



**UNITED NATIONS      NATIONS UNIES**  
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**Video Message**

**Asia and the Pacific Regional Seminar on the Contribution of Development to  
the Enjoyment of all Human Rights**

**14 February 2023**

**Excellencies,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Ladies and gentlemen,**

**Human rights are the cornerstone of peaceful and  
inclusive societies. They are central to our most pressing  
global issues, underpinning the work of the entire UN  
system.**

**But new development issues and human rights  
challenges are rapidly emerging as the world faces multiple  
interlinked global crises.**

**The COVID-19 pandemic has had devastating impacts on lives, livelihoods and human development. It slowed, disrupted, or temporarily reversed progress across the Sustainable Development Goals, increasing poverty and hunger among vulnerable populations.**

**At the same time, the world is witnessing the highest level of state-based armed conflicts since 1945. By the end of 2020, around two billion people were living in conflict-affected countries.**

**Conflict has exacerbated deficiencies in access to water, energy, and other necessary resources, leading to food and energy price hikes, and a potent cost of living crisis.**

**Across the globe, countries are experiencing changes in temperature, increases in extreme weather events, losses of soil fertility, and increases in droughts and floods.**

**These events intensify competition for resources and cause internal displacement, ultimately diminishing access to**

**fundamental needs and increasing the risk of human conflict.**

**The UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in its work to support the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, strives to advance development and protect basic human rights.**

**The annual High-Level Political Forum has a central role in the follow-up and review process of the Sustainable Development Goals.**

**The Forum serves to identify key issues and challenges facing the globe today and discusses how best to advance progress under the guidance of the SDGs.**

**It is a forum to consider synergies and tradeoffs between the SDGs; to share success stories, good practices and challenges; to identify areas of concern; and to suggest**

**ways forward in terms of policies, partnerships and coordinated actions at all levels.**

**Through Voluntary National Reviews, Member States “conduct regular and inclusive reviews of progress at the national and sub-national levels, which are country-led and country-driven.”**

**To date 181 countries have presented at least one VNR, a testament to governments’ commitment to the 2030 Agenda and to advancing sustainable development.**

**But we need to go from commitment to action. Urgent, transformative action.**

**When we come together at the SDG Summit this September, we must come with bold visions for advancing development in inclusive and measurable ways, that will impact the lives and livelihoods of the people we serve.**

**Thank you.**

*Please check against delivery*

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