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THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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REMARKS AT DINNER WITH KOREAN BUSINESS LEADERS

30 November 2011, Busan

Mr. Jung Byung-chul, Vice President of the Federation of Korea Industries,
Distinguished business leaders,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good evening. Thank you for your warm welcome.

It is a great pleasure to be with so many national and international business leaders and development partners this evening.

It is an added pleasure to see so many familiar faces.

I know many of you here tonight from my years as Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

I just want you to know: in those days I used to carry around a small book of facts and figures on Korean trade.

Nowadays I do the same, but instead it is global economic trends and the latest UN statistics on everything from the number of people we feed to the number of vaccines we provide to number of shelters we give to refugees.

Wherever I go, I try to meet with business leaders -- from global corporations to small enterprises and entrepreneurs.

We have found over the years that partnership with the private sector can accelerate and deepen our work in every sphere.

That is why I am here this evening.

I want to tell you how much we appreciate your efforts.

Let me briefly recognize the Korean Global Compact Network and the Federation of Korean Industries, which are doing a great job in getting their members to embrace corporate responsibility.

Korea's history has direct experience for the issues we are discussing at today's forum.

Many of us in this room remember first-hand that foreign aid from the United Nations, the United States and many others helped Korea to rebuild after a devastating war.

Today, we are givers of aid, especially in Africa.

I want those who are less fortunate today to have the same chance Korea had.

The private sector can help make that happen.

That is my message to all the business leaders taking part in this forum – not just Korean but all of you.

You are already helping us to alleviate poverty, create jobs and accelerate green growth.

Your efforts are having positive impacts in crucial areas from health to energy, from climate to food, from anti-corruption to women's empowerment.

And many of you are playing very dynamic roles in the Global Compact.

We have important opportunities beyond today's conference to carry forward this important work.

Next month, world leaders gather for climate negotiations in Durban. At Durban, we must complete what was agreed last year in Cancún.

Next June, the Rio + 20 conference is a chance to steer the world towards a greener, more sustainable and more equitable path.

I urge all of you to participate actively.

Engage in our Caring for Climate and Sustainable Energy for All initiatives.

Bring green solutions to share with the world.

This transformation is necessary; you can help make it possible.

Without a critical mass, we cannot scale up the projects and interventions we know can make a difference.

Help us change business as usual.

In that spirit, let me propose a toast:

- to successful public-private partnerships;
- to even closer ties between the United Nations and business;
- to a sustainable future for all.

Thank you again for being at this conference and for caring about these important issues.