

# **Nepal**

## **Country Statement**

**Delivered by Hon. Dr. Min Bahadur Shrestha  
Vice-Chairman, National Planning Commission of Nepal**

**10<sup>th</sup> Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development  
27- 30 March, 2023**

**Theme: “Accelerating the recovery from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at all levels in Aisa and the Pacific”**

**Mr. Chair,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen!**

1. First and foremost, I would like to extend my gratitude to the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, and particularly to the Executive Secretary of ESCAP for organizing this 10<sup>th</sup> Forum. The theme chosen for the forum is very pertinent and timely considering the current regional and global economic scenario.
2. The Sustainable Development Goals are our global commitment in ending poverty, promoting equality, addressing environmental issues and achieving peace and prosperity. SDGs are at the centre of Nepal's development vision and priorities. It underpins our national aspiration of "Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepali."
3. Nepal is pursuing sustainable development agenda with strong national commitment. SDGs have been mainstreamed into our national plans and programs. We have been localizing it at the provincial and local level planning and budgeting processes. Institutional architecture has been created to make the implementation of SDGs more systematic. Other stakeholders such as the private sector, civil society, community, and development partners have also been mobilized in attaining targeted goals.
4. We have made some progress in key area of SDGs such as in poverty reduction, food security, education, health, gender equality and energy sector. However, the multifaceted effect of COVID-19 pandemic and current global geopolitical conflicts have threatened our progress.

5. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the poverty and unemployment rate have increased and the gap between the rich and poor has widened. It has brought negative implications on the hard-earned gains. In sum, the pandemic has slowed down the momentum of our development efforts.
6. Currently, we are facing the problem of rising food and energy prices. Disruptions in supply chain, decrease in revenue growth, increase in outstanding debt and widening fiscal deficits have added more challenges. The increase in unemployment and inflation rate have exacerbated inequalities, pushing marginalized and vulnerable groups even further behind and creating hurdles in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.
7. The Government of Nepal is implementing various recovery policies and strategies to mitigate these negative impacts and to achieve the targeted goal of Sustainable Development. In this regard, the government has brought various relief packages, even in a situation of resources constraints to respond to the pandemic and other challenges. The fiscal and monetary policies have supported the hard-hit sectors by increasing the budget allocation and extending subsidized credits.
8. Currently, the economy is facing external sector vulnerabilities. More stimulus packages for economic recovery are needed in short, medium and long terms. Ensuring social protection is vital to deal with the impact of the COVID-19 and other crisis. Digitization of the public sector, digital connectivity in public schools and prioritizing MSMEs are also in high priority. Partnerships need to be strengthened to build

national capacities and ensure the delivery of quality health services and infrastructure.

9. To achieve early recovery of the economy, we need to bring structural reform that boost economic growth and make the economy resilient from future shocks. Economic growth can be increased through increasing capital expenditures and increasing domestic production. To create more equitable society, we have to reallocate our resources for steering growth and making it more inclusive.
10. Moreover, investment to improve health infrastructure along with boosting human capital is equally important. Also, we have to carve our policies to reduce the digital divide. We need to incentivize private sector to invest in SDGs.
11. Finally, our collective efforts are critical to achieve SDGs. Foreign investment in infrastructure and human capital could provide an opportunity to boost not only economic growth but also enhance resilience and inclusiveness that could also address environmental sustainability related challenges. I highly appreciate the global initiatives and support measures taken to respond COVID-19 pandemic. Similar concerted efforts from the international community, development partners and stakeholders can accelerate the SDGs implementation.

I thank you all.