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VIRTUAL ANNUAL CEO FORUM 2020

Theme: Leading Change through Strategic Collaboration

Talking points for the UN Resident Coordinator and Designated Official for
Security, Ms. Rosa Malango

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Panel discussion: "Building Win-Win Partnerships in Corporate Startup
Collaboration"

- a) Emerging Opportunities for Businesses Through Startup-Corporate
Collaboration
- b) How to Establish Mutually Beneficial Partnerships with Entrepreneurs.

Acknowledgements:

Distinguished participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is not by chance that I am speaking to the private sector this morning, but a principle and commitment that the United Nations Member States made through the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development, which prescribes means of implementation for the Agenda, fully recognizes the strong role of private sector in supporting the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). For example, in developing countries like Uganda, nine (9) out of ten (10) jobs are provided by

the private sector. Hence, your contribution is critical, not only to achieving SDG 8 on Decent Work and Economic Growth for the growing youthful population, but also providing multiplier effects on the rest of the Goals.

With 78 percent of the population under the age of 30, Uganda has the second largest youthful population in the world. Yet, creating enough jobs and opportunities for this energetic and highly enthusiastic group of people has remained a challenge. Majority of the population remains employed in the informal sector without decent working conditions, social security and voice for effective representation. Many are also engaged in work that underutilizes their potential, which denies the country opportunities for economic growth.

The challenges of this employment structure have been exacerbated by the outbreak of COVID-19. UN analysis indicates that close to 60 percent of the micro and small informal enterprises in manufacturing, hospitality, trading and services that employ young people, are likely to be pushed below the poverty line or completely close down businesses.

Amidst the current socio-economic challenges, there are several opportunities for the private sector, many of which are likely to be explored better through partnerships and collaboration with the multiple actors.

Through the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for Uganda (UNSDCF) 2021-2025 that was launched by His Excellency the President yesterday, the UN system in Uganda has committed to explore and strengthen its partnership with the private sector as an enabler of sustainable development. The Framework, which is fully aligned to the Uganda Vision 2040 and the Third National Development Plan will be implemented through 31 UN entities focused on three Strategic Priorities: 1) Transformative and Inclusive Governance; 2) Shared Prosperity in a Healthy Environment; and 3) Human Well-being and Resilience.

Basing on our experiences in the UN, allow me to highlight some of the key opportunities for collaboration and partnership.

- **The growing youth population** in Uganda remains one of the biggest opportunities for the private sector. Every year 40,000 young people graduate from tertiary institutions and only 20% of these can find decent employment. The COVID-19 pandemic could aggravate this situation, if swift action is not taken. The private sector has the highest potential to and should employ young people productively. This is in the interest of businesses and corporations as these young people will in future provide market for their products if they are economically active with higher purchasing power.

In full appreciation of this low hanging fruit, the United Nations in Uganda, in partnership with the with the National SDGs Secretariat at the Office of the Prime Minister and the Youth Coalition for SDGs have organized the **“One Million SDG Solutions from Youth in Uganda Innovation Challenge”** which aims at identifying and mobilising Ugandan youth to present solutions which are changing lives. The initiative will identify solutions at national and sub-national levels. I request you to promote the initiative by inviting youth to submit their solutions at www.ugandayouthsolutions.com. The best innovations will receive start-up support and grants from UN agencies and partners in the private sector during the national commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the United Nations on 24th October 2020. It is my appeal to you to join the partners who will provide start-up support and grants to best innovators to scale up their solutions.

- **Investment in research and innovation:** Government and development actors are continuously looking for private sector partnership in research and innovation to address day-to-day challenges. For example, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Stanbic Uganda Holdings Limited (SUHL) have developed the Youth4Business Innovation and

Entrepreneurship Facility (Y4BF), to enable youth and businesses pilot innovative enterprises or new ways of delivering products and services. It seeks to support the creation of at least 20,000 new decent jobs for youth; while skilling 50,000 youth to increase their entrepreneurial success rate. We expect this to have a multiplier effect and influence the creation of over 100,000 indirect jobs.

- **Affordable financing solutions:** Currently, over 40 percent of Ugandans are still financially excluded and this has negative implications for achievement of SDGs. Organisations are seeking private sector partnerships in supporting initiatives that can contribute to financial inclusion, especially for rural women and youth who are at the risk of being left behind. An example is the recent initiative between Stanbic and ten (10) UN agencies to set up an Economic Enterprise Restart Fund (EERF) that aims to provide low-interest refinancing to support survival and recovery of micro and small enterprises during and post COVID-19.
- **Repurposing business processes** to respond to COVID-19 and its impacts, but also the new normal that has been created by the pandemic. The use of virtual working arrangements and delivery of goods and services through digital channels is unlikely to go back to pre-COVID-19 times. Therefore, in order to remain relevant, businesses need to partner with relevant actors to create solutions to respond to the emerging way of life and produce goods and services that will satisfy the needs of today and tomorrow. For instance, UNDP and UNCDF have partnered with Jumia and Safe Boda, respectively, to launch e-commerce platforms for delivery of goods and services.
- **Skills development:** Evidence shows that skills gaps between the job market needs and graduates contributes to unemployment in Uganda. Yet, the new normal dictates that new sets of skills, particularly online and digital, will be required in the job market. Hence, the private sector should identify and explore partnership with Government, development organisations,

fellow private sector and other stakeholders to address these skills gaps. This could be through the establishment of training institutions to provide the necessary skills, or to partner with academic and vocational institutions in research and development to strengthen their capacity to provide relevant skills.

- **Medical related options:** With the growing medical related challenges, and the current heavy reliance on importation of drugs and medical equipment, there are opportunities in development of medical related solutions. Many young Ugandans have been involved in building some of these innovations in the recent past and they have proven to be viable. The strategic location of the Country in the Great Lakes region, where several countries still have limited capacity to fully address and meet health related needs, the prospects are even higher.

On behalf of the UN, I reiterate our commitment to engage you in discovering opportunities for collaboration in finding solutions to development challenges.

Thank you for listening to me