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UN DAY 2016

REMARKS

BY

MS. MICHELLE GYLES-McDONNOUGH

**UNITED NATIONS RESIDENT COORDINATOR, MALAYSIA
UNDP RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE
FOR MALAYSIA, SINGAPORE & BRUNEI
UNFPA REPRESENTATIVE FOR MALAYSIA**

24 OCTOBER 2016

10.00 am

KUALA LUMPUR



Excellencies and members of the Diplomatic Corps;

Our partners from the Government, the private sector and civil society;

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning.

On behalf of the UN Country Team in Malaysia, let me wish us all a Happy United Nations Day!

Today we celebrate the 71st anniversary of the United Nations and take the opportunity also to commemorate the first anniversary of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, comprising the Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Climate Agreement, the Sendai Disaster Risk Reduction Framework, and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development, was a landmark achievement for the global community. UN Member States came together in common commitment and unanimously pledged to take bold action to transform our world -- placing people, human dignity, gender equality, and respect for the rights of all at the core of their national development strategies and plans. They reaffirmed the values and principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter and other international conventions and commitments, and set new pathways toward peaceful, resilient and inclusive societies.

We have universal agreement on what we need to do; and high expectations from people around the world that we will end poverty, reduce inequalities and the impacts of climate change, and move towards sustainable cities and communities in the next 15 years - enabled by science,



technology and innovation, peace, justice, and good governance, and stronger and expanded partnerships for development.

The imperative now is urgent and sustained implementation.

For this reason, the theme we have chosen for today's UN Day celebration is **"A world where no one is left behind"**. And this year's UN Malaysia Award recognises the work of partners who are contributing in emphatic ways toward achievement of the SDGs, so that they may be a source of inspiration to the rest of us.

Countries are Moving Ahead, including Malaysia

So what have countries been doing in this first year since the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals?

First, and very important is that many countries, Malaysia a leader among them, are acting without delay, unlike with the MDGs where momentum was reached only several years in. At the end of this first year, governments, private sector and civil society are in different stages of mainstreaming and implementing the 2030 Agenda. Twenty-two countries participated in the voluntary reporting on their actions and progress at the High Level Political Forum in July. Countries like Colombia and Sierra Leone have prioritised monitoring and improving data; and have oriented their national institutions towards achievement of the Goals¹.

Malaysian Government action

Malaysia too is moving forward and can be counted amongst the more than 50 governments worldwide, who are actively moving towards having a central framework for the SDG's, by anchoring it on current and future national development plans. Even before the SDGs were

¹ http://www.huffingtonpost.com/michael-klosson/the-sustainable-developme_b_12010986.html



formally adopted, Malaysia integrated the spirit and ambitions of the goals into the 11th Malaysia Plan. The 11MP places high priority on improving the well-being of the B40 and reducing inequalities, and reflects the central principle of Agenda 2030 to leave no one behind. It aims to “Anchor Growth on People”..

Malaysia also hosted, in partnership with the UNDP, the Global Transformation Forum, only three weeks after adoption of the 2030 Agenda, to create a global platform to exchange experience and solutions for implementation of the SDGs. To really localise and build national ownership of the agenda, Government has conducted one of the most comprehensive SDG gap analyses among countries so far, to understand the remaining development challenges; and next month, informed by this detailed gap analysis, the Economic Planning Unit in the Prime Minister’s Department, which serves as the focal point for the SDGs, is set to unveil a **proposed** roadmap for the implementation of 2030 Agenda in a multi-stakeholder workshop co-organised with the UN Country Team, on the 15th and 16th of November.

This workshop is set to provide the space for civil society, business, academia and other development actors to contribute to shaping the country’s implementation strategies and plans and be part of the journey towards achievement of the goals. We hope to see you there as Government cannot do this alone. It is an agenda for all of us.

We also commend Malaysia for registering its interest this month to conduct a Voluntary National Review (VNR) and report to the next High level Political Forum (HLPF) in July 2017. This is a strong demonstration of Malaysia’s commitment to the 2030 Agenda. The HLPF is the intergovernmental forum to review and analyse progress towards achievement of the SDGs of developed and developing countries alike; facilitate the sharing of experiences, successes, challenges and lessons learned; strengthen policies and institutions of governments; and mobilize multi-stakeholder support and partnerships for the implementation of the SDGs. The



UN system in Malaysia will support Malaysia in this process as required.

Data for planning and supporting sustainable development, and measuring progress on the goals, is a big challenge for countries big and small, rich and poor. The SDGs, as we know, comprises a set of 17 goals, 269 targets and 230 indicators². States will have to strengthen statistical capacity and their data ecosystems to drive the agenda. Indicators can be grouped in three categories. For some goals and targets, countries already have the data and established methodologies for their collection. For another group of indicators, we have data but no established methodology, and for a third group, we have not been collecting the data and there is no methodology. These gaps will need to be addressed. Malaysia in this regard also has been proactive. The Department of Statistics has completed its national data assessment and knows where the data gaps are so steps can be taken to address them.

Ownership and action by all

Ladies and gentlemen,

While governments and their machinery around the world act on their commitments to the 2030 Agenda, it is important to recognise that the Global Goals belong to all of us individually and collectively. The goals are all-inclusive and relevant to every aspect of human life. They relate to our practices and behaviours as individuals and organisations, so much so, that they cannot be achieved by governments alone. It therefore requires us, as responsible citizens, responsible businesses, civil society, academia, responsible young people, including children, to do our part in transforming our world. Many schools, for example, are already fully on board; also, still many are unaware. We will need to do much more to increase awareness so all actors can take ownership of the goals.

The dividends will be enormous. Success in meeting the goals will help ensure that our planet is

² <http://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/indicators-list/>



not only able to sustain life, but also to secure our progress and wellbeing for years to come.

Civil society and business action

In this first year, we are encouraged by the actions of Malaysian civil society, academia and businesses in support of the 2030 Agenda. Civil society has come together to form the SDG CSO Alliance in Malaysia to ensure coherence and coordination of their contributions. Malaysian businesses across various sectors, are contributing in very interesting and innovative ways towards ensuring “no one is left behind” – from building smart villages; making local farmers more visible and recognised in agricultural supply chains; using ICT to protect biodiversity; establishing sustainable development educational centres and programmes – to creating awareness on poverty, inequality, climate change and other SDG related issues.

In a world that is faced by economic challenges, increased environmental degradation, political instability, and unprecedented human suffering as reflected by the record number of refugees and migrants -- the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development calls on all of us to change the way we do things, so that we can **together** transform lives, ensure peace and prosperity, leaving no one behind.

The UNCT therefore, as I noted earlier, decided to focus this year’s UN Malaysia Award on the work of individuals or organisations, particularly young people, who are making change and exponential shifts, particularly as they relate to the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda. Our winner for this year will be announced later this morning.

Appreciation and farewell

Before we move on to the next item on the agenda, please allow me to acknowledge the dedicated men and women of the UN system in Malaysia who work tirelessly to promote the values and principles of the United Nations Charter and support the national development



agenda. And also thank our national and international development partners and friends, all of you who are here today and many more, whose support and contributions enable our work for sustainable development.

I thank the Government and the people of Malaysia for hosting the UN specialised agencies, funds and programmes in Malaysia and for facilitating our work here in Malaysia and also regionally and globally.

I have been in Malaysia for nearly three and a half years now, and it has been a rich and rewarding experience for me. There have been many moments of pride at what the UN Country Team has achieved together with government and with our other development partners; as well as recognition of the unfinished business for development; and importantly, the determination to address the remaining development gaps to enhance the well-being of the population, strengthen social cohesion, and protect the environment. The new and ambitious Global Goals offer us a clear framework to keep focus and continue our efforts together. It is therefore, with great sadness that I announce my impending departure.

First to New York, this coming week, as I join the five-member transition team of the newly appointed UN Secretary-General-designate, António Guterres as Senior Adviser, to help prepare for his assumption of duties on the 1st of January 2017. I am humbled by the trust placed in me by the Secretary-General designate to support this transition. I have also been appointed as the Deputy Assistant Administrator and Deputy Regional Director Designate of UNDP for Asia and the Pacific, and will assume my duties at the regional office in Bangkok in the middle of January.

Hence, as I bid you farewell, please accept my sincere appreciation for all the support rendered to me personally and professionally during my tenure here. The Government and people of Malaysia have been most gracious hosts and strong partners. And I hope that you will extend

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the same support, friendship and more to my successor.

Thank you.