

*Speech of Mr. Laszlo Borbely at the Regional Seminar on the Sustainable Development Goals for the Parliaments of Central and Eastern Europe organized in Bucharest, on 15-16 June 2015, by the Romanian Chamber of Deputies and the Inter-Parliamentary Union.*

Ladies and gentlemen, dear guests,

This year – 2015 - is a year for global action - a once-in-a-generation opportunity to put our world on more peaceful, sustainable and equitable footing. Addis Ababa, New York and Paris are the locations of three very important global meetings on the universal agenda.

Next month in Addis Ababa, the International Conference on Financing for Development is an opportunity to mobilize the resources and technology to make the future sustainable development goals reality.

These will be In September in New York, the world leaders will gather to adopt a new development agenda with a set of Sustainable Development Goals, SDGs, which will be the successor to the Millennium Development Goals, MDGs.

And in December the climate summit in Paris, is most likely our last chance to limit global warming to 2 degrees. Our goal is therefore an ambitious agreement with binding climate targets and fair international financing.

These are the three priorities of the whole international community for humanity this year. They give us our best chance to end poverty – and our last chance to address the impact of the climate change phenomenon.

And, National Parliaments do have an important role to play in the implementation of the future Sustainable Development Goals at the national level and in the transformation of our economies according to new, sustainable production and consumption patterns, with regard the protection of the environment.

But how exactly can Parliaments get involved?

National Parliaments are the ones that can secure the support of the population for the implementation of the SDG-s and this will be necessary if the SDG-s are to be translated into national goals.

Parliaments are the mediators between the executive Governments and their people. As such, they not only have to create awareness and legitimacy for the SDG-s, in our case, but also to carry the expectations of the people and have them integrated into policies.

Furthermore, Parliaments are in charge of the legislation necessary for the implementation and they decide the budget allocated for these goals.

However, Parliaments should also be aware of their role in the monitoring and review process after 2016, and actively oversee the implementation process.

For sure, on short term, there will be contradicting goals and this is why national debates (in Parliaments and involving actors of different fields) will be absolutely necessary to set priorities within the national implementation calendars.

However, parliamentarians also have a large range of informal instruments at hand, in order to promote the SDG-s, like using their own international network of contacts with fellow parliamentarians, with NGO's and International Organizations, Academia, Think-tanks, contacts of the political party they are a member of, and also by using mass media and even social networks to address the public.

But let's not forget that it is time to already start thinking about preparing the necessary legislation to make the efficient implementation of the SDG-s possible, to update the existing institutional frameworks, to create the necessary coordination instruments and reporting mechanisms, but also to set-up the interdisciplinary forums and committees in order to secure a broader, long-term and overarching development perspective in each country, with the integration of the sustainability in all sectoral policies.

So, we have to reflect on what we will do starting September till 2030. What do the institutions have to do, because every institution and authority in a country is involved in sustainable development? What are the means of implementation and which are the tasks that need to be carried out?

We need to face this challenge by consciously exchanging information and by setting priorities. We need to prepare for the next 15 years; a change in mentality is needed. This is why education on sustainable development is so important, because the young generation will be the future leaders of the mankind. Quantification of the goals and achievements is absolutely necessary, as well as the involvement of all stakeholders, along with transparency and accountability.

The SDGs must be translated into every-day life and explained in a way everybody – from politicians to the ordinary citizens – can understand them. This is the only way we can transform our consumer societies in to economies based on sustainable production and consumption patterns.

Romania is a reliable partner in the field of Sustainable Development and the Romanian Parliament has a very good working relationship with the IPU.

We have organized last year a regional seminar on the role of Parliaments in the implementation of the Universal Periodic Review recommendations. Romania also intends to become a regional hub for parliamentary diplomacy in order to promote at regional level among parliaments the global topics of the UN agenda.