

## **Tuvalu Voluntary National Review (VNR) Main Messages**

Tuvalu is the fourth-smallest country state in the world with 26 km<sup>2</sup> of land on 9 islands scattered across nearly a million km<sup>2</sup> of exclusive economic zones. Its population of 12,000 people live on coral atolls that are no more than 2.5 meters above sea level. The impact of annual cyclones and the rise in sea levels further compound life in Tuvalu.

Since 2015, development aid funding accounted for 30% of total financing with domestic revenues from fisheries licensing and remittances funding most of the remaining economic and social activities in the country. Overseas employment is provided through labour mobility schemes and seafarer contracts on merchant fleets abroad. Still, a good proportion of the labour force is looking for work annually and is constrained by a lack of skills, work experience and job opportunities. Fishery licence earnings are volatile and subject to climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic.

COVID-19 in particular has severely impacted the prices of imported merchandise through its effect on the production and supply chain of both basic food commodities as well as the building and construction industry.

The adverse impacts of Climate Change pervade the entire life of Tuvalu and it is the foremost challenge of the country. Erosion, storm events, tidal flooding, saltwater intrusion, drought conditions and bug infestation of trees and plants, are some of the events that are undoing the progress that has been achieved to date. More funding and technical assistance are needed to continue work on adaptive infrastructure, food security, water, transport, communication, alternative energy, coastal protection and land reclamation. The expected impact of changing weather conditions on current patterns in the southwest Pacific, will have significant impacts on the pelagic fishing industry, presently the only major source of domestic revenues.

Performance in the social sectors of education and health has been mixed. Issues in education include volatile pass rates in schools, low literacy and numeracy rates and low teacher-pupil ratios with many teachers lacking the right qualifications. In the health sector, many health professionals come from overseas to fill gaps left by local doctors who themselves left for better-paid positions in the region. Mortality rates have not changed significantly in the last three years and the main killer disease continues to be non-communicable diseases. On a positive note, in 2022, Tuvalu remains the only country in the Pacific Island region that is still COVID-19 free.

### **SDG Review Process in Tuvalu**

Stakeholder consultations were the most important phase in the preparation of Tuvalu's VNR Report. There was a lot of appreciation for the policy shift in government towards the internal development of the country. For example, the boat harbour and airfield constructions for all 7 outer islands and the purchase of aircrafts for starting the Tuvalu Airline Service were appreciated. Construction of these national infrastructure projects has already started, along with the ongoing national Solarisation project, and the food security projects responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. There are also important projects in the information and

telecommunication sectors that are taking advantage of opportunities availed in cyberspace. The land reclamation programmes reacting to the rise in sea levels is also another national project critical for the survival of the Tuvalu state and people. Tuvalu is also requesting other states to continue to recognise Tuvalu state when it has gone under and without a geographic territory. A few states have responded positively and Tuvalu has thanked them most sincerely.

However, the good progress achieved thus far continues to be dogged by the operational inefficiency of the public servicing functions of government. Issues with the conflicts between traditional and formal laws, sea transport, diseases and the global impact of COVID-19 and many other problems continue to impede Tuvalu from moving forward.

Imported inflation in the country is significantly higher than in the source supplier countries, mainly Australia, New Zealand and Fiji. Our capital formation is largely borne by our development partners and friends abroad. We continue to rely on their help in building our capacity to earn and run our development ourselves.

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