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**Video Message to the Africa Dialogue Series  
Public Policy Forum**

**New York, 26 May 2021, 3:00 pm**

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, dear colleagues,

When the General Assembly and the African Union respectively adopted Agenda 2030 and the 2063 Agenda, they put ownership at the core of the development policies. In the African context, ownership has three main implications.

First, taking responsibility of our present and future by creating the conditions and policy frameworks that are necessary to ensure transparency, accountability and equality in the exercise of public service.

Second, taking control of our own resources. As long as African countries continue to depend on others to cover basic needs, such as having access to the COVID-19 vaccines, they will not be really free to establish their own priorities and decide on their future.

Third, a change of narrative that is based on Africa's reality and identity. We need to understand our past, embrace our heritage and traditions and build on them, taking advantage of Africa's rich culture and history as the best way of finding sustainable solutions for the continent.

The three issues, Financing for Development, Sustaining Peace and Human Capital and the COVID Recovery, that will be discussed today provide a perfect opportunity to increase African countries' ownership over their own development.

Increasing available resources for financing development is indispensable to achieve sustainable peace in Africa. Ensuring inclusivity and equality in the access to public service delivery is the best most effective way to promote peace and stability on the continent.

Promoting inclusive and sustainable development should continue to be prioritized in order to achieve sustainable peace in Africa.

Illicit financial flows, including those linked to the extractives sector, are draining Africa's development resources. They exceed Africa's total external debt stock, making Africa a net creditor to the rest of the world. We need to bolster transparency and traceability throughout the global value chain to eradicate tax evasion and promote human rights principles.

A just transition to a net-zero future will require comprehensive national and international regulatory frameworks and the design and effective implementation of long-term national and regional agreements to achieve the SDGs and the Paris Agreement, including through the African Mining Vision.

The COVID-19 pandemic has clearly proved that perceived inequalities and restrictions in the access to basic services can trigger conflict. It has also demonstrated that investing in health is not only fulfilling a right, but also protecting a country most valuable resource: its human capital.

But as it stands, 80% of the population in Africa has no social protection at all. As Africa gets ready for building forward better, human capital should become a cross-cutting priority to promote resilience, growth and sustainability. To do so, we

need to scale up investments made during the pandemic in order to ensure robust social protection systems are in place to deal with the next shock.

The COVID-19 recovery will be dependent on the quality of the response for vaccines, investments for socio-economic recovery, and climate action through just transitions that cover women, energy, connectivity and food systems. This will support and enhance the vision of the continent and the implementation of the CFTA.

I invite you to discuss specific proposals in these three areas and to reflect how can they contribute to strengthen Africa's ownership of its development path leaving no nation behind.

Thank you.