



**SAINT KITTS AND NEVIS
FIRST VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEW
KEY MESSAGES
2023**



A Sustainable Island State

Introduction

Saint Kitts and Nevis has made significant strides in implementing the 2030 Agenda. Our development initiatives over the past two decades targeted accelerating economic growth with a focus on employment, resulting in a fall in levels of poverty, improved social services, and expanded social protection for poor and vulnerable households. The pandemic caused massive disruption to people's lives and affected the implementation of the SDGs in areas such as poverty reduction, good health care, quality education, decent work, and economic growth.

Saint Kitts and Nevis' National Development Planning Framework (2023-2037), which guides the country's long-term development planning, is well-aligned with the SDGs and serves as the key mechanism for implementing the government's vision for the country to become the first Sustainable Island State (SIS).

People and Prosperity

Saint Kitts and Nevis' economy bounced back positively from the pandemic. Tourism and its ancillary sectors have rebounded sharply, contributing to real GDP growth of 9% in 2022, after contracting 14.5% in 2020 and 0.9% in 2021. The government is resolute in economic diversification targeting sustainable agriculture and food security through the establishment of environmentally friendly green villages; regenerative tourism focused on building resilience and the sustainable consumption of environmental resources; and developing the green, blue and orange economies. We have intensified our transition to renewable energy through solar power and geothermal energy production estimated by 2025.

Lessons learned during the pandemic highlighted the importance of social protection in post-pandemic recovery, including strengthening household resilience and skills relevant to the emergent labour market. The government's top priorities are improving health and well-being, building social cohesion, and protecting the most vulnerable; mainstreaming gender, youth, and persons with disabilities across all policies and initiatives; and improving the access to and affordability of education.

Delivery of quality and accessible health care is focused on national health insurance, climate-smart infrastructure, prevention and control of NCDs, mental health and nutrition. The establishment of the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Ageing and Disabilities will ensure special attention is paid to some of our most vulnerable residents. To enhance human capital, the government introduced free tuition to all students at the community college in addition to reducing the cost of university education via favourable student loan terms at the Development Bank. The government also focused on the integration of technology in education including addressing the digital divide through reintroduction of the One-to-One Laptop Programme.

Planet

Saint Kitts and Nevis is extremely 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 water supply, protecting these resources is crucial. To increase and diversify water production capacity, resources will be required to construct desalination plants in the short term.

Saint Kitts and Nevis remains committed to environmental sustainability and resilience. As a signatory to several climate change-related international agreements, we have integrated climate change mitigation and adaptation into our development planning by formulating the updated Nationally Determined Contributions which pledges an ambitious 61% reduction in CO² emissions by 2030 and emphasizes the urgency of climate adaptation initiatives and accessing climate financing for resilience building.

Peace and Partnership

Violent crimes have declined significantly through a comprehensive crime management strategy including the improvement of social intervention and rehabilitation programs for deeper impact along with the modernisation of security infrastructure, and reform of the judicial system. Similar initiatives are ongoing to accelerate the government's good governance agenda, with a focus on anti-corruption, integrity in public life, and freedom of information.

Both domestic and external partnerships have played a catalytic role for Saint Kitts and Nevis to successfully advance on the SDGs. However, accelerating SDG implementation in line with the SIS agenda will require even more strategic and impactful partnerships. The National Sustainable Development Coordinating Committee, incorporating private sector and CSO representatives, will continue to fully integrate the SDGs through medium-term planning, including key principles such as gender mainstreaming and Leave No One Behind.