



The Bahamas

National Voluntary Report Main Messages



Government of The Bahamas
The Bahamas

Introduction

The Bahamas is a low-lying, small-island, archipelagic developing state. The country has enjoyed the peaceful transition of Government within its Parliamentary democracy over its 45 years as an independent country. The economy, driven by the twin pillars of tourism and financial services, has been generally good, delivering a high quality of life for many. Nevertheless, there are some important negative trends which suggest that many have been left behind as the country progressed.

Youth unemployment, for example, has remained high – rising to as much as 30% in 2015. Some 13% of the population lives in poverty, with 25% of these being children between the ages of 5-14. Key industries are not producing enough growth to drive sufficient employment expansion. Challenges prevail in both the public education and health care systems leading to less than optimal results. The country is experiencing serious infrastructure challenges leading to marked uneven development. Public institutions require strengthening. Finally, like so many small-island developing states, the country's greatest threat is its vulnerability to climate change and sea level rise.

Integration of the SDGs into the National Development Plan

In 2014, The Bahamas began the process of developing a 25-year National Development Plan: Vision 2040. Recognizing the synergies between the National Development Plan and the Sustainable Development Goals, the Government of The Bahamas ensured that the 2030 Agenda was localised into its national development planning process thereby providing a roadmap for the implementation of the SDGs.

Institutional Arrangements

The national process for preparing The Bahamas' SDG review is currently guided by a collaboration between the Economic Development and Planning Unit (EDPU) in the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. However, it is recognized that these institutional arrangements must be strengthened and formalized to ensure that all segments of society are more involved in, and take ownership of, the Sustainable Development Goals.

Leaving No-One -Behind

Strengthening the resilience of groups and communities which are marginalized or have not benefited sufficiently from the success of the country is a key goal of the recommendations of the implementation framework of the SDGs through the National Development Plan. These programmes must consider the special issues of the elderly, youth at risk and the particular, but different challenges for both men and women, as well as the geographical disparities within the country. For this reason, the Government in collaboration with Civil Society, Academia and the Private Sector has created a special zone for a traditionally marginalized region known as the “Over the Hill Community” as a pilot for a comprehensive poverty alleviation strategy focusing on social and economic empowerment, rejuvenation, smart and green technology and programmes which focus on youth and the elderly. This project will be replicated throughout the country.

Areas where support is needed for finance, capacity-building, technology, partnerships, etc.

The Bahamas recognises that in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, the country will also need strong institutions and access to the necessary resources. Notwithstanding the high GDP per capita of the country, The Bahamas remains a vulnerable, developing country. The Government continues to take steps to strengthen its public institutions including, the introduction of a new programme to strengthen its financial and budgetary management systems, programme delivery capacity and the development of a National Statistical System. Strengthening the country’s statistical capacity for the production of high quality, timely, reliable and disaggregated data, is particularly critical to support effective policy and decision-making and to ensure the continuous review of the country’s progress in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Conclusion

The Bahamas understands that meaningful sustainable development is critical for its very survival. The Bahamas is, therefore fully committed to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable

Development. These global goals are consistent with and are fully integrated into the country's National Development Plan framework – Vision 2040.

The Bahamas is pleased to present its National Voluntary Report at the 2018 High Level Political Forum of ECOSOC to showcase the work which has been done towards meaningful development for our citizens and residents and also to learn from the experiences of the other 46 countries presenting this year.