

“Promoting equality must be a priority for our governments. The commitment with the peace goes through the path of social justice.”

Chair of the Indonesian House Steering Committee

Mr. Bambang Soesatyo, Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia.

Dr. Fadli Zon, Vice Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia.

In the last years of this century, four key themes emerged from the collective concerns and aspirations of the world’s peoples: peace, freedom, development and environment.

The Brundtland Commission’s brief definition of sustainable development as the ability to make development sustainable- to ensure that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Using that definition has led many to see sustainable development as having major focus on intergenerational equity. Although, the definition does not give a clue about how the sustainable development can be achieved.

In 2015, the United Nations approved the 2030 Agenda with 17 Sustainable Development Goals in order to face challenges related to poverty, inequality, climate, environmental degradation, prosperity, peace and justice.

We had overcome many challenges but there is work to be done. Without empirical data regarding the current global situation, it is not possible trace our path with confidence towards the fulfilment of Sustainable Development Goals.

Poverty is one of the most important obstacles to overcome when we talk about equality in the world, fight poverty represents the Sustainable Development Goal number 1.

Although the extreme poverty has decreased since 1990, the worst forms of poverty persist. The latest global estimate (2013) suggests that 11% of the world’s population or 783 million people lived below the threshold of extreme poverty.

The proportion of the world’s workers living with their families under US\$1.90 per person a day declined significantly in the last two decades, falling from 26.9% in 2000 to 9.2% in 2017

In Asia and the Pacific, though poverty reduction had been quite significant, this region remains home to the largest number of the world's poor. More than one in four people in Asia and the Pacific's developing countries experience poverty in multiple dimensions. Including additional deprivations that impact their health, education and standard of living. **Furthermore**, hunger represents the deep inequality around the globe and unfortunately is on the rise again: the proportion of people suffering undernourishment increased from 10.6% in 2015 to 11% in 2016. This represents an increase to 815 million people in the world in 2016 in comparison with 777 million in 2015.

In 2017, 151 million children under the age of 5 suffered of low height for their age. 51 million was underweight and 38 million was overweight. In the case of the Asia-Pacific, there are almost half a billion people undernourished.

Talk about hunger naturally leads us to health issues.

Globally, from 2000 to 2016, the mortality rate of children under 5 fell by 47% and the neonatal mortality rate decreased by 39%. During this same period, the number of deaths of children under 5 years old, decreased from 9.9 million to 5.6 million.

In the Asia-Pacific region, in 2015 around 85,000 women died through cases related to pregnancy or childbirth. Up to 90% of these deaths could have been prevented through quality antenatal, obstetric and perinatal care- including care given by midwives and skilled birth attendants. In the absence of such care, the average maternal mortality rate in the region is extremely high, at 127 per 100,000 live births, compared to the developed-country average of just 12 per 100,000. Also, 9 of every 10 maternal deaths occur in just 12 countries of this area.

However, other topic related to the achievement of equality is education. Worldwide, the participation rate in education during early childhood in the age of primary education was 70% in 2016, showing an increase from 63% in 2010. The lower rates are found in sub-Saharan Africa with 41% and North Africa and western Asia with 52%.

It is estimated that 617 million children and adolescents of teaching age primary and lower secondary, 58% do not achieve the minimum levels of reading and math proficiency.

This represents an obstacle to guarantee equal education and decent opportunities for all.

Otherwise, gender equality is not only a fundamental right but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous, equal and sustainable world.

Currently, 1 in 5 women and girls between the ages of 15-49 have reported experiencing physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner. Also, today 49 countries have no laws protecting women from domestic violence.

Although, worldwide female representation in the lower or single chamber of parliament increased from 19% in 2010 to 23% in 2018.

Despite, Asia and the Pacific region have among the poorest development indicators for women and girls. Deep-rooted gender inequality and discriminatory norms and practices reinforce patriarchal systems. Women in the region also have the lowest rates of political participation and suffer from a high prevalence of gender-based violence.

Those harmful practices and so many others, reinforce gender inequality across not only the region but the whole world.

As has been said, about the half world's population still lives on the equivalent of about 2 American dollars a day with global unemployment rate of 5.7%.

Although, the situation in Asia and The Pacific is a little better with 4.2% of unemployment but it is important to keep promoting the sustainable economic growth in this area to decreased even more this rate.

Concentrating efforts on policies and legal frameworks that allow economic inclusion will not only produce financial growth, but will allow social growth in regions that require it. Another situation that avert the consolidation of an equal world are the crimes related to human trafficking

While homicide and trafficking cases have seen significant progress over the past decade, there are still thousands of people at greater risk of intentional murder within Latin America, Sub-Saharan Africa and around Asia.

70% of detected victims of human trafficking are women and girls, most of them for sexual exploitation.

All this data, give us clarity about the challenges we need to face immediately.

One of the first steps towards protecting individual rights and providing equality circumstances to all, is the implementation of worldwide birth registration and the creation of more independent national human rights institutions around the world.

Also to reduce inequality, policies should be universal in principle, paying attention to the needs of disadvantaged and marginalized people. Providing them with equal access to education, health care, decent work, and representation in political and economic decision-making processes will fuel sustainable economies and benefit societies and humanity at large.

