



**Statement by the Republic of Latvia**

**at the**

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

**of the High-level political forum on sustainable development,**

**convened under the auspices of the ECOSOC**

**10 – 19 July 2023**

*Check against delivery!*

Madam/Mister President,  
Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

Latvia welcomes this debate at the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development as an important milestone in the preparations for the SDG Summit this September.

At the outset, let me **reaffirm Latvia's commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**. Latvia presented its VNRs in 2018 and 2022. Domestically, Latvia strives to achieve the SDGs through the transformation of its economy and addressing inequalities. The Sustainable Development Report 2023 ranked Latvia in the 14th place showing we are on the right way. Internationally, Latvia contributes to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda through reinforced development cooperation instruments and strong commitment to multilateral cooperation.

Distinguished delegates,

The Covid-19 pandemic, adverse impacts of climate change and Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine along with its global consequences have challenged global sustainable development.

**Latvia condemns Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine**. Latvia's support to the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine is unwavering. Russia's war of aggression is a blatant violation of the UN Charter and the international law. It threatens the international rules-based order that is the bedrock for global peace and security. And, indeed: "There can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development."

Yet as we address the lack of progress and setbacks in sustainable development, **we should also address lack of resilience and the need for consolidating development gains**. Allow me to illustrate how cross-cutting principles of policy coherence, gender equality and rights-based approach are instrumental for that.

The **triple planetary crisis** demands a resolute and urgent action. In line with the 1.5 degrees goal, Latvia is determined to reach climate neutrality by 2050, and committed to the EU's target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% until 2030. Energy transition is central to these efforts. Latvia's energy transition is accelerating as we strive for greater self-sufficiency through deployment of renewable energy. However, we also recognize renewable energy policies should be aligned with environmental and biodiversity protection policies. Clean energy should not come at the expense of our natural ecosystems. **Policy coherence and integrated approaches**

**are critical for successful transformations across the sustainable development spectrum.**

**Addressing inequalities** continues to be one of Latvia's key domestic policy objectives. Latvia has significantly increased guaranteed minimum income level, and we are pleased to report that the risk of poverty is decreasing. In the realm of foreign and development cooperation policies, **promoting gender equality** has been a long-standing priority for Latvia. We are deeply concerned that the achievement of gender equality remains generations away. Latvia will continue to work within the Commission on the Status of Women, the Executive Board of UNWOMEN, across UN processes and through our development cooperation activities to support the empowerment of women and girls. **Women and girls must be included in shaping and implementing transformations.**

We live in the age of **digital transformation. It is a work in progress as digital divides within and between countries persist.** With rapid advances in the AI development accelerating digital transformation, the future seems both exciting and uncertain. Trust has emerged as the key ingredient for harnessing the benefits of digital transition. It can be ensured through human-centric and human rights-based approach to digitalization. This is also true for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda as a whole. **Human rights-based approaches are critical to achieve lasting sustainable development gains and leave no one behind.**

In conclusion, I would like to recall that the implementation of 2030 Agenda is a shared commitment and responsibility. **We need to work together with all stakeholder, including local governments, civil society, private sector, youth,** to get back on track and deliver on the SDGs. Gains that are achieved together and with the buy-in from all will be truly resilient.

I thank you!