

Prime Minister's speech for UN HLPF presentation of the first VNR on progress towards the SDGs and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

21 July 2019

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*He waka eke noa.*

Towards a better future, together.

“Together” is an important word for us in New Zealand.

It says a shared vision. It puts the people at the heart of policy decisions. It's about building a happy, healthy and prosperous New Zealand, which everyone can benefit from.

Togetherness is the core of our strategy to deliver wellbeing and recognises the spheres of our lives – our environment, our people, our economy – are interconnected and interdependent.

These same principles lie at the heart of the Sustainable Development Goals.

I am proud to present New Zealand's first Voluntary National Review on progress towards the SDGs.

The report is a demonstration of our strong commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

New Zealand is richly blessed as a nation. We have tremendous physical and human resources. We are a diverse and agile nation. We are innovative and resilient. But we also have our share of challenges and one of these is to ensure all New Zealanders achieve a decent standard of living and a strong sense of wellbeing.

“Leaving no one behind” requires openness and honesty about the challenges we face. It's an approach we have brought to our first Review of the SDGs and to our domestic agenda.

As we transition to a sustainable, productive and inclusive economy, we require a deeper understanding of the groups who will be most affected so that we can ensure the right strategies are in place.

It requires us to do things differently.

It requires solid, disaggregated data to base decisions on. We have developed a new suite of statistical indicators, *Indicators Aotearoa New Zealand*, which go beyond economics to incorporate social, cultural and environmental measures.

The Indicators will provide a clearer picture of New Zealand's overall wellbeing as well as measure our progress towards the SDGs.

Alongside this, we have developed a new analytical framework that emphasises the diversity of outcomes meaningful for New Zealanders. This Living Standards Framework will be part of our toolkit to analyse and assess policy options that enhance well-being, and support New Zealand's achievement of the SDGs.

New Zealand is strongly committed to being a leader and constructive partner, nationally and internationally, in the global effort to create a more sustainable and inclusive economy.

We recognise that all SDGs are connected and cannot be achieved by governments alone.

This report highlights my government priorities, including working towards eradicating poverty, improving mental health, addressing inequalities, thriving in a digital age and transitioning to a low-emission, sustainable economy. These initiatives are crucial to achieving the SDGs.

We know the cumulative value of small, incremental steps; the day-to-day decisions and actions that make a difference and change people's lives.

We have seen and heard some inspiring stories of what New Zealanders are doing already. We want to bring all New Zealanders, regardless of their circumstances or experience, along with us on the journey. In this report we have celebrated some of these stories.

In the spirit of Goal 17, we are committed to partnership - partnership with Māori, the indigenous people of New Zealand, and partnerships with communities, with business, and with our international friends.

We have made a good start. Our challenge is to continue this momentum. Together.

*He waka eke noa.*