

Session 1 Panel: “Where do we currently stand with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Samoa Pathway in the Pacific?” (5-7 minutes)

1. At the 5 year milestone of the 2030 Agenda for SD, to what extent have the SDGs promoted “LNOB” in Vanuatu?

Vanuatu 2030 The Peoples Plan (The Plan) is the National Sustainable Development Plan (NSDP) for the period 2016 to 2030. The NSDP charts the country's vision and overarching policy framework for achieving a prosperous Vanuatu within the next fifteen years. In doing so, it sets out the national priorities and context for the implementation of the new global Sustainable Development Goals over the same period by aligning our National Vision with the Sustainable Development Goals and the *Pacific Roadmap for Sustainable Development*. The government is committed to implementation and monitoring, and to reporting on progress of both the NSDP and the SDGs that are aligned within our National Framework.

We had a very extensive 2 year consultation process for the NSDP and this was well documented in our NSDP *Consultation Report* (December 2016) and it provides more details regarding how the NSDP process ensured inclusion of inputs from all levels of Government and Society in Vanuatu with a National Validation Summit was held at the National Convention Centre in Port Vila in November 2016. Approximately 200 participants.

By this same guidance throughout the development of our NSDP, we have tried to replicate that in the development of our national planning, data collection, reporting, aid coordination, and other implementation mechanisms that have since been developed, all in close consultation with relevant partners and using our existing and updated stakeholder engagement strategies. Since developing the NSDP, the formal recognition of the fantastic work that our CSO partners are engaged in led to the development of an NGO desk and officer within our Internal Affairs ministry who acts as a contact point for all registered CSOs in country, and our increased engagement with the Private sector through more formalised activity with the Vanuatu Chamber of Commerce and Industry, who also provided valuable inputs to the VNR in a shadow report they produced this year as a result of this increased commitment to stakeholder engagement.

An interesting development and also building on our commitment to further improve our national reporting and integrating data from all relevant stakeholders is the development of our national indicators database for which we're extremely proud of. The Vanuatu National Statistics Office (VNSO) are the legally mandated keeper of national statistics and have developed this integrated database which has all of **our 3 pillars: Society, Environment, and Economic → 15 broad goals → 98 Policy Objectives → 196 Indicators and 205 Targets as well as the 17 SDGs and around 122 SDG indicators with data (where available) going back 12 years**. There are challenges with access and availability of baseline data of course, we have around 49% NSDP indicators coverage and around 22% SDG indicators coverage but it reiterates our commitment to identify data gaps, engage and include all stakeholders – including the private sector and CSOs who are doing and are committed to the NSDP goals but their inputs are often not captured at that national reporting level.

The use of the VNRS in the process of SDG progress and LNOB concepts

We see the VNR as a chance to review our national systems and to provide us with more practical means to strengthening our NSDP implementation, for which SDGs have already been incorporated into. Vanuatu is one of the first countries globally to undertake a review of their Voluntary National Report. A Peer Review team, facilitated through UNDP Regional team and the Pacific Islands Forum

Secretariat saw three countries from the region, all at different stages with their SDG implementation and VNR process – some with one under their belts, and some in the process of developing their alignment of SDGs into their national plans come to Vanuatu to spend time with us to review our NSDP integration processes and implementation documents, stakeholder engagement activities and to review the initial draft of this Voluntary National Report (VNR) and provided feedback and recommendations. This shows a willingness to share experiences (both good and bad) and to open up government planning and reporting process with neighbouring Pacific countries. We welcomed this opportunity for best practices and knowledge sharing with our neighbours and it was a useful activity. In fact, we used some of these recommendations in our final VNR and with our “Learning” strategy post VNR.

Our VNR process and timeline highlighted wide engagement at all levels. Additionally, Government continued the focus on public engagement, found throughout the NSDP process regarding the design and development of the VNR. Government engaged the public regarding the VNR in both 2018 and 2019 (at the beginning and conclusion of the VNR report process) to ensure that their inputs were included in the report.

This VNR process (and report) is a very useful tool for moving forward in 2021 with the first five-year stock take of the NSDP. The VNR process has helped to illustrate areas where additional effort will be needed in order to complete the stock take in 2021.

3. What are the 3 key issues you think this Pacific Forum on SD should consider in accelerating progress towards SDG achievement mindful of the collective commitment to LNOB?

Issues to be strengthened

Just as there are critical areas of success, there are also areas that Vanuatu must ensure have enough focus to ensure effective implementation including:

- Public/Private Financing and sources of Financing - domestic
- Capacity Building/Human Resource Development
- Reporting/Monitoring/Evaluation
- MEL and Statistics including baseline data and trends analysis – includes strengthening our national statistics development strategy and relationships with producers and users of data
- Stakeholder engagement and mechanisms to ensure participation is a two way street and is integrated into formal partnerships
- Considerations with climatic events and disasters – SPC slide with 64% of GDP costs due to TC Pam 2015
- Tradeoffs in priorities at a national/regional level

Vanuatu has developed and is using various tools in order to ensure the implementation process addresses those areas outlined above. The following tools are the foundation the structure of the enabling environment.

2. How can regional cooperation assist national efforts to implement the Samoa Pathway and 2030 Agenda?

*Grateful for the ongoing assistance with national systems and programs that look at SDG integration into national plans, etc. and looking at ways of furthering the efforts that countries in the region are making in nationalising priorities, or looking at how to integrate the Agenda 2030 into their progress initiatives

*Through this we can look at streamline activities – not working on specific SDGs only and reporting pressure to countries to only report on this or that SDGs and recognising that countries will want to focus on specific national priorities that incorporate SDGs and not vice versa because there are always going to be difficulties with how we share our resources to do this effectively

*Let's look at providing regional and best practice solutions – what are some of the good lessons coming out from countries that can be shared with other pacific countries? How do we continue to support each other through peer learning and sharing? This includes data and methodologies that can be applied, linkages to stakeholder engagement

Thank you.