



Republic of Nauru

Madam President,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

I am pleased to be here today to present Nauru's First Voluntary National Review on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

I represent a Republic of 11,000 people living on a single island, with land area of only 8 square miles, of which 80% is completely devastated by phosphate mining and therefore uninhabitable. The photo before you and on the screen is of our island, the Republic of Nauru.

For Nauru, our development story has been a regretful one, not that many years ago our country was among the highest in the world in terms of GDP per capita, but the economy collapsed, leaving us virtually bankrupt. The consequences still reverberate to this day. This is the well-known history of the first 50 years of our Nation. It is a story of unsustainability and depletion. However, today we are attempting to write a new story focused on resilience and renewal, which will be critical to the prosperity of our people for the next 50 years.

With the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, Nauru undertook the review of our National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS) to ensure that it is responsive to the changing needs and priorities of the Nauruan people. Through this process we also aligned our NSDS with the SAMOA Pathway. Taken together, they have provided us with a useful roadmap.

Madam President

The findings of the review were indeed discouraging. The economy is affected by high costs of goods and services, inadequate infrastructure and the impacts of climate change. Twenty-four percent of our population live below the basic needs poverty line (BPNL).

Improving the education system will also be critical to our efforts to develop sustainably and respond to climate change. We are currently grappling with high levels of truancy, which is leading to a decline in literacy and numeracy among our youth. This is exacerbated by the poor job prospects for graduates, who see diminishing returns from their investment in education. It is difficult to imagine us moving forward effectively with implementation if our next generation does not have the basic skills to succeed.

We are also facing a health crisis, with non-communicable disease leading the premature death of far too many of our family members. Healthy food, such as fresh fruits and vegetables, is simply unaffordable for most. While not traditionally seen as "climate action," addressing public health and education in Nauru is as essential to the long-term viability of the country as reducing global green house emissions to zero.

Madam President,

Despite the bleak circumstances we are determined to provide a sustainable quality of life for the People of Nauru. Today our social and economic landscape is more optimistic. Madam President allow me to give you a glimpse of some of the initiatives we have undertaken for the betterment of our people.

We have provided much needed banking services after a decade of operating as a cash economy. The government has also invested heavily in infrastructure including the New Learning village, sports stadium and Solar Farm. Madam President in the interest of time, these initiatives will be elaborated further in our video presentation.

These are only a some of our efforts to implement the 2030 agenda, in the context of limited fiscal space. While efforts have also been made to mobilize resources at the domestic level, this alone is not enough to implement the 2030 Agenda, we need better access to development financing. We also see the potential for the United Nations Development System to do more to help us achieve our goals. In this vein we welcome the Secretary General's decision to open a MCO in the North Pacific.

Madam President,

We view this VNR process not as the end but only the beginning. Our work going forward will focus on strengthening data collection and statistical systems. A robust M&E is critical in ensuring that we are stay true to our commitments. Strategic Planning is relatively new to Nauru and was conceived during the financial crisis, so there is much to do, to strengthen our institutions to not only be effective but also go beyond political mandates to ensure continuity. This is a huge undertaking for our small administration and we will continue to rely support from our development partners.

Our sustainable development aspirations are not possible without strong partnerships. I would like to thank all our partners who have provided generous support over the years which have helped us toward realizing our goals. I invite others to engage with us in partnerships to help us achieve even more.

In the true spirit of empowerment and inclusivity and to demonstrate the real impact of partnerships, a representative from one of our CSO - ECONAURU Mrs. Cassi Appi is here to provide perspectives of CSO's.

Thank you.