

President Abdulla Shahid,
Secretary General António Guterres,
Distinguished delegates,

I am extremely delighted to join you at SDG Moment 2021 and grateful for inviting me to this special occasion.

A research institute of the United Nations University recently released a report that found that all disasters in the world are interconnected.

For instance, the heatwave in the Arctic and cold wave in Texas as well as the Covid-19 pandemic and Cyclone Amphan that hit Bangladesh are closely connected with one another through the links of carbon emissions and environmental destruction.

If the problems are interconnected, then so be the solutions.

When humanity transcends national boundaries to work together, that, in and of itself, would be our first step towards surmounting a crisis.

Right in this hall 6 years ago, the UN agreed to adopt Sustainable Development Goals, and 2 years ago, it proclaimed the Decade of Action until 2030.

Humanity's strides towards an inclusive future were held back by COVID-19, yet, ironically, it was the very pandemic that keenly brought home the desperate need for SDGs.

Our commitment to action grew stronger.

We must move ourselves beyond simply overcoming the crisis and build back better and stronger.

If actions that we take together are interconnected, we will deliver, without a doubt.

First, our commitment to inclusion and mutual prosperity must be immediately put into action NOW.

That action can begin with an equitable access and distribution of Covid-19 vaccines by the international community.

At G7, the Republic of Korea made a 200-million-dollar-pledge to COVAX AMC.

As one of the global vaccine hubs, we are committed to making continued endeavors to expand vaccine supply and support.

Taking a step further, we stand ready to actively contribute to strengthening international health cooperation at WHO, among others.

Second, we must collaborate beyond our borders in responding to the climate crisis.

Our planet is getting hotter faster than anticipated with extreme weather events occurring one after another in every part of the world.

Carbon neutrality is a goal that developed and developing countries alike must move towards in tandem.

To this end, leading countries in climate action must work with developing countries by sharing their experiences and transferring technologies.

Korea plans to finalize its 2050 carbon neutrality scenario by the end of October and submit its updated NDC at COP 26.

Korea will scale up Green New Deal ODA and share its experience and technology as a nation that has grown from a developing to a developed one, thus actively supporting developing countries in their endeavors towards green recovery and carbon neutrality.

Third, sustainable development demands that we fully harness the fourth industrial revolution technologies.

Digital technologies and infrastructure, however, engender new divides and inequalities at the same time.

Addressing the digital gap and inequalities thus presents another challenge of our time.

These are the problems that we also encounter in energy transition process. Our digital and green transitions, therefore, must be inclusive, leaving no one behind.

Lastly, we must respect our future generations and gather the wisdom for intergenerational co-existence.

We must move beyond our differences in ideas and cultures across generations.

All generations, as we strive to transcend the boundaries of nationality, race, and gender to communicate and connect to one another, must recognize that after all, we are part of “one planet”.

For poverty, inequality, climate change and other crises that remain unresolved by older generations, the voices of future generations must be heard more attentively as so doing would indeed be a duty asked of the older generations.

Fearing change, the older generations have left many problems unsolved, yet the younger generations' sensitivity and capacity for empathy may find us the solutions.

We must not forget, in particular, that the future belongs to our future generations.

Joining us today are an exceptionally outstanding group of young men who are connecting with the youth across the world, BTS, in the capacity as the Special Presidential Envoy for Future Generations and Culture.

Together with BTS, the first-ever, special envoy from the private sector,

I hope today's gathering will serve as an opportunity to mobilize the future generations' good will and action towards sustainable development.

Guided by the conviction that no one is safe until everyone is safe, the Korean people will join the journey of inclusive international cooperation as your most reliable, steadfast companion, 'leaving no one behind',

Thank you.