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THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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## MESSAGE TO THE BLEED STRATEGIC FORUM

**Bled, Slovenia, 1-3 September 2013**

I am pleased to send greetings to the Bled Strategic Forum. Your gathering provides an opportunity to share ideas on how Europe can address not only its own challenges but also those facing a world in transition. Our common goal is an economic and political environment that promotes sustainable peace and development for all.

Since the creation of the United Nations, Europe has played a critical role across all aspects of its work -- from peace and security to development and human rights. Today, as the international community works to define the global development agenda beyond 2015, Europe has a significant role to play in helping to formulate an inspiring new framework and implementing the necessary transformative actions.

The elimination of extreme poverty is within sight but we must step up our efforts. Europe has been a long and generous supporter of development cooperation, and has encouraged its

middle income countries to become donors. Despite budgetary pressures, I encourage the European Union to meet the goal of providing at least 0.7 per cent of Gross National Income for official development assistance by 2015.

Environmental sustainability is another important challenge on which Europe can set an example. Europe has made great strides in altering its production and consumption patterns, developing alternative energy sources, improving energy efficiency and managing transboundary water resources. It has also been at the forefront of efforts to address climate change, a threat that risks undermining our progress.

As we move towards a new set of universal goals for sustainable development, we must build upon and learn from our experience with the MDGs. The MDGs have been extremely effective in guiding the international community in a common direction, with impressive results. Yet there is much work left to do, and it is imperative that we accelerate and intensify our efforts as the deadline draws near.

The post-2015 dialogue also provides an opportunity to address gaps in the MDG framework and other emerging challenges such as the absence of elements related to peace, governance and the rule of law. These are key to development and core foundations for building peaceful and prosperous societies. Building on its own experience, Europe is well-placed to contribute to the discussion on ensuring that these elements figure prominently in the post-2015 agenda.

It is my hope that your dialogue will also provide insights into how Europe can best address its own challenges of reviving growth and improving equality in an era of rapid technological change, major structural transformations and ageing societies. A prosperous Europe committed to a global sustainable development agenda will be critical for achieving the future we want and a life of dignity for all.

I look forward to continuing our close partnership in the coming decades. Please accept my best wishes for a successful forum.