

## United Arab Emirates

### Main Messages of Voluntary National Review HLPF 2018

May 2018

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#### 1. Sustainable Development and UAE's National Development Priorities

The UAE was a strong advocate for the formulation of Agenda 2030. UAE's commitment to sustainable development is at the heart of the country's vision for its future. The ideas of sustainable development permeate UAE's national development plan - Vision 2021 - and the plans of its seven Emirates.

UAE's national development priorities - the *National Agenda* - guide efforts towards Vision 2021. Multi-stakeholder engagement was at the center of the formulation process for the agenda involving over 300 officials from 90 federal and local government entities, participants from civil society organizations and the private sector and experts from academia. The agenda specifies a wide-ranging work program emphasizing sustainable development centered around 4 pillars, 6 national priorities and 52 federal-level key performance indicators (Figure 1).

Figure 1: UAE National Development Agenda, VISION 2021



#### 2. Institutional Arrangements for Implementation of the SDGs

UAE's National Committee on SDGs was formed in 2017 and is chaired by the Minister of State for International Cooperation. The Federal Competitiveness and Statistics Authority (FCSA) serves as vice-chair and secretariat for the Committee.

The Committee comprises 17 federal government organizations. It serves as a platform for multi-stakeholder engagement and provides the whole-of-government systems and procedures for information-sharing, policy coherence and review in the run up to the year 2030.

Since 2017, the National Committee has:

- Mapped SDG targets to UAE’s National Agenda and prioritized targets to pursue on an annual basis
- Determined the criteria for incorporating SDG targets into the national development agenda and aligned monitoring and reporting cycles with the work program of the national statistics system
- Assessed the scope of SDG implementation given resource capacities and constraints in a particular year.

Figure 2: Institutional Arrangements for SDG Implementation



### **3. Implementation, Review and Follow up of the SDGs**

The UAE has one of the best performing public sectors in the world, one that operates in an open and transparent way, underpinned by a systematic performance framework, a highly skilled civil service and efficient and innovative mechanisms for the delivery of public services.

To implement UAE's National Agenda, policy initiatives are incorporated in the government's performance management framework and linked to five-year strategic and operational plans of federal ministries. This framework is flexible enough to incorporate the SDGs. The government will leverage all aspects of this architecture to ensure that the SDGs are localized and harmonized across federal and local government, that policy coherence is achieved using mechanisms that align national and sub-national policies and that enabling technologies and stakeholder relationships are deployed to their full effect to achieve the SDGs.

### **4. Stakeholder Engagement**

Broad stakeholder engagement is an established part of policymaking processes and includes consultation with youth groups, the private sector, knowledge institutions and civil society. Beyond established mechanisms, the National Committee has developed a comprehensive communication strategy to engage societal stakeholders on the SDGs.

With the appointment of a Minister of State for Youth Affairs in 2016, the government signaled its ambitions to involve its youth to determine the future direction of the country. Subsequently the Emirates Youth Council and seven emirate-wide Local Youth Councils were launched. These youth councils are involved in the official deliberations concerning the implementation of the SDGs.

A Private-Sector Advisory Council was created that reports to the vice-chair of the National Committee on SDGs. The Council will engage the business community to raise awareness of the SDGs via a variety of events and media platforms.

### **5. Global Partnerships**

The UAE endeavors to meet its international obligations towards Agenda 2030. The 2016 Foreign Aid Report presents UAE's foreign assistance contributions through the lens of the 17 SDGs. In 2016, the UAE was recognised as the world's largest donor, surpassing the UN target of 0.7 percent of gross national income (GNI) as ODA by reaching 1.12 percent ODA/GNI. The UN target of 0.15-0.20 percent ODA/GNI to LDCs was also achieved with disbursements reaching 0.36 percent.

SDGs feature prominently in global events hosted by the UAE. The 'SDGs in Action' platform is a permanent feature of the annual World Government Summit in Dubai. In addition, the SDGs, and more broadly sustainability, will be a central focus of Expo 2020 Dubai.