Madame/Mr President.

At last year’s High Level Political Forum in New York, Australia recounted the remarkable progress made by regional partners, in particular our Pacific neighbours, towards the Sustainable Development Goals since 2015.

- Vanuatu was the first country to undertake a regional peer review of its VNR process, leading global efforts to ensure accountability for SDG implementation
- Fiji recorded its achievement of universal primary education
- Nauru created a Trust Fund providing long-term sustainable revenue for future generations
- Palau celebrated establishing a national network of marine protected areas, and
- Tonga worked to ensure early childhood education is inclusive for children with disabilities and other vulnerable groups.

Since then, COVID-19 has seen the drivers of prosperity and the mechanisms to achieve the SDGs, outlined in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, become
disconnected. Global trade routes, financing flows and the movement of people around the globe for business, tourism and study have been disrupted.

This has led to major economic shocks, particularly harshly felt in Small Island Developing States in the Pacific who are expecting a contraction of around 6% of their GDP.

In response, Australia is working closely with our Pacific neighbours to maintain a humanitarian corridor to the Pacific and Timor-Leste ensuring that a flow of food, medical supplies and expertise can continue.

Australia is drawing on our full range of diplomatic, economic and defence resources, particularly our development assistance to the Indo-Pacific, to respond to the most acute impacts of COVID-19.

We commend the UN on its policy brief regarding the impact of COVID-19 on small island developing states.

Australia believes that open, transparent and clear data on the causes and impacts of COVID-19 will ensure that we can, as a global community, commit to addressing these issues together and build back better.

Mr / Madame President

In 2015, we set out to shift the world onto a sustainable and resilient path, and to leave no one behind. Australia remains firmly committed to this promise.

We hope to see you all in person in 2021 and continue our momentum towards achieving the 2030 we collectively committed to.

Thank you.