

23 October 2017

**UN Resident Coordinator's remarks on the occasion of the first
Constitutional Meeting of the Government Working Group on SDGs**

Honorable Minister Djukic Dejanovic
Foreign Affairs Assistant Minister, Ambassador Katarina Lalic Smajevic
Mr. Yngve Engstroem, Head of Cooperation, EU Delegation in Serbia
World Bank Country Manager in Serbia, Mr Stephen Ndegwa
Senior Government members with us today
Your Excellencies
Ladies and Gentlemen

Let me start by reiterating the UN's support to the Government of Serbia and its efforts to move the Sustainable Development Agenda forward in a coordinated and meaningful manner. It is truly a pleasure to be here at the first constitutional meeting of the Inter-ministerial SDG Working Group meeting which includes representatives of 22-line ministries and other key governmental bodies like the Public Policy Unit and Bureau of Statistics among others. It's also a pleasure to see that many member states of the UN are present today as well as Civil Society.

We all know the steps that have brought us to this moment and I believe we are grateful to all the actors that have advocated to put Agenda 2030 on the list of priorities for the Government of Serbia.

While the UN's entire five-year development program is aligned to the EU accession process, it recognizes that achieving market reforms must be supported with gains in social and environmental development which is the hallmark of the SDG Goals.

Achieving the SDGs by 2030 requires us to address issues of equitable development, for example. This means the Agenda should to be supported by strong institutions which is why the governance elements of the Agenda are so important and central to its success. Serbia having a strong government is in a position to nationalize Agenda 2030 and lead it to a successful conclusion.

The fact that Serbia has already mapped current policies compared to SGD goals is a step in the right direction and will assist in informing the Rapid Integrated Assessment process which is required to Mainstream Acceleration and Policy Support (also known as MAPS). This would inform the nationalization of indicators and targets for Serbia. In return this information would be used for the SDG Baseline Report and for the Voluntary National Review in 2019.

The universality of Agenda 2030 and its 17 SDGs is intimately linked to the EU accession process. Countries like Serbia could benefit from developing a National Sustainable Development Strategy which captures the ideals of accession while addressing the principles of Agenda 2030 which are mutually reinforcing.

Again, I would like to congratulate the Government for this milestone moment in Serbia's progress towards Agenda 2030. The UN family remains available to support this process wherever requested.

Thank you.