

WORLD PARLIAMENTARY FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
ACHIEVING THE 2030 AGENDA THROUGH INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT

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H.E. Fahri Hamzah, Vice Speaker of the House Representatives
H.E. Dr. Nurhayati Ali Assegef, Chairperson of the Committee of
Inter-Parliamentary cooperation
Excellencies,
Distinguished Parliamentarians,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Salamat Pagi.

Let me begin by stating how privileged I am to address this
august meeting of the World parliamentary Forum on Sustainable
Development.

On behalf of UN Environment, our Executive Director, Mr. Erik
Solheim and my own behalf, I would like to express sincere
thanks to the Speaker of the House, H.E. Setya Novanto and Dr.
Nurhayati Ali Assegef for the invitation and this opportunity.

This is a timely meeting.

1. During the past decades sufficient evidence has been collected

of how our economic and social interactions have impacted on the Planet. The effects of unsustainable patterns of production and consumption on Life on Earth are so significant that scientists assert that we live in a geological era in which humans are determining the fate of planetary processes. They call it the “Anthropocene”.

2. The Earth systems provide the socioeconomic basis for survival, wellbeing and prosperity of human communities and nations, but the accelerated rate and intensity at which we are consuming natural resources, is pushing the global environment to tipping points. Human impact is surpassing the regenerative capacity of Earth systems.
3. Not far from this beautiful island of Bali, the Great Barrier Reef lost 29% of its shallow water corals in a massive bleaching episode in 2016. Though relatively young when compared to the existence of corals on the Planet, the Great Barrier Reef has existed for half-a-million years. Even some of its most modern formations developed 8,000 years ago. Let us pause for a moment and reflect on what it means to lose in only 12 months almost one-third of this biological structure that has been around for so long, covers an area about the size of the United Kingdom and can be seen from space.
4. Rising ocean temperatures, overfishing, ocean acidification and pollution—including waste, plastics and agricultural runoff—are amongst the leading causes of this environmental loss. The situation of other ecosystems is not much better. A significant number of scientists assert that we are in the middle of a sixth mass extinction event, more intense and accelerated than all the previous ones. Some estimates

indicate that global vertebrate populations of mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians and fish have declined by more than half in the past four decades.

5. It is thus evident that observed changes to the Earth's Systems due to human activities are unprecedented. Climate change, biodiversity and ecosystems loss are only the most obvious manifestations.
6. At the same time, we live in a period of extreme inequality in the distribution of natural resources and associated wealth. Almost one billion people are still in extreme poverty. The world's eight richest billionaires own the same wealth as the poorest half of the Globe. Enabling every individual of the growing global population to attain a life in dignity while staying within safe environmental boundaries is the greatest challenge of our time.
7. This, precisely, is the question of sustainable development: how do we respond to humanity's present needs without compromising Earth's ability to provide a healthy home, food and the natural economic base for future generations?
8. Let's try to address this question and discuss the instrumental potential of parliaments and parliamentarians towards achieving sustainable development at global, national and local level.
9. While the challenges are daunting, decades of multilateral work in the field of environmental sustainability demonstrate a valuable lesson: Yes, it is possible for individuals, communities and nations to decouple economic development, from environmental degradation.

- 10.** Successfully phasing out ozone depleting substances under the Montreal Protocol is perhaps one of the greatest examples of this possibility. The Protocol has been instrumental in the progressive restoration of the ozone layer. It is estimated that the layer will be almost fully restored by 2050.
- 11.** And, what were the main factors of this outstanding achievement?
- ✓ Political will.
 - ✓ Science-based policy making.
 - ✓ A universal framework that takes into account the particularities of countries with different levels of development.
 - ✓ A framework that integrates environmental concerns with economic and social objectives, including a global partnership between public interest, the private sector and other stakeholders.
 - ✓ Technological innovation.
 - ✓ A business case.
- 12.** All these success conditions are attainable today. To some extent the Montreal Protocol anticipated the three main principles that hold together the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development:
- ✓ *Universality*, as it applies to all countries, rich and poor, developed and developing.

- ✓ *Integration* of the economic, social and environmental dimensions for sustainable development in each of the 17 SDGs.
 - ✓ And the spirit of *partnership* that implies that implementation depends on the involvement of all relevant stakeholders, including Government, civil society, academia, scientists and the private sector.
- 13.** These three principles are an attempt at harmonizing the needs of people and the needs of the Planet, and fostering peace and prosperity.
- 14.** The 2030 Agenda embodies key elements of international policymaking on environmental sustainability and sustainable development.

Distinguished Parliamentarians,

- 15.** With this universally agreed policy framework for national implementation and international cooperation there is no excuse to delay action.
- 16.** The challenges of climate change and environmental degradation are global and can only be addressed through global responses.
- 17.** The 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals are not legally binding. Strong and continued commitment and

political will are going to be key to achieving this agenda through inclusive development.

- 18.** An entire new international architecture has been put in place in support of the 2030 Agenda.
- 19.** Few institutions have more political legitimacy, public authority and legal competencies to lead the implementation of the 2030 Agenda within countries than parliaments.
- 20.** The legislative function and the role of oversight are the most obvious tools to align global and national public policy. Through these functions Parliaments can guide implementation by all relevant line ministries and government offices, even at the sub national and local levels.
- 21.** We cannot afford to ignore the imperative of urgent action and full implementation. Time is not on our side. Climate change is a threat multiplier. The security dimension of climate change is not hidden anymore. The extent of poverty, pollution and degradation of natural resources signals that time has come to focus on achieving the 2030 Agenda without further delay. As 2018 approaches, we should be asking ourselves whether we are fulfilling our respective roles and delivering on our potential.
- 22.** The most unique potential of parliaments in supporting the implementation of sustainable development lies in their representative role. Ideally, Parliaments are the most inclusive and democratic government institutions and, thus, best positioned to create a level playing field that leaves no one behind and supports the most vulnerable. By their very nature

and the transaction and negotiation of public interest, parliaments represent all, including youth, women, elderly, local and indigenous peoples. More often than not, they also represent the interest of other social segments like academia and the private sector.

Distinguished Parliamentarians,

- 23.** Sustainable development compels us to provide for the current needs of all people, without compromising the future of the Planet and humanity. This is based on ethical notions of intergenerational justice. No other governance institution but parliaments can better represent the interests of our children, youth and future generations.
- 24.** In addition to engaging all relevant stakeholders in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, Parliaments are best placed to improve the science-policy interface to ensure evidence-based policies.
- 25.** UN Environment is available and ready to support this crucial function of parliaments through our technical knowledge and capacities. For instance, UN Environment and GLOBE International launched the initiative *“Bringing the 2015 Summits home: An action agenda for legislators”*, which focuses on the historic urgency of implementation through the convergence of five major multilateral processes: the SDGs, the Paris Accord, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Management, the Addis Agenda on Financing for Development and the Beijing +20 Gender Platform.

Madame Chair,

- 26.** One of the biggest challenges in achieving sustainable development is mobilizing the necessary financial resources and means of implementation. It is now clear that the sheer size of the requisite investments cannot rely on public funding. Mobilizing investments from the private sector and promoting innovation is crucial. Parliaments have the key role in setting up the right incentives towards these desired transformations.
- 27.** We have witnessed positive changes in public expenditure on sustainable development, both incremental and linking investments on environmental sustainability with social and economic objectives. But these changes are too slow and too little. Even in regions where sustainable development has been already mainstreamed throughout public policies, public funding for the environment is too modest. For instance, a look at public expenditure by function in the EU shows only 0.8% accounts for “environmental protection”¹. In other regions is even less.
- 28.** Very large-scale reallocations of investment are necessary. UN estimates show that achieving sustainable development will require USD \$5-7 trillion a year, a large slice of which must fund the transition to a low-carbon, resilient world economy. We will need to look at creative funding options, in which both public and private sector flows are aligned and scaled-up.

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Government_expenditure_by_function_-_COFOG (2015).

- 29.** We will need to transform our economies and societies at a larger scale. One major instrument to promote such transformation will be the shift to a green economy.
- 30.** A green economy can improve human well-being and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities. Low-carbon development, resource efficiency and social inclusiveness shall be at the heart of a green economy that will focus on expanding green sectors while greening traditional economic activities.
- 31.** To realise this ambition four transformative changes will be needed:
- ✓ Incorporate sustainability as a core criteria of investment and shift capital flows towards green investments
 - ✓ Make production patterns more efficient, cleaner and safer for humans and the environment
 - ✓ Shift towards more sustainable patterns of consumption
 - ✓ Ensure socially inclusive and equitable access to, and distribution of environmental goods and services
- 32.** The green economy is about transforming institutions and incentivizing change of individual behaviour. UN Environment has been leading in advising authorities, governments and other stakeholders in this area. More than 60 countries worldwide have ambitiously started implementing green economy and related strategies. Parliaments provide the logical bridge to link the global agenda to action at national level.
- 33.** We are moving in the right direction and Parliaments have a

huge potential to expand the shift towards the green economy by incentivizing the multiple social, economic and environmental benefits and opportunities it creates, particularly at the community level.

Distinguished Delegates,

- 34.** The United Nations Environment Assembly will hold its next session from 4 to 6 December 2017, in Nairobi, Kenya. The universal Assembly convenes the World's ministers of environment and others, to review the state of the Planet's health and address the environmental dimension of sustainable development.
- 35.** This session will meet under the theme "A Pollution-Free Planet". In its outcomes, we expect that Governments, UN entities, the scientific community, academia, civil society, the private sector and other stakeholders will come together around a long-term program of action to address pollution. We hope that Parliaments and parliamentarians everywhere also join us in this endeavour.
- 36.** Pollution has been a driver of environmental degradation and a major threat to social and economic sustainability. The devastating consequences of pollution are felt all over the world and across a wide range of areas —from human health to food production, from tourism to urban living, or even from energy production to the clothing industry.

- 37.** The World Health Organization estimates that exposure to indoor and outdoor air pollution kills around 7 million people every year worldwide, making it the world's largest single environmental health risk. Another example of the crosscutting consequences of pollution is plastic waste in our Oceans. More than 8 million tonnes of plastic end up in the oceans every year, wreaking havoc on marine life, fisheries and tourism, and costing at least \$8 billion in damage to marine ecosystems. At this pace, by 2050 there will be more plastic than fish in the Oceans of Earth.
- 38.** Addressing pollution in all its forms —air, water and land-based— will have positive impacts on achieving the 2030 Agenda, the SDGs and also improve the wellbeing of the most vulnerable.
- 39.** The upcoming session of the UN Environment Assembly is already being supported by work at every relevant level. For instance, the *Asia-Pacific Ministerial Summit on the Environment* is taking place in Bangkok right now and is expected to contribute regional perspectives on pollution. The meeting is jointly organized by UN Environment and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia-Pacific (ESCAP). I would like to invite all parliamentarians to constructively engage and interact with the ministries of environment and other relevant entities on matters pertaining to pollution.
- 40.** Distinguished parliamentarians: your political systems and fellow citizens have entrusted you with the tremendous responsibility of protecting the public interest in designing

policies and monitoring implementation.

- 41.** At the same time, the magnitude and global nature of today's sustainability challenges have offered you a higher mission: your decisions will now be instrumental for the future of the Planet and the viability of humankind.
- 42.** I am personally encouraged by the fact that you are all gathered here. The quality and passion of your interactions is a signal of hope that Parliamentarians across the world are ready and willing to act on the most urgent calls from Earth and humanity.

Terima kasih,
I thank you.