



**Voluntary National Review (VNR) on the Implementation of the 2030
Agenda for Sustainable Development**

Mr George Vernicos,

President of the Economic and Social Council of Greece

The Economic and Social Council of Greece (ESC), which I represent, is the constitutionally established institution that conducts social dialogue in Greece. Our members' list consists of all the social partners and a wide range of civil society organizations, thus covering the whole of the productive and social players in the country. My role today is to underline the importance of social dialogue throughout the process of implementing Agenda 2030, as well as to present our contribution to the process so far.

The success of any policy depends greatly on the acceptance of society. Especially for a multi-level and complex plan such as the Agenda 2030, social dialogue and civil society involvement are vital to achieving increased consensus and mobilizing the entire economy and society. The effective implementation of the Agenda 2030 is a process that affects our present and our future and should therefore involve every citizen, in every part of the world.

The Greek Government, from the early stages of the whole process, has asked for the ESC to be actively involved with the aim of achieving stakeholder engagement and the highest possible representation of civil society. The ESC of Greece applauds this initiative and believes that it has been fruitful so far. Upon request from the Greek Government, the ESC issued an Opinion on the SDG's, thus providing input for defining the National Priorities. This Opinion also included a comprehensive set of proposals regarding the effective implementation of key economic, social and environmental aspects of the SDGs at national level, including SDGs 7, 8, 9 and 10.

Furthermore, the ESC has assumed an important role towards promoting the systematic and structured consultation and dialogue on the effective implementation of SDGs at different levels and sectors and has launched various events to disseminate relevant information.

What should really be stressed out is that Greece's commitment towards the implementation of the SDGs should be an essential part of an overall development strategy for the future. A strategy to re-launch the economy, to exit the crisis, to tackle inequalities and preserve the environment. It's within this context that the ESC has incorporated the SDG's into all its activities, most notably the open, structured dialogue amongst its members towards a National Strategic Plan for growth, social cohesion, social justice, inclusion and sustainable management of the environment and natural resources. We have already reached an Agreement that has led to a Joint Declaration presenting the Central Development Goals as well as the Main Intervention Axes on which all the productive and social actors of the country agree. At this stage, we

continue the dialogue in order to come up with concrete proposals for each Priority Axis. Our goal is to deliver to the Greek Government and the Greek Parliament a complete National Development Plan in line with the Agenda 2030 which, unlike the respective Plans that have been occasionally presented by governments and political parties, will incorporate social consensus.

As far as the implementation of the Agenda 2030 is concerned, it is an ongoing process whose success will depend on various factors. From our part, I can assure you that the Economic and Social Council of Greece is strongly committed to actively participating in the next stages, such as the upcoming National Implementation Plan. The ESC will continue to conduct social dialogue in close cooperation with its members and organized civil society, in order to provide structured proposals to the Greek Government and the Greek Parliament. Proposals that will incorporate the views of society and will be useful to the effective implementation of Agenda 2030.