

STATEMENT BY THE SECRETARY OF NATIONAL COORDINATION
COUNCIL ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF AZERBAIJAN REPUBLIC MR
HUSEYN HUSEYNOV at the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development for UNECE
Region.

High-level Policy Segment: Transformation towards sustainable and resilient
societies in the UNECE Region 1-2 March, 2018 Geneva

Distinguished delegates.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, I would like to express my gratitude for giving me the opportunity to share our experience on Sustainable Development Goals, as a past VNR presented country.

It is undeniable fact, High Level Regional Forums gives us an excellent opportunity to share the experience of the member countries as part of global initiatives launched by the United Nations such as ‘Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development’. Thus, having joined the Millennium Declaration in 2000, Azerbaijan crafted its national development strategy which was articulated in a number of state programmes to transform our society. The successful implementation of these programmes created a conducive environment for attaining impressive results and dramatic improvements in the living standards and social life in the country. Hence, Poverty rate has decreased from 49,0% in 2001 to 4,9% in 2015. Food security of Azerbaijan and food ratio status is similar to those of the developed countries.

As consequence of its outstanding achievements in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, Azerbaijan received the 2015 South-South Award.

The government of Azerbaijan thinks that SDGs are favorable platforms enabling joint activities of state authorities, civil society institutes, business representatives, scientific

and educational establishments, mass media and international organizations supporting progress. As is known, achievement of SDGs requires high level coordination among national and international partners and extensive consultations at government level. Most significantly, I want to mention that Azerbaijan has gained a remarkable experience in institutionalization of the Sustainable Development Goals. Pursuant to the Decree of the President of Azerbaijan, the National Coordination Council for Sustainable Development was established under the leadership of the Deputy Prime Minister of Azerbaijan Republic. The Council comprises the Minister of Economy, Deputy Ministers and heads of several state service entities. The Coordination Council encompasses the Secretariat as well as working and expert groups. It is the vested authority for coordination and overseeing the extensive implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Additionally, I want to bring your attention from our well-organized job on the way of engagement with stakeholders that special emphasis is placed on advocacy to raise public awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals and create a conducive environment for their implementation. Several wide-ranging discussions engaged key stakeholders and included a panel on the role of science in achieving the SDGs in Azerbaijan, an open lesson entitled “The Sustainable Development Goals: Education Can Change the World”, consultations on the role of civil society in achieving the SDGs, and a panel entitled “The SDGs: Women and Progress”.

The Government of Azerbaijan, in partnership with the UN Office in Azerbaijan, developed Advocacy Campaign Strategy on the SDGs for 2017-2018, which is guided by the principle of leaving no one behind.

By the way, in order to increase superior the engagement with stakeholders, especially engagement with parliament recently, on 22 September, an international conference held in our parliament with co-organized the Parliament of Azerbaijan Republic, the Committee on Social Affairs, Education, Culture and Civil Society of the Euronest PA, the UN Baku office and the European Parliamentary forum on Population and Development.

The mentioned conference is underway in Azerbaijan's parliament on the theme "Involvement of Eastern Partnership countries in promoting gender equality and women's health for Sustainable Development Goals".

Also, it could be in a right place to underline, the huge scale meeting, "Role of parliament in achieving sustainable development goals" in which was hold in Parliament of Azerbaijan Republic in 25 December, 2017.

Besides engagement of all stakeholders into the successful implementation of SDGs, participation at "UNECE 2017 Ideas for changes" innovation contest within Regional Forum on Sustainable Development organized by United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) inspired our delegation to organize such enlightening events in our country.

On the way of implementation and advocacy of SDGs, Republic Innovation Contest organized in order to support the implementation of the goals of the United Nations Sustainable Development Agenda, encourage innovation, and support the implementation of the "Azerbaijan 2020: Outlook for the Future" Development Concept and the "Strategic Road Map on the Production of Consumer Goods at Small and Medium Enterprises" innovation in our country is the first event in this format. About 200 projects covering the economic, social and environmental spheres have been submitted to the contest organized by the Ministry of Economy. It could be great honor to mention, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed among the Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Transport, Communication and High Technologies of the Republic of Azerbaijan, State Agency for Public Service and Social Innovations under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan and National Academy of Sciences in order to coordinate joint activities on organizing annual Innovation Contest until to 2030.

Moreover, with the aim to ensure effective implementation of SDGs and their regional coordination our country prepares to hold in Baku on 6-7 September "Baku Forum on Sustainable Development" to gather officials responsible for coordination of

implementation of SDGs at the national level, as well as UN representatives, international and local experts.

From our experience, I want to add pretty briefly that what are the main opportunities not only for our country but also entire the world to co-operate with stakeholders, particularly, parliament on the way to ambiguous goals. In the first place, engagement with stakeholders provides a platform for national discussion and awareness-raising on SDGs. Subsequently, it gives a chance to track the way to huge channel for diverse representative voices at regional and global levels. Also, significantly, it mobilizes additional financial resources for the country from multiple sources. As you are already aware Addis Ababa action plan demonstrated that the implementation of SDGs requires approximately 3 billion united states dollar (USD) that it is pretty complicated to for any government to cover the expenditure without the supporting of private companies.

Success in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda would also require learning on the best international practices, particularly under the South-South Cooperation modality. Azerbaijan would remain committed for sharing its knowledge and experience in formulating and implementing of nationalized SDGs. To this end, I would like to stress the role of Regional and international Cooperation in knowledge sharing and sharing of success stories in implementations of Sustainable Development Goals. Azerbaijan is closely participated in all important events regarding SDG Process organized by UNECE and UN regional commissions. For that reason, I would like to point out that we consider UNECE to be an important regional commission that has accumulated huge experience and knowledge in various areas of economic development and we believe that UNECE can be a great asset to help member countries to achieve SDG targets by supporting international cooperation.

Ladies and gentlemen!

I would like to conclude my intervention to give remark to the statement sounded by member countries on Sustainable Development Platform. To support my conclusion I would like to point out the statement by the UN Secretary General his Excellency Antonio

Guterres on recognizing the links between peace and sustainable development. We cannot gain a long term sustainable development with observing conflicts and wars in a region. The member countries should work together to sustain peace and peaceful societies in a region. Considering that one of the main aim of SDGs is “leaving no one behind” it requires to remove all the risks that can damage the development. To promote the implementation of SDG 16 (peaceful societies) we need to remove all the barriers that can be a threat to development in member countries.

Ladies and Gentlemen

I wish you all productive and fruitful discussions!

Thank you for your attention.