

Achieving the SDGs amidst COVID-19

Thank you Madame President. Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen.

The Decade of Action is upon us, with only 10 years left to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The world needs the SDGs more than ever, but COVID-19 has posed yet further challenges to reaching them by 2030. Urgent action to accelerate progress is required.

We are committed to this aim, leaving no-one behind.

Finding a globally accessible vaccine for COVID-19 is the most urgent shared endeavour of our lifetime. We have pledged up to £764 million (US\$960 million) of UK aid to the global response to the pandemic, including £250 million (US\$314 million) to the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI). CEPI is developing a COVID-19 vaccine and will ensure no delay in access for our developing countries.

Tackling other preventable deaths is also crucial. On 4 June, the UK hosted the Global Vaccine Summit, which raised \$8.8 billion for Gavi's vital work over the next five years to vaccinate a further 300 million children and save up to 8 million lives.

While we remain strongly committed to responding to COVID-19, in parallel it is important to begin to consider how we will recover. The UK is committed to working with others to ensure our recovery delivers cleaner, healthier, more inclusive, and more resilient economies and societies.

We thank the UN Secretary General for the leadership he has shown in convening Member States under the Financing for Development in the Era of COVID-19 initiative. We are so pleased to be working alongside the EU, Fiji, and Rwanda, as we lead the rebuilding for sustainability workstream.

COVID-19 has only exacerbated the SDG financing challenges, so it is integral that we take this opportunity to build momentum, including on important matters such as further leveraging private finance and investment.

Climate change is a global threat, which affects poverty, stability, nature and prosperity. The UK will host COP26 next year, in partnership with Italy, providing a vital opportunity to accelerate global progress.

So at this High-Level Political Forum, the UK has hosted an event on climate action, which has sought to build the momentum for a successful COP – raising ambitions, focusing efforts and drawing important links with broader sustainable recovery objectives.

COVID-19 has aggravated an already serious learning crisis. We know the power of educating girls in fighting poverty, building prosperity and stability, tackling climate change and of course leaving no one behind. Girls' education must therefore be a priority both for the recovery and for our ongoing efforts to achieve those SDGs.

We urge all UN members to stand with us in championing the right of every girl to 12 years of quality education.

And more broadly, our commitment to the Inclusive Data Charter underscores our determination to ensure that everybody is counted, so that they have a fair opportunity in life.

We owe it to future generations to work together and build back better from COVID-19 and base our recovery from the pandemic on solid foundations. The Sustainable Development Goals are pivotal to this endeavour.

Thank you.