



Statement by

**H.E. Mrs. Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović
President of
the Republic of Croatia**

at the

United Nations Summit for the adoption of the Post-2015 development agenda

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Your Excellencies,

Mr. President of the General Assembly,
Mr. Secretary General of the United Nations,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen...

I feel privileged and proud to be the first among many speakers that will in the next three days mark the end of our momentous preparatory work on the Sustainable Development Goals. Our meeting, one of the biggest ever in the history of international relations, will also be a historical beginning, a milestone for mankind.

The seventeen Sustainable Development Goals in front of us are not just another chapter in the United Nations bureaucratic procedure. It is not just another tome in the endless archive of this Organization. It is the blueprint for our development for the next fifteen years and beyond, a framework and tool for our better future.

“Transforming our world” – this is not a phrase, it is an obligation for all of us.

I want to express Croatia’s gratitude to the Secretary General, Ban Ki-Moon and the President of the 69th General Assembly, Sam Kutesa, for their exceptional efforts and leadership in the preparatory process of the Post-2015 Agenda. The tribute for this remarkable achievement goes to many hard working people, but above all it goes to 193 Member States of the United Nations who worked together tirelessly and reached unprecedented consensus about the goals and means for our future development.

Some will say that we have too many goals and targets. I must disagree with that – our Declaration states that this is a “far-reaching and people-centered” agenda. This means that no one is left behind. Neither the landlocked countries, nor the small islands perilously exposed to the hazards of climate change; neither those who are in dire need of water, nor those who have too much of it; neither the oceans, nor the mountain tops; neither those around the Equator, nor the snow covered parts of the Planet. We are all in this together: developed and underdeveloped, providers and recipients of assistance, North and South, big and small.

The year 2015 is the turning point in our development history, where we recognize the achievements of the Millennium Development Goals and we chart the road for the next fifteen years. We have to be honest about MDGs – a lot has been done, but not all goals have yet been accomplished. This should be a warning and a lesson for the future. Our ambition must be matched by our determination and ability to deliver.

Today more than ever we need real leadership. We need people who are not just talking about change, but making change happen.

It is not enough to just keep speaking out against the visible and the obvious, it is not enough to be aware or to create a vision of the future. Instead, what we need is people that will get the job done.

We are constantly exposed to well-known problems, with which we have been coping for many years with limited success, and to new challenges that not so long ago few were able to foresee.

Croatia, for example, is suddenly encompassed with the migrants crisis that has been generated far from its borders, and we are not the final destination point of it, but nevertheless this tide of migrants (mostly of Syrian origin) is leaving a profound impact on my country and the region of South East Europe. I will speak in detail about it next week, during the general debate, but today I use this as a telling example of how interlinked and interdependent the global world has become.

Our world is not our own. We owe it to our children and right now, what are we leaving them? Therefore, we have to approach all seventeen goals quickly, coherently, with determination and passion. A lot more is to be lost than could ever be gained back.

In Addis Ababa we reached a groundbreaking agreement on how to generate financing for the sustainable development. This was the first step and by the end of this week we shall take another one. But our work is far from done – the next milestone that awaits us is the Paris climate change conference. Only then, with the successful outcome of that Summit, we shall be able to say that in 2015 we truly set the framework for these SDGs.

There was no better way to start this day than to listen to the inspirational speech by His Holiness Pope Francis. And there is no better way to crown our Summit than to forge our commitment to implement all Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. Rest assured that Croatia will do its part.

Let me end with the emphasis on the fifth sustainable development goal: gender equality. As a practical contribution in fulfillment of this pivotal goal is the simple fact that the first speaker in this historic debate of ours is a woman.

I want to keep this Global Conversation going. But it is not enough just to meet here once a year and maintain our commitments to UN initiatives and national development strategies without taking ownership for problems that are manmade and therefore require us to fix them. Without leadership there is no way to guarantee that anything can take root and sustain. Everything less than that is just not enough.

Thank you.