

**Her Excellency Lachezara Stoeva, President of the Economic and Social Council,**

**Honourable Ministers,**

**Excellencies,**

**Distinguished delegates,**

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

It is an absolute privilege to address the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, in my capacity as President of the sixth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly.

This year's theme of the High-Level Political Forum related to the urgency to accelerate recovery from COVID-19 and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda at all levels cannot be over-emphasized. We are at a critical juncture. A juncture of both incredible challenges, but also of a unique, and maybe our last, opportunity to transform. And as SG rightly pointed out, everyone of our SDG goals demands that we accelerate climate action.

The latest data is mind-blowing:

- The world is already 1.1°C hotter than in preindustrial times and global average temperatures rises are estimated to breach 1.5°C by early 2030s. And According to IPBES: One million plant and animal species face extinction.
- According to the IPCC's 6<sup>th</sup> Assessment Report, people in highly vulnerable areas are 15 times more likely to die in floods, droughts and storms, not only to loose their single source of income, or to migrate to a less decent life but to die.

The forthcoming Global Sustainable Development Report clearly indicates that progress halted in many areas partly as a consequence of a confluence of crises – pandemics, unmanaged inflation and the cost-of-living crisis, and planetary, environmental and economic distress, along with regional and national unrest, conflicts, and natural disasters.

And as recently highlighted by the General Secretary: 3.3 billion people live in countries that spend more on debt interest payments than on education or health. We agree to consider this as a systemic failure.

**Ladies and Gentelman**

Reflecting on the last three years, the COVID crisis had an unprecedented impact on the world, exposing many of our vulnerabilities and inequalities. It was also a powerful wake-up call on so many fronts, on all SDGs, for all countries – developed and developing. But today, three years after the great lockdown, do we remember this wake up call?

TIf the great lockdown reminded us that the delicate balance of nature has been disrupted by humans, the post pandemic recovery requires us to accelerate the economic and social transformations needed to address the planetary emergency.

As the UN Secretary-General has noted, "COVID recovery and our planet's repair must be two sides of the same coin." And that is the crux of my message today.

To achieve the SDGs in post-covid recovery, to re-build degrading ecosystems, we have no option than Leveraging scientific and indigenous knowledge and strengthening governance for the SDGs, mobilise finance and engineer inclusive solutions to restore planetary health.

We must also take a moment to reflect on our record of achievement as a global community. Over the last five decades, a lot has been done to protect our health, to build resilient communities, to support economic and social development, to build peaceful societies, and to uphold human rights.

Significantly, and certainly a more lasting accomplishment, has been the growth and shaping of the multilateral environmental institutions and agreements tasked with protecting our environment.

We have the tools, but we need to strengthen active participation of the Multilateral Environmental Agreements- MEAs in the Environment Assembly in order to achieve more coherence between the resolutions of UNEA and the decisions of the governing bodies of MEAs, ... in order to make multilateral environmental governance streamlined and effective.

The Environment Assembly has identified key areas of transformative and urgent action:

- We must urgently ensure that the interface between science, policy and decision-making is stronger than ever. With strong governance, supported by economic policies, we can lay the foundation of change needed to salvage the SDGs. If we are serious about achieving the SDGs, this will require today, not tomorrow, massive shifts and increases in public and private financial flows, debt and investment patterns, including in the water, food and energy sectors. Developing countries need increased access to low-interest finance, to build capacity, overhaul accounting systems and policy frameworks in pursuit of the SDGs. These changes require a combination of work through global partnerships, North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation.
- We must strengthen the links between conservation, sustainable use of biodiversity and public health in accordance with the One Health approach, among other holistic approaches. We must promote circularity and secure livelihoods with sustainable and resilient infrastructure in our cities.

### **Ladies and gentlemen**

Let us put solutions at the forefront of the science-policy interface in a way that also includes traditional knowledge systems of local and indigenous communities to leverage the lessons from the Pandemic. The same goes for engaging the private sector. We saw how powerful the private sector's data, expertise and rapid response times can be during the COVID-19 pandemic. We want to move from science to policy to action, involving the whole of society, bolstered by effective and streamlined multilateralism.

This year's SDG Summit provides us with a golden opportunity to recommit to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals.

The Sixth Environment Assembly is mobilising its efforts to this global acceleration, in 2024, under the theme of "Effective, inclusive and sustainable multilateral actions to tackle climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution".

I invite you all to join the Assembly's efforts towards the achievement of the SDGs; because, in the end, there is nothing more powerful and effective than having all intergovernmental bodies rowing fiercely in the same direction.

We owe this to ourselves and to present and future generations.

Thank you,

*Merci,*

*Shukran Jazilan*