

Statement by the President of the Republic of Lithuania Gitanas Nausėda at the SDG Moment convened by the United Nations Secretary-General in the context of the General Debate of the 76th session of the United Nations General Assembly

Mister Secretary-General,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today, while assessing the progress of the Agenda 2030 for the Sustainable Development Goals, it should be clearly stated: we have done much – but not enough.

One significant obstacle was the COVID-19 pandemic. Starting as a public health crisis, it has exposed the dire consequences of deepening systemic inequality.

Nonetheless, this crisis has also left room for bold solutions aimed at social and economic well-being. We can still accelerate global development, taking a new, more resolute trajectory.

For once, we have been shown the true value of solidarity. Without global cooperation, there would be no vaccines. And now vaccine sharing is a way to stop the virus worldwide.

We will need this solidarity to deal with another major pressing issue – climate change. Recent alarming reports call us to take immediate actions before it is too late.

Over half of global GDP depends on nature. The lives of many people depend on nature. Therefore, while restarting our economies, we must invest in climate neutrality, protection of biodiversity and its restoration.

We have already seen how the COVID-19 pandemic has brought new dynamic into the Lithuanian BioTech industry. An innovative GreenTech might also be highly productive – and useful for the environment, too.

Lithuania has recently adopted the National Climate Change Management Agenda. We seek to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 70 per cent and to become climate neutral by 2050. The challenge is to find tools to encourage

everyone to contribute, such as precise fiscal incentives or clever deposit systems.

I am happy to inform you that last June the Declaration of Green Lithuania has been signed in Vilnius. Together with the European Commission, local communities, businesses, industries, and NGO's we agreed to work together transforming our economy – and our lives.

I invite all to move resolutely to a climate neutral economy based on solidarity and cooperation. Thank you!