Statement by Albanian Civil Society Organizations (VNR Presentation)

Distinguished Chair, Excellencies, and esteemed delegates,

We, the undersigned civil society organizations of Albania, welcome the opportunity to contribute to this Voluntary National Review at the United Nations. We acknowledge the progress achieved by Albania in advancing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its continued engagement with the Sustainable Development Goals. These efforts demonstrate an important commitment to reform and international cooperation.

At the same time, we wish to emphasize that implementation gaps remain significant and continue to affect the most vulnerable groups in society. Structural challenges persist across key areas, including poverty reduction, quality education, gender equality, decent work, reduced inequalities, and strong institutions. Limited institutional coordination, uneven resource allocation particularly at local level and weaknesses in enforcement and accountability continue to constrain the full realization of the SDGs.

Violence against children and women, including online exploitation, remains a serious concern requiring stronger prevention systems, and enhanced interinstitutional coordination. Albania's evolving role as a destination country for human trafficking further highlights the urgent need to strengthen identification, protection, and referral mechanisms, including a fully functional and victim-centred National Referral Mechanism.

Roma communities continue to face structural exclusion, including poverty, inadequate housing, limited access to quality education and employment, restricted access to essential services, and persistent discrimination, including discrimination based on work and descent and antigypsyism. These realities require sustained political commitment, adequate financing, and effective implementation of inclusion policies to ensure equal opportunities and dignity for all.

Achieving the SDGs requires a renewed commitment to partnership, human rights, and equality. Only through inclusive and coordinated action can we ensure that no one is left behind, and that the promise of the 2030 Agenda becomes a lived reality for all people in Albania.

Question to the representative of the Albanian government: What concrete, time-bound actions will the Government take before the next Voluntary National Review to strengthen accountability, protect children, ensure adequate financing for social inclusion, combat discrimination including discrimination based on work and descent and antigypsyism, and guarantee the meaningful participation of civil society in implementing and monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals?

Thank you.