

Mr. Chairman, your Excellencies, distinguished colleagues,

I am pleased to introduce the annual Report of the Secretary-General A/76/218. This report is on the priorities and initiatives of the United Nations Office for Partnerships for 2020 – in keeping with General Assembly decision 52/466 and 53/475. The UN Office for Partnerships is guided by the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 71/243 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, 2019 (A/74/73-E/2019/14).

By engaging key stakeholders, the United Nations Office for Partnerships (also known as UN Partnerships) serves as a global gateway to catalyze and co-create collaborations that accelerate solutions to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals (the SDGs). To fulfil its mandate, UN Partnerships leverages expertise and networks across its teams and initiatives including:

- The Sustainable Development Goals Advocates,
- The Sustainable Development Goals Strategy Hub and the Climate Action Team;
- The United Nations Democracy Fund which supports projects that empower civil society and strengthen democracy; and
- The United Nations Fund for International Partnerships also known as UNFIP. UNFIP is the primary interface between the United Nations Foundation and the United Nations system.

To enact transformative change and to propel advocacy and engagement for the SDGs, the Office leverages expertise and networks across its teams.

Before I go into the details of the report before you, I would like to bring to your attention several initiatives driven by the UN Partnerships during the high-level segment week of the General Assembly last month.

Pursuant to the political declaration of the 2019 high-level political forum on sustainable development, the Secretary-General was tasked with organizing an annual event called the SDG Moment to highlight inspiring action on the SDGs. The UN Partnerships collaborated closely with the Office of the UN Secretary-General on the second SDG Moment of the Decade of Action.

The event was held virtually on 20 September 2021 - marking the start of the General Assembly High Level Week. The Secretary-General was joined by more than 30 Heads of State, a number of his SDG Advocates, top UN officials and the iconic K-pop music band – BTS that amplified and reinforced the continued relevance of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and highlighted urgent actions needed to ensure COVID-19 response and recovery efforts are equitable, inclusive and accelerate the transition to sustainable development.

Together with the Dutch Government, UN Partnerships worked across the UN Secretariate to conceptualize and implement the SDG Studio as a modern platform to enable interactive on-line engagements with formats that flow like our television programming. The SDG Moment, watched more than 6 million times and was the first event hosted by the SDG Studio. The SDG Studio will continue to provide original programming and be a key platform for the UN leadership as it transitions to the Department of Global Communications.

Another event convened by UN Partnerships was the annual SDG Action Zone. This three-day virtual convening was organized around the solutions to core issues of the Decade of Action: Poverty and inequality, Gender, and Climate change.

Also, the Office, in collaboration with the Department of Global Communications, launched *Keeping the Promise* a new campaign to accelerate engagement and action on the SDGs. As of today, more than 130,000 people across the globe have posted their SDG promise.

The year 2020 was characterized by uncertainty in the face of COVID-19 and the climate crisis. The pandemic shined a spotlight on the need for collaboration among all sectors and the importance of strategic leadership. UN Partnerships has focused on driving expertise and resources towards sustainable and inclusive recovery, with the SDGs as our North Star.

I would like to highlight two examples supported by the UN Office for Partnerships in 2020. The first, is “Women Rise for All” launched by the Deputy Secretary-General to recognize women as drivers for an inclusive and resilient recovery going beyond COVID-19. Another example is the “United Nations Research Roadmap for the COVID-19 Recovery” published with the Canadian Institutes of Health Research to underscore the importance of science-based solutions to the pandemic.

In 2020, during its fourteenth round of funding, UNDEF funded 33 projects at approximately US\$ 7.5 million. At the same time UNDEF worked closely with its civil society partners to adapt projects to respond to the challenges to civic space and democracy as a result of the pandemic. UNDEF launched its 15th round of calls for project proposals on the first of November 2020. When applications closed, UNDEF had received 1621 proposals, the vast majority of applications were from local or regional civil society organizations in Africa, Asia, the Americas, the Arab region and Eastern Europe. In its 14 rounds of funding, UNDEF supported more than 830 projects in more than 130 countries, with a total disbursement of some US\$ 185 million dollars. The projects ranged from supporting civil society efforts for accountability and transparency to building capacity for strengthening media literacy, good governance and the rule of law.

The relationship between the United Nations and the UN Foundation is governed by the Relationship Agreements of 1998, 2007 and most recently 2014. The principal governing mechanisms between the two parties are the UNFIP Advisory Board, chaired by the Deputy Secretary-General, and the Joint Coordination Committee. In 2020, UNFIP focused on advancing the delivery of the SDGs, as well as the work of the United Nations system on inclusive and resilient COVID recovery.

By the end of 2020, UNFIP disbursed US\$ 9.76 million in funding from the UN Foundation for UN projects. Of that amount, US\$ 4.98 million was used to address global health crises. In line with previous years, the UN Foundation has continued to provide financial support toward advancing the UN’s work in several other key areas including women and girls, capacity development; fiduciary agreements and multi-stakeholder alliances. Over the past two decades, UNFIP has collaborated with the UN Foundation on 676 innovative, cross-sector projects implemented by the UN system globally.

In closing, the UN Office for Partnerships has continued to foster inclusive and transformative engagement of partners, including diverse and marginalized voices, in multi-stakeholder collaborative spaces.

Going forward, the UN Office for Partnerships will continue to invest in its capacity to deliver results and to take partnerships to scale – in keeping the promise of the SDGs.

Thank you for your attention.

Annmarie Hou
Executive Director
United Nations Office for Partnerships