

Statement by Hege Hertzberg, Ambassador of Norway

SDG Advocacy Group event, 12 February 2016

Accra International Conference Centre

Your Excellency, the President of Ghana, John Dramani Mahama

Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin, UN Under-Secretary General and UNFPA Executive Director

All protocols observed

Ladies and gentlemen

We have something to celebrate!

For the first time in history, the international community has agreed on a roadmap to the future we want that will leave no one behind.

We have a comprehensive plan that is indivisible and borderless and that addresses fundamental aspects of economic, social and environmental development.

Addressing poverty, inequality, conflict, forced migration and global warming is not something that can wait. These are highly complex global challenges that affect us all, no matter where we live or how we make a living.

Let me take this opportunity to congratulate Your Excellency, the President of Ghana, John Dramani Mahama on your appointment as co-chair of the Advocacy Group. You are sharing this role with the Prime Minister of Norway, Mrs Erna Solberg. What a team! This has to be a success!

Ladies and gentlemen, allow me to read out my Prime Minister's message on how the SDGs can be achieved:

“The 17 goals are not a menu. They are a marching order. The first line of the preamble to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development reads, ‘This agenda is a plan of **action**, for people, planet and prosperity.’ So **action** is what world leaders agreed to.

First, progress on any given goal will be faster if we make use of **effective partnerships**. These should involve all the crucial actors: governments, the private sector, the UN and the development banks, civil society, NGOs as well as science and academia. And if we make use of suitable investment models, we can scale up financing from millions to the trillions that are needed.

Second, the 17 SDGs are part of a **holistic** sustainable development agenda. We need to cultivate the **synergies between goals**. One good example is the well-documented synergy between education – particularly for girls – and health. (And let me add: Gender equality is fundamental for the achievement of all the SDGs!)

Third, simply establishing goals does not lift people out of poverty or safeguard our environment. Goals must be accompanied by **coherent strategies, policies and investments** at national level. This will require improving tax revenues, halting illicit financial flows, eliminating tax havens and combating corruption.

Fourth, good data are needed as a basis for good policies and programmes and the decisions needed to tackle global challenges. We must therefore improve **data collection** at national and global level.

Lastly, and this is an issue that cannot be stressed enough, it has proved very difficult to make progress in areas that are affected by **crisis and conflict**. These areas of the world fell behind on most MDGs. Crisis and conflict are our common global enemy. The international community must therefore act

together to improve the situation in these areas. (And let me add: this is very visible in our region here in West Africa.)

Like other countries, Norway will do its utmost to reach the goals and targets at home. Just like other countries, we will struggle to meet all the goals.

We will only succeed if we work together. The spirit and determination of state leaders at the SDG Summit in New York was clearly evident. We must not let this determination be weakened. If we achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, we can be the generation that finally ends extreme poverty. We are also the last generation that still has a chance to stop irreparable damage to our climate. It's now or never."