

**Speech for the Deputy Minister of Economy of the Republic of Azerbaijan
Ms. Sevinj Hasanova at Regional Forum on Sustainable Development for the
UNECE Region-2022**

OPENING AND HIGH LEVEL POLICY SEGMENT

**“Building back better from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) while advancing
the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the
UNECE Region”**

Excellences, Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Republic of Azerbaijan, I extend my gratitude for giving us the opportunity to share our experience on Sustainable Development Goals.

Over the last 6 years, Azerbaijan has demonstrated its firm commitment towards achieving the 2030 Agenda.

Last year Azerbaijan among 10 countries in the world and first in UNECE region submitted its third National Voluntary Reviews on SDGs.

We are following strategic approach for the SDGs implementation. We have integrated SDGs into 30 state programs.

The national priorities for the socio-economic development of Azerbaijan until 2030, approved last year, became a culmination in nationalizing the SDGs. In accordance with the National priorities, "**Strategy of socio-economic development for 2022-2026**" has been prepared. The new strategy sets out a radical vision of a more sustainable, more inclusive and more innovative environment towards 2026. The Action Plan of the Strategy was aligned with the goals and objectives of the SDGs. Allocations for the implementation of strategy was budgeted via Medium Term Expenditure Framework. We hope than this will be an important tool in financing sustainable development.

Distinguished participants!

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused new realities in implementing SDGs in Azerbaijan as well.

To mitigate the impact of COVID-19, the government of Azerbaijan adopted 10 programs. They have targeted most vulnerable population, employment, affected businesses, the banking sector, health care systems. On-time lockdowns, preventive measures, medical support, rapid construction of 10 hospitals helped to mitigate the consequences of the pandemic. Within adopted Vaccination Strategy more than 50% of population is fully vaccinated, over 30% of them received a booster dose.

In parallel to the national measures, Azerbaijan supported the global COVID-19 efforts with the financial and humanitarian aid on multilateral and bilateral bases.

As the Chair of the Non-Aligned Movement, Azerbaijan initiated a Special Session of the UN General Assembly in response to COVID 19. There our Head of State voiced important calls for fair and equal access to vaccines.

Because of effective support, last year Azerbaijan GDP increased by **5.6%** while our non-resource sector increased by **7.2 %**. Economic activity recovered from COVID-19 and real GDP exceeded pre-pandemic level. External debt declined, international reserves of the country increased and non-oil exports reached its historical high.

Distinguished participants!

Peace and stability are prerequisites for sustainable development. With the end of the armed conflict sustaining peace, rehabilitation and reconstruction activities and return of IDPs is the absolute priority for Azerbaijan.

In this regard we have embraced a new development concept: “smart cities and smart villages” in Karabakh and East Zangezur regions of Azerbaijan. We aim to transform the region into a smart and green economic and cultural hub.

“The 30th Anniversary of Azerbaijan-UN Partnership” Conference held in liberated Shusha this March created the favorable platform for reviewing the steps taken towards the SDGs, as well as to discuss the new priorities and opportunities for partnership in the post-pandemic and post-conflict realities.

Honorable delegates!

Conflicts, Coronavirus pandemics, the climate crisis and rising costs of living create the challenges for the SDG implementation.

I hope together we will be able to overcome these challenges and we will speed up in the way to more secure more sustainable and more resilient world.

I thank you.