



MAIN MESSAGES FOR THE 3rd VNR OF AZERBAIJAN

OWNERSHIP OF THE SDGs

The establishment of a just, equitable and inclusive model of sustainable development for everyone is one of the key priorities for the Republic of Azerbaijan. This is the third VNR presented by Azerbaijan since the adoption and integration of the Agenda 2030 to its national policy and development strategies. The National Coordination Council on Sustainable Development and the Ministry of Economy lead VNR process with the support of UNDP country office through the consultation with various stakeholders including the parliament, line ministries, public institutions, NGOs, private sector and academic institutions.

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES (NDP) OF AZERBAIJAN, 2030

Azerbaijan is entering a strategic phase in this new post-pandemic and post-conflict era which spans from 2021 to 2030. Acknowledging global trends and challenges, the Government of Azerbaijan sets the country's long-term development vector and pathways to socio-economic and environmental development through five corresponding national priorities (approved by Presidential decree) for the subsequent decade. These priorities aligned with Azerbaijan commitments under the 2030 Agenda, are as follows:

- **steadily growing competitive economy;**
- **society based on dynamic, inclusive and social justice;**
- **competitive human capital and space for modern innovations;**
- **great return to the liberated territories;**
- **clean environment and green growth country.**

The end of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan creates new economic opportunities not only for Azerbaijan but also for the region. In this regard, **rehabilitation, reconstruction and reintegration of the liberated and conflict-affected areas** will be one of the main directions of the development priority of Azerbaijan in coming years.

BUILDING BACK BETTER FROM THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

COVID-19 pandemic caused massive disruption in people's lives around the world and seriously affected the implementation of SDGs in Azerbaijan in several areas – economic growth, employment, healthcare, education and tourism. Since the first quarter of 2020, spread of COVID-19 in Azerbaijan and the subsequent obligatory lockdowns naturally had a negative impact on economic activity and led to 4.3% decrease in GDP in 2020. To mitigate the impact of COVID-19, Government of Azerbaijan approved support programs to provide direct financial



assistance (overall 1.5 billion USD in 2020) through wage subsidies to entrepreneurs, tax concessions, customs and insurance payments, benefits to unemployed and public works, covering education and health expenses. As a result of effective support it is assumed that 2021-2022 will be a recovery period for Azerbaijan. Parallel to internal measures, the Government actively participates in fighting COVID-19 globally through bilateral and multilateral programs and has supported 33 countries with humanitarian aid and financial assistance.

GREEN GROWTH

The Government of Azerbaijan admits that global climate change should be based on the introduction of clean technologies, encouraging the use of clean energy sources, recycling and remediation of contaminated areas. In this regard, selected priorities include a high quality ecological environment and spaces for green energy, and building smart cities and smart villages based on NDP and SDG 11.

NEXT STEPS ON CHALLENGES

- **Driven by COVID-19 challenges**, strengthening health care system and enlarging the coverage of vaccination process. Meanwhile, recovering the economic activity by gradual elimination of mandatory lockdowns;
- **Accelerate economic diversification** and ensure dynamic development of the non-oil sector contributing to the implementation of SDG. This will be through clustering, the formation of a favorable business environment, development of a national innovation system, and the formation of a favorable institutional framework;
- **Develop competitive human capital** through expand the scope of active labor market programs, increasing investment in education and ensuring full accessibility to the compulsory health insurance system;
- **Strengthening the use of alternative energy sources and protecting biodiversity**. Ensure government agencies take measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in order to fulfill the obligations arising from the Paris Agreement on Climate Change;
- **Ensure sustainable development through the rehabilitation, reconstruction and reintegration of the liberated territories**, consideration of the SDGs and other international challenges, resources and perspectives;
- **Improve data collection and analysis** on sustainable development, including strengthening capacity for analysis and generating detailed disaggregated data on gender, ethnicity, age groups, habitats and regions/administrative districts;
- **Establish of SDG Financing Mechanism** with the engagement of private sectors and government institutions to achieve the selected targets of SDGs.