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**Keynote Address by H.E. Peter Thomson,
Global Action Day of Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week**

H.E. Dr. Thani Al Zeyoudi, Minister of Climate Change and Environment,
H.E. Patricia Espinosa, Executive Secretary of UNFCCC,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me begin by expressing my condolences to the Government and people of the United Arab Emirates on the death of five of your diplomats in Afghanistan. I wish a speedy recovery to those injured in the attack.

Excellencies,

It is a pleasure to join you for Global Action Day.

I thank the Government of the United Arab Emirates for convening Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week, and for its steadfast leadership in driving the global transformation towards a clean energy future. I must commend the achievements of the UAE on climate, including early ratification of the Paris Climate Agreement and the UAE's hosting of a conference on the Montreal Protocol process that helped secure the Kigali Amendment to the protocol last November that secures the phase down of hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs).

Initiatives such as "Global Action Day" will be critical to our efforts to secure a sustainable future for humanity on this planet, as it is only by bringing leaders from policymaking, business, finance, academia, regions, cities, foundations, and philanthropy together that we will be able to forge the innovative partnerships needed to achieve our sustainable development, climate action, and clean energy goals.

Excellencies,

When world leaders adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, they provided humanity with a universal masterplan to transform our world.

The challenge now is to turn these words into action at the speed and scale necessary to reverse the destructive effects of climate change and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals in the next 14 years.

With estimates suggesting that achieving the SDGs will require annual investments of US\$5-7 trillion, and current Nationally Determined Contributions of Parties to the Paris Agreement being insufficient to limit global warming to between 1.5 to 2 degrees Celsius, it is clear that far more needs to be done.

The Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action adopted three months ago was an important step in harnessing action from business to help catalyze climate action as well as commitments by thousands of cities, regions, companies, and investors from across the world. This collaborative action is being done across and within sectors, governments, the United Nations, business, civil society, and the scientific and academic communities.

Innovative new partnerships that leverage competitive advantages, mobilize resources, drive research and development, and direct investments into low-carbon and sustainable sectors must be pursued both for mitigation and adaptation.

Examples are 1) Nationally Determined Commitments partnerships which bring developed and developing countries together with other institutions to provide technological and financial solutions and 2) “Under2Coalition” which is a club of subnational governments committed to reduce emissions 80 % by 2050, with 165 members and a combined GDP of \$26 trillion and one billion people.

Governments and policymakers have a critical role to play in establishing the regulatory frameworks needed to create enabling environments for business and catalyze public-private partnerships.

This includes by incentivizing the development of renewable energy technologies, addressing access to finance issues, mitigating risks, encouraging companies to seek longer-term returns, and scaling-up international cooperation.

Such efforts are essential to ensuring that green investments become best business, and lead to the creation of markets that drive down the cost of solutions for all.

Excellencies,

The global transformation towards clean and renewable energy presents major opportunities for governments, businesses, innovators, and entrepreneurs willing to invest in clean energy solutions. The Sustainable Energy for All partnership seeks to advance energy access, renewable energy, and energy efficiency.

Yesterday at IRENA’s assembly we celebrated that in 2015 we had a record three hundred and five billion dollars in investments in renewable energy, most of this in developing countries. It is now within reach to double renewable energy in the global energy mix to 36% by 2030, which is needed to stay well below the 2-degree threshold set in the Paris Climate Agreement.

The RE100 initiative has 84 prestigious global companies committed to 100% renewable energy. Google most recently joined RE100 at COP22 with the goal of 100% renewable energy in global operations by the end of 2017.

Action in many other sectors is underway and numerous multi-stakeholder initiatives have been created to support Governments in their efforts. Let me mention just a few. Partnerships focused on advancing sustainable transportation are under way and were listed by governments in more than 140 Nationally Determined Commitments, while numerous multistakeholder partnerships are stepping up their support for governments to ensure implementation.

Action to decrease emissions of so-called short lived climate pollutants in agriculture, waste, transport, and energy production by the Climate and Clean Air Coalition is underway. The Coalition continues to grow smartly, now with 51 government partners, 16 Intergovernmental Organizations, and 45 NGOs. Their work in near term climate mitigation is critical.

Indeed, climate action is increasingly being seen as a way to create jobs, improve livelihoods, and drive inclusive economic growth, with even greater dividends possible given the interlinked nature of climate action and the SDGs.

As President of the General Assembly, I am committed to driving a universal push for meaningful progress in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals. To this end I will be convening a High-Level Thematic Debate on the SDGs and Climate Change in the Spring, and a High-Level Event on Sustainable Finance in April.

The UN will also host The Ocean Conference in June, which will provide a unique opportunity to mobilize the urgent action needed to reverse the cycle of decline in which The Ocean is currently caught.

I encourage all of you to attend these critical discussions.

Excellencies,

Implementing the Sustainable Development Goals represents humanity's best chance to shift away from the precipice of un-sustainability and move towards a future of opportunity, equality, prosperity, security, and peace for all.

But this will require us all to work together in this pursuit.

There is no greater moral imperative and no time to lose.

I thank you.