

Speech of Mr. Albert FRICK, Speaker of Parliament, Landtag Liechtenstein

to the first motion of the Interactive General Debate (“Achieving sustainable development requires more attention on human well-being and environmental preservation than on economic growth”)

Mr. President

Dear colleagues,

Sustained and inclusive economic growth is a prerequisite for sustainable development, which can contribute to improved livelihoods for people around the world. In recent years, however, there have been increased observations that the negative environmental and well-being effects of economic growth often override its positive impacts. As a result, there is a strong call for countries and societies to expand the vision of development by paying attention to economic growth, environmental sustainability and human well-being.

Economic growth has increasingly been criticized due to the negative impacts it has had on our climate and the environment. While economic growth can indeed be harmful, the positive sides must not be undermined. Since 1990, the number of people living on less than \$ 1.90 a day, which is the World Bank’s definition of extreme poverty, fell from nearly two billion to around seven hundred million. Also, the increase of GDP allows investments in healthcare, schools, infrastructure and has been contributing immensely to the well-being of people around the world.

Hence, a sustainable development is crucial to ensure a healthy planet and prosperity for all, demanding a transformation from a purely economic-driven system into one that adopts environmentally sound policies which ensure growth in a “green” and sustainable way. But how to do so?

Liechtenstein has been demonstrating that the decoupling of the GDP growth from the CO₂ emissions is possible. Our energy demand has been decreasing for a few years despite an increasing GDP. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by the United Nations are a powerful tool to shape a sustainable future.

While all SDGs are of high importance, not all are equally relevant in every country. The governments therefore need to prioritize the SDGs to maximize the impact according to their own specific situation. To take Liechtenstein as an example: Our highly industrialized country faces an ever-increasing traffic density. Therefore, our efforts and measures focus as a priority on SDG 9, i.e. building resilient infrastructure, promoting broad-based and sustainable industrialization, and supporting innovation.

Let’s all enforce the implementation of the SDGs in a suitable manner to shape a new sustainable future.

I thank you.