

United Nations High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
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Statement by the Honourable Dr. Ashni Kumar Singh, M.P.

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Madame President Stoeva, Excellencies and Distinguished Delegates

We meet today just past the halfway milepost along the Agenda 2030 journey. Along the way, many of our countries – my own included – have made significant progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These two weeks, we will be hearing much about the progress made to date. But many of our countries are still struggling to achieve the SDGs, not for want of effort on our part, and often for reasons beyond our control.

Recent years saw us grappling with COVID-19, increased geopolitical tensions, disruption to the global supply chain and inflationary pressures not seen for nearly two decades driven primarily by rising energy and food prices, which hurt the vulnerable most. Meanwhile, the past eight years were the warmest on record globally, as the onslaught of climate change continues unabated, while we continue to lose the battle to limit our own damage to the world which we plan to leave for our children and grandchildren.

These realities lay bare the oneness of the planet on which we live, and the interdependence of our wellbeing. This interdependence provides the most

compelling argument in favour of a shared global responsibility for eradicating poverty worldwide and reaffirms the very foundation on which the SDGs are based.

Recognising this at a national level, Guyana's President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali has committed to a philosophy of One Guyana to guide all public policy, with a firm commitment that our country's recently enhanced economic fortunes be deployed to improve the lives of every single Guyanese person. The One Guyana philosophy is also grounded in a recognition of Guyana's role in regional and global outcomes. Examples include Guyana's leadership on the Caribbean Community's (CARICOM's) goal of improving food security by reducing the region's food import bill by 25 percent by 2025, as well as our Low Carbon Development Strategy 2030 which harnesses Guyana's forests in the global fight against climate change.

Guyana remains firmly committed to the noble ideals of Agenda 2030, and will continue to work aggressively to advance our own progress toward the SDGs. Our Second Voluntary National Review, which we present later today, documents the progress we have made, the challenges we have faced, and the road ahead. But, national commitment alone will not be enough to achieve the SDGs in many of our countries, especially the poorest and most vulnerable. And, we have known this for a very long time.

In 1970, our predecessors met in this very hall and resolved that the developed world should deliver official development assistance of no less than 0.7 percent of Gross National Product by 1975. Fifty years later, five advanced economies have achieved this target. The others have mostly gone quiet, while the developing world has been embarrassed into minimising mention of this missed target. We use this opportunity to repeat our previous call that this and other long standing undelivered

commitments be honoured including the adoption of a Multidimensional Vulnerability Index, even as we endorse measures such as those proposed under the Bridgetown Initiative to support the most vulnerable countries.

No less is required, if we are to have even a remote chance of achieving the lofty but necessary Goals we set ourselves in Agenda 2030.

Guyana is also pleased to align itself with the statements of CARICOM, G77 and China, and AOSIS.

Thank you very much.

17 July 2023