



Shared Prosperity Dignified Life



**Key messages from the Arab region to the  
High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development**

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Your Excellency, President of the Economic and Social Council,  
Your excellencies, ladies and gentlemen Heads of Government,  
Your excellencies, ministers, ambassadors and representatives of Member States of the United Nations,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the Qatari Government, I have the honour of conveying the key messages of the Arab region to the 2020 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

Our meeting today comes under exceptional circumstances imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has affected our peoples and economies in an unprecedented manner, and impacted various social and humanitarian processes.

The pandemic has also delayed many regional activities to a later time this year, including the Arab Forum for Sustainable Development, whose outcome is submitted each year to the HLPF.

The messages I will share with you today reflect consensus among Arab States on a number of issues raised at several recent regional meetings. They also reaffirm the messages of previous Arab forums on sustainable development and emphasize that peace and the end of occupation are prerequisites for achieving inclusive and equitable sustainable development, and require the support of the international community and the United Nations.

*We therefore:*

1. Acknowledge the region's progress in integrating the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs in government processes, and our countries' commitment to coherence and collaboration across government institutions, and stress that development plans should be further aligned with the 2030 Agenda and translate into projects and programmes with clear budgets and financing strategies.
2. Recognize that inclusive development work is floundering in the Arab region and requires concerted efforts and effective mechanisms to identify priority groups and better target development projects to benefit those most in need and leave no one behind.
3. Highlight the need to build national statistical capacity, enhance coordination and address the lack of disaggregated and quality data, critical for evidence-based policymaking and reporting.

4. Stress the importance of mainstreaming gender equality in VNRs at the procedural and content levels, including the review of SDG 5 and all relevant targets.
5. Encourage effective, credible and transparent partnerships between Government and all stakeholders, including local and regional authorities, at all stages, from planning and implementation to follow-up, review and evaluation.
6. Urge the private sector to adopt a sustainability perspective, strengthen its relationships with partners based on the principles of the 2030 Agenda, and explore opportunities to expand into new fields that respect the environment and natural resources.
7. Stress the importance of enabling parliament to perform its functions and facilitating the participation of parliamentarians in regional and global follow-up processes, and invite the UN organizations to provide technical support and assist them in forming networking platforms.
8. Acknowledge the necessity of partnering with civil society and major groups in all stages of development planning and implementation, to enhance accountability and ensure that national strategies benefit all segments of society.
9. Recognize the independence of think tanks and research centres in Arab countries, and the need to facilitate their access to funding and resources.
10. Emphasize that VNRs should be awarded sufficient time and attention, and consider the recommendations and guidance set out in the resulting report as a basis for planning the next stage and setting a road map for implementation and acceleration.
11. Stress the importance of self-evaluation to build on lessons learned and focus on mechanisms for implementing recommendations, rather than moving too quickly to preparing another review.
12. Underscore the importance of regional and global mechanisms, including regional forums, in follow-up and review of progress, awareness raising, capacity building, and in promoting the exchange of experiences and peer learning.
13. Stress the need to continue organizing regional workshops for Arab countries in partnership with relevant regional and international bodies.
14. Recognize that the Decade of Action launched pursuant to the Political Declaration of the Summit on Sustainable Development Goals, is a strong impetus to galvanize efforts and mobilize national, regional and international resources and engage stakeholders in acceleration actions.
15. Emphasize the need to strengthen government institutions' capacity to ensure their resilience and readiness to adapt and respond to emergency situations and crises.

Honourable delegates,

The Arab region's countries reaffirm their commitment to the 2030 Agenda and its principles as an essential enabler of recovery from COVID-19. Working towards achieving the principles, Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda will contribute to strengthening Arab countries resilience to any future crisis.

Thank you.