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KEYNOTE STATEMENT 3



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Good morning to you all here in Geneva and good afternoon and good evening to all those watching us live from other parts of the world.

Ladies and gentlemen, esteemed delegates from WASD and distinguished diplomats from the United Nations Office and countries' missions in Geneva.

My name is Lena, I am 14 years old and I have just finished year 9 in my school in London. Six years ago, together with Mrs Sarah Collymore, my headteacher at the time, I was honoured and privileged to be given the golden opportunity to speak in this same room about a similar topic relating to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and the Agenda 2030.

Back in 2018, in my speech I emphasised the importance of implementing the 17 sustainable development goals NOT by 2030 but before 2030. Now 6 years later, I am not just going to give you my personal perspective but a collective point of view from other young children like me and some of my friends. To name a few, these are Maia John, Shamail Ali, Sofia Faizi and Rayan Mohammed. Together we have discussed the impact the 17 sustainable development goals will have on our future and wellbeing.

It is with a sense of urgency and shared responsibility that I address this esteemed assembly today. The journey towards achieving the 17 sustainable development goals by 2030 demands our unwavering commitment and collective action. We must recognise the critical importance of the 17 sustainable development goals for the future generations. In my eyes, each goal is a piece of a puzzle put together to make a world with no boundaries or limits. As we stand on the precipice of time, the need for accelerated progress becomes ever more apparent. We find ourselves at a crossroads, where the pace of our current efforts falls short of the aspirations set forth in the Sustainable Development Agenda many years ago.

Let us not be daunted by the magnitude of the task at hand, but rather emboldened by the knowledge that our actions today will shape the world of tomorrow.

The Sustainable Development Goals address a wide range of pressing global issues, from poverty and hunger to climate change and inequality. By achieving these goals, we can create a world where every individual has access to education, healthcare, clean water, and a decent standard of living. We must act now to preserve our planet for future generations, ensuring that they inherit a world that is thriving, resilient, and harmonious. At the same time, my generation should also be responsible in the future and not blame you adults but rather take their share of responsibility than claim nothing is their responsibility. For example, My dad got his first mobile phone after graduating from university, he bought me my first mobile phone when I entered secondary school, even though I've been playing with mobiles here and there since I was 4 years old. It is therefore, MY responsibility to use my mobile phone wisely and safely.

It is our moral obligation to work towards the fulfilment of these goals, to create a world where no one is left behind, where prosperity is shared, and where the environment is safeguarded for generations to come. Let us commit ourselves to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, for they hold the key to a brighter and more sustainable future for all.

As I am growing up and learning more about sustainable development and the united nations system at school, I feel very strongly that the United Nations is doing a great job bringing academics together like this conference to engage with their politicians and governments to shape the future. These sustainable development goals are the outcome of many academic and universities together with the United nations and clearly they are good forward goals for a better future for us all, we should all take the lead on ensuring their successful implementation. It is not the responsibility of the United Nations alone for this big task but it is the responsibility of all of us in this room, governments, universities, communities, civil societies and so on.

Finally, to all those enduring hardship in places such as Sudan, Palestine, Ukraine and other war zones, I want to remind you to hold onto hope, know that brighter days can emerge from the darkest of times. It's incredibly hard to even imagine what they have to go through every single day, all the hurt they feel and people they have lost. Stay strong, for our ability to endure and overcome is simply a testament to our shared humanity.

Thank you for listening.



