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Statement by H.E. Peter Thomson, Youth Marketplace on Social Innovations for Health and Wellbeing Event

Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome everyone to this session on Social Innovations for Health and Wellbeing. I hope it will be a stimulating one for you all.

I want to thank Every Woman Every Child for joining with my office in organizing this dynamic event and for the important work that they are doing across our world.

I also want to thank the young innovators who will be presenting today for sharing their ideas with us, as well as today's panelists for their valuable time.

Today's event sets out to digitally connect young people from across our Planet to discuss innovative ideas being used to implement the SDGs – particularly those related to health and wellbeing.

Securing the health and wellbeing of the 1.8 billion young people around our world is a priority task for us all, as we look to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Taken together with the Paris Climate Change Agreement, and a number of other recent global agreements, the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda provides humanity with a universal masterplan to transform our world. If we succeed in implementing this masterplan, we will live in a world in which extreme poverty is eliminated, the rights of women and girls are secured, the environment is protected, climate change is combated, and people live in peaceful and inclusive societies.

But in order for us to achieve this equitable sustainable way of life for all people, we must seriously scale-up our implementation efforts.

Each and every one of us has a critical role to play – as individuals' role-modeling sustainable living, as innovators and creative thinkers conceiving new ideas, and as activists working with others to implement solutions to shape our world towards a sustainable future.

In our modern, interconnected world, technological advancements empower us with new ways and new platforms to drive SDG implementation. They provide new mediums to share ideas and build collaborative partnerships across our world.

Today's event is testament to that.

It is premised on an appreciation of the high levels of technology literacy among young people. In fact, people under the age of 25 account for half of the world's internet users.

This event is based on understanding that technology has made our common destinies ever more closely connected.

And on recognition that local initiatives that are helping to eliminate poverty and hunger, improve health and wellbeing, drive economic growth, and address gender discrimination and injustice, have the potential to be replicated in other settings, or scaled-up for global impact.

For such ideas to take hold, they need to be promoted and supported through events such as this one.

Young people will inherit the success or failure of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. To achieve the desired success, they need to be empowered with knowledge and skills so that they understand the logic of the agenda and become agents of transformation.

I have written to all of the world's Heads of Government urging them to include the SDGs in the education curricula of their schools, so that the message of the 2030 Agenda is universal, and all young people seize the goals as rights and responsibilities.

Later this week I will be going to Silicon Valley to meet with leading tech corporations to discuss how we can work together to ensure the message of the SDGs reaches all quarters of our world. I urge all of you to also use your platforms and creative ideas to make the message of the SDGs go viral!

In closing, I look forward to being inspired by your ideas today, and to working with you in our common effort to secure a sustainable future for the young people of tomorrow.

Thank you.