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**THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**

**MESSAGE TO THE FIFTH WORLD ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND INVESTMENT (WEIF)**

**Manama, 14 May 2024**

I am pleased to convey my warm greetings to the Fifth World Entrepreneurship and Investment Forum. Hosted under the patronage of His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, The Crown Prince and Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Bahrain.

The world is grappling with a confluence of crises – from worsening poverty and hunger, rising inequalities, conflicts, climate change and stalled progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals.

This Forum reminds us that entrepreneurship and innovation provide an effective path forward for people and planet alike.

Micro-, small and medium sized enterprises are at the heart of entrepreneurship and innovation. These businesses represent jobs, opportunity and economic growth for communities and countries alike.

In particular, micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises that leverage the benefits of science and technology—including artificial intelligence and renewable energy – can help get us back on track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and develop local solutions to global challenges like climate change.

Unlocking these benefits requires an enabling environment that prioritizes research and development investment and access to financing and markets, while empowering women and young people.

As we look to the Summit of the Future in September, I encourage this Forum to find ways to harness the power of entrepreneurship and innovation to make our world a better place for all people and the planet we share.