



ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF AFGHANISTAN

MINISTRY OF ECONOMY

Afghanistan VNR-2021 Key Messages **At High Level Political Forum (HLPF)**

Realizing Self-Reliance by Accelerating SDG implementation

Afghanistan has the privilege to present its second Voluntary National Review (VNR) report on progress towards the SDGs this year. Since the adoption of the SDGs, the Afghan government has committed to the attainment of this global development agenda. To demonstrate political will and promote national ownership, Afghanistan integrated the SDGs into its national development framework, created an institutional mechanism to enable an environment for policy and technical innovation, and successfully developed national SDGs through robust consultations with all stakeholders.

Alongside government efforts to achieve the targeted economic, social and environmental goals, Afghanistan faced significant existing and emerging challenges, which affected Afghanistan's development efforts, including the overall achievement of the SDGs. The COVID-19 pandemic and its socio-economic consequences, a decrease in economic growth, the prolongation of the peace process and the associated increase in civilian and military casualties, the negative impact of the withdrawal of the international coalition forces and the government's increased security burden, and the impact of climate change have all directly impacted Afghanistan's socio-economic and environmental progress, including the achievement of the SDGs.

Considering the situation, the Afghan government launched the second National Peace and Development Framework (ANPDFII) in July 2020, to continue the agenda of eradicating poverty, developing the country into a self-reliant and productive economy connected with the region and the world, investing in strong institutions, while continuing our endeavors to address the risks imposed by COVID-19. Our development focus for the next five years will be on peace-building, state-building, and market-building.

At the core of our vision lies the principle of state response to citizens' demands, especially those of women and the most vulnerable, in a direct, accountable, and transparent manner. The Government has taken concrete steps since its last VNR in 2017. These steps include but are not limited to:

- 1) Nationalizing the SDGs with 16 goals, 110 targets, and 177 indicators,

- 2) To further improve the political and technical enabling environment, a new institutional set up under the chairmanship of the Chief Executive with four thematic committees established to provide a sustained high-level platform to engage various stakeholders, including the government, the private sector, civil society organizations, academia, and development partners.
- 3) The National SDGs aligned with the national development plan (ANPDF), which are now being aligned with the second version (ANPDF II),
- 4) The national Afghanistan SDGs (A-SDGs) were aligned with 10 national priority programs (NPPs).
- 5) Prioritization of the A-SDGs using the Multi-Criteria Analysis methodology, which scored all SDG targets based on a weighted linear average of the level of urgency, the systemic impact and the policy gap analysis indicators,
- 6) Completion of the Data Gap Analysis on the A-SDGs.
- 7) The Computable General Equilibrium (CGE) model for the SDGs was developed. The SDGs Dashboard and M&E framework, SDGs financing strategy and SDGs costing are under process.

The COVID-19 pandemic had a substantial negative impact on Afghanistan's accelerated efforts to achieve the planned economic, social, and environmental targets and overall the SDGs. The government quickly recognized the seriousness of the COVID-19 pandemic and mapped its trajectory into five phases of; acknowledgment, diffusion, adversity, relief, and recovery phases and organized a whole-of-state response, delegating unprecedented authority to the Ministry of Public Health and the provincial governors.

The government, considering fiscal realities, undertook a restructuring of its existing programs, closed non-performing projects, and aligned all resources to help meet the immediate needs of citizens, relief, response, recovery, and resilience objectives related to COVID-19. Given the vast impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, in the short to medium-term, Afghanistan will be unable to meet all financing needs from domestic revenue sources.

We commit and meanwhile attach much importance to meaningful international cooperation for attaining the SDGs. Global partnership is required in the form of finance, technology, and trade, particularly for countries in special situations to accelerate the implementation of the SDGs and the realization of its core philosophy of leaving no one behind.

Successful implementation of the SDGs complements our endeavors to achieve our national aspiration for granting lasting peace, self-reliance, and economic growth as we move into the second half of Afghanistan's decade of transformation, from 2021-2025.