**THE SECRETARY-GENERAL : OPENING REMARKS TO THE SUMMIT OF THE FUTURE**

**New York, 22 September 2024**

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Welcome to the Summit of the Future.

I thank the co-facilitators, the former and current Presidents of the General Assembly, and all Member States, for their strong engagement, creativity, and spirit of compromise; and all my colleagues for their invaluable efforts over the past three years.

We are here to bring multilateralism back from the brink.

I called for this Summit to consider deep reforms to make global institutions more legitimate, fair and effective, based on the values of the UN Charter.

I called for this Summit because 21st century challenges require 21st century solutions: frameworks that are networked and inclusive; and that draw on the expertise of all of humanity.

I called for this summit because our world is heading off the rails – and we need tough decisions to get back on track.

Conflicts are raging and multiplying, from the Middle East to Ukraine and Sudan, with no end in sight.

Our collective security system is threatened by geopolitical divides, nuclear posturing, and the development of new weapons and theatres of war.

Resources that could bring opportunities and hope are invested in death and destruction.

Huge inequalities are a brake on sustainable development. Many developing countries are drowning in debt and unable to support their people.

And we have no effective global response to emerging, complex and even existential threats.

The climate crisis is destroying lives, devastating communities and ravaging economies.

We all know the solution – a just phase-out of fossil fuels – and yet, emissions are still rising.

New technologies, including AI, are being developed in a moral and legal vacuum, without governance or guardrails.

In short, our multilateral tools and institutions are unable to respond effectively to today’s political, economic, environmental and technological challenges.

And tomorrow’s will be even more difficult and even more dangerous.

When the United Nations was established nearly 80 years ago, it had 51 Member States. Today there are 193.

The global economy was less than one-twelfth of its current size.

As a result, our peace and security tools and institutions, and our global financial architecture, reflect a bygone era.

The United Nations Security Council is outdated, and its authority is eroding.

Unless its composition and working methods are reformed, it will eventually lose all credibility.

The international financial architecture was established when many of today’s developing countries were under colonial rule.

It does not represent the realities of today’s global economy, and it is no longer able to resolve global economic challenges: debt, climate action, sustainable development.

It does not provide the global safety net that developing countries need.

Meanwhile, technology, geopolitics and globalization have transformed power relations.

Our world is going through a time of turbulence and a period of transition.

But we cannot wait for perfect conditions. We must take the first decisive steps towards updating and reforming international cooperation and make it more networked, fair and inclusive – now.

And today, thanks to your efforts, we have.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

The Pact for the Future, the Global Digital Compact and the Declaration on Future Generations open pathways to new possibilities and opportunities.

On peace and security, they promise a breakthrough on reforms to make the Security Council more reflective of today’s world, addressing the historic under-representation of Africa, Asia-Pacific, and Latin America.

They lay the foundations for a more agile Peacebuilding Commission, and for a fundamental review of peace operations to make them fit for the conditions they face.

They represent the first agreed multilateral support for nuclear disarmament in more than a decade.

They recognize the changing nature of conflict, and commit to steps to prevent an arms race in outer space and to govern the use of lethal autonomous weapons.

They include measures to mount an immediate and coordinated response to complex global shocks.

On sustainable development, these agreements represent major progress towards groundbreaking reforms of the international financial architecture.

They will help to make its institutions more representative of today’s world, capable of mounting a stronger response to today’s challenges, and able to provide an effective global safety net for developing countries at a time when many of them are suffocating in debt and unable to make progress on the SDGs.

The Pact for the Future is about turbocharging the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement, accelerating a just transition away from fossil fuels, and securing a peaceful and livable future for everyone on our planet.

It includes a groundbreaking commitment by governments to listen to young people and include them in decision-making, at the national and global levels.

And it commits to stronger partnerships with civil society, the private sector, local and regional authorities and more.

The Global Digital Compact is based on the principle that technology should benefit everyone.

It includes the first truly universal agreement on the international governance of Artificial Intelligence.

It commits governments to establishing an independent international Scientific Panel on AI and initiating a global dialogue on its governance within the United Nations.

The Global Digital Compact represents the first collective effort to reach agreed interoperability standards – essential for consistent measurement.

And it supports networks and partnerships to build capacity on AI in developing countries.

The Declaration on Future Generations echoes the call of the United Nations Charter to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, committing governments for the first time to taking the interests of our descendants into account in decisions we take today.

Respect for human rights, cultural diversity and gender equality are woven into all three agreements.

In the face of a surge in misogyny and a rollback of women’s reproductive rights, governments have explicitly committed to removing the legal, social and economic barriers that prevent women and girls from fulfilling their potential in every sphere.

Excellencies,

I welcome these three landmark agreements – a step-change towards more effective, inclusive, networked multilateralism.

I have been fighting for the ideas in them since the first day of my mandate.

And I will be totally committed to their implementation until the very last day.

We have unlocked the door.

Now it is our common responsibility to walk through it.

That demands not just agreement, but action.

I challenge you to take that action.

To implement the Pact for the Future by prioritizing dialogue and negotiation, ending the wars tearing our world apart, and reforming the composition and working methods of the Security Council.

To accelerate reforms of the international financial system – including at next year’s Conference on Financing for Development.

To put humanity’s best interests front and centre of new technologies.

We stand and fall not by adopting agreements, but by our actions and their impact on the lives of the people we serve.

Excellencies,

Throughout my life – whether as a political activist or at the United Nations – I have learned that people never agree on the past.

To rebuild trust, we must start with the present and look to the future.

People everywhere are hoping for a future of peace, dignity, and prosperity.

They are crying out for global action to solve the climate crisis, tackle inequality, and address new and emerging risks that threaten everyone.

And they see the United Nations as essential to solving these challenges.

All this was confirmed during the past two inspirational Action Days.

The Summit of the Future sets a course for international cooperation that can meet their expectations.

I congratulate all Member States for playing their part as we take these first important steps together.

Now, let’s get to work.

And I thank you.