

10 October 2016

71st session of the General Assembly

**Statement by H.E. Peter Thomson,
Formal Session of the Second Committee
Agenda Item 19: Sustainable Development**

Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to address the Second Committee. I take this opportunity to congratulate Ambassador Dian Triansyah Djani for his election as Chair of Second Committee, as well as the Bureau Members.

I would also like to convey my appreciation to the Committee Secretariat. I look forward to working with all of you to ensure a successful session.

Distinguished delegates, Implementation of the historic 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, and the Paris Agreement which will enter into force on 4 November, is the moral imperative of our time.

Taken together, these agreements provide humanity with a universal masterplan that – if implemented urgently, effectively and at scale – will eliminate extreme poverty, empower women and girls, build peaceful and inclusive societies, increase prosperity, and combat climate change.

However, there are serious challenges that will need to be overcome if we are to be successful. These range from slow and uncertain economic growth; volatility in commodity prices; extreme poverty; entrenched inequality between and within nations; unemployment and underemployment; climate change and environmental degradation; as well as intractable conflicts; mass flows of refugees and migrants; systematic violations of human rights; and the denial of the rights of women and girls.

The work of the Second Committee will closely impact the international community's success in implementing the global development.

The need for urgent action is why we have made the principle objective of the 71st Session of the General Assembly to drive a universal push for meaningful progress in implementing all 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

To achieve this, the SDG Implementation Team within my Office is currently finalizing an SDG Implementation Strategy. Through this, we will be looking to push implementation through three tracks.

We will be providing sustained engagement to support successful outcomes from previously mandated SDG events and processes. This includes:

- The Habitat III Conference in Quito, where the international community will look at ways to make cities and human settlements more inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable;
- The COP22 in Marrakech, where we will build on momentum following the entry into force of the Paris Agreement, including by scaling up adaptation, mitigation and financing support to developing countries; and facilitating transitions to clean energy, and to resilient, low carbon economies; and
- The Oceans Conference on SDG 14 in New York in June, which will bring together key stakeholders to develop partnerships and innovative solutions to reverse the cycle of decline of our beloved oceans.

We will be supporting existing efforts within and outside of the UN system and member states to drive strategic partnerships and implementation of each of the SDGs, including by me, by the PGA's Special Envoy on SDG Implementation or by my Special Advisor on SDG Implementation travelling and participating actively in key events; and

We will be backing a number of signature events throughout the year that will lay the foundation for sustained action in key areas right up until the end of 2030. This includes in the areas of raising SDG Awareness, especially with youth and children; fostering and sustaining peace; empowering women and girls; and securing better financing for sustainable development.

We will be sharing more information about our SDG Implementation Plan with all delegations, over coming weeks. Given the scale of the ambition of the SDGs, and the collective effort that will be required to meet the targets and goals, I will be relying on your support in ensuring the success of this work.

Distinguished Delegates,

The Second Committee will consider a large number of resolutions this Session, covering a broad-range of issues of critical importance – from ICTs, international trade, debt, migration and development, and many other specific issues that are relevant to the achievement of the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda, as well as to the global development agenda more broadly.

While all of these matters are vital, consideration of the UN's operational activities through the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review, the QCPR, is also critical.

The QCPR resolution will shape and define how effectively, efficiently, and coherently the UN system delivers on the ground for the next four years and will have critical implications for the implementation of SDGs, as well as other relevant outcomes.

I call on all of you to take an open-minded and comprehensive approach to your deliberations. The lives of so many depend on it.

Another critical issue for the Session will be addressing means of implementation, which remains fundamental to many countries in special situation, including African countries, SIDS, LDCs, LLDCs and post-conflict countries. The specific requirements of the poor in middle-income countries, also needs to be considered.

It is clear that in addition to essential Official Development Assistance, there is also a need to broaden the sources from which financing is drawn, including domestic finance, innovative sources of financing, strategic partnerships, and private investments. Improved capacity-building and increased transfer of technology, is also vital, as is the further promotion of South-South cooperation, in exchanging lessons learned, enabling sustained economic growth, and complementing North-South and Triangular Cooperation

Distinguished delegates, As was requested by this Committee last year, significant work has been undertaken during the last session on the alignment of the General Assembly's agenda with the 2030 Agenda, including the SDGs.

This process, which was ably led by Ambassador Maria Emma Meija and supported by the Chairs of the First, Second and Third Committees, and the President of the ECOSOC, aimed to ensure that the overall work of the General Assembly – from the plenary to the main committees – as well as the work of ECOSOC, contributes effectively and efficiently to the implementation of relevant frameworks.

There is a clear need to continue this comprehensive discussion, as it is in the interest of all that we do to support SDG implementation. I will therefore take this forward in the resumed session, and I look forward to your guidance and proposals in this regard.

As part of my efforts to help improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the UN system, I have undertaken to meet regularly with the Presidents of the ECOSOC and the Security Council, to strengthen the cooperation and coordination of our work. I will also be informing Member States of each of my meetings and the scope of discussions with them, as well as with the Secretary-General.

I will also look to support the President of the ECOSOC to ensure that the next High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development session, which will review progress on the 2030 Agenda, continues to build political momentum on the implementation of the SDGs.

Finally, Mr. Chairperson, I want to lend my strong support to your efforts to improve the methods of work of this Committee, including in terms of time management, the timely submission of draft texts, and the organization of side-events and joint meetings. Addressing these issues upfront should allow for adequate time to be dedicated to the negotiation of resolutions and enable the conclusion of the work of Second Committee on time.

Distinguished Delegates,

In closing, I want to assure all of you of my deep personal commitment – as well as that of my team – to supporting your work this session.

If we can be of assistance at any stage, please let us know.

I thank you all for your hard work and dedication and I wish you a successful Session.