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MR. LI JUNHUA

UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS

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Remarks

Introduction of Secretary-General Progress Report on the SDGs  
High-Level Political Forum

New York, 11:00 am, 8 July 2022

**Excellencies,**

**Distinguished Delegates,**

**Colleagues,**

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

**I am pleased to present the Secretary-General's  
2024 progress report on the Sustainable Development  
Goals.**

**The midpoint of our journey to 2030 has passed,  
but the signs of a determined, sustained global  
comeback have yet to emerge. This year's report  
reveals that the world is currently on track to achieve**

**only 17 per cent of the targets under the Sustainable Development Goals. While marginal or moderate progress is being made on nearly half of the targets, there is a pressing need for acceleration. Alarming, progress towards over one-third of the targets has stalled or even regressed.**

**In the early years of the 2030 Agenda, progress in key indicators was slow but steady. Then, global challenges intensified after 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic, escalating conflicts, geopolitical tensions, climate change impacts, and systemic economic shortcomings have endangered the Sustainable Development Goals, disproportionately affecting developing countries and vulnerable populations worldwide.**

- An additional 23 million people lived in extreme poverty and over 100 million more**

**suffered from hunger in 2022 compared to 2019.**

- **Global health progress slowed since 2015, with mixed improvements in health targets.**
- **Education remains gravely threatened as many countries see declines in student math and reading skills, and one in five young people not in employment, education or training.**
- **Limited progress in achieving gender parity in public life and managerial roles, with high levels of violence against women and girls.**

**Shrinking fiscal space has curbed countries' capacity to address these shortfalls. While ODA hit another new high of \$223.7 billion in 2023, foreign direct investment to developing countries fell by 7 per cent. Debt levels remain unprecedentedly high, and**

**the annual SDG investment gap for developing countries stands at \$4 trillion.**

**And we are failing to protect our planet. Despite some reductions in emissions in developed countries, greenhouse gas concentrations hit record highs in 2022 and continue to rise in 2023. Carbon dioxide levels are 150 per cent above pre-industrial levels. Public funding for fossil fuels doubled from 2021 to 2022 and have tripled since 2015. Ocean acidification and species extinction risk are worsening, with a 12 per cent decline in the Red List Index since 1993.**

**Distinguished Delegates,**

**Violence and armed conflict have become an increasing threat to our sustainable development efforts. Ongoing conflicts and persistent unrest contributed to a record of 120 million forcibly**

**displaced people worldwide by May 2024. Civilian casualties in armed conflicts rose by 72 per cent between 2022 and 2023. These crises highlight the urgent need for international cooperation to address both long-standing and emerging security challenges.**

**But there are glimmers of hope. As shown in the present report, progress is being made in such areas as reducing the global child mortality rate, the incidence of HIV infections and the cost of remittances, and increasing access to water and sanitation, energy and mobile broadband. In addition, behind the global trends are countries pursuing transformation agendas with real determination to achieve the Goals. And they are making tangible progress.**

**Excellencies,**

**To translate these achievements into widespread, accelerated progress, we need bolder action in three key areas.**

**First, we need peace. We must resolve ongoing armed conflicts through dialogue and diplomacy, and prevent future conflicts by upholding the principles and values of the Charter of the United Nations.**

**Second, we need action on finance. Developing countries urgently require more financial resources and fiscal space. We must reform the outdated, dysfunctional and unfair international financial architecture to facilitate far greater investment in the SDGs. At last year's SDG Summit world leaders pledged to rescue the 2030 Agenda, and advance a \$500 billion SDG Stimulus. We must see this evolve from pledge to payout.**

**Third, we need a surge in implementation.**

**Massive investment and more effective partnerships are needed to drive critical transitions across food, energy, digital connectivity, climate change and more, unlocking progress across the Goals.**

**In addition, efforts must prioritize dismantling gender barriers and empowering women and girls. This is essential for achieving the SDGs.**

**Stronger international cooperation is urgently needed for immediate progress. The Summit of the Future this September, alongside the Financing for Development Conference and Second World Summit for Social Development in 2025, are critical milestones for advancing these goals.**

**With just six years left, we must not let up on our 2030 promise.**

**We must act now, and act boldly.**

**I thank you.**

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