

High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development under the auspices of the ECOSOC General debate

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Artak APITONIAN
Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia**

14 July 2020

It is my distinct pleasure to address the Ministerial Segment of the High-Level Political Forum.

On July 10th Armenia presented the Second Voluntary National Review on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. The theme of this year's forum - Accelerated action and transformative pathways- perhaps best describes what Armenia has been doing for the last two years, since our first VNR and since the non-violent Velvet Revolution in 2018.

Based on the broad popular mandate, the Government of Armenia has been implementing ambitious reforms aimed at building a competitive and inclusive society benefiting from technological, industrial, and environmental high standards. The reform agenda includes almost all the areas of public life, especially focusing on human rights protection, rule of law, combating corruption, improved public administration along with large-scale economic and social development.

The Government of Armenia is currently developing the Armenia Transformation Strategy 2050 with its 16 mega goals. The Government has the ambition to synchronize the SDGs with Armenia's national priorities and reform agenda, by incorporating them into national strategies with an institutionalized and inclusive approach.

We firmly believe that the respect for human rights is indispensable for sustainable development. Human rights are universal for every individual in all parts of the world, regardless of geography or status. Throughout its membership at the Human Rights Council, Armenia prioritizes the promotion of all human rights and fundamental freedoms and consolidation of democratic values.

As a member and the current chair of the UN Commission on the Status of Women, Armenia strongly advocates the enhancement of global efforts for gender equality, empowerment of women, and countering violence against women and girls. As recognition of our commitment and progress in this area, recently Armenia was selected as a global leader for "Technology and Innovation for Gender Equality" action coalition of the UN-led Generation Equality Forum.

These days the humanity is facing one of the worst challenges in the last decades – the COVID-19 pandemic. Apart from many human losses and sufferings, the COVID-19 has pushed our societies into uncertainty and disquiet, hampering the progress towards the achieving of the SDGs.

It is worthy to reiterate that only through international solidarity, recommitment to effective multilateralism and coordination that the response strategies can be effective, dragging our societies out of this calamity. We need to reinvigorate multilateral institutions, including the global healthcare system, to restore trust in them to improve preparedness in preventing and addressing this and other outbreaks.

I want to stress once again the relevance of launching the "United Nations COVID-19 Response and Recovery Multi-Partner Trust Fund" and other international initiatives, which are aimed at supporting small, developing countries, to overcome the health and socio-economic crisis caused by this pandemic.

In the spirit of our collective pledge "Leaving no one behind", we share the conviction that equitable access to all essential health technologies and products to combat the virus is a global priority, and no one, including those living in conflict areas, should be denied or be limited in access to remedies to mitigate the impact of COVID-19.

Likewise, vaccines against COVID-19 are a global public good and should be accessible and affordable to all countries, especially the vulnerable ones.

With the understanding that there is no development without peace, Armenia extends its unequivocal support to the Secretary-General's appeal for a global ceasefire and welcomes the adoption of the UN Security Council resolution 2532 on the COVID-19 pandemic demanding "general and immediate cessation of hostilities in all situations".

On the other note, as a Landlocked Developing country, we fully acknowledge that only through international cooperation, coordination, and consolidation of efforts it is possible to ensure full integration into the global economy and to achieve sustainable development.

The Government attaches great importance to the full implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014-2024, especially in terms of accelerating economic growth, increasing share of trade, and boosting regional cooperation.

We, as an international community, need to take swift and resolute actions to strengthen economic and environmental resilience to be able to face global challenges, including climate change, rising inequality, extreme poverty, food safety and malnutrition.

Thank you.