

Statement at the fourth World Conference of Speakers Parliaments

By Mr. Sam K. Kutesa, President of the General Assembly of the United Nations

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**Rt. Hon. Saber Chowdhury, President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,
Right Honourable Speakers of Parliament,
Excellencies,
Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,**

I am pleased to address this Fourth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament. I extend a warm welcome to the many Honourable Speakers of Parliament who have joined us today.

This Conference is taking place at an important juncture during this momentous year. We gather in this General Assembly Hall, just one day before Member States are due to take action on a draft resolution to transmit the agreed outcome document entitled “Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” to the Summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda.

This ambitious development framework, which is the result of nearly two years of preparatory work and intense negotiations, represents a historic opportunity to change our world for the better. Through the eradication of poverty, improvement of livelihoods for all and achievement of sustainable development in its social, economic and environmental dimensions, we can realise prosperity and protect our planet.

The contributions and input of parliamentarians, local authorities, civil society and academia, among other stakeholders, were all instrumental in formulating this transformative agenda that will guide our development efforts for the next 15 years.

Members of parliaments provided particularly insightful contributions, owing to their unique perspectives on the needs of citizens, the specific circumstances of their respective countries, as well as the capabilities of governments to meet development aspirations.

Given their role as pillars of democratic governance, parliaments will also have an important role in the implementation of the new development agenda.

Parliamentarians should continue to ensure that the voices of the people are heard and included in the development process. This will enhance ownership of the new agenda and its implementation on the ground, which will be vital for its success.

Through their oversight function, parliaments also promote accountability of development commitments, appropriate budgetary resources, and ensure that the necessary legislative frameworks are in place.

Right Honourable Speakers of Parliament,

The successful implementation of the post-2015 development agenda will depend on a number of critical factors, including integrating it in respective national development plans, and mobilizing adequate financial, technological and capacity building resources.

It will be essential to carry forward the unfinished business of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which have been incorporated in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In particular, greater attention will be needed in the areas of education, health, water and sanitation, advancing gender equality and women's empowerment, and creation of employment, among others.

While the number of women parliamentarians continues to increase worldwide, greater efforts will be required going forward, to reach the internationally-agreed target of 30 per cent of female parliamentarians by 2020.

Furthermore, we must work together to educate, empower and employ the youth. As governments adopt legal and policy frameworks that seek to adequately respond to the needs and aspirations of the youth, we should do more to harness the contribution by the youth to sustainable development. We should also take concerted steps to engage young people in democratic processes.

Finally, parliamentarians worldwide have a critical role to play in the protection and preservation of the environment, including through enacting appropriate legislation. As we work toward reaching a new, universally-binding climate change agreement at the Conference of the Parties on Climate Change (COP 21) in Paris this December, bold commitments that will protect our planet for generations to come are needed. Parliamentarians and other stakeholders should remain actively engaged in collective efforts towards this noble goal.

I thank you for your attention.