

THE DEPUTY SECRETARY-GENERAL

**REMARKS ON THE OCCASION OF
2024 PARTNERSHIP FORUM OF
THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL**

“Reinforcing the 2030 Agenda and eradicating poverty in times of multiple crises: the effective delivery of sustainable, resilient and innovative solutions”

New York, 30 January 2024

Trusteeship Council Chamber

(delivered by Mr. Li Junhua, Under Secretary-General for
Economic and Social Affairs)

**Your Excellency, Ms. Paula Narvaez, President of ECOSOC
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen**

This year's Partnership Forum comes at a time of great instability and uncertainty for our world.

Numerous interconnected crises are unfolding around us, making our agenda more urgent than ever. Only 15 per cent of our Sustainable Development Goal targets are on track. Over 30 per cent have stalled or gone into reverse.

Inequality is rife. Well, over 300 million people face acute food insecurity. 700 million live in extreme poverty. And unsustainable levels of debt are preventing countries from addressing the needs of their populations.

Meanwhile, respect for the rule of law is evaporating around the world - exacerbated by escalating conflicts, weakened national institutions, attacks on human rights, and shrinking civic space.

The devastating impacts of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution are hampering progress towards the SDGs.

The situation is particularly acute for least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, and small island developing states.

Many face export marginalization, exclusion from international capital markets, high climate vulnerability, and energy poverty. All of which hobble their ability to provide basic services, let alone invest in sustainable development.

Excellencies,

There is hope. Last year's SDG Summit resulted in a strong Political Declaration to accelerate action around the 2030 Agenda.

The United Nations has identified six key transitions that, with the benefit of investments at scale, can make the aspirations of that Declaration a reality:

food systems; energy; digitalization; education; climate change and the environment, and decent jobs and social protection.

The United Nations is increasingly organizing its country engagement around these six transitions.

Each of these transitions has the potential to have a catalytic effect across every one of the SDGs.

And must be supported by effective trade policies, access to technology, reliable data, increased capacities, accountable local and national institutions, and essential financing.

But “Business – as –usual” is not an option.

The tailwinds of economic growth that drove economic development during the era of the Millennium Development Goals have faded as global growth has stalled.

We face an ever-widening SDG financing gap. Meanwhile, fiscal space is becoming more and more

constrained by unsustainable levels of debt, rising interest rates, and sky-rocketing debt servicing costs.

We need a massive surge in finance for the SDGs.

The Secretary-General's call for an SDG Stimulus is our best chance of success. This would massively scale up affordable long-term financing for development, especially through multilateral development banks. And it would expand contingency financing to countries with constrained liquidity.

The Stimulus would raise an additional \$500bn per year. That would provide developing countries with immediate relief to weather today's challenging conditions and allow them to invest in long-term development. The Stimulus would also help to tackle the high cost of debt and the rising risks of debt distress.

The Stimulus was endorsed by countries in the Political Declaration of last year's SDG Summit.

It is a vital, immediate measure and we must continue to progress to make it a reality this year.

But ultimately, the Stimulus must be accompanied by more fundamental reforms of the international financial architecture.

That system reflects a bygone age.

We must build an international financial system that is fit for the 21st century. One that is more just, more representative, and more conducive to supporting the bold investments in sustainable development we need.

Excellencies,

This year, we must accelerate action towards the SDGs.

That requires focus. It requires effort.

It requires partners and partnerships consistent with the vision laid out in the Secretary-General's report: Our Common Agenda.

The UN has been working hard to expand and deepen partnerships across all sectors and at all levels to drive the 2030 Agenda forward.

Across the globe, Resident Coordinators and United Nations country teams are collaborating with governments to convene stakeholders and build partnerships to help mobilize investment and translate global commitments into country-level action.

Resident Coordinators are also working closely with United Nations entities to bring together the system's capacities and experience for coherent, solutions-oriented support to countries' efforts to advance sustainable development, anchored in human rights, ensuring we leave no one behind.

We have seen UN-led public-private partnerships play a critical role in accelerating the SDGs. That includes partnerships led by the UN Global Compact, the Food Systems Hub, the Energy Compact Action Network and more.

In the year ahead, the UN development system will intensify its focus on localized action at the country level to bring partners together and drive progress towards the Goals.

Excellencies,

This year, we have a unique opportunity to help enhance global cooperation, address gaps in global governance, deliver on our shared agreements, and prepare for future challenges.

Together, Member States are developing a Pact for the Future ahead of the Summit of the Future in September.

This process is led by Member States. But to succeed in its ultimate objectives, it needs meaningful engagement between all voices and all actors.

Excellencies,

Today is an opportunity for a broad range of stakeholders to come together: to exchange ideas and

priorities; to discuss concrete actions; and to build partnerships that can advance the sustainable development agenda.

We must build on the momentum throughout the year: at the Regional Forums on Sustainable Development, the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, the Commission on the Status of Women, the Financing for Development Forum, and, of course, the Summit of the Future.

Friends,

This is a vital year in a vital decade. Let's come together to make this the decade we make the SDGs a reality.

There is no time to waste.

I wish you all productive discussions.

Thank you.

[END]