

We, civil society representatives from Fiji, take this opportunity to congratulate Fiji, for volunteering for this year's National Review, and for presenting its Report.

As part of an active citizenry and as a member of the Fiji CSO SDG VNR Task Force, we are vested in the full and inclusive implementation of the SDGs at home. And as the 2030 Agenda says to 'leave no one behind', we ask you the following questions:

1. As part of the first-ever multi-stakeholder meeting for this first ambitious VNR, we found the process rushed, unengaging and exclusive. How are you going to ensure meaningful engagement of all stakeholders- government, civil society, private sector, trade unions, international organisations and UN agencies and others, in implementing the SDGs and other forward processes?
2. The Ministry for Economy has written the VNR with baseline data and convenes the SDGs Task Force that is charged with overseeing SDGs implementation. How is this Task Force connecting with all ministries and stakeholders to educate them and streamline data collection on the 2030 agenda, targets, and indicators so that there is alignment their work with these global processes?
3. The SDGs require significant investments and creative financing, which the Fijian government has been exploring off late. In order to convert this to effective development and improving lives on the ground, the entire finance infrastructure has to inculcate accountability and transparency which includes meaningful participation of those involved. Often when it comes to financing, civil society is out of the loop. How does the government plan to include the voices of civil society when it comes to financing for development?

Statement #2

While we note Fiji's commitment to gender equality and take note of the progress in this area in the VNR, we question the following:

1. The VNR states that gender inequality, the existence of systemic and structural barriers and the prevalence of patriarchal and heteronormative values for diverse women continue to hold many women and girls back. What is Fiji's response to the very high rates of VAW, gender pay gap, only 20% women in Parliament, women concentrated in the informal economy and have a larger burden of unpaid care work? Will we be able to report better by the next VNR?
2. The VNR states that the Fiji Bill of Rights is comprehensive and robust. Fiji 's 2013 Constitution (section 26) states that no one should be discriminated on the basis of their sexual orientation and gender identity and expression. In reality, LGBTIQ people face difficulty accessing decent work, put up with discrimination at the workplace, earn lower than average and face more economic hardships, including working in environments that do not guarantee their safety and protection. What has the Fiji government done to address these critical issues as part of the process of leaving no one behind?

3. Fiji's investment in improving access to justice services is commendable. But it is an unfortunate reflection of the status of women's access to justice where it takes them up to 868 days to access services. Meaningful access to justice does not end at providing free legal services but requires eradicating barriers such as cost, distance and complexity of the judicial system and processes, and which includes ensuring that all frontline officers are gender sensitized. To rectify this, what will the government do?