

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Sang-wook Ham,
Deputy Minister for Multilateral and Global Affairs,
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea
2021 High-level Political Forum**

Mr. President,

I am pleased to join you virtually at the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

With more than a year into the pandemic, COVID-19 is still very much with us. And it now threatens to reverse years of progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Many countries are facing a slow rollout of vaccines as new virus variants continue to spread rapidly. Millions continue to lose lives and livelihoods to the virus, with the most vulnerable being hit the hardest.

At no time in modern history has it been so important for all of us to come together to end the crisis, and turn it into a united drive for the achievement of the SDGs.

The role of the HLPF is paramount in this regard. As the global platform to follow-up on the SDGs, the HLPF should lead efforts to galvanize the collective spirit embodied in the 2030 Agenda to build back better. I wish to make a few points that will be central to such efforts.

First, our priority should be to end the COVID-19 crisis, while investing in national and global health systems to prepare for future pandemics. We must continue to strengthen our multilateral mechanisms to ensure equitable distribution of COVID-related tools, especially vaccines, for all countries.

As for the Republic of Korea, under the “Building TRUST” ODA initiative, we provided more than 160 million dollars of health assistance to 120 countries to help efforts overcome the pandemic. President Moon Jae-in recently pledged to contribute an additional 200 million dollars to the COVAX AMC.

Secondly, upholding our commitment to leaving no one behind should lie at the heart of global recovery efforts. The pace of recovery is diverging greatly across countries and regions, and the rising inequalities are worrisome.

The Korean New Deal as a national development strategy aims to support the recovery from the pandemic with a vision toward an inclusive society. As co-chair of the Group of Friends of SDG 10, Korea has long been a strong advocate of addressing inequality. This year, the Group of Friends, together with the private sector and international organizations, focused our discussions on addressing inequality in the era of COVID-19 -- a summary of which has been submitted to the HLPF.

Thirdly, we must continue to help developing countries mobilize resources to close the SDGs financing gap. We welcome recent initiatives to provide debt relief to developing countries from COVID-19, especially DSSI(Debt Service Suspension Initiative), the Common Framework and allocation of new SDRs(Special Drawing Rights).

We must also work together to unlock the potential of private finance in reaching the SDGs. Today, the private sector is showing unprecedented interest in aligning their interests with the SDGs. We must take advantage of this paradigm shift.

Lastly, to move forward on all these fronts, building multi-stakeholder partnerships across member states, the private sector, international and regional organizations, and civil society is essential. The P4G summit held in May contributed to strengthening public-private partnership for climate action. With participation of

various stakeholders, Korea also hopes to contribute to enhancing the effectiveness of all forms of development cooperation by hosting the 6th Busan Partnership Forum late this year.

Mr. President,

In closing, as we mark the second year of the Decade of Action, Korea wishes to reiterate our strongest commitment to working with the international community in our common quest towards the 2030 Agenda.

I thank you. /END/