



ASSEMBLEIA DA REPÚBLICA

*O Presidente*

**The 3rd World Parliamentary Forum on Sustainable  
Development**

***Combating Inequality through Social and Financial Inclusion***

Bali, 4 September 2019

Remarks by His Excellency the President of the Assembly of the  
Republic of Portugal, Eduardo Ferro Rodrigues

Your Excellency,

Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia,

Excellency,

Governor of Bali,

Dear Colleagues,

Parliamentarians from all over the World,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we address the overarching topic of combating inequality through social and financial inclusion, and more specifically, on how infrastructure and industrial innovation can foster equal opportunities, we should bear in mind that we are experiencing a new industrial revolution.

Knowledge, interconnectedness and mobility are key words.

Yet, an industrial revolution does not mean necessarily neither equity nor fairness.

New dynamics go hand in hand with new imbalances.

It is our duty to ensure that progress leaves no-one behind.



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It is a bold task yet one we should not neglect.

The Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development provides us with guiding principles and targets: people, planet, prosperity, peace, partnership.

As Goal 9, the Declaration points to building resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.

It is an ambitious undertaking.

Infrastructure and industrial innovation impacts on several of the 17 Goals stated in the Declaration.

They are crucial, inter alia, to our efforts aiming at ending poverty; ending hunger and achieving food security; ensuring inclusive and equitable education; water and sanitation for all; affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy; combatting climate change and impact; or protecting ecosystems and reversing biodiversity degradation.

In implementing those goals we have to bear in mind that infrastructure is no longer synonymous with physical infrastructure.

Certainly when a community is provided with sanitation, a new road or a school, we are speaking about physical infrastructures – and indispensable enablers too.

Yet, as the digital revolution has been evidencing, we have to think about the hardware and the software.

The latter is crucial: this is the case of quality education, health or closing the gender gap.

Unless we successfully address them it will be much more arduous to be innovative in industry and to create new opportunities.

The lack of access to formal education will prevent us from combatting inequalities, from creating new jobs – decent jobs – and enhance social mobility; and without education the gender gap will persist harming our social and economic progress.

People come first. This is basic tenet.

As stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, «(...) *everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status*».

As we all are aware of, our planet faces unprecedented challenges that imperil our collective future.



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It is urgent to address climate change.

It demands global action.

Inertia would impact severely on our access to food, water and combating diseases, on energy security, on the Oceans sustainability – and no-doubt the most vulnerable would be the first to suffer from such inertia.

Industrial innovation has the potential of enhancing our means of combatting the environmental, economic and social consequences of climate change.

However, political willingness is imperative.

Multilateral institutions need to work properly and international commitments need to be implemented as agreed.

On the bright side, it is heartening to realize that the international community is mobilizing its efforts.

This happens at official level, particularly the United Nations, but also includes the deep engagement of the civil society.

Let me stress that Portugal is fully committed to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

We are acting as members of the European Union, multilaterally and at the national level. Let me just enunciate two initiatives:

Firstly, the 27th European Environment and Sustainable Development Advisory Councils (EEAC), to be held this 19 September in the Assembly of the Republic, the Portuguese Parliament.

Its agenda will address topics such as clean and sufficient water for all, energy transition and the sustainable use of oceans, seas and marine responses.

Also, next year, the United Nations High-Level Conference in Lisbon from 2 to 6 June 2020 that will focus on the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans, seas and marine resources in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Dear Colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

What brought us here is demanding and requires long-standing efforts.



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No-one is exempt.

This is the basic challenge ahead of us: having the resilience to increase and expand our efforts, to cooperate and to act together in order that we may succeed in building a more harmonious, cohesive and sustainable planet.

Thank you for your attention.

*Eduardo Ferro Rodrigues*

President of the Assembly of the Republic of Portugal

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