

24 October 2016

71st session of the General Assembly

**Opening remarks by H.E. Peter Thomson,
UN Day Concert**

Mr. Secretary-General,
Deputy Minister Szabó,
Ambassador Bogyay,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with great pleasure that I join you all as we celebrate the 71st anniversary of the coming into force of the United Nations Charter. Our organization continues to inspire hope for the people of this world. And despite our difficulties, that inspiration and that hope will never diminish as long as the United Nations Charter stands.

The Charter tells us that our purpose is to develop friendly relations among nations, based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and to take the appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace.

As President of the General Assembly, I have the huge privilege of witnessing, on a daily basis, the unceasing resolve of our family of nations to pursue peace, human rights and sustainable development. We often fail, but one step backwards and two steps forward is still progress.

Terrible conflicts, terrorism, pervasive poverty and implacable climate change are dashing the hopes and eliminating the opportunities of millions of women, men and children. We all know that unless these challenges are tackled with sincere commitment and a sense of urgency, the prospects for our grandchildren and our planet are even worse.

We, who are tasked with meeting these global challenges must not, will not shirk from our responsibilities.

We have made a noble beginning in the landmark agreements of 2015, adopted in New York, Addis Ababa, Sendai and Paris. In these we have a masterplan to lead humanity to a more sustainable way of life on this planet, and to the ultimate attainment of universal peace: no sustainable peace without sustainable development is our mantra.

At the core of this masterplan are the Sustainable Development Goals. In the 71st session, we are committed to achieving meaningful progress in the implementation of all 17 SDGs. My office is

catalyzing major initiatives relating to our ocean's health; to sustainable finance; to gender equality; to poverty eradication, to sustainable peace and to 'SDG education'.

We must get the transformative message of the SDGs out to young people everywhere so that they see the goals as their rights and their responsibilities; for it is they who will in their own interests be the transformers.

Excellencies,

Allow me to briefly pay tribute to all those who pursue the values and principles of the United Nations in their daily work. I think at this time of our peacekeepers and peacemakers, our dedicated experts in the field, and of course our inspirational Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon.

Let us now remember those who made the ultimate sacrifice in the service of the United Nations. May they rest in peace. And let us be mindful of those who right now are risking their lives for the sake of the principles embodied in the Charter of the United Nations.

For them and all who look with hope towards the light blue flag of the United Nations, I make a plea on this 71st anniversary of the UN Charter. My plea is that you do not let this day close without resolving to find a way, for you as an individual within a community, to add your will and your resources to achieving momentum for the Sustainable Development Goals. For it is through them, that we will finally deliver on the high aspirations of the Charter of the United Nations.

On behalf of the UN and of you all, I thank the Government of Hungary and Hungarian State Orchestra for this evening's festivity.

Köszönöm [Thank you].