



*Permanent Mission
of Barbados to
the United Nations*



**Ministerial Statement of the Government of Barbados delivered
by the
Minister in the Prime Minister's Office**

Senator Dr. The Hon. Shantal M. Munro-Knight, PhD

**at the Building Momentum Towards The 2023 SDG Summit:
Transformation for Accelerating Implementation of The SDGS**

Monday, July 17th, 2023

10:45 a.m.

United Nations Headquarters

please check against delivery

President of ECOSOC, Excellencies, Fellow Delegates,

Good morning,

1. With approximately 2,360 days left before 2030, it is clear that there is challenge before us to deliver on the Agenda 2030 – the plan of action to which we all agreed for people, planet and prosperity. From the VNRs presented throughout the HLPF, States have outlined not only their progress to achieving the goals but have also outlined the challenges being faced.
2. According to the most recent SDG Progress Report¹, the COVID-19 pandemic has reversed three decades of steady progress towards reducing poverty, with numbers indicating that poverty is now increasing for the first time in a generation. Since 2019, more than 70 million people have been pushed back into poverty, and given current projections, only one-third of countries will halve their national poverty rates by 2030.
3. Further to this, climate change represents a present not future existential threat, the current El Niño ocean heat up threatens millions of people, communities and marine life. For Small Island Developing States (SIDS) on the front line of the crisis, if we are unable to reduce greenhouse gas emissions globally, by failing to keep temperatures

¹ [*SDG Progress Report Special Edition.pdf \(un.org\)](#)

from increasing over the 1.5° C target, we will leave more than 3 billion people at risk, with significant socio economic and ecological implications for health, agriculture, water resources and livelihoods. Madam President, we have no choice if ever there was a time for bold, decisive and transformative action, it is NOW.

4. Today's forum focuses on building momentum and accelerating implementation of the goals, Madam President, in order to make progress towards the SDGs and build momentum we must first be able to address the issues affecting our ability to achieve the goals, the most significant of which is insufficient **and** unaffordable finance.

5. The Bridgetown Initiative presents an opportunity for States and non-state actors to be courageous in a moment when it is most necessary. This Initiative is not just about providing much needed resources for climate vulnerable countries, but rather it underscores the need for the overhaul of the current international financial system to create one that is more equitable and no longer based on an Imperial construct that is irrelevant to today's realities. The current structure of these international financial institutions (IFIs) perpetuates the debt trap for developing countries, who struggle to mobilise the necessary capital to support adaptation and build resilience. We are at a tipping point Madam President, the interconnectedness of our world and the transboundary impacts of the climate crisis makes transformation an imperative. The Bridgetown Initiative calls for an integrated resilience strategy to achieve the SDGs based on an equitable global governance system that delivers, finance at a scale **and** pace to

address liquidity and debt sustainability challenges. We propose the widespread use of natural disaster and pandemic clauses and the mobilization of private sector investment for adaptation and reconstruction. One of the Initiative's main proposals is also to accelerate implementation of the SDGs by increasing official sector development lending to \$500 billion as an annual stimulus for SDG Investment. This stimulus will provide the financing necessary to accelerate implementation of the SDGs globally.

6. Madam President, while addressing the transformative action required at the global level, we must not forget the other actions also required. Nationally, we must challenge ourselves to do better. **Yes**, even with limited resources; we must be more accountable; we must be more compassionate towards each other within our countries and amongst each other as nation states. Leaving No One Behind must mean something at all levels.

7. Madam President, as we build momentum towards the SDG Summit in September, let us be reminded that we cannot achieve the SDGs if we do not work together. Prime Minister of Barbados, Mia Amor Mottley consistently says "Many hands make light work" and this aptly applies to how we can achieve Agenda 2030. To achieve the SDGs there must be bold meaningful, transformative and consistent action as a collective. All of us must put our hands to the plough so that we can reap the harvest of sustainable development. I leave you with the words of a famous calypsonian not from Barbados but from Trinidad, Black Stalin, ***we country facing its darkest hour, So our people***

need us today more than ever, But in our fight to recover, if ever you feel to surrender, It have one little thing that I want you always remember...We could make it if we try just a little harder.

8. I thank you.