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NATIONS ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND  
THE PACIFIC (UNESCAP) 23-27, MAY, 2022**

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Ahsan Iqbal**

**Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives**

**Executive Secretary,**

**Excellencies,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were formulated and adopted by world leaders to ensure economic, social and environmental sustainability to improve the quality of life of the people. However, when these goals were adopted, the world had a different set of socio-economic realities. As of now, COVID 19 pandemic as a black swan event reversed gains of decades of socio-economic development.

While the deadly health impact of the COVID 19 pandemic is almost over, the socio-economic repercussions continue to affect countries in several ways. In particular, the pandemic has further taken away the fiscal and monetary space available to the developing economies.

National governments all over the world offered emergency stimulus packages to their people during the pandemic to mitigate the impacts of the economic shutdown.

I appreciate the exceptional role of global multilateral institutions in providing emergency debt relief and in facilitating access to the COVID vaccine in developing countries.

Pakistan and Sri Lanka will present their Voluntary National Reviews in July later this year at the High-Level Political Forum.

I owe special thanks to UNESCAP for facilitating Pakistan and Sri Lanka to organize a twinning program to share best practices and case studies to achieve SDGs. This will help both the countries in the implementation of the SDG's agenda as well as in the compilation of their respective Voluntary National Reviews.

**Ladies and Gentleman,**

The world is facing unprecedented challenges now and entirely different from when Sustainable Development Goals were conceived and launched in 2015.

All governments and especially developing countries are going through a commodity super cycle causing double-digit inflation and facing deterioration in their debt sustainability indicators.

I believe there is a need to think afresh about the purpose of the Sustainable Development Goals and what can be achieved realistically. The world leaders need to get together and agree on a new global development agenda underpinned by the post-COVID 19 socio-economic realities.

I'll add further that Pakistan is the first country to adopt SDGs as national development agenda. Because all the 17 goals are imperative for developing countries not because they come from international agreement not because they represent international understanding but

because each and every country if they want to progress they needs to fulfill these basic conditions of development and enable their people to lead equality.

**I thank you.**