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Remarks

**Report of the Secretary-General - Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals
High-Level Political Forum “Session 1: Where do we stand at year one?”**

New York, 11 July 2016 - 10:15

Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests and Panelists,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The 2030 Agenda is a pact for present and future generations. It embodies a promise to truly set the world on a different, sustainable path, leaving no one behind. We have started this collective journey with strong political will for implementation at all levels.

Today, I have the honour to present the Report of the Secretary-General on “Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals”, as mandated by Member States to inform the follow-up and review of the SDGs in the context of the High-Level Political Forum.

This inaugural report provides the first account of the current global situation relative to the 17 SDGs. The report is based on the proposed global indicator framework developed by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators, which were agreed to, as a practical starting point, at the Statistical Commission in March this year. The report provides an overview of the significant progress that has been made in many areas, building on the successes of the MDGs, and also presents many challenges we face as we begin implementation of the Agenda.

Distinguished delegates,

The 2030 Agenda recognizes that eradicating extreme poverty is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. In the decade from 2002 to 2012, the proportion of the world’s population living below the extreme poverty line dropped by more than half, from 26 to 13 per cent. While significant, there will need to be bolder actions taken in order to eliminate poverty entirely.

Although progress is undeniable in the fight against hunger, there are still nearly 800 million people worldwide who suffer from hunger.

Our strides in ending preventable deaths of women and children worldwide are notable. Between 2000 and 2015, the global maternal mortality ratio declined by 37 per cent and the mortality rate of children under 5 fell by 44 per cent. Yet still, an estimated 300,000 women died during childbirth and 5.9 million children died before their fifth birthday in 2015, mostly from preventable causes.

Universal primary education still has not been achieved. In 2013, 59 million children of primary-school age were out of school. The SDGs will challenge this even further as they address not only access, but also equity and quality of education.

More than 1 in 4 women aged 20 to 24 reported being married before their 18th birthday in 2015; a decrease from 1 in 3 women in 1990. And in 2016, women's participation in parliament reached 23 per cent, an increase of six percentage points over a decade. Despite these advancements, gender equality remains a persistent challenge for countries worldwide.

The world continued to face persistent environmental challenges. Water stress affects more than 2 billion people worldwide. Despite significant gains in access to improved drinking water and sanitation, still 663 million used unimproved water and 2.4 billion lived without improved sanitation facilities in 2015.

The report also indicates improvement in the protection of the environment and biodiversity. For example, global net loss of forests declined from 7.3 million hectares per year in the 1990's to 3.3 million hectares per year between 2010 and 2015. The recent Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, marked a remarkable milestone to reduce the pace of climate change and to accelerate the actions and investments needed for a sustainable low-carbon future.

Today, many countries still face protracted armed conflict and violence, and far too many people struggle under weak institutions and lack of access to justice, information and other fundamental freedoms. Millions of children worldwide are still denied registration at birth – the very first step in securing a person's recognition before the law and safeguarding individual rights and access to justice.

Achieving our ambitious Agenda requires a revitalized and enhanced global partnership that brings all stakeholders and mobilizes all available resources. Delivering on all the commitments contained in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda is key to achieve the means of implementation targets. In 2015, total ODA from OECD-DAC members reached \$131.6 billion. This is 6.9 per cent higher than in 2014 but still falls short of the 0.7% of GNI target.

Excellencies,

Leaving no one behind is one of the overarching principles of the 2030 Agenda. The first report demonstrates that the benefits of development are not equally shared by all. Severe income inequality is one of the biggest challenges.

The statistics and data presented in the report show some of the most significant implementation challenges and gaps. However, disaggregated information needed to address all vulnerable groups remains scarce. A global effort to improve data quality and availability is needed to provide an accurate picture of progress and make informed decisions in order to fulfill our promise to present and future generations.

I look forward to the deliberations of this panel in taking stock of progress towards the SDGs.

Thank you.
