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**Implementing the 2030 Agenda for resilient societies:
Introduction of Secretary-General progress report on the SDGs
High-Level Political Forum
Conference Room 4, UNHQ
Monday, 9 July 2018**

Madame President,

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

Colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to begin our discussions this week with the introduction of the annual Secretary-General's progress report on the Sustainable Development Goals, which provides an overview of where the world stands toward the implementation of the SDGs.

[map of the world from Esri bank of maps]

It has been three years since world leaders committed to end poverty and hunger, to protect our planet, to foster peaceful societies, and to unleash economic, social and technological progress—and in implementing this vision they committed to reach those furthest behind.

Countries have been working hard to translate this transformative vision into concrete results, and many will report on their progress throughout the week. This report is an important tool for measuring progress. It is based on data from national statistical systems that are reported to the global system for the review of progress in the many areas of the 2030 Agenda.

[Adoption of 2030 Agenda photo]

[People]

Ladies and gentlemen,

Many people are indeed living better lives than they were a decade ago, even in regions facing the greatest development challenges. The proportion of the world's workers living with their families below the extreme poverty line has declined significantly, from 27 per cent in 2000 to 9 per cent in 2017. However, drought and disasters linked to climate change, and surging conflicts in parts of the world, are hindering faster progress.

[animated trend line of poverty data from 2000 to 2017]

Significant pockets of poverty persist in rural areas, where the proportion of the population living below the national poverty line is more pronounced in rural areas compared to urban ones.

[poverty map on rural/urban differentials]

Social protection is key to poverty alleviation. Still, close to 4 billion people were left without social protection in 2016. This is accompanied by a global deficit of social protection for vulnerable groups such as older persons, mothers with newborns, children, people with severe disabilities and the unemployed, leaving many without the means to make ends meet.

[icon from 2017 w/ graph and breakdown by type of social protection]

For the first time in more than a decade, hunger is on the rise again.

[Goal 2 image of hands and grain]

There are now approximately 38 million more hungry people in the world, rising from 777 million in 2015 to 815 million in 2016.

[Line chart with absolute numbers of undernourished]

Significant progress has been made in health around the world. Since 2000, in sub-Saharan Africa, the maternal mortality ratio has declined by 35 per cent and the under-five mortality rate has dropped by 50 per cent.

[Icons on maternal mortality and under-5 mortality with trends in SSA]

Some forms of discrimination against women are declining. In Southern Asia, a girl's risk of marrying in childhood has declined by over 40 per cent since 2000. But gender inequality still holds women back in many areas, depriving them of opportunities and basic rights.

[Icon on child marriage in Southern Asia from 2018 report]

Safe and quality water and sanitation services, crucial for survival, are still absent from many people's day to day lives. In 2015, 4.5 billion people lacked access to safely managed sanitation services, and about 2.1 billion people lacked access to safely managed drinking water supplies.

[Water and sanitation chart from Goal 6]

[Planet]

Ladies and Gentlemen,

With competing pressures on land to urbanize, expand agriculture and provide for increasing populations, the natural sites that we depend on are under threat and weakening our chances to fulfil our ambitions.

[Photo: Goal 15]

Forest areas are still shrinking, albeit at a slower pace, leaving just 30.7 per cent of forest area to total land area in 2015.

[Percentage of forest area showing trends]

Land degradation threatens the security and development of all countries and the livelihoods of over one billion people. About one fifth of the Earth's land surface covered by vegetation showed persistent and declining trends in productivity from 1999 to 2013.

[land degradation map time series]

The year 2017 was one of the three warmest years on record: 1.1 degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial levels.

In 2017, the world experienced the costliest North Atlantic hurricane season on record, driving the global economic losses attributed to disasters to over \$300 billion, with small island developing States particularly vulnerable.

[image of hurricane]

Climate-related events, such as drought, threaten food and water supplies, increasing competition for these and other natural resources. Globally, more than 2 billion people are affected by water stress.

[Image of a drought]

Transitioning towards sustainable and resilient societies hinges on responsible management of finite resources. By 2018, 108 countries had national policies on sustainable consumption and production.

[map of SCP in countries from 2018 report]

[Prosperity]

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Prosperous individuals and societies keep the world engine humming. However, it is the SDGs' aim to ensure no one is left behind as others benefit from employment, access to electricity, economic growth, industrialization and safe and resilient cities.

In 2016, the absolute number of people living without electricity dropped below the symbolic threshold of one billion. In the least developed countries, the proportion of population with access to electricity more than doubled between 2000 and 2016.

[Electricity at night map]

However, rural areas are gaining access at a much lower rate compared to urban areas and lag behind in access rates at just 76 per cent compared to 97 per cent.

[map of rural and urban electricity coverage in 2016]

[Peace and Partnerships]

Dear Colleagues,

Over the last decade, the number of violent conflicts has increased, leading to the forced displacement of millions of people. The number of people forced to flee their homes in 2017 rose by nearly three million to 68.5 million. Conflict is one of the main drivers of food insecurity in 18 countries, where 74 million people need urgent humanitarian assistance.

[Picture of the girl carrying water in refugee camp]

Birth registrations, which plays a key role in ensuring individual rights and access to justice and social services, are still globally only 73 per cent.

[Birth registration icon]

Strengthening global partnerships to support and achieve the 2030 Agenda needs accelerated progress.

Official development assistance (ODA) and other forms of international development cooperation, such as south-south cooperation, are key to achieving the Goals and targets of the SDGs. Only 5 donor countries met the 0.7 per cent of GNI benchmark for ODA in 2017. ODA overall decreased slightly in 2017, mainly due to lower costs for refugee assistance.

[ODA bar chart]

Migrants provide an important contribution to development. For instance, in 2017, remittances to low- and middle-income countries were more than three times the amount of ODA they received.

[Goal 17 Chart on ODA and remittances]

[Data Revolution in Motion]

Ladies and Gentlemen,

To understand our accomplishments and setbacks and chart our way forward, we need reliable, timely, open and disaggregated data to inform all our actions. However, progress in strengthening data and statistical systems has been slow.

[Census photo]

Globally, very few developing countries have statistical plans that are fully funded, and the share of ODA to statistics has hovered at around just 0.3 per cent since 2010. Fulfilling the ambition of leaving no one behind without timely and disaggregated data is impossible.

The need for investment in statistics—even within advanced statistical systems—has never been more pressing. Improvements will require political leadership, adequate resources and commitment. We need to further expand on tools available for data collection, production and dissemination, and ensure that all countries have rigorous evidence and comprehensive data to guide their efforts towards 2030.

[Goal 17 icon on ODA to statistical capacity development]

Dear Colleagues,

We have only 12 more years to fully realize this transformative agenda, but these Goals are *absolutely* within our reach. It will require policy makers' unwavering attention, a laser-sharp focus on implementation of these Goals, and a true sense of urgency.

[SDG logo page]

I wish you have a very productive discussion in the coming days.

Thank you.
