



Statement

by

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**at the
Ministerial Segment of the
High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development**

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Mr. President,

Allow me at the outset to congratulate you on the successful organization of this year's High-Level Political Forum. Your leadership and wisdom have been instrumental in ensuring its success.

We also acknowledge the valuable contributions and inputs that were delivered throughout during the Forum's deliberations, particularly the first Voluntary National Reviews, and the scientifically rich and informative panel discussions.

This year's Forum will serve as a guide for most of us as we embark onto the implementation and follow up phases of Agenda 2030.

In Lebanon, we are currently in the final stages of drafting our own National Sustainable Development Plan, which will be aligned to the highest extent possible with Agenda 2030's goals and targets, while also introducing our own country-specific targets.

The Plan will cover the country's different economic sectors, such as industry, agriculture, finance, and tourism, in addition to addressing the challenges facing our public services such as electricity, water, water treatment, renewable energy, and transport.

While all 17 SDG's will be covered in our National Plan, more attention will naturally be given to those goals which were identified as more urgent to the national context.

Consultations are currently being led by the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, involving all concerned ministries and government agencies. They will be expanded at a later stage to involve all other relevant stakeholders, including the private sector, civil society, the academic community, and UN agencies operating in Lebanon.

As for financing, the National Plan envisages a diverse structure, including public-private partnerships (PPP's), privatization, concessional financing from multilateral development institutions, and a boost in domestic resource mobilization.

Mr. President,

It is no secret that the implementation of this universal and integrated agenda will stretch the financial, institutional and human capacities of developing countries, including middle income countries.

It is our firm belief that the role of the United Nations Development System (UNDS) will be crucial in assisting developing countries during the implementation and follow-up phases through the provision of integrated normative support, evidence-based policy advice, capacity building in areas such as data collection, and technology facilitation.

The UNDS role will also be essential in facilitating partnerships, bringing together stakeholders and mobilizing the necessary domestic and international public and private resources for a successful implementation of the Agenda.

In order for the UNDS to fulfil this role in the most efficient manner, it is our view that this would require, among other things:

- 1) A more coherent and integrated UN Development Assistance Framework.
- 2) A revitalized and strengthened Resident Coordinator system.
- 3) Predictable, sustainable and flexible funding for the UNDS operations.
- 4) Improved coordination and coherence between development and humanitarian activities, particularly in situations of protracted crises.

Finally Mr. President,

Lebanon welcomes the reference to refugees and people living in areas affected by complex humanitarian emergencies in the Ministerial Declaration. In an HLPF whose theme is “*Ensuring that no one is left behind*”, recognizing the challenges faced by refugees and their host communities cannot be overlooked.

Since 2011, Lebanon has been engulfed by a protracted humanitarian crisis triggered by the influx of more than 1.2 million Syrian refugees as a result of the crisis in Syria.

This has placed immense social, demographic, environmental and economic pressures on my country, reducing its economic growth prospects, aggravating unemployment, and exacerbating the vulnerabilities of Lebanese host communities by overstressing their limited resources and infrastructure.

Addressing such a formidable challenge will require, in addition to short term humanitarian assistance, delivering longer term development financing on concessional terms to Lebanon and other developing countries hosting large numbers of refugees, which are literally providing a “*global public good*”.

Failing to do so would seriously curtail our ability to implement Agenda 2030 and our National Sustainable Development Plan.