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UN SUMMIT HIGHLIGHTS: FRIDAY, 25 SEPTEMBER 2015

The UN Sustainable Development Summit opened on Friday, 25 September, at UN Headquarters in New York with an opening plenary, during which delegates adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by acclamation. Lars Lokke Rasmussen, Prime Minister of Denmark, and Yoweri Museveni, President of Uganda, who are co-chairing the three-day summit, urged world leaders to take action on implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Pope Francis visited UN Headquarters in the morning and addressed the UN General Assembly before the high-level plenary convened. Two interactive dialogues took place in the afternoon, on: ending poverty and hunger; and tackling inequalities, empowering women and girls and leaving no one behind. Country leaders also delivered statements to plenary, continuing late into the evening.

OPENING EVENT AND ADOPTION

As UN Member States took their seats for the opening plenary of the UN Sustainable Development Summit, they viewed a film, titled "Earth from Space," on the theme of people and planet, and listened to performances by singers Shakira and Angelique Kidjo. Malala Yousafzai, surrounded by 193 youth representatives holding blue lanterns, stressed to leaders that education is not a privilege but a right, and called on them to promise children peace, prosperity, education and safety.

Prime Minister Rasmussen noted Denmark's support for the 0.7% of gross national product for official development assistance (ODA) and for global partnerships that catalyze investments in developing and middle-income countries (MICs).

President Museveni said the SDGs prioritize key drivers of economic growth, such as energy, transport and information and communication technology (ICT), industrialization and market access. He called to ensure affordable long-term financing for critical infrastructure projects, and to operationalize the proposed new forum on bridging infrastructure gaps. He called for urgent reform of the UN Security Council and other multilateral institutions. He said the success of the agenda hinges on its ability to address inequality and improve the lives of the most vulnerable.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said the 17 SDGs offer a blueprint for success, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA) provides a solid financing framework, and institutions need to become fit for purpose. He emphasized the need to adopt an agreement on climate change that is solid and universal.

Salil Shetty, Secretary General, Amnesty International, said there are four tests for the SDGs: ownership, accountability, non-discrimination, and coherence and consistency. He noted that

inequality, injustice and environmental destruction are a toxic combination.

Prime Minister Rasmussen then called on delegates to take a decision of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) on document A/70/L.1, "Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development." He noted that the UNGA's Fifth Committee will examine the revised estimated Programme Budget Implications (PBI) related to the resolution. He gavelled the adoption at 11:46 am EST. Participants rose in a standing ovation, cheering and waving flags as a short "Global Goals" film was played.

PLENARY

Throughout the day, heads of state and government and other dignitaries addressed the plenary. They highlighted the importance of: eliminating extreme hunger and under-nutrition; and an effective Global Partnership. Several speakers emphasized the role of capital markets in mobilizing finance; the need to provide increased concessional support to the poorest and most conflict-affected states; and the importance of special groups of countries, including Least Developed Countries (LDCs), small island developing States (SIDS), MICs and landlocked developing countries (LLDCs). Speakers shared national experiences in implementing the MDGs, the lessons generated in their implementation, and the opportunities and challenges offered by the SDGs. They highlighted: the rule of law and governance as overarching goals; the importance of means of implementation including the need to broaden South-South cooperation; and the importance of strengthening national ownership by adapting SDGs to national and regional contexts.

Kolinda Grabar-Kitarovic, President, Croatia, said the AAAA sets out how to generate the financing for sustainable development. She added that, when the Paris Climate Change Conference concludes, we will have set the framework for the SDGs.

Sauli Niinistö, President, Finland, said we must match the ambitious agenda with ambitious resources. Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov, President, Turkmenistan, proposed establishing a new global coordination mechanism for implementing the SDGs, and called for reinvigorating the regional commissions.

Juan Manuel Santos Calderón, President, Colombia, recalled that it proposed the SDGs a few years ago, hailed the Goals as laying necessary foundations for peace, which will in turn support all other areas of development in a "virtuous circle," and noted the need for credible indicators for the SDGs.

Abdel Fattah Al Sisi, President, Egypt, stressed developing countries' right to adopt economic and social programs in line with regional needs.

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Ralph Gonsalves, Prime Minister, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, highlighted that his country has special vulnerability to the effects of global warming.

José Maria Pereira Neves, Prime Minister, Cabo Verde, highlighted his country's ambition to build a green and blue, fair and inclusive economy.

Perry Gladstone Christie, Prime Minister, Bahamas, said global partnership must address countries' high indebtedness and vulnerability to exogenous shocks. He called to capitalize the Green Climate Fund.

Angela Merkel, Chancellor, Germany, noted that the SDGs apply to everyone and said Germany will report to the HLPF on national implementation in 2016. She called for a shared vision on decarbonization at the global level.

Narendra Modi, Prime Minister, India, said eliminating poverty is our highest obligation. He said the "bedrock of our enterprise" is the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDR), stressed the need for climate justice, and expressed hope that the Technology Facilitation Mechanism (TFM) will turn technology into a public good.

Edna Kenny, Prime Minister, Ireland, emphasized the need for an agreement galvanizing action; faster progress on gender equality, and good governance.

Mark Wilson, Chief Executive Officer, Aviva, called on UNGA to provide a roadmap for sustainable capital markets.

Jim Yong Kim, President, World Bank Group, emphasized the importance of setting goals, forming strategies, and building on lessons from the MDGs.

Christine Lagarde, Managing Director, International Monetary Fund, highlighted: a 50% increase in concessional resources available to the poorest countries; and intensification of support for fragile and conflict affected states.

Raimonds Vējonis, President, Latvia, said rule of law is the "backbone" principle for economic and social transformation.

Salvador Sánchez Cerén, President, El Salvador, called for broadening South-South cooperation and an integral and plural vision for financing SDGs.

Faure Essozimna Gnassingbé, President, Togo, emphasized adapting the SDGs to national and regional contexts.

Michelle Bachelet Jeria, President, Chile, stressed social cohesion and the opportunity afforded by the SDGs to achieve economic integration. Arthur Peter Mutharika, President, Malawi, stressed the need to implement gender-related goals.

David Arthur Granger, President, Guyana, called for: unity of effort to implement SDGs including reforming the UN system; mobilizing all sources of finance; and operationalizing the TFM.

Uhuru Kenyatta, President, Kenya, called for: increased ODA levels, better targeting resources to address the needs of the poorest, and trade reforms to support implementation of SDGs.

Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, President, Liberia, called for a renewed and revitalized partnership among nations, with specific attention to fair trade, taxation and technology, while combatting illicit trade and terrorism.

Anoté Tong, President, Kiribati, called for an ambitious, meaningful, legally binding agreement at the Paris Climate Change Conference, with a special mechanism to fast track urgent action for those on the frontlines of climate change.

Juan Carlos Varela Rodríguez, President, Panama, committed to restoring 50% of Panama's deforested areas over the next 20 years. He said the widening of the Panama Canal will be complete in 2016, providing more resources to achieve the SDGs.

Muhammadu Buhari, President, Nigeria, said his country is committed to transparent financial and fiscal management and putting in place mechanisms to prevent oil theft.

Tommy Esang Remengesau, President, Palau, said his country aims for 20% of Palau's energy use to be renewable by 2020. He said the country is striving to be carbon-neutral by 2050 and

is establishing the Palau National Marine Sanctuary, which will close an area the size of France to commercial fishing.

Evo Morales Ayma, President, Bolivia, reported that his country has reduced extreme poverty from more than 40% to 17% and has attained most of the MDGs, which would not have been possible if resources remained in private hands.

Truong Tan Sang, President, Viet Nam, said developed countries should take the lead to ensure capacity building, technology transfer, trade facilitation and access to financial resources in developing countries.

János Áder, President, Hungary, called for reaching agreement at the Paris Climate Change Conference, remarking that within a few days, there will be just 40 days left.

Elbegdorj Tsakhia, President, Mongolia, highlighted the importance of: taking responsibility to ensure the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda; good governance; rule of law; and reliable monitoring and accountability institutions.

Don Felipe VI, King of Spain, remarked that his country established, with the UN Development Programme (UNDP), the first SDG fund, which is financing projects in over 17 countries. He expressed his country's commitment to provide 0.7% of GDP by 2030 to developing countries, with an emphasis on the LDCs.

Simonetta Sommaruga, President, Switzerland, said priorities for Switzerland include goals on: gender equality; water, going beyond access to drinking water and sanitation; peace and inclusive societies; and healthcare that addresses non-communicable diseases and sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Juan Orlando Hernández Alvarado, President, Honduras, noted the progress achieved in his country on drug trafficking. He highlighted the importance of creating jobs for women and expressed concern about the impacts of climate change on Honduras.

Robert Mugabe, President, Zimbabwe, called for the immediate removal of sanctions on his country, and for adequate financial resources for the implementation of agenda.

INTERACTIVE DIALOGUES

Ending Poverty and Hunger: Miro Cerar, Prime Minister of Slovenia, and Ralph Gonsalves, Prime Minister of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, co-chaired the dialogue. Cerar stressed that 836 million people in the world are very poor, and 800 million are chronically malnourished.

Hage Geingob, President, Namibia, said his country is declaring a war against poverty and has taken approaches accordingly, including organizing town hall meetings.

Catherine Samba-Panza, Head of State of Transition, Central African Republic, called for equal development and for offering young people innovation and opportunity.

Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca, Malta, remarked that poverty is not a matter of individuals but is rooted in political and economic justice, and that the current socio-economic scenario has created greater disparities, and increased poverty and hunger.

Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, President, Mali, said 15% of the national budget will be allocated to ending hunger in the country. He noted that in the budget adopted five days ago, Mali allocated 15.1% to agricultural development.

Edgar Chagwa Lungu, President, Zambia, noted the determination of his country to end hunger, ensure food security and end all forms of malnutrition, and its commitment to social protection programmes.

Characterizing themselves as "impatient optimists," Bill and Melinda Gates, Co-Chairs of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, called for investing in women and children and noted that these investments can benefit the economy. They added that the SDGs present an opportunity for "incredible progress."

Paul Polman, CEO, Unilever, called for reducing food waste, and having clear metrics across all SDGs and targets.

Panama highlighted war and conflict as a major cause of poverty and hunger, noting that dialogue is a key tool for forging alliances and accelerating solutions.

Erna Solberg, Prime Minister, Norway, said the remaining one billion people living in extreme poverty are often found in the more affluent societies, and that a more equal distribution of wealth is needed. She called for doubling the level of assistance to Syria.

Hailemariam Dessalegn, Prime Minister, Ethiopia, said his country now spends more than 70% of its budget on pro-poor areas such as education, health, and agriculture, highlighting the importance of smallholder agriculture as the basis for food security.

Prayuth Chan-O-Cha, Prime Minister, Thailand, said inequalities persist in his country despite the reduction in poverty, due to concentrated ownership of land and resources by a few. He said the core of sustainable development is balance and moderation.

David Arthur Granger, President, Guyana, said countries should fashion fiscal policies that provide space for governments to do what is necessary for the poor and hungry.

Michael J. Morrissey, President and CEO, International Insurance Society, said the ability to finance and manage risk is a key development in society. He highlighted the role of the insurance industry in raising living standards and offering social protection.

Winnie Byanyima, Executive Director, Oxfam International, called for: delivering on climate change talks; increasing decision-making power of “poor” countries; and opening the space for citizens to take the 2030 Agenda forward.

Viet Nam highlighted its multidimensional poverty eradication programme that tackles income, health care, education, clean water and sanitation, and access to information. He called for mainstreaming poverty eradication in public programmes.

Helen Clark, Administrator, UNDP, emphasized the need to leave no one behind, and added there seems to be strong national ownership for the SDGs.

Ahmet Davutoğlu, Prime Minister of Turkey, said his country generated more than 6 million new jobs after the global crisis, and its open-door policy on providing protection to refugees continues. He called for: quality education, strong institutions and accountability, and investment in agriculture. Roberto Azevedo, Director-General, World Trade Organization, called for reform of trade rules to make them fairer and more sustainable.

Kuwait said his country provides important humanitarian assistance, including on food security.

Sudan remarked that his country has increased spending on social welfare, and improved salaries and basic services. He called for strengthening international partnership, increasing agriculture investment and opening markets to tackle poverty.

Gambia said his country has created many programmes to eliminate hunger and has introduced initiatives for inclusive development. Pakistan called for: targeting micro-financing; supporting social safety net programmes; and fulfilling unfinished ODA commitments.

Belize highlighted his country’s use of multi-criteria assessment to support prioritized decision making, and called for the international community to address support for SIDS and long-term debt sustainability for MICs.

Action on Disability and Development (ADD) International called on Member States to engage with people with disabilities.

Åsa Skogström Feldt, President and CEO, The Hunger Project, said effective, accountable local government is needed to solve hunger and poverty, saying this is not a technical problem but a human one and calling for community-led development to be elevated on the international policy agenda.

France emphasized the importance of universal healthcare, saying recent years “have cruelly reminded us” that the world is unprepared to deal with epidemics such as ebola.

Cambodia highlighted the country’s success in reducing poverty from 53% in 2004 to 20.5% in 2014. He noted Cambodia’s vulnerability to economic shocks, saying that losing just 30 cents a day of income per capita would double the poverty rate. He also highlighted Cambodia’s national and social protection strategy, which includes food-based safety nets, and addressed the changing development needs that affect incomes and access to food.

Canada highlighted his country’s efforts to improve nutrition and maternal and child health in developing countries, as well as Canada’s work on the ReDesigning Development Finance Initiative (RDFI) on blended finance as a way to finance the SDGs.

The Philippines stressed the poor should be empowered to participate in growth and planning for development.

Brazil highlighted that her country increased access to water for isolated communities, reaching 1.2 million people.

South Africa noted that conflicts are undermining Africa’s efforts to achieve sustainable development, and highlighted the need for integration in development and for citizens’ involvement.

Patrick Gomes, Secretary-General, African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP), called for a multidimensional approach linking, for instance, food, energy and water resources for sustainable development, and added that ACP will build on South-South and triangular cooperation.

UPL Limited called for bringing technology to farmers and making small farmers bankable.

Malta said poverty is not only an economic condition but leads to a lack of access to basic services, and should be handled as a human rights issue.

The Lao People’s Democratic Republic outlined rural development and poverty eradication as top priorities of his country, and added that adequate infrastructure and the ability to mobilize enough resources are among the challenges to attain the SDGs.

Myanmar said his country has given priority to poverty alleviation, implementation of micro-finance institutions, environmental conservation and local energy, and highlighted the importance of assistance, including for flood disasters.

Jose Graziano da Silva, Director-General, Food and Agricultural Organization of the UN (FAO), observed that poverty and hunger need to be addressed together. He called for change in how we produce and consume food and for making food systems more inclusive and resilient.

Ertharin Cousin, Executive Director, World Food Programme (WFP), highlighted the importance of: safety nets; outreach programmes to accompany interventions; addressing land rights, education, access to credit, infrastructure, and access to fair market opportunities in development plans; and including multinational, national and local entities in public-private partnerships.

The League of Arab States (LAS) said the LAS is keen to cooperate with the international community, and noted that some support is needed.

Tackling inequalities, empowering women and girls and leaving no one behind: This dialogue was co-chaired by Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović, President, Croatia, and Uhuru Kenyatta, President, Kenya. Grabar-Kitarović opened the dialogue and emphasized that tackling gender inequality must be at the “heart of our efforts,” and stressed the need for mechanisms for equitable redistribution and good governance. Kenyatta noted that sustainability levels are usually lower in states with high levels of inequality. He stressed that “youth must be and will be engine for change.”

Edi Rama, Prime Minister, Albania, noted his country's 50% quota for women's participation in municipal councils, and said the greatest challenge for Albania is access to justice. Luis Guillermo Solís Rivera, President, Costa Rica, stressed economic independence for women, and highlighted plans to incorporate women and girls with disabilities into the workforce. Juan Alfonso Fuentes Soria, Vice President, Guatemala, said his country has achieved education parity at all levels, and has made progress in women's prominence on electoral rolls, but the conditions that allow progress are "far from reached."

David Gunnlaugsson, Prime Minister, Iceland, stressed the need to address the gender pay gap and urged his male colleagues to sign up for the "He for She" campaign. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director, UN Women, said "we should have more women presidents in this room in 2030." She also stressed the need for reproductive and sexual rights to be respected.

Julia Gillard, Chair of Board of Directors, Global Partnership for Education, described the benefits of educating girls, including that educated mothers invest more in their children's education, economic growth is faster when children learn, and health benefits.

Pakalitha Mosisili, Prime Minister, Lesotho, stressed the need for public education, saying it is the only way to change entrenched discrimination, such as the constitutional rule that only a first-born male child can succeed to the throne.

Neven Mimica, European Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, said the EU has adopted a new framework putting women and girls at the heart of its development cooperation.

As Sy, Secretary-General, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), stressed that attention to the needs of women and girls should be a priority from the start when responding to disasters.

The Netherlands stressed the need to ensure sexual and reproductive rights for all women and girls. She announced that the Netherlands will launch programmes to: address inequalities for women and young people; fund leadership opportunities for women; and build capacity for CSOs to lobby and advocate for all women and girls.

Reeta Roy, President and CEO, MasterCard Foundation, called attention to the philanthropy partnership platform at www.sdgfunders.org and invited other sectors to join. Bahrain outlined her country's constitutional provisions for all citizens to participate in society.

Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, called for addressing horizontal inequalities as well as vertical ones, such as gross wage differences between CEOs and workers. Akihiko Tanaka, President, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), stressed linkages among the SDGs, human security and eradicating gender inequalities. He said JICA is beginning a training program for seven Asian countries on disaster risk reduction.

Estonia highlighted the role of ICTs in increasing education opportunities. Jamaica stressed the importance of ensuring that the girl child participates in decision making.

Vladimir Cuk, Executive Director, International Disability Alliance, called for connecting the 2030 Agenda with the UN Convention on Rights for Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), and expressed his hope that the new framework changes the narrative, allowing persons with disabilities to be recognized as active, contributing members of society.

Maldives outlined its progression from ensuring everyone can read and write, to opening a national university and issuing higher education loans. Colombia said her country has allocated resources to gender equality.

Irina Bokova, Director General, UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), said that, unless we

accelerate the expansion of education, it will take 70 years to achieve the full enrollment of poor girls in primary education.

Qatar said his country's 2030 national vision includes enhancing women's potential and their social and economic engagement, as a major pillar.

William Lacy Swing, Director General, International Organization for Migration (IOM), called for a more balanced narrative about migration, which he said can be a means to overcoming inequality. He added that current immigration policies give "a free subsidy to human smugglers."

Camilla Croso, President, Global Campaign for Education, said Goal 4 has the potential to be a promoter of all other rights, and expressed alarm at the commodification of education that places profit before the right to education.

Israel stressed equal development opportunities for all and called for uniting in a common agenda for the Middle East region.

Alicia Barcena, Executive Secretary, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), highlighted the economic impact of teen pregnancy, the need for an equal burden for men and women in the care economy, and the need for more female leaders.

Arancha Gonzalez, Executive Director, International Trade Centre (ITC), said ITC has launched a five-year call to action to bring one million women entrepreneurs from developing countries to markets.

UNAIDS noted that, 15 years ago, the face of the AIDS epidemic was suffering, death and discrimination, and highlighted that the AIDS movement has been a story of inclusion.

Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, President, Tanzania, supported equal opportunities for women to possess property, and eliminating discriminatory laws on land use and ownership.

UNICEF said that, before we can invest in children in need, we must know "who they are, where they are, and why they are in these circumstances," calling for good-quality, disaggregated data.

The IKEA Group said the company avoids gender discrimination in toys, is working to close the gender gap in senior managers, has equalized pay for part-time and full-time workers, and employs an equality index for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) rights.

Shirin Chaudhury, Chairperson, Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, stressed the need to consider who is not being heard or who is not at the table when making decisions.

IN THE CORRIDORS

On a full day of speeches, VIPs, and mushrooming security barriers, the most enthusiastic crowd was perhaps the UN Secretariat itself during Pope Francis' remarks to UN staff early Friday morning. "I actually won a lottery to attend," said one Secretariat staff member standing in line at 7:30 am outside UNHQ with her ticket – one of 800 awarded in a random selection for this popular event.

Many were touched by the Pontiff's comments as he spoke highly of the UN's role and recognized the sacrifice of staff killed on missions of peace and reconciliation. "The work you do here is not the kind that makes the news," he said. "You worry about the future of the planet, and what kind of world we will leave for future generations." He encouraged staff to embody in their service "the UN ideal of a united human family living in harmony."

As he was driven down the hallway to the opening of the UN General Assembly in his Pope mobile, a children's choir lifted their voices in song and reached out to "Papa": the applause was long and loud.