

**Presentation by
H.E. Ambassador Halit Çevik,
Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations
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Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Turkish Minister of Development Mr. Elvan has originally intended to present our country report to this meeting.

However, due to a failed coup attempt to our constitutional order on 15 July, the Minister has to cancel his trip to the USA.

On this occasion, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all who have condemned this attempt and express solidarity and support to Turkish people, the democratically elected Government in Turkey and its democratic institutions.

It is a privilege for me to address to the first High Level Political Forum since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Sustainable Development Goals. I would like to present the initial steps taken by Turkey for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The 2030 Agenda is an ambitious framework that urges all countries to take action at all levels. It provides us a unique opportunity to integrate the concepts, goals and targets of sustainable development into national policy frameworks. In this process, we believe that strong ownership and leadership by Governments is a key feature for effective and timely implementation. Success of the implementation depends on the right steps to be taken by active participation and contribution of all stakeholders.

Turkey, in this respect, is determined to take necessary actions for the achievement of SDGs by the year 2030. As one of the 22 volunteering countries to present National Reviews in this platform, Turkey demonstrates its ownership, dedication and leadership at this early stage of the implementation of the Agenda 2030.

Turkey has prepared its National Voluntary Review Report under the coordination of the Ministry of Development, and with valuable cooperation with all stakeholders, namely public institutions, civil society, private sector, academia and the UN Country Office. I would like to express my sincere appreciation to all participants of this teamwork for their extensive support and contribution to the report.

Let me now briefly present the main elements outlined in our report. Firstly, I would like to highlight our achievements in the Millennium Development Goals. Then, I will address the current sustainable development policy environment and our plans for the integration of SDGs into national context. Following that, I will explain institutional mechanisms as well as public awareness and ownership. Finally, I will touch upon SDG indicators and monitoring, development cooperation and the challenges identified at early implementation. In conclusion, I would like to share our messages with the international community.

Mr. President,

Turkey has made significant progress in achieving MDGs over the last 15 years and wishes to prolong its success in realizing SDGs with the same pace. Comprehensive policies and efforts to achieve MDGs have created a holistic development perspective among policy makers and practitioners. Turkey is among the top ten performers as measured by average annual rates of relative progress, especially for goals such as eradicating extreme poverty, reducing child mortality, improving maternal health and ensuring environmental sustainability.

Turkey adopted sustainable and inclusive development as a main policy and put people at the center of its development agenda. In the last decade, Turkey launched and followed an important development model, which regards human development along with economic growth and environmental protection as the fundamental dynamics of medium and long-term development.

Significant achievements regarding poverty eradication, better income distribution, extension of social protection measures and services for the disadvantaged, provision of equal opportunities to access basic services such as education and health were recorded.

Effective policies were implemented aiming at preventing next generations to face to inadequate income and insufficient access to basic needs and services. Furthermore, structural transformation programs have been applied to establish resilient conditions for future generations.

These experiences will support Turkey in the implementation of SDGs. This inclusive approach is promoted by Turkey at both national and international endeavors. Turkey's primary focus has been on fighting inequality, achieving inclusive and sustainable growth and assisting the least developed and low-income countries to achieve sustainable development and integration into the world economy to ensure that "no one is left behind".

Mr. President,

Sustainable development concept has a long history in Turkish policy environment. It has been reflected to numerous laws, regulations and action plans in a variety of fields and sectors.

As the highest-level national policy document in Turkey, National Development Plan sets all macro-level national policies and goals. Development Plans lead the society to achieve higher levels of prosperity and determines long-term objectives and priorities beyond short-term approaches.

Turkey has included sustainable development policies in its National Development Plans since the Rio Summit in 1992. The current Tenth Development Plan has put sustainable development at its core with a green growth and a human-centered development approach. It incorporates the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development in a balanced way and makes special emphasis on international cooperation for development. A thorough analysis of the Plan demonstrates a high consistency with SDGs.

Having a strong ground for sustainable development in its principal policy document, Turkey is dedicated to operationalize the 2030 Agenda according to its national circumstances. Turkey will take SDGs as a critical input in the process of drafting the vision of the next Plan in 2016 and integrate SDGs into the Plan itself. As a first step to this end, a comprehensive stocktaking analysis for determining the current state of affairs has been programmed. Based on this analysis, our Government will fully incorporate SDGs into the Eleventh National Development Plan.

In addition, our institutions functioning in different fields and sectors are working on integrating relevant SDGs into their strategic plans or action plans. For instance, some public institutions and NGOs are already taking steps to nationalize SDGs, in fields such as migration, women's empowerment, health, agriculture and food. Some business institutions have started to prioritize SDGs as well.

Mr. President,

Turkey regards good governance as the fourth pillar of sustainable development. Robust institutions are crucial to achieve SDGs goals at the international, national and local levels. Effective coordination among these institutions is also essential for transforming the global vision into successful outcomes.

Since sustainable development requires a multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder perspective, a strong coordination mechanism among existing structures as well as establishing new ones for responding to the scope of the ambitious 2030 Agenda is needed.

The Ministry of Development, which coordinates the planning and programming processes among public institutions, is the principal authority for sustainable development in Turkey. It has a multi-sectoral perspective within itself, along with its coordination capacity, which proves to be a significant advantage.

In order to provide an effective coordination among diverse institutional structures working on sustainable development, the National Sustainable Development Commission was established in 2004. In addition, the High Planning Council and Economic Coordination Council have been playing a key role in coordination, monitoring and assessment of sustainable development. There are several other high level and technical commissions in which civil society, academia and private sector are involved.

At this point in time, the Government of Turkey is discussing the options for elevating SDGs in the decision making process to the highest possible level. The existing institutions are considered useful and practical. Further institutional arrangements to support Turkey's roadmap for implementing SDGs will be completed by the end of this year. Strengthening and widening the scope of the National Sustainable Development Commission is a case in point.

2030 Agenda assigns responsibility not only to Governments, but also to private sector, civil society and academia. Hence, sharing of responsibilities among different stakeholders to implement SDGs is an urgent step that should be taken. Turkey aims at creating a national setting based on the principles of participation, inclusiveness, accountability and transparency for the effective contribution of all relevant stakeholders.

For the effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda, communication channels should be created among different segments of the society. Enhancing dialogue especially with women and young people is important for encouraging participation at the widest level, which will result in a rapid achievement of SDGs.

Mr. President,

Turkey intends to develop a framework that conforms with the UN framework on follow-up and review. National SDG Review Reports are expected to be prepared on a periodical basis in line with the HLPF agenda. The Turkish Statistical Institute will play a central role on monitoring the implementation of SDGs based on global SDG indicators. Moreover, voluntary monitoring and reporting mechanisms by private sector will be encouraged.

Since 2000, Turkey has been using its national sustainable development indicator set, composed of 132 indicators under 10 categories. According to a national study carried out in April 2016, 45 percent of SDG indicators are currently covered by the Turkish Statistical System, independent of disaggregation. Turkey will complete its set by taking into account the results of the ongoing work in the UN for establishing a global common monitoring framework and the national priority list of SDGs. The Turkish Statistical Institute plans to initiate a study for analyzing the data gap and building a monitoring capacity to fill those gaps as well.

Addressing the global challenges under the framework of sustainable development goals requires adequate means of implementation. The main elements may be listed as finance, capacity building, technology transfer and market access by least developed and low-income countries.

In addition to these requirements, the most important is the international public finance, since official development assistance is a must in order to support development endeavors of the low income countries. However, it is clear that the financial resources required to implement the SDGs cannot be met only by increasing the current global level of ODA. We can fill the financial gap by mobilizing more resources through private investment, domestic resource mobilization, philanthropy and remittances. It is also crucial to use all resources more effectively.

On the other hand, current humanitarian crises around the world are closely related to the development challenges of the countries. Therefore, humanitarian assistance should go hand in hand with development assistance, thereby building infrastructural and human capacity and increasing resilience to shocks.

Turkey is determined to share the benefits of its economic growth with other countries in need. As an emerging donor in the development cooperation, Turkey has increased its ODA rapidly in recent years. Turkey provided 3.9 billion US dollars ODA in 2015. Our ODA/GDP ratio is 0.54 percent, approaching to 0.7 percent benchmark every year, despite the persistent humanitarian crisis in our region.

During the 4th UN Conference on LDCs in Istanbul in May 2011, Turkey announced a comprehensive “Economic and Technical Cooperation Package” and committed to providing assistance of 200 million US dollars annually to LDCs until 2020.

I am pleased to state that Turkey has exceeded its commitment to date, marking 1.5 billion dollars assistance to LDCs, which corresponds to 300 million dollars annually. Preliminary data show that 442 million dollars of assistance was allocated to LDCs for the year 2015.

Mr. President,

Migration is a complex phenomenon and became a very important item on the international agenda. Migration can contribute to sustainable development on condition that it is managed properly. A significant progress in migration and development can only be achieved through common sustainable strategies as well as comprehensive dialogue. In this regard, Syrian case in Turkey is worthy of attention.

The crisis in Syria has become the biggest humanitarian tragedy in the world since the Second World War. As a neighboring country, Turkey deeply feels the multiple effects of this tragedy. Currently, Turkey is the neighboring country that hosts more than 2.7 million Syrians seeking protection and assistance.

We grant “temporary protection” status to Syrians and provide them with accommodation and food as well as medical, educational and psycho-social services. In view of improving the living conditions of Syrians in Turkey, they have been allowed to have access to the Turkish labor market since January 2016.

Our policy is based on humanitarian responsibility and international law. We have mobilized all our resources and capabilities to address the needs of these people on behalf of the international community. We expect the international community to show necessary solidarity and act with greater sensitivity with respect to responsibility and burden-sharing.

Mr. President,

In spite of the progress made in achieving MDGs, prevailing regional disparities and gender inequality remain as major challenges that Turkey needs to address. Establishing strong communicative ties and working together on specific goals in an integrated manner will be a critical challenge. In this regard, multi-sectoral approaches including at the policy making level should be put in practice. Advancing the use and quality of administrative data, disaggregation and ensuring all stakeholders' ownership of the 2030 Agenda are among the immediate challenges to be addressed. We also consider climate change and loss of biodiversity as challenges that require a global response and action.

An integrated global partnership with effective means of implementation and strong accountability mechanisms could best help achieve SDGs. Therefore, Turkey will continue to cooperate with regional and international organizations in the field of implementation.

Istanbul is becoming a regional hub for UN institutions, creating important opportunities for new partnerships. In this manner, Turkey is proud to host the UNDP Istanbul International Center for Private Sector in Development. Through this global center, UNDP and Turkey have taken concrete steps to engage the private sector in 2030 Agenda globally. Istanbul Center will be instrumental for mobilizing business to improve the lives of poor around the world through investment, job creation, capacity building and innovative public-private partnerships. We hope that our partnership with UNDP will set an example for prioritizing SDGs.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that Turkey strongly supports the 2030 Agenda, and stands ready to continue fulfilling its commitments.

I thank you.