

## **VNR Statement on Dominica, HLPF 2022: Major Group for Children & Youth**

Thank you moderator,

We are grateful for the opportunity to comment on this, the first VNR delivered by Dominica.

In 2017 after Hurricane Maria ravaged Dominica the Prime Minister came to the UN's stage and proclaimed that Dominica will be build back to become the first Climate Resilient Country in the World.

As a small island state, the impacts of climate change pose a significant threat to our wellbeing.

Now, several years later, while some strides have been made on building back Dominica stronger and better, just as we were approaching a recovery from this natural disaster we were struck by the pandemic and the wider social and economic effects that came with it.

To date, we have had a total of 14,852 confirmed cases and 68 deaths from COVID-19. As we return to our 'new normal' and try to shake off the effects of these two disasters, we are also committed to educating people about Climate Change and the importance of Sustainability to our development.

In terms of government policies, areas such as waste management and recycling are crucial, as is the implementation of environmental policies that will strengthen our biodiversity and Eco-systems.

How does the Government intend on filling these gaps in not only policy but implementation to tackle climate change and protect biodiversity?

Furthermore, we believe that there should be clear plans for more direct involvement of vulnerable groups, particularly LGBTQ individuals, as well as persons who are differently abled and the youth.

Overall, I believe that Dominica is on the right track in accomplishing the sustainable development goals. Nevertheless, more can be done for a more equitable and direct engagement across Vulnerable groups In the Country. Everyone should have opportunities to be involved and there need to be new spaces created for their involvement.

Please could the government outline how they intend to provide new opportunities for broader engagement and participation of diverse populations to leave no one behind?