THE DEPUTY SECRETARY-GENERAL

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REMARKS AT JOINT MEETING OF THE BOARDS
OF UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF, UN-WOMEN AND WFP

New York, 19 June 2017
Dear colleagues,

I am pleased that I could join you today.

Your work in guiding the work of individual entities and – even more important – your support to the UN as a team is critical to all our efforts to help Member States implement the 2030 Agenda and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

The SDGs are at the heart of the Secretary-General’s vision for the organization.

Successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda across the globe is the most effective way to prevent crises, reduce vulnerabilities and foster prosperity.

Investing in sustainable development is investing in peace, human rights and prevention.

The two particular issues under discussion today – resilience and youth – are a case in point.

Prevention and resilience are really two sides of the same coin, and we need to equip and reorient the UN to strengthen our focus in these two critical areas.
Investing in youth is also a cross-pillar investment.

I have seen it again and again: where young women and men live a life of dignity and opportunities, they provide a decisive contribution to peace, prosperity and political dialogue.

They serve as agents of change and transformation.

In many ways, the Sustainable Development Goals represent a contract between world leaders and this and future generations.

Young people will inherit the good and bad decisions made today, and it is important that not only do we serve them well, but that we engage and empower them so they can play a meaningful role in determining their future.

They need quality education, jobs, security and the freedom to enjoy their rights and participate fully in society.

Youth unemployment, particular, is a global challenge.

The issue is not just one of quantity but the quality of jobs.
Unemployment among youth affects social and economic development not just now but in the future, as they are less likely to achieve prosperity and security as adults, thus locking in a cycle of poverty.

The 2030 sustainable development agenda therefore provides a critical opportunity to address these shortcomings.

Investments in adolescents and youth can deliver a triple dividend of benefits for themselves now, as adult life and as parents of the next generation of children.

Ensuring the health, well-being, protection, education and skills of this age group – especially girls and the most marginalized and vulnerable -- will provide the critical foundations we need for achieving the SDGs.

So how are we going to achieve this?

The UN development system has a critical role to play.

The 2030 Agenda is transformative and integrated.

Implementing it requires a transformed and integrated UN development system.
Member States have been clear in their expectations.

The QCPR has provided a roadmap towards more efficiency, accountability, transparency, coordination and oversight – at global, regional and country-level.

The Secretary-General and I are working with the system to ensure it is fit for purpose.

And we rely on your leadership at this important time to enable the system to step up to the challenge, and uniquely respond to the challenges of each country, working as one in a swift, flexible and effective manner.

Executive Boards have a critical role to play.

You can guide each entity to work better within the system in realizing the SDGs.

You can also work better together to ensure horizontal as well as vertical system-wide strategic guidance.
Similar to our own efforts within the Secretariat and UN development system, your Governing bodies are also taking important steps to become fit for purpose and help connect the dots.

I am grateful for your efforts to ensure that the draft strategic plans currently being devised in the different Boards include a common section on coordinated delivery in support to the 2030 Agenda.

In the Secretary-General’s upcoming proposals, he will be putting forward ideas to strengthen the interface and oversight of Member States on system-wide results in support of SDG implementation by national partners.

System-wide coherence should progressively shift its focus from a coordination system overly based on process to strengthened leadership around results.

A coherent interface with our various governing bodies will be critical.

A more integrated governance architecture would help to ensure synergies and coherence in the way we support you at all levels, but particularly on the ground.
This Joint Meeting of the Boards is an important step in that direction.

I count on your support as the United Nations development review proceeds.

By working together effectively, we can help Member States provide peace, prosperity, dignity, opportunity and sustainable progress for all.

Thank you.

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