

# THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

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UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY SEVENTY-FIFTH SESSION  
SECOND COMMITTEE  
General Debate

*Check against delivery*

## STATEMENT

by

Ms. Emilija Marinkov

First Secretary

Mr. Chair,

At the outset, I would like to congratulate you and the other members of the Bureau on your election and to wish you every success in your work. You can count on our full support during this Second Committee session.

Serbia has aligned itself with the Statement of the European Union, therefore I would like to use this opportunity to make some additional remarks in my national capacity.

Mr. Chair,

The world today is in the midst of a biggest economic and social crises, facing an unprecedented challenge caused by COVID pandemic. The global wakeup call is also call to the UN and all member states to join forces and unlock a new, brighter vision of a better and more prosperous, safer and more stable world that leaves no one behind. We owe to the coming generations to build back better. The implementation of the 2030 Agenda, Paris Climate Agreement as well as the Addis Ababa Action Agenda are crucial in facing some of the biggest challenges today - global economic instability, growing social inequality and climate change. Within its possibilities, Serbia has remained fully committed to the implementation of all these documents. More than ever before, the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals at the global level is of the utmost importance as we strive to create a better, more prosperous and resilient world to benefit us all.

Serbia attaches great importance to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the achievement of the SDGs. It has taken extensive measures to promote implementation of the Agenda at the national level. Those measures include eradication of poverty, decent work and economic growth, especially for the young people, greater inclusiveness and better education and health protection, as well as full gender equality and the prevention of violence against women.

Serbia presented its first Voluntary National Review (VNR) on the SDGs implementation at the meeting of the HLPF, held in New York in July 2019. The presentation provided an opportunity to shed light on Serbia's strong commitment to the 2030 Agenda and highlighted the importance of, and synergy between, Serbia's SDGs implementation and its Euro-integration processes while further promoting regional cooperation in this field.

My country has taken concrete steps to provide funds for the 2030 Agenda implementation. The National Assembly established the Focus Group for the SDGs implementation and oversight; it is engaged in the process of adopting laws relevant for the 2030 Agenda implementation and financing the priority SDGs. A significant part of financial resources comes from the EU pre-accession funds and the Ministry of Finance coordinates the management system and the implementation of the programs financed from these funds.

Preparing for the VNR elaboration, our Statistical Office held a number of workshops to map the SDGs indicators. The Workshop to collect data and assess the SDGs country indicators, held in November 2019, identified the sources of missing data and considered the possibility of obtaining the Serbia-related data from the United Nations database.

To increase the visibility of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs importance at the local level, 8 events on SDGs Localization have been planned for a number of Serbia's towns in partnership with the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities and the German Corporation for International Cooperation (GIZ).

Mr. Chair,

At the initiative of the Secretary-General, the governmental Office for Public Investments Management, UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Office in Belgrade organized a meeting at which the results of the UNCT assessment on the socio-economic consequences of COVID-19 in Serbia were presented. The assessment focuses on the period of the first six months after the outbreak of the pandemic and is based on the official data and specific surveys carried out by various agencies and programs within the UN system. Special attention was accorded to the impact of the pandemic on the health system, social protection, economic response and recovery, macro-economic flows and multilateral cooperation, social cohesion and community resilience, climate change and environmental effects.

The UNCT document assessed that the Government reacted timely and effectively in the past six months even though the country was hit hard by the pandemic. The economic measures that have been taken are characterized as a 'short-term resilience of the economy' while the period to come is characterized by a high level of insecurity. The document also highlights the strong coordination of institutions and efficient allocation of resources, while the response to the pandemic was somewhat slow in local communities and took time to reach vulnerable groups. The health system of Serbia reacted swiftly and with adequate human resources and physical capacities in given circumstances. With respect to the macro-economic response, the document reveals that small and medium enterprises showed greater adaptability, while industrial production was hit hardest.

Head of the WHO Country Office in Belgrade, stated that the pandemic is 'under full control' in Serbia, but that it depends also on global trends. He commended the Government efforts and measures, as well as the attitude of Serbian people in overcoming the pandemic. The situation in the refugee camps during the pandemic was assessed as positive with an exceptionally low rate of infection.

Through collecting data on the responses to the pandemic and the recovery plan, Serbia will continue to invest in the health protection, social inclusion, reproductive health, gender equality and the prevention of gender-based violence, as well as to the improvement of the situation of the young and the elderly.

Mr. Chair,

While coping with the pandemic we should not oversee the challenge that climate change poses to the world. Covid should be seen as an opportunity to combat climate change and to move toward green resilient recovery. In this regard, Serbia has made an important steps towards the achievement of ambitious

climate goals, through adoption of the legal framework including the Law on climate change and the National Low-Carbon Development Strategy. Serbia's active role related to climate changes was acknowledged by its election as a Vice-Chair of the forthcoming 26<sup>th</sup> Convention of the States Parties to the afore-mentioned Convention to be held in Glasgow, Scotland, in November 2021.

As a world biodiversity hub, Serbia remains committed to the efforts made by the international community to unite the world in its struggle for the survival of life on planet Earth. The Balkans is one of the areas richest in biodiversity. Common regional initiatives in the struggle against climate change and for the reduction of pollution, such as afforestation, bear out the importance of the ecology that knows no borders. This was why the initiatives of Serbia to increase the square mileage of land under the trees in the region were supported as a way forward in the quest to achieve the greatest possible number of climate goals. Only through cooperation of all of us we can solve the problems of the pollution and the devastation of the ecosystem.

Mr. Chair,

In closing, let me assure you that despite numerous challenges posed by the pandemic, Serbia remains firmly committed to the full implementation of 2030 Agenda and achieving all SDGs.

Thank you Mr. Chair