



# New Zealand Permanent Mission to the United Nations

Te Māngai o Aotearoa

## High Level Political Forum for Sustainable Development 2020

New Zealand statement



Five years into the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the world is confronted with the formidable challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic.

A global crisis of this magnitude, where no country is spared, demands collective action and underscores the need for international cooperation and solidarity. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which seek to ensure we leave no-one behind, have never been more relevant because as long as one country is at risk, we all remain at risk.

COVID-19 has given rise to massive loss of life and livelihoods, and pushed many economies into recession. A COVID-19 vaccine is essential to reverse and ultimately end this trend. International cooperation is crucial to quickly developing a safe and effective vaccine. Once developed, New Zealand strongly advocates for universal access to these vaccines to ensure vaccine distribution is fair and equitable, and reaches those who are most vulnerable.

Regionally, we have worked very closely with Pacific Island governments to support their COVID-19 preparedness, and with the World Health Organization to coordinate response efforts in the region.

At home, this challenge requires agility and innovation as we continue to *Unite against COVID-19*. New Zealand is committed to adopting a wellbeing approach that reflects the SDGs as we seek to respond, recover and rebuild from COVID-19.

Wellbeing is at the heart of our decision-making and underpins our COVID-19 elimination strategies. This includes a comprehensive package to cushion the economic impacts of COVID-19, particularly for vulnerable groups, through subsidies and loans, and investing heavily in essential health and social services particularly in the education, employment and housing sectors.

***He waka eke noa (towards a better future, together) - a year on***

It has been a year since New Zealand presented our first Voluntary National Review (VNR). During this period, the Government has progressed work on a number of SDGs. To highlight a few:

- the latest update on New Zealand's 2020 net position shows that New Zealand is projected to meet our 2020 emissions reduction target for the period 2013-2020 and our goal to be carbon neutral by 2050.
- the first set of comprehensive child poverty statistics since the government set targets in the Child Poverty Reduction Act in 2018 showed improvements in seven out of nine child poverty measures. These legislated measures and monitoring parameters hold the government to account and allow us to capture the impacts of key policies and investments to lift children out of poverty.
- New Zealand is committed to support and strengthen statistical capacity building in the Pacific. As a key donor in the region, New Zealand's current funding assists Pacific National Statistics Offices in statistical collection and analysis. In 2019, we also started supporting a new regional initiative to develop the Pacific Data Hub as a central repository of statistics, data and knowledge products. The aim is to improve the publication and dissemination of Pacific data, statistics, research and evaluation, including by providing a SDG Dashboard for the Pacific region.

Achieving the SDGs cannot be carried out by governments alone. Following the release of New Zealand's VNR, youth leaders, civil society groups, academic institutions and business representatives came together and drafted the sectors' vision for New Zealand to achieve the SDGs and guide the sectors' activities in the coming decade. We welcome the commitment and perspectives of the many individuals and groups who are actively engaged in working for a more sustainable future as envisioned by the 2030 Agenda.

With only ten years left to deliver the SDGs, we recognise that much more needs to be done if we are to achieve the SDGs. Now more than ever, as we confront the unprecedented challenge of COVID-19, the international community must accelerate its efforts and work more closely together if we are to achieve our common goals.

Thank you.