

Mr\Ms President, dear colleagues,

It is a great pleasure for me to say a few words about the political, economic and social situation in the world from the perspective of our very vital theme.

Healthy and developed societies are founded on justice, equality and opportunities for all. Today, we live in an era where social development and justice form the cornerstone of our future. Hence, it is our duty to ensure that children and youth have the chance to flourish, on their own terms, regardless of their background or social standing.

Governments, parliaments, and communities play a vital role in improving the position of children and youth worldwide.

Our societies cannot achieve the goals of sustainable development unless we address armed conflict, poverty, and social inequality. The issue is not solely about the economy or the environment, but about ensuring that all children have equal access to opportunities, healthcare, education and social welfare.

The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals provide us with essential guidance in this context, particularly Goal 4 on quality of education, Goal 5 on gender equality and Goal 10 on reducing inequality.

In Iceland, the government prioritizes strengthening the welfare system to support children and youth, with special focus on those who live in challenging circumstances. It is crucial to ensure that no child is left behind, especially those living in poverty or who have experienced trauma. By investing in education and healthcare for children, we not only safeguard their well-being but also the future of society as a whole.

The Icelandic government has also placed emphasis on improving the status of children and youth by promoting gender equality and advancing the rights of children with disabilities or those from marginalized groups.

The focus on mental health, education and social welfare is equally essential, as children who grow up with trauma or mental health challenges require specialized support. It is also important that children are given opportunities to participate in society, have their voices heard

and in decision-making processes, and are able to engage in political and social affairs.

Mr \ Ms Presiden,

(We must also ensure that climate change and natural disasters do not place children at risk. They are the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, and it is our responsibility to ensure they have an environment that is both safe and sustainable.)

In conclusion, I want to emphasize that achieving success in social development and justice for children and youth requires a collective effort. It is not enough to simply strengthen the rights of children globally – we must ensure they are active participants in building a just and sustainable society for the future.

Thank you!

(443 words)