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**Remarks at the Opening Session: 2023 SDG Learning, Training and Practice**

**Monday, 10 July 2023, 11:15AM – 12:00PM**

Conference Room 5

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to be part of the opening session of this year's SDGs Learning, Training and Practice that is organized in connection with the 2023 session of the UN High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

Allow me to start by expressing our gratitude to the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) for their long-standing partnership in organizing this Special Event since 2016.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all the organizations that will be leading the 10 learning sessions in both virtual and in-person format. You have been identified through an open call that generated almost 130 submissions from all over the world. I look forward to the sessions providing space for knowledge-sharing and stimulating discussions that can support strengthening capacities towards SDG implementation, in particular those that are under review at this year's HLPF,

namely SDG 6 on clean water and sanitation, SDG 7 on affordable and clean energy, SDG 9 on industry, innovation and infrastructure, SDG 11 on sustainable cities and communities, and SDG 17 on partnerships for the Goals.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The world is currently facing the impacts of multiple crises, ranging from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the triple crises of climate, biodiversity and pollution which have been amplified by ongoing conflicts, including the war in Ukraine.

We have reached the halfway point in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and it is clear that we are very far away from achieving them.

The Special Edition of the Secretary-General's SDG's progress report indicates that only 12 percent of the targets are on track while progress has stalled or reversed for more than 30 percent of the SDGs.

This past March, the global community came together in New York at the UN 2023 Water Conference to discuss the progress made in implementing **SDG 6**. The increasing frequency of climate disasters is threatening the availability of clean water and effective water management. Consequently, numerous regions are experiencing severe water scarcity. To address these challenges and meet the targets set by SDG 6, it is imperative to prioritize infrastructure investment, enhance coordination and take robust action against climate change.

Furthermore, it is distressing to observe that 675 million people still lack access to electricity and a staggering 2.3 billion rely on unsafe and polluting fuels for cooking. Achieving **SDG 7** necessitates accelerated electrification, increased investments in renewable energy sources and the improvement of electricity grids.

The review of **SDG 9** indicates that the recovery of the manufacturing industry from the pandemic is incomplete and uneven. To drive progress, it is essential to invest in advanced technologies, reduce carbon emissions and improve global mobile broadband access.

The pandemic has disrupted climate change mitigation efforts and has underscored the disproportionate impacts of climate change and conflicts on cities. As a result, the realization of **SDG 11** remains distant. Prioritizing urban development planning, improving access to public transportation and enhancing waste management are critical steps to advancing SDG 11.

Lastly, while certain areas related to **SDG 17**, such as development aid, remittances, and access to technology, have seen progress, funding for development remains a significant challenge, particularly for low-income countries. We need to urgently address funding gaps, promote international cooperation, and prioritize the development of reliable data systems to ensure effective monitoring and accountability.

Ladies and gentlemen,

This Special Event precedes the SDG Summit to be held in September here in New York. At the Summit, global leaders are expected to pledge bold commitments that

match the scope of our mutual challenges and the ambitions of our common goals. The lessons, tools, methodologies and practices shared during the SDG Learning and Training Special Event will be instrumental for the implementation of these commitments.

I hope that you will all be inspired by this year's sessions. I wish you a very fruitful HLPF 2023.

Thank you.