



REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA

STATEMENT

**BY H.E. MR. ROSEN PLEVNELIEV,
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA**

**AT THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
HIGH-LEVEL THEMATIC DEBATE ON
ACHIEVING THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

NEW YORK, 21 APRIL 2016

**Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Last September we adopted a truly transformative new Agenda for Sustainable Development - a historic achievement and an important step forward in our efforts towards creating a world where all people live in prosperity, peace and dignity. A world where “no one is left behind” and the human rights of all individuals are protected. Adopting the Agenda was only the first step. Now, it’s up to all of us to adjust our national development strategies to fulfill these new commitments.

Progress on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will depend on the implementation of three steps: taking action at national level, helping the most vulnerable countries and building a stronger United Nations, while actively involving all stakeholders in those efforts.

Bulgaria has already started the process of framing a mechanism for the national implementation of the 2030 Agenda. We are elaborating our National Program for Development Bulgaria 2030 by also actively engaging the civil society, business, young people, academia and the media. We are focusing on education, high technology and innovation. Our goal is the development of a green and energy efficient economy that protects the environment.

One of the ways to achieve that is by educating younger generations on the importance of sustainability. Since September 2015, many Bulgarian schools have been working together with UNICEF on the implementation of a project entitled “The Biggest Lesson in the World”, aimed at acquainting children with the SDGs. As President, I’m proud to say that Bulgarian students and teachers have shown a great deal of interest in this initiative.

However, domestic implementation is not enough. If we want to achieve the SDGs, we need to also pay more attention to those people and nations that are most vulnerable. Official development aid has to focus on empowering people and making them self-reliant. Bulgaria actively participates in the efforts of the EU and the wider international community to help those that are most in need. We are providing humanitarian and development assistance to regions affected by conflict and political instability. We also support educational, health and economic projects in the Western Balkans and the Black Sea region.

While empowering people is a key aspect of sustainable development, we should not forget the environment. An excellent tool for responding to the climate challenge through collective action at all levels is the Green Climate Fund. In 2015 Bulgaria made a donation to the Fund.

The third important step towards achieving the SDGs involves building a stronger and more coherent UN Development System by strengthening its transparency, cost-efficiency and effectiveness. The High Level Panel on Humanitarian Financing co-chaired by the European Commissioner for Budget and Human Resources Mrs. Kristalina Georgieva and His Royal Highness Sultan Nazrin Shah (Назрин Шах) of Perak made an invaluable contribution in this direction.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

While we work towards building our new and sustainable development model, we need to remember who the SDGs are ultimately for – children. During the intergovernmental negotiations on the 2030 Agenda, Bulgaria actively worked for the integration of children's human rights in all aspects of development, placing children at the heart of the Agenda. And we are already seeing results. In April this year, in Sofia, we launched the new Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child. The Sofia Strategy was adopted under the Bulgarian Chairmanship of the Council of Europe.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is time to take action. We need to think smart, act sustainably and change our approach if we want to achieve the goals set out in the 2030 Agenda and leave future generations a healthy and prosperous planet.

Thank you, Mr. President!
