

## **Main message VNR Suriname 2022**

### **Introduction**

The Republic of Suriname reiterates its commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In July 2020, the Santokhi-Brunswijk Administration took office and the new government partners, mutually agreed to work towards a sustainable future for Suriname. The Government considers the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a parameter to work towards sustainable growth and development. Hence, the SDGs are, to a large extent, integrated in the Multi-Annual Development Plan 2022-2026, which was developed in a broad consultative and participatory process taking into account the specific country context.

### **Suriname's progress**

Suriname's first Voluntary National Review (VNR) was drafted based on a wide consultative process and provides an analysis on the progress regarding SDG's 4, 8, 13 and 17. The VNR Technical Commission, consisting of officials of the ministries responsible for the selected goals, was tasked with the preparation of the Review. Furthermore, a national SDG committee with representatives of the line-ministries, the Parliament, the National Planning Office, and the General Bureau of Statistics was established to accelerate the achievement of the SDGs. Consequently, an SDG platform has been institutionalized to serve as the link between the government, the private sector and non-state actors. Finally, the SDG Youth Ambassadors program, facilitates the inclusion of youth in the implementation of the SDGs

The Review highlights:

- i. the efforts and progress in reforms in the education sector including the introduction of new curricula, restructuring technical and vocational education, extending compulsory education up to grade 10, and continued professional development for teachers;
- ii. climate mitigation policy focused on the approval of the Environmental Framework Act, Suriname's classification as one of the three carbon negative countries in the world and the adoption of Suriname's Climate Change strategy and action plan;
- iii. revisions in labor legislation and promotion of entrepreneurship to enhance employment;
- iv. the results of effective partnerships through bilateral, regional and multilateral cooperation with the aim to support Suriname's development.

### **Challenges and constraints**

International commodity shocks, the COVID-19 pandemic and the high fiscal and debt burden have weakened the financial-economic situation and social security system in Suriname. The pandemic led to closure of companies and increasing unemployment, and exposed the gaps in the education system due to minimal digital advancement in the country for distance learning. Moreover, Suriname is currently facing unprecedented flooding in the coastal and interior areas mainly due to the effects of climate change.

The government has set out its policy strategy, based on its homegrown recovery plan, support from the International Monetary Fund and its medium-term policy framework, focusing on (i) investments and innovation in the economic sectors, (ii) rebuilding of the social security system, (iii) investments in education and health and (iv) strengthening of key institutions.

In the process of mainstreaming the SDGs, the Report exposed challenges related to (1) grasping the technical concept of the SDGs, (2) awareness of the SDGs across all levels of society and (3) the availability of updated and disaggregated data.

#### **Opportunities and revitalizing partnerships**

- **SDG 4:** human capital development is at the core of national development. Continued investments are required to guarantee access to education, educational innovation and reform, emphasizing technical and vocational education.
- **SDG 8:** a positive business and entrepreneurial climate and local content policy can ensure sustainable employment, the best means for combating poverty, crime and violence. The emerging offshore oil and gas industries create opportunities, contributing to prosperity and well-being in the long-term.
- **SDG 13:** utilize the developed policy framework and legislation to mitigate the threat of climate change that Suriname faces due to its low-lying coastal areas. Suriname should maximize its standing as a high forest, low deforestation country, with a forest coverage of approximately 93 percent. Despite this, Suriname does not fully benefit from global arrangements associated with sound forest management.
- **SDG 17:** building and revitalizing strategic partnerships and alliances at both national and international level are critical to contribute to sustainable development, while considering a transition towards a green economy.

The Government of Suriname remains committed to achieving the SDGs, and acknowledges a need for a stronger focus on advocacy and increased awareness regarding SDGs at community level, while strengthening data collection, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to support evidence-based policy planning and execution.