



CZECH REPUBLIC

Permanent Mission of the Czech Republic to the United Nations

**2023 High-level Political Forum for Sustainable Development
held under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council**

Ministerial Segment of the HLPF/High-level Segment of the ECOSOC

General Debate

***“Building momentum towards the 2023 SDG Summit: Transforming for
accelerating implementation of the SDGs”***

17 – 19 July 2023

**Statement delivered by Mr. Radim Sršeň,
Deputy Minister of Regional Development of the Czech Republic**

Check Against Delivery

Mister/Madam President,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my honour to address you at this year's High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development on behalf of the Czech Republic.

We are halfway to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its seventeen Sustainable Development Goals. At the same time, we are living in an era of doubts and questions about the global order, witnessing the erosion of trust in institutions at all levels. Global economic order, international financial architecture and new technologies, including digital and emerging technologies, are those factors that contribute to creating distrust the most.

Collective action has never been more important, nor has the interrelated nature of our efforts ever been more apparent. We need to learn the lessons from the Covid-19 pandemic to remind ourselves that we are all on this journey together. To be better prepared for future crises and pandemics, we need to embrace true partnerships at all levels that seek to achieve inclusive and sustainable development that is based on mutual trust. These principles should become more than words.

The world leaders will gather here in September for the SDG Summit. This will be a moment of truth and of reckoning. In his Special Edition of the Report of the Progress towards achieving the SDGs, the Secretary-General António Guterres sounds the alarm. At the mid-way point on our way to 2030, the SDGs are in deep trouble.

That is why the SDG summit must also be a moment of hope, when the leaders will unite to "turn the tide" in the achievement of the SDGs. We have to bear in mind that the SDGs are not about beautiful words, they are about people, planet, prosperity, peace, and – of course – partnerships. The upcoming SDG summit will be a unique opportunity for us to recommit to an ambitious action to accelerate the achievement of the SDGs at global, regional, national, and local levels between now and 2030.

The 2023 SDG Summit should send a strong message of urgency. But, most importantly, it will be a chance to renew our shared commitment given in 2015, as well as to come up with a genuine “Rescue Plan for People and Planet” as the Secretary-General requests in his Report, a plan to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and rescue the SDGs, underlining the multilateral approach for tackling global challenges.

As we all know, local action is a precondition for achieving the SDGs. Today, more than a half of the world’s population lives in cities and also more than a half of the SDGs targets cannot be reached without proper engagement, cooperation, and coordination with local and regional governments. By tailoring strategies, engaging multiple stakeholders, strengthening local governance, promoting data-driven decision-making, and fostering innovation, we aim to drive sustainable urban transformation. Through this localization process, we harness the potential of cities to accelerate progress toward the SDGs, ensuring a prosperous and resilient future for all residents. This rapid urban growth poses challenges in providing adequate housing, infrastructure, and services. The challenge lies in promoting sustainable urban planning, reducing emissions, enhancing resilience, and protecting ecosystems within urban areas.

Mister/Madam President,

We are now experiencing a gloomy reality. The world is witnessing the highest number of violent conflicts since 1945, with approximately 2 billion people living in conflict-affected countries. The world has not yet recovered from the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic and now we are facing detrimental and catastrophic effects of the Russian aggression against Ukraine on peoples’ lives and livelihoods causing not only tremendous human suffering, but also widespread food and energy crises.

The 2030 Agenda itself stipulates: “there can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development”. In the context of current geopolitical tensions and multiple, simultaneous and interlinked crises, there is an urgent need to highlight a link between peace, security, development and human rights, as well as to put a stronger emphasis on peace, justice and strong institutions. The implementation of the SDG 16 is one of the main priorities of the Czech foreign

policy. We firmly believe that promoting peaceful and inclusive societies, providing access to justice for all and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels is a pre-requisite for achieving sustainable development.

We expect the SDG summit to incentivise necessary transformative changes for the acceleration of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, in synergy with the Our Common Agenda processes, as the Summit of the Future could also be used to spur long-term policies for achieving sustainable development. We need these processes to deliver concrete and operational outcomes, such as the Global Digital Compact and the Declaration for Future Generations.

I thank you.