

**Session 3: Building synergies between human rights and SDG implementation at the national level**  
**Written contribution by Greece**

Thank you Mr Chair.

Greece considers human rights one of the key elements of the 2030 Agenda, and their protection and promotion to be crucial towards attaining a truly sustainable development. We therefore seek to mainstream them in relevant national policies. In this respect, Greece has undertaken a number of initiatives aiming at ensuring that sustainable development goals are reached in an equitable and inclusive manner which leaves no one behind.

Among our national priorities, as presented in the Voluntary National Report, is the balanced integration of economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, as well as of rule of law, good governance and democratic and transparent decision-making, in all relevant policies.

In order to build efficient, responsible and transparent institutions and to support open, inclusive and democratic procedures, Greece is undertaking structural and institutional reforms, especially as regards public administration. These reforms aim, inter alia, to improve the protection and promotion of HR, but also to strengthen partnerships between different stakeholders, both on a national and international level. In this vein, the Greek Government has initiated numerous international and regional frameworks closely linked to HR, democracy and peaceful coexistence. The implementation of SDGs is therefore central to Greek Foreign Policy, as it seeks to promote peace, security, the respect of HR, law and good governance, inter alia through trade and investment, development assistance, economic and sector-specific cooperation.

In that framework, different Ministries have already undertaken a series of initiatives for the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies and accountable institutions, as provided for in SDG 16. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has organized a series of international conferences and ministerial meetings on topics related to HR (SDGs 16.2, 16.3, 17.17), democracy and peaceful coexistence, including safety and stability, migration, environmental sustainability and religious and political pluralism. The Ministry of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights works towards the planning and implementation of effective policies aiming at strengthening transparency and the protection of human rights, as well as against monopolies. The Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs is active in essential fields, including peace and Human Rights, development, intercultural education, Global citizenship and World Heritage.

Among the measures taken to strengthen HR through the operationalization of the SDGs are:

- The reinforcement and broadening of the competences of the Ombudsman.  
The Greek Ombudsman is committed to the strategic objectives of safeguarding the respect for civil, political and social rights, of defending the fundamental constitutional guarantees, enhancing the rule of law and of strengthening the democratic governance principles and mechanisms. The portfolio of the Greek Ombudsman are directly related to key areas of the SDGs (e.g. human rights is directly related to SDGs 1, 4, 10, 16, 17,

environment, and quality of life to SDGs 2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, equal treatment to SDGs 3, 4, 5, 16, etc.)

- The Immigration and Social Inclusion Code (Law 4251/2014) was drafted with the aim to reduce the operational and administrative workload and costs, improve the services offered to interested citizens and facilitate the operation of the competent services, in particular through the simplification of procedures and the operation of one-stop-shops for migrants
- A Special Secretariat for the Social Inclusion of the Roma (Law 4430/2016) has been established in the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Social Solidarity and the national strategy for the social inclusion of this population group has been developed.
- The Greek public administration is a member of the Open Government Partnership and therefore participates in relevant initiatives aiming at improving transparency.
- The Greek Government has established the Migrants' Integration Councils, which constitute advisory bodies to the municipalities in the decision-making process at local level, with the possibility of migrants to participate (Law 3852/2010).
- Achieving gender equality and empower all women and girls (SDG 5) constitutes one of the main priorities for Greece. This overarching priority is pursued by the General Secretariat for Gender Equality (GSGE)/ Ministry of Interior. The issue of gender equality is comprehensively addressed by the National Action Plan on Gender Equality 2016-2020 (NAPGE). Furthermore, apart from the General Secretariat for Gender Equality, the Ministry for Migration Policy systematically collaborates with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' National Referral Mechanism as well as all relevant ministries in order to combat human trafficking and to protect victims. At the legislative level and in line with relevant EU legislation, special care is taken for the granting of residence permit to third country citizens who have been characterised as victims of trafficking in human beings or migrants' smuggling, as well as to victims of domestic violence.
- Numerous initiatives have been undertaken on a municipal level, notably Athens, Thessaloniki and Trikala.
  
- As regards initiatives underway, Greece will soon adopt a new National Plan of Action on the Rights of the Child, which will contribute to the better protection of this vulnerable group (SDG 16.2). Legislative measures are already underway, while more are planned, in order to promote the rule of law and access to justice (SDG 16.3). Other plans include infrastructure, human resources and the use of new technologies. The issues of racism and intolerance will also be in focus, including through the recently established National Council Against Racism and Intolerance, expected to further improve the implementation of the legal framework against racism and lead to effectively combating hate crimes in all areas of public life. It has inter alia been tasked with setting up a global unified national strategy against racism (SDGs 1,4,10,16,17), inter alia through the adoption of a new National Action Plan.

Greece remains convinced that the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as tackling extreme poverty and hunger constitute the basis for achieving equality, peace and

sustainable development. We look forward to the reinforcement of synergies on all levels in order to stress the linkage between Human Rights and SDGs. We consider this meeting to be an important step in improving relevant global action and cooperation in this regard.