

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Sang-wook Ham,  
Deputy Minister for Multilateral and Global Affairs  
of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea  
on behalf of MIKTA (Mexico, Indonesia, Republic of Korea, Turkey, and  
Australia) at the 2020 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development**

Madam President,

It is an honor to speak on behalf of MIKTA countries, namely Mexico, Indonesia, Republic of Korea, Turkey, and Australia. Bringing together five countries across regions, each with its unique cultural and historical background, MIKTA has demonstrated that a shared vision of a more inclusive, sustainable, just, and resilient world can transcend national differences.

Such shared vision and collective action are what we need right now to accelerate the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the COVID-19 era. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, there were concerns that we were not on track to achieve the SDGs by 2030, and the financing gap remained significant. With COVID-19, much more work is required, and the relevance of multilateralism and international cooperation have become more evident than ever. In implementing our efforts in the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development, we would like to highlight three major issues that require our special attention.

Firstly, we emphasize **the increasing importance of the “leave no one behind” principle of the SDGs as well as equality and inclusion as the impetus for sustainable development.** Rising inequalities were already a big concern. Now, the COVID-19 pandemic is exposing inequalities within and among our societies even more explicitly. An inclusive and gender-responsive approach will be key to building back better. We are concerned by the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on people living in poverty and those in vulnerable situations, including women, children, the elderly, persons with disabilities,

refugees, internally displaced persons, and migrants. Also, the increasing stigma and discrimination against race, ethnicity, and nationality, and consequent social unrest are worrying. We should prioritize the poorest and the most vulnerable, particularly children and the elderly left alone during the pandemic, in our efforts to strengthen the social safety net, eradicate poverty, expand digital and financial inclusion, and increase education and employment opportunities under the recognition that tens of millions of people are at risk of being pushed back into extreme poverty and hunger. Without a solid foundation for our societies, we may slide back from hard-won development gains whenever a crisis hits.

Secondly, **multi-stakeholder partnerships at all levels are crucial** for mobilizing various sources of finance, knowledge, and innovation. Strengthening the capacity and solidarity of all segments of society will also be an engine for a resilient and sustainable recovery. In this regard, we must continue to engage with a diverse range of actors, including central and local governments, the parliament, civil society, the youth, the private sector, philanthropy, the media, and the academia. In particular, MIKTA will continue its active engagement with the academia and youths at home and abroad to facilitate global discussions on ways to unlock the future we want. We also recognize the importance of supporting the private sector – especially micro, small, and medium enterprises as well as enterprises led by women – and the informal sector as they play a critical role in creating jobs, promoting innovation, improving the skillset in new technologies, providing goods and services, and generating a better condition for communities. Faced with the COVID-19 pandemic, we reiterate the importance of coordinating international responses to avoid unnecessary interference with international traffic and trade, revive international trade and investments, and ensure the proper functioning of global supply chains. International cooperation and solidarity are also important, including to ensure countries' debt sustainability and sufficient fiscal space to address the pandemic and achieve sustainable development. We recognize the importance of strengthening the means of implementation to achieve the SDGs.

Lastly, we are **committed to building back better** by investing more in research, innovation, connectivity, and infrastructure with the aim of strengthening resilience against climate and disaster risks and environmental sustainability across governments and stakeholders. Such efforts will not only contribute to achieving the SDGs and their targets but also prepare us to respond effectively to any crisis. International cooperation must be strengthened to ensure global access to safe and affordable medicines, vaccines, and medical equipment for COVID-19 as laid out in General Assembly resolution 74/274. Furthermore, we recognize the role of extensive immunization against COVID-19 as a global public good. On this note, we welcome the *Tech Access Partnership* launched by the United Nations Technology Bank together with the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, and the World Health Organization to improve the medical production capability of developing countries, the least developed countries in particular. Digitalization and connectivity, accessible by all, will be more critical than ever, but many are at risk of being left behind. The focus should be given to addressing the digital gap as nearly half of the world has no access to the Internet, particularly women. In this regard, we welcome the launching of the Secretary-General's Roadmap for Digital Cooperation. We also highlight the value of efforts on many levels to prevent future zoonotic disease threats, including the One Health approach. We should be firmly reminded that we can never achieve sustainable development by turning a blind eye to the suffering of our planet. We must step up our efforts to change the patterns of energy production and consumption in a sustainable manner and address the high level of carbon emissions through international cooperation.

MIKTA will continue to play its part in forging cooperation to address the current challenges and accelerate SDG implementation in its entirety. Adding a new layer to the existing MIKTA network, we have launched a dialogue channel among our development cooperation agencies to share best practices and explore ideas for collaboration. We are confident that our individual and collective commitments to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development will continue to grow, particularly with the election of Indonesia and Mexico as United Nations Economic and Social Council members for the 2021-2023 term

– joining Australia and the Republic of Korea, and the election of Turkey’s candidate as the seventy-fifth President of the United Nations General Assembly.

Taking this opportunity, in my national capacity, I would like to briefly touch upon the Republic of Korea’s contributions to SDG implementation in the COVID-19 context.

At home, my government recently announced **the "Korean New Deal," which consists of two main pillars: digitalization and decarbonization.** While the details of this initiative are still being fleshed out, large-scale investments will be made to strengthen the digital ecosystem, enhance digital inclusion and access, promote green innovation, and accelerate green transformation of infrastructure, eventually contributing to creating jobs and nurturing new industries. A green recovery is not a trade-off to poverty alleviation and economic growth. Rather, it can contribute to economic and social prosperity, and vice versa.

Globally, we are launching **the *Building TRUST (Transparency, Resilience, Unity, and Safety Together) Initiative* to provide comprehensive development support to our partner countries in tackling the challenges related to COVID-19.** Activities under the initiative range from emergency relief and health services to longer-term socioeconomic support that aims to increase resilience. In addition, we will continue to share our experience and best practices in responding to COVID-19 through dialogues, webinars, and publications to contribute to the wisdom pool of overcoming the complex challenges of the pandemic.

Amid the COVID-19 crisis, we have been able to see how closely we all are connected as a global community. Closing borders and becoming insular will not resolve the challenges. **Only through multilateralism, international cooperation, and collective actions based on trust and openness,** we can make the world a better and safer place for all.

Thank you very much. /end/