

**Inaugural speech United Nations High-level Political  
Forum on Sustainable Development**

***“Reinforcing the 2030 Agenda and eradicating poverty in  
times of multiple crises: the effective delivery of sustainable,  
resilient and innovative solutions”***

Excellencies, distinguished delegates

Dear friends

Before I came to New York to participate in this forum, I met many people around the world: people with different backgrounds, academics, politicians, policymakers, women and girls, civil society organizations, youth, Indigenous people, and many others. There is awareness of the current complex situations and the magnitude of the problems we face as a global community. But, in all of these instances, I have found people eager to connect among groups and contribute in different fields to be part of the solutions. We have various diagnostics for the global challenges and problems that people face in their daily lives.

We have data

We have information

We have knowledge

We have institutions

Even with all these resources, there is no easy response to the complexities encountered in the problems that affect the daily quality of life of millions of families and individuals. I know the

current diagnosis at local, regional, and global levels is complex. Believe me, I know. I have been head of state two times. I know how to deal on a daily basis with complex situations that require comprehensive approaches and measures that apply differently in different contexts.

That is why, my invitation today is to focus our attention on possible solutions.

We are confronted with stark realities, such as the ongoing humanitarian crises in Gaza and the escalating tensions in Ukraine, accompanied by broader global challenges, including climate-induced displacement, persistent poverty and inequality, and violations of human rights. All of these issues underscore the urgent need for international cooperation and solidarity.

While we cannot ignore the devastating impacts we face, we must also acknowledge a second, equally true reality: one of solutions and progress. Change is happening faster than we think, and extraordinary transformations are underway already.

We are indeed lagging, yet we must recognize the significant progress made since the inception of the SDGs. These goals have transformed countless lives, bringing hope and improvements to communities worldwide.

Humanity encounters itself in a crisis, and not one of resources or capability but of hope. It is our collective belief in a brighter future that drives us. While there are no easy answers, I come here today

not with all the answers, but with proposals grounded in multilateralism, cooperation, and forward-thinking.

Multilateralism, which is none other than working together with solidarity and compassion, is our best and most realistic opportunity to build a future for all of us and the next generations. Unilateralism has no place in the twenty-first century.

Our multilateral system was created in times of crisis. We need a new spirit of global cooperation and solidarity to rebuild trust, work on our differences, and set humanity on the path of sustainable development.

Today we need a system ready to address the changes our world is facing: political, economic, environmental, and technological transformations.

Multilateralism has been slow and not as agile as we need. We require institutions that can adapt quickly to emerging threats, but also that can seize unprecedented opportunities for peace and security.

This is especially crucial as we strive for sustainable development, which is the backbone of the SDGs that gather us here today.

For centuries, poverty and hunger have been unavoidable companions of humanity. In the past, they seemed beyond our ability to remedy. Now, with advancements in knowledge, technology, and strong political will, poverty and hunger can only

be seen as the result of terrible injustice and a lack of solidarity. Commitments to end hunger and poverty are not just numbers. We are talking about children, women, and men who are going to sleep hungry in Gaza, South Sudan, and many other places. We are talking about people that need us to change their living conditions. We cannot forget how urgent this commitment is, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic, which caused extreme poverty to increase in 2020 for the first time in decades, reversing global progress by three years.

The second element I want to address is the triple planetary crisis –climate change, pollution, and biodiversity loss. It might be the worst threat to humankind nowadays. It is also a great opportunity to rethink our economies sustainably. The commitment to combat climate change and its impacts is urgent.

This is a challenge for all countries, even though the most affected tend to be countries that haven't been responsible for the damages. The Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, said: "Climate action cannot be captive to geo-political divisions." I add that poverty and hunger shouldn't be captivated by this as well.

In third place, I emphasize the importance of working together to strengthen our institutions. It is an investment for our collective future.

We must address the reforms to multilateral governance. We suffer from a loss of global trust, especially in multilateral institutions, because of the global debt crisis and the scarcity of resources for

social development, which have reversed progress on the Sustainable Development Goals.

We need democracies to deliver because otherwise, citizens lose faith in democratic institutions. We have to increase effective political participation for all, especially groups that have been historically disadvantaged and excluded, or facing political, cultural, or socioeconomic barriers.

We have to protect and defend human rights. When countries ignore these universal and globally accepted principles, someone pays the price. And that price is the lives of people, especially those most vulnerable.

Dear friends,

This Forum is an opportunity to find sustainable, resilient, and innovative solutions for the challenges that we have talked about.

In September we will have another opportunity, a once-in-a-generation one: The Summit of the Future. This will permit us to enhance cooperation on critical challenges, address global governance gaps, and reaffirm existing commitments, including the Sustainable Development Goals and the United Nations Charter. It will be a chance to move towards a reinvigorated multilateral system for the present that is better positioned to impact people's lives positively.

There are serious deficits in balancing responsibilities and consequences. Because of these imbalances, the world's trust in multilateral institutions is low and falling rapidly. We must create a robust international system, guided by norms, where international human rights and humanitarian law work for the people who need it, protecting the children in Gaza and the women and girls in Afghanistan.

Let's work together to achieve the SDGs and, thus, build a better life for all, children, men and women, not just in some countries, but worldwide. Working together is the only way that we can make it. I'm a prisoner of hope, as Desmond Tutu used to say. Seeing all of you here makes me hopeful that, with our joint efforts, we can build a sustainable and peaceful world for everyone.

Thank you very much.