

**KEY NOTE ADDRESS BY H.E. MR. MIROSLAV LAJČÁK,
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OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC,
AT THE LIECHTENSTEIN DIALOGUE FOR DEVELOPMENT**

SDGS - THE IMPACT WE CAN ACHIEVE TOGETHER

17 January 2019, Vaduz

Minister Frick, dear guests, ladies and gentlemen ...

I am very pleased and honoured to be here and thank you for this great initiative.

Right at the outset, let me wish happy birthday to Liechtenstein and congratulate you all on 300 years of success story.

I am very pleased that our countries, *Slovakia and Liechtenstein*, are friends and good partners, working together bilaterally and on multilateral forums. That includes the United Nations.

Here, 3 years ago, the international community came together and committed to work together for humanity. By the time of our deadline, Liechtenstein will be 311 years old.

When you “*google*” what to expect for our world at that time, *you find* a range of fascinating articles about humans moving towards the Red Planet.

Stories about holograms and “*matrix-style*” mind uploading. Pictures of flying cars hitting the road. Or ... better said ... the air.

At the UN, we remained much more grounded.

So when you “*google*” what the UN wants this world to look like in 2030, *you find* an agenda. Agenda for a peaceful, dignified and healthy life on a sustainable planet. Not sci-fi images. Not vague ideals. Concrete goals and targets with clear follow-up mechanisms – to keep ourselves in check.

Adopting this agenda was a remarkable success. A shining example of what we can achieve working together. So when I started my mandate as the President of the General Assembly in 2017, me and my team made SDGs and climate action one of the priorities of the 72nd UNGA.

But we soon recognised – efforts don’t match the results. With SDGs, we have this *great*, universal plan. This *great* vision. We have many *great*, dedicated people working tirelessly to deliver. And we have everyone on board.

But the time is running out and the chances of achieving some of our goals are already at risk. *So what’s missing from this implementation recipe?* From my perspective, there are 3 main *ingredients* to add:

I. Financing

We might have the most noble goals and the best policies - but they don't come for free. The SDGs require 5 to 7 trillion US dollars of global investment annually. That's between 7 to 10% of global GDP.

This seems like an *amount big enough* to make our eyes water. And it really is an *amount big enough* that the governments alone won't cut it. We cannot rely solely on public funding.

Especially not since the 60% of global GDP is created in the private sector. That's where the money is, and that's where we need to look. So I guess it's fitting that I am standing in the room full of CEO's and business leaders. What a coincidence.

And the fact that you are here today proves that you support SDGs. You drive your companies with commitments to society and you measure business actions in human terms. You care.

Actually, the good news is - many businesses do. According to a study by *Deloitte (January 2018)*, 92% of business executives support SDGs. No wonder - consumers want sustainable products and are willing to pay for them.

The bad news is - only 17% of the businesses have actually introduced any relevant plans or policies to materialize this support. So what's up?

The need is huge. The resources are out there. What we need to do – is match them. Connect them. Build bridges. So the second ingredient is...

II. Network

“*Why*” is not the question anymore. We are persuading no one. The real questions many are asking is: “*how*”.

How to channel investment into SDG sectors ... *how to* enhance the risk-return profiles of new and sometimes vulnerable investments ... *how to* generate sustained impact on the ground.

To look for answers, I convened 2 events during the 72nd UNGA.

Luncheon with the business sector (*in February 2018*) and a high-level event on Financing for SDGs (*in June 2018*).

Representatives of businesses, think tanks, investment banks and non-traditional donors took central stage, to take the stock of various initiatives and best practices in removing barriers of investing in development.

And we heard some very bright ideas:

- 1) On *providing leadership* – setting guiding principles and ensuring policy coherence
- 2) On *mobilizing investment* - raising finance and reorienting financial markets towards investment in SDGs

- 3) On *channeling investment* - promoting and facilitating investment into SDG sectors
- 4) On *maximizing investment impact* – increasing the benefits and minimizing the risks of investment in SDG sectors

Since we didn't want these recommendations to remain at the UN halls, we created a toolbox – online repository of good practices from the private sector, governments, and international organizations, presenting the steps needed to increase private investment in SDGs.

The website is hosted by UNCTAD (UN Conference on Trade and Development). It already contains more than 40 examples to learn from and will be constantly updated.

And we need these examples – both ways. Because whilst the UN and governments will continue to play a key role in implementing the SDGs, they cannot do this alone.

We need all parts of community working together. Private sector. Civil society, philanthropists ... in fact – every one of us. *We need* women. *We need* the youth. *We need* functioning, inclusive networks to join forces. To cooperate, share lessons, learn from each other and set examples for one another.

And that's the third ingredient.

III. Examples

1) The UN truly has a great responsibility to lead by example.

This September, during the UN General debate, you, Aurelia, assured to continue looking at the UN for setting examples that guide our own path.

The UN introduced the 2030 Agenda, now it needs to be at the helm of efforts to bring it to life. We all know UN is not perfect and faces many challenges.

But the efforts to reform, bring more clarity, coherence and coordination into UN development work are sincere and are bringing results.

2) The governments have a responsibility to set examples.

Agenda 2030 gives national governments this master plan – but they are called to come up with strategies that fit their own circumstances.

So it was very encouraging to hear from you, Aurelia, about the importance of SDGs and their impact regarding Liechtenstein.

By incorporating the Agenda 2030 into daily work of your ministries and government offices, by promoting events like this one and bringing stakeholders together, you are providing an excellent example. For the UN, for other Member States and for the private sector.

And from this place I want to recognize the example of Liechtenstein. Because during my tenure as the President of the GA, Liechtenstein was a great force and a vivid example of *how* multilateralism can work and *why* the UN General Assembly is so unique.

Because it doesn't matter how big the country is. Or whether you count your population in millions or thousands. Everybody has equal voice and equal vote. And I can attest – the voice of Lichtenstein was always persistent, loud and clear.

Particularly the voice promoting the rule of law and international justice. Let's not forget, it is also access to justice and effective, accountable and inclusive institutions that Agenda 2030 sets to achieve in its Goal 16.

3) Private sector examples need to be replicated.

The positive examples of private sector chipping in are numerous. Examples where private sector's contribution to SDG financing, not in substitution but rather in complementarity to public financing, made a real difference.

You can read about many of them in the Toolbox.

These examples need to be shared, spread and inspire further action. Because it's still not enough. We need to galvanize action on private finance for the SDGs. The world needs more!

Ladies and gentlemen,

To conclude ... the message I want to leave you with is the message of urgency.

If we continue business as usual, by 2030, the lists of our failures will be much longer than the lists of our successes.

It is clear we are committed. But commitment is not enough. We need to see results on the ground.

We need to see wells filled with drinking water.

We need to see hospitals filled with affordable technology.

We need to see schools filled with children.

So that in 2030, ladies and gentlemen, we can reach the deadline filled with hope.

Thank you.