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Distinguished delegates,

- It is my pleasure to address the 55th session of the
  - I wish this 55<sup>th</sup> session would have come at a better time for the world. But it hasn't.
  - As we highlighted in our report to the Global Crisis Response Group, set up by Secretary General Guterres in response to the war in Ukraine, and to the Steering Committee group chaired by the DSG Amina Mohamed, the developing world is at the brink of a perfect storm of debt, food, and energy crises.
  - Given elevated levels of socioeconomic stress following the COVID-19 crisis and the unremitting cost of climate change, global exposure to this crisis is counted in the billions of people living in over a hundred countries.

- The first brief of the Global Crisis Response Group shows that 107 economies are severely exposed to at least one of the three global channels of transmission that characterize this crisis – rising food prices, rising energy prices, and tightening financial conditions. 1.7 billion people live in these countries, of which more than 500 million are already poor, and 215 million are undernourished.
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- Furthermore, in many countries of the world the issue is not one of rapidly growing populations, but one of rapidly declining fertility rates.
- My own region, Latin America, will go from having the greatest demographic dividend in its history as our millennials and zoomers enter the workforce, to having the most inverted population pyramid once they retire. Put differently, in the span of two generations, our population will invert as fast as it has exploded. It is unclear how we will deal with that, how our fragile and patchy pension systems will cope with that, what this will mean for our politics and our culture.
- Population decline has therefore as big an implication as population growth for sustainable development. But how well we deal with these facts will depend on our capacity to sympathize with the reality of the billions of individuals involved.

Excellencies,

- To talk about population is to talk about how we will

- So my question is this.
- When we think about the world today, how many of these 8 billion people do we really think about? Do we know where they live? Do we know what they care about most in life?
- Do we know whether they are in low-income or middle-income countries? Whether their children are going to school, whether they have access to water, energy or if they had internet access during the COVID lockdowns?
- After all these years at the United Nations, I have learnt that truly global policies require truly global sympathies. Earlier, for example, I mentioned that 1,7 billion people in the world live in countries severely exposed to the

- I don't know if all global policy makers are really thinking about these questions – we at the Crisis Response Group are definitively trying. But what I do know is that no policy solution will be correct unless it is coherent with the larger sympathies of mankind, unless it can imagine how the world looks today in Addis Ababa, in Bridgetown, in Lima or in Karachi.
- We need a new sustainable development paradigm that really integrates the perspective of the developing world. Unless we do that, negotiations among countries at the COP will never conclude. Not for a lack of good ideas, but for a lack of sympathy.

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