

REGIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON ACCELERATING PROGRESS ON THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID19 pandemic in Asia and the Pacific

Distinguished excellencies, honorable dignitaries and spokespersons, It is indeed an honor and privilege for me to represent Pakistan and to share our perspective, journey to sustainable development and equitable regional uplift.

Post-COVID19 we confronted the reality on progress with candor, beginning by analyzing the damage pandemic had done, how are the most vulnerable experiencing the crisis, to ensure that temporary reversals do not become permanent.

There was an SDG backslide yes, but we are certainly making a case for a collaborative response to this shared crisis, more global than national, as we rebuild our economies and strive to get back on our feet.

Despite being a low-middle-income country with inherent limitations, Pakistan managed an 8 billion Dollars stimulus package and emergency cash transfer schemes with 12 million marginalized households alone receiving over 1.12 billion Dollars emergency cash support very early into the pandemic. Multidimensional vulnerability index was developed to support, and supplement integrated national strategies for COVID19 response.

Health has been the top global agenda this past year, with national investment in superior and resilient health infrastructures. A National Command and Control Center was established under the Prime Minister for evidence informed decision making and response tracking. Pakistan was lauded by the World economic forum as one of the five countries to be learning from, during the pandemic.

Regional collaborations were developed for rapid deployment of diagnostics, testing kits, treatments, vaccines and their timely delivery. COVID19 may have set us back but we are using evidence to build back better and are fully cognizant of the dividend associated with youth demography. We are engaging voices of youth not only in Pakistan but across the globe.

Agenda 2030 is an ambitious aspiration and entails substantial costs, exacting exploration of bold ideas for financing and resource mobilization. Socially and economically equitable long-term resource efficiency, a less wasteful and resource-frugal industrialization and development of social capital are the key pillars for our COVID responsive growth strategy.

We have all learned a pricey lesson from COVID19, which has cost lives, sickened millions, and thrust the global economy into a devastating recession. That country-first politics will not work, with world's most vulnerable falling through the cracks and achievement of SDGs getting as distant as year 2073. Fostering global governance and regional peace are critical.

This exacts revitalizing and deepening global partnerships for exploiting the power of synergies in the face of the political, economic and social disruption. These are historic crossroads, and we must together choose to be on the right side of the history.

On behalf of the Govt of Pakistan, I would like to offer all support and look forward to benefitting from the power of synergies as we strengthen our collaborations and partnerships.