



United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Mr. Liu Zhenmin Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs

Opening Statement

Launch of 2018 Executive Training Course for Policymakers on the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs

23 April 2018, Incheon, Republic of Korea

Your Excellency,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

My Under-Secretary-General Mr. Liu Zhenmin sends his regrets for not being able to be here today. He asked me to deliver his message below:

Your Excellency Mr. Keewon Hong, Ambassador of International Relations at the Incheon Metropolitan City,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to welcome you all to the 2018 edition of the Executive Training Course for Policymakers on the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

I very much welcome this initiative taken by the United

Nations Office for Sustainable Development (UNOSD) based in Incheon, Republic of Korea.

I take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the Government of the Republic of Korea for the support provided to the United Nations offices here in South Korea, and particularly UNOSD, which is managed by the Division of Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (also known as UN DESA).

The Republic of Korea has achieved a remarkable success in combining rapid economic growth and human development since the early 1960s. Its experience towards sustainable development provides lessons that can benefit many other developing countries.

As you know, since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, significant progress has been made towards achieving the SDGs at global level, as shown during the Voluntary National Reviews presented at the high-level political forum for sustainable development (or HLPF) held in New York in 2016 and 2017.

While 22 countries presented at the 2016 HLPF, the number of countries presenting their national reviews

has climbed to 43 countries at the 2017 HLPF, where we saw multi-stakeholder engagement being increased and changing as new actors have committed in structured implementation processes.

The 2017 VNRs have also allowed us to witness partnerships gaining momentum, with financial and business sectors leading the way.

With a growing recognition that a significant part of the 169 SDG targets can only be achieved through the substantial involvement of local actors, last year's VNRs were also an opportunity to see that decentralization is really occurring on the ground and that local governments and communities are adapting the SDGs to their particular circumstances.

The 2018 HLPF will review the progress towards the 2030 Agenda under the overarching theme of "Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies." Considering the 47 countries who have volunteered to report at the HLPF next July, a total 112 countries will have presented their Voluntary National Reviews since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda by this year.

The preliminary findings seem to confirm progress but also reveal serious gaps and challenges in the

implementation of the SDGs in many countries. Over the next 13 years, we should bear in mind that eradicating poverty will remain a top priority in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Poverty eradication is both a stand-alone goal and the overarching theme mainstreamed throughout the 2030 Agenda.

As our collective blueprint for sustainable development in the years ahead, the 2030 Agenda recognizes poverty as a multi-dimensional phenomenon. It highlights that people living in poverty and vulnerable situations face barriers that hinder their ability to escape poverty. Those include the lack of access to education, healthcare, clean water and sanitation, affordable food, adequate housing and decent jobs, to name a few.

It is imperative that we double our efforts to eradicate poverty in all its forms and everywhere it is present if we are to achieve the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

Eradicating poverty requires that we develop comprehensive and integrated socio-economic policy frameworks, supported by strong institutions, broad-based participation, and evidence-based policymaking.

The need to stress sustainable development must be

emphasized as many individuals, communities, regions and countries in many parts of the world are still being excluded and left behind.

It is estimated that more than 2 billion people still suffer from excess water stress; 9 out of 10 city dwellers are living in cities where air pollution is a chronic health hazard; and global warming continues unabated – setting a new record in 2017 of roughly 1.1 degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial period contributing to the global impacts of climate change.

More efforts should be also made to address issues, as reflected through the selection of SDGs that will go under in-depth review during the 2018 HLPF, which include:

- SDG 6 - ensuring availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation
- SDG 7 - ensuring access to affordable, reliable and sustainable modern energy for all
- SDG 11 - making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
- SDG 12 - ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns
- SDG 15 - protecting, restoring and promoting life on land; and

- SDG 17 - partnerships for sustainable development. (This Goal will be reviewed every year)

Implementing the 2030 Agenda will require massive domestic and international resources, as mapped out in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. Global resources, including official development assistance, must complement countries' own funding mechanisms, including improved and reformed taxation systems. International financial institutions should help countries access financial markets and attract foreign direct investment.

This Executive Training Course will allow you to learn more about those issues in addition to providing you with a platform to discuss and share your successes and challenges in implementing the 2030 Agenda. I look forward to reading the report and seeing the many positive outcomes that will be realized as a result of this training course.

Thank you very much, welcome again and I wish you all a very productive week!