



## ECOSOC HIGH LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (HLPF) 5-18 of July

Written Statement by the Minister of Finance of the Republic of Cyprus  
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Mr. President, your Excellencies, distinguished guests, fellow delegates, colleagues and friends.

The 2030 Agenda of the UN for sustainable Development sets an ambitious global framework, aiming to end poverty, fight inequalities and tackle climate change. Yet halfway to this global target, efforts have been hindered by the unprecedented economic and social impacts of the pandemic and the increased geopolitical insecurity. The High-Level Forum is an important opportunity to reassess our course of action to the new reality and re-iterate our determination to our 2030 Agenda for the benefit of all.

Ensuring long-term sustainable growth and strengthening the resilience of the economy are amongst the Government's leading priorities. We have already adopted a Long-Term Strategy highlighting our priorities until 2035 which is aligned with the SDGs. We are implementing a holistic approach to the transition to a new development model, which aims through very specific policies, investments, and reforms, to promote the three pillars of sustainable development, namely the achievement of the green transition, the promotion of social and without exclusion of growth and strengthening of the economy.

The transition towards environmental sustainability is the most challenging for Cyprus, especially in the areas of sustainable agriculture, water scarcity and sustainable waste management, energy efficiency and the elevated level of greenhouse gas emissions. Nevertheless, Cyprus has overachieved the Renewable Energy Sources target for 2020, maintains the excellent water quality of its bathing sites, and is currently in the top 5 EU countries in the surface of terrestrial sites which are protected within the framework of Natura 2000.



Cyprus continues to make progress in reducing poverty in all its forms by decreasing unemployment and income inequality and implementing targeted welfare schemes. However, the high volume of first-time asylum seekers and the integration of immigrants still remains a major challenge.

The protection of all vulnerable groups is a priority for our government; thus, we have introduced measures for the reduction of prices on electricity tariffs as well as financial incentives for upgrading the energy efficiency of houses and installation of Photovoltaics with the net metering method. At the same time, with the introduction of a national healthcare system equal access to quality healthcare is provided for all.

Regarding gender equality, Cyprus ranks among the 10 countries with the smallest gender pay gap but falls behind in the representation of women in politics and women who hold leadership positions in the public and private sector. Focusing on the protection of vulnerable groups, increased efforts have been made on domestic violence, sexual abuse and human trafficking. More opportunities at the education level have been encouraged through the adoption of the STEAM and STEM education projects.

Aiming towards becoming a fit-for the-future society and knowledge-based economy, our government has adopted a National Digital Strategy, enabled by digital and emerging technologies that will drive economic prosperity and competitiveness.

As an EU member state, Cyprus has implemented various actions towards providing assistance to developing countries and to promote international cooperation. A regional Initiative led by the Cyprus Government to address the impacts of climate change in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East region has been established. The aim is to coordinate a concerted regional response to address the climate crisis.

We are sharing the present and envision a future with everyone involved. The achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals requires universal efforts by all. We are thus bringing together a diverse network of social actors including non-governmental organizations, local authorities, academic institutions, organized groups



of citizens, and businesses. We all need to join forces so as to fully implement our ambitious strategy towards a new model for strengthening the economy's resilience and achieving economic, social and environmentally sustainable long-term growth and prosperity.

Thank you and I wish all the participants a successful and fruitful Forum