



THE CO-OPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA



FIRST VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEW OF THE 2030 AGENDA AND THE 17 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS: KEY MESSAGES

ECOSOC HIGH LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM - 2019

A PEOPLE-FOCUSSED AND DRIVEN AGENDA FOR IMPLEMENTING THE SDGs

The Co-operative Republic of Guyana has consistently prioritised sustainable and inclusive development over recent decades. Institutionalising the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) forms key components of development planning cycles. Guyana's long-term development strategy, titled the *Green State Development Strategy: Vision 2040* (GSDS), reflects principles of a 'green agenda' within safe and secure borders and highlights the need for resilient development for all its citizens. It is based on the delivery of quality education and health care, social protection, new economic opportunities, justice and political empowerment while protecting the natural environment.

Guyana has undertaken a suite of reforms designed to achieve this vision across the whole-of-government, and is committed to continuing along this trajectory. All stakeholders – private sector; civil society; communities, especially indigenous communities and people in vulnerable situations; and development partners - are involved so as to ensure that no Guyanese is left behind. This principle of inclusivity was demonstrated in extensive stakeholder consultations to ensure national ownership and a participatory approach to policymaking within the context of the GSDS, thus reinforcing commitment to participation and empowerment.

PROGRESS TOWARDS ACHIEVING THE SDGs

While economic growth has remained positive over the last decade, its impact on poverty reduction is uncertain since the last national poverty assessment was done over 12 years ago. Notwithstanding, a raft of interventions, including those targeting single women, youth, the disabled and indigenous communities in remote areas, has been implemented to reduce poverty levels across both coastal and hinterland regions.

Programmatic interventions towards advancing the SDGs include: climate adaptation and mitigation efforts, through multi-sectoral approaches such as smart-health facilities; environmental education awareness and resilient agriculture; education curriculum reform, reviewing teacher quality and performance and expanding the use of information technology in classrooms; expanding access to a wider range of health services to

hinterland communities; promoting community participation through local government elections and greater decentralisation of central government service delivery; economic diversification through expansion of service sectors and non-traditional agriculture lines of production, tourism and construction industries; and adapting cleaner energy and resilient infrastructure for expanded connectivity and trade facilitation.

CONSTRAINTS TO DEVELOPMENT

Guyana's geography creates a range of geopolitical and other challenges for all sectors. Guyana's border controversies continue to put the country at risk for security issues and increased migration. Additionally, the 751,000 residents of Guyana are distributed unevenly over 214,970km². This impedes greater inclusivity and equitable distribution of social benefits, given the marginal costs of delivery in rural, hinterland and remote areas. Climate change has brought increased rainfall, leading to intense flooding in many areas, on the one hand; and drought, on the other. The pace of education reform is hindered by lack of human capacity, a factor which was inimical to the achievement of Goal 5 of the MDGs; yet it remains critical to realising all of the SDGs.

Guyana requires significant human capital development and institutional strengthening in all sectors, particularly in light of the anticipated economic, environmental and social changes that the country is expected to undergo with an emerging oil and gas sector.

PARTNERSHIPS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Financing the SDGs will remain a challenge, especially given major gaps in structural resilience and an already expanded domestic resource mobilisation effort that has proven insufficient to date. The involvement of the local private sector and civil society organisations, as development partners, though meaningful, requires further strengthening taking into account that the scale of the local private sector is limited.

The United Nations Country Team, complemented by support of traditional donors and other development partners, has been collaborating with Guyana in the implementation of the SDGs. Increased South-South co-operation has also enabled access to new sources of finance and technical cooperation.

MONITORING PROGRESS ON THE SDGs

Guyana will continue to monitor progress on SDGs within the context of the GSDS to assess progress on its achievement of the 2030 Agenda. National data systems' strengthening, including frequent national surveys, is needed to inform evidence-based policy, planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting. This means, among other things, that the country will need to reform its National Statistical System, including building the relevant capacities for data collection, analysis and reporting.