

**Statement of His Excellency Dr, Mohamed Irfaan Ali, President of the
Cooperative Republic of Guyana, to the
Sustainable Development Moment (SDG) Moment,
76th Session of the United Nations General Assembly
(September 20, 2021)**

03:00 mins

Mr. Secretary-General,

Please accept my Government's congratulations on the renewal of your term of office and be assured of Guyana's continued cooperation and support in the execution of your duties.

Guyana welcomes the convening of the SDG Moment in order to explore best practices, lessons and opportunities for a resilient post-COVID recovery and ensuring the global community's commitment to the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*.

My country's commitment to leaving no one behind is unalterable. Guyana is a plural society, with six ethnic groups and a kaleidoscope of cultures. This diversity impels us to approach policymaking in an even-handed and inclusive manner.

Agenda 2030 represents a framework for sustainable, inclusive and equitable development. It is therefore imperative that the international community is not distracted or detoured from achieving the Agenda's objectives and targets.

Unfortunately, even prior to the pandemic, progress on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda was slothful and lagging. The pandemic has only compounded this reality. It has reversed many development gains and has threatened the attainment of the SDGs.

The uneven global response to the pandemic has not helped. In order to attenuate this uneven response, avert the adverse consequences of a two-tier recovery and prepare for future exogenous shocks, greater attention must be paid to strengthening resilience, particularly for the most vulnerable countries, like Small Island Developing States and low-lying coastal states. This will

require debt rescheduling, increased access to soft resources and increased financing for climate adaptation.

In advance of critical summits and intergovernmental meetings, which are significant in the thrust toward accelerated implementation of the 2030 Agenda, I am pleased to take this opportunity to expound on some of the initiatives that the Government of Guyana has been engaged in to further the achievement of the SDGs.

First, recognising that food systems are critical not only to the elimination of hunger and the reduction of poverty but is also linked to the achievement of several of the SDGs, Guyana is spearheading the CARICOM Agri-Food Systems Agenda, which prioritises regional food security and nutrition.

Second, as a low-lying coastal developing state, Guyana's economic development is being guided by a Low Carbon Development Strategy, which simultaneously facilitates sustainable economic development while combatting climate change.

Third, conscious that the pandemic has engendered learning loss, the Government of Guyana is providing tangible support for learning from nursery to tertiary levels. This support includes the provision of 20,000 online scholarships to universities around the world for vocational, undergraduate and post-graduate studies, intensifying digital learning and preparing to make university education free by 2025.

Guyana remains committed to presenting its second Voluntary National Review in the Decade of Action to realise the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

Guyana will stay wedded to SDGs and will strive through its small but aggressive advocacy to ensure that this the third decade of the 21st century is characterised by transformation in which 'Agenda 2030' remains the primary guiding framework.

I thank you.