



# HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

**TPs for the introduction – UNDP Administrator  
ACHIM STEINER**

**The SDGs in time of crisis:**

**A sustainable, inclusive and resilient recovery from COVID-19 as  
an opportunity to realize the SDGs**

**Tuesday, 6 July 2021, 10:00 A.M. - 12:00 P.M.**

**[CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY]**

- Excellencies, **welcome to the session “The SDGs in time of crisis: A sustainable, inclusive and resilient recovery from COVID-19 as an opportunity to realize the SDGs.”**
- The 2021 High Level Political Forum session is a critical one – the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, reversing sustainable development efforts. Countries and societies are juggling to prevent the further spread of the COVID-19 virus variants, **with the world nearing 4 million deaths**<sup>1</sup>; and the need to make the right investments to recover socially and economically.
- In over a year – we have seen:
  - ✓ More than **100 million people were pushed back into poverty and hunger**;
  - ✓ One year into the COVID-19 pandemic, **close to half the world’s students are still affected by partial or full school closures**;
  - ✓ An equivalent of **255 million full-time jobs were lost**;
  - ✓ Violence against women and girls intensified across countries; and
  - ✓ Many countries are facing soaring debts and liquidity crises.
- Vaccine equity remains a prerequisite for a sustainable, inclusive and resilient recovery from COVID-19 everywhere. (According to UNDP research) – **just 1% of**

---

<sup>1</sup> As of 5 July, the WHO reported **183,560,151 confirmed cases** of COVID-19, including **3,978,581 deaths** globally.

**debt service in 2021 would cover the cost of 1 billion vaccine doses under the COVAX initiative. That's 1% for 1 billion doses.**

- But as COVID-19 and its socio-economic impacts spread, local and global actors - public and private -- teamed up, **working together in an unprecedented way to solve complex problems.**
- Moving ahead – **the choices countries make today in investing the pandemic stimulus packages will frame the type of development pathway for the future.** We want to **ensure those choices are informed by long-term investments in the SDGs**, supporting sustainability, the furthest behind, and building more resilient societies (e.g. thus far about 137 countries have committed to achieve carbon neutrality within the next few decades; investments on universal or expanding social protection schemes; and sustainable infrastructure).
- Our response must be tailored to the needs of countries, including the least developed countries (LDCs), landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) and small island developing states (SIDS), and not forgetting some of the middle-income countries.
- This 2021 High Level Political Forum session builds on the **report of the Secretary-General on “Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals”** and the relevant General Assembly and ECOSOC meetings related to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- This session will take stock of the SDGs overall progress taking into account the impact of the pandemic and the experiences and responses of countries at various development levels, while ensuring that the recovery from pandemic is sustainable and resilient, putting countries back on track to realize the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- This is a special session – taking in a form of a “townhall” for the first time at High Level Political Forum to encourage **inclusive, inter-active, candid and forward-looking discussions** with and by you.

+++++Introduce the first speaker according to the scenario+++++