

# High-level Political Forum 2020

## Overview and main messages from Latin America and the Caribbean

*Meeting of the Community of Practice for Caribbean  
countries that present their Voluntary National Review*

*11 August 2020*



UNITED NATIONS



HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM  
ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

# The 2020 HLPF in numbers



[Source: DESA, Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform](#)

# Overview of Latin America and the Caribbean's participation in the 2020 HLPF

- Similar HLPF program to previous years, but 100% virtual format
  - **9 VNRs from the region:** 1st time (Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines) and 2nd time (Argentina, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Honduras, Panama, Peru)
- **First week** with substantive discussions focusing on countries with special situations and the 6 pillars of the [Global Sustainable Development Report 2019](#).
  - Interventions in plenary by Ministers of Argentina (focus on food security), Barbados (financing challenges for SIDS), Colombia (building resilience) and Panama (ending poverty)
  - ECLAC Executive Secretary participated in the SIDS panel (focus on ECLAC proposal for a debt relief initiative irrespective of income levels, access to concessional funding, and the use of contingency bonds)
- **Second week**, Ministerial Segment, with session of the Chairs of the Regional Fora for Sustainable Development
  - Minister Rodrigo Malmierca of Cuba presented [progress and challenges from the region on 2030 Agenda implementation](#) (in Spanish)
- **Side events** from Antigua and Barbuda (focus on eye health), Barbados (oceans and energy), Argentina (poverty and hunger), Colombia (South-South Cooperation), Costa Rica (Parliaments and SDG 16), Chile (health and nutrition), El Salvador (SDG16), Paraguay (water-energy solutions), and Uruguay (social protection)- notes available if interested

# Regional side event “The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the new global and regional context: Scenarios and projections in the current crisis”

- Event on COVID-19’s socioeconomic impacts in the region, analysis of emergency policy responses and recommendations towards building back better. ECLAC highlighted the largest contraction in GDP in a century (-9.1% in 2020); sharp rise in unemployment (13.5%, +18 million from 2019), poverty (37.2%, +15 million people), extreme poverty (15.5%, +28 million people), and inequality (+4.7% of Gini index); Women affected more severely; Indigenous peoples disproportionately affected and exacerbated vulnerability of migrants and refugees.
- With remarks from:
  - H. E. Mr. Juan Ramón de la Fuente, Permanent Representative of Mexico to the United Nations
  - H.E. Ms. Pilar Garrido, Minister of National Planning and Economic Policy of Costa Rica
  - H.E. Luz Keila Gramajo Vílchez, Secretary of Planning of Guatemala
  - H.E. Ms. Markova Concepción Jaramillo, Presidential Commissioner for the Voluntary National Review, and designated Permanent Representative of Panamá to the United Nations
  - Mr. Juan Daniel Oviedo, Director, National Statistical Administrative Department (DANE), Colombia
  - Ms. Rochelle Whyte, Senior Technical Advisor to the Director General, The Planning Institute of Jamaica
  - Ms. Laura Giannecchini, on behalf of the Civil Society Participation Mechanism in the Sustainable Development Agenda and the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development



[Link to the event’s page](#)  
[Link to the event’s recording](#)



[Link to COVID-19 Observatory](#)  
[Link to 2030 Agenda LAC knowledge management platform](#)

# VNRs from LAC: key messages







- **COVID-19 exposed the precarity of hard-won development gains and structural gaps** of the LAC region's development pattern. Caribbean SIDS vulnerabilities (economic, social and environmental) exposed further.
- **Challenges of middle-income countries (MICs)** in the face of COVID-19, with limited fiscal space, reduction in oil prices, reduction of trade and economic contraction
- **People-centered public policies:** human life is our greatest asset. Efforts to improve education, health and gender equality across the region.
- **Focus of measures on the most vulnerable groups**, leaving no one behind
- Addressing **poverty and inequality** remains central for sustainable development efforts in the region
- Multi-dimensional approach and measures to limit socio-economic impact of the pandemic. But **COVID-19 reprioritized expenditures;** it will reset the development baselines
- We do not want to go back to previous times but **accelerate action towards the SDGs with a State that is present**, protecting the rights of all people
- **Multi-stakeholder participation and partnerships** is necessary in the VNR process and 2030 Agenda implementation
- Availability, timeliness and quality of SDG **data remains a concern**
- Great progress in the **integration and localization of SDGs and their targets into national and subnational development plans**
- Sustained efforts for more **sustainable energy, resilient infrastructure and carbon-free, resilient economies**
- Calls on mobilization of access to international concessional funding, expansion of global liquidity, reform of international governance and **financial systems that recognize vulnerabilities**. High-level foreign investments are needed.
- **SDG 17 remains the most transformative goal** of the joint agenda, without it, SDGs will not be attained.

# Warning signs just 10 years from Agenda 2030 and SAMOA Pathway as we enter the Decade of Action



1. Target already reached
2. Target likely to be reached on the current trend
3. Target likely to be reached only with more public policy intervention
4. Target likely to be reached only with significant public policy intervention
5. Progress towards the target stalled
6. Regression from the target

# Building better means placing equality and sustainability at the forefront of development

-  **A welfare state with universal social protection systems and access to quality public services** in a new equation with the market and society.
-  **Progressive fiscal policies** to expand the fiscal space, with incentives towards equality and sustainable investments, job creation and transition to a carbon-free economy.
-  **Access to information, participation and justice**, respect of human rights, based on democratic governance.
-  **Institutions and coalitions** capable of formulating and implementing policies at the global, regional, national and local levels.
-  **Extending financial support to MICs:** greater liquidity, concessional financing, and debt relief, especially for Caribbean SIDS
-  **Greater regional integration** in the face of a changing global economy

Thank you



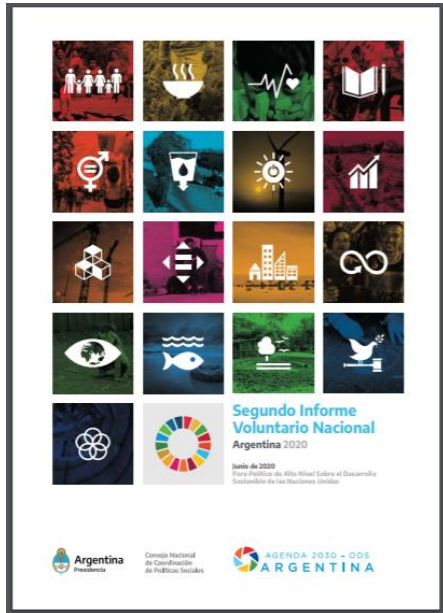
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**HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM  
ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**



# Argentina



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- We have a series of programs to address the SDGs, such as the national hunger alleviation program, and the safe water initiative that enhance focus on access to food. It is vital to begin with those further behind to make sure that everyone is reached.
- Argentina faces various challenges moving forward, **such as high inflation, imbalance of salaries, social inequalities, and high debt (90% of GDP)**. We were able to flatten the COVID-19 pandemic curve by staying home to save lives. Our indicators show an enormous commitment of the entire population. The right decision has it made possible to flatten the curve, **focusing on people's lives**, and strengthening public health systems. It is still hard to imagine the extent of the impact of the crisis, but we will remain committed to the right to life, **focusing on the most vulnerable groups, such as families**.
- Pandemic is a time to rethink public policies. **Poverty and inequality indicators on the rise**.
- Various **assistance programs**, such as direct cash transfers, reaching not only formal, but also informal workers (40%), who traditionally do not have access to social protection schemes. We have assisted more than two million workers with guarantee of salaries.
- Meeting the SDGs in Argentina is not only a way to move forward, but also recall the back clock. **We do not want to go back to previous times** but accelerate action for the SDGs with a present State, protecting the rights of all people.
- The **SDGs will be the major goal for our Government for the next ten years to come**.

# Barbados



## Government of Barbados Voluntary National Review (VNR) – Main Messages

In 2018, the Government of Barbados announced and began implementation of the Barbados Economic Recovery and Transformation (BERT) Plan to restore macroeconomic stability and place the economy on a path of strong, sustainable and inclusive growth, while safeguarding the financial and social sectors. The BERT Plan outlines the policies that reflect the Government's alignment of its anti-poverty and sectoral strategies with the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly in the areas of fiscal policy to achieve greater equality; increased social protection access and social spending floors; improved financial innovation, regulation and inclusion and; climate-resilient, carbon neutral and marine-conscious public and private investment for growth.

On the basis of the BERT plan, Barbados signed an Extended Fund Facility (EFF) with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in October, 2018. The BERT Plan and EFF are perhaps unprecedented as a series of fiscal adjustment and structural reform measures that managed to shift the burden of the adjustment away from labour and the most vulnerable towards capital and the visitor economy. A successfully completed domestic and external debt restructuring, changes to the revenue and expenditure models and ring-fencing and even increases in health, education and social protection investments have led to significant improvements in key social and economic indicators included in the SDG Framework.

This was the environment in the first quarter of 2020 in which the Government of Barbados was preparing to deliver its VNR. It was also the moment in which the global community was called upon to completely reprioritize and reorganize expenditures, global supply chains and economic structures in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Overnight, we have seen the sharpest, deepest and most far-reaching economic recession since the Great Depression, presenting, beyond the disease itself, a further threat to lives and livelihoods. Entire industries have halted activity, millions find themselves unemployed, and decades of global, human development progress are at immediate risk of being reversed. Small, vulnerable, highly-indebted, tourism-dependent states like Barbados are among the hardest hit. The tourism-dependent islands of the Caribbean see on average an over 45% contribution of their GDP from this sector, with comparable levels of employment. As of May 8, 2020, the National Insurance Scheme, the Government's national social security programme, had received over 35,000 unemployment claims, representing a quarter of the workforce.

For this reason, and as this event has served to reset every development baseline, we propose to present the Barbados VNR 2020 in the context of the country's broad-based, COVID-19 response, which has not only seen a sharp scaling up of social protection investment and fiscal/financial inclusion policies, but also has implications for the achievement of other targets on which we will report. This VNR will discuss the ways in which the BERT Plan and the COVID-19 response are likely to impact SDG achievement, as well as the opportunities they create to fast-track progress in the goals and targets outlined below. Finally, the Barbados VNR will discuss the perennial challenge of country capacity to monitor achievement, as well as address Goal 17 on the global partnership for development, which has

- **Sustainability is more onerous to SIDS**, Hurricanes yearly, effects of climate change. Vulnerabilities SIDS; cycles of success, collapse and rebuild. HDI does not reflect this cycle. Decades of human development progress are put at risk. Barbados saw a 31% economic decline in only the first 2 months following the pandemic. Systems were not designed for this type of recession. Every development baseline had to be reassessed.
- **COVID 19 reprioritize expenditures**; Sharpest and most profound sudden stop of economic activity; it is a test of development, it will reset very development baseline. New initiatives that relate to social security – floor on social spending. Traditionally people moved in and out of eligibility, but pandemic required different and new immediate tools: survival programme, targeting individuals who were already enrolled; new business interruption benefit; small businesses subsidy; emergency programme for those without water supply, installation of flushing toilets inside homes, electricity.
- **Care work**: recuperation from illness, childcare, move to private space. Resilience of individuals is not free. Access to services and access to digital. Needs to be valued, properly remunerated
- SDG 3 – more resources devoted to public health introducing new clinics and nurses.
- SDG6 – Barbados is one of water stressed countries, the country is facing drought and investments in this area are required.
- SDG10 – most investments in Barbados are private and workers are forced to put their savings in commercial banks.
- SDG 11 - Better building standards and codes.
- SDG 17 – Barbados is standing up for partnerships, but small economies are tightly linked to the international system which has become a risk.
- **Barbados calls for more mobilization of access to international concessional funding**. The pandemic has highlighted the importance of the expansion of global liquidity. Investments in Barbados are privately held; democratize the ownership of assets, the investors forced to give shares to local ownership. Financial system is internationally owned. The international system has become a threat. International agreements for climate change, vulnerability to be recognized. We earn too much to be considered poor and too little to be heard.

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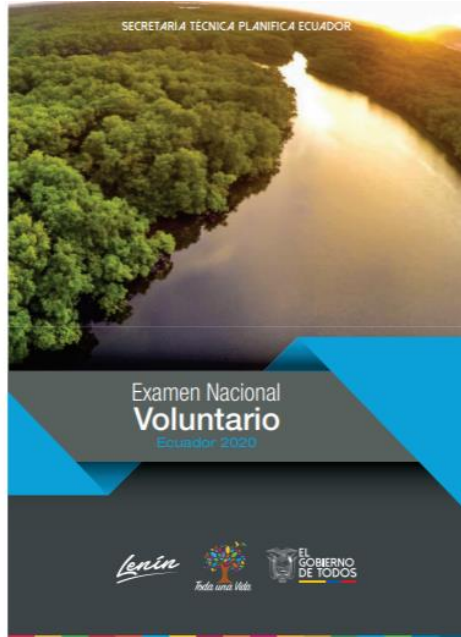
# Costa Rica



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- The UN system has been a strategic ally to the Costa Rican Governments, to strengthen the statistical system and leaving no one behind. We want to build one agenda, which is being taking forward by all stakeholders, taking accountability for the agenda.
- 44% of local governments have **aligned their planning instruments with the 2030 Agenda**. Together we can identify ways to share our responsibilities and work together, with **people at the center of all our efforts**.
- We base our **policies on evidence-based data and facts, which is demonstrated by our statistical capacity, counting on 136 national SDG indicators**. Every six months we review our national policies aligned with the 2030 Agenda, including the financing for development plans. The German cooperation has been a strategic partner on this path.
- 59% of our SDG indicators highlight that we are on the right track to deliver on the SDGs by 2030. 13% show mixed results and 28% show negative trends.
- We are on a path towards a **carbon-free, resilient economy** by 2050, providing people with sustainable consumption and production chains.
- We need to rethink **the mechanism and means of implementation to include innovative ideas**, such as creating spaces of the global community to come together to share experiences and best practices with other countries.
- We encourage an inclusive, decarbonized and resilient development.

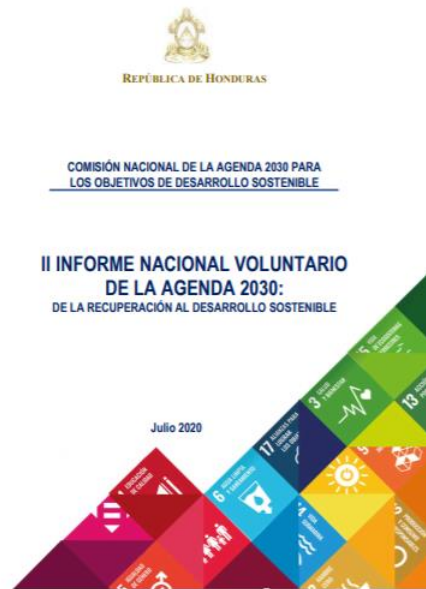
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- The COVID 19 and the indirect effects of isolation mean that economic revival establishes a mechanism conducive to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The challenges for Ecuador as a result of COVID 19 were accentuated by the dramatic drop in the price of oil and the decline in foreign exchange revenues from the export of other products and services. With a dollarized economy, greater flexibilities of multilateral financial bodies for Ecuador to address its commitments on better terms; and, that **the situation of middle-income countries** is reversed. These flexibilities would facilitate the implementation of policies that reduce poverty, an objective of 2030 Agenda. According to ECLAC, poverty in the Latin American region and the Caribbean could increase by 3.5% and extreme poverty by 2.3% due to the pandemic.
- Ecuador sees in the 2030 Agenda **an opportunity to generate synergies between various actors** for true sustainable development at the economic, social and environmental levels. It is issued two Executive Decrees and a Ministerial Agreement that allow the incorporation of the 2030 agenda in public policy and laying the groundwork for the governance of this Instrument. By 2020 the country has directly **aligned each SDG with the objectives, policies and National Development Plan goals**, so it has been possible to identify responsible actors, prioritizing and focusing resources, as well as strengthening national planning exercises, monitoring and evaluation.
- Ecuador considers it essential to promote mechanisms **of linkage and articulation between key players, such as representatives of academia, civil society, public enterprises and private governments, among others**. The participation of these actors has **contributed to the 350 initiatives at the national level by 2020**, which contribute to the construction of the 2030 agenda in the country. These processes have become mechanisms for identifying opportunities that promote transparency and accountability. Ecuador believes in the 17 SDGs of the 2030 Agenda and is confident that support from allies and friends who recognize collective action as the best measure of walking towards the creation of sustainable development.

# Honduras



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- **Adoption of 17 objectives and the prioritization of 68 targets and 99 indicators**, which was carried out within the framework of a participatory process, which included a **number of actors**: central government, decentralized councils, regional development councils, academia, productive sectors, churches, organized women, among others. T
- **The objectives, indicators and targets are articulated with the instruments of the National Planning System of the Development:** the Country Vision Act and the Nation Plan (2010-2022) and the Strategic Plan Government (2018-2022), incorporating the ASSISTANCE goals into the budget and operational planning instruments, both in the Central and Municipal Governments.
- The implementation and follow-up processes of the AN-SDG have found significant achievements and good practices, but more challenges related to the governance of ANODS have been identified, such as the adequacy of the Agenda to the results-driven management model, the **availability of data timely and quality and availability of resources for implementation**, among others; it's affected by the closure social, economic and environmental gaps.

# Panama



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- **Human life is our greatest asset**, it is time for humanity to work together to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, the collaboration of all citizens is required to mitigate the negative effects of the pandemic, uniting as a nation. This is the only way forward.
- There are still **deep social inequalities, that were visible and further exacerbated by the crisis**. We must **protect early childhood**, the most crucial time of a person's life.
- We must **protect indigenous communities as protectors of land** and combat the climate emergency together. It is our mother, our daughter, our sister, our earth.
- We have **partnerships set up in our countries with various stakeholders, including civil society and the private sector**. For example, we are conducting an initiative with the private sector to protect the environment by floating garbage. Everyone has to take action to accelerate the process of delivering on the promise of the 2030 Agenda.
- We need to enhance **local governments and citizen participation**. We need to reduce poverty and close the gap of social inequality and achieve social justice.

# Peru

Gobierno del Perú



Informe Nacional: Perú a mayo 2020  
La Protección de la Vida en la  
Emergencia y Después

Versión sin editar | 12 junio 2020



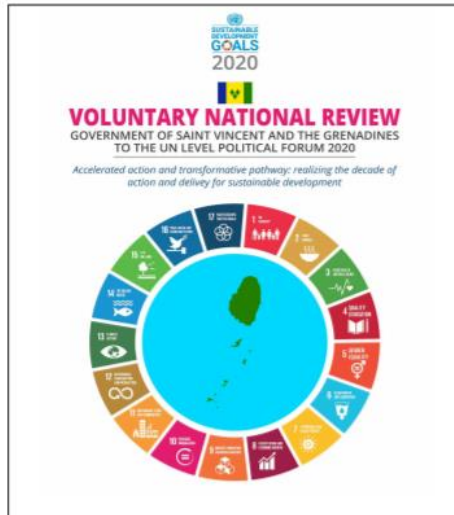
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II Informe Nacional Voluntario  
sobre la implementación de la  
**Agenda 2030**  
para el desarrollo sostenible

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- COVID-19 presents enormous challenges for Peru in terms of health and added to already serious situation of malnutrition and undernourishment in the country, especially affecting children under the age of five years.
- The current plan for public health is taking the impacts of the **pandemic into account**. **Peru has allocated large amounts (12% of GDP) to face the COVID-19 pandemic.**
- In 2016, Peru **integrated SDGs to development plan**. In 2017, Peru established a national agreement for the 2030 Agenda (and presented its first VNR). In 2018, Peru established a framework for national policies in line with Agenda. In 2019, the national agreement approves the vision Peru 2050 and since then formulated **development strategies in 26 departments of the country** through virtual meeting due to the pandemic.
- Peru has a strong focus on long-term prevention and strengthening **the local capacity of provincial governments to deal with crises**. More research is needed to determine the **impact of climate change** in the diverse regions of Peru, and for risk management in general.
- The country aims **to protect the life of everyone**, including the **most vulnerable groups**, such as indigenous communities and is aiming at measuring and reducing premature deaths and years not spent in good health
- To recover from the crisis and build back better, the country aims to improve its productivity, improve human lives in all phases and **collaborate with multiple stakeholders**, including local governments, civil society, private sector and academia.

# Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG)



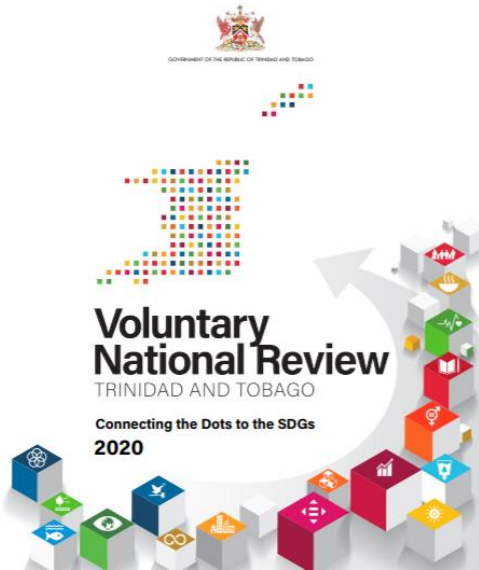
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- In the context of pandemic, previous months have demonstrated **the precarity of hard-won development gains**. Pandemic leading to dire forecast. In SVG, severe economic contraction, severe inequality and declining revenues in SVG. Hurricane season forecasted to be active. SVG vulnerability, pandemic a force multiplier
- COVID-19: **goals to reduce infection, control congestion, assist the most vulnerable and recover with equality**. But SDGs in jeopardy without the commitment of international community
- **VNR presentation built on tangible progress**: SVG people centered approach. Policies objectives span on number of SDGs, to provide opportunities for development Almost 95% of citizens have access to electricity; 100% of children in secondary education; Diminished malnutrition and maternal mortality; Investment in clean energy. Zero hunger trust fund to target pockets of malnutrition, funded by small tax on telecommunications, for school kids, elderly; assist farmers in food production. Pre-Covid data: indigence reduced to 3%; 55% primary school kids food programs SVG recognized by FAO, as one of 18 countries globally to have the least proportion of undernourished
- **Gender-based inequalities**: progress in public and private sector, girls surpass enrollment in tertiary. Focus on roles and occupations traditionally done by women; increased wages for unskilled women by 25% ; legal status of domestic workers. Gender-based Violence: national multisectoral efforts, community-based campaigns, hot line and support services
- Access to secondary **education** from 39 to 100 % in 10 years; Scholarships and low interest loans for disadvantage students; Pedagogy to suit developmental needs
- **Economy in transition**, diversified and more service oriented; supporting entrepreneurship. States role in supporting entrepreneurship and innovation is pivotal; SVG investing in microenterprises and innovation; grants to youth, grants to tech-based entrepreneurs; Improved ICT infrastructure, state of the art cables, wifi to all schools, one laptop per child programs
- **Coastal protection, satellite warehouse in rural areas; infrastructure climate resilient**; Building sturdy low- and no-income homes and housing development, to reduce barriers to homeownership; Free building materials, pavement to access to villages; Banned the use of styrofoam, plastic bag and hunting of endangered species.
- **Blue economy initiatives**, keen to sustainably exploit marine resources, to expand market access to artisanal fisheries and buy ships
- Contingency funds, catastrophic fund of World Bank for post-disaster situations, and maintain macroeconomic stability. High-level foreign investments needed. Economy cannot absorb unemployed youth. Impediments lie beyond borders. Countries are not in periphery by choice. Systemic challenges of sustainable development, beyond borders. **SDG 17 remains the most transformative goal of the joint agenda, without it, SDGs will not be attained.**



# Trinidad and Tobago

- Trinidad and Tobago remains committed to the prosperity of its citizens through the SDGs and the national development plan Vision 2030.
- Focus has been **placed on 8 of 17 SDGs**.
- **Stakeholder engagement with vulnerable groups.** Trinidad and Tobago has made positive strides and is progressing towards wider 2030 Agenda and the goal of reducing inequality and vulnerable persons. National Social Mitigation plan 2017-2030 is one of several key policy instruments, in alignment with the SDGs.
- Ongoing roll out of the peri-natal information system has contributed to the decline of maternal mortality rate.
- Decline in under five mortality rate.
- Early childhood education with 892 ECCE centers.
- In terms of **gender equality**, Trinidad and Tobago has a long history of participation of women in political and economic life. Women representation in national parliaments has surpassed the national quota of 33% as stipulated by UN Women and the Inter-parliamentary union.
- Increase in the minimum wage from TT\$ 15 to TT\$17 to improve the living conditions of the poor and vulnerable.
- GDP growth indicating a stabilized economy. Govt taken a **multi-dimensional approach with the introduction of a number of economic measures to limit contractions caused by COVID-19. Road to recovery committee for COVID-19**
- **To combat climate change**, Trinidad and Tobago has committed to 15% reduction in overall emission of gases in 3 main sectors in electricity, industry and transportation.
- There has been a focus on the **improvement of strong institutions** with a focus on law enforcement with the transformation of the police service.
- Important role and commitment of **civil society partnerships and collaboration** for achieving the SDGs.
- **Child protection and Gender-based violence units** in the police service.
- More cognizant of challenges that can hinder reaching Agenda 2030. **Strengthen data collection and data flows.** Strengthening of national statistical capacity to improve coordination and collaboration within and across government



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