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OPENING REMARKS 2018 PARTNERSHIP FORUM, 4 APRIL 2018

“Partnering for resilient and inclusive societies: Contributions of the private sector”

Madame Deputy Secretary-General, Ms. Amina Mohammed,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very pleased to open the 2018 ECOSOC Partnership Forum, including those who are with us from across the world via webcast.

When they adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, world leaders called on all businesses to “apply their creativity and innovation to solving sustainable development challenges”. They underscored that business - along with governments, multiple actors and people- would be part of the collective journey to realize the vision of the Agenda.

As we meet once again for this annual dialogue, it is heartening to welcome such a group of bright business leaders to the United Nations and this Council. This is but one testimony of the



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enthusiastic engagement of many private sector companies around the Sustainable Development Goals.

The 2030 Agenda, as a roadmap for people, planet and prosperity, provides a platform for aligning private action and public policies to help advance the seventeen sustainable development goals.

Achieving the seventeen goals is not possible without pursuing inclusive development models and combatting inequality. It also requires building the resilience of societies, communities and people to cope with shocks -- be it natural disasters, economic shocks, conflicts or others. To do so, we must reach out to “those furthest behind first”, including women, youth, indigenous peoples and persons living with disabilities.

This year, the ECOSOC Partnership Forum will focus on the significant role the private sector can play in addressing those dynamics, promoting more inclusive societies and achieving the sustainable development goals.

Coming from a private sector background myself, I can assure you that the business case here is clear. According to recent research by the Business and Sustainable Development Commission,



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sustainable business models could unlock economic opportunities worth up to USD 12 trillion and increase employment by up to 380 million jobs by 2030. The study also shows the majority of companies are already aware that investing in sustainable development goals is a “win-win partnership”.

Distinguished Delegates,
Invited Guests,

Today, we also meet with the renewed conviction that major progress can be achieved through multi-stakeholder and public-private partnerships that are premised on a shared vision which puts people and planet at the centre of all our actions.

The recent discussions at the United Nations on partnerships with the private sector have focused on how to incentivize their participation. Growing attention is also now being placed on the quality and results of their engagement.

Both the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda highlight that the role of the private sector in implementing the sustainable development goals goes way beyond financing sustainable development, and includes sharing expertise, technologies and knowledge.



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The contribution of the private sector to the inclusion agenda in particular can mean many things, from creating more inclusive value chains, establishing diversity policies, including marginalized groups in decision-making processes and spurring disruptive innovations that bring marginalized groups into the mainstream of economic and social life. These efforts also require the engagement of all stakeholders beyond the business world – to make sure that the opportunities created by the private sector reach those the furthest behind first.

Today, the Forum will discuss how the private sector can foster inclusive and innovative business models for women, youth and vulnerable groups. We will showcase best practices that demonstrate how the inclusion targets in the sustainable development goals can be translated into “business goals” and make positive impact on the lives of vulnerable populations. We will also explore the role of the private sector in harnessing the potential of big data analytics for public good, including for marginalized populations.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I look forward to a rich and vibrant discussion today. The ECOSOC Partnership Forum has historically provided practical policy advice and solutions on improving partnership effectiveness. By



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focusing on ways that the private sector and partnerships can speed up progress in achieving the inclusion and participation targets in the sustainable development goals, your ideas and recommendations will strengthen the partnership for sustainable development. Our meeting will also contribute important elements to the Special Meeting ECOSOC will hold in New York in May on “Towards sustainable, resilient and inclusive societies through participation of all”. It will finally inform the discussions that will take place at the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in July 2018.

I would also like to take the opportunity to challenge the business leaders present here today to consider making bold commitments to act and invest towards co-designing a more inclusive future for all.

I look forward to the participation of all present here today.

Thank you.



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