



Main Messages – The Commonwealth of Dominica

We are Building the World's First Climate Resilient Country

The Commonwealth of Dominica is a small island developing State in the Caribbean, stretching 751 km² with 148 km of coastline and a population of 72,000. It is the only Caribbean island to have retained a colony of pre-Columbian population, the Kalinagos. We are called the “Nature Island of the Caribbean” because of our lush rainforests, 365 rivers, and the Caribbean’s highest mountain peaks, Morne Diablotin.

As a small island, the cornerstone of our development is based on putting our people first, development that is equal and inclusive and which aims to leave no one behind. Our focus on development that is equal, responsive and futuristic to women’s empowerment dates as far back as 1978 when we gained Independence - a process led by Dame Eugenia Charles, who was later elected in 1980 as our first female Prime Minister, and who also was the Caribbean’s first female Prime Minister. With 44 years of Independence behind us, the preparation of this Voluntary National Review (VNR) is timely and allows us to take stock of the journey we have so far travelled and assess our current development progress.

Our first VNR reflects and reaffirms our commitment to advance the global agenda. We believe that our people must decide the future of Dominica and the preparation of the VNR embodies this thrust, as stakeholder engagement – was an important part of the process.

The United Nations places Dominica in the high human development category with an HDI value of 0.742, positioning the country at 94 out of 189 countries. We have recorded positive indicators across several development spheres including improvements in fiscal discipline and management; reduction in poverty; expansion of housing; improvements in educational outcomes; reduction in infant mortality; improved access to safe water; and gender equality. In the area of governance, we have made advances in rule of law, progress in public sector modernization and enhancement in our foreign policies.

Our story of development, however, cannot be told without mention of our vulnerability to the effects of climate change and other exogenous shocks, such as the COVID-19 pandemic which has further underscored the multi-hazard environment in which we exist. A little short of 5 years ago, in 2017, Dominica was devastated by Hurricane Maria - a category 5 hurricane which resulted in losses amounting to 226 per cent of GDP, causing significant destruction to every sector and community. This event followed on the heels of Tropical Storm Erika in 2015 which

cost Dominica 96 per cent of its GDP. The COVID-19 pandemic caused new challenges and impacted the anticipated gains that would have strengthened Dominica's recovery post Maria. In 2020, Dominica's GDP contracted by 11 per cent, and the country only achieved a modest recovery of 3.7 per cent in 2021. These disasters did not only impact the physical environment or the country's economic growth trajectory, but also exposed Dominica's socio-economic vulnerabilities, inflicting hardship on our people. Notwithstanding, these disasters provided us with a unique opportunity to review our development pathway and create new solutions and ambitions to advance our development prospects. We remain focused and on track!

We recognize that development, underpinned by a resilience agenda, is key to sustainably uplifting Dominicans towards our shared vision for the future. Over the past several years, the Government has promulgated three key documents to achieve this: The National Resilience Development Strategy; Dominica's Climate Resilience and Recovery Plan 2020 – 2030; and The Disaster Risk Financing Strategy. These documents represent our roadmap for achieving the 2030 Agenda and are fully aligned with the SDGs. Implemented together, they will enhance policy coherence and help us to aggressively identify key enablers and critical 'accelerator points' for lagging SDGs.

As we work to prioritize resilience and to create enduring prosperity for our people, we will be leaning heavily on the knowledge, perspectives and experiences of our partners around the world. We too have much to offer, and through this process we will share our experiences, recommendations and solutions as we journey to build the world's first climate resilient country and become the gold standard in resilience for SIDS.