

**Statement by Prof. Dr. Puspa Raj Kadel, Vice-Chair of National Planning Commission and
the Head of Nepali Delegation,
at the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development 2020
Ministerial Segment, New York, 14-16 July 2020**

Madam President,

I would like to appreciate your leadership for convening this year's High-Level Political Forum despite the disruptions caused by COVID-19.

The sustainable development goals have become more important than ever as we face this multifaceted crisis that is wreaking havoc on life and livelihoods, and in societies and economies.

The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed the fault-lines—be it in terms of inequality, economic sustainability, or poverty. For the countries in special situation LDCs, LLDCs and SIDs –it has further intensified the pre-existing challenges, brought economies to standstill, and threatened to reverse the hard-earned development gains.

The COVID-19 is plainly a clarion call for sustainability, resilience, and global cooperation. The current crisis is also an opportune time to reflect on our actions and accelerate our initiatives with transformative pathways for the collective good, in a more coordinated manner.

In these trying times, the Sustainable Development Goals serve as the signposts for a better tomorrow, as rightly captured in the theme “*Accelerated action and transformative pathways: realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development*”

The overarching goal ahead should be to effectively respond to the pandemic and its fallouts while keeping in focus the attainment of 2030 Agenda.

Sustainability and the principle of ‘leaving no one behind’ must underpin our responses. Building back better and realizing the decade of action must go hand in hand.

Madam President,

2030 Agenda is well integrated into Nepal's policy frameworks –at all levels of the government. The Constitution of Nepal embodies the principle of 'leaving no-one behind'.

The current 15th Development Plan along with the 25-Year Long-term Vision have fully integrated the SDGs. The national aspiration of a 'Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepali' provides a pathway for achieving the interconnected and indivisible goals of social, economic, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

Reaffirming the commitment to the global development agenda, Nepal presented its second VNR last week showcasing the achievements and challenges. We remain committed to realizing the SDGs thereby building on the progress made in poverty reduction, education, health, energy, gender equality, among others.

By and large, Nepal is on the right direction of achieving the 2030 Agenda. However, our development path is beset with challenges –structural, financial, institutional, and technological. Vulnerabilities to climate change and disasters further accentuate them.

As in many other countries, the COVID-19 has brought Nepal's economy to a standstill – impacting industry, employment, trade, revenues, tourism, and remittances. It is likely to constrain Nepal's economic growth to less than expected in FY2019/20 and increase the resource requirements. This is sure to have a bearing on Nepal's ambition for smooth and sustainable graduation from LDC category.

There is a need for scaling up international partnerships, with means of implementation matching up the level of ambition. Development partners need to support and complement the national efforts of developing countries.

Only a genuine spirit of global solidarity to support and complement the efforts of the poorest and most vulnerable can ensure that no one is left behind.

All means of implementation, including ODA, trade, technology, and capacity building need to be deployed for increasing the productive capacity and building sustainable and resilient infrastructure in LDCs and LLDCs.

Nepal is committed to doing all it can and anticipates an enhanced level of international partnership to create synergy while implementing globally agreed development outcomes such as Addis Ababa Action Agenda, IPOA, VPOA and 2030 Agenda.

To conclude, Madam President, we created this Forum for review and follow-up on the implementation of SDGs. Its credibility will be defined by its ability to provide leadership and guidance to implement the 2030 Agenda effectively. Nepal looks forward to closely working with the United Nations, fellow Member States, and development partners to rise up to the challenge so that we would build back better and emerge stronger and more resilient in the days ahead.

I thank you for your attention.