

UNITED NATIONS



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**UNITED NATIONS RESIDENT COORDINATOR IN THE PHILIPPINES
MR. OLA ALMGREN**

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**Keynote Message
INAUGURATION OF UNIC MANILA'S SDG EXHIBIT
24 October 2016
Atrium of the SM Mall of Asia**

Ambassador-Designate, Philippine Mission to the UN, Mr. Teodoro Locsin Jr.,

President of SM Prime Holdings, Mr. Hans Sy,

Assistant Secretary Dr. Evelyn Cruzada,

Former Senator Heherson Alvarez, also founder of Earthsavers UNESCO DREAM Center

SM Senior Vice President for Marketing Communications, Ms. Millie Dizon

Mr. Efren Penaflorida

Former Climate Change Commissioner Mr. Yeb Sano,

Friends and UN colleagues,

Good morning.

At this time last year, the United Nations celebrated its 70th anniversary--a special moment marked by the lighting in UN Blue of over 70 famous landmarks around the world. The SM MOA LED globe that we see outside was one such landmark. Viewed from Google Earth, the signature blue of

the UN bloomed almost simultaneously in 70 places all over the planet, including right here, in the SM Mall of Asia, on the night of the 24th of October 2015. It was a moment when countries around the world seemed to be intertwined by the benevolent light of the UN.

The UN's 70th year was monumental for another reason. In September last year, all 193 members states of the UN adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, or what we call the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, which this exhibit will showcase today.

Since then these Goals have become our collective responsibility. The commitments we have made are ambitious and transformative. We now have 15 years to deliver.

We have 15 years to end extreme poverty, hunger and malnutrition, preventable deaths of newborns and children under five, as well as to end the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected tropical diseases.

We have 15 years to achieve universal health care coverage and free primary and secondary education, as well as to end discrimination against women and girls.

We have 15 years to transition to a low-carbon economy and change unsustainable patterns of consumption and production.

We will have to deliver on the 2030 Agenda regardless of persistent challenges, new obstacles and unforeseen setbacks during the years to come.

The shift from the MDGs to the SDGs is huge, but not unbridgeable

In this first year anniversary, or SDG Year 1— over 50 governments, and a great many businesses, scientists and civil society organizations have taken serious measures to put the SDGs at the heart of their policies and actions.

At the local level, numerous cities and municipalities are formulating plans to achieve the goals. Thousands of communities representing different sectors of society have taken up the cudgels for the SDGs through local level action.

The Philippines, for instance, has already started a serious process of implementation.

The Philippine Government is building on the lessons learned from the Millennium Development Goals and their own experiences. It is starting to integrate the new goals into their national economic and social planning.

All these steps have built momentum to limiting climate change, advancing gender equality, mitigating natural disasters, addressing mass migration, and reducing inequality.

In July this year, 22 governments presented their SDG plans to the United Nations. These plans show how the SDGs could be made a central framework for national development. They will help to make sure that actions are aligned, that there is synergy among programmes and that funds are used as efficiently as possible. Development cooperation will likewise be aligned with the SDGs.

Global support for the Paris Agreement on Climate Change is also accelerating. To date, governments of 55 nations have ratified the agreement—including the world's largest emitters of greenhouse gases, China and the United States.

Momentum is building in other sectors as well. A significant transformation is happening in how businesses are being conducted. We are seeing greater focus on social, economic and environmental dimensions of development. The UN too is moving towards joint working in support of aligned policies, from focusing on projects to convening stakeholders, and ensuring that efforts are aligned so that partners can work together in an efficient and effective manner.

Great progress has been made.

But much more remains to be done to achieve the SDGs. The SDGs lay out specific targets for everyone towards solving the challenges that people around the world are facing.

How do we stay the course?

This is where people--the most important stakeholder—come in. Public support and public pressure are indispensable if we are to transform the SDGs from goal to reality.

Children and youth have a vital role to play. They are the face of social movements, they drive social change and they carry the torch that will guide us towards a more sustainable future for generations to come.

SDG Year 1 allows us the opportunity to mark our achievements thus far, to resolve to do more to make SDGs a reality and most importantly to acknowledge governments, businesses, civil society groups and young people around the world for all their efforts.

If all stakeholders keep up the effort to build a sustainable world, achieving the SDG targets in the next 15 years and changing the way we live is not impossible.

As Special Adviser to the Secretary General for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Climate Change, Dr. David Nabarro, has said, "We really do not have a plan B. There is no planet B."

Thus, we, as One UN System, will continue to support the government and our development partners and we will do our utmost to help you make a difference for people and the planet in the coming years living up to the new Agenda.

We will work with you, side by side, to progressively improve the channels for participation of multiple stakeholders.

It is essential that no one is left behind, which is a key unifying concept of the 2030 Agenda – a message of solidarity.

The challenges are great. We live in turbulent world with growing uncertainties about the road ahead. There are polarizing, inward-looking trends.

At the same time, the world is a world of promises and opportunity with many, many working to fulfill the dreams and aspirations of our peoples.

If we work together, both inside and between nations mobilizing all good forces we can achieve a better world of peace, opportunity and dignity for all.

Before I end my message, I would like to express my appreciation to SM for their continued support for the work of the UN Family in the Philippines. Last year, the UN and the Department of Foreign Affairs celebrated UN Day here, at the Music Hall of SM Mall of Asia, and this year, SM is again graciously hosting this year's celebration of UN Day.

I congratulate my colleagues at UNIC Manila for this creative outreach initiative to promote the SDGs. I would like to acknowledge the Filipino celebrities who have lent their star power to help popularize the SDGs among Filipinos. These celebrity standees will help to shine a spotlight on

the goals. For the generosity of these celebrities in sharing their image for the SDG campaign, the UN Family is deeply grateful.

Thank you to all of you who have joined us here today to celebrate the UN's 71st anniversary.

Would that we could come together 15 years from today--older, yes, but hopefully transformed by a better world, and be able to say to each other, "We have arrived at the future we had dreamed of." That would really be something, wouldn't it?

May we all live to see the achievement of the SDGs in the year 2030.
Thank you and have a good day!

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