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**The Deputy Secretary-General's
Video Message to the Sixth Local and Regional
Governments Forum on the 2030 Agenda**

**Date: 12 July 2023
UNHQ, Conference Room 1**

Excellencies,
Distinguished Mayors and Governors,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a pleasure to extend a warm welcome to the sixth edition of the Local and Regional Governments Forum.

This Forum has represented a platform for multi-partner dialogue and cooperation, and over several years, it has transformed into a space showcasing innovative and tangible contributions by local and regional governments.

Making progress at the local level has proven instrumental in driving transformation on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development from the ground up.

It is through public institutions that we can carry the torch of sustainable development for present and future generations. Building peaceful, just and inclusive societies that provide equal access to justice, based on respect for human rights, must be at the centre of our

roadmap of action. This is critical to deliver better access to basic services, better socio-economic opportunities and improved governance systems.

By strengthening the capacities of public institutions at the regional and local levels, countries will be able to further accelerate the delivery of the SDGs, activating SDG16 as an enabler of the whole 2030 Agenda.

Local initiatives within cities and communities have had significant national and broader cross-country impacts on the SDGs.

We have seen local shifts drive forward the six SDG transitions. Local authorities are on the frontline of the clean energy transition and demonstrating continued leadership on climate and biodiversity goals, without compromising livelihoods nor economic prospects.

Local and regional authorities are also among the first to find solutions to make agri-food systems more resilient and credit-worthy, to transform education systems and to bridge the digital divide on the ground – where it matters most.

We must leverage this momentum, through strategic partnerships that can support these local shifts towards innovation, greener employment and local market opportunities, while optimizing local value chain developments.

Local actions have also targeted commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and pollution through

uptake in renewable energy sources, greater circularity, and just transitions. These actions have triggered multiple co-benefits, to restore greener spaces, reimagine inclusive societies and rebuild social trust.

As catalysts of transformative change, local and regional governments are incubating ideas, bringing actors together, drawing on local assets and knowledge and testing solutions on the ground.

Whether it's water and sanitation, energy, industry, infrastructure, and sustainable cities, your strategies of transformation are an inspiration for us all.

Voluntary Local and Subnational Reviews capture critical local experiences, best practices and trends for SDG analyses and advocacy at all levels. But we must continue, tailoring solutions for scalable deployment and positive impact in all parts of the world.

Going forward, we need to leverage the momentum and impact of local SDG implementation. Aside from the scale and speed of the transformation, we need to be mindful of the multi-faceted areas that require urgent shifts, with financial and technical measures to optimize change and impact.

For this reason, in 2021, the United Nations established the Local 2030 Coalition - the UN system-wide initiative to localize the SDGs. The Coalition facilitates exchange of solutions, knowledge, and experiences, showing real change and local investment opportunities for people, their livelihoods and well-being and the environment.

The SDG Summit in September marks the halfway point to 2030, providing an opportunity to redouble our efforts, in line with the 2030 Agenda.

As we reignite this momentum, world leaders, local and regional authorities, civil society, business, indigenous groups, youth, women and many other actors, are called to actively engage and present meaningful strategies to accelerate action.

I trust you will use the SDG Summit as an opportunity to announce your ambitions, with a clear action plan for delivery.

We need commitments, clarity on the course corrections, consistency and cooperation to rescue our shared SDGs and put them back on track to deliver by 2030.

It can be done.

Together we can set in motion the changes needed to secure a better future for all. I wish you productive exchanges and successful outcomes.

Thank you.