

## **Kingdom of the Netherlands – Main Messages of the Voluntary National Review of Progress Towards the Sustainable Development Goals 2022**

### *Four countries, one Kingdom*

The four countries of the Kingdom (Aruba, Curaçao, the Netherlands and St Maarten) collaborated closely on the second Voluntary National Review. Significant contributions were also made by stakeholders. Partnership is at the heart of our efforts to achieve the SDGs by 2030.

Assisted by the UN, Aruba and Curaçao have drafted national plans linked to the SDGs and to the Multicountry Sustainable Development Framework for the region. St Maarten has linked its national vision, aimed at resilience, capacity building and sustainable development, to the SDGs. The Netherlands' Plan of Action for national SDG implementation, evaluated in 2021, recommended strengthening the link between policies and the SDGs by means of a national strategy. A major step was the introduction in 2019 of an 'SDG check' of new policies, which includes an assessment of the potential impact on developing countries. Progress has been made in the area of statistical monitoring. Statistics Netherlands (CBS) annually publishes the Monitor of Wellbeing and the SDGs and will from now on also publish a Monitor for the Caribbean islands of Bonaire, St Eustatius and Saba (part of the Netherlands). Recently, Aruba and Curaçao have also expanded their sets of indicators.

### *A good basis, but efforts must be stepped up*

The Kingdom is well placed to achieve the SDGs, although work remains to be done. Data show that the European part of the Kingdom scores well on tackling inequality; decent work and economic growth; innovation; strong institutions; education; and water management. Its biggest challenges are biodiversity restoration and further accelerating the climate and energy transitions. The Caribbean part of the Kingdom faces bigger challenges, while their resources and capacity are more limited. The consequences of climate change, such as sea-level rise, biodiversity loss and extreme weather, increase existing vulnerabilities and restrict economic opportunities, particularly in agriculture and tourism.

The SDGs demand a comprehensive approach. For this VNR, progress on the SDGs has therefore been reviewed on the basis of six major entry points, as defined in the Global Sustainable Development Report (2019). The resultant overall picture is that governments in the four countries have formulated ambitious objectives on making the economy and the energy and food systems more sustainable, while leaving no one behind. Human rights are the basis for the SDGs. Effectiveness can be markedly improved by aiming for concrete targets, adopting a comprehensive approach, enhancing policy coherence and scaling up innovative solutions. Further developing sustainable business models is also crucial. For the countries in the Caribbean, investment in digitalisation and capacity is vital for economic growth and resilient societies.

### *Voluntary Subnational and Local Reviews*

More than a third of the municipalities and a number of provinces in the Netherlands have embraced the SDGs. The Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG) has conducted a Voluntary Subnational Review which will also be presented to the UN this year. The city of Amsterdam will present its first Voluntary Local Review.

### *Involvement of society at large*

There has been a sharp increase in the involvement of society in SDG-implementation in the Kingdom. The platform 'SDG Nederland' now counts over 1,200 member organisations. The annual report presented to Dutch parliament each year on SDG progress in the Netherlands is the result of a collaborative effort by government, the business community and financial sector, NGOs, local authorities, knowledge institutions, youth organisations and the Netherlands Institute for Human Rights. Young people have amplified their voice and the government has adopted their suggestion for a 'generational impact assessment'. Stakeholders in Curaçao and Aruba are also involved in drafting national development plans and VNRs. In Curaçao the national SDG committee encompasses

platforms for people, planet and prosperity, which bring government and stakeholders together. The Aruban government, too, has worked actively and successfully in recent years to increase the involvement of wider society – NGOs, academic institutions and the private sector. St Maarten has launched an awareness campaign and held national dialogues to inform citizens on sustainable development. Moreover, it added the SDGs to the educational curriculum.

The Kingdom has also contributed to SDG-development through its global partnerships and will continue to do so.