

Planning Institute of Jamaica

Presentation at the VNR Workshop for the Fifth Meeting of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean

March 8, 2022

Greeting

Madame Executive Secretary Alicia Barcena,

Representatives of the Economic Commission of Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)

Representatives of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA)

Colleagues from the region and the Community of Practise,

I am grateful for the opportunity to reflect on Jamaica's experience with preparing a second voluntary national review, and to participate in this peer learning exercise to gain insights from the experience of colleagues in the region.

How will you prepare your 2022 VNR based on your review(s) from the previous year(s)?

In 2018, Jamaica conducted a comprehensive voluntary national review, reporting on the 17 SDG goals both from a programmatic and statistical perspective. It was an opportunity to take a deeper dive into critical issues which, following the adoption of the agenda in 2015, would be necessary to advance its implementation well beyond the presentation of the VNR. A Roadmap for Communication and Advocacy and Leaving No one Behind report were prepared to deepen stakeholder engagement and lay the foundation for participatory and integrated approaches to implementation, reflective of the country's commitment to a whole of society approach.

In the context of implementing the SDGs through the National Development Plan, the VNR was informed by the outcomes of implementing the 2015-2018 Medium Term Socio-Economic Policy Framework (MTF) - the first cycle of implementation since the adoption of the SDGs in 2015. MTF 2018-2021 built on the lessons learned and development gains while addressing gaps in advancing the achievement of the national and global 2030 goals. It presented the alignment of the strategy and results frameworks of Vision 2030 Jamaica with the SDGs and SDGs Targets. The MTF was informed by evidence, the long-term Sector Plans, relevant policies and strategies and "A Road Map for SDG Implementation, which was approved by Cabinet in 2017. The Road Map informed greater focus on the integration of the SDGs in the implementation of Vision 2030 Jamaica as well as the strengthening of the means of implementation, including policy coherence, sustainable development financing, communications and advocacy and results-based management.

In response to the need to assess the country's overall capacity to implement the sustainable development goals, the Auditor General's Department, in 2017, conducted a readiness assessment which identified gaps in stakeholder participation, monitoring and evaluation, coordination and alignment.

The scoping of the 2022 VNR represents continuity through evaluation of the actions taken in response to the first VNR process and the requirements to advance the SDGs within the local context, including assessing the impact of the COVID 19 Pandemic. The second VNR therefore continues to strengthen the process of localization, preparing a dedicated thematic report on localization efforts since the first VNR and identifying recommendations to strengthen local level participation and action. The second VNR will be informed by the performance report of the 2018-2021 MTF and the strategic priorities for 2021-2024, and the monitoring systems prepared in response to the findings of the review. It will assess and identify imperatives to support the development of innovative financing through deeper engagement of the local private sector.

What lessons learned from previous reviews informed the process of 2022?

WE have learnt that a fully functional institutional framework is fundamental to monitoring the SDGs. The Institutional mechanism is fully engaged with conducting the VNR; supporting the SDG Secretariat in executing the stakeholder engagement plan, supporting data gathering and preparing the report. The availability and consistent engagement of technical experts within the coordinating body and the National Agenda Oversight Committee, creates a seamless process in preparation of the VNR report.

The VNR process must also provide space for all stakeholders to participate freely and meaningfully and must be a tool to promote ownership and shared accountability for our development results. Stakeholder engagement must therefore be consistent, targeted, and must evolve with the process toward full ownership and accountability.

How does your VNR contribute to the national implementation strategy of the 2030 Agenda?

The Vision 2030 Jamaica – National Development Plan (NDP) and its successive 3-year Medium Term Socio-Economic Policy Framework (MTF) cycles is the mechanism through which the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are being implemented in Jamaica. The Voluntary National Review assesses performance under each MTF, which integrates the SDGs at the outcome and strategic levels. The priorities of the new MTF will inform the way forward in implementing and accelerating the achievement of the SDGs. The complete integration of the SDGs into the National

Development Plan Implementation implies coherence between national and global development processes and goals.

The Voluntary National Review will contribute to identifying the imperatives to drive progress on the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, evaluating the gaps, challenges and structural issues to be addressed through coordination and partnership. Recovery from the COVID 19 Pandemic is therefore a central focus as well as expanding pathways for financing. The VNR will examine the impact of the Pandemic across the 17 goals and identify both challenges and opportunities from the experience of the pandemic with the potential to catalyse positive change across sectors and goals of the SDGs. The VNR will also reflect on the changing global dynamics resulting from the COVID 19 Pandemic and the implications for advancing the SDGs locally.

Recognizing the challenges in development financing for upper middle income countries such as Jamaica, the VNR supports initiatives in innovative financing for the SDGs, by assessing the landscape of corporate social responsibility (CSR) in Jamaica that will inform the development of a strategy for CSR to guide local businesses in developing CSR policies in line with national development imperatives, and in the long term, strengthen the SDGs financing framework.

Closing Statement

The second Voluntary National Review process and report are intended to be reflective of the commitments made by Jamaica both internationally through the adoption of the shared global goals, and to ourselves to achieve our vision to make “Jamaica, the place of choice to live, work, raise families and do business”. It acknowledges the vulnerabilities faced as a small island developing state and peculiarities of an upper middle income status and its constraints on access to financing as well as the need to rebuild from the pandemic. The VNR process acknowledges and responds to the need to assess key areas for strengthening local capacity, promoting national ownership and forms the basis to mobilise partnerships and identify innovative means to move our development process forward.