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REMARKS

UGANDA PRIVATE SECTOR PLATFORM FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS LAUNCH

By H.E. Rosa Malango

UN Resident Coordinator and Designated Official for Security
4th May 2021, 14:00-17:00, Serena Hotel, Katonga Hall

Salutations

Right Honourable Prime Minister of the Republic of Uganda, Hon. Dr. Ruhakana Rugunda
Minister for General Duties and Focal Point Minister for SDGs
Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development
Private Sector Foundation of Uganda leadership
Executive Director & CEO of the United Nations Global Compact in New York
CEO Summit Team Leader
Executive Director of the Uganda Bankers Association
Representatives of the Private Sector and Civil Society Organizations
UN Agencies in Uganda, diplomatic missions, development partners
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the United Nations System in Uganda, I would like to convey our appreciation to the private sector and all partners as we launch the Sustainable Development Goals Private Sector Platform in Uganda. This a joint partnership initiative that aims to unite Government, businesses and development partners to achieve prosperity, sustain peace and protect the planet.

In September 2015 President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni in his statement at the UN General Assembly to launch the Sustainable Development Goals stated that “ the global agenda captures most of the ingredients necessary for growth and transformation of societies.” This assessment has informed the universal push to transform our world through the SDGs. We welcome the fact that Uganda remains at the forefront of applying these principles to its socio-economic transformation. Today’s launch enables Uganda to join Nigeria, Kenya, South Africa, Tanzania, DRC, Ghana, Tunisia, Morocco, Mauritius and Madagascar at the forefront of SDG implementation milestones.

I wish to commend the Office of the Prime Minister, the Private Sector Foundation of Uganda, United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) for co-leading this initiative. I wish to thank our partners the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, the CEO Summit, Uganda Bankers Association, Uganda National Chamber of Commerce and Industry, for their commitment to the Private Sector Platform for SDGs as a national mechanism designed to make businesses more

SDG-responsive. Together we can promote responsible business growth and offer a support system to apply end-to-end business solutions, facilities and financial support.

Some of the questions, the Platform can help us to address include: What is the cost of financing the SDGs, NDPIII and the National 2040 vision? How much will it cost to attain the 2063 aspiration of an Africa capable of caring for her citizens and ensuring her security? How will Uganda position herself to attract sufficient financing at home and abroad? Top performing countries in Africa have highly decentralized revenue collection and management, digital platforms for revenue management, clear revenue mobilization strategies and robust citizen engagement for development. It is our hope that the Private Sector Platform for SDGs will support Uganda's efforts to address these factors and develop a systematic approach to effectively integrate private financing into the NDP III. Current projections expect the private sector to finance over 42% of the objectives. The Private Sector Platform for SDGs will be integrated into existing national and international mechanisms that promote private sector involvement in SDG implementation. For instance, the platform will be linked to the FAO/MAAIF private sector consortium of youth entrepreneurs and SMEs commonly known as Youth Champions, as well as to the UNCDF/UDB START facility and to the Youth Coalition for SDGs hosted by the National SDG Secretariat and the Office of the UN Resident Coordinator, among others.

Why the platform? 2020 has taught us that our collective well-being depends on the well-being of each and every one of us. I am encouraged that so many of you are joining the Platform and commit to integrating the Sustainable Development Goals into your business policies, practices and value chains. We can use our recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic to move from fragilities to resilience.

Covid-19 has generated a severe global economic crisis, exposing inequalities and fragilities both within and among countries. The UN socio-economic analysis on Covid-19 impacts showed that Micro, small and medium enterprises account for approximately 90% of the entire private sector, over 80% of manufactured output and about 75% of GDP are mostly made up of women and youth. Current data indicates that the total rate of failure in businesses is estimated at more than 50% in three years and is higher for smaller businesses, one third of which do not see their first birthday. Socio-economic recovery from the COVID-19 will depend on the availability and effectiveness of vaccines for all and the effectiveness of stimulus measures that will be implemented by all stakeholders, both public and private. The UN system is working with Government and private sector to address these needs. We appeal to partners to join our efforts to ensure the delivery of vaccines to the people of Uganda, starting with those who are most at risk. It is in this environment that the SDGs provide us with an opportunity to address systemic constraints in the emerging domestic private sector. The Platform we launch today will also serve to review and assess the most viable financing pathways for NDPIII and SDGs in the country.

Ladies and gentlemen,

While the UN remains steadfast in supporting Uganda's development aspirations especially during these unprecedented times, allow me to point out a few opportunities we need to focus on going forward.

- The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) agreement which provides a huge opportunity for economic growth and socio-economic transformation by offering a market which we can contribute to and benefit from. Our partnerships will reinforce collaboration

between the private sector and the Government to fully benefit from the opportunities created by the AfCFTA.

- While the private sector has been traditionally known to be profit oriented, we are witnesses to the fact that you have been key partners in ensuring that no one is left behind through your engagement in socially responsible business practices as well as your organizational culture that enable the recruitment, retention and promotion of women in an environment free from discrimination and sexual harassment. These are not mutually exclusive objectives: It is possible to do well by doing good. A growing number of businesses have been certified under the Gender Equality Seal for Private Enterprises – which the UN in Uganda, led by UNDP and UN Women, has implemented since 2014 as evidence of what we can achieve together.
- Lastly, emerging technologies have become the sure way for youth to create jobs, to improve business practices, to promote efficiency and create opportunities for the over 78% of the population below 30. We count on the Government to enable the youth and private sector to unlock the potential of digital technologies to support Uganda’s socio-economic transformation.

As I conclude, on behalf of the UN in Uganda, I reiterate our commitment to support implementation of the Uganda Vision 2040, the third National Development Plan and the 2030 Agenda as outlined in the United Nations Sustainable Cooperation Framework for Uganda (2021-2025). We pledge to continue leveraging new partnerships to support private sector leaders to apply their creativity and innovation in support of SDG implementation in Uganda. We invite partners to join the Uganda Private Sector Platform for SDGs. We need decisive private sector action to achieve the SDGs by 2030 and build the equitable and sustainable future we want and we need.

Thank you for your attention.