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Statement

by

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at the 6th Meeting of Informal Consultations

on the Summit of the Future

on High-level Advisory Board Report on Effective Multilateralism

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Thank you, Co-facilitators, Neville and Antje,

1. I align myself with the statement made by Cuba on behalf of G77 and China. I also would like to thank the High-level Advisory Board (HLAB), and especially the co-chairs, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia and Stefan Levin, who is here with us, of Sweden. And I thank all the panelists for their contributions.

2. It is a very rich report with rich recommendations and very diverse. And we will, of course, need time to adjust and digest all of it. But let me just echo the sentiments made by the President of the UNGA. The ideas contained in this report should be taken as food for thought for Member States to think about what they wish to further promote collectively, based on consensus; and that to use it not only for the Summit of the Future, but for the important processes like the SDG Summit, which is the priority this year, taking place in a couple of months from now. So let us make use of all available resources to push that forward.

3. And having read the report preliminarily, there are some important ideas that could be useful inputs for the SDG Summit itself, which is the priority. Let me just give three reflections at this stage on the overall report and end with one concluding suggestion.

4. The first reflection is that the six transformative shifts that have been provided are indeed useful. We have preliminarily studied it and from those shifts we have identified, depending on how you number it, about 67 recommendations, take into account possible overlaps and repetitions. Out of those 67 recommendations, 39 of the 67 have existing processes, platforms or organizations that deal either partly, fully, or indirectly with the ideas contained in the recommendation. That's about three-fifths or 60 per cent (39 out of 67). This is not the same for all the six shifts that are contained in report.

5. Now what does that mean? It means with this multitrack, the multiplicity of processes, it can be either a plus or minus. Of course, if we can ensure complementarity between the ideas contained in the report as they are reflected and taken forward; if we all agree, in the Summit of the Future preparation process, complementarity between these and the existing processes, then we should be in good shape. After all, the Summit of the Future is supposed to catalyze ideas and take things forward.

6. On the other hand, if there is a lack of connection between existing processes and whatever we will be discussing in the Summit of the Future based on some of these recommendations; if there are efforts to redirect or perhaps even to renegotiate, there will be a lot of confusion. I take, for example, without making any judgments, the many diverse recommendations on climate change, climate finance, on the environment in this report. We are also very well aware of the existing processes of the UNFCCC and the COPs, the most recent in Sharm el-Sheikh, where we have had many useful recommendations that we need to act on. How to ensure complementarity, I think, will be a major challenge. This is something that we have to really take into account as we decide on what to take forward or what to, perhaps, better leave to processes that are already taking these things forward.

7. There are, of course, also some new ideas we noticed. For instance, the shift regarding digital transition. Many of these ideas are new, there are no, as far as we can see, existing processes that deal with some of these ideas. So you do not have that complexity there. The key words are complementarity and prioritization. This will be critical as we take forward our deliberations on what to take forward in the Summit of the Future.

8. The second reflection is the healthy competition of ideas. Just a few days ago, we had the SDGs report on how to deal with rescuing the

Sustainable Development Goals, which is the priority and we thank the SG for that.

9. We noticed what seems to be like a “Marshall Plan for Development” based on the SDG stimulus. We also see some ideas here on the shifts regarding development financing and the reference to global public goods, where we will have to clarify what that means. But I thought that the most important priority for financing is development. So this competition of ideas has to be managed. While we have to see how perhaps some ideas are better taken forward in the SDG Summit. While more long-term issues perhaps could be factored in into the Summit of the Future which would reinforce the SDG rescue process.

10. My third observation is on the proposed shift on, and the use of the word, “collective security arrangements”. My initial reaction is collective security arrangement against whom? We have to think about what we are trying to achieve. References made to in the report on UN regional organizations cooperating on security issues, I think that is fine. We have a dialogue based on mutual interests. But if we are to have a collective security arrangement based on that partnership, this is something that we have to look to very carefully. And I say this from the Southeast Asian experience. We used to try a collective security arrangement several decades ago, and it has since been replaced by a more cooperative security mindset based on preventive diplomacy and dialogue. We would be interested to see how this idea is thought about, as we think about the Summit of the Future.

11. Let me touch very briefly on nuclear disarmament. We were a little bit surprised that there is less ambition on those references to nuclear disarmament. More ambitious proposals have been made in other nuclear disarmament processes, including the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, for example.

12. Our final thought on the collective security arrangement is that it will inevitably deal with the issue of the New Agenda for Peace, and I will not make any judgments on that. We wait to see what are the ideas in there. But let me just reflect very briefly on the Agenda of Peace in 1992. That process, which in our view has been quite successful, took place without the glare of Summitry diplomacy, but rather evolved through careful diplomacy and consultations with various groups and countries, and then quietly pursued and ultimately supported. I know, for example, in ASEAN, we took inspiration from the ideas in the Agenda for Peace and developed preventive diplomacy for our region.

13. In conclusion, there are a lot of good ideas but the diversity and breadth of all these ideas contained in the very useful HLAB report, and we commend all the efforts made there. This is reflective, I think, of a stronger momentum that we have to manage very carefully, of putting everything in the Summit of the Future. Because there is a tendency to believe that the Summit of the Future is the end all and be all of all discussions on our future. So as we move forward, perhaps, we should be guided by pragmatism and selectivity, focus on those issues that we can all agree upon, and move forward together. We perhaps need to be catalytic rather than prescriptive, focusing on issues where we can catalyze actions and perhaps then complement with existing processes that are ready to take these ideas forward, and work in synergy with that. And we will, therefore, have to make sure that the ongoing processes will not be affected by the good work that has been done in preparation for the Summit of the Future. This will be very important as we look into what will be included in the Summit of the Future. And we hope that we will have time to discuss this further so that we can have some of the future that is fruitful, that supports the sustainable development process, and that draws consensus because, after all, it is our common future.

Thank you very much, Mr. Co-facilitator.
