



**PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE  
NUKU'ALOFA, TONGA**

## **Tonga's 2019 Key Messages Voluntary National Review**

The ethos of sustainability has historically been at the heart of Tonga's development progress. King Tupou I, who ruled Tonga over 170 years ago, adopted our national motto, *God and Tonga are My Inheritance* which enshrines sustainable development as a way of life. Our motto embodies our inheritance and wealth in the form of our people, our land, and our strong Christian and traditional values underpinning our culture.

Tonga Strategic Development Framework (TSDF II) 2015-20125 is embedded within the foundations of our Christian and cultural values. The Framework underscores our approach to sustainable and inclusive growth and is aligned to the 2030 Agenda, the SAMOA Pathway, Addis Ababa Agreement, Sendai Framework and others. These have been integrated into our national planning processes and supported by a strong monitoring and evaluation framework.

### *VNR drafting process and focus*

Tonga's VNR is an opportunity to share our endeavours in terms of national development agenda and related SDG implementation. It highlights that improved coordination amongst stakeholders, is and, will be instrumental for the effective implementation of our development agenda. It provides information on key issues and selected priority programmes as well as update on priorities contained in the TSDF II.

- Tonga has prioritized social protection and human rights with a focus on vulnerable groups. To fully inform policy changes and interventions, Tonga has utilized advanced statistical techniques to enable poverty reporting that is inclusive of smaller island communities and developed a robust multidimensional poverty measure that is reliable, valid and contextually appropriate.
- Tonga continues to honor its commitment to Universal Health Coverage - striving for nationwide coverage and access to quality healthcare services. Non-communicable diseases and communicable diseases are ongoing concerns with high NCD prevalence, low contraceptive use and Sexually Transmitted Infections. Tonga, however maintains low maternal and infant mortality, and high immunization coverage.
- Regulations are in place to make education inclusive of students in ECE, those with disabilities and other vulnerable groups. Improvement to effective delivery of sustainable development principles and global citizenship are crucial to learning activities. Strengthening access to vocational training as well as accreditation to meet international standard is a priority.

- Tonga will continue to enhance accessibility to sustainable and energy efficiency services. Tonga's energy efficiency target of reducing electricity network losses to 11% of total electricity generation has been achieved in 2017. As of date, Tonga has achieved 10% of the 50% share of renewable energy target by 2020.
- To strengthen sustainable economic growth through use of relevant trade tools and employment opportunities for our people, we will continue to implement relevant structural reforms and further develop productive sectors. We will also promote decent work including those in the informal sector and public private partnerships for improved service delivery.
- Tonga recognizes the need for equal opportunities for all, in particular vulnerable and marginalized groups including access to employment, political leadership and social services. This is underpinned by our commitment for all men, women and children to live in an environment free from all forms of violence and exploitation.
- Climate Change continues to pose serious threats to the environment and livelihood of the people of Tonga. A National Climate Change Policy and Joint National Action Plan 2018-2028 provide strategies for climate actions. A Climate Change Trust Fund has been established to strengthen coping capacities of all vulnerable communities.
- Collective efforts are in place to promote the rule of law and strengthen legal institutions to increase access to justice and judicial independence, through the application of international standards in line with our capacities and circumstances.
- We remain committed to support the implementation of our development agenda through genuine and durable partnerships with development partners, donors and local stakeholders, recognizing national priorities and systems are critical. Further partnerships remain particularly important in areas of finance, appropriate technology, technical support, capacity building and statistics.

### *Conclusion*

We acknowledge that reaching the SDGs by 2030 is a challenge for all, and that the journey is long mindful of the capacity and resource constraints we face. With adherence to our longstanding cultural and traditional values on sustainable development, we aim to achieve our national priorities in durable partnership with key stakeholders.