

Dr Nabarro's address to Diplomats and United Nations (UN) System Principals at the UN Office in Geneva

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I have the honour to speak to you about the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Climate Change, and the work I have been undertaking in support of the Secretary-General as his Special Adviser: feeling the pulse of SDG implementation; understanding the issues faced in countries and regionally; building functional links between UN hubs in different continents; and, supporting the Secretary-General and the Deputy Secretary-General in this regard.

These remarks are structured under six points:

- 1) **Summary of the agenda-setting process that occurred in 2015;**
- 2) **Means for implementation of the 2030 Agenda;**
- 3) **Support for implementation beyond the UN system;**
- 4) **Adaptation of the UN system to the challenges of the Agendas;**
- 5) **Joint work with civil society, the business community and academia;**
- 6) **Challenges as we all move forward.**

1. 2015: the year of transformative international agreements

The Secretary-General often refers to four key moments in 2015: 1) Sendai, Japan (March, 2015) and the new Framework for Action on Disaster Risk Reduction; 2) Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (July, 2015) and the Agenda for Action on Financing for Development; 3) New York, USA (September, 2015) and the Agreement on the 2030 Agenda and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals; and, Paris, France (December, 2015) and the most ambitious climate treaty to date – COP 21.

The SG says that 2015 was the '*year of multilateralism like never before*' and there is no doubt that when history is written, it will be clear that this was the year when governments committed to a sustainable path for the planet and its people, with far-reaching implications. The outcome was negotiated by Member States, through skillful facilitation by Permanent Representatives Macharia Kamau of Kenya and David Donahue of Ireland.

Member States were supported by a massive engagement of civil society and other actors. The UN Millennium Campaign (now the SDG Action Campaign), mobilized through the MyWorld survey more than **9 million people** in identifying the development priorities that matter most to them. They came together and gave their views on what the new Agenda should look like.

The result was the 2030 Agenda and its 17 goals, which cuts right across the three pillars of the United Nations: **i) Peace and Security; ii) Human Rights and Justice; and, iii) Sustainable Development**. The Secretary-General often says *the Agenda "cuts right across the UN charter"*. This is ground-breaking as it means we can no longer function in silos, separating peace and security, human rights and justice, or development. We need to build bridges between all UN entities because that is what the 17 goals of the new Agenda are all about. The Agenda also reflects the 'Rio' Consensus, started in 1992, with an integration of Economic, Environmental and Social Development agendas and it does this in a very tight

and integrated way. No longer is it reasonable to argue that the global agreements allow trade-offs between economic and environmental or economic and social aspects - they are all there together.

Five words summarize the 2030 Agenda: **People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace and Partnership**. The new Agenda links together human development and the planet. It focuses on equity, redistribution and access to benefits that matter among all human beings. It stresses that one cannot have development without there being peaceful means to resolve conflict and so, peace is at the center. The document also focuses on partnership as a way of working.

Looking at the new Agenda, there are some really important features that should always be with us. The first is that **climate is strongly inside this Agenda**. There some debate among Member States on whether climate should be there or not? I think that everybody now recognizes that unless climate is strongly inside this development Agenda, and is made central to all aspects of development, it will not work. Second, this also has to be made a feminist Agenda. All concerned must address each goal through the eyes and hearts of women. Third, are the **protracted crises** currently affecting many countries. Experiences, particularly in the last few years, demonstrate that **protracted crises have to be considered as a development challenge and not just as a humanitarian challenge**. Fourth, **Youth and Young People** must be at the center as they are the ones who will help taking this Agenda forward.

2. Implementation of the 2030 Agenda

Implementation is being done by nations and their people. It is not being done by the United Nations, development agencies, or international NGOs. We have to keep reminding ourselves that the primary actors are National Governments, National Parliamentarians, National Organizations and their people. Of course, with a lot of help from other entities that I have mentioned.

As they go ahead with integrating this Agenda, their first step is to infiltrate the ideas and actions in the Sustainable Development Goals into their own National Development Plans. This effort is already underway in more than 60 Nations. There is a lot of emphasis on ensuring resonance at local level. There is an explicit effort to involve civil society, faith groups, local businesses, and others. National reviews of implementation, what are called National Political Forums, are being encouraged. There will be regional and indeed a global political forum for review. At the High-Level Political Forum meeting this July, at least 21 countries will present their progress with implementation- a real bottom up process.

Within this, the 169 targets enable different parts of government to anchor their activities within the context of this matrix. It is however not simple. I have been to several countries where governments have told me how they are mapping the targets across the work of the different departments, ensuring they are able to integrate Sustainable Development Goals in national plans.

Within the 2030 Agenda, there are principles for implementation we must never forget:

This is a universal Agenda. It applies to every nation. This is not just about a certain group of people, but about all people of the world. But what does that mean? It means that every country is a developing country and the language of developing and developed does not wash anymore. We are all developing.

This is an indivisible Agenda. As I sit listen to the Member States Representatives talking in New York, I hear them say again and again that nobody should take out any individual goals, and say “that's mine and that's what I'm going to do and that's it”. These goals are all linked together and they reflect the totality of human experience and the indivisibility really matters. There were times when people tried to cut it down and split it, during the negotiations and some Member States said if that happened, they would just walk away. Indivisibility really matters. The new way of thinking is horizontal.

Leave No one Behind. This means that no community should be considered outside the totality of this Agenda. Whatever your ethnicity, your livelihood, your lifestyle or your location – we are all inside.

Integrated Action. The only way to respond to this agenda is through integrated action, which moves right across the sectors and right across the disciplines. That is perhaps the hardest of all because over the years, in our professional work, in our governments, we have operated in separate Ministries, in separate departments, separate disciplines, and separate professions.

3. Supporting implementation, from outside and beyond the UN system

Most people understand the new Agenda will only work if people everywhere know that it exists, understand its significance and internalize it in their daily lives. We have got a huge challenge: 17 different concept areas. Some are new, not easy to communicate, and not easy to memorize. The big focus now, within the United Nations and elsewhere, is simply to **disseminate the message that the 17 goals exist**; that these 17 goals represent a new kind of social contract between leaders and their people; that these 17 goals are the heart of a plan for the future of the people and the planet.

Under the vision and leadership of the Secretary-General, we want **at least two billion people** in the world know about the goals and what they represent by the end of 2017. That is slightly more than one quarter of the world's population. It is very ambitious, but, unless we embrace that level of ambition, the prospect for the agenda being understood is very limited. We also want to engage committed activists who can help us explain the goals and why they matter to people's lives. We need to activate 1000 champions each day by working through government, faith-based organizations, universities and schools. If that can be done, by the end of 2017 there should be **700,000 activated people** who can explain. That kind of cascading out is the only way we believe to get this information out and act on it.

We also need a core group of organizations with networks that can take forward these goals and **share with each other the new ways of thinking, working, and reporting**. Thinking and working horizontally and holistically. It is that third function I now want to focus on as I move on to my fourth point.

4. The UN system and how it is adapting to the challenge of the new Agendas

Within the UN, we have the Secretariat with its different offices and departments and we have the wider UN system a total of around 65 entities who come together under the Secretary-General's Chief Executive's Board. We are a very large, federated and widespread series of organizations with many different functions. The 2030 Agenda is an opportunity that requires us to think about our work in new ways. Separate working is not on anymore; fragmentation undermines our utility; duplication inefficient. What is required is **synergy and coherence** in response to the requests of the Member States.

I read the results of the panel chaired by Juan Somavia and Klaus Topfer, established by ECOSOC. New language is being used to describe the functions of the UN system in relation to this synergy: *Convenor, Facilitator, Catalyst, Broker, Activator, Accountor*. These words of providing support to processes that are taken forward by other people are increasingly being used to describe the way in which the UN system works, moving away from the emphasis of implementing small, time-bound and focused projects. There are exceptions - in humanitarian emergencies and in fragile conditions when the UN system is asked to implement specific projects. Magdy Martínez-Solimán of UNDP briefed you on a new approach emerging, called "Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support (MAPS)". It shows the optimal way the UN system will be helping Member States implement this new Agenda is by coming in **alongside and supporting**. This does not mean there is no role for specific projects in specific places. There are countries that continue to

depend on direct assistance. There is a vital role for development assistance to support the implementation of this new Agenda; but the ways assistance will be used will change over time, given that this new Agenda focuses on **interdependence, horizontal ways of thinking and working, and that it cuts across the three pillars of the UN system.**

There is increasing recognition, again from the work of this expert group established by ECOSOC, that there will be a **need for far greater differentiation of the UN system's engagement with countries, depending on the needs of the individual country.** Classification of countries into big groups like 'middle income country' or 'less developing country' may be useful for certain kinds of analyses, but in practice may not be helpful for how the system actually works with the country. We need to be more precise in identifying the type of support countries should receive based on the discourse between National Authorities and the UN system, through UN Country teams. And through other arrangements, like the new partnerships established between the regional commissions.

This is work underway and I am particularly involved in it because one of my tasks has been, on behalf of the Secretary-General, to help prepare a report on the way the Secretariat will implement mandates associated with the 2030 Development Agenda and Addis Ababa Agenda for Action within the coming two years and then on into the biennial that follows. This was a **report requested by General Assembly Resolution A/70/794** that was officially issued in all languages yesterday 14th April. I encourage you to look at this because it shows the Secretariat is starting to re-examine ways of **achieving synergy and reducing fragmentation** in its interactions with countries and also with regional bodies.

5. The roles of civil society, businesses and academia in supporting this Agenda.

Member States are in charge. The UN family is there to support. But there are many other active groups. **Civil Society** was active in the formulation of the 2030 Agenda and now seeks ways to support implementation. In particular, civil society is seeking to help with advocacy; seeking to support with action and seeking to assist with citizen accounting so that people themselves are able to partner with their governments in trying to ensure that services are delivered. Advocacy, action and accounting are key to ensuring political momentum for implementing the SDGs is sustained. Creating and maintaining space for civil society within the 2030 Agenda will require continued negotiation at all levels.

Business too perceives that it has a part, not just through social responsibility, but in all aspects of business activity. These must be shown not only to fit within National rules and regulations for the functioning of business, but also to fit into the principles and elements of the Sustainable Development Goals. This is beginning to happen; not as fast as we would like, but it is happening. You cannot issue an Agenda like this just with money and activities done by governments. You cannot pursue it with just development assistance. It must be part of the totality of the activity of the all business enterprises and that is increasingly being seen as a key to the future.

We are particularly interested in continuing to encourage **investors**, whether they are long or short-term investors, to find ways in which their capital, private capital - trillions of dollars - can be used in ways that contribute to the SDGs and also in seeking ways to get development assistance to blend with private capital in order to prioritize social goods.

Academia is absolutely vital. They are providing research, innovation and technologies that will help all of us to advance this Agenda. The more we can encourage academics to see their social responsibility, as linked to the totality of the SDGs, the better it will be for the world and the more likely it will be for poorer countries to be able to access technologies and be able to leapfrog forward.

6. Challenges as we move forward

This is an enormous Agenda that leaders agreed to in September 2015, after two-and-a-half years of negotiation. But it should be enormous, because it is the first time we have a plan for the future of people in the planet. As I talk with people who are working on this in the UN system, in business, in civil society and most of all the government, they say to me “this is a big task and sometimes we find it overwhelming to think about it and to consider how to do it”. And I say “yes, of course it's overwhelming and it should be”. It is overwhelming because it is challenging so many of our assumptions about how we live, how we work, how we relate to each other; but within that, what I am seeing so far, particularly in countries at local level and National level, what I am seeing is people saying “we are part of this, we are going to give it to go, it is what matters to us and we are not going to give up!”.

First: **Thinking and Working Horizontally**. By that I mean **working across and between sectors**. Working at the interface between health and environment, economics, employment; working at the interface between peace and security, migration and development; working at the interface between climate and energy; that way of working is not one that many of us are comfortable with. Look at how we organize our lives and our governments. We are always in separate pieces: you have a specialist on this, a specialist on that and frequently there are disputes between them. So thinking and working horizontally will not be easy but we should all be recognizing that that is what we need to do.

Second: **Being Universal**. Trying to make sure that what matters in Sweden and what matters in Swaziland and what matters in Suriname are all inside the same conceptual space; that we don't separate the interests of one group of countries from those of another as has been the practice in the past. I sense that that is proving to be quite challenging for many but the more I travel, the more I listen, then the more I realize that it is happening.

Third: **Leaving No One Behind**. That is the hard one because when we were doing MDGs, we could think in terms of averages. Now we have to think about the people who are below the average, below the last quantile - the bottom 2 percent; the people who really struggle; the people who are not accessible to humanitarian aid; the people who are left behind when dealing with a disease like Ebola. It is the people who are not heard and seen, who we still now have to find. That is a big challenge.

Finally: **Stewardship - how all is this actually governed**. It is difficult! I was at the World Food Program Executive Board meeting in February, and on the one hand they were saying “we've got to be more efficient and more efficient and more focused”. On the other hand they was saying “with the SDGs, we need to be very horizontal”. You could feel that the governors, the people who are sitting at the board, were finding their task to be challenging.

The people who are governing the different parts of the UN system are also looking for ways to be consistent across the system. Effective Stewardship of the complex agenda will be a continued challenge, but I am absolutely certain that our world will rise to that challenge. Thank you.