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Statement by H.E Mr. Lasha Darsalia, First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia
High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development: “Building momentum towards the 2023 SDG Summit: Transformation for accelerating implementation of the SDGs”
Ministerial meeting of the HLPF, convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)
General Debate

New York, 17-19 July 2023

Mr. President, Distinguished Delegates,

The UN Secretary General’s Report on “Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals” does not evoke an optimistic picture. The long-term effects of the pandemic, intersecting socio-economic, humanitarian and triple planetary crises, as well as global impacts of Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine, have halted years of development progress. Georgia continues to condemn in the strongest terms Russia’s unprovoked and unjustified full-scale invasion of Ukraine and expresses its full support and solidarity to Ukraine and Ukrainian people.

Thus far, to improve future prospects for action by 2030, every inch of progress matters. In this regard, we look forward to the successful SDG Summit in September, which should launch a new phase of transformative and accelerated actions leading to progress by 2030.

Excellencies,

Since 2015, Georgia has been firmly committed to the 2030 Agenda. We are pleased to note that in February 2023, the Government approved an annual Action Plan of the Vision 2030 – Development Strategy of Georgia, which is a supreme nation-wide policy document, fully aligned with the 17 SDGs and covering the key priorities of the nation-wide development by 2030.

At the same time, Georgia continues mainstreaming the SDGs in the local self-government. This year additional 14 municipalities have been added. The goal is to localize the SDGs in all municipalities by 2025.

As a further illustration of Georgia's aspiration to advance sustainable development, the Government intends to prepare its third VNR for the 2024 HLPF.

Mr. President,

The SDG 6 on is crucial for the survival of people and the planet. Regrettably, billions still lack access to safe water, sanitation, and hygiene. We look forward to the global implementation of the Water Action Agenda¹ to accelerate progress within the second half of the Water Action Decade².

To achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all, the Government is committed to ensure the provision of water to the population of Georgia. By 2025, 100% of Georgian cities will have uninterrupted water supply and by 2030, 100% of the population will have access to water that meets the standards.

Furthermore, the Parliament of Georgia recently approved the "Law on Water Resources Management" and its accompanying legislative package, which establishes the model of river basin management and incorporates the charter of water revenue.

Excellencies,

Access to affordable, reliable and sustainable energy is crucial for realizing many of the SDGs. Regrettably, the ongoing war in Ukraine continues to negatively affect energy prices, putting the already achieved progress on SDG 7 at risk (*as many States decide to raise investments in renewables and others to strengthen dependence on coal*).

To achieve SDG 7, the Government of Georgia has elaborated a draft of National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP), prioritizing 5 key dimensions, namely: decarbonization of the economy, increasing energy efficiency, strengthening energy security, the establishment of an internal energy market, increasing research, innovation and competitiveness.

To speed up the development of renewable energy, the Government established the market-based support scheme - capacity auction. As for today almost 82% of electricity is generated from renewable sources³.

Excellencies,

Georgia attaches particular importance to the implementation of the SDG16. To this end I would like to underline significant role of digital technologies in guiding our efforts towards achieving this goal, strengthening democracy and good governance. We stand ready to share our experiences and reforms in various fields that support the implementation of the SDG 16, for instance public administration reform, public service delivery and fight against corruption.

¹ adopted in March 2023 at the UN Water Conference.

² 2018-2028.

³ 81% of which is hydropower and 1% from wind energy.

Distinguished delegates,

There can be no development without peace and security and vice-versa.

The Russia's occupation and effective control of the 20% of Georgia's territories deprives the Government of the possibility to achieve the defining principle of the 2030 Agenda - to leave no one behind, as people living in the Georgia's regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali are left behind the development processes and are daily subjected to the grave violations of their fundamental rights, including right to life and health.

Mr. president,

Halfway to 2030, with only 7 years left to achieve the SDGs, multilateral cooperation and partnerships matter more than ever. We are stronger together and we will walk further together. I would like to reiterate Georgia's strong commitment to contribute towards building momentum on this track, in close cooperation with all relevant stakeholders, including civil society and private sector.

I thank you!

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