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Transcribed as delivered

Thank you and good morning to everybody. thank you for inviting me to present just a few ideas for the benefit of this important organization. I already had the opportunity to give a speech in one of the events of the IDLO and I think that this organization may have a very important role in fostering actions - concrete actions - towards the implementation of the sustainable development strategies.

I would divide my intervention in two parts. The first trying to answer the question: we have now the Sustainable Development Goals, but how should we change not really the individual policies but the way in which policies are designed? And this is, of course, is something that has to do with the legal environment, but especially with the way in which each and every country works. The the second part of my speech will be about the role of data and not just statistics.

Let me for the first part just share with you some thoughts we with some fiends we put together in an article that was published a few weeks ago in The Guardian. The title of our article was supposed to be "The Republican Wellbeing", but then the guardian changed a little bit the title to "Say goodbye to capitalism and say hello to the “Republic of Wellbeing”.

What its the key point that we tried to put together in this article? Let's suppose that we have a brand new country, completely new. And what this country should do to implement SDG's. If the leaders of this country really believe in the SDG's, what should they do to make things different? I'll give you just 15 seconds to think about the first thing that you would do. I don't know weather we got it right or not, but our first item in

the wish-list was very simple. Most constitutions don't have any reference to sustainable development. This is because our constitutions were written many many years ago, when this concept was not even developed. We know how important constitutions are, and we know that the constitution is the fundamental charter of a country. So our to-do list starts with including the concept of sustainable development in the constitution. In Europe we are lucky, because we have the article 3 of the EU treaty that contains this statement. Why? because it was written, just a few years ago.

Why is it so important to have this concept in our constitutions? first of all if you have this principle in the constitutions then - and I will come back in a second to this - all the implementation laws and subsequent laws must be coherent with the constitution. More importantly it's because courts, judges use the constitutional principals to make decisions. If you don't have - like Italy doesn't - the concept of inter-generational equity, it is very difficult to make decisions in favor of the future generations. In Italy we have a constitution that has the concept of equity within the current generation not between generations. And so the constitutional court made, for example, important decisions on pension rights just looking at the way in which the changes in the law affects the quality between groups within the current generation, but it doesn't say anything about the future generations. This is why it would be so important to have this concept in our constitutions. This would be the first step.

But then the second step would be very coherent with this one - How could we be sure that new legislation is abiding, coherent with the sustainable development? Because you know very well that now with the SDG's and the Agenda - the post-2015 Agenda - each and every country has to implement policies for sustainable development. The answer is relatively straight forward. You must have a body, the parliament, the government, that should make an exact assessment of any new piece of legislation to be coherent with the concept of sustainable development. Do you have in your country such an evaluation body that tries not to look, again like in Italy, at the impact of a legislation on the public budget, the deficit, the debt, the GDP, the employment, or other dimensions of sustainable development?

Of course with a new concept of sustainable development this is very complicated, because you have so many elements to take into account, so many dimensions to take into account. But let's suppose that we want to have such an assessment. Do we have concrete examples on how to do that? I could continue, but the good news is that in this paper, you always find the hyperlinks to concrete cases where these elements have been already implemented around the world. So, the republic of wellbeing should just copy what some countries are doing in to include in the constitution the concept of sustainable development. What some countries are doing - like France for example - which did in March of this year (and from now each and every year) the government, French government, has to report with an assessment of past policies and future policies from the sustainable development point of view. Italy also is discussing something like this these days. And then you can look for example at the Better Regulation Package that has been adopted by the European Union. It's a little bit complicated I have to admit, but you can try to simplify, where each and every new piece of legislation has to be considered in terms of impact of the different dimensions of sustainable development. So you see how important it is to establish legislative processes that are conducive to the change in what we are doing now in order to make the sustainable development revolution. Of course, if you do these kind of things you must have data to monitor what's going on, and you also need modelling to try to assess what are the future tendencies.

Sustainable development is a great concept. As expressed by the Brundtland commission many years ago, the possibility that development allows the current generation to satisfy its needs without putting in danger, the risk that future generation can do the same. How can we do that?

You also know, maybe, the famous criticism to the concept of sustainable development by Marx. Not Karl Marx, Groucho Marx. A famous American actor who, in the 30's, of the last century was saying: "why should I care about future generations? What did they do for me?". I think this is the smartest way of putting the sustainable development

Agenda for many years that I have ever seen. By the way Woody Allen has used this sentence several times.

Because your approach to sustainable development is really based on the way in which you answer this question. Actually this was what we thought about a deal few years ago. Because now we know that the situation - at least in some respects - is so bad that sustainable development is not just about the future generation, but about this current generation. This is a big change, because some processes are moving much faster than what we had expected. Not only climate change. So actually what we need to do is to monitor what's going on, it is to be able to assess whether we are moving towards a more sustainable path, and whether our actions can be rewarded also in terms of elections. Because we shouldn't be naïve. the shorter means that we see in the decision-making, is something that is indeed accelerated by also the availability of data. As a statistician - by the way, do you know what is the origin of the word "statistics"? The science of the state. And you can use both state with a lower case "s" which is the state of things, but also the capital "S" - the government, this is why this is so political - so the availability of data is putting pressure on decision makers towards what has been called by Hillary Clinton the quarterly capitalism. The availability of GDP and the daily, hourly actually, stock exchange, quotation and so on; is putting so much pressure on decision makers that maybe it is really polluting the whole discussion. Politicians want to be reelected and they behave to do that trying to maximize the short term outcomes, but this is not necessarily good for the long term perspectives.

This is why you need to rebalance this, from this perspective the current organization of our governments, maybe not be the best in the sustainable development perspective.

Maybe you have heard that Sweden has established a position of "Ministry for Future". And they nominated as minister of future a woman. I think that was a great signal in a sense, because we know how that women often care about future generations more than men. The role of this minister is to check each and every ne piece of legislation in terms of sustainability. Of course in this perspective rule of law is so important because rule of law is building the social capital, the human capital, but also the economic capital and the

natural capital that are also important for sustainable development. Rule of law is really at the core of a new way of making policies and data in this perspective and it plays a very important role. I refer to data not just to statistics. Data is much more than statistics. In our report to the Secretary General of UN the award that counts on the data revolution for sustainable development we highlight that the great opportunities, the technologies and new opportunities for collecting data bring to governments to foster an improved decision making, but also to individuals to civil society, to companies, but on the other hand we also highlighted the risks. In a nut shell, we said in the report, that without very careful policies, without a legal environment to deal with data, the divide between the public and the private sector will increase because the private sector is investing huge amounts of money to benefit from the data revolution, while the public sector is lagging behind. The divide between developed countries and developing countries will also widen unless we do something. Finally, the divide between those who know how to use data and those who don't know how to use data will also increase.

We know that knowledge is the most powerful ingredient to make changes. So in conclusion, what I would like to argue here is that rule of law is so important and the indicators of rule of law that are being discussed now in the inter-secretariat working group at the UN level, will be very important to monitor what's going on. But beside indicators, besides statistics, the legislators have to rethink very carefully about the way in which our countries work, and our international organizations work.

Let me just conclude with a wish. I'm a dreamer. Thirty-nine years ago when I was a student in the second year at university studying economics, I read a book about the mess that the world could be around 2020 and I decided to try to give help in hand. My dream from this perspective is that the SDG and the post - 2015 agenda will be taken very seriously by our governments around the world. I'm trying to do something to do with this in Italy, unfortunately the attention by media and also politicians, also because of the dramatic events recently, already moved to something else. So the key point is that as we will have every single day new emergencies, that will take our attention to something else, we need to embed in our institutions the obligation to think about the future. Data,

models, the constitutions, the way in which the next legislation is assessed, and so on and so forth, are all ingredients of a new way of thinking. Not only for the future generations but also for the current generations, in a conference we had in Brussels - by the way the day in which there were the Paris attacks - I was in Brussels and I moved to Paris in the afternoon leaving just two hours before the attack - we were talking about the future of Europe, and it's clear that the future will be full of non-linearities. "Non-linearities" means that the current and the past trends will change suddenly. Not necessarily for the worst, it could also happen for good. This is why we need to try to be able to anticipate this and prepare ourselves.

So my last remark is just a plea to go back to the 2014 Human Development Report, which was based on two key words - vulnerability and resilience - because we will have a lot of shocks in the future and therefore we can try to protect our countries from vulnerability but especially we need to invest in resilience. The capacity to react to shocks. Again this is about culture, but this is also about legislation. It's about the capacity of people - and this is why the rule of law is so important - to change for the good, and not just to be stuck with old ways of thinking, and the old rules. This is very complicated. This is very challenging, but I think this is really the only way to try to rescue our world and to make our world a better place for us and for future generations. Thank you.