



The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

COUNTRY STATEMENT

at

The 2016 SPECA Economic Forum
under

**Agenda Item II: Review of Implementation of Sustainable Development Goals
At the National Level**

22 November 2016

Ganja, Republic of Azerbaijan

His Excellency Shahin Abdulla MUSTAFAYEV,

Minister of Economy of Azerbaijan

Mr. Christian Friis BACH,

Under Secretary-General of the United Nations & Executive Secretary of UNECE

Mr. Kaveh ZAHEDI, Deputy Executive Secretary of UN-ESCAP

Dear colleagues of SPECA Member States,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, I take this opportunity to thank the UN-ESCAP, UNECE and Government of Azerbaijan for convening and hosting this Annual Economic Forum being held under the relevant and timely theme of *“Enhanced Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals through Cooperation.”* Indeed, the United Nations Special program for the Economies of Central Asia, Afghanistan and Azerbaijan (SPECA) is a beneficial platform to facilitate sharing of knowledge, experiences and lessons learnt concerning SDGs implementation in Central Asia, Afghanistan and Azerbaijan.

My delegation would like to highlight some key points regarding the status of SDGs implementation in Afghanistan, institutional arrangements, reforms currently underway, the major challenges in this respect and some recommendations.

- I) First of all, in terms of contextual realities, Afghanistan as the only least developed country in the SPECA sub-region is faced with unfinished business of Millennium Development Goals implementation, mainly as a result of being a later starter in implementing MDGs in 2005. Nevertheless, the MDGs off-track targets and indicators are now being interfaced with the SDGs and therefore, the baselines for most of the SDGs targets in Afghanistan are based on MDGs, particularly in poverty eradication related targets and indicators.
- II) In institutional arrangements, as per a decree of Council of Ministers, the Ministry of Economy has been designated as the leading institution in coordination, prioritization, monitoring and reporting on SDGs for the Government of Afghanistan. All the budgetary units have either direct or indirect part in implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. The 26 budgetary units are assigned as the leading agencies which have the main responsibility to implement the relevant SDGs targets. Out of the 26 leading agencies, 10 of them are leading the 80% of the SDGs targets and indicators, and the rest 16 leads only 20% of the SDGs. For each of the targets the leading agencies have the supporting budgetary units and international development partners. The development partners are mainly the United Nations agencies (UNDP, UNFPA, and recently UN Women) plus USAID, World Bank, and GIZ.

The coordination of the Afghanistan-SDG is taking place in different levels, including technical, political and decision making levels.

- III) In terms of process, the SDGs in Afghanistan are going through three phases of Nationalization, Alignment and Implementation. Each phase comes after the completion of the previous one, where one phase is connected with the other phase. The three phases are as follows:

- 1. **Nationalization:** In this phase the SDGs were firstly introduced to all stakeholders and the consultations on the process as well as the targets and indicators were made with the government and none-government agencies at the national and sub-national level. The technical meetings with all the Budgetary Units and the United Nations Agencies were conducted to identify and assign the leading and supporting agencies for relevant goals and targets. The leading agencies together with the supporting agencies then decide

whether the indicators and targets kept the way they are or it should be removed or revised considering the situation and development needs of the country. This main output of this phase, which will be finished on January 20th 2017, is to have the nationalized and approved targets, indicators, baseline for each indicator and annual target for each indicator until 2030.

2. **Alignment of the SDGs with the national plans and policies:** After completion of the first phase and officially launching the Afghanistan-SDGs, on January 19, 2017, the alignment phase is to be started. The second phase is planned to be completed within six months (July 2017). In this phase the A-SDGs targets and indicators which are not yet reflected to the plans, reflect and inserted to the national, provincial and ministerial policies, strategies and annual plans.

It is worth mentioning that the current available national indicators are considered while deciding on the A-SDGs indicators, which means that most of these indicators are already in the national policies and plans. In addition, the Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework (ANPDF) that was presented by the Afghan National Unity Government in the Brussels Conference on Afghanistan in 5th October this year, also acknowledges SDGs.

In the alignment phase the tools and guidelines for the A-SDGs Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting, e.g. the database, is to be developed and activated, so that, the M&E system be in place while going to the implementation phase.

3. **Implementation, M&E and Reporting:** The third phase which takes the longer period of time than the other two phases (14 years) is the most important phase where, the planned activities and targets are being implemented. In this phase, the process is to be monitored, evaluated and reported regularly and continuously. The leading agencies collect the data every six months from their relevant units and directorates. The Ministry of Economy is developing the A-SDGs analytical progress reports annually and shares it with all stakeholders at the national and international levels. The A-SDGs will be evaluated every 3-years and the corrective revisions will be made.

IV) **Afghanistan's -SDGs Format**

As the planning and budgeting mechanism in Afghanistan is based on the eight sectors (Security, Education, Health, Social Protection, Infrastructure, Agriculture,

Governance and Economic sectors), the national budget is also formulated, implemented, monitored and reported based to these sectors.

To avoid the duplication and creating a parallel system of planning and budgeting, the Afghanistan Sustainable Development Goals and Targets are categorized and placed under these eight mentioned sectors. Each sector includes one or more than one goal of the SDGs. The number of targets and indicators are also varying on each sector.

It is pertinent to mention that the government of Afghanistan is still working on the targets and indicators until December 2017, therefore the number of the targets and indicators may change.

V) Achievements, plans and challenges

The Government of Afghanistan has made efforts toward implementation of the SDGs in Afghanistan since one year. The efforts made so far are focused in the phase one (contextualization of the SDGs).

Achievements

1. Conduct first National Coordination Committee meeting,
2. Conduct around 20 technical meetings with the leading and supporting agencies,
3. Identified the leading and supporting agencies for each A-SDGs targets,
4. Finalization of 80% of the targets and indicators by the leading agencies,
5. Presentation of the health and education sectors to the Economic Committee of Council of Ministers,
6. Conduct the consultative workshops with government, civil society and provincial level,
7. Develop four working committees,

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