

Tēnā koutou, he mihi nui ki o kōrerō

We thank the New Zealand Government for its presentation and for additional contributions by civil society.

We are encouraged to hear of the government's commitment to the SDGs, which acknowledges that new thinking is needed to achieve the SDGs, and that this is only possible through cooperation and the participation of all sectors of society. A cooperation we believe members of civil society would welcome.

We also recognise the government's commitment to well-being. It is aspirational and addresses many of the issues included in the SDGs.

Yet, the first New Zealand People's Report on the SDGs identifies areas such as persistent inequality, the major loss of New Zealand biodiversity and marine life, and the pollution of freshwater sources. The poorer outcomes for Māori, the indigenous people, in particular, demonstrate the effects of many years of neglect and post colonial racism.

NGOs and others in civil society are making concrete contributions in areas encompassed by the goals, but the Report shows that there is inconsistent engagement between government and civil society, lack of collaborative planning, sustainable funding and resourcing.

This risks the achievement of the government's vision and the SDGs, which are grounded in legally binding international human rights commitments, and have multi stakeholder partnerships at the core.

We would therefore like to know:

- 1. How will the New Zealand government encourage and strengthen meaningful participation and collaboration with Māori and wider civil society in achieving its vision and the SDGs?**
- 2. Will the government set up, in consultation, a framework and national plan that are formally linked to the SDGs?**

Statement 2

Tēnā koutou,

I am honoured to present this statement on behalf of rural women's NGOs in New Zealand, who cannot be here today. We commend the government for reporting on all 17 SDGs in its first VNR, and welcome the recognition of the imbalance in social provision affecting rural women and other marginalised groups.

As with most countries, data collection on rural communities is insufficient, and we note the confirmation of a new approach to relevant indicators for domestic and international reporting. We further welcome the government's commitment to engage with Civil Society and believe that this collaborative approach informs the realistic and honest identification of issues needing to be addressed in this VNR. We heartily encourage the government to continue this engagement, and further develop it to ensure that all parts of our country, and all New Zealanders, are heard.

Despite a 12.5% increase in births over the past six years, New Zealand's midwifery workforce grew by only half this rate, with rural communities relying on self-employed Lead Maternity Care midwives to cover 86% of the workload. Reduction of services at facilities such as the Lumsden Maternity Centre by the Southern District Health Board mean that

expectant mothers are forced to travel further, and suffer undue risks to their pregnancies and births. This is one feature of a broad spectrum of issues in rural healthcare provision which also includes access to general medical facilities, mental health services, and specific support for victims of domestic violence. New Zealand reports the worst rates of family violence in the OECD, the consequences of which are amplified by the isolation and reduced network of services in rural communities.

New Zealanders are working hard to achieve the 2030 Agenda, and we commend all endeavour thus far, but encourage the government to redouble efforts to ensure that they leave no one behind.