Opening remarks at the SDG Business Forum
18 July 2017
General Assembly Hall

Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Leaders of Business and Industry,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to join you today, for the second year of the SDG Business Forum.

I note with appreciation that there is such an outstanding turnout.

Today, leaders from business and Government, together with representatives of UN agencies and civil society groups, are assembled in this august Hall, to discuss the critical role business will play in delivering the 2030 Agenda.

I want to recognize and applaud the co-hosts, the International Chamber of Commerce, the United Nations Global Compact, and UN-DESA, whose hard work has made this event possible.

The SDG Business Forum is held on the margins of the high-level political forum for sustainable development, which is United Nations central platform tasked with the follow-up of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

This year the HLPF focuses on reviewing progress on SDGs 1, 2, 3, 5,

9, 14, 17 under the overarching theme of "Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world". Every year the Forum will review Goal 17 on the Means of Implementation and partnerships, which is a critical area for business intervention.

Over the course of 5 days of in-depth discussion at the HLPF, we have been witnessing tremendous support by all stakeholders in pushing for the timely delivery of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

This is evident in the record number of participants that have attended all the different meetings and events and in the impressive lineup of speakers here today.

We are also witnessing strong commitment to sustainable development by Member States. A record number of 44 countries are presenting their experiences and progress towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs during HLPF.

By acting as a platform for sharing experiences, successes, challenges and lessons learned, the HLPF can help accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

At the national level, the voluntary national reviews by Member States can also act as catalysts to strengthen national policies and Governmental institutions and to mobilize multi-stakeholder support and partnerships for the implementation of the SDGs.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We are two years into implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which is an ambitious plan of action for people, planet and prosperity.

There are many positive signs – including the fact that so many countries have already aligned their development plans and strategies with the Agenda and the SDGs and have put in place coordinating structures and mechanisms for national implementation.

At the same time, many challenges remain – including slow economic growth in many parts of the world and inequality both within and between countries.

Today we will hear from representatives of the private sector about the innovative ways in which they are addressing global challenges, in particular in the areas of poverty, hunger, health, gender equality, industry and innovation, marine life and partnerships.

While the private sector has made much progress in integrating the SDGs into corporate strategies, we still have a long way to go.

Events such as this SDG Business Forum can help make the business case that aligning corporate strategies with the Sustainable Development Goals has the potential to greatly advance business interests and open trillions of dollars of new market value.

I once again would like to thank you all for your participation today. Together, we must build off of the momentum that has developed over the past two years around the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. I urge you

to share what you hear today with your own networks, to further advance the progress that has been made.

I thank you.