

STATEMENT BY THE SECRETARY OF NATIONAL COORDINATION  
COUNCIL ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF AZERBAIJAN  
REPUBLIC

MR HUSEYN HUSEYNOV at Regional Forum on Sustainable  
Development for the UNECE Region-2020

**HIGH LEVEL POLICY SEGMENT**

*19 March, 2020 Geneva, Switzerland*

*Excellences,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

A few months after signing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Government of Azerbaijan established high level institutional mechanism (a National Coordination Council for Sustainable Development (NCCSD) with a Secretariat in the Ministry of Economy) to ensure and facilitate inclusive stakeholder participation and consolidate core resources to translation the global SDGs into a national context by aligning national plans and strategies with the SDGs.

Particularly, inclusion of The Azerbaijani Commissioner for Human Rights (A-status NHRI in accordance with the Paris Principles) into NCCSD as a part of it created such a powerful bridge between civil society and government.

Azerbaijan's two Voluntary National Reviews underscores the Government of Azerbaijan's commitment to implement all 17 SDGs and the principles that underpin the 2030 Agenda, including 'leaving no one behind'.

Azerbaijan was one of the first countries in the region to undertake a Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support (MAPS) mission aimed at creating a roadmap outlining definitive steps to be taken to accelerate the implementation of SDGs.

Taking the consequences of the analysis of MAPS Report and the series of meetings with all stakeholders (including government institutions, NGOs, civil society, public and private sector

so forth) the Government of Azerbaijan selected 17 SDGs, 88 targets and 119 indicators as the main priorities to implement in the subsequent decade.

Prioritizing and determining national priorities for achieving global goals in Azerbaijan is conditioned by a strategy of deep reforms in many various areas of economic and social life. In this direction, it is not fortuitous Azerbaijan was named among the top ten reformers in World Bank's Ease of Doing Business Report for 2018, allowing the country to secure 25th place as a favorable investment destination among 190 countries.

In recent years, the Government of Azerbaijan has shown the dynamism of democratic transformations, unique transformational opportunities, which are a reliable basis for strengthening social well-being and the transition to innovation and modernization in society. On this direction and also building opportunities for inclusive and sustainable economic growth for all under the principle of 'leaving no one behind' the Government of Azerbaijan established the agency for Development of SME and afterwards SME Development Centers. Also, ensure equal access to social services, improve the quality of services provided to citizens in the field of employment and social protection under the principle "leaving no one behind" Government established "Sustainable and Operative Social Protection Agency" under the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of Population of Azerbaijan Republic.

Beside of this adaptation process of SDGs and the improvement of people prosperity, the Government of Azerbaijan has upgraded the amount of minimum social standards for everyone. Thus, since 1<sup>st</sup> September 2019, on the way of increasing the prosperity of people especially under the principle of "leaving no one behind" in our country, the minimum salary and the social benefits for the vulnerable groups of people has been increased significantly by 92 percent and 100 percent respectively.

Despite of ongoing successful implementation of 2030 Agenda on SDGs, there are some difficulties are observed in accelerating the process of achieving the SDGs in Azerbaijan. First of them, the military conflict that arose as a result of the aggression of Armenia against Azerbaijan, which resulted in the occupation of about 20 percent of the territory of the latter, remains a serious problem in the country. Despite four UN resolutions and the call of many international organizations for the De-purchase of Azerbaijani territories, the conflict is still unresolved. More than one (1) million people, deprived of their permanent residence in Nagorno-Karabakh and adjacent regions of Azerbaijan and from their homes in Armenia, continue to be deprived of the

right to a safe and dignified return to their homeland. Resolution of the conflict will not only contribute to the stability and development in Azerbaijan and Armenia, but will also ensure broader peace and justice in the entire region.

Moreover, the Government of Azerbaijan endeavors to protect and restore its land ecosystems and promote their sustainable use, as well as halt land degradation and loss of biodiversity. However, low environmental awareness among both the population and business is one of the biggest bottlenecks to progress in fighting climate change and protecting the environment.

Despite this, implementation of the SDGs also requires widespread application of the principles of the circular economy – such as efficient and responsible resource consumption, waste management and symbiosis among the major industries currently dominating the country's economy.

I hope that the Regional Forum will mobilize efforts and generate positive momentum to strengthen regional partnership to implement sustainable development goals.

*I wish you all productive and fruitful discussions!*

*Thank you for your attention.*