

Mr. Wu Hongbo Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs

## Opening Remarks - Partnership Exchange

18 July 2016, New York

Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the first ever Partnership Exchange – a special side event of the High-level Political Forum, also known as the HLPF.

This is an innovative feature of the HLPF and we hope to build on this year's experience.

I want to recognize the UN Office for Partnerships for co-organizing this Exchange with us and I also thank Dr. David Nabarro for his support.

And I want to thank all presenters of the partnerships featured in this Exchange here today – you are the actors on the ground and you are keeping the momentum for implementing the 2030 Agenda.

The 2016 HLPF is the first session of the Forum since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

Last week, we witnessed a rich and often inspiring exchange of ideas, lessons learned and actions taken to advance the SDGs.

We heard loud and clear the critical importance of partnerships.

We also heard examples of partnerships leading the way.

Today marks the start of the ministerial segment of HLPF, which will include 22 voluntary national reviews.

The spirit and initiatives of partnership are being spotlighted in many of the national reports.

I invite you to attend the voluntary national reviews to identify and explore partnership opportunities with the volunteering countries.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The UN has a long history of initiating, fostering and promoting the work of partnerships in advancing sustainable development. Allow me to provide just a few examples in recent history;

- At the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002 in Johannesburg, partnerships were recognized as voluntary multi-stakeholder initiatives that complement intergovernmental commitments.
- At the Rio+20 Conference in 2012, over 700 voluntary commitments and partnerships were launched as a complement to the formal outcome of the Conference, also known as the Future We Want.
- The Future We Want is recognized as a landmark agreement that launched the idea of SDGs and the creation of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

More recently, the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, held in Samoa in 2014, further spurred the announcement of partnerships devoted to the sustainable development of SIDS..

- In the outcome document, called the SAMOA Pathway, member States lay the foundation for a strong follow-up process of these partnerships, now enshrined in the unique SIDS Partnership Framework.

In moving forward, we should build on these successful experiences.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The adoption of the 2030 Agenda has elevated partnerships to a new height.

Building on the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, Member States dedicated to "*Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development*". SDG 17 recognizes multi-stakeholder partnerships as important vehicles for mobilizing and sharing knowledge, expertise, technologies, and financial resources to support the implementation of the SDGs.

I hope this event will provide an annual platform for sharing your knowledge and expertise and for identifying lessons learned and best practices.

I myself am eager to hear your views and experience of what makes partnerships work – why some succeed and others not. What are the dos and don'ts we can share to help launch new and innovative partnerships – partnerships that produce concrete results and impact on the ground?

What are the new characteristics, new methods and changes we

need to introduce in partnerships to reflect the universal, indivisible and integrated nature of the SDGs?

How can partnerships be transformative?

The SDGs are universal, applying to all countries, and all sectors. This universality requires that the knowledge and expertise managed and possessed by partnerships need to be shared as widely as possible to have an impact on a global scale.

I am therefore delighted to see an impressive lineup of many global innovative partnerships and speakers at this special event today.

It is a true testimony of the stakeholders' response to the call for action for implementing the SDGs.

Excellencies,

We have collectively embarked on a historic journey to a sustainable future with people at the center, prosperity for all, with no one left behind, with a peaceful and inclusive society, and a healthy planet.

Are we being too ambitious?

Yes, we are.

But as Nelson Mandela said once, and I quote: "*It always seems impossible, until it's done.*"

I wish you all a fruitful exchange and insightful dialogue.

Thank you very much.