



SERBIA

**2017 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
General debate**

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S T A T E M E N T

by

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Excellencies,
Distinguished Colleagues,

At the beginning of my Statement, I would like to greet all of you, gathered together here today at the Ministerial Segment of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. The Forum's central role is to monitor the process of review and follow-up of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the global level and it is a key mechanism to monitor the results in the fulfillment of the obligations that we have assumed. In September 2015, the international community decided, on the highest level, to work towards achieving one of the most important goals of the world today: a sustainable future of our planet and the generations to come. Perhaps never in the history of the United Nations did we set the bar so high. To beat back climate change and global warming as a separate goal cuts across all other goals of sustainable development. Failure to achieve success in this regard and its consequences will jeopardize all other goals. The activities on the implementation of the Paris Agreement and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda are therefore of paramount importance. Serbia ratified the Paris Agreement on 29 May 2017.

Serbia is fully committed to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and took an active part in formulating the goals of the Agenda, as a member of the Open Working Group on SDGs and as the only country in the region of South-East Europe that was actively participating in the process of establishing the model of its financing. Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world, the title and the theme of the Forum this year, is very important for my country, in particular in view of the many threats and challenges that the world is facing today. The implementation of all Special Development Goals (SDGs), especially those that we are discussing at this session, is therefore a *conditio sine qua non*.

On 30 December 2015, the Government of Serbia adopted the Decision to establish an Inter-Sector Working Group to implement the 2030 Agenda, consisting of representatives of relevant Ministries, Offices and agencies tasked to monitor and coordinate the Agenda implementation, as well as those representing civil society, academia and the private sector. The first meeting of the Group was held in April 2016; after the recent elections in Serbia and the appointment of the new chair of the Group, it is to commence work on prioritizing the 17 SDGs and 169 targets and their adaptation to the situation in Serbia.

The SDG inter-linkage and interdependence are becoming ever more evident as is the importance of the elaboration of statistical indicators to monitor the SDG implementation. Of particular use is the Global Indicator Framework developed by the Inter-agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators, as well as the data and indicators for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development prepared by the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-building established by the Statistical Commission in 2016. To monitor the implementation of the Agenda responsibly, we need timely access to high-quality data at all levels, as pointed out by the Secretary-General in his comprehensive Report prepared for this session. This is a serious challenge for national and international statistical systems, but we are pleased to note that the

international statistical community has invested significant efforts in modernizing and strengthening statistical systems in the quest to address this problem.

The presentation of 44 Voluntary National Reviews on the implementation of the Agenda is very important, particularly with regard to exchanging experiences, focusing on the examples of good practices and confronting the challenges at sub-regional, regional and global levels. The decision to submit Reports on global sustainable development every four years is very important, too. It is expected that the first such Report to be presented at the High-Level Political Forum in 2019 under the auspices of the General Assembly will be an important indicator of our success on the road to sustainability. The Inter-Sector Working Group of the Government of Serbia is to commence extensive activities on the preparation of Serbia's Voluntary National Review on the implementation of the Agenda. Also, the Government concluded a 5-year Development Partnership Framework for the period 2016-2020 with the UN Country Team in Serbia last May; the Framework is fully aligned with the national development priorities of the Serbian government, as well as with the process of accession negotiations between Serbia and the European Union and the UN Agenda for sustainable development by 2030. With its five pillars and nine outcomes, the Framework is a road map for the further promotion of good governance and the rule of law, development of social and human resources, economic development, growth and employment, environmental protection, fight against climate change and building resilient communities, as well as for the integration of culture into the overall process of sustainable development. My country cooperates closely with the UN Country Team and the Resident Coordinator in the implementation, promotion and popularization of the 2030 Agenda. On 1 June 2017, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Serbia and the UN Country Team organized a Workshop, aimed at considering the possibilities of linking the process of the EU accession negotiations and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The representatives of the UN Regional Bureau in Istanbul, UN Country Team in Serbia, UN international partners and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Serbia, as well as the members of the Inter-Sector Working Group for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

After years of multiple challenges, Serbia is set on the way of fiscal stability and dynamic growth followed by meaningful comprehensive and structural reforms, with significant results. We are well aware that this growth and development must be sustainable, especially with respect to environmental protection, eradication of poverty, advancement of gender equality and the ending violence against women and girls. Serbia is on the path of European integration and is a serious and dependable partner, committed to peace, stability, reconciliation in the region and humanitarian needs of migrants with full hearted support of citizens of Serbia. In this context, my country emphasizes, in particular, the achievement of SDG 16 on peaceful inclusive societies as peace is the basic precondition of development.

Thank you.