

***Address by the Deputy Speaker of the Albanian Parliament,***

***Mrs. Valentina Leskaj***

***To the Fourth World Conference of Speakers of Parliaments***

***New York***

***2 September 2015***

Madam Chair,

Your Excellencies Speakers of Parliaments,

Dear colleagues,

It is an honor for me and for the Albanian parliamentary delegation to have the opportunity to address this Conference.

Let me say from the beginning that the Parliament of Albania, is committed very seriously to the democracy and Sustainable Development.

My country was one of the fourteen countries from Central and Eastern Europe to participate in the first phase of the global “Future We want” consultations on the development of Post-2015 Development Agenda.

The outputs and findings of the national consultations, fed into the development of the SDG framework.

Following the consultations, the Government of Albania agreed to pilot the Governance SDG, both for national purposes and for informing the Post-2015 Development Agenda as well.

And I can say today that our Parliament has played a leading role in this process.

Seen from the three-dimensional point of view: legislative process, oversight role and proper political representation the parliament of Albania has radically

transformed its approach, being today more open, more demanding and more inclusive.

We consider the transparency to be crucial for any parliament of functioning democracy.

This is why we have created a new space of communication which has contributed to more serious debates on major challenges on economy, energy, judiciary reform which are closely linked to the sustainable development and public interest.

Today our parliament has a more open and wide participatory approach not only in legislative process, but for the oversight as well.

Dear colleagues,

We strongly believe that democracy cannot be functional if the half of society is under represented in decision making and there is no sustainable development without an inclusive process for both women and man.

Therefore our Parliament has regarded women rights as the main priorities.

We are aware that we still have a long way to go, but I can say today that because of strong political will we have made considerable progress for the legal and policy framework.

In the meantime, the number of women in Parliament has tripled, and the number of women in government has more than tripled.

We all agree that integrating gender equality in the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, requires a holistic approach, because challenges are complex, interlinked and affects each other.

The Parliament has a key role to play not only as regards reforms, but also regarding its role to oversee the executive body for the implementation of the reforms.

Democratization is an ongoing process, but I can confirm that Albania remains fully committed to do the best for it.