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BEIRUT: Prime Minister-designate Saad Hariri said Thursday Lebanon was firmly committed to achieving the sustainable development goals, through solid partnership with all key stakeholders, including the strong and talented private sector.

These remarks came during the opening of the “Multi-Stakeholder SDG Forum,” organized by Global Compact Network Lebanon, the Lebanese chapter of the U.N. Global Compact at the Grand Serail.

The forum was attended by Crown Princess Victoria of Sweden, Acting U.N. Special Coordinator for Lebanon Pernille Dahler Kardel, GCNL President MP Dima Jamali and a number of participants from the public and private sector and civil society.

“I am a firm believer that building effective partnerships with the private sector ensures sustainable financing and effective implementation of the SDGs in Lebanon. “We launched the SDGs process last year by building a strong institutional setup and mechanism. We established the National Committee for SDGs, which I personally chair, and includes representatives of the public administration, the private sector and civil society,” Hariri said.

He added that the government objectives were to first localize the ambitious global agenda according to the national needs, challenges, and resources and ensure an effective engagement and ownership by all stakeholders.

“Last July, Lebanon presented its first Voluntary National Review report to the High Level Political Forum of the U.N. Lebanon’s report was very well received by the international community, and it demonstrated the seriousness of Lebanon in its commitment to the SDGs. The report gave us the opportunity to reflect on our current status, existing gaps, aspirations and challenges,” Hariri said. He added the conclusions of the report highlighted the need to prioritize the global goals.

“It also underscored the need to ensure an integrated approach to development in Lebanon. This important conclusion goes hand in hand with the approach that we are currently adopting when revisiting the projects in the Capital Investment Program presented at the CEDRE conference,” Hariri said.

He added that the vision presented by the Lebanese government at the CEDRE conference lays down the solid foundation for growth, employment and development in Lebanon.

“The private sector has a central role to play in the implementation of this vision, and a number of promising investment opportunities await Lebanese and international businesses in Lebanon’s Capital Investment Program. The enactment of the PPP law, a year ago, has paved the way for these opportunities to effectively materialize, thereby also allowing Lebanon to mobilize private sector resources for the implementation of its development agenda,” he said.

He announced that Lebanon had launched three major infrastructure projects under PPP modalities: the expansion of the Rafik Hariri International Airport, the toll road from Khaldeh to Okaibeh, and Lebanon’s national data center.

“Our solid partnership is key to advancing Lebanon’s development and achieving inclusive growth for all the Lebanese. Your efforts complement our efforts. Your achievements complement our achievements. By working together, we can take the Lebanese economy to new levels,” Hariri said.