Mauritius has data availability for 75 per cent of the Sustainable Development Goal indicators. Measures are under way to upgrade the capacity requirements of the statistical process to bridge the data gap.

Mauritius firmly supports the strengthening of the multilateral system that fosters international cooperation and effective financing for development that delivers urgent solutions to fulfil the 2030 Agenda.

By adopting a whole-of-society approach, Mauritius seeks to achieve inclusive and sustainable development, through national and international transformative partnerships and innovation, in our unwavering pursuit of equity.

## Mexico

[Original: Spanish]

Mexico has made progress in its implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as a result of the shift to a new development paradigm since the change of Government in 2018 based on Mexican humanism, which places people – in particular the most underprivileged and vulnerable – at its core.

It has been five years since that paradigm was adopted, and as shown in its fourth voluntary national review report, Mexico is making strides towards the targets of the 2030 Agenda. One example of progress is that 5 million people were lifted out of poverty between 2018 and 2022, which is not only directly related to Sustainable Development Goal 1 but also closely connected with Goal 10, as we have also been able to narrow the gap between the rich and the poor. In 2018, people in the richest decile earned 21 times more than those in the poorest decile, which was reduced to 15 times by 2022.

Between 2018 and 2024, through an economic policy focused on growth and income distribution in line with the “Leave no one behind, leave no one out” principle set out in our national development plan, we raised the minimum wage by 110 per cent, increased social expenditure by 38 per cent and reduced the unemployment rate to 2.6 per cent.

These successes were also made possible by a climate of confidence for investment; in 2023, foreign direct investment rose by 27 per cent.<sup>2</sup> We have a vibrant

<sup>2</sup> As at the end of 2023, compared with the end of the previous year.

private sector that respects national laws. We also achieved a significant increase in tax revenues.

Under our model, it is essential to channel resources to social programmes as redistribution tools and as public policies that further specific agendas, as we do not believe in development in abstract terms; rather, we believe in development that recognizes and remedies social injustice and dismantles structures that perpetuate poverty.

In the 2018–2022 period, we also increased by more than 10 million the number of people who are food secure (those who have physical and affordable access, at all times, to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs). This increase contributes to the advancement of Goal 2, which is directly related to Goal 3, confirming the interdependent nature of the Goals.

The fourth voluntary national review report has three main sections. In the first, we provide an overview of the economic context in which we conducted the review and of the approach to poverty reduction and State planning under our welfare model.

In the second, we present, using a mostly qualitative data interpretation methodology, six sustainable development initiatives undertaken at the local and national levels by civil society, the business sector and the Government of Mexico. These initiatives are specific examples of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Mexico.

In the third, we take stock of the level of progress achieved, the main challenges in the lead-up to 2030 and the lessons learned.

The initiatives described in our fourth voluntary national review report have a direct impact on the productive capacity of agricultural land, assist in the recovery and conservation of forest ecosystems, improve food environments and health, and strengthen economic sovereignty. Other initiatives facilitate the integration of young people into the labour market or education, providing families with economic security and broadening the distribution of income, which in turn boosts the domestic economy and helps improve community mental health. All of these initiatives uphold rights and are based on a sustainable development approach that considers social, environmental and economic aspects.

The fourth voluntary national review report is the outcome of the lessons learned over these years with regard to the monitoring and implementation of the 2030 Agenda, as well as the previous reviews carried out in 2016, 2018 and 2021.

The report is a representative sample of the efforts made to achieve the Goals, as described by those who, in their daily lives, participate in the achievement of the Goals at the local level, with the aim of increasing the number of people who take ownership of the Agenda. The preparation of the fourth report represents a significant accomplishment that will contribute to these efforts.

## **Namibia**

[Original: English]

### **Summary of key messages**

Namibia, in steadfast adherence to its pledge towards realizing the Sustainable Development Goals, has willingly assumed responsibility for conducting a third comprehensive national review of the Goals in 2024. This review will place emphasis on three pivotal dimensions of the framework for the Goals: economic, social and environmental. These dimensions are intricately interwoven within the pillars of the



fifth National Development Plan of Namibia, namely, economic progression, social transformation, environmental sustainability and good governance.

### **Economic progression**

Namibia has seen steady economic growth, rebounding from an 8 per cent contraction in 2020 to 4.2 per cent growth in 2023, albeit at a moderate pace. To tackle poverty and inequality, the country has focused on diverse energy investments, including green hydrogen, oil and gas, attracting around 33.4 billion Namibia dollars in investments between 2021 and 2023. Despite unemployment standing at 34 per cent, initiatives like the \$10 billion green hydrogen project aim to create up to 15,000 jobs. Namibia has continuously been in the top ranking of road infrastructure in Africa for the past seven years, according to the assessment of the World Economic Forum.

### **Social transformation**

Namibia has made significant strides in transforming its social environment by prioritizing investments in the social sector, aiming to enhance long-term economic productivity and uplift living standards. Notably, the country allocated 50.7 per cent of its budget for the financial year 2024/25 to the social sector, totalling 44.3 billion Namibia dollars, with increases in social safety nets such as old age and disability grants. Initiatives like the establishment of 28 food banks and a drought relief programme have provided support to thousands of Namibians, while the HIV/AIDS 90-90-90 targets being exceeded and the implementation of a COVID-19 relief package demonstrate proactive measures to address challenges.

### **Environmental sustainability**

Namibia has shown commendable dedication to environmental sustainability, driven by its low-carbon, green growth approach. Notably, it generated 493.1 million Namibia dollars from natural resources between 2017/18 and 2021/22, underscoring the economic value of conservation efforts. Conservation is a priority, with all 20 conservation areas effectively managed, veld fire and poaching rates reduced through enhanced patrols and law enforcement, and 34 waste disposal sites receiving environmental clearance certificates. Compliance with the Environmental Management Act reached an impressive 89 per cent, exceeding the 80 per cent target, with 363 million Namibia dollars raised from environmental levies during the same period.

### **Good governance**

Namibia has made remarkable progress in bolstering its governance framework, evidenced by its ranking of eighth in overall governance on the 2022 Ibrahim Index of African Governance and recognition among the top nine nations in the *Global Gender Gap Report 2023*. Key achievements include advancements in safety and security, public administration, the business environment, infrastructure, education and social protection. The World Economics governance index of 5 April 2024 reveals Namibia as the second-best-governed country in Africa, boasting a B grade and an index score of 68.1, through indicators such as corruption perception, rule of law, press freedom and political rights. Namibia also reclaimed its leading position in press freedom in Africa according to the 2023 World Press Freedom Index, underscoring its dedication to democratic values.

### **Lessons learned**

Holistic integration: one of the foremost lessons learned is the importance of holistic integration of the Sustainable Development Goals into national policies, plans

and strategies. Namibia believes that a siloed approach to development has hindered progress, whereas mainstreaming the Goals across sectors has fostered synergies and maximized impact, in the spirit of leaving no one behind.

**Data and monitoring:** effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are imperative for tracking progress and informing decision-making.

**Partnerships and collaboration:** collaboration, both domestically and internationally, has proved indispensable in advancing the Goals.

**Resilience and adaptation:** Namibia has recognized the importance of building resilience and adapting to dynamic challenges, including climate change, economic shocks and pandemics.

### **Affirmation of commitment**

Namibia reaffirms its unwavering commitment to sustainable development through multifaceted initiatives, exemplified by the launch of the Development Finance Assessment Report in 2021, a strategic endeavour which underscores the country's comprehensive approach to enhancing financing frameworks in alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals, Vision 2030 and the national development plans. As part of this ongoing commitment, Namibia is actively developing its sixth National Development Plan to further propel the agenda of sustainable development and advance the attainment of the Goals.

## **Nepal**

[Original: English]

Nepal has incorporated the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development into its national policies, plans and programmes. It has been consistently working to localize these efforts at the subnational and community levels. Collaborative endeavours of the Government and stakeholders have helped in bringing significant socioeconomic changes in the country.

Up to the midpoint of implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, an average progress of 41 per cent has been achieved. Certain areas have witnessed remarkable progress, while a significant number of targets are either progressing too slowly or even regressing. Compared to the 2022 targets, 41 per cent of indicators have exceeded their targets, 35 per cent have displayed some kind of positive progress, 20 per cent have shown negative progress and 3 per cent remain unchanged. Based on the current pace of progress observed between 2016 and 2022, the country is projected to attain about 60 per cent of the Goals by 2030.

The progress on poverty reduction was very encouraging during the first four years, but around 4 per cent of the population fell into extreme poverty due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Progress towards zero hunger remained a bit slow during this period. There is gradual progress on healthy life and well-being; however, the incidence of anaemia among women of reproductive age as well as the mortality rate for children under 5 years of age worsened during the period. Similarly, basic water supply and sanitation facilities have increased, but more focus is needed on safe water supply. Remarkable progress has been observed in terms of access to electricity, per capita energy consumption and the adoption of cleaner cooking methods. In decent work and economic growth, there is positive progress in real GDP growth; however, employment-related indicators and financial inclusion have faced setbacks. The road density has gone up during the period, while progress in the industrial sector has lagged far behind.

Progress has been made in reducing income inequality; however, further emphasis is needed to bridge the gap between disadvantaged groups and the rest of society to ensure equal access to resources, opportunities and services. Significant progress has been observed in enhancing safe housing and planned new cities. Efforts are needed to minimize the environmental impact of changed consumption patterns. In climate action, the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and the preparation of local adaptation plans have exceeded the national targets. A notable achievement has been made in community-based forest management, afforestation and the conservation of iconic species such as tigers and rhinos. On Goal 16, encouraging trends emerged in controlling child trafficking and sexual violence; however, stagnant scores on transparency and accountability have become a setback. Thus, the overall progress made so far indicates the need for intensified and concerted efforts to enhance partnerships for achieving the remaining targets by 2030.

Nepal is preparing the third voluntary national review of the Sustainable Development Goals with the participation of representatives from line ministries, associations of the subnational governments, the private sector, cooperatives, civil society, the national human rights commission and marginalized groups. The voluntary national review focuses on accelerating the achievement of the Goals. The prioritized themes include decent jobs and social protection, food systems transformation, transformation of health and education, sustainable and resilient urbanization, gender equality, social inclusion, climate action, digital transformation, and data management. The upcoming sixteenth periodic plan, which is based on the broad aspiration of good governance, social justice and prosperity, places emphasis on the acceleration of implementation of the Goals to achieve the national development goals.

The 2024 update to the *Needs Assessment, Costing and Financing Strategy for the Sustainable Development Goals* has estimated that the total investment requirement for achieving the defined targets for the period 2024–2030 is \$163 billion, amounting to an annual average of \$23 billion. The average investment requirement will reach 45 per cent of GDP in 2030. This requirement is obviously high, but is achievable with the mobilization of larger financing sources in productive areas, thus improving the efficiency of investment.

Nepal is graduating from least developed country status in 2026, which will have significant implications for the country’s trade, aid and investment environment. Ensuring financing of the Sustainable Development Goals, capacity-building, strengthening institutions and fostering collaboration to create a conducive environment for research and innovation will be essential in the coming years. This will help to fulfil the overarching aspiration of “leaving no one behind” and “reaching the furthest behind first”.

## Oman

[Original: Arabic]

In documentation of its consolidated efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, this year the Sultanate of Oman will be presenting its second voluntary national report. It comes three years after the launch of Oman Vision 2040, which is the Sultanate’s gateway and platform for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, keeping pace with regional and global changes, and investing in opportunities to boost economic competitiveness, social welfare, and financial and environmental sustainability. The goal is inclusive, balanced and sustainable development that reflects the deep-rooted values of Omani society based on the principles of peace, dialogue, coexistence, sustainability and justice.

The Sultanate of Oman is committed to providing an enabling environment supportive of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. It is developing an administrative apparatus, stepping up government activity, and creating institutions to improve the decision-making process and assess institutional performance. It is integrating the concept of sustainable development into the decision-making process and promoting programmes, projects and initiatives that support development. It is also stepping up coordination with the private sector and civil society to maximize their contributions to sustainable development. The report details the roles of these new institutions.

The Sultanate of Oman has developed an integrated governance system to ensure that work is institutionalized, efficiency is raised, and coordination is facilitated among the relevant authorities. To engage stakeholders and create greater opportunities for community participation in achieving the Goals, the SDGs in Focus labs were launched with the aim of developing sustainable and innovative implementable solutions. A youth centre has been established as an institutional and executive framework for integrating youth initiatives and aspirations. Oman launched Oman Sustainability Week to highlight innovative strategies conducive to achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. The national committee for following up achievement of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals has made efforts to raise community awareness of the Goals. It also monitors progress through the Dashboards integrated benchmark system.

The decentralization and localization principle adopted by the Sultanate of Oman enshrines the role of the local community in balanced development, with a view to stimulating the local economy and maximizing the benefit conferred by the comparative advantage of the governorates. It enables local communities to identify their needs, set their priorities, and take part in the design, finance, implementation and follow-up of development plans. All this reinforces the fundamental sustainable development principle of “leaving no one and no place behind”.

With regard to financial sustainability, the Sultanate of Oman launched Future Fund Oman to boost economic activity, encourage the private sector to enter into partnerships, and incentivize venture capital for medium, small and growing enterprises. Government investments have been consolidated under the umbrella of the Oman Investment Authority to increase the efficacy of government investments, support diversification, and expand the role of the private sector, notably in the health and education sectors. The Sultanate of Oman is the first Gulf country to adopt a sovereign sustainable finance framework as a tool to achieve national strategies for sustainability, whether financial, economic, environmental or social.

The Sultanate of Oman has made proactive efforts towards reaching the Sustainable Development Goals on climate change, including emissions reduction and renewable energy sources. It has implemented numerous plans and programmes to promote the circular, green and blue economies, make more efficient use of resources, and incentivize investment in renewable energy projects, in accordance with its strategy of achieving carbon neutrality by 2050. The Sustainable City Yiti and Sultan Haitham city are integrated models for cities of the future.

The Sultanate of Oman has a comprehensive social protection system that includes benefits for women, children, the elderly and persons with disabilities, as well as social insurance programmes and job security, with a view to achieving social justice, social welfare, and an improved quality of life. The Sultanate of Oman also takes care to support women’s empowerment. Women have a presence in public and political life, and have occupied leadership positions, in addition to their active participation in volunteer work.

With regard to food security, the Sultanate of Oman attaches great importance to maintaining a stable food supply. It supports modern technologies for sound water use, expansion of artificial rain creation, and sustainable agriculture. It has also created a multisectoral contingency plan to ensure safe and healthy food, and strives to manage natural resources to ensure sustainability for future generations.

Education and health are key pillars of development. The Sultanate of Oman has made them a right for all. It considers them, along with digital transformation, to be indispensable for accelerating the pace of development. They are part of national strategies and legislation intended to keep pace with global developments in research, innovation and advanced technologies, including artificial intelligence. The digital economy is prioritized as a major contributor to the national economy. Emphasis is placed on readiness for the transformation to the knowledge and innovation era.

The second voluntary national review of the Sultanate of Oman, to be presented at the 2024 high-level political forum on sustainable development, encapsulates progress made in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda of the United Nations. It sketches the sustainability blueprint for the future, and confirms the commitment of the Sultanate of Oman to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals at a steady pace within the specified time frame as part of a sustainable development approach that meets the needs of the present and the aspirations of the future.

## **Palau**

[Original: English]

### **Introduction**

The overarching priority of the Government of Palau is “A Kot a Rehad er Belau” (Palauan people first): “Our Palauan people will have improved quality of life; are motivated and able to pursue their happiness; and will be the driving force behind the development and progress of our country”.

### **Progressing towards the Sustainable Development Goals**

In charting progress in the period 2015–2024, there is much to celebrate. Likewise, there remain shortfalls, many a legacy of COVID-19. Despite its devastating economic and social impacts, COVID-19 created new opportunities to “build back better”, a key message in the 2024 voluntary national review of Palau, together with culture as a means of implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, resilience in the face of climate change, and leaving no one behind.

The 2024 voluntary national review of Palau is organized around five pillars: culture, people, the economy, the environment and partnerships.

### **Pillar 1: Sustaining our cultural heritage Sustainable Development Goals 1-17**

The culture of Palau has evolved over millennia, shaped by, and shaping, the natural environment and forging a harmonious society. Independent Palau has crafted a modern governance system while safeguarding traditional governance and culture. Nurturing a vibrant culture for future generations is a priority goal, a means of implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and a strategy for “building back better”. Cultural practices supporting implementation of the Goals are showcased throughout the voluntary national review.

**Pillar 2: Empowering our people  
Sustainable Development Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 16**

Palau is “building back better” by expanding social protections for vulnerable populations, enhancing food security, harnessing technology to expand basic services to all, ensuring equitable participation of men and women in development, and investing in a future without violence. Nonetheless, Palau faces challenges in achieving food security, reducing non-communicable diseases and improving mental health.

**Pillar 3: Growing our economy while leaving no one behind  
Sustainable Development Goals 8, 9 and 10**

Due to COVID-19, economic growth regressed between 2020 and 2023. To restore growth, Palau “builds back better” while “leaving no one behind” through climate-resilient economic diversification, entrepreneurship, sustainable tourism and the harnessing of new opportunities fuelled by information technology. The national infrastructure investment plan prioritizes climate-resilient infrastructure. The national youth policy seeks to leave no young person behind, and a forthcoming labour policy will improve the quality of work and slow outmigration.

**Pillar 4: Protecting our home, from ridge to reef and beyond  
Sustainable Development Goals 6, 7, 12, 13, 14 and 15**

Today, as in the past, culture, people, the economy and the environment are inextricably linked. At home, Palau manages 100 per cent of its marine area and 20 per cent of its terrestrial area while implementing its Unlocking Blue Pacific Prosperity strategy. Globally and regionally, Palau advocates for a moratorium on deep-sea mining and a plastics treaty that limits production.

Looking beyond the exclusive economic zone, Palau hosted the Our Ocean Conference in 2022, and, in 2023, was the first signatory to ratify the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction. Recognizing the existential threat posed by climate change to culture, the environment, livelihoods and health, Palau celebrates the climate-biodiversity-oceans nexus and in 2024 launched the second edition of its climate change policy and plan.

Palau maintains universal access to clean water, sanitation and energy with lifeline utility subsidies that ensure that low-income households are not left behind. Despite progress in sustainability, new consumer products and lifestyles far removed from nature pose additional challenges, as do transboundary threats, including, but not limited to, climate change.

**Pillar 5: Sustaining lasting partnerships  
Sustainable Development Goals 11 and 17**

To realize the promise of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Government works in partnership with traditional leaders, subnational governments, the private sector and civil society. Internationally, Palau celebrates partnerships with like-minded multilateral, bilateral and private partners and seeks to expand these partnerships for the benefit of all.

## Pathways to 2030 and beyond

Palauans have called our islands home for generations, adapting to change and evolving values and traditions that are foundations for sustainability as Palauans progress in this era.

## Peru

[Original: Spanish]

### 2024 voluntary national review report: Peru

Since the adoption of its long-term vision and subsequent National Development Strategic Plan, Peru has been committed to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Through its State strategy, which is aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals, national goals and targets are established to guide the country's efforts towards the full development of people's capabilities, the sustainable management of its territory, increased competitiveness and productivity, and the consolidation of a just and democratic society.

### People-centred progress

Peru monitors progress on the Goals through the National Institute of Statistics and Information. To date, we have systematized information on 127 indicators. According to the data, the greatest progress has been made on the Goals related to health and well-being, gender equality, and clean water and sanitation, since the indicators have continued to show a positive trend despite the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

Priority needs to be given, however, to terrestrial ecosystems, institutions, economic growth and the generation of decent work, as the related indicators have trended in a negative direction, both before and after the pandemic. There also needs to be a sharper focus on Goal 1, on ending poverty in all its forms everywhere, as progress thereon has been reversed in recent years.

### Implementing the Goals from planning to delivery

The Goals are implemented by the National Strategic Planning System of Peru on the basis of the State strategy, national policies and strategic plans at the three levels of government. There are currently 38 national policies in force, mostly aligned with Goals 4, 8, 10 and 16, and they are aimed at the provision of goods and services and the implementation of investments.

Flagship projects have been launched under the National Sustainable Infrastructure Plan for Competitiveness, which have mainly contributed to Goal 11, on sustainable cities and communities. International technical cooperation has also been a key source of income to finance Goals 2, 3, 8 and 10 in particular. The role of business action through the Perú Sostenible organization is also noteworthy; projects have been carried out at the national level aimed mostly at making progress towards Goals 4 and 8.

Other important means of implementation, mainly relating to Goals 4 and 9, are the "Works for taxes" and "Public-private partnerships" mechanisms, which highlight the results of the joint work undertaken by the public and private sectors.

### Challenges ahead

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a major obstacle to sustainable development globally. Records show that it caused the death of 220,000 people and led to a major

economic downturn and the reversal of gains made in the fight against income poverty and labour informality. The outbreak of future pandemics could jeopardize the achievement of the Goals.

Furthermore, in drafting the present report, the country's institutional framework was identified as a factor that must be addressed as a matter of priority. At present, we are witnessing high levels of protest and social conflict, a high turnover of authorities and various forms of criminality, including corruption, which are resulting in significant economic losses and poorer-quality public services.

Climate change is also a major challenge for the future development of Peru. It will affect agriculture, food security, water availability and the presence of infectious diseases. Addressing climate change is essential to achieving the Goals.

### **Considerations for the acceleration of sustainable development in Peru**

There is a need to make progress in the implementation of existing regulations and to foster collaboration among different sectors. There is also a need for the interoperability of information systems to be improved, clear responsibilities to be established and constructive dialogue to be fostered among all stakeholders. Lastly, continuing to strengthen the monitoring and follow-up system for the Goals, ensuring that its indicators are kept up to date so that they can be used as robust decision-making tools, is crucial.

## **Samoa**

[Original: English]

The global ambitions of Samoa remain focused and steadfast despite the socioeconomic challenges that continue to impact our people, driving us towards a policy direction that is centred on human development, empowering communities, building resilience and inspiring growth. As a small island developing State with unique challenges as a result of our vulnerabilities, we recognize the importance of collective action towards achieving our sustainable development goals. Our 2024 voluntary national review signals the continued commitment of the Government of Samoa to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at a pace commensurate with our prioritization, resource availability and the active engagement of our communities. It must be acknowledged that the lack of progress on most of the targets in the region may mask many achievements and transformative actions taken at the national level.

Over the years, Samoa continues to place emphasis on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals through a balancing of the strengths of our culture and society, transformative reforms, effective resource mobilization and the careful management of our natural environment. We continue to align global targets of the Goals to our national development plan, the Pathway for the Development of Samoa, with the theme "Fostering social harmony, safety and freedom for all", as well as integrating localized targets and map indicators into our national sector plans. The approach of Samoa in localizing the Goals takes into consideration its unique context and circumstances as a key design feature of our overall implementation framework for the Goals.

The voluntary national review of Samoa takes into consideration the theme of the 2024 high-level political forum, "Reinforcing the 2030 Agenda and eradicating poverty in times of multiple crises: the effective delivery of sustainable, resilient and innovative solutions". It will build on the progress achieved since our previous reports in 2016 and 2020, with an in-depth focus on Goals 1, 2, 13, 16 and 17.



Challenges remain and are being exacerbated. Despite progress made in our development efforts, with tangible improvements made in the areas of poverty eradication and service delivery across the country, not all are benefiting equally. The global polycrisis continues to put a strain on our economy, exacerbated by our vulnerabilities as a small island developing State and the risks associated with climate change. Against that development tapestry, it is important that we focus on enhanced coordination, prioritization and resourcing of our development goals in a way that fits our national context.

Our greatest challenge in measuring progress on the Sustainable Development Goals remains within the limitations of relevant and available data to quantify our collective achievements against the targets of the Goals. Our approach will be to report on the basis of our national indicators developed under the monitoring, evaluation and learning framework for our national development strategy as well as drawing on qualitative case studies.

Our efforts to combat the spread of COVID-19 involved a whole-of-government response, resulting in an increase in public spending and the reprioritization of resources to address our immediate health and emergency response needs. Health considerations were prioritized over the economy. The voluntary national review will review the impacts of COVID-19 on the economy of Samoa, its post-COVID-19 recovery efforts, resultant impacts on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and the valuable lessons learned for a build-back-better recovery.

Climate change remains the single greatest threat to Samoa and the Pacific region, and we continue to face several challenges due to our geographic location and vulnerability to environmental impacts, spanning from extreme weather events and sea level rise to the loss of marine biodiversity and natural disasters. Climate change threats continue to have an enduring impact on our communities, their livelihoods, food security and health, and have enhanced socioeconomic vulnerabilities, hence the focus on building resilience, including that of climate mitigation and adaptation efforts.

As a small island developing State, Samoa continues its strong advocacy role in promoting peaceful, secure and inclusive societies and good governance in the Blue Pacific. The importance of maintaining peace and security within communities requires efforts to address social inequalities, such as violence against women and children, and promoting meaningful community engagement in development efforts. In parallel, Samoa contributes to ensuring the same conditions prevail in the Blue Pacific region to enhance resilience to the prevalent and growing geopolitical tensions. We will also reflect on how this evolving landscape impacts the delivery of assistance from our development partners.

Samoa actively engages in fostering multi-stakeholder partnerships to help achieve our sustainable development goals. The launch of the Government's district development programme initiative promotes community-led development across all socioeconomic sectors, with key interventions to address development challenges at the district level. The initiative has the potential to be the catalyst for the delivery and monitoring of vital support and sustainable development to all our grass-roots communities and promotes ownership and active participation in decision-making.

## **Sierra Leone**

[Original: English]

Sierra Leone is fully committed to implementing the 2030 Agenda and has been consistent in the Sustainable Development Goals review and reporting processes. The country has undertaken three previous voluntary national reviews and produced an

acceleration road map for the Goals in September 2023. The road map prioritized Goals 1, 2 and 10 and has outlined national investment commitments for sustained poverty reduction and the socioeconomic transformation of the country. As part of the localization process for the Goals, three local reviews were conducted in 2022 and 2023 in three administrative districts, each assessing progress on local indicators and targets.

The leading acceleration commitments for the Sustainable Development Goals and the rest of the 2030 Agenda are relentlessly pursued within the framework of the new Sierra Leone medium-term national development plan for the period 2024–2030, framed around the Government’s big five game changers. Three of these game changers – “Feed Salone”, human capital development and the youth employment scheme – align with our acceleration commitments for the Goals and with Goal 14. Feed Salone is the Government’s flagship programme for attaining food security, boosting economic growth and reducing poverty, which remains a key challenge. The national budgetary allocation to agriculture has increased from 2.1 per cent in 2023 to 7 per cent in 2024.

The Government continues to prioritize human capital development for long-term socioeconomic transformation. The education sector receives 22 per cent of the national budget, in addition to the Government’s radical inclusion programme, all leading to a 69 per cent increase in school enrolment and the maintenance of gender parity. On Sustainable Development Goal 3, implementation of the free health-care initiative has been strengthened, the national budgetary allocation to the health sector increased from 6 per cent to 11.6 per cent from 2019 to 2023, more health-care workers were recruited and four dialysis stations were established. These policy efforts have positively impacted health indicators, particularly maternal mortality, which decreased from 717 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2019 to 443 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2020, and life expectancy, which increased from 53 to 61 years from 2017 to 2023. The country continues to experience a youth bulge, owing mainly to a high fertility rate of 4.2 births per female and a decrease in the infant mortality rate. To respond to the youthful population and its attendant challenges, the Government has launched its youth employment scheme to create at least 500,000 jobs by 2030.

On Sustainable Development Goal 16, Sierra Leone is doing a commendable job, securing a non-permanent seat on the Security Council, providing leadership to the Group of Seven Plus and participating in the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and State-building. The continued reforms of the justice sector are fundamental for promoting sustainable peace and development, guaranteeing and protecting citizens’ human rights. The Sierra Leone Legal Aid Board continues to provide access to justice for underprivileged persons, embracing the alternative dispute resolution mechanism for speedy out-of-court settlement of cases. The constitutional review process has been advanced, a new Government white paper launched, and the death penalty abolished.

The Independent Commission for Peace and National Cohesion was established in 2021 and has since promoted dialogue among political parties and led reconciliation efforts. Following the 2023 general elections, the Commission played a pivotal role in addressing post-election disagreements, mediating peace between major political parties and supporting the implementation of the tripartite agreement on electoral reforms and management.

The Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Act, 2022 is among the critical milestones in gender mainstreaming, followed by dramatic increases in female representation in ministerial cabinet positions to over 30 per cent, and to 28.2 per cent in Parliament.

The Government considers access to information essential for good governance and a critical enabler of the Sustainable Development Goals. A marked increase in freedom of information requests and proactive disclosure of information was recorded, with a score of 98 per cent on freedom of information in the 2023 Millennium Challenge Corporation global scorecard. The recent launch of the Digital Access to Information platform will significantly improve public access to information.

Sierra Leone has scaled up efforts to harness its blue economy potential and developed a blue economy strategy. This is also crucial in advancing the Government's climate resilience, energy transition and sustainable food systems agenda.

Like many other underdeveloped countries, Sierra Leone faces data gaps and funding constraints in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals, owing mainly to multiple global crises since 2020. To address these challenges in the new national development plan, which has an estimated financing gap of \$2.56 billion, the Government will explore innovative financing instruments, including the Sierra Leone integrated national financing framework, and strengthen development cooperation.

## **Solomon Islands**

[Original: English]

Solomon Islands is located in the Pacific region, spread over an exclusive economic zone of 1,340,000 km<sup>2</sup>, and comprising 997 islands with around 720,900 people.

The National Development Strategy 2016–2035 remains the overarching development blueprint to implement relevant Sustainable Development Goals. In this context, this voluntary national review process has involved various stakeholders, building on the recent review of the National Development Strategy, which provided a benchmark to report on progress, challenges and the way forward.

### **Implementation of the 2030 Agenda**

Solomon Islands has made progress in implementing the National Development Strategy and the Sustainable Development Goals. The sections below provide a snapshot of the progress against each of the five objectives of the Strategy since the first voluntary national review, in 2020.

Solomon Islands is committed to diversifying its economy and promoting investment. The 2023 Pacific Games significantly supported private sector growth, including in transport, hospitality, and wholesale and retail trade. Progress made includes: the completion of strategic infrastructure, such as the Kukum Highway, sporting facilities and the Munda international airport; more inclusive access to financial services through mobile money; strengthened facilities for exporting commodities from remote areas; and legislative reforms to improve revenue collection and compliance.

Ensuring basic needs are met, as well as alleviating poverty, remains a commitment for the Government, including through the more equal distribution of benefits of development to the most vulnerable, such as persons with disabilities, youth, women, elderly persons and children. The current focus has resulted in the development of policies to support the empowerment of women and youth, gender equality, the rights of children, and social and emotional well-being. The Government recognizes the need for targeted social protection measures, which remain in progress.

Improving health outcomes remains a priority for Solomon Islands, and some progress has been made in improving the standards and quality of health-care services in the provincial and rural areas. The National Health Strategic Plan 2022–2031 also enables the delivery of more integrated health services. To tackle the rising cases of non-communicable diseases, specialized clinics have been established across the country to provide early screening and tailored care plans.

Enhancing access to quality education, vocational training and entrepreneurship opportunities remains a significant commitment for Solomon Islands. Noting the unequal learning outcomes for male and female students, inter alia, the Education Act 2023 will enhance the provision of education services to every child. The established Solomon Islands Tertiary Education and Skills Authority will support improved human resources planning and capacity-building.

Solomon Islands remains vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, including sea level rise, the increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, and ocean acidification. A number of recent measures aim to mitigate the impacts, including the introduction of regulations banning single-use plastic, a national ocean policy, a national renewable energy road map and a low emission strategy. Risk and resilience assessments have been integrated into the design and implementation of infrastructure projects.

National stability, security, peacebuilding and effective governance remain important in Solomon Islands. Progress in this regard includes the development and implementation of the National Security Strategy, the draft traditional governance and customs facilitation bill, which would enforce the legitimacy of village chiefs and elders to deal with community disputes and enhance peace, a national policy on the reintegration of those involved in past conflicts, a policy on conflict prevention and victims' rights, and a strategic partnership framework with churches to support peacebuilding.

### **Moving ahead**

A major challenge in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals lies in institutional capacity and governance to manage the rapidly changing development context, including population growth, security, the cost of living, and sociocultural and environmental change. Solomon Islands recognizes the need for evidence-based decision-making, building capacities across government to support improved service delivery, targeted investments and private sector development, and continuously strengthening national processes and systems, inter alia, to manage these challenges.

Building on our achievements to date and addressing the challenges that lie ahead, Solomon Islands remains committed to accelerating progress in the implementation of National Development Strategy priorities and the Sustainable Development Goals. With a focus on inclusivity, resilience, genuine partnerships, financing and innovation, we are forging a path towards a prosperous and sustainable future for all Solomon Islanders.

### **South Africa**

[Original: English]

#### *Commitment to an inclusive process*

- The second voluntary national review reflects and reaffirms the country's commitment to advancing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Sustainable Development Goals are implemented through an inclusive process

through the aligned National Development Plan Vision 2030 of South Africa and Agenda 2063 of the African Union.

- South Africa has embraced the localization of the Goals, as reflected in the voluntary local reviews conducted in 2024.

*Signs of progress amid persistent challenges*

The 2024 voluntary national review highlights continued progress by South Africa in improving the lives of its citizens, especially the most vulnerable, as follows:

- Comprehensive social protection coverage, including public employment, dents the high poverty levels.
- Universal health coverage for all South Africans is aimed at guaranteeing quality health care regardless of economic status.
- South Africa has witnessed a steady decline in maternal mortality, child mortality, new HIV infections and other communicable diseases.
- There has been a notable increase in access to quality early childhood development and in school completion, with universal school enrolment attained, and an expansion in the provision of student financial aid for higher education.
- A strong legislative framework promotes gender equality, social inclusion and equity.
- A large majority of South Africans have access to water and sanitation.
- Ambitious commitments supported by substantial financing are driving the just energy transition in South Africa.
- Institutions aimed at identifying and prosecuting corruption have been strengthened significantly.

Despite areas of progress, challenges remain:

- High unemployment rates and high inequalities persist, including income inequality as measured by the Gini coefficient.
- The skills mismatch between education and industry needs requires focused attention from all stakeholders.
- South Africans experience regular power outages and rising electricity costs, negatively impacting quality of life and economic productivity.
- Infrastructure inefficiencies, including at the local government level, hinder increased production and the export of goods and services, thus negatively impacting growth.
- South Africans' material footprint remains high, and there is a slow uptake of sustainable practices.
- The level of violent crime, in particular violence against women and children, remains very high.
- Parallel public and private health systems exist, but resource allocation is skewed in favour of the private sector, resulting in huge health inequities in terms of access to health.
- There is suboptimal use of evidence to inform policy development and implementation in all spheres of government.

*Ambitious proposals to accelerate progress*

To accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in South Africa, the 2024 voluntary national review recommends prioritizing five high-impact Goals acceleration mechanisms:

- *Mechanism 1: Prioritize human well-being and enhanced capabilities through sustainable development (Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 11)*

Focus on improving the quality of life and enhancing the capabilities of all South Africans, particularly the most vulnerable, through improved social infrastructure investment for quality health care, education, water and sanitation systems.

- *Mechanism 2: Invest in young people for participation in fields with a high job growth potential, such as the green and digital economy (Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 13, 14 and 15)*

Empower young people to contribute to and participate in fields with a high job growth potential, such as the green and digital economy, through targeted vocational and skills development and entrepreneurship support.

- *Mechanism 3: Create economic growth and opportunities by increasing sustainable energy sources (Goals 7, 8, 10 and 13)*

Urgently address the immediate energy security needs of South Africa while shifting to renewables to enhance future energy security, reduce carbon emissions and create economic opportunities.

- *Mechanism 4: Unblock infrastructure constraints and invest in green and resilient infrastructure (Goals 8, 9, 10 and 11)*

Address infrastructure constraints: invest in network industries and target key infrastructure investments that support a diversified and competitive economy in an environmentally sustainable manner, contributing to labour market activation and social infrastructure development.

- *Mechanism 5: Rebuild trust through effective and responsive institutions (Goals 16 and 17)*

Rebuild public trust by effectively combating corruption and increasing efficiency in the public service. Build strong local and global partnerships to help accelerate progress. Scale up successful and innovative interventions.

- *Mechanism 6: Mobilize means for implementation (Goal 17)*

Optimize domestic resource mobilization through tax collection, reduce illicit financial flows, call for appropriate technology transfer and expand technical and financial cooperation, which are required to accelerate progress by South Africa towards achieving the Goals.

**South Sudan**

[Original: English]

**The context**

Rooted in the aspirations of Vision 2040, the South Sudan Revised National Development Strategy 2021–2024 provides a strategic framework for steering the nation towards sustainable development. The Revised National Development Strategy not only is aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda

2063 of the African Union, but also resonates with the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan, which focuses on consolidating peace, stabilizing the economy and fostering sustainable development.

### **Main messages of the voluntary national review on selected Sustainable Development Goals**

- **Goal 1: No poverty.** The Government is making efforts to alleviate poverty in all its forms. However, aspiration and determination for citizens to benefit from natural resource abundance are hindered by protracted conflicts, natural disasters, pandemics, economic hardships and humanitarian crises. The World Bank estimates that 80 per cent of South Sudanese live below the poverty line. Preliminary results of the Multidimensional Poverty Index (2024) show that 86 per cent of South Sudanese are multidimensionality poor.
- **Goal 2: Zero hunger.** Over the past five years, there has been an increase in net cereal production due to the expansion of cultivated areas and because of relative peace and government prioritization of agricultural production. Unfortunately, the gains made are being impacted by subnational violence and climate shocks, leading to severe food insecurity. About 7.1 million people are food insecure and 2.5 million people are at risk of acute malnutrition in 2024. Nonetheless, the Government continues to consolidate peace to enhance food production in areas not affected by floods.
- **Goal 3: Good health and well-being.** The Government is collaborating with development partners to reduce morbidities and maternal and child mortality. Nonetheless, limited access to quality health-care services derails comprehensive health-care interventions.
- **Goal 4: Quality education.** The country's literacy rate has improved from 27 per cent (2008) to 35 per cent (2018) among adults aged 15 and above. Likewise, there has been an increase in enrolment, from 1.9 million in 2021 to 2.2 million in 2023. Although the Constitution guarantees compulsory and free basic education, access to education remains limited, especially in conflict- and flood-affected areas, with about 2.8 million children out of school. The Government is prioritizing vocational training, digitalization of learning and alternative education systems to encourage inclusive education for all.
- **Goal 5: Gender equality.** The Revitalized Agreement provides for a 35 per cent quota for women's participation in leadership positions at all levels to promote gender equality. Despite this affirmative action, social stratification problems, including gender inequality, hinder women's empowerment and participation in development. Enhancing women's participation in entrepreneurship and gender mainstreaming in policy frameworks are a priority for the Government.
- **Goal 8: Decent work and economic growth.** The Government is making strides to foster inclusive economic growth, private sector development and job creation. Economic diversification across sectors, including agriculture, mining and the private sector, to promote economic growth are top priorities for the Government and partners.
- **Goal 9: Industry, innovation and infrastructure.** The Government has prioritized the construction of road networks to connect Juba with the states and administrative areas. South Sudan has limited infrastructure, industrialization, innovation and technology, which are catalysts for accelerated development. The Government is planning roads that connect South Sudan to Kenya, Uganda, the Sudan and Ethiopia.

- **Goal 13: Climate action.** The Government’s investment in climate-resilient development and adaptation strategies is a fundamental step to mitigating the adverse impacts of climate change on communities and ecosystems. The effects of recurrent floods, droughts, heatwaves and deforestation exacerbate vulnerability and food insecurity.
- **Goal 16: Peace, justice and strong institutions.** The relative peace since 2018 has provided an opportunity to accelerate the 2030 Agenda. However, subnational violence poses significant obstacles to achieving sustainable peace. Efforts to promote accountable governance, access to justice and strong institutions are government priorities to build the foundations of long-term development and peace.

### **Opportunities for the Goals**

Full implementation of the Revitalized Agreement and the priorities of the Revised National Development Strategy can accelerate the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. The provision of resources by the Government and partners to implement development plans and sector strategies will fast-track progress towards the Goals. In addition, the 2023 South Sudan Sustainable Development Goals rescue plan, if keenly followed, could rapidly enhance sustainable development. Furthermore, the strengthening of the National Bureau of Statistics and sector working groups would enhance coordination mechanisms and the development data ecosystem.

## **Spain**

[Original: Spanish]

### **Commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

The submission of a third voluntary national review report is evidence of the commitment of Spain to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, sustainable development in general and human rights. The 2030 Agenda is at the core of national laws and policies in Spain and, since 2021, the Sustainable Development Strategy 2030 has served as the guiding framework for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Spain. The Strategy is rooted in the commitments made in the Action Plan for the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda, adopted in 2018. Amid growing scepticism regarding the Sustainable Development Goals and their underlying principles, Spain remains firmly committed to multilateralism, sustainable development and human rights.

### **Institutional framework for the 2030 Agenda**

Achieving the Goals requires a multi-stakeholder, multilevel approach, and the robust governance system for the 2030 Agenda in Spain facilitates its implementation. The Ministry of Social Rights, Consumer Affairs and 2030 Agenda has executive powers in relation to the development and coordination of government action aimed at achieving the Goals. That responsibility is discharged as part of an institutional framework that ensures the multi-stakeholder, multilevel approach: the Executive Committee of the Government for the 2030 Agenda coordinates government action; the Sectoral Conference for the 2030 Agenda enables collaboration between governments at the central, autonomous community and local level; and the Council for Sustainable Development, a body composed of 60 representatives of civil society, the private sector, trade unions and academia, provides advice and support for policymaking towards the 2030 Agenda.



The report was informed by the governance system through consultations, meetings and reviews of drafts, as well as by progress reports on the 2030 Agenda, which have been published annually since 2019. It is the culmination of an extensive participatory and collaborative process involving the governments at the central, autonomous community and local level in Spain, in addition to key non-governmental actors, including civil society. Other government actors provided technical inputs on topics such as the alignment of budgets with the Goals, Goal indicators and the training of public employees on the 2030 Agenda. The active and effective management of the governance system illustrates the deep commitment of Spain to the integration of sustainable development at all levels of policymaking.

### **Challenges and opportunities**

This voluntary national review marks the midpoint of the Sustainable Development Strategy 2030, which was endorsed and presented in 2021 as part of the second voluntary national review of Spain and is now pending midterm evaluation. The third voluntary national review is a key milestone, as it identifies persistent challenges and emerging opportunities that will inform the next review of the Strategy's goals, accelerator policies and indicators. Despite strong economic and employment growth, reduced emissions and increased renewable electricity production, major challenges remain, including rural, child and energy poverty, housing insecurity and land degradation. Spain is committed to addressing these and other challenges by strengthening human rights and the welfare State and ensuring a just transition that leaves no one behind; by using the Sustainable Development Strategy 2030 as the guiding framework for government action; and by supporting the efforts of other countries to achieve the Goals through international cooperation. Spain will host the International Conference on Financing for Development in 2025.

### **Cross-cutting priorities**

Spain firmly believes that the implementation of the 2030 Agenda must be guided by human rights obligations and principles. In particular, the eradication of poverty (the theme of the 2024 high-level political forum) calls for a human rights-based approach and is part of the obligation of Spain to respect, protect and uphold the right to, inter alia, life, a decent standard of living, social security, food, housing and water. This approach also emphasizes participation, transparency and accountability as key ingredients for all policy design, implementation and evaluation activities.

Achieving the Goals requires the active participation of all autonomous community and local governments. Demonstrating its commitment to localizing the Goals, Spain hosts the Local 2030 Coalition headquarters in Bilbao and has made significant contributions to the Joint Sustainable Development Goals Fund in support of localization, which is a priority. Several autonomous communities have adopted their own sustainable development plans and strategies, established participatory bodies and adopted procedures for regulatory and budgetary alignment, and they evaluate progress towards the Goals using indicators. Local entities can also deepen their involvement in the 2030 Agenda through the Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces, which coordinates the Network of Local Entities for the 2030 Agenda and provides training and support for localizing the Goals.

At both the national and international levels, Spain is committed to the development of a comprehensive system to ensure policy coherence for sustainable development. The system will prioritize policy impact assessment, maximizing positive interactions between the Goals and reducing negative cross-impacts. It will also enhance capacity-building and ensure that both the national and international dimensions of policies are aligned with the Goals.

## Syrian Arab Republic

[Original: Arabic]

The Syrian Arab Republic presented its first voluntary national report on the Sustainable Development Goals during the 2020 United Nations high-level political forum. It included two types of messages.

One addressed the international level, and focused on the international community's role in contributing to achievement of the sustainable development goals. The second addressed the national level, and focused on national efforts to accelerate achievement of the Goals.

Four years later, in formulating messages for the second voluntary national review, we find it necessary to revise the messages from that first voluntary national review report submitted in 2020.

### **At the international level**

The international community has not made genuine efforts to bring about peace and security and put an end to aggression, terrorism and flagrant violations of international law and Syrian sovereignty. Certain countries continue to protect, support and use terrorism to steal and deplete Syrian national resources.

The unilateral coercive measures imposed on Syria continue to be factors that hinder the development process as a whole.

The international community has been unable to condemn and stop ongoing attacks by the Israeli occupation entity on Syrian sovereignty that have affected infrastructure, including educational and cultural facilities, airports, diplomatic and consular headquarters, and citizens' homes. Those attacks have claimed the lives of many Syrian civilians.

Syria is still barred from membership in certain international and regional organizations, and therefore cannot benefit from rights of membership. It is also being prevented from using frozen assets to finance interventions necessary for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

No official development assistance has been provided to Syria to help it finance its development goals and build its economy on sustainable bases. The only assistance provided has been in response to humanitarian needs to mitigate the impact of war and natural disasters.

### **At the national level**

The Syrian Government has set forth integrated and consistent policies to achieve the sustainable development goals. It has launched programmes to jumpstart and sustain the development process. However, its efforts have collided with the aforementioned obstacles and challenges at the international level, especially with regard to needs stemming from the devastating earthquake that struck the country on 6 February 2023.

The Syrian Government operates in a difficult and complex environment. Needs are growing even as capacities decline and development financing falls short owing to the exigencies of war, ongoing theft by certain States of domestic resources, and the coercive measures being imposed. Even so, the Government has managed to make use of available resources to rehabilitate some of the economic and social infrastructure destroyed by the war, to help realize as much as possible of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Government has broadened participation in implementation of development plans to include the private sector, the academic community, civil society and the media. It has strengthened cooperation with the United Nations system and international and regional organizations operating officially in Syria so as to ensure optimal joint utilization of resources.

The devastating earthquake that struck Syria proved that the aim of the coercive measures is to damage the lives of Syrian citizens. Those measures limited the capabilities of the Syrian Government and society, reducing the space available for earthquake rescue and response efforts.

Based on the preceding, it can be said that the development work environment at the international level has become non-conducive to full realization of the Sustainable Development Goals. In fact, it can be described as having become more hostile to certain countries, Syria among them. We therefore give warning that the international community is working against the realization of the 2030 Agenda's "Leave no one behind" slogan. If current conditions persist, there are countries that will be left behind in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

In this report, we reiterate the messages contained in our first voluntary national report in 2020, because none of their content has been implemented:

- We renew our demands on the international community to shoulder its responsibilities with respect to the Sustainable Development Goals. It must apply pressure to bring to an end the illegal foreign military presence of certain countries on Syrian territory.
- Pressure must be applied to put a stop to the practices of certain countries that are supporting terrorism and stealing Syrian national resources.
- The unilateral coercive measures imposed on Syria must immediately and unconditionally be lifted.
- Attacks by the Israeli occupation entity must be condemned and brought to an end.
- The Syrian Arab Republic must be assisted in financing and supporting achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.
- The international community should act more fairly towards developing countries, especially the lowest income among them.

## Uganda

[Original: English]

The third voluntary national review of Uganda demonstrates the country's commitment to the fulfilment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The overall implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in Uganda is guided by Uganda Vision 2040, which aspires to transform Ugandan society from a peasant one to a modern and prosperous one and is implemented through a series of five-year national development plans. Currently, the country is implementing the Third National Development Plan, which is more than 95 per cent aligned to the Sustainable Development Goals, an improvement from 70 per cent in the Second National Development Plan.

Building on the coordination framework developed in 2016 and operationalized through a rolling road map which defines catalytic actions and interventions, the Government continues to strengthen coordination, partnerships and localization mechanisms for implementation of the Goals. The coordination framework is

executed through five multi-stakeholder technical working groups composed of actors from the Government, civil society, the private sector and academia. The technical working groups are aligned to the core functions of planning and mainstreaming, data generation, financing and resource mobilization, communication and popularization, and monitoring and reporting. At the highest policy level, the Prime Minister continues to provide the overall leadership for the implementation of the Goals across ministries, departments, agencies and local governments.

In 2019, to enhance implementation of the Goals, the Government, in partnership with the United Nations country team, established a fully-fledged national Sustainable Development Goals secretariat that has strengthened the coordination and partnership architecture. In addition, coordination platforms and task teams for implementation of the various Goals have been established by the relevant government agencies and specific capacity-building programmes for monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the Goals. As such, there has been increased Goal localization and voluntary local reviews across various government ministries and agencies, as well as in local governments. In addition, there has been strengthened monitoring and reporting on various indicators for the Goals, with data points increasing from 41 in 2016 to 135 currently. Furthermore, the Government and its partners have initiated and organized two Sustainable Development Goals conferences as annual events where stakeholders reflect on the journey of Uganda towards the Goals and draw actions for acceleration. There has also been strengthened partnership with the private sector and civil society organizations through the establishment of respective platforms to enhance ownership of and accountability for the Goals.

At the midpoint of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the progress of Uganda presents a mixed picture. In terms of targets, only 26.1 per cent of the Goals are on track, 54.2 per cent have limited progress and 19.7 per cent are stagnating. However, the Ugandan economy continues to recover from and remains resilient against negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change. The economy is estimated to grow by 6 per cent in 2023/24, up from 5 per cent in the fiscal year 2022/23, translating into a per capital GDP of \$1,093 by June 2023. Uganda has also made substantial investments in key areas of infrastructure and human capital development, which have significantly enhanced the country's competitiveness and present numerous viable financing opportunities.

With this mixed performance, Uganda has, through a consultative process at the national and subnational levels, developed six commitments for Goals acceleration and transformation. These commitments focus on actions to accelerate: (a) the "leaving no one behind" agenda through implementation of the inclusive Parish Development Model; (b) inclusive actions for trade financing and climate-smart investments; (c) the leveraging of science, technology and innovation; (d) inclusive economic and social development through climate change adaptation and mitigation; (e) the harnessing of the full potential of data to improve the lives of all Ugandans; and (f) the strengthening of Goals coordination and service delivery mechanisms.

Moving forward, Uganda will focus on integrating these commitments into the forthcoming Fourth National Development Plan (2024/25–2029/30), enhancing innovative financing mechanisms at all levels, strengthening partnerships for Goals localization and citizen participation, and enhancing Goals monitoring and reporting. This will involve continuous alignment of the budget allocations and development plans with Goals priorities, diversifying funding sources and unlocking new innovative financing models and mechanisms to enhance financial resilience and resource availability. Uganda will also identify and explore options for creating synergies among the various Goals to leverage available resources and capacities; leverage innovations in technology and digitalization; foster partnerships and

international cooperation, especially regional cooperation and South-South and triangular cooperation; build the resilience of the economy to various shocks, including climate change; and strengthen institutional and human capacity for effective service delivery.

## Vanuatu

[Original: English]

The theme of the second voluntary national review of Vanuatu is “Building resilience and accelerating progress through local empowerment”.

Our 2019 review presented a positive message of progress despite extreme vulnerability to climate-related disasters. We have long faced the force of weather, but now the path to recovery is harder to navigate. Since 2020, we have endured three severe cyclones, including unprecedented back-to-back events. The COVID-19 pandemic was not a separate problem to be dealt with. It meant facing a compound disaster, unique in the way it unravelled, with no clear trajectory or end in sight. Ever looming is the prospect of future disasters. The Government and people of Vanuatu have had to continuously adapt and strengthen resilience mechanisms to mitigate the impacts of these persistent threats and disruptions.

In 2023, a national “Summit of the people and their Government” provided an opportunity to test and reset our approach to sustainable development. Vanuatu 2030: the People’s Plan charts our path for achieving a stable, sustainable and prosperous future, localizing the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. To this we remain fully committed. The summit identified the importance of empowering local communities to accelerate progress and enhance resilience.

Decentralization reforms have focused on devolving more authority to local areas and making our public institutions more accessible, accountable and responsive. Strengthening our six provincial and 71 area councils is helping to better deal with the compounding impacts of disasters and improve service delivery.

By aligning formal and traditional governance arrangements, we are developing local capacity and harnessing our rich trove of traditional knowledge. Building stronger local authorities this way means that our national policy frameworks are increasingly informed through localized assessments, planning and action. These reforms have led to key parts of the national budget being administered at the area level, facilitating quicker, more transparent responses that are better tailored to local needs.

The COVID-19 pandemic led to the first contraction of the economy in nearly 20 years. The disruption to people’s lives and livelihoods was profound and required the most extensive ever package of government support. Alongside wage subsidies and tax breaks were substantial investments in the productive sectors to address immediate needs and build longer-term resilience.

Social protection in Vanuatu is anchored in our community networks and cultural traditions. Reciprocity, fairness, trust, safety and adherence to custom are what hold our communities together. We continue to draw on traditional values, which align with modern language around human rights, equality and inclusion. Social protection policies also need to accommodate shifting social norms, new urban lifestyles and the pressures associated with increased labour migration.

Stresses associated with recent disasters highlighted stubborn social issues. In response, we renewed commitments to achieve gender equality, the protection of women, girls and young people, and the full inclusion of people with disabilities.

Actioning these policies and engaging in the new conversations that are emerging will help ensure that no one is left behind.

Vanuatu proudly spearheaded the coalition of 132 nations adopting by consensus General Assembly resolution [77/276](#) on the request for a non-binding advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the obligations of States in respect of climate change.

At home, we have been mainstreaming climate-related disaster preparedness and recovery by integrating them into national, provincial and local planning, budgeting and activity programming. We can no longer sustain what were previously parallel processes. The change has led to improved outcomes, with significant investments made in essential infrastructure, connectivity and enhanced agriculture practices. These are aimed at stimulating economic growth, improving livelihoods and ensuring food security. We are also focusing on improving sustainable land and marine resource management, coupling science and technology with traditional practices.

Education is pivotal for our people achieving their development aspirations. We expanded our school fee subsidy to improve access and now strive to improve quality. This includes providing appropriate infrastructure and boosting skills training for early school leavers.

Our second voluntary national review presents a cautiously optimistic outlook. It showcases a country determined to prosper despite living amid the stark realities of climate change. We have leveraged our commitment to democratic processes and citizen empowerment to accelerate our progress on the Sustainable Development Goals. Achieving more requires enhanced financial access, including direct access to climate finance, improved resource allocation, stronger data systems and deeper partnerships and stakeholder engagement.

## Yemen

[Original: Arabic]

Yemen has a unique strategic location that positions it to play a strategic political, economic and security role. It is located in the southwest of the Arabian peninsula and possesses the port of Aden, which was the second most significant global port in the 1950s. It also possesses a 2,500 km coastline spanning the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden, the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea. It overlooks the Bab al-Mandab Strait, through which 20 per cent of the world's oil passes, and is the shortest and least expensive sea route for global trade.

On 21 September 2014, the Houthi militia carried out an insurrection against the Yemeni State and the outcomes of the national dialogue in which it had been a participant. It occupied the capital, Sana'a, and launched a war that led to the destruction of major portions of infrastructure, tens of thousands of deaths, and the displacement of 4.5 million people. Yemen has lost the equivalent of 23 years of development gains. Some 80 per cent of its population are being denied access to basic social services. The war also led to a contraction of GDP by almost half. The economy lost more than \$126 billion. Oil and gas production came to a halt, owing to Houthi drone and ballistic missile attacks on oil export ports. Domestic and foreign indebtedness rose due to the Government's inability to pay outstanding debts. Yemen imports about 90 per cent of its food needs, making it vulnerable to food insecurity, which affects more than 60 per cent of the population. Yemen is also facing a water security crisis. Some 80 per cent of the population is in need of humanitarian assistance. That is not to mention the repercussions of successive international crises, including the COVID-19 pandemic, high energy prices and climate change. In the

face of these crises, Yemen is unlikely to achieve any of the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals requires development and implementation of an integrated recovery and reconstruction strategy, along with building resilience to future challenges. This report on the Sustainable Development Goals is our first. It was prepared in the face of challenges through a participatory mechanism. It contains numerous messages of both domestic and international significance that confirm that Yemen is an active member of the international community and will step up its pace in harnessing all available capabilities to make significant progress in the coming years with the support of regional and international partners. The following are the most prominent of those messages:

1. Support should be given to efforts by the United Nations and the international community to reach a comprehensive and sustainable peace agreement in Yemen – in accordance with the outcomes of the national dialogue, the Riyadh Agreement, the Gulf initiative and the relevant international resolutions – that would bring an end to the insurrection, restore State institutions, and promote transparency, accountability and the rule of law.

2. The regional and international communities should mobilize financing for reconstruction, achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, and a move from humanitarian interventions towards development interventions that can have a sustainable impact, so as to build resilience against future risks and crises.

3. Oil and gas production and export must be resumed, and made maximum use of in developing the real sectors and maintaining the sustainability of public finances, in conjunction with investment in renewable and clean energy.

4. Programmes and policies should be adopted to combat poverty, hunger and malnutrition by developing small and micro enterprises, creating job opportunities for women and youth, expanding social protection, developing the agriculture and fisheries sectors, enhancing access to basic services, making full use of technology and the digital and green economies, and reducing inequality.

5. External indebtedness should be addressed through debt swaps for climate action and negotiations with creditor countries and regional and international financial institutions to partially or fully exempt Yemen from debt and interest, convert short-term loans to long-term loans at reduced interest rates, and make available concessional financing.

6. Proactive measures and policies should be adopted to preserve natural resources, maximize their sustainable use, and reduce the negative impacts of climate change, particularly with regard to water, agriculture, livelihoods, the green economy, marine wealth development and protection from overfishing.

7. Institutional capacities should be built up and soundly managed at the central and local levels. Digital infrastructure should be invested in for government institutions and the public sector.

8. Economic opportunities should be diversified by introducing climate change adaptation measures in promising sectors, including agriculture and fisheries, water resources management and governance. Small and medium enterprises and value chains should be reinforced in the sectors where that is feasible.

9. Basic social services should be improved, including water, health and education. Investment in human capital should be increased.

10. Technological transformation and digitization should be promoted by improving internet connectivity and information access.

11. A broad partnership should be built with the private sector and civil society to enhance the role of the private sector in financing development and reconstruction.

12. Statistical capacities for monitoring progress on the Sustainable Development Goals should be enhanced.

13. The roles of the Central Office for Control and Auditing and the Supreme National Authority for Combating Corruption should be enhanced to help enforce the principles of good governance, transparency, accountability and anti-corruption.

## **Zimbabwe**

[Original: English]

Zimbabwe aligned and mainstreamed the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, and Agenda 2063 of the African Union, into Vision 2030 and its accompanying blueprints, the Transitional Stabilization Programme for the period 2018–2020 and National Development Strategies 1 (2021–2025) and 2 (2026–2030).

The first and second voluntary national reviews were developed in 2017 and 2021, respectively, with the assistance of consultants. To ensure buy-in and ownership, the 2024 voluntary national review is being developed by the Government together with stakeholders drawn from ministries, departments and agencies, representatives of persons with disabilities, youth, women, civil society organizations, the private sector, development partners, organized business, organized labour and academia, in line with the whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches.

In line with the “leaving no one and no place behind” principle of the Sustainable Development Goals, countrywide consultations and validations were undertaken across the 10 provinces, including special interest groups such as civil society organizations, the private sector, children and parliamentarians.

The 2024 voluntary national review reviewed all 17 Sustainable Development Goals, and the report incorporated key messages from voluntary local reviews undertaken between 2022 and 2024 and key messages from the chapter prepared by children.

### **Summary of progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals**

The 2024 voluntary national review report reviewed the performance of all 17 Goals, but key messages are limited to the five Goals to be reviewed in-depth at the high-level political forum.

Goal 1: the introduction of the Integrated Social Protection Management Information System and the enhancement of social safety nets and sustainable livelihoods is helping the country move its citizenry from extreme poverty. The country’s poverty level has, however, been affected by polycrises which continue to exert pressure on social protection requirements.

Goal 2: implementation of the Agriculture and Food Systems Rural Transformation Strategy increased public sector investment and encouraged the participation of the private sector in agricultural investment, leading to rapid development of the agricultural sector. The agricultural sector grew by 4.1 per cent in 2020, 17.5 per cent in 2021 and 6.2 per cent in 2022, through the acceleration of climate-smart farming practices, Pfumvudza/Intwasa (conservation farming) and the development of the irrigation alliance resulting in an increased area under precision irrigation, leading to increased productivity.



Goal 13: completion of the national adaptation plan is crucial in integrating and mainstreaming climate change into development planning, enhancing resilience and reducing vulnerability across all stakeholders. Aligning climate goals with budgets and policies helps ensure coordinated efforts. The strengthening of institutional capacity through transparency-focused initiatives, the facilitation of effective reporting and international collaboration are vital in meeting the Paris Agreement. Collaboration, public awareness, monitoring frameworks, financial mobilization, inclusivity, synergies with other Goals and adaptive management are important in guaranteeing long-term success and addressing climate change challenges. However, the ever-changing climate-related events complicate resilience-building mechanisms.

Goal 16: in line with the Goal, the implementation of the devolution and decentralization policy and the upholding of human rights and the rule of law enhance community engagement and participation in development, and enhance and expedite case settlement and the rehabilitation and reintegration of inmates, thereby building up to peaceful and just societies.

Goal 17: Zimbabwe is implementing strategies aimed at fostering global, regional and national collaboration and cooperation with various stakeholders to enhance financing and partnerships in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. These include strategies to increase the quantity and quality of official development assistance and on debt relief restructuring and cancellation, the implementation of progressive taxation, enhancing data for monitoring and reporting on the Goals and promoting partnerships and volunteerism to enhance achievement of the Goals.

Children-led voluntary national review: this was spearheaded by children and flags key messages from children, with the following call to action: “We, the children of Zimbabwe, demand action, NOW! We want a Zimbabwe where ALL children have equal opportunities: free education, access to affordable health care, a registered identity for every child, because we all matter, protection from abuse and a justice system free from corruption and, create for us sustainable solutions to end poverty and hunger”.

Voluntary local reviews: the Government of Zimbabwe, together with partners and local authorities, embarked on the localization agenda in 2020 with two pilot projects (Harare and Victoria Falls). Between 2022 and 2024, a total of 14 additional local authorities were capacitated, and six voluntary local reviews have been produced by three urban and three rural councils. The voluntary local reviews promoted multi-stakeholder participation and collaboration between councils and their stakeholders in monitoring and reporting on the Goals. However, the lack of budgetary support towards the production of voluntary local reviews, the lack of data, the need to digitalize systems and limited awareness of the Goals and Agenda 2063 were the major challenges.