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Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to be here today and present the Cyprus National Review on the implementation of Agenda 2030.

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Cyprus is a small island state in the Eastern Mediterranean, with an area that extends to around 9250 square km and a population of approximately 840.000 people. The GDP growth rate has currently risen to 3,3%, with a per capita income of about 34.000 dollars. Cyprus is, since 2004, a member of the European Union.

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My presentation will focus mainly on the domestic implementation of the goals being reviewed in depth this year at the HLPF, many of which

coincide with Cyprus' priorities. The enabling environment aspect will be presented by an NGO representative.

Our review indicates that we are in good course. We fully meet many of the targets, through legislation or other policies emanating from national and European strategies.

Cyprus faced a deep, unprecedented economic crisis that reached its peak in 2013, which led to the government's inevitable focus on the economic and social dimensions of policies. Structural and institutional reforms were promoted, especially in the public sector, the health system and other sectors, aspiring to lead to breakthrough systemic transformations.

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Cyprus' institutional mechanism for the implementation of Agenda 2030 is comprised of Ministries and other governmental services, such as the Statistical Service, under the coordination of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A mapping exercise was initiated, aiming to define stakeholders, strategies and action plans and indicators, if applicable, for each of the targets. Priorities were set based on the government priorities as well as on what we consider as horizontal focal areas such as youth.

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The primary concern of the government of the Republic of Cyprus is no other than for all Cypriots to live in a peaceful society. Our top priority and aspiration is to achieve a fair and viable, comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem, under the UN auspices.

Additionally, a general focus on youth is defined through the National Youth Strategy, for the period 2017-2022.

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Youth is obviously linked to meeting all SDG4 targets, in which Cyprus has already achieved significant progress, as described in our review.

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As far as other priorities are concerned, Cyprus focuses more on SDGs 1, 3, 7, 8, 9, as well as SDGs 4, 5 and 14.

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Ladies and gentlemen,

Coming to this year's UN focus:

On SDG 1, although Cyprus has eradicated extreme poverty, due to an increase of needs for social support stemming from the economic environment, the reform of the social welfare policy has been an immediate priority. The National Strategy on Social Policy, adopted for the period 2014-2020 provides for a minimum standard of living for all citizens, while taking steps to activate, integrate or reintegrate all those in need into the labor market. A minimum guaranteed income has been introduced and a single social welfare record created.

We see a direct linkage between ending poverty and health and take pride in successfully meeting a number of the SDG3 targets in full. A very important development is that, last month, the Cyprus House of Representatives voted in favor of the introduction of a National Health Care System, which will improve the utilization of resources and quality of health care and reduce inequalities.

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While in Cyprus hunger does not constitute a problem, the 2013 financial crisis led families to be supported by various food banks. Although the phenomenon is now almost eliminated, the support of our most vulnerable citizens continues. The nutritional status of people living in Cyprus is generally good and my Ministry, in order to tackle the challenge of nutritional disorders, is very active in promoting good nutrition in schools.

Although agriculture represents only 3% of the GDP, agricultural products contribute to approximately 37% of the total exports value. Strengthening the competitiveness of the primary and secondary agricultural sector and reviving the countryside, is a government priority. The Rural Development Plan 2014-2020, linked with SDG 2, is the basic strategic tool through which action is being taken.

As expected in a semi-arid region, vulnerable to climate change, water is a major issue. All households in Cyprus are connected to public water supply providing excellent quality of drinking water, as well as improved sanitation facilities.

Potable water dependency on rainfall has been eliminated through desalination units and the construction of reservoirs on virtually every

stream or river. Water pricing, which takes into consideration environmental and resource costs, has been in place for many years and is used as a disincentive for water wastage.

In maximizing the use of our limited water resources the treated wastewater is a growing and stable resource. All sewage treatment plants treat wastewater to the degree that can be used directly for irrigation and/or to recharge aquifers. Currently, more than 74.2% of all treated wastewater is being reused.

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On SDG5, Cyprus strives to contribute to this universal goal of gender equality. We have national legislation in place that protects all women against gender inequality at work, with special focus on maternity protection. The Parliament has just approved (14 July) paternity leave legislation. There is close cooperation between government and relevant NGOs on issues including domestic violence and human trafficking. Notable efforts are made, especially on the latter, while challenges still

remain, especially as regards gender stereotypes and political participation, all described in our report.

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With regards to SDG 9, Cyprus is characterized by a light industry, with a slow but rising growth rate to 2,9% in 2015, a 7% contribution to the national GDP and 9% contribution in employment. In terms of innovation and digitalization, Cyprus is a moderate innovator. Towards increasing the country's performance ratios a new integrated national industrial strategy is being designed.

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Being an island, Cyprus is closely linked culturally and economically with the sea. Our national priorities and targets are based on EU, regional and international objectives. All our activities in the sea are carried out within the framework of UNCLOS, which we strongly support at national and international level.

At regional level, by Cypriot initiative, a sub-regional contingency plan in dealing with marine pollution incidents, between Cyprus, Greece and Israel,

is under preparation, to be completed this year. A similar plan is to be prepared between Cyprus and Egypt. This was among our commitments at the UN Oceans Conference.

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Dear friends,

Progress is observed in all the SDGs, while planning is already in place for most of them. The Republic of Cyprus takes pride in its success in meeting a number of targets at a 100% level, many of them in the framework of SDGs 3 and 4.

Being at the initial stages of implementation of Agenda 2030, it is obvious that there is more work to be done to fully achieve the SDGs.

The process of drafting this Voluntary National Review has offered the small-sized administration of Cyprus an opportunity to map the activities and strategies that can be linked with the SDGs, thus reinforcing the path towards their achievement. We consider this review a very useful tool and we urge UN partners to engage in this procedure.

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Before I give the floor to Mr. Sotiris Themistokleous, Associate Director of the Cypriot Civil Society Organization CARDET, who will speak to you about the involvement of all stakeholders in Cyprus in achieving the SDGs, I would like to dedicate this presentation to a dear friend and colleague who recently passed away. Mary Zoupaniotis was our 2nd Committee delegate here in NY for ten years and a very passionate supporter and promoter of the SDGs.