

Launching the Decade of Action during COVID-19

Thank you Mr Chair.

As others have said, the landscape has changed significantly since we met in 2019 and it is clear that COVID-19 presents significant challenges to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. But our message is that we must not be consumed by the challenges alone, we must use this too as an opportunity to rebuild better.

This is the moment to shape a recovery that delivers cleaner, healthier, more inclusive, and more resilient economies and societies, that puts the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the goals of the Paris Agreement back within reach as we collectively rise to the challenge of the Decade of Action.

This means leaving no one behind. This means supporting and providing quality education and health services for people living in poverty, women and girls, people with disabilities and marginalised and crisis affected groups. This means ensuring that they are empowered to play a meaningful leadership role and their voices are heard.

To this end, the UK is delighted to be leading the UN Financing for Development work stream on recovering better for sustainability, alongside our partners, the EU, Fiji and Rwanda.

We will also use our G7 presidency, and work with the Italian G20 presidency, to push for a clean and resilient recovery. This approach will also be at the heart, as you say, of our COP26 presidency.

Mr Chair, COVID-19 is very likely to have knocked the SDGs further off-track globally, as we have heard again today, but the story doesn't end there. It's important that we work together to take urgent action.

The SDGs provide a valuable framework to help us build back better in our COVID-19 recovery and by working to achieve the SDGs we will also be better placed to withstand future crises.

COVID-19 has exposed our vulnerabilities, but let it now also galvanise our strengths. We are stronger when we come together.

Thank you.