

We need to recover what I might call the 'spirit of 2015'. We saw then, in the 2030 Agenda but also in the three other major agreements reached that year, an unprecedented global solidarity and determination to achieve the collective good. That is now, sadly, waning.

- The 2030 Agenda is unique for all the reasons we know: its innovative approach to development, its recognition that real transformation can be achieved through interaction between many different goals and fully joined-up thinking, the creation of a single universal agenda, the scale of its ambition and the range of actors needed for its implementation.

- The results so far have been, to put it mildly, uneven. Progress has been slow and patchy. In many areas, indeed, we are seeing movement in the wrong direction. The world is seriously off-track on many of the Goals. There have, of course, been major setbacks. In particular, a pandemic which has exacerbated existing inequalities and reduced the ability of States to make the progress needed. And a Russian war against Ukraine which is threatening a global food and energy crisis and sabotaging economies just as they were emerging from Covid-19.

- But we must not sink into inertia or defeatism because of these setbacks. The 2030 Agenda remains the only roadmap towards a better, fairer and more sustainable world. Far from being less relevant, the SDGs are actually now more relevant. The clarion-call from the UN has been to "build back better" on the basis of the SDGs; I like to think of it, indeed, as building forward better.

- Next year's Summit will be a major opportunity to re-energise this Agenda and to rekindle optimism, positivity and determination around it. We still have seven years left; let's think how we can use this time to best effect.

- Member States must be proactive. Not enough of them have been willing to convert the transformative vision of the Agenda into real policies. There has been too much 'business as usual'. The VNRs have shown Governments still thinking in largely silo terms. The 'whole-of-Government' approach must be re-emphasized. Governments should be much more explicit in presenting their policies and programmes as implementation of the SDGs. Ministers should be reporting, internally and externally, on what they are doing concretely to achieve individual SDGs, including the synergies they are pursuing between a number of them but also the conflicts they are trying to avoid.

- I hope groups of member States will take high-profile initiatives to demonstrate progress they are making in individual areas of the Agenda. By providing mutual support and encouragement and offering examples of good initiatives and best practice, they will help others to realize similar progress.

- We need, I believe, a broad coalition of champion Governments, UN agencies, civil society groups, IFIs and the private sector which can help to define a set of priority actions, in effect a work programme for the next seven years. Specific initiatives in particular Goal areas or regions of the world could be announced in the run-up to the Summit.

- What counts is less the achievement of all the Goals and targets by 2030 - let's face it, a tall order - and more the creation of new habits of working, joined-up thinking, nationally and internationally, and scaled-up investments based on that.

- Multi-stakeholder partnerships are the bedrock of the 2030 Agenda. We need fresh thinking on how to stimulate these. UN agencies have a role to play in identifying, and recommending, potential partnerships between various actors, public and private.

- I would like to see next year's Summit do a number of things:

i) It should reaffirm the pre-eminence of the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda. It should ask member States to recommit to the global solidarity which gave rise to them in 2015 and to the principles of inclusiveness, fairness and equality on which they are based.

2) Heads of State or Government should make clear that implementation of the SDGs is their personal top priority going forward and that all their Government's policies and programmes will be subordinate to this.

3) The Summit declaration should identify major opportunities for implementation but also major challenges and obstacles and how these will be tackled

4) It should put a much sharper focus on Leaving No One Behind and the commitment to try to "reach the furthest behind first". Governments should report much more specifically and regularly on what they have been doing to implement this.

5) It should accept more openly and clearly the vital role of civil society in relation to implementation, monitoring and accountability.

6) while welcoming recent reforms in the HLPF arrangements, it should look for further emphasis there on interlinkages between the SDGs, on cross-cutting issues like human rights and LNOB and on the mutual learning aspect.

7) It should announce significant steps to address the data challenge, recognizing the needs of many countries with limited capacity in this area and mobilising also the potential of new technologies.

8) It should announce major new partnership and investments in support of implementation as well as policy innovations.

9) It should highlight the importance of implementation by regional actors such as the AU or EU;

10) It should highlight the largely untapped potential of cities and local authorities as implementers;

11) it should deliver a strong message about the role of youth in SDGs implementation.

12) it should stress the interconnections between the Summit and many other global review processes.

- The Summit of the Future, arising from "Our Common Agenda", will take place during the same week. While it seems clear that its work will be complementary to that of the SDGs Summit (rather than in competition in any way), it would be helpful nevertheless if the Summit of the Future were to issue a strong endorsement of the primacy of the 2030 Agenda. There is, of course, much to welcome in the likely work programme and priorities for the Summit of the Future and I have no doubt that there will be important synergies between both events.

- In conclusion, the SDGs Summit will be our last significant 'call to action', with only seven years to go. We should grasp this opportunity wholeheartedly.