

ቀዋሚ ሚሽን ሃገረ ኤርትራ ናብ
ወደብ ሕቡራት ሃገራት
ኒ-ዮርክ



البعثة الدائمة لدولة إريتريا لدى
الأمم المتحدة
نيويورك

**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE STATE OF ERITREA TO THE UNITED NATIONS
NEW YORK**

Presentation of Eritrea's Second Voluntary National Review (VNR) on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the 2024 High-Level Political Forum

New York, 12 July 2024

Mr. Chair,

Eritrea has made extensive efforts towards nation-building and realizing the 2030 Agenda. This second Voluntary National Review (VNR), prepared through a collaborative and participatory approach, reflects the country's deep commitment to advancing the 2030 Agenda and its national developmental priorities. Building on the first VNR report in 2022, this VNR presents progress on SDGs 4 (Quality Education), 5 (Gender Equality), and 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation).

Guided by the principles of social justice, equality, and a commitment to leaving no one behind, Eritrea's development objectives are, among others, realization of full employment for all able citizens; fair distribution of national income and social service-providing institutions across all regions; meeting the rising demands for population consumption needs through consistent productive investment and price stability and promoting regional and global cooperation. These efforts aim to eliminate poverty and inequality, promote gender equality and empowerment, secure opportunities for all, eradicate all forms of

discrimination and create a more inclusive, fair, and just nation, prioritizing those furthest behind first.

Mr. Chair,

Against this backdrop, let me briefly highlight the progress achieved on the three focused SDGs:

On education

Education is a pillar of Eritrea's development agenda, and it is provided free-of-charge from primary to tertiary levels. Hundreds of new schools, learning centers, and libraries have been built while older ones have been renovated throughout the country. The number of schools increased from just over 500 in 1991 to 1,930 in 2015 and to 2,351 last year. Enrollments at the primary, middle, and secondary levels have also exponentially increased.

Parallel to these advances, the number of qualified teachers has increased significantly, and notable progress has been achieved in literacy. Adult literacy rates have risen from 46 percent in 1990 to 77 percent in 2018, and youth literacy rates have increased from 61 to 94 percent. Parity between girls and boys is achieved at all levels.

Eritrea is also implementing mother tongue instruction at the primary level and expanding access to education for students with disabilities, regularly updating national curricula, and enhancing technical and vocational education and training.

On gender equality

Advancing gender equality, empowering women and girls, and protecting their dignities are among Eritrea's top national priorities. Recognizing the differing conditions and experiences of women and girls, Eritrea has enacted progressive and affirmative action measures in enhancing women's education, employment, and public services. The national proclamations on labor, citizenship, and land reform ensure women have equal rights and access as their male counterparts.

Currently, women constitute almost half of the labor force and 46 percent of all employees holding managerial positions, and they make up 22 and 29 percent of all members of the National Assembly and Regional Assemblies, respectively. Moreover, rates of harmful traditional practices such as Female Genital Mutilation have been significantly reduced.

On clean water and sanitation

Access to safe drinking water and improved sanitation facilities are critical components of Eritrea's commitment to SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation). The increase in access to safe drinking water in rural (79%) and urban (95%) areas underscores the country's efforts towards universal health coverage and combating water-borne diseases (SDG 3), supporting agricultural productivity (SDG2) and poverty alleviation (SDG 1), reduced inequalities (SDG 10), and climate action (SDG 13). The declaration of 93 percent of villages as "open defecation free" illustrates significant progress in public health and community well-being. Efforts to protect and restore water-related ecosystems and combat land degradation, deforestation, and climate change include community afforestation and reforestation campaigns, the construction of terraces and dams, and the promotion of renewable energy sources.

Mr. Chair,

Despite considerable challenges, including regional and global conflicts, sanctions, climate issues, and pandemic-related shocks, Eritrea has demonstrated resilience and consistent economic growth. This has led to improved citizen well-being and developmental progress, including increased life expectancy, poverty reduction, food and nutrition security, access to education, gender empowerment, and improved water, sanitation, and hygiene. Eritrea's holistic development approach acknowledges that achieving SDGs 4, 5, and 6 will positively affect other SDGs, creating a ripple effect that fosters overall sustainable development.

The preparation and submission of Eritrea's 2024 Voluntary National Review provides an opportunity to assess progress on SDGs 4, 5, and 6, and identify challenges and gaps, and share lessons. While celebrating achievements, Eritrea remains aware of the challenges that lie ahead. To better leverage on the existing

human, financial and technological resources, the Government will continue assessing and reforming institutional development mechanisms. Moving forward, Eritrea reaffirms its commitment to consolidating improvements, addressing challenges, driving progress towards equitable and sustainable growth and remains resolute in its mission to leave no one behind.

I Thank You.

Last Updated Jul 13, 2024