

UNITED NATIONS



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THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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MESSAGE TO THE 132ND INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION ASSEMBLY
Hanoi, 28 March 2015

Delivered by Ms. Amina J. Mohammed, Special Advisor of the Secretary-General
on Post-2015 Development Planning

I am pleased to send greetings to the 132nd Inter-Parliamentary Union Assembly. I commend your theme of “Turning Words into Action: The Sustainable Development Goals”, as well as the breadth of other issues that you will examine during this Hanoi Assembly, all of which complement our own efforts at the United Nations.

Member States are currently in the midst of the intergovernmental negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda. As agreed in Rio, in 2012, it will be applicable to all countries and will encompass the three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, environmental and social. The objective is an agenda that meets the needs of people and the planet.

The process of defining the seventeen goals that will be at the core of the post-2015 development agenda has been unprecedented. It has galvanized the international community and brought renewed energy, excitement and optimism to the United Nations. Progress is being closely monitored outside the UN.

A global summit at the level of heads of state and government this September will serve to endorse the post-2015 development agenda. Parliamentarians have a key role to play, not least through the Fourth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament, which will take place at UN Headquarters in New York as part of the series of high-level meetings leading up to the summit.

We have an ambitious proposal at hand -- the Open Working Group’s Sustainable Development Goals. Over the course of 18 months, Member States have worked towards a transformative proposal with 17 sustainable development goals and 169 targets. They have consulted with the United Nations, civil society, the private sector, parliamentarians, academia and others. National consultations with domestic and local actors have been held in more than 60 countries. The MyWorld project has solicited views from citizens all over the world. With its global convening power, the United Nations has supported these deliberations by bringing actors together and providing substantive inputs whenever needed.

The proposed sustainable development goals fully integrate economic, social and environmental dimensions. They firmly place poverty eradication at the centre. They include the economy and productive capacity, climate change, health and well-being, women’s empowerment and inequalities as stand-alone goals. They address

ways to build peaceful and inclusive societies. They make provisions for financial and non-financial means of implementation as targets throughout the goals and in a stand-alone goal. Most importantly, the proposed SDGs are based around the notion of leaving no one behind.

It is obvious that business as usual will no longer be an option. This is not only reflected in the holistic focus of the agenda but also in the way that all actors have been included in the process of defining it and their anticipated role in implementing it.

This is why the role of parliaments is pivotal. Parliaments serve as a bridge between citizens and their governments. They can – and must -- lead the way, galvanizing action and fostering accountability and implementation.

Sustainable development goal 16 emphasizes the role of institutions and the need for them to be representative, transparent and participatory. Parliaments have a great responsibility in this regard.

A first role of parliaments is to create an enabling environment for the implementation of the development agenda beyond 2015 through legislation and incentives.

Secondly, parliaments can ensure that central government budgets reflect their commitment to achieving the agenda in a manner that is aligned with countries' development priorities.

A third role of parliaments is delivering an oversight function through monitoring and evaluation and holding governments accountable. It is therefore important to strengthen parliaments' ability to engage in the assessment of development programs.

Beyond these roles, parliaments can raise awareness of the post-2015 development agenda and the sustainable development goals through networks like the IPU. Parliaments are uniquely positioned to communicate the agenda to the people – and to make it a tangible framework for citizens of all countries. They can facilitate the national debate on how each country visualizes its sustainable future.

Simultaneous to this meeting, there is a consultation for Parliamentarians on our updated Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health, which is aligned with the sustainable development goals and targets. The role of parliamentarians is critical to ensuring we end all preventable maternal, newborn, child and adolescent deaths within a generation.

Indeed, parliaments will be at the forefront in making all these ambitious goals a reality and bringing them to the people. I count on your engagement and hope that the great cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU – which will be further strengthened by the forthcoming Cooperation Agreement between the two organizations -- will continue throughout this exciting time.

I wish you a successful Assembly.

