

The Bahamas 2025 Voluntary National Review

MAIN MESSAGE

The Commonwealth of The Bahamas has prepared its 2025 Voluntary National Review (VNR) through a series of consultations with key national stakeholders representing Government, non-Government, and private sector organizations. The 2025 VNR provides an opportunity to determine the progress made in respect of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) since the 2021 VNR, and The Bahamas' efforts to recover from Hurricane Dorian and the COVID-19 pandemic. The 2025 VNR covers the period 2021 through 2024.

Economic achievements, over the past four years, include: introduction of initiatives to enter the carbon markets, adding new revenue streams and creating inroads for economic diversification. One such initiative is "The Bahamas Debt Conversion Project for Marine Conservation", launched in 2024, which is expected to generate an estimated \$124 million in funding for marine conservation over the next 15 years. It is a public-private-partnership between the Government and partners in the banking and NGO sectors. A key benefit of the project is an endowment fund of up to \$20 million by 2039 to finance marine conservation and management.

Moreover, The Bahamas is undertaking a comprehensive, nationwide plan to modernize and upgrade the way it generates, stores, and distributes electricity across the country – in alignment with SDG 7. The Government, through private sector collaboration, is installing modern infrastructure, including utility-scale solar power of up to 80 MW, utilizing cleaner fuels, and enacting energy efficiencies across the archipelago. Climate resilience is being promoted through the Integrated Coastal Zone Management program, which seeks to utilize ecosystem-based adaptation (EbA) as a means of protecting coastal resources and communities.

Growth in the Fintech sector has been supported by enactment of the Digital Assets and Registry Exchanges Act (DARE), placing The Bahamas among the first countries to regulate blockchain technology and digital currencies, including the Bahamian Sand Dollar. In the agricultural sector, efforts to enhance food security include: expanding production through hydroponics, school gardens, poultry farming, and use of climate-responsive agricultural practices.

Tourism remains vital to the economy, and efforts are underway to promote sustainability through the development of a Sustainable Tourism Framework and zero-waste-to-energy initiatives, particularly in

the Family Islands. Other tourism programs include: development of heritage and nature trails on various islands and capacity building in nature tourism through certification and training.

Achievements in the health sector include: reductions in maternal and infant mortality, fewer cases of communicable diseases such as HIV and tuberculosis, and increased vaccination coverage for childhood illnesses including measles, mumps, and rubella.

As a Small Island Developing State, The Bahamas faces numerous challenges. Climate change continues to be the greatest threat to its continued existence. Loss and damage from hurricanes between 2002 and 2022 exceeded \$6.7 billion, representing more than 50 percent of GDP. The country remains vulnerable to external shocks such as geopolitical unrest, trade disputes, and inequitable negotiation practices. A shortage of human, technical, and financial resources continues to hinder the ability to collect data on national-level indicators for SDG tracking.

Gender equality also remains an issue, with rising incidences of sexual violence against women and girls. Legal and social challenges include: inability of Bahamian women married to foreign nationals to pass citizenship to their children and pay inequality.

Progress in SDG implementation since 2020 has been incremental and positive. The Bahamas remains committed to implementation of the SDGs not only as important global objectives, but as essential goals for the nation's development. The integration of the SDGs into national development planning, including the 2021–2030 National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP), reflects national recognition of the importance of these goals for the continued growth and development of The Bahamas.