



Regional Forum on Sustainable Development

Geneva, 25. april 2017

Intervention by Slovenian State Secretary at the Government Office for Development and European Cohesion Policy – Policy segment

Distinguished UNECE **Executive Secretary**,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to **thank the UNECE for organizing this Regional Forum** with an **important agenda**, that calls upon us all, to see where we stand, what has been done in the last two years and which challenges we have to tackle to move on to prosperity and well-being for all. **New global development agenda is an opportunity for all of us**: to plan better, to do better and to work together better.

This year`s Regional Forum brought us together in a special year - a year we are **celebrating the 70th anniversary of UN Economic Commission for Europe**. It seems that today, more than ever, we are **facing common challenges** – like sluggish growth, high unemployment especially among youth, rising inequalities in various forms, unsustainable consumption and production patterns. Too many people are still left behind, marginalized or face limitations in economic opportunities and other inequalities. And despite many important accomplishments, the region as a whole has still a very large ecological footprint.

Therefore, the **goal set 70 years ago – to build together a new, safer and more prosperous world for everyone is still very much alive today**. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and our common work towards its implementation represent an important step in this direction.

Slovenia considers the 2030 Agenda the most comprehensive development action plan so far. It is global and universal. It is people and planet oriented. It gives promise to leave no one behind and to build a life of dignity for each and every individual. And it includes a vision that – through collective action – we can ensure well-being for all.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me say a few words about **Slovenian approach towards planning for the future**. Already at the beginning of its term our Government recognized the need to develop more agile and adaptable policies that take into account unpredictable, faster paced and more fundamental shifts.

One of our key commitments was to **prepare a new national development strategy in accordance with the new 2030 Agenda**. A strategy, that will be forward-looking, close to the people (*for the people*) and with a clear vision where and what Slovenia as a country and a nation wants to be in the future.

Preceding our development path towards sustainable, inclusive and responsible development was a **clear political commitment**. We decided in the early days of this process, that Slovenia will

implement Sustainable Development Goals on a national level by **embedding them into our very own development plans – rather than designing a separate process in parallel.**

We have **identified 18 national development goals** together with the national strategic development orientations. Concrete goals, targets and outcome indicators are being under discussion and revision at the moment. While the **SDGs together with their targets are being connected with the national goals**, the measurement framework is tailored to the national context. Here, we are working closely with the OECD.

Our main goal and strategic direction is better quality of life for all. Therefore policies and measurements that will address prosperity, health, well-being, gender equality, social inclusion, sustained and inclusive economic growth as well as innovations, are high on our agenda. But we do not wish this to be the end of our endeavors. We would also like to see the measurements of objective dimensions of well-being be matched with the subjective well-being (this is life satisfaction).

We therefore aim to go beyond improving people's lives in absolute terms only. It is important that people themselves also recognize their **quality of life**. This is, however, impossible if there are severe inequalities in societies. It is clear that **inequality can pose a serious threat to social and political stability. And it can also endanger sustained growth.** Social and economic inequalities tear the social fabric, undermine social cohesion and prevent nations, communities and individuals from flourishing.

Despite the fact that Slovenia has a very low income inequality, we still face large inequalities in other areas. It is however important to keep in mind that **inclusive growth can only be sustainable if it allows for operating within the limits of our planet.** This urges us all to find an answer to the question how to achieve a **“good growth” – inclusive and green at the same time.**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Slovenia wants to be a responsible global citizen; while we are setting our own path towards well-being, we are acutely **aware of our shared responsibility for global peace and prosperity.** This is why our national development strategy will also address our commitment to implement the 2030 Agenda globally. In fact, **Slovenia is a pioneering country in terms of officially recognizing SDGs as an integral part of our development plans.**

At the regional and global level, Slovenia will continue to contribute to the poverty eradication and sustainable development on the basis of **updated legal and strategic documents on International Development Cooperation.** Our goal for the future is clear – to further strengthen our international development cooperation and demonstrate that the efforts of small countries can also be an important contribution to the realization of global development objectives.

Excellencies,

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is an opportunity of a lifetime. In the last two years we have learned that the adoption of the Agenda was just the beginning and that the **present phase– the implementation – is our common journey.** And we will be successful only if we work together, learn from each other and build strong partnerships among all of us – governments, citizens, private companies, civil society, parliamentarians, local authorities, academia, international and regional organizations.

It is within the power of us all to make the world a happier, better and more prosperous place. Today we are planning for the future. But let us not forget that not only we need to prepare to act. We rather need to act to prepare.

Thank you.