

Regional Forum on Sustainable Development

Address by Mr. Gramoz Ruçi

Honorable Ambassador Gerber,

Honorable guests, representatives convened in this Forum,

It is my pleasure to participate in this Forum, in the capacity of the Speaker of the Albanian Parliament.

The Program on sustainable development or the 2030 Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals, is an important program for all, including Albania.

The lives of millions of people have improved thanks to the joint work to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, set for the period 2000-2015. The achievements in reducing poverty, disease control, extending life expectancy, access to education, infrastructure, etc., are numerous and encouraging, but they're not enough.

The 2030 Agenda is a starting point encouraging all countries in the world, developed or developing alike, including Albania, to work in achieving the 17 global Goals, to promote welfare and prosperity for all, in the 15 coming years.

The motto of this agenda **“leave no one behind”** sounds realistic in the Albanian context and in the course of efforts and reforms of the country to accomplish this motto.

With the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, the Albanian Government, in cooperation with the UN agencies in Albania, immediately started work on the implementation of the SDGs, in line with **the 2015-2020 National Strategy for Development and Integration** and **the country's EU integration agenda**.

The Sustainable Development Goals have been integrated in the 2015-2020 National Strategy for Development and Integration and in the 2016-2020 National Program of Statistics.

The government is drafting the Basic Report, which gives an analysis of the current situation in Albania in relation to each of the Goals, as well as the National Action Plan, describing the steps to be undertaken by the Albanian institutions in order to realize the goals.

The Inter-Ministerial Committee and the Inter-Institutional Working Group have been established for the achievement of the SDGs, which aim to ensure a comprehensive and long-term approach to sustainable development, including policy guidance, planning, implementation,

financing and reporting, in close dialogue with partners, such as independent institutions, development partners, private sector, civil society and academia.

I have the pleasure to inform that in **July 2018 Albania will voluntarily report to the High Level Political Forum, in New York**. The report is being drafted based on a **long process of consultations with various stakeholders**, at central and local level, **focused on setting several priorities at national level** and on general adaptation of the 2030 Agenda for Albania.

I am delighted that **Albania, during the Political Forum, will organize a side event on the contribution of our region's countries to the Sustainable Development Goals implementation**.

We praise the UN initiatives as they will help the Albanian society, in particular the Albanian policy-makers, to place our work agendas, political mandate or our joint EU integration agenda, in the global context of sustainable development.

Dear participants,

Considering the importance of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, me, in the capacity of the Speaker of the Albanian Parliament, and all my colleagues, members of Parliament – representatives of the majority and the opposition – embraced since the beginning the achievement of this agenda in the country.

Parliament of Albania paid particular attention to Objective 16, which engages member states to promote **peaceful and inclusive governance, ensuring that parliaments are representative, participatory, inclusive and accountable institutions**.

Albania and Parliament, in particular, has been totally committed in the implementation of **a deep and important reform: the judiciary reform, which aims to reform the judiciary system, to enhance transparency, accountability, independence and increase public access to justice**.

Considering that Albania has been a pilot country for Goal 16, engagements in this reform, **create grounds to quickly achieve this goal**.

Furthermore, the reforms undertaken by the Albanian Parliament and Government, such as: public administration reform, health reform, adoption of the law on the protection of national minorities in the Republic of Albania, etc., aim to bring us closer to EU integration, **and at the same time to realize the commitments stemming from the 2030 Agenda. These are two agendas that are complementary and in synch with each other**.

Parliament of Albania, in order to enhance its role in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, unanimously adopted in December 2017 the **Resolution on Sustainable Development Goals**. With this act, Albanian lawmakers are committed to promote, implement

and monitor the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals through drafting laws, budgets and the oversight and representative functions.

Parliament is fully committed to implement this Resolution.

To this end, it was established a working group, chaired by the Deputy Speaker of Parliament, with focal points to follow up the implementation of goals in every parliamentary committee and to integrate these goals to the activity of each committee.

Parliament of Albania has drafted an Action Plan for the 2018 Goals, which has started to be implemented.

The key elements of this plan include:

- Review of legal framework, to understand where it is necessary to fully comply with the commitments under the 2030 Agenda, particularly the adoption or amendment of laws to promote gender equality, social inclusion and environment protection;
- Strengthen the parliamentary committees' capacities to provide an effective oversight of the Sustainable Development Goals;
- Provide and monitor government's budget engagement in order to effectively contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Parliament aims to commit, in a close cooperation with government structures, independent authorities and civil society, in supporting the inclusive, transparent and accountable implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.

One of the challenges is to determine the priorities and the indicators for measuring their outcomes, the coordination between the activities of the Government and that of the Parliament. This is why Parliament representatives participate in the Inter-ministerial Committee meetings.

Furthermore, the mechanism, established in 2017, for the systematic monitoring of the implementation of the recommendations made by the independent institutions and those established by law, in which the Government is represented by the Deputy Prime Minister, could serve to promote the achievement of sustainable development goals.

In the context of commitment for the implementation of Goal 5 – **Gender Equality**, and Goal 4 – **Education**, 2 parliamentary groups have been established, under my auspices, as Speaker of Parliament: **Women Parliamentarians Alliance and the MPs' Group "Friends of children"**. Thanks to the support of the UN agencies such as UNICEF, UNDP and UN Women these groups enable Parliament's more vital engagement with regard to issues of gender equality and children.

Parliament has established 4 parliamentary subcommittees, focused on concrete goals:

- **Gender equality and prevention of violence against women;**
- **Human rights;**
- **Issues related to local governance**
- **Issues related to public administration**

We are aware that the achievement of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals requires the **establishment of a partnership among Parliament, freelance experts, academic and governmental institutions, civil society and business and also needs a systematic monitoring of the measures taken.**

Parliament has adopted a resolution on cooperation with civil society. Parliament is a good model of cooperation. This experience should be used also for the achievement of sustainable development goals.

Of course, we need a consolidated national and global partnership, we need the consultancy, initiatives of organizations such as the United Nations, in order to deploy the sustainable development goals in our context and to make them part of our agenda and of our national strategy on economic and social development and on integration to the European Union.

Therefore, **this regional meeting serves to share experiences and to strengthen partnership in joint, consolidated and inclusive actions for the whole region to achieve a sustainable development by 2030.**

Let me once again thank you for the attention!