

MGOS RESPONSE AND QUESTIONS FROM THE CSOs IN SLOVENIA TO THE VNR OF THE GOVERNMENT OF SLOVENIA

Thank you for this opportunity.

While Slovenia has been committed to the full achievement of the SDGs, we, as representatives of civil society, understand that coherent development requires full participation of civil society. In fact, Goal 16 underscores this essential component. Today, 35 Slovenian NGOs and NGO networks call upon our Government to establish an advisory body for the 2030 Agenda, bringing together stakeholders from various spheres and levels, including underrepresented groups, to support the Government decision-making on sustainable development policies. Our question is: Together, how can government and civil society create an effective and durable advisory body to ensure an inclusive and open dialogue to further realize the SDGs?

We note that, despite an inclusive process in the development of Slovenia's second VNR, the concerns raised by civil society were not adequately reflected in the report. Moreover, unlike in 2017, the voice of CSOs has not been part of the VNR presentation. Civil Society Organizations are intrinsic to implementation of the "Leave No One Behind" principle. Only broad civil society ownership over the SDGs ensures achieving sustainable development for all.

While an enabling environment is the basis for inclusive and transparent processes of Goal 16 regarding the 2030 Agenda, it would be somewhat challenging to assess the current political climate in Slovenia as enabling environment for CSOs. For example, the Covid-19 outbreak and related measures resulted in disproportionate budget cuts for culture and limits to the participation of NGOs in environmental impact assessment procedures.

We look forward to our partnership to establish a Government advisory body as one measure to focus achievement of the SDGs.