Excellencies,

Dear colleagues and friends,

On behalf of the UN Family, I express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to all of you for joining us at the Opening Ceremony of the United Nations Exhibition at EXPO-2017.

It is very symbolic that we gather today under the auspices of EXPO-2017 “Future Energy”. Today’s event takes place in an era of major push to advance the global development agendas. Together, the Paris Agreement on climate change and Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development create a pathway for the world to transition towards zero-carbon and climate-resilient development.

I would like to start by paying tribute to the Government of Kazakhstan and to all the people who have worked tirelessly to open EXPO-2017 in Astana.

I convey my sincere congratulations to the management and the team of the EXPO Company, Mr. Yessimov and his staff, the representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Zhoshybayev in his role of the EXPO National Commissioner.

I would also like to acknowledge the presence of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), Director-General Mr. Li Yong, as well as Heads and representatives of the UN agencies participating in the EXPO, and all UN staff, and other partners who have been working hand-in-hand with us to make our exhibition a success.

As the UN Commissioner-General for EXPO-2017, I would like to reiterate that the UN highly values the continuous cooperation with the Government of Kazakhstan. The UN Secretary-General during his visit to Kazakhstan stressed the significance of this Forum as an excellent opportunity to underline the importance and urgency in moving towards a more sustainable energy future, and reaffirmed the UN system’s continued support to the sustainable development agenda.

Utilizing the EXPO 2017 platform, the UN will raise awareness and highlight the coordinated actions needed to combat climate change, and engage partners in productive dialogues on inclusive, resilient and sustainable development with the aim to ‘leave no one behind’, as stipulated by the global Sustainable Development Goals adopted by the Member States of the United Nations.

Nine UN organizations (UNDP, UNESCO, UNESCAP, UNIDO, IAEA, UNICEF, UNEP, UN Women, UNHCR) will demonstrate, through their exhibit booths and installations, the importance of ensuring universal access to energy, global best practices in reduction of emissions and combating pollution of the air, water and soil, decarbonization of the economy, and adaptation of simple but innovative technologies for the use by the people and small- and medium-businesses.

Representatives from more than 100 countries – international organizations, Government officials, energy experts, and people of science, business and arts – came to Astana to share their best practices, achievements and experiences in promoting sustainable development and bringing mankind closer to the Energy of the Future.

Meanwhile, demand for energy is growing and ‘will double by 2060’. That is why the core idea of EXPO-2017 is closely linked to the implementation of the global Climate Change agenda and the recent Paris Agreements. It is hoped that the EXPO platform will advance dialogues between Governments, climate scientists and engineers to find practical solutions for reducing greenhouse gas emissions while generating energy.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This EXPO-2017 and the related events, constitute an ambitious initiative, led by Kazakhstan, to appeal to the international community’s sense of responsibility by way of institutions, organizations, corporations, and individuals, with the aim of generating debate and awareness regarding the decisive impact that energy management has on the lives of people and that of the planet.

Through this exhibition, the UN contemplates raising awareness regarding energy as an inherent asset of humanity that should be used responsibly and efficiently. I very much hope that our exhibits will be enjoyed by the children, youth, women and men of Kazakhstan, by the international guests and tourists. Some of our
installations were developed with interactive features so that children and youth can learn about energy and climate change through ‘play.’

We, the UN family, are looking forward to welcoming you during the three Summer months of the EXPO.

Let me conclude by thanking once again the Government of Kazakhstan for hosting the EXPO and the UN exhibit. With this, I would like to welcome all of you to join me in declaring the UN Exhibition for EXPO-2017 officially open!