

Statement by President Cyril Ramaphosa at the virtual High Level Meeting of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Moment

18 September 2020 - 12:00am



Mr Secretary-General,
Mr President,
Excellencies,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

South Africa welcomes this opportunity to engage on accelerated global action towards sustainable development.

As we do so, we face the reality that the immense resources we have directed to fighting the coronavirus pandemic have severely set back our ability to realise the Sustainable Development Goals.

At the same time, this is an unprecedented opportunity to build back better and fairer.

For Africa, the path we must take is clear.

The UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is our lodestar for transforming our world, and the template for global cooperation and partnership.

We must invest in people.

We must provide developing countries with the means to achieve the SDGs.

We must ensure technology transfer and capacity-building support.

We must ensure that no country is left behind.

We must prioritise those countries with special needs and circumstances, including least developed countries, small island developing states and countries in conflict or

under occupation.

Regrettably, the multilateral response to advancing sustainable development has experienced setbacks on many fronts.

This has been in no small part due to the impact of the pandemic.

Some countries have reneged on their multilateral commitments.

It is our hope that Member States will find common cause in this ambitious, forward-looking and truly transformative global agenda.

Our experience with COVID-19 has demonstrated what can be achieved if we act and work together to address global challenges.

In the face of the pandemic, African countries have acted with determination and resolve.

The African Union is developing a comprehensive response to COVID-19, addressing the economic, social and environmental pillars of sustainable development.

Working together as countries, as the international community and with our development partners, it is within our means to meet the aspirations of Agenda 2030.

It is within our means to eradicate poverty and inequality, bring about greater economic justice and conserve our natural world for future generations.

I thank you.