

**Panel Remarks for
The Hon. Dr Joyelle Clarke
Minister of Sustainable Development, Environment, Climate Action and Constituency
Empowerment of Saint Kitts and Nevis**

**9th ECLAC Forum on Sustainable Development
Good Practices and Challenges in the Preparation of the Voluntary National Reviews**

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- Saint Kitts and Nevis' participation in the Voluntary National Review (now engaged in second) process and, indeed, our preparation to present our second VNR have allowed us significant opportunities for introspection and reflection. Through necessary national dialogues, information sourcing, and progress tracking and accountability mapping exercises, we have been able to stock take our national SDG Accelerator model, the Sustainable Island State Agenda, to ensure direct alignment with the i2030 Agenda.

- In 2022-2023, we formulated and commissioned a new **National Development Planning Framework (NDPF)** which is guiding our efforts for a transformation toward full sustainability in the period 2023-2037. Through this, we have introduced our Sustainable Island State Agenda, the engine that will drive the implementation of the NDPF. Both mechanisms are complementary to allowing our government to reshape various sector-specific strategies to promote structural and policy-based harmony across our public industries, health services, land management practices and tourism, agricultural and waste management sectors.

- Since 2023, we facilitate training on **Programme Based Budgeting** that focused on capacity-building to strengthen the connectivity between the 2030 Agenda, our NDPF, and our localized climate action and sustainability-related efforts.

- Due to the level of statistical requirements of a VNR presentation, we capitalized on this process by equally investing in longevity – taking the opportunity to improve our statistical information and data collection platforms. Given that the 2026 VNR requires timely delivery of an SDG time series and a Statistical Annex supported by clear sources and documentation, the Department of Statistics within our Ministry of Sustainable Development, through a newly introduced online engagement and data collection platform, is working to institutionalize a secure, standardized submission and validation workflow that strengthens SDG monitoring beyond the VNR cycle. In the long-term, this translates to **a reduction in one-off or ad hoc calculations and improves the Government's ability to respond to future reporting and policy demands.**

- Our unique governance and cultural experiences as a twin-island Federation make the individual context of Nevis' sustainable development critical to the accuracy of our Federation's overall VNR and as such, we are inspired to continue and intensify our alignment and collaboration. In anticipation of our presentation of a second VNR, the Ministry of Sustainable Development, conducted a **Nevis-specific Voluntary Local Review** on our sister isle to increase buy-in and

participation of stakeholders and to resultantly expand the collection of data and information-sharing between both islands.

- We have also sought to renew relationships and engagement frameworks with **civil society organizations and the private sector** via an online national repository and continued engagement as key partners guiding the process.

- A lot of our preparatory work has prompted us to lean into the capacity of our **inter-Ministerial agencies to support direct**, in-person data collection, but has also shed light on the specific needs, challenges and experiences of many citizens in the context of our development goals that may have otherwise gone unheard; information that better equips us to channel public assistance where it needs to go and to ensure that equity and opportunity are possibilities for our most vulnerable.

- As a good practice, we have also leveraged the momentum of our VNR preparations to review and assess our **current mechanisms for stakeholder engagement**. In doing so, we have opted to revitalize our National Sustainable Development Coordinating Committee (NSDCC) to ensure the greatest representation, acceleration and governance.

- However, our efforts are not without challenge.

i. **Statistical impediments**

- The **unavailability of properly formatted data** needed for SDG reporting affects our ability to accurately measure and communicate progress especially quantitatively.

- Compounding this, the reality is that many Ministries and Departments **store critical, SDG-relevant data in standalone systems, spreadsheets and paper registers** which causes fragmented and siloed data production making efforts to improve our datasets doubly difficult.

- Equally, the current landscape of our **public service is such that routine data submission has not yet been fully embedded in Ministry workflows** and as a result focal points are not always formally designated or resourced meaning that follow-up is often heavily premised on personal relationships rather than agreed, government-wide, streamlined processes.

ii. **Lack of structured engagement frameworks**

- Furthermore, the reality is that sustainable development must be accounted for. In small island developing states like our, this means a **gradual overhaul or restructuring of our government's processes, budgeting, and approaches to work** so that we can fully and efficiently capture and mainstream SDG implementation and monitoring and evaluation into our regular work programs, government-wide mandates, policy and legislation.

- **Similarly, our coordination frameworks are being** rewired so that the groups we engage and the data we collect are streamlined, precise, reliable and structured.

- **But challenges are merely pivot points into opportunity. We are:**

• **Investing in a digital transformation** that will improve data collection and storage practices – Modernizing them so that they are reliable and can function in ways that help to centralize SDG-critical information and contribute to SDG-centric planning. Currently in the pipeline are three (3) digital systems that will improve the way we secure, store and operationalize data.

i. **ECHO:** An online platform that will strengthen community-based reporting, follow-up and resolution by directly connecting our people to the Departments and Units that service their needs.

ii. **The PSIP Digital Platform:** Which will improve our project management capacity.

iii. **Digital Land Management Information System:** Which will enhance land management and consumer-related land application processes.

• **Leaning into communications and public engagement as a means of encouraging local buy-in and participation.** Our ACT4Now SDGs campaign, as well as other local sustainability-based campaigns have helped to sensitize the public on the VNR process and the necessity of the SDGs which makes outreach easier. There is significant creative opportunity (and intention) to upscale and expand these efforts and connect them directly with our SISA.

• **Using partnership and diplomacy (bilaterally, multilaterally and across regional and international agencies)** to promote peer-learning and facilitate the replication of best practices and context-specific solutions.

- **Our government believes that a Voluntary National Review (and the preparations that must accompany it) is not merely a report to be presented but, with the right intention, perspective and political will, can be an instrument for local transformation. In acknowledging our shortfalls, learning from our mistakes, addressing the gaps that emerge, and integrating the lessons gleaned into our policy and practices, the VNR process can truly be a resource that guides us to a future that is not only sustainable, resilient, and uniquely reflective of our individual needs.**