

HLPF / ECOSOC high level segment, 19 July 2016
Czech Republic: Foreign Minister, H.E. Mr. Lubomír Zaorálek

(check against delivery)

Mr. Secretary General, Mr. President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Czech Republic aligns itself with the statement delivered by Commissioner Mimica on behalf of the EU and its Member States. Additionally, I would like to make the following points in national capacity.

Last year was crucial for the future of sustainable development. Across the subjects and around the world, we have reached several important global agreements. But as significant as these accords may be, they are just the beginning. Leadership and commitment to translating last year's promises into this year's real actions must follow.

This session of the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) – the first since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals – demonstrates that the will to keep promises is there. It also proves that the HLPF is the right forum to provide political leadership, guidance and recommendations for the implementation of sustainable development commitments.

I would like to congratulate all the countries that present their National Voluntary Reviews already this year. I am grateful for the valuable opportunity for my country to learn how the implementation process is dealt with throughout the world. And I am looking forward to the presentation of the Czech Republic's National Voluntary Review before long, possibly next year.

The Czech Republic has already started her homework on all levels – national, regional and global.

Firstly, **on national level**, the Prime Minister himself is tasked with the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the process is well on track. A new Strategic Framework for Sustainable Development of the Czech Republic, fully reflecting the new global framework, is currently under preparation and should be completed by the end of this year. And we are preparing it with participation as a key principle on our mind. That is why ministries, state and non-state institutions, civil society, business and academia have all been participating in numerous round tables, sharing good practices, discussing challenges and overall shaping of a sustainable future for our country.

In order to take account of the 2030 Agenda, I tasked my Ministry to put greater emphasis on the social dimension of foreign policy with human dignity at its core. Allow me to give a few concrete examples of our efforts:

- The new Czech Development Cooperation Strategy, which is to become effective in 2018, will fully respect the principle “Leave No One Behind”. It will include a stronger focus on the Least Developed Countries and cover most of the 17 SDGs. There are five priority areas under consideration: Good Governance and Strengthened Democracy, Sustainable Management of Natural Resources, Sustainable Economic Growth, Agriculture and Rural Development, and Inclusive Social Development.
- The Future of Work Initiative of the International Labour Organization is of high interest to the Czech Republic because productive employment and decent work are the key elements to achieving fair globalization and poverty reduction. In November 2016 the Czech Republic will host a high level regional conference which is part of the global effort.

- Empowering women and girls is a key to achieving genuine sustainable development. Gender equality is not only a human right but it also has a multiplier effect across all other development areas. Ending all forms of discrimination against women and girls is a priority for the Czech government domestically as well as internationally. It was only natural for me to personally support the HeForShe Initiative by UN Women.

And I am proud to say that we do put money where our mouth is. Two weeks ago, my Government approved increased funding for bilateral development cooperation, which should now grow on a yearly basis. We also make voluntary financial contributions to the initiatives we support.

Secondly, the Czech Republic recognizes that **regional** and sub-regional fora have an important role to play in the implementation of 2030 Agenda, especially in its follow-up and review process. We recently chaired the first ever Regional Forum on Sustainable Development organized under the auspices of the UN Economic Commission for Europe. The conclusions that the Regional Forum arrived at were forwarded as a contribution of the UNECE Region to this meeting.

Moreover, my country has been a strong supporter of the SDGs implementation in the EU, through its internal as well as external action. Lately, we have actively participated in a public consultation on a new European Consensus on Development.

Thirdly, the Czech Republic also wants to play an active role in the process of implementation of the groundbreaking 2030 Agenda on **global level**. That is why we not only strove for a membership of the Economic and Social Council, but also decided to present our candidacy for the Vice-Presidency of the ECOSOC.

It will make us very proud if we are elected to the ECOSOC bureau at the elections that will take place here in New York in a few days. And I can promise that if elected, the Czech Republic will do its utmost to contribute to the success of the 2030 Agenda we are all hoping for.

Thank you for your attention.