

Transcription of Denmark's VNR 2021

<https://media.un.org/en/asset/k15/k15sy72471?fbclid=IwAR3gvTmqvEd3CvLe8EX8hnInHVHnLkUIS9XaPhaarm0Qvxc651teZF05ZTA> (around 03.00.00)

Introduction to Denmark's VNR presentation

Minister for Finance, Nicolai Wammen:

Thank you, Mr. President. Dear excellencies, ladies and gentlemen. Denmark is committed to the 2030 Agenda and to the development of solutions to achieve social, economic and environmental sustainability. As Minister for Finance in Denmark, I am proud to present Denmark's second Voluntary National Review. And I am also very pleased that I am not alone here today, this is a team effort. Today Denmark attends the 8th HLPF with a panel of representatives of some of the stakeholders working actively with the SDGs. The Danish LNOB coalition, civil society represented by Global Focus, the 2030 Panel, Gladsaxe Municipality and the 2030 Network. We look forward to hearing your questions and comments but first we would like to show you Denmark's video presentation of our second VNR. Please.

Denmark's video presentation to VNR:

Texts from YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L0dtH5yTRMw&t=231s>

Questions to Denmark's VNR:

President:

I thank the distinguish Minister of Finance of Denmark and other participants for the presentation. We will now hear comments and questions from member states and other participants. Delegations wishing to intervene, I invite you to use the speaker response accessible through the link on the chat board. I will give the floor to those seeking for comments and questions and after that we will listen to the responds from the VNR presenting countries.

(...)

The first speaker is the distinguish representative of Sweden from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Sweden, you have the floor.

Sweden:

Thank you, mister president for giving the floor to Sweden. Sweden congratulates Denmark for an open, transparent, and inclusive VNR process. As well as an ambitious report in which we can see and hear many voices from Denmark, we are impressed to learn that you have not only managed to write the VNR report this spring but also developed a forward-looking action plan, tangible initiatives, and policy measures. Involving the parliament in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda is critical. Sweden has recently adopted a bill in the parliament in the 2030 Agenda. I would be interested to learn more about how you are engaging the Danish parliament in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda to ensure long-term political commitment. Thank you, mister President.

President:

I thank the distinguish representative from Sweden and the next speaker is the distinguish representative from Switzerland.

Switzerland:

Thank you, mister chair, for giving me the floor. Mister minster, ladies, and gentlemen, let me start by congratulating Denmark on its achievement in the implementation of the sustainable development goals including setting up a statistical database for monitoring progress on the goals. Equally, I wish to comment you for including both an independent assessment of the progress made towards each goal by government officials as well as one by civil society actors in your VNR. On behalf of Switzerland, I thank you for the opportunity to ask questions related to your VNR. Firstly, we are facing the consequences of Covid-19 around the globe. In this light, we would be interested to learn how Denmark is specifically using the country's recovery and resilience plan to further the 2030 Agenda. Secondly, Denmark is one of the most equal countries in the world with a large degree of redistribution and a strong social welfare system. However, like many countries, Denmark is experiencing rising inequality. We comment Denmark's commitment to leave no one behind and would be very interested in learning what approach Denmark is taking to remedy inequality nationally including concerning the immigrant population. Thirdly, Denmark created an all-party parliamentary group for the sustainable development goals 2030 Network in 2017. In line with the question already brought up by the Swedish delegation we would be interested in learning what role the network has played and furthering the implementation of the goals in Denmark since 2017 and how Denmark is working to embed the sustainable development goals in the legislative process. Once again, I would like to congratulate you and thank you for your presentation.

President:

I thank the distinguish representative of Switzerland and I give the floor to the distinguish ambassador of the Netherlands. Ambassador, you have the floor.

Netherlands:

Thank you, mister president and before posing my question to the delegation of Denmark, I first like to congratulate them on the informative presentation of their second VNR. I think it really gives us a very comprehensive picture of the progress as well as of the challenges Denmark is still facing when moving towards the SDGs. We particularly welcome Denmark's ambitions to further contribute to green transition as well as to assume global responsibility and collaborate on long-term sustainable solutions together with other countries. The Netherlands has counteracted these ambitions and set out a journey towards climate neutrality and a fully circular economy by 2050, recognised that broad societal support is crucial for these transitions to succeed. So, it was really good to see that Denmark has involved such a diverse group of stakeholders in this VNR. What we would like to learn more about is the strategies that the government intends to employ to ensure participation and support from different social groups and private sector and particularly how to include young people in the next steps so beyond the VNR so we can make sur that no one is left behind and that everybody is on board when moving towards greener and more sustainable ways of living. Thank you, mister president.

President:

I thank the distinguish ambassador of the Netherlands and lastly, I have the non-governmental organisations Major Group, you have the floor.

NGO Major group:

Thank you chair. Ladies and gentlemen. The Danish civil society highly appreciates the inclusion of stakeholders into the VNR process. We appreciate the public hearings and the VNR report, which includes our uncensored assessment of each goal. However, looking back at four years since the VNR

in 2017, we see that there have been no specific results on SDG implementation in Denmark. In fact, our National Auditors concluded in 2020 that SDG implementation has been based on common knowledge and politics that already included the SDGs. The new Danish Action Plan means looking ahead - and this also leaves us deeply concerned. Because we are not heading towards a sustainable society - not through policies and not through actions. If all countries were to consume as we do, it would take 4 planets to supply the resources. Nothing in the Action Plan matches the severity of the pressure on our natural resources. We are deeply concerned by the lack of understanding of the urgency of taking action on SDGs 6, 12, 14 and 15. And the urgency is real: Pesticide residues are found in 45% of active waterwork wells. Danish biodiversity is degrading. 95% of terrestrial habitats and 7 out of 8 marine habitats are severely threatened. And our impact on global ecosystems is high as we import goods which directly cause deforestation abroad. I appreciate mister Wammen's oral comments and would nevertheless ask how the government more specifically plans to: Act for responsible consumption and production including corporate responsibility for human rights and the environment. Act on our global impact through requirements for deforestation free products in supply chains. Act on pesticide residues and organic micropollutants in our water. Act for improving biodiversity - dedicating space to nature. Act for a 100% sustainable management of Danish marine resources. Thank you.

President:

I thank the distinguish representative of the non-governmental organisation's group. And now I think we can turn to the countries presenting VNR to respond to the comments and questions we have had. We will have three minutes or so to each of the countries to respond to the questions.

Minister for Finance, Nicolai Wammen:

Thank you mister president and I would also like to start by thanking colleagues from Sweden, Netherlands and also of course civil society in Denmark for their comments and their questions. I will answer some of it and then I will invite colleagues around to table to join in. We are very much aware of the time limit so we will try to be precise and to the point. So let me start with the issue raised by Sweden concerning the involvement of parliament and there is no doubt that parliament is a crucial part of the process. Mister Rasmus Nordqvist who is a member of the Danish parliament will elaborate in a moment about that, but I would just say from the government's side that one very specific initiative that we have taken is that all legislative proposals must undergo a screening process with respect to the impact in terms of the 2030 Agenda. That is completely new I am not aware that it is happening anywhere else, and we are really looking forward to this being a key part of the legislative process here in Denmark. But I will leave the floor to Rasmus Nordqvist who is a member of the Danish Parliament.

Member of Parliament, Rasmus Nordqvist:

Well, thank you and thank you for the questions. To be more precise I mean, first of all there is the important work that the minister was talking about, but there is also the network which is a true cross-party network, we have members from all political parties in parliament. We work a lot of course with engagement from civil society, with the private sector and all the different aspects of society but also internally in parliament we have developed tools and inspirations for the committees to work with the SDGs on an ongoing basis. So, it is not something we take out when we do the VNR or action plan, it is something we work with in all committees in parliament throughout the year.

Minister for Finance, Nicolai Wammen:

Thank you. Our colleague from Switzerland raised quite a few very interesting points. I will in my responds focus on the question: how do we use the recovery after the pandemic to strengthen our approach when it comes to the 2030 Agenda? That is a very important question and what we want to do is not to go back to Denmark or the world as it looked before the crisis, we want to make a fairer, greener, and more just society at home and also on the international level. And we have especially spent a lot of effort and also money on the green agenda. However, you also raise questions alongside your Dutch colleague about leaving no one behind and the involvement of youth which I agree are key components of a strategy and also of the Danish approach. So, I will give the floor to a representative to the leave no one behind organization and also a young woman here in Denmark. Please.

The Danish Leave No one Behind coalition, Barwaqo Hussein:

Thank you for the question. To answer this simply its “nothing about us without us”. To elaborate a bit more, I believe that inclusion and action are the most important elements to make sure that Denmark leaves no one behind. We need the Danish government to include them most left behind. And for that we need more inclusion, collaboration, ownership, and actions between the government and the once potentially left behind. Including the work with the action plan. We will be looking very much forward to this in this decade of action. Thank you for the word.

Minister for Finance, Nicolai Wammen:

And thank you for your work. The last question came from civil society and had a critical approach which I find to be positive. In the sense that even though we do believe we have presented a strong action plan it is crucial important that civil society is constantly looking after whether we can do things better and that is an integrated part of Danish democracy that we have an open process where critics are more than welcome. To the very relevant questions mentioned, we have challenges in Denmark and even though we are at the forefront of sustainable development, we are not a place yet where we can say that we have achieved all of our goals. We have worked to improve biodiversity, sustainable management of marine resources, nature, and the environment with various initiatives. But we will continue to work on these issues. And more. Not only the Danish government but also parliament at large. It is very engaged on this agenda and even more important, the Danish society is very engaged, so making the green transformation towards a more sustainable, not only country here at home but also world at large is at the forefront of our ambitions. And I am sure that we will have other opportunities to go deeper into what other actions could be taken but we certainly welcome your constructive criticism, that is a part of how we do things here. I would at the end of this part ask if there were colleagues that would like to say a few words?

President:

Thank you, mister minister, we are running out of time. So, thank you so much for that comprehensive answer from yourself and your distinguish team. We value and note these responses which I am sure will be vey valuable in the assessment.