Agenda Item 2: Mainstreaming the Sustainable Development Goals into Economic Policymaking

Pakistan is committed to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development right from its inception, in 2015. In February 2016, Pakistan became the first country in the world to adopt the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as part of its national development agenda through a National Assembly Resolution.

Since then, Pakistan has made considerable progress by mainstreaming these goals in national policies and strategies, including the Five-Year Plan, provincial growth strategies and Pakistan’s long-term development perspective. For SDGs’ implementation, the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) has increased spending at the federal level. In tandem, the provincial governments are also allocating higher share of provincial budgets.

In March 2018, the National Economic Council (NEC), the country’s highest economic policy-making forum, approved the National SDGs Framework that envisages a national vision to prioritize and localize SDGs. To improve vertical and horizontal coordination among different tiers of government and other stakeholders, seven SDG Support Units have been established. National data collection tools have also been modified to improve data availability, with a focus on the inclusivity, equity and sustainability aspects of the SDGs.

This institutional arrangement has been instrumental in guiding the alignment of federal and provincial policies, sectoral plans and growth strategies with the contours of the 2030 Agenda.

Pakistan’s policies and plans are focused on various interlinked dimensions of sustainable development. Just to list a few:

1. Constitution of Poverty Alleviation Coordination Council for aligning and integrating various poverty alleviation and social protection initiatives;

2. Promulgation of laws, policies and strategies at national and provincial levels to address gender inequality;

3. Fostering women economic empowerment and entrepreneurship;

4. Creation of jobs through structural transformation, industry orientation, skills building of youth and focus on SMEs, IT, Tourism and agriculture sectors, as well as major infrastructure programs;
5. For universal provision of essential basic services and infrastructure, projects have focused on water supply, housing, electricity, mobility and telecommunication; and

6. Prioritization of universal social protection and financial inclusion; and

We are cognizant that financing the SDGs in a slow growth environment will be a trying task, compounded by the knowledge and technology gap in developing local solutions and improving efficiency through improved governance. Pakistan is, therefore, strengthening existing alliances and forging new ones, while leveraging technology and mobilizing finance. Partnerships and close collaboration with a broad array of governmental and private sector supplemented by regional and international support, will continue to be a major feature of our strategy. Notwithstanding economic and financial challenges, Pakistan will continue to work towards achieving the SDGs through innovative, targeted and focused implementation strategies.