

HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM 2020

Theme: Accelerated Action and Transformative Pathways: Realizing the Decade of Action and Delivery for Sustainable Development

Friday, 17 July 2020, 10:30 AM -11:30 AM

Where are we heading: Visions and scenarios for the future of the SDGs following the COVID-19 crisis

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I congratulate the UN Economic and Social Council for hosting the High-Level Political Forum 2020 despite the pandemic challenge we are facing today. This session is important. Malaysia reiterates its commitment to support the accelerated action and transformative pathways of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Malaysia's development plans have always been geared towards sustainable development. Hence, SDGs have been seamlessly embedded into our five-yearly national development plans as well as the Shared Prosperity Vision 2030.

The impact of COVID-19 on the world economy has been devastating. The massive spread of the virus has forced countries to close borders and enforce lockdowns. Travel restrictions have significantly disrupted business activities in various sectors, affecting incomes and livelihood.

The wellbeing of the people has always been at the heart of Malaysia's development. We have cushioned the impact of the pandemic by introducing a number of economic stimulus packages totalling about 70 billion US Dollars. These include the protection of jobs as well as providing funds to support the bottom 40% of households, Small and Medium Enterprises and larger businesses.

The whole nation has been united in fighting the pandemic. We have been internationally acknowledged for effectively containing the situation. Medical assistance, food, and donations from individuals, the private sector and NGOs have been distributed to those in need including foreign workers.

Excellencies,

Malaysia, as the Chair of APEC 2020, pledges to facilitate the flow of essential goods and services to fight the pandemic and strengthen regional connectivity by intensifying efforts to make global supply chains more resilient and less vulnerable to shocks. In order to advance sustainable economic growth, we are committed to ensure that trading links remain open. We will collectively explore ways to facilitate essential movement of the people across borders, without affecting efforts to prevent the spread of the virus.

The current pandemic is an unprecedented global crisis. On the positive side, lockdowns and physical distancing measures have resulted in cleaner air and less pollution. Air pollution has decreased in Malaysia, where the percentage of stations which recorded “good” air quality readings increased two-fold from 28% to 57% after the Movement Control Order was enforced.

This may be temporary as global carbon emission may rise when economic activities are back to normal. Therefore, we must take decisive action to change the “business as usual” approach and transform how we do things. These include how we commute, how we manage resources and how we reduce waste as well as greenhouse gas emissions. We should lay the groundwork to accelerate the transition to the circular economy and more sustainable approaches to development. The pandemic is a turning point.

It is imperative for all countries to respect the planet's limits and value our natural endowments. In this regard, we should remain committed to address the issue of global climate change.

Excellencies,

Malaysia hopes the UN and member states will continue to share their best practices, knowledge and technical expertise through capacity building in realising the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Thank you.