

**Statement by Mr. Dominik Porvažník,  
Youth Delegate of Slovakia to the United Nations  
in the general debate of the UN GA Third Committee  
on item 28. Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation  
and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family  
3 October 2018, New York**

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Mr Chair,  
Fellow delegates,

Let me first congratulate the UN for the launch of new UN YOUTH 2030 strategy, which can really empower youth across the globe if it is going to be implemented.

I would like to speak about one issue, which I realized during last week while following the events and speeches of leaders from around the world, which took place here, in the UNHQ. I can definitely say, that the voice of youth is heard more and more and the fact that I can now speak here, is also a proof of it. However, I also noticed another issue. During the event launching new UN YOUTH Strategy, one of the honourable guest advised people: “don’t trust anyone over 30, to make the most important decisions that are going to affect your future”.

Mr. Chair,

I have to say that without intergenerational trust, we will not move forward.

Senior leaders do need advice from young leaders and to believe them, but this is true the other way around as well. Young leaders are full of energy, but we also need guidance of senior leaders, and we need moral role models we will be able to follow and believe in.

When I was graduating from my high school, one of the professors told me: “Dominik, I am happy that you are full of ideals but at the same time, I am afraid that those ideals during your life-time will be broken by the others”.

I came to this building last week, full of ideals. I was walking in corridors of the United Nations and looking where could I buy the SDG pins for my friends in Slovakia, who also became enthusiastic about SDGs. I found them, but I was disappointed. I was disappointed because besides the 6 pins, I also bought 6 small disposable plastic bags the pins were packed in. I was disappointed because when I went to the cafeteria to have lunch, meal and fruits were packed in disposable plastic boxes or foil, and I had to use disposable plastic cutlery. In the time when the UN is the most prominent advocate of the SDGs in the world. In the time when it is proved that disposable plastic is causing so much harm to the environment we live in. I started to question whether the UN, takes SDGs seriously.

In the New Testament of the Bible, we can find the following quote: “Anyone who is trustworthy in little things is trustworthy in great”.

Mr. Chair,

I would like to ask all the people here and around the world: Do we take it seriously?

I believe, we have to be idealists. I believe many of us here are idealists. Isn't the goal of achieving equal opportunities for every human being idealism? Isn't the goal of providing everyone with opportunity to live a full-fledged life where they can strive for their dreams idealism? Isn't the existence of the United Nations, bringing together leaders from all around the world idealism?

We know that you, the senior leaders, need us the youth, but I also know that we, enthusiastic youth full of ideals, needs you, experienced senior leaders, to make implementation of all the SDGs possible.

We need mutual trust and an intergenerational dialogue to make this world a better place for everyone. We need mutual trust, to combat the extremism, to combat the apathy towards active citizenship, to combat all the inequalities and challenges we have to face together. Only with mutual trust and with intergenerational cooperation, we can build the world all of us dream of, the world where no one will be left behind.

I would like to conclude my statement with one request for you all. During these days, there are thousands of people walking in the corridors of the United Nations. We also belong among these people. Walking from one event and meeting to another, grabbing the lunch or coffee and continue running from one meeting and event to another. Please, do stop for a while. Raise your head, look around how beautiful are the pieces of art in this building. Think about their deeper meaning. But ideally dedicate five minutes of your daily routine to visit the room, which is in spite of those thousands of people in this building, usually empty.

Maybe even you never heard of it. It's the Meditation Room also known as a Room of Quiet. Room, dedicated to silence where people could withdraw into themselves regardless of their faith, creed or religion.

Room, dedicated also to those, who died in the missions of the United Nations.

Dedicated to all those, who lived according to their ideals, ideals of the UN and they took them seriously.

And when you will enter this room, ask yourself a question: Do I take it seriously?

Thank you, Mr. Chair