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THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

MESSAGE TO THE VULNERABLE TWENTY (V20) GROUP

Washington DC, 14 April 2016

To be delivered by Mr. Wu Hongbo, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs

I am pleased to send greetings to this meeting, and once again commend your advocacy on behalf of the countries that are most vulnerable to the impact of climate change.

The adoption of the Paris Agreement last December was a landmark of international cooperation on one of the world's most complex issues.

The leadership exerted by the members of the Climate Vulnerable Forum was pivotal for strengthening the ambition level of this Agreement. I salute your vision and commitment.

The Paris Agreement includes elements that are critically important to your countries.

It has mechanisms to raise ambition over time; to ensure balanced support for adaptation and mitigation; and to scale up global efforts to minimize loss and damage.

I look forward to seeing many of the members of the V20 forum at the signing ceremony for the Paris Agreement on 22nd April in New York. Thank you for your leadership.

Early ratification and entry into force will send a strong signal to governments, businesses and communities that it is time to fast-track climate action.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our climate is changing at an alarming rate. Last year was the hottest year on record.

Extreme weather, storms and floods are putting lives and property at risk on a greater scale than ever before. Continued use of fossil fuels is destabilizing areas of Antarctica and contributing to rising sea levels.

The window of opportunity for limiting global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees is shrinking rapidly. For some members of the Vulnerable Twenty, this is an existential issue.

We have a profound moral responsibility to protect and support the world's poorest and most vulnerable people, who have contributed the least to climate change, and to leave a healthy planet for future generations.

The hard work you and other countries did last year has paid off – but it is not finished.

The real challenge lies ahead: implementation.

There are cost-effective climate solutions that work. We must use them, and quickly.

National climate plans need to be funded. Bankable investment projects are key to channeling green investments.

Financing that supports low-carbon, resilient development does double-duty. Building more sustainable cities, transport and energy systems will be essential for the successful implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

Last year's four landmark development agreements -- the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement – form an interlinked foundation for the low-carbon, climate-resilient transformation of the global economy.

We cannot eliminate poverty and build sustainable economies without strengthening climate resilience and utilizing cleaner, safer sources of energy.

Similarly, we cannot fully meet the climate challenge without strengthening equity, opportunity and environmental protection for all.

Partnerships between governments, the private sector and civil society will be key.

To this end, the Secretary General launched the multi-stakeholder A2R initiative in Paris, based on the three principles: Anticipate, Absorb, Reshape.

The overriding aims of A2R are improving early warning systems so that we can better anticipate climate-related hazards; increasing insurance and social protection so that people and communities can absorb climate-related shocks; and reshaping development policies to reduce climate-related risks.

I invite you to work with me to translate these aims into policies that save lives, protect livelihoods, and build a more sustainable future for those on the climate frontlines.

I count on your leadership.

Thank you, and I wish you a fruitful meeting.