



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

**NINTH SESSION OF THE UN HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL
FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (HLPF 2021)**

NATIONAL STATEMENT

**PRESENTED BY
GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA**

JULY 2021

The President of the General Assembly

The United Nations Secretary General

Excellencies, Distinguished Colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen

I align this statement with that delivered by the Republic of Guinea on behalf of the G77 and China and wish to make the following remarks in my national capacity. At the onset let me state that during the last six years since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Kenya has recorded progress which include mainstreaming the Agenda in the National Development Plan and setting up of appropriate institutions to support its implementation. This has been achieved through creating an enabling environment for public participation and negotiation, incorporating SDGs into national frameworks and creating awareness.

However, COVID-19 pandemic has cast a shadow in the implementation of the SDGs. The negative effects of COVID-19 Pandemic have precipitated socio-economic challenges that disrupted global supply chains, businesses and economies, eroding the consumer purchasing power. With the pandemic still raging worldwide, the degree to which SDGs have been knocked further off track is not yet fully known. What is clear, however, is that the pandemic has already had a very significant impact on many economies, thus undermining decades of development efforts.

We have to fundamentally focus on how to cushion and build resilience to the most vulnerable in our societies to the present and future shocks to ensure no one is left behind. The most vulnerable include the marginalized, the poor, older persons, youth, aged, persons living with disabilities, minorities, indigenous people, children, youth and persons with underlying conditions. More specifically we must address the effect of this pandemic on women and girls who are most at risk.

We must make commitments to timely and effective assessment of the SDGs through carrying out rapid assessment or real time monitoring of SDGs. This is critical in ensuring that we adjust policies on time to mitigate the impact of COVID-19. We call for international cooperation and support in building capacity of our national statistics offices that face challenges in producing, collecting, analyzing and using of timely, reliable, quality and disaggregated data.

Economies in transition from low to middle income face unique challenges of development. Most of them are weaned off support before their incomes grow, have high income inequalities and are ineligible for concessional lending. COVID-19, has exposed them to vulnerability at a time when development cooperation is on the decline.

Limited access to COVID-19 vaccines as attributed by inability to buy has precipitated a social crisis, further increasing inequalities, exclusion and unemployment in the short and medium term. This has slowed down efforts to recover back better and achieve SDGs.

Development cooperation should take into consideration the diversity and specific development needs for middle income countries, scale up and target more support especially to those countries that are most in need as part of building back better. Graduation policies by Multilateral Development Banks should be sequenced, gradual and phased to address diverse challenges in Middle Income Countries (MICs).

Accelerated post COVID-19 recovery efforts through implementation of stimulus packages can save MICs from falling into the Middle-Income trap, considering that eight out of ten new poor people live in MICs. We call for more grants and loans with high level of concessionality and longer maturity periods, which are fully aligned to the Government's national development agenda post COVID-19 including cooperation in research and development of safe COVID-19 vaccines.

Experience in response to COVID-19 has shown that promoting inclusive engagement and integration with multiple stakeholders is critical. The promotion of the whole of government and whole of society approach is critical to foster transformative change in governance and public policy and ensure policy coherence in sustainable development. This is in addition to responsive, inclusive participation and representative decision making at all levels to help us build back better.

The Kenya Government recognizes that there is an opportunity to leverage on the resources, skills and knowledge of the private sector to accelerate implementation of SDGs, and to recover from the negative effects of COVID-19 Pandemic. In this decade of action businesses will provide additional boost in achieving SDGs through innovation, investment, partnerships and collaborations for sustainability and resilience. As a result, the Government acknowledges the benefit of working with the private sector towards its agenda of 'building back better: strategy for resilient and sustainable economic recovery and inclusive growth as spelt out in the budget for financial year 2021/22.

COVID-19 has brought to the fore the importance of utilizing technologies to build resilience among our people. This has greatly accelerated the digital transformation the world over. Kenya government continues to support ST&I to enhance the transformative agenda through new technologies aimed at increasing productivity and efficiency in all sectors. In this regard, we are adding our voice for support in modern and advanced IT infrastructure and development to help adapt and recover from COVID-19 pandemic. This calls for addressing the digital divide among and within countries, and across gender, to reduce cyber-crimes and enhance cyber security.

In conclusion, to mitigate the adverse impacts of COVID-19 Pandemic the Government, in collaboration with stakeholders, has developed certain policies and strategies that include the Economic Stimulus Programme (ESP), COVID-19 Economic Recovery Strategy (ERS) 2020 to 2022, Building Back Better from COVID-19 in Kenya, County COVID-19 Social Economic Re-engineering Recovery Strategy 2020/21 to 2022/23, and more recently the 2021/22 Budget Policy Statement. All these measures are aimed at an inclusive, sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 Pandemic and promotes the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development by building an inclusive and efficient path for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The development of these documents is a collaborative effort involving extensive consultations, input within and outside the Government, and utilizes the institutional framework for coordination and implementation of Government programmes and projects at the national and county levels. Moreover, it prioritizes close co-ordination and active participation with private sector, development partners, academia, non-governmental actors and community based organizations.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, I would like to state that Kenya remains committed to sustainable and resilient recovery from COVID -19 pandemic in the context of decade of action and delivery for sustainable development. Thank you.