

UN secretary general calls for a global partnership to address COVID



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United Nations, May 30 (RHC)-- Speaking in a key international partnerships summit, António Guterres said that if governments embrace together the goals of phasing out coal, enhancing climate commitments, and investing in the Global Goals, there is an opportunity to rise to 'the biggest challenge of our lives.'

The world needs a global partnership to beat COVID-19, achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and address climate change, said the UN Secretary General in a video message for the opening day of the 2021 P4G summit in Seoul, Republic of Korea.

The Partnering for Green Growth and the Global Goals 2030 (P4G) event aims to boost market-based partnerships and rally high-level political and private sector action. It brings together Heads of State, CEOs, and civil society leaders around a shared action agenda to mobilize investments for tangible impact.

António Guterres expressed that although there are commitments to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050, there is “still much to do” to close the emissions gap and achieve the SDGs. He reaffirmed his call to all main emitters to present new Nationally Determined Contributions, commit to net zero emissions by 2050, and, ‘most importantly,’ put in place policies and programs towards achieving that goal.

“Tackling climate change head-on will help protect the most vulnerable people from the next crisis while sustaining a job-rich recovery from the pandemic”, he said, reminding that the first priority right now is stopping plans for new coal plants and phase-out of coal use by 2040.

On that note, the Secretary General commended the Government of the Republic of Korea for announcing that it will stop all international coal finance and encouraged other government and private sector entities to do the same.

Mr. Guterres also expressed his concern about the 'finance and adaption gaps'. He said that developed countries have yet to deliver on the 100-billion-dollar annual commitment to climate action efforts and supporting vulnerable communities that are already suffering the consequences of global warming.

He also explained that one in three people globally are still not adequately covered by early warning systems, and women and girls, who make up 80 percent of those displaced by the climate emergency, are still often excluded from decisions to address the climate crisis. “We urgently need a breakthrough on adaptation and resilience”, he added, asking all donor countries to significantly enhance their financial commitments.

In his message, the UN chief highlighted the importance of financing the ‘infrastructure of tomorrow’ by supporting developing countries in a just transition to sustainable energy and a circular economy while helping them to diversify their economies. “In short, we need a global partnership for green, inclusive, sustainable development”, he underscored.

Mr. Guterres warned that there is no global partnership if some are left “struggling to survive” and said that this was true for COVID and the distribution of vaccines as well as the climate emergency. “In this quest, the Republic of Korea is a leading partner,” he said, commending the government for its 2050 net-zero pledge and the Korean Green New Deal.

He stressed that if governments embrace the same goals, there will be an opportunity for a real partnership that will equip us to “rise to the biggest challenge of our lives.”

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