STATEMENT AT THE SOCIAL GOOD SUMMIT
PRESS CONFERENCE
AT
UN COMMON PREMISES

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Hello and good morning to all of you here today.

I would like to start by welcoming those of you who have not been here at the UN Common Premises before.

But, I also would like to start by very sincerely expressing the condolences from the United Nations team here in Iran through you to the families of those who have lost loved ones in the tragedy of Mecca.

And of course there are still many families who are waiting to hear news of the status of their loved one and so we wish you strength to those citizens.

Today, we are gathered here to look at something that offers an immense prospect for the future of humanity.

A few days ago, as you know, 150 world leaders gathered in New York to adopt the 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development.

This agenda included the Sustainable Developments Goals (SDGs).

As you know these SDGs will take us now forward to fifteen years.

There are 17 goals in all. And they have built on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

I think it is fair to say that the MDGs have taken humanity forward in a number of important areas – which I will only name three:

- Compared to the year 2000, we now have 800 million fewer people who are living in extreme poverty.
• Compared to the year 2000, we have 2 billion more people who have access to adequate water.
• Compared to the year 2000, we have almost parity in terms of education of boys and girls.

These are quite dramatic examples of success, but we have still a long way to go and that is why we have established the SDGs.

The new 17 SDGs are much more ambitious and broader than the MDGs.

They set higher standards in trying to eradicate poverty and hunger.

And they set much higher standards in asking the world to achieve education, health, gender equality and climate change goals.

The new SDGs are universal and they will apply to all countries regardless of their level of development.

And there is strong recognition that now all countries must do their part.

I think we were all very impressed by President Rouhani’s statement at the Sustainable Development Summit. He made a speech in New York which I would like to share with you in a small part.

He starts off by saying: “Environmental problems have taught us human beings living on planet Earth that we are all on the same boat.”

He said “what others do also impacts our destiny”.

He said: “We cannot be assured of our own peace and security while ignoring how others are living. Without extensive cooperation at national, regional and international levels, achieving SDGs will be very difficult.”

He concluded by saying: “Such cooperation should be mindful of our common destiny and joint commitment towards important human responsibilities.”

Colleagues, the plain fact is that us human beings living on this planet, need to change the way we consume and the way we live if we are to carry on with the possibility of a sustainable future for our children.

The next two points that I am going to make, is something that personally I believe in.

We are the last generation that has the possibility of heading off the worst effects of climate change.

But, we are at the same time, the first generation with the wealth and the knowledge to eradicate poverty and to make human living sustainable into the future.

I think what needs to happen now, is that all of need to show leadership. The sort of leadership that President Rouhani showed in making his statement.

The sort of leadership that comes from young people speaking out and drawing attention to things that we need to do through social media and other forms of communication.

The sort of leadership that comes from our scientists looking to find solutions that allows the seven billion of us on this planet to live sustainably.
And the sort of leadership coming from us – as ordinary citizens – making wise choices about how we produce and how we consume.

In all of this, the United Nations has a role to play.

And the UN Development Pregame (UNDP) is the primary UN development agency in providing support to countries that request technical expertise.

So, we have invited you here this morning, and you have kindly accepted to come, in order to have a conversation about these SDGs and how Iran can contribute.

I am going to pause at this point, and invite my colleague who is a distinguished Iranian Economist, and who works with us at the UNDP to talk in more detail and exclusively – in Farsi – about the SDGs.

He will initiate his discussion by looking briefly at the MDGs and spending much more time on the SDGs.

And then after Dr. Mohammad Ali Farzin concludes, we will be very happy to take any questions, clarification or observations.

Thank you very much.