



B e l a r u s

Unofficial translation

HIGH LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

General Debate

New York, 5-18 July 2022

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Yury Ambrazevich,
Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus**

Ladies and gentlemen,

The COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic has become a serious test both for each affected state separately and for the system of international cooperation.

What conclusions can we draw from the experience?

1. Globalization does not work against a pandemic.
2. International cooperation is not a panacea for the pandemic, its possibilities are very limited.
3. A pandemic can only be countered by an effective strong state, prepared and largely self-sufficient.
4. International assistance achieves its goals and results much faster and more efficiently if it is provided through bilateral channels or within the framework of regional integration associations, rather than through universal mechanisms.

So, the main lesson from the pandemic is the need for every nation to build a strong sovereign and independent State that is responsible and effective in ensuring the needs and rights of citizens, including the right of every person to affordable and adequate health care.

It is the sovereign State, with its effective State institutions of governance and administration, and not external institutions and mechanisms, that is the most effective tool for any people in ensuring its sustainable development. It is the sovereign State that is the main guiding force, as well as the guarantor of proper coordination and synergy of efforts of all actors in the development process: citizens, business community, non-governmental organizations.

Second and no less important lesson: international interaction should complement the capabilities of national-states voluntarily supporting the concept of shared responsibility for problems and challenges that transcend national borders, and should be realized in the form of voluntary, mutually beneficial international cooperation on the principles of sovereign equality and non-interference in internal affairs.

Unfortunately, the development of the international situation today contradicts these lessons to a very high degree.

Despite foreign aid, many developing states are emerging from the pandemic even weaker and more dependent on international donors.

International cooperation, which is designed to complement national efforts and serve the interests of all participants, is deliberately politicized and used to provide individual states with unilateral advantages in both development and security dimensions.

The principles of sovereign equality and non-interference in internal affairs are regularly violated in relation to countries that dare to put their own national interests at the forefront and pursue a policy aimed at the transition from a unipolar world order to a multipolar one.

With regard to such countries, bypassing the UN Security Council, a whole group of states regularly impose economic and other restrictions. These unilateral coercive measures deliberately hamper the development of entire nations, hitting every family, every senior citizen and child in the affected countries.

Interference in internal affairs, illegal sanctions pressure, ignoring by some states the legitimate interests of other countries in matters of security and development, strengthening one's own security at the expense of other countries have brought the world to the brink of a global war.

The global success of sustainable development, as well as the existence of our civilization, have become hostages of uncontrolled geopolitics, of the desire of one group of states for global dominance and the preservation of their privileged positions.

Where there are sanctions and wars, there is no place for development...

However, it is not enough to simply determine or calculate the damage caused by sanctions, although this seems important and requires close attention of the UN Secretariat and members of the Organization. Perhaps in 2023 our Forum should be devoted to the impact of unilateral coercive measures on the achievement of the SDGs.

In order for the Sustainable Development Goals not to remain empty figures on paper, President of the Republic of Belarus Aleksandr Lukashenko in his recent letter to the United Nations Secretary-General A.Guterres stressed the need for "a global and defining process in the spirit of San Francisco involving all leading international players. Such a process should result in clear and transparent agreements on the rules that would govern a new world order, which would provide security guarantees to all members of the international community for years to come."

Our people say: "one man can't win a war". But let me express my confidence to this audience that Belarus is not alone in its position.