

Address of the Permanent Mission of Republic of Albania at the General Debate of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development

Leave no One behind – 20 June 2016

Your Excellences,

Dear Participants, Ladies and Gentleman,

My delegation would like to congratulate Ambassador Oh Joon for bringing us together to discuss and to review the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development.

The spirit of the Agenda for Humanity of the Secretary General and its five core responsibilities will guide our humanitarian response. Relying on the principles of humanity, neutrality, responsibility and impartiality, our humanitarian actions will relieve the suffering of vulnerable groups, war refugees, and others in need.

The adoption of the 2030 Agenda marked a milestone for sustainable development for the world, and in my country “Leaving no one behind” has already become a cross-cutting theme in all our efforts.

The Albanian National Strategy for Development and Integration 2015-2020 is the main document that supports the economic, social and environmental sustainable development of my country. Our path to rapid development is driven by our commitment to meet European standards in governance and rule of law, as well as in economic and social areas.

With the assistance of the United Nations and our other partners, we are working to further refine targets, design disaggregated monitoring and data efforts, and ensure that

action all the way to community level, realizes the ambition of leaving no one behind.

And we are seeing results. The Albanian Government has made efforts to achieve a sustainable economic growth over the last two years, which brought a decrease of the level of poverty with more than 2%.

To reach this goal, the Government encouraged formal employment; improved the business climate; and improved public services for the citizens. We have quadrupled government funding for labor promotion measures in the last three years.

Enrollment in vocational and educational training programmes has doubled over the last two years. More than 70% of recent graduates from vocational schools are employed. In a region known for high youth unemployment, this is a significant step. Youth is a critical issue in Albania, in our sub-region, and in the world. Therefore, we have adopted a new National Youth Action Plan 2015-2020.

Albania has undertaken a number of measures for the social inclusion, protection, employment promotion and integration of Roma and Egyptian populations, counting the adoption of a new four-year strategy. For its implementation, we are working closely with community groups, the European Union, and the United Nations.

Wide attention has been devoted in building a strong awareness on gender equality. Government and civil society campaigns are united to stop violence against women, and figures show increased responsiveness of our services in this regard. We have made strong advances in women's political participation. 35% of municipal counsellors are women; 21% of

our national members of parliament are women, a high figure even for the whole European region.

The National Council for the Protection of the Rights of the Children has identified priorities for strengthening the child protection system and new strategic guideline for the new Action Plan for Children 2016-2020. "Child friendly Cities" is the newest initiative, which combines policies and action in central and local level of governance, to ensure that cities are inclusive places, aiming that no child is left behind.

Of course another key feature of the Agenda 2030 is its focus on climate change. I am proud to say that our parliament ratified last week the Paris Agreement.

Dear Participants,

Dedicated for effective governance and the rule of law, the Government of Albania is especially sensitive to Goal 16 of the 2030 Agenda, focused on access to justice and accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

We have volunteered to pilot indicators of Goal 16 to inform the global effort. Last year we undertook a critical local governance reform, consolidating 61 municipalities to be the focus for local democracy and development. And this year we are pursuing relentlessly a critical judicial reform.

The full implementation of the Agenda 2030 depends on us, each and every Member State. This is our commitment and we have to work hard to make the proper investment for the future generations and ensure that no one is left behind.

Thank You