



**Statement by H.E. Mr. Lasha Darsalia, First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of
Georgia**

High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development: “Sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic that promotes the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development: building an inclusive and effective path for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda in the context of the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development”.

Ministerial meeting of the HLPF, convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

General Debate

Mr. President,

Distinguished delegates,

Every year we gather at this high forum to assess progress towards sustainable development and deliberate on the ways to advance it. Unfortunately, the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development started with an unprecedented crisis throughout the history of the humanity. Decades of the development efforts have been undermined by the pandemic that has claimed over 4 million lives and devastated global economy.

Recovery from the severe crisis demands collective response from governments, international organizations and other stakeholders. And we concur with the Secretary General¹ that getting back on track with the Goals, will require taking advantage of the recovery “to adopt low-carbon, resilient and inclusive development pathways that will reduce carbon emissions, conserve natural resources, create better jobs, advance gender equality and tackle growing inequities”.

Mr. President,

¹ E/2021/58 - Report of the Secretary-General “Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals”, 30 April 2021.

Georgia remains committed to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and as a further illustration to this end, presented the Voluntary National Review (VNR) at the HLPF for the second time last year.

The Government has developed a framework, which ensures that the national and sector policy documents are in accordance with the Agenda 2030 and its Goals. In order to mainstream the SDGs in the local self-government level, a localization plan for the implementation of SDGs at the local level has also been elaborated.

To mitigate the damage caused by the pandemic, the Government developed anti-crisis plan, which was implemented in two stages and covered a large part of the population with various targeted benefits and assistance.

Georgia has remained committed to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all during the pandemic. Thanks to the Universal Health Care Program launched in 2013, everyone in the country has access to the free-of-charge treatment they need for the COVID-19.

[Recognizing the green economy's potential for sustainable economic growth, job creation and poverty reduction, we have been working on the Green Growth Concept with a view towards adoption of the Green Growth Strategy.]

Excellences,

Regrettably, the recent years have been the warmest on record² requiring ambitious, and urgent actions to combat climate change and to implement the SDG 13. In this regard, we look forward to the COP 26 in Glasgow with the expectation of significant progress in addressing the above-mentioned crisis.

Among the national level efforts let me highlight the establishment of the multisectoral Climate Change Council in 2020 to ensure the efficient implementation of the UNFCCC (UN Framework Convention on Climate Change), the Kyoto Protocol, and the Paris Agreement. The Council has endorsed Georgia's updated Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), which was submitted to the UNFCCC secretariat in May 2021.

Distinguished colleagues,

Georgia attaches particular importance to the SDG 16 that we believe is the key for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. In this regard, special attention has been

² Ibid.

paid to further improvement of accessibility to public services throughout the country. E-Governance has continued to be widely used in public service delivery that ensures smooth operation of public institutions.

Despite the significant progress Georgia has achieved over the years in eradicating corruption, prevention of corruption continues to be one of the top priorities of the Government as a part of the overarching goal to enhance an institutional democracy and uphold the principles of transparency, accountability and rule of law in the country.

Excellences,

Unfortunately, Russia's occupation and effective control of Georgia's regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali, which has been clearly attested by the 21 January 2021 ruling of the European Court of Human Rights, prevents the Government from the possibility to share the benefits of sustainable development with the conflict-affected people in the Russia-occupied Georgian regions, who with no international human rights mechanisms on the ground, are daily subjected to the grave violations of their fundamental rights, including right to life and health.

Mr. President,

While the international community is on the path towards recovery from the devastating crisis, Georgia reiterates its willingness to join the common efforts and make its contribution towards the process.

I thank you!

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