

Excellencies, distinguished colleagues,

As we enter the final stretch of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, with only five years remaining, it is imperative that we accelerate our collective efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. The devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, along with ongoing serious and deadly conflicts from Ukraine to the Middle East and across Sub-Saharan Africa, have, among other things, slowed the progress towards the SDGs. The urgency of our task has been reaffirmed in the Pact for the Future, emphasizing the need for rapid acceleration.

Serbia is committed to the full realization of the SDGs and has made notable progress in their implementation. Ranked 35th globally in the 2024 Sustainable Development Network Report with a score of 77, Serbia continues its meticulous process of nationalizing the SDGs and is currently preparing its second Voluntary National Review.

Regarding SDG 8 on decent work and economic growth, Serbia has recorded significant economic success, with an average GDP growth of 3.1% over the past decade and the highest GDP growth in Europe in 2024 at 3.9%. This has been accompanied by a significant reduction in poverty and unemployment. Progress in SDG 3 on health and SDG 5 on gender equality is also advancing steadily, while SDG 17 partnerships have enabled Serbia to strengthen its cooperation with developing and least developed countries, particularly in the field of education, where it offers extensive scholarships.

Serbia firmly believes that science and science-based solutions play a crucial role in accelerating SDG implementation. In that spirit, Serbia was among the co-sponsors of the UN General Assembly resolution on the International Decade of Sciences for Sustainable Development (2024–2033). In this framework, we propose that the role of science in achieving the SDGs be integrated into the Ministerial Declaration of the High-Level Political Forum in 2025, making explicit reference to the UNGA resolution on the International Decade of Sciences for Sustainable Development.

As we move forward, we must reinforce our collective commitment to innovation, partnerships, and science-driven solutions to ensure that no one is left behind. Serbia stands ready to contribute actively to these global efforts.

Thank you.