

Speech by Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel at the Summit on Sustainable Development Goals



Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermúdez , September 18, 2023

Speech delivered by Miguel Mario Díaz-Canel Bermúdez, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba and President of the Republic, at the Summit on Sustainable Development Goals, New York, September 18, 2023, "Year 65 of the Revolution."

Mr. President:

I have the honor of speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

The mid-term review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is taking place at an extremely critical time, when developing countries are facing multiple challenges and an unjust economic order that perpetuates inequality and poverty.

The reports produced by the Secretary-General contain irrefutable figures that reflect a rather bleak reality. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, the world was not on track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

By 2030, 575 million people will be living in extreme poverty. By then, barely a third of countries will have succeeded in halving national poverty levels. We will not eliminate hunger, as we agreed. On the contrary, 735 million people suffer from chronic hunger today, more than in 2015. At this rate, none of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals will be met, and more than half of the agreed targets will be missed.

Aware of the current situation, the G77 and China have made this event a top priority, with the aim of putting sustainable development back at the center of the international agenda and providing the political impetus needed to speed up implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

This call also presupposes an improvement in the global sovereign debt architecture with the participation of the South, enabling the implementation of a fair, balanced and development-oriented treatment.

The high cost of borrowing prevents developing countries from investing in the Sustainable Development Goals. Currently, 25 nations in the South devote more than 20% of their public revenue to debt servicing alone.

At the same time, a rapid and substantial recapitalization of the multilateral development banks is urgently needed to radically improve their lending conditions and meet the financial needs of the South.

In this respect, we call on the international community to follow and support the Secretary-General's proposal for a "Sustainable Development Goals Booster" for developing countries, with the (objective) of increasing affordable long-term financing for development and aligning financial flows with sustainable development goals.

We also call on developed countries to finally honor their unfulfilled official development assistance commitments.

Excellencies:

The climate change agenda must be fully implemented in line with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Paris Agreement, upholding the principle of equality and common but differentiated responsibilities, as well as respective capabilities.

More ambitious targets in areas such as mitigation, adaptation and the means to achieve them, as well as the provision and mobilization of resources by developed countries, are essential to tackling climate change while meeting our development challenges. We strongly urge developed countries to live up to their commitments in this area.

Developing countries' efforts to implement Agenda 2030 must also be supported by concrete actions in technology transfer and human resources training, as well as North-South cooperation,

to foster industrialization and investment in quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure.

The international trading system must also be reformed, and sustainable supply chains created to help achieve the SDGs by promoting export-led economic growth in developing countries. To this end, special but differential treatment for developing countries should be strengthened as a multilateral principle. Unilateralism and protectionism, including unilateral protection and trade restrictions, which are incompatible with World Trade Organization agreements, must be eliminated as quickly as possible.

This is the case for countries suffering from the imposition of unilateral coercive measures, which constitute a serious violation of the aims and principles of the United Nations Charter. These measures seriously hamper the efforts of the countries concerned to achieve the SDGs and sustainable development in general. The international community, including the UN system, must continue to firmly reject the imposition of such measures and work towards their unconditional elimination.

Excellencies:

The above demands have been made repeatedly by Southern leaders. The lack of progress should not be attributed to the absence of solutions. The actions are there.

What is urgently needed is the political will to "leave no one behind", and to overcome one of the most complex crises humanity has faced in modern history. This would be our best contribution to the common future we must build together!

Thank you.

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