

**Mr. Siddharth Chatterjee, UN Resident Coordinator in China,
Excellencies,
Members of UN Country Team in China,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Good afternoon.**

First of all, let me thank Mr. Siddharth Chatterjee for inviting me to speak at this briefing about the implementation of UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework. I also thank the Chairs of the various Theme Groups for their update and presentations.

UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres once said, and I quote “Sustainable Development is more than a goal. It is our responsibility to our planet and future generations” unquote.

His predecessor, Secretary General Ban Ki-moon once said, and I quote “Sustainable Development and Climate Change are two sides of the same coin” unquote.

These two statements are basically the crux of the discussions we are having today. And the introduction by Mr. Siddharth and the presentations just made fully endorse these words of the two Secretary Generals.

Dear Friends,

We are living in an extraordinary time in human history. While on one hand we have unlocked the secrets of atom, conquered space and are about to unleash the potential of artificial intelligence, yet we have failed to provide shelter, food and adequate medical aid to millions around the world. Still there are over 700 million people living in poverty, over 800 million facing hunger and over 600 million affected by various diseases.

Undoubtedly, UN SDGs 2030 Agenda is a visionary initiative, specially envisioned to help us address these challenges. However, its success is being hampered and slowed down by a number of factors but most notably by climate change and its negative affects.

Let me give you an example to put this in perspective. Last year, the devastating floods in Pakistan were unprecedented in their scale and magnitude. From nowhere the torrential rains came with ferocity, inundating one-third of my country and impacting over 30 million people.

Essential road and communication infrastructure was destroyed, homes were washed away, livestock perished and standing crops were destroyed. Overall economic losses were close to US\$ 30 billion. The climate induced natural disaster has yet again raised its ugly specter, engulfing a developing country like Pakistan and severely affecting its socio-economic agenda and its quest to achieve SDGs.

Similarly in recent past months, earthquakes, floods, tropical storms in Türkiye, Syria, Philippines, Afghanistan, Nigeria, Brazil and many other countries have also impacted their socio-economic development plans.

A few days back, another episode of torrential rains killed over 20 people in Pakistan. As we speak, a cyclone in the Arabian Sea is threatening our coastal areas.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We like it or not, believe it or not, but Climate change is real. All these recent natural disasters are stark reminders and clarion call for action.

Secretary General Guterres after Pakistan floods stated “Lets stop sleepwalking towards the destruction of our Planet by Climate Change. Today, its Pakistan. Tomorrow, it could be your country”.

Climate threats are global. These require global response, global objectives, and global successes. Either we all are safe, or none could be fully safe from potential disaster.

This brings me to the critical step required in this battle against climate change. And that is international cooperation and global solidarity. No one country can do it alone. The leading path finders must respond and help the followers on the trail. We all must work collectively, at bilateral, regional and international levels. In this regard, North-South and South-South Cooperation is also essential.

I don't have any specific recommendations to give here, as lot of good work is already going on. We have established many platforms, partnerships and initiatives in the form of UN Climate Change Conferences, UN South-South Cooperation Framework. All we need to do is to fulfill the commitments made for providing development assistance for Climate Change, especially to developing countries. Yes, the figures given are into billions and trillions of dollars, but honestly what all the money would be worth, if there is no planet and its inhabitants left to spend on.

Finally, yes, the role of governments, international organizations, corporate sector and NGOs is certainly important to take forward the SGD agenda and for climate action. At the same time, all of us, as individuals, have a responsibility as well to contribute to these efforts. The famous Kenyan environmental activist and Nobel Peace Prize Winner Wangari Maathai stated, “It is the little things that citizens do that will make the difference. My little thing is planting trees”. So let us be a responsible global citizen and do our bit in helping save our planet and the humanity. And we should all do it with a purpose and urgency, lest it is too late and we are left to be reminded of Confucius words: “Who heeds not the future will find sorrow at hand”. I hope that would not be the case and together we would make the world a happier place for us and our future generations.

I thank you all!

In this respect, I would give following five recommendations:

1. To develop all developing partners must follow through official developments assistance commitments for climate change and as well as contribute through UN for South-South Cooperation.
2. It is important for collection of empirical to measure impact of South-South Cooperation. This would help to mobilize resources and their effective allocation.
3. We should promote e-commerce and digitalization of agriculture and real economy.
4. We should include South-South Cooperation in the international development agenda. It should not only be providing funds but should also assistance relating to trade investments and reforms.
5. Access to technology for the global South is important to bridge digital revenue. Capacity building is also an important area, it is essential to teach the people how to fish but to give them a fish.