



8TH BUDAPEST HUMAN RIGHTS FORUM

12 NOVEMBER 2015

Keynote Speech

by

H. E. Ms. Katalin Annamária Bogyay
Permanent Representative of Hungary
to the United Nations in New York

Excellencies,

Distinguished Participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to participate in the Eighth Budapest Human Rights Forum. Over the past 8 years, this very Forum has established itself as an important venue for the exchange of ideas among diplomats, representatives of international organizations, the academia and civil society. Under the Chatham house rules the Forum provides an excellent opportunity to delve deeper into important human rights topics that are high on the international community's agenda.

Human Rights and Sustainable Development

On 25th September, world leaders adopted the **2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development** in which they envisaged a world of universal

respect for human rights and human dignity, the rule of law, justice, equality and non-discrimination; and of equal opportunity permitting the full realization of human potential.

In other words, world leaders recognized that human rights and the rule of law are *enablers* of sustainable development. As many recent examples have shown, without the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, there is no hope for durable peace and development.

The 2030 Agenda is a groundbreaking instrument which charts an ambitious path for humanity over the next 15 years. The goals and targets of the Agenda reflect the universality and indivisibility of all human rights by addressing both **freedom from fear** and **freedom from want**.

The Agenda promises “*more peaceful, just and inclusive societies which are free from fear and violence*” with attention to democratic governance, rule of law, access to justice and the protection of fundamental freedoms.

The Agenda also places the human rights principles of **equality and non-discrimination** at the center of sustainable development efforts by calling for a just, equitable and socially inclusive world in which the needs of the *most vulnerable* are met.

In the past, development efforts often left the poorest and most marginalized increasingly far behind. The new Agenda strives to leave no-one behind by fighting inequality and reaching the most vulnerable segments of society.

The Agenda also reaffirms the responsibilities of States to “*respect, protect and promote human rights without distinction of any kind as to race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinions, national and social origin, property, birth, disability or other status.*”

By adopting the new Agenda, world leaders envisaged a world which invests in its children and in which every child grows up free from violence and exploitation. A world in which every woman and girl enjoys full gender equality.

Hungary actively supported the efforts to create a human-rights based approach in the new Agenda and to ensure that the rights and needs of vulnerable groups, including women, children, indigenous people and persons with disabilities, are fully incorporated in its goals and targets.

And this aspect is the one, I would like to concentrate on this morning .

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Agenda is a milestone also in the process of empowering women. It includes a stand-alone goal and many cross-cutting targets on gender equality and the empowerment of women which call for the elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls, the elimination of child, early and forced marriage and women's equal opportunities for leadership, among others.

The Agenda also aims to provide children with a nurturing environment for the full realization of their rights by ensuring their right to education, reducing child mortality, prohibiting child labor and the recruitment of child soldiers, among other important targets.

To create a truly inclusive society as envisaged by the 2030 Agenda, States must also protect the rights of persons with disabilities. The Agenda sets out to empower persons with disabilities by ensuring their access to education, vocational training, promoting their employment, and creating accessible cities.

Most importantly, the Agenda recognizes children and young people as critical agents of change. By adopting this new framework, we recognized that the future of humanity and of our planet lies in our hands and in the hands of today's younger generation who will "pass the torch to future generations". We must ensure that they can live up to their full potential by ensuring that the ambitious goals and targets are implemented effectively over the next 15 years.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Gender equality and women's empowerment

This year, we are celebrating two important anniversaries relating to women's rights. 20 years ago, participants at the Fourth World Conference on Women adopted the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, a landmark document in the promotion of **gender equality and women's empowerment** which remains as relevant today as 2 decades ago. The Beijing Declaration is the most comprehensive document which recognized the human rights of women and girls, and it continues to guide our global efforts to advance gender equality around the world. Since 1995, much has been achieved, but progress has been slow and uneven.

In order to accelerate progress, UN Women launched its new campaign called "**Step it up**" to ensure that women and girls have equal opportunities and rights by 2030. **Hungary joined the campaign and pledged** commitments in three priority areas: efforts to combat domestic violence, the promotion of women's economic empowerment, and support for international efforts aimed at ending sexual violence in conflict.

In order to effectively combat domestic violence, Hungary pledged to prioritize prevention efforts, with a special emphasis on awareness raising among young people. New initiatives to ensure the protection of victims are also underway, by increasing the necessary number of shelters for survivors of domestic violence and by providing trainings for professionals who encounter domestic violence, with a special focus on professionals working in child protection services.

Hungary is also committed to improving the economic status of women by increasing their employment and implementing more flexible daycare options in order to help reconcile work and **family** life. We believe that efforts aimed at gender equality and the strengthening of families are mutually reinforcing and not inherently opposed as some argue. Our policies are guided by the objective of ensuring that women can fulfill their

potential in all spheres of life. We will continue to work with our partners in international fora to promote an honest and constructive dialogue on these issues.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Hungary is also strongly committed to international initiatives aimed at combating **sexual violence against women and girls in conflict**. Women and girls continue to suffer disproportionately from the effects of armed conflict. They are often the targets of sexual violence, abuse, sexual slavery, child and forced marriage, and other serious violations of their human rights.

15 years ago, the Security Council adopted Resolution 1325 on “Women, peace and security” which recognized the crucial contribution of women to peace processes and the need for their protection in situations of armed conflict. A lot has been achieved since 2000: sexual violence in conflict has been recognized as a tactic of war and now constitutes a war crime, women’s participation in peace processes has increased, and the number of senior women leaders within the UN has been on the rise—from special envoys of the Secretary-General, to the appointment of the first female commander of a UN peacekeeping mission in Cyprus.

Despite the remarkable progress made over the last 15 years, significant challenges remain which hinder the full realization of the goals set out in 2000.

With regard to sexual violence in conflict, few perpetrators are ever held **accountable**, making little difference for women and girls on the ground. Hungary supports greater emphasis on ensuring that perpetrators of serious crimes against women are held accountable. Accountability plays an important role not only in ensuring justice for the victims, but also in healing the wounds of traumatized societies.

New challenges have also emerged, most notably the rise of violent extremists groups, like ISIS. In his latest annual report, the Secretary General gave a detailed account of the horrific crimes committed by ISIS,

including reports of rape, mass abduction, forced marriage, forced prostitution and stoning of women for alleged adultery.

The primary targets of these horrendous crimes were women and girls belonging to religious minorities, including Christians, Yazidis and other faiths. Hungary strongly condemns the crimes committed by ISIS against **women belonging to religious minorities**. We must not forget about these crimes against humanity and urge the International Criminal Court to investigate and punish the perpetrators of these brutal crimes.

We also need more *meaningful* participation of women in peace talks to achieve sustainable peace around the world. Women continue to be marginalized in peace negotiations even when they can participate. By letting half of the population's voice being unheard, it is impossible to build societies based on inclusion and justice.

A few weeks ago, the Security Council held a High-Level Review of its resolution 1325 to reflect on the implementation of the women, peace and security agenda, and to make concrete and ambitious commitments to its full realization. At the meeting, Hungary pledged to identify and deploy female military experts, officers and police officers to UN peacekeeping and EU Common Security and Defense Policy missions.

Hungary also co-sponsored a new resolution adopted at the high-level meeting which calls for targeted sanctions against actors who have committed sexual or gender-based violence and requests the UN to conduct research on the drivers of radicalization for women. This is a very urgent task as many young women and girls are lured by extremist groups to fight in conflict situations.

As we look ahead to creating a more sustainable, inclusive and peaceful world, we must ensure that the potential of half of the world's population is fully realized. When we empower women and girls, we achieve a better and more sustainable future for all.

Children

In the same vein, we must ensure that **children** affected by armed conflict receive full protection. War destroys the lives of millions of children and

their families around the world. Children affected by conflict spend years, if not their entire lives, recovering from the trauma of war. Their wounds are not only physical, but also emotional.

As the Secretary-General has highlighted in his latest briefings on this issue, 2014 has been the worst year for children affected by conflict.

The abduction by Boko Haram of hundreds of girls from their schools in Nigeria is a shocking example of the group's brutal tactics and total disregard for basic human rights. Targeted attacks against schools have serious repercussions on the right to education of children. I believe that education is a crucial factor in countering the extremist narrative of these groups and reducing the risk of radicalization for young people.

Despite these daunting challenges, there are also important achievements to celebrate. The International Criminal Court issued its first ever sentence in 2012 against Thomas Lubanga for the crime of recruiting child soldiers. This case stands as a glimmer of hope in the culture of impunity that surrounds the serious crimes committed against women and children in armed conflicts. The "Children, Not Soldiers" campaign, launched UNICEF and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, has also achieved steady progress during its first year.

The protection of children plays an important role in **Hungary's** human rights policy and international efforts. Over the last few years, we have supported several projects aimed at helping children affected by humanitarian crises, including in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Syria, the Central African Republic and Sudan.

In Hungary, we have implemented several measures to promote the rights of children, including in the areas child friendly justice, education, health care and the fight against poverty for children in vulnerable situations.

We are strong supporters of UNICEF's activities in providing assistance to children all over the world, and are proud that the organization decided to establish its new Global Shared Services Center in Budapest. By hosting the new Center, Hungary effectively contributes to the reduction of UNICEF's

administrative costs which can be used to fund the important life-saving work of the Organization.

Minorities

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The third panel discussion of this year's Forum will deal with the situation of minorities in media. Promoting the rights of national, ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities is a priority area for Hungary's engagement in international and regional organizations. We are active supporters of the mandate of the UN Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues and the work of the UN Forum on Minority Issues, held annually in Geneva.

On the basis of its own historical experience, Hungary strongly believes that the promotion and protection of minority rights contribute to political and social stability and peace. We believe that, when the individual and collective rights of minorities are safeguarded by law and protected by government authorities, and when minorities are accepted and respected by the majority of society, they can efficiently contribute to both internal stability and international peace and security.

In this context, Hungary is deeply concerned by the increased violence targeting religious minorities in several conflict situations. As noted earlier, we are particularly troubled by the brutal attacks committed by violent extremist groups, like ISIS, against Christian and other minorities. These atrocities and serious crimes must be investigated, and perpetrators must be held accountable.

In Hungary, the rights of minorities are guaranteed by the Fundamental Law (Constitution), the Cardinal Act on Nationalities and Criminal Code. These pieces of legislation ensure a solid legal basis to prevent violence or atrocity crimes against minorities, to protect minorities and also to punish crimes committed against them.

We believe that the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development can only be successful if the human rights of minorities are protected, and their needs are taken into account in line with the principle of leaving no-one behind.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Over the next 2 days, you will be discussing these and many other important human rights issues affecting our world today. I wish you all an interesting and fruitful discussion.

Thank you.