



SAINT KITTS AND NEVIS FIRST VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEW KEY MESSAGES 2022



Introduction

We are pleased to present our first Voluntary National Review, reaffirming our commitment to implementing the Sustainable Development Goals and share with the international community the institutional arrangements in place to accelerate the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the Federation of Saint Kitts and Nevis.

Our development initiatives pre-COVID-19 targeted accelerating economic growth with a focus on employment, resulting in a fall in levels of poverty, improved social services, and expanded social protection to poor and vulnerable households. Work continues to exploit the blue, green, orange and knowledge economies.

People and Prosperity

Saint Kitts and Nevis has been hit hard by the pandemic, especially given its reliance on tourism for economic growth and employment generation. GDP fell from a pre-COVID-19 growth rate of 4.8% (2019) to -14.4% (2020). The pandemic caused massive disruption to people's lives and affected the implementation of the SDGs in key areas such as poverty reduction, good health care, quality education, decent work, and economic growth.

The top priority of the Government was the health and protection of its citizens, as well as providing support to cushion the social and economic fallout from the pandemic. The Government implemented prompt public health interventions which proved effective in controlling outbreaks. As of March 2022, 82.8% of the adult population had received their first dose and 77.7% were fully vaccinated against COVID-19. The holistic wellbeing of the individual continues to be prioritized, through the delivery of quality and accessible health care, and policies that focus on equity/human rights, shared responsibility, prevention and control of NCDs, mental health, food security and nutrition.

The Government expanded its social protection service provision in response to the pandemic, with the Poverty Alleviation Programme and a food voucher programme playing important roles. The support package for employees, self-employed, vulnerable groups, and businesses, in 2020 amounted to 3.7% of GDP. Lessons learned highlight the critical role social protection plays in the national emergency response, and the importance of social protection in post-pandemic recovery, including strengthening household resilience and skills relevant to the emergent labour market.

Notably, the pandemic fostered the full integration of technology in education delivery, and catalyzed efforts at robust and inclusive curriculum reform. Furthermore, formulation of a new National Social Protection Policy has emphasized greater coherence and performance, and a life-cycle approach, in social protection delivery.

Planet

Saint Kitts and Nevis is very vulnerable to climate phenomena. Several cyclones and hurricanes have affected the country since 1950. With about 15.2% of the population living in low-lying coastal zones, the threat of storm surge and sea-level rise is real. Drought has been identified as a critical hazard making water scarcity a significant challenge. Given the centrality of groundwater sources to the national water supply, keeping and protecting the underground water resources is crucial. The negative impact of the country's CO² emissions and material footprint on its human development index score is estimated at 4.6 tonnes per capita¹. Saint Kitts and Nevis is a signatory to several climate change related international agreements and has integrated climate change into development planning, through the formulation of the National Determined Contributions (NDC) and the pursuance of funding to address climate change issues. The updated NDC pledges an ambitious 61% reduction in CO² emissions by 2030.

Partnership and Peace

These could only be accomplished by strengthening regional and international cooperation to address the issues and challenges faced. The Federation remains resilient and has responded quickly and strategically to emerging challenges and is simultaneously working on an economic recovery strategy and updating its National Development Plan for the period 2023-2037, to be fully aligned with the 2030 Agenda, Sendai Framework, Samoa Pathway, NDC, and National Gender Equality Policy. Violent crimes have declined significantly through an increased focus on social intervention and rehabilitation programmes, modernization of security infrastructure, and reform of the judicial system. A National Sustainable Development Coordinating Committee, incorporating private sector and CSO representatives, has been established and efforts are being made to fully integrate the SDGs through medium-term planning, including key principles such as no one left behind and gender mainstreaming for which the United Nations is providing support.

¹ <https://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/KNA>