



REPUBLIC OF POLAND
PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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**Poland's written statement for the 2022 High-level Political Forum
on Sustainable Development**

Statement by Mr. Waldemar Buda,
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New York, 5-15 July 2022

Dear Excellencies, Dear Friends and Stakeholders of the 2030 Agenda,

We are almost halfway through the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The last seven years of working towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have been full of challenges. One of the most complex challenges that we face is the COVID-19 pandemic, which has affected all SDGs in many dimensions: from health, economy and social issues to the environment. It has also proved that, when making progress towards achieving the SDGs, both in times of prosperity and a slowdown, policy coherence is crucial.

On 24 February 2022, we were made acutely aware that the economic recovery after the pandemic is not the only challenge that we face, as we have to deal with the dramatic consequences of war in the very heart of Europe. Russia's aggression against Ukraine violates international law and hinders the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. It also undermines the already achieved progress on the global scale. We are convinced that sustainable development and the SDGs represent a compass in these difficult times. They offer an integrated perspective of addressing global challenges, shaping the way out of the pandemic, as well as fighting the consequences of the Russian aggression against Ukraine.

All actions taken by the Polish government in response to the crisis triggered by the pandemic and the crisis stemming from the war in Ukraine have been guided by the 2030 Agenda's principles, especially of leaving no one behind and helping the most vulnerable groups.

At this year's HLPF, we are looking in particular at the progress made towards Goal 17. Today, the partnership for goals is more relevant than ever. Defending universal values and human rights and working to ensure peace globally are our utmost priorities. The Russian aggression against Ukraine is a global concern. It has caused food, energy and financial crises, which affect every country separately.

As one of Ukraine's neighbours, Poland is facing many of these challenges directly. Guided by the principle of solidarity, the need to work for the common good and strengthening partnerships, we are trying to ensure the highest standards of protection for Ukrainian citizens seeking refuge from war. Ukrainian citizens are granted access to the Polish labour market, health system and education. Polish local authorities have introduced solutions to ensure care for the youngest children of refugees and local-level labour offices organize Polish language trainings for Ukrainians. The crisis triggered by the pandemic brought immense pressures on the education system and necessitated the widespread transition to distance learning and hybrid learning. This issue is fundamental now in Poland in the context of refugees from Ukraine and securing their educational needs. Additionally, procedures in Poland related to the conversion of buildings owned by local governments and intended for residential purposes, their renovation or change of use, have been simplified in view of providing Ukrainian refugees with shelter. The Polish government has also launched a dedicated website, where anyone seeking or offering medical, legal, or social assistance for Ukrainian refugees can find support. This is solidarity at its best.

This year, the focus of the HLPF is also the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda, which is of key importance. Sustainable development is intrinsically linked with environmental considerations. For many years, the issues related to the pollution of water, soil and air have been in the world's spotlight. Currently, the outbreak of the war in Ukraine resulted in the

need to reassess the foundations of energy security and diversify energy sources of many countries in Europe and beyond.

Poland believes that climate action and green transition must be strongly anchored in the principle of just transition, which underpins Goal 7 of the 2030 Agenda (affordable and clean energy). The inclusion of social aspects and leaving no one behind principle must guide the implementation of climate action and cannot aggravate the economic conditions in certain regions or of social groups. In this regard, development aid should focus, on the one hand, on reducing the socio-economic impact of phasing out the use of fossil fuels, and on the other hand, on offering new development and labour market opportunities through green technologies. Poland is aiming to increase the share of renewables in our energy mix. Apart from climate change and energy security considerations, renewable energy has a positive impact on natural environment. For instance, in the case of offshore wind farms that Poland is developing in the Baltic Sea, they create places free from sea transport and fishing, shelter marine mammals and birds and create an opportunity to rebuild underwater reef ecosystems.

Smart environmental regulations can also play an important role in achieving the 2030 Agenda. Poland strongly supports all efforts to combat plastic pollution. We believe that the currently negotiated international agreement should promote action at all levels: international, regional, and national, and enable countries to implement the agreement according to their national specificities. The new instrument should address all stages of the product life cycle, from design to waste management. Poland is also working on reducing the amount of waste generated from single-use plastic products in the environment, particularly in the marine environment, as this poses a severe threat to the environment and human health.

Additionally, it is also necessary to boost action to diversify sources of critical raw materials. This can be achieved, for instance, by forging and strengthening strategic partnerships, enhancing recycling opportunities and incentivizing the private sector to change its supply chain strategies, e.g. by increasing stocks and looking for new suppliers or new solutions.

The 2030 Agenda remains our guiding framework, yet its implementation is a complex process. The good state of the environment is intertwined with the interests of communities. Social development is increasingly affected by inequality and unfavourable demographic change. Only by joint efforts we will be able to face existing and new challenges. Just as the world unites for Ukraine, we should unite to achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda and build a peaceful, better, and more sustainable future together.

Finally, let me repeat last year's message, which is still valid: shared values, shared responsibility, and shared progress must be our guide and our primary objectives.