

**Speech of Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign & European Affairs
of the Slovak Republic
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Dear Secretary General, President of the General Assembly, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen...
At the dawn of the new millennium we convened here with the ambition of eradicating poverty and gave birth to eight Millennium Development Goals...Now we stand here again to review what we have achieved and what to do to make our common ambition become a reality...

Despite undeniable progress achieved, asymmetries persist across regions and countries...As we speak, some 800 million people are still living in extreme poverty ...they have been left behind.
We salute the adoption of the revolutionary, comprehensive and inclusive 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda ...aiming to ensure prosperous and decent life for all.

Slovakia thanks the Secretary General, the President of the General Assembly and the co-facilitators for their hard work to reach a balanced outcome document...We were actively involved in preparatory process by...(1) contributing to the Open Working Group and...(2) as a member of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Financing for Development paving the way for the adoption of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

Slovakia commends and supports all 17 SDGs...They build on the millennium priorities of poverty eradication, prosperity and gender equality...But they also include new and relevant key factors of sustainable development...Allow me to elaborate more on them:

(1) First of all, one of the crucial lessons learned from the MDGs was that they focused mostly on the statistical targets of poverty reduction...while insisting less on creating socio-economic conditions, infrastructure, addressing global threats to development (such as climate change) and forging an enabling environment to support these objectives...

Slovakia considers all these aspects, including rule of law, good governance and inclusive institutions, as equally important and fundamental...Therefore, we consider Security Sector Reform as a relevant parameter to achieve Goal 16 on peaceful and inclusive societies...

The absence of enabling environment can have a negative impact on many SDGs such as gender equality, women empowerment or inclusive economic growth...

(2) Second, the new development agenda lays out more specific targets on preservation of the environment and sustainable management of natural resources...A clear set of environmental goals shall create a critical momentum and pave the way for a successful COP 21 in Paris...We are on the right path...

(3) Third, Slovakia openly supports a revitalized Global Partnership as proposed in SDG 17... We are eager to build on the positive results from MDG8 such as the Busan principles for Effective Development Cooperation and its voluntary initiatives...

As discussed in Addis Ababa, ODA remains vital for development of many countries. At the same time the mobilization of all domestic resources is one of crucial elements to address national contexts...It is here where Slovakia sees its biggest contribution to development by sharing its know-how on fiscal reform and tax collection...Also, the new Global Partnership means inclusive cooperation with all stakeholders, including civil society & private sector.

SDGs have to be implemented at two levels: (1) a global level of coordinated and inclusive cooperation and (2) an individual level of domestically implemented strategies...Each member state must be involved, participate and contribute to the extent of its own regional and national capacities...joint action and individual responsibility are keys to success.

Finally, we need a systematic follow-up and review mechanism at the national, regional and global level based on balanced and smart indicators...Slovakia sees the High Level Political Forum as well positioned to oversee the implementation of the agenda at the global level in order to preserve its universal character... In the process, sound cooperation among countries will be crucial in order to enhance the collection of relevant, transparent and disaggregated data...

Members of the international community, fellow representatives of our citizenry...

Facing one of the biggest challenges for human kind, all our efforts will be void if we are not determined to go well beyond our political discourse...We have to be courageous and brave to put this agenda over our collective and individual interests...

Mahatma Gandhi's wisdom tells us..."strength does not come from physical capacity. It comes from an indomitable will" It is clear that without a firm political determination, only feeble results can be expected, thus:

Let's not miss this unique momentum and opportunity to bring real and sustainable changes towards 2030 and beyond...

Let's board on time this train to prosperity and peace ... but most importantly...

Let's make sure that on our common journey of humanity...NO ONE IS LEFT BEHIND.

Thank you for your attention!