**SR Environment, report to the GA on “Human Rights, Transformative Actions and the UN Sustainable Development Goals” (deadline May 15):** [**https://www.ohchr.org/en/calls-for-input/calls-input/call-inputs-human-rights-transformative-actions-and-un-sustainable**](https://www.ohchr.org/en/calls-for-input/calls-input/call-inputs-human-rights-transformative-actions-and-un-sustainable)

**1. What transformative actions would be required, given the national context of your State, to achieve SDGs directly linked to environmental sustainability (SDGs 2, 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15)? Transformative actions can be understood as “bold and transformative steps which are urgently needed to shift the world on to a sustainable and resilient path”.1**

As a small developing island state, Vanuatu aspires to pursue a path of sustainable and inclusive development for the collective benefit of its’ citizens. Being usually ranked as number one in the world where risk exposure is concerned, Vanuatu further perceives transformative actions as those that are essential for resilience building. Vanuatu, and all Pacific Leaders have affirmed that climate change is “the single greatest threat to the livelihoods, security and wellbeing of the peoples of the Pacific (Boe Declaration 2018, Kainaki II Declaration 2019).

The essence of bold and transformative action needs to be infused in all facets of development. Shifts are required across all governance levels in the domains of technology, knowledge and skills, finance and institutional frameworks. Effective transformative actions are warranted within an enabling environment that fosters innovative partnerships between a diverse range of stakeholders.

For Vanuatu, to understand and respond to the sustainable development, human security implications of climate change in the Pacific, there must be a renewed institutional integration and coordination as well as predictable and sustainable funding and capacity.

Human security—defined in terms of the preservation of the welfare, wellbeing and life prospects of people, as individuals and as members of a community—is directly and immediately affected by threats posed by climate change, especially for the people of the Pacific.

Recognition of the threat posed by climate change to human security by Pacific leaders is therefore important in helping to expand the threat agenda, and guide responses to this threat.

**2. What steps has your State taken to accelerate progress towards fulfilling the eight SDGs that have the most direct environmental linkages (SDGs 2, 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15)?**

Vanuatu has taken substantive bold policy reforms to effectively facilitate its’ journey to fulfilling environmentally related SDGs. The country’s principal development framework, Vanuatu 2030 – The People’s Plan, places high priority on environmental sustainability as a central pillar for all aspects of development. Additionally, core policies such as the National Environment Policy and the National Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction signal Vanuatu’s focused strategic priority actions relative to environmental sustainability and resilience building. Furthermore, a host of sector policies have mainstreamed environmental sustainability and climate resilience within their respective key thematic actions e.g. tourism, water, agriculture and infrastructure policies.

In addition, Vanuatu sees the importance of significantly addressing the risks to its’ development aspirations namely from climate change. On that front, Vanuatu is taking measures to accelerate progress via synergies with other environmentally related SDGs along the core pathway of climate action (SDG 13). The Government of Vanuatu has recently revised and updated its’ Nationally Determined Contribution to the UNFCCC Paris Agreement, which will be submitted before COP27 in 2022. The new NDC includes 116 new adaptation commitments and 12 loss and damage targets, including a strong focus on ecosystem-based adaptation as well as addressing the impacts of climate change on biodiversity and environmental goods and services.

The government recognizes the need to relate the causes and effects of climate change to concepts of environmental justice and social justice. There are veritable concerns about the inequitable outcomes for different people and places associated with vulnerability to climate impacts, loss and damage.

**3. What specific actions is your State taking to fulfil the commitments to “leave no one behind” and to prioritize actions “to reach the furthest behind first” in terms of achieving SDGs 2, 6, 7, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15?**

The State’s current commitments to “leave no one behind” and to “reach the furthest behind first” are signaled and actioned through sector polices such as National Gender Equality Policy (2020 – 2030), National Disability Inclusive Development Policy (2018 – 2025) and the National Child Protection Policy (2016 – 2026). Respective programs and initiatives from these sector policies recognize and integrate targets related to the achievement of SDGs 2, 6, 7, 10, 12, 13, 14 and 15. Furthermore the establishment of a Gender Protection Cluster within the Ministry of Justice and Community Services serves to ensure the needs to vulnerable groups are addressed during both disaster preparedness and response phases.

Of added value is the Vanuatu government’s present ambition to seek climate related environmental justice and social justice to address human rights particularly for vulnerable groups within the present and future generations.

**4. Are there any good practices that you would like to highlight?**

**5. How much budget has your State invested, since 2015, on actions to fulfil the eight SDGs that have the most direct environmental linkages (SDGs 2, 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15)?**

On average, from 2013 to 2022, environmentally linked SDGS make up to at least 5 percent of Vanuatu’s national budget. More specifically climate justice and environmental sustainability related commitments are predominately featured within Vanuatu’s Enhanced NDC. It is estimated that the total cost for Vanuatu to achieve its’ Enhanced NDC to be USD 1,214,350,000.

6**. What are the main barriers to progress towards achieving the relevant SDGs?**

The achievement of the relevant environmental sustainability related SDGS can only be realized where the country seeks to substantively overcome hurdles with respects to:

1. Inadequate financing from both public and private sources;
2. Limited capacity Building/human resource development in critical sectors
3. Minimal or non-existent statistics including baseline data and trends analysis to inform decision making and relevant development implementation.

**7. How can steps taken by your State to implement the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment (recognized in A/HRC/RES/48/13) serve as a catalyst for making more rapid progress towards SDGs 2, 6, 7, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15?**

Vanuatu is now in the process of requesting from the International Court of Justice (ICJ) an advisory opinion seeking clarification on the duties of states under international law to respond to climate change in order to protect the rights of present and future generations.

It is envisaged that an opinion from the ICJ will foster enhanced international cooperation in the area of climate action and environmental protection.

Most importantly a resolution from the ICJ will encourage States to reflect their highest possible level of ambition, particularly when preparing their nationally-determined contributions under the Paris Agreement and in providing synergistic support towards SDGs 2, 6, 7, 10, 12, 13, 14 and 15.

In the legal formulation proposed by Vanuatu, the International Court of Justice would be requested to provide legal clarity on important legal principles such as precautionary decision-making, and the obligation to preventing significant harm to the climate system and other parts of the environment

**8. How could increasing gender equality contribute to more rapid progress towards SDGs 2, 6, 7, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15?**

Women and girls are highly impactful agents of change in Vanuatu, holding important traditional decision-making roles in their families, communities and schools. Women and girls have unique abilities as drivers of solutions when they are empowered, as men and women have different coping mechanisms, capacities and experiences in the face of climate change and disasters. Women and girls play an important role in environmental management, climate change adaptation and mitigation because of their roles in core environmental sustainability sectors: agriculture, livestock management, energy, disaster risk reduction (DRR), forestry, water management and health. Increasingly, women are entering into, but still underrepresented in renewable energy and mitigation activities in Vanuatu. Women’s local and environmental knowledge and survival strategies are major ingredients for recovery and resilience.

**9. How can businesses contribute to transformative actions and accelerating progress to achieve SDGs 2, 6, 7, 10, 12, 13, 14, and 15?**

Businesses are vital players in accelerating progress to achieve SDGS. Business entities can significantly contribute by modifying their operations towards more corporate socially responsible compatible actions. The exploration and pursuit of circular low carbon economy initiatives is another practical pathway for businesses to achieve impactful SDGs outcomes.

SDGs financing is further a critical and supplementary area by which businesses can effectively shift progress. Unlocking private finance or blending financial instruments are avenues that businesses are able to transform advancement towards the achievement of SDGs 2, 6, 7, 10, 12, 13, 14, and 15.

Here in Vanuatu, the Government has officially recognized business and private sector within the institutional structure of the National Advisory Board on Climate Change & Disaster Risk Reduction, specifically through representation by the Vanuatu Business Resilience Council.