



PERMANENT MISSION OF SAINT LUCIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

Presentation by

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DEVELOPMENT

of

Saint Lucia's First Voluntary National Review Report on the
Implementation Of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

to

The High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development

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Madame President,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Introduction

It is a distinct honour to present Saint Lucia's first Voluntary National Review of our implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. As a Small Island Developing State faced with a myriad of challenges owed to our environmental, economic and social vulnerabilities and compounded by our narrow resource base and limited institutional capacity; the progress of our implementation has been modest.

Nonetheless, the Government of Saint Lucia made the deliberate decision to report to the High Level Political Forum this year. We utilized the VNR process not only to assess our progress and identify specific challenges; but also to accelerate national momentum and inform and guide the critical steps required to reinforce our public institutions and mechanisms and to mobilize the necessary financial resources to facilitate their development, strengthening and maintenance.

Saint Lucia is pleased to deliver our presentation under this year's theme of "*Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality*". Our national development approach is inherently people-centered with a focus on the key principle of the 2030 Agenda of leaving no one behind.

The nine goals reviewed in our report, were selected through a process of national stakeholder consultations, with public and private agencies and civil society. The selected goals represent all the goals under review at this year's HLPF in addition to the primary goals that have been incorporated into our national medium term development plan and priority goals from civil society and the private sector.

National Ownership

Saint Lucia's VNR preparation coincided with the formulation of the government's medium term development strategy for 2019-2022. The strategy will guide the implementation of a strategic vision anchored in six specific areas – Healthcare, Education, Citizen Security, Agriculture, Infrastructure and Tourism – with a goal of delivering a more sustainable and inclusive Saint Lucia by 2022. The medium term development plan has incorporated the appropriate SDGs into its work plans and deliverables, and represents a critical first step in the mainstreaming of all the SDGs into Saint Lucia's national development plans.

Following the adoption of the 2030 Agenda in 2015, the government engaged in a preliminary exercise of reviewing the SDGs and their respective targets, with a view to aligning them to the appropriate work programmes of the various line ministries. Two key outcomes of the review

process were the decisions to establish a framework for monitoring and review of the SDGs and the development of a national coordinating mechanism for the implantation of the SDGs.

National Coordination Mechanism

In early 2017 Saint Lucia's Cabinet of Ministers endorsed the establishment of the national coordination mechanism for the 2030 Agenda. It comprises a SDG-Cabinet Sub Committee of Ministers (CSC) and a Sustainable Development Goals National Coordinating Committee (SDGNCC) which is the governing committee tasked to guide the implementation and monitoring of the SDGs.

The SDGNCC is a multi-sectoral committee co-chaired by the Ministries responsible for Sustainable Development and Economic Development and is mandated to convene once every quarter. The inter-Ministerial SDGNCC is also comprised of representatives and alternates from the private sector, Academia, Youth, Civil Society and Non-Government Organizations. The Committee's mandate provides for mandatory engagement with Faith-Based and Community-based organizations, as well as Persons with Disabilities, women's groups and the wider public to ensure that no one is left behind.

Engagement with stakeholders

To date the government of Saint Lucia through the SDGNCC has been successful in building partnerships with relevant stakeholders. There has been effective engagement with the private sector and civil society organizations who have proven their commitment to national efforts at SDG implementation.

Both the private sector and civil society have presented the government with their prioritized list of the SDGs that apply to their respective organizational goals and mandates.

On the ground, Civil Society is actively engaged in efforts to implement the 2030 agenda. They have launched a "*Coalition of CSOs for Sustainable Development*" not only to fulfill their mandates but also to support national development processes.

I invite you to have a look at an example of CSOs contribution to raising public awareness of the 2030 Agenda.

[VIDEO 1]

Partnerships

The United Nations Development System, along with bilateral state partners and agencies, are supporting the ongoing work in Saint Lucia toward the finalization and operationalization of an effective roadmap for SDG implementation.

In May 2018 the United Nations Development System (UNDS), conducted a Rapid Integrated Assessment (RIA). The RIA undertook a review of Saint Lucia's 32 planning documents which loosely made up a national planning framework, to assess the coverage and alignment of the SDGs and their targets. In addition, Saint Lucia's Office of Audit conducted a performance audit of Saint Lucia's readiness to implement the SDGs. These initial processes laid the groundwork for further assistance from the UNDS. In May 2019 the Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy support (MAPS) Mission was launched in Saint Lucia, with a goal of assisting the government with the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and to achieve the SDGs.

Commitment to the most vulnerable

Saint Lucia has recommitted to poverty reduction within the framework set by the SDGs. The government recognizes that poverty is a multidimensional concept that encompasses the various deprivations experienced by poor people in their daily lives – such as poor health, lack of education, inadequate living standards, disempowerment, poor quality of work, the threat of violence, and living in areas that are environmentally hazardous, among others.

In 2014, the Government of Saint Lucia approved the country's first National Social Protection Policy, to guide the development of a framework, to support and promote equity and enhances the well-being and capacity of the poor and vulnerable population in Saint Lucia. The Policy also aims to guide the construction of a system that enhances efficiency, equity and transparency in delivering social protection services, while avoiding duplication and promoting synergies to reduce poverty and protect the most vulnerable population.

The eradication of extreme poverty, promotion of gender equality, empowerment of women, youth and persons with disabilities are at the core of Saint Lucia's Medium Term Development Strategy. Our sectoral policies, strategies and programmes incorporate the principle of leaving no one behind and affirm the government's commitment to the social and economic inclusion of all.

Challenges

One of the major structural issues impeding Saint Lucia's implementation of the 2030 Agenda, is the lack of reliable statistical data necessary to report on selected indicators and targets. We have identified the need for an integrated database system in Saint Lucia. A system that will

allow for storage and dissemination of multi-sectoral data for development of macro-planning tools including, monitoring the implementation of the SDGs, and preparing Poverty Reduction Strategies and National Development Plans. In order to bridge that gap we require the development of a mechanism by which economic, social and environmental data are collected and analyzed within an integrated framework of evidence-based planning and governance.

Our National Statistical System, along with other critical institutional systems and frameworks for national development, are severely underfunded. The funding shortfall is due to the persistent challenge of adequate resource mobilization in the context of our particular vulnerabilities as a SIDS. At the national level the mobilizations and prioritization of funding - including funds provided through partnerships with international development partners, is critical. This is particularly so given Saint Lucia's classification as a Middle Income Country, which has graduated us beyond the eligibility for grants and concessional loans.

Although the Addis Ababa Action Agenda for Financing Development establishes a strong foundation of plans and policies to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda; without the meaningful commitment of ALL relevant stakeholders to advance the priorities of sustainable development, significant challenges will persist.

Progress

The challenges we face on the path to our sustainable development are many. But we are a resilient people, and in the face of challenges we persist. I wish to share with you some of the progress we've made...

[VIDEO 2]

Conclusion

We are proud of these accomplishments and we continue to work hard to achieve our national development goals.

Saint Lucia has demonstrated its commitment to implementing the 2030 Agenda, through various initiatives, policies and programmes and through the establishment of mechanisms to guide the country's path to meaningful sustainable development. However it is clear that there is much more work to be done.

We recognize that in order to efficiently and effectively implement the SDGs and achieve our national development goals, while simultaneously tackling the challenges exacerbated by our unique vulnerabilities; there are critical next steps that have to be enabled.

The preparation of our first VNR Report has provided an invaluable opportunity for self-assessment and has laid the foundation for renewed, clear and practical actions to be taken in order to accelerate progress to sustainable and inclusive development.

Saint Lucia remains committed to our collective mission and shared agenda to transform the world for the better - a world where we recognize that we are stronger when we stand together.

Thank you.