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**The 9<sup>th</sup> WSPU General Assembly**  
**13<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> November 2018**  
**Dusit Thani Bangkok, Thailand**

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**Concept Note on the Theme**  
**“Roles of the Parliament in Supporting Scout Movement towards SDGs Achievement”**

**Introduction**

Following the UN Millennium Summit in 2000, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have been established to address global social challenges such as poverty, hunger and health in order to improve the well-being of the vulnerable people of the world. The MDGs generated new and innovative partnerships and showed the immense value of setting ambitious goals. By putting people and their immediate needs at the forefront, the MDGs helped lifting more than one billion people out of extreme poverty. Yet inequalities persist and the progress has been uneven. The world's poor remain overwhelmingly concentrated in some parts of the world. Progress tends to bypass women and those who are lowest on the economic ladder or are disadvantaged because of their age, disability, or ethnicity. Disparities between rural and urban areas remain pronounced.

As the MDGs era comes to a conclusion, the 70<sup>th</sup> UN General Assembly in 2015 adopted a resolution titled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, which embraces 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Built upon the success of the MDGs and the goals yet to be fulfilled, the SDGs stimulate favorable actions towards the people, the planet, prosperity, peace and partnership required to achieve the agenda by 2030.

In 3 years after the adoption of the SDGs, eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is still the greatest global challenge and an indispensable part for sustainable development in all its dimensions. The unprecedented impacts of climate change disproportionately burden the poorest and most vulnerable. Owing to the climate factor and other anthropogenic activities, the world continues to lose biodiversity both on land and under water. Consequently, all stakeholders have to be engaged in the development process, especially children and youth, because young women and young men are key agents of change, who must be supported by a culture of innovation, sustainability and inclusiveness, to enable a better future for themselves and their communities in a just, equitable, tolerant, open, creative and socially inclusive world.

Whilst the government is usually highlighted when talking about the implementation of the development agenda, the parliament also carries a lot of weight. On the one hand, it is one of the key institutions central to SDG 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions, especially in promoting of the rule of law. On the other hand, it is the key enabling institution for the government's policy to implement all other SDGs. Without its support, government agencies responsible for each of the SDGs will fail to deliver their plans as significant government's policy implementation relies on primary legislation and budgets, both of which have to be approved by national parliaments.

This is the first WSPU General Assembly to adopt the SDGs as the underlying theme. Throughout the event, discussions will revolve around possible contributions of past WSPU activities for future scouting development and possible roles of national parliaments in supporting scout movement towards the achievement of the SDGs. In line with the Mission of Scouting, adopted by the 35<sup>th</sup> World Scout Conference in Durban, South Africa in 1999, such achievement would result in "a better world where people are self-fulfilled as individuals and play a constructive role in society". Particular emphasis of the discussions will be placed upon the contributions of scouting to SDG 3 on good health and well-being, SDG 4 on quality education, SDG 13 on climate action, SDG 14 on life below water, SDG 15 on life on land, SDG 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions, and SDG 17 on partnerships for the goals.

## **Objectives**

1. To review past WSPU activities and consolidate initiatives for scouting development in the future
2. To raise awareness of potentiality of the national legislature as one of the key institutions for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the achievement of the SDGs
3. To provide parliamentarians with opportunities to discuss their roles concerning youth empowerment and the scout movement in response to development challenges

## **Topics to be Discussed at the General Assembly**

### **Plenary Session: Review of WSPU Activities for Future Scouting Development**

Since the WSPU officially came into existence when the Constituent Assembly was held in 1991, there have been eight General Assemblies and two milestone documents, namely the Commitment of Valparaíso and the Manila Declaration. With the aims to support youth-related legislation and non-formal education, such as scouting, the aforesaid documents and meetings emphasize the roles of national parliaments and the WSPU to facilitate scouting and empower young people who are the crucial part for the achievement of sustainable development. However, many challenges and problems concerning youth development have occurred whilst solutions have become increasingly challenging. Therefore, it is time to look back at our past discussions and review outcomes of the activities at local, national as well as international levels, so as to accumulate lessons learned by the WSPU and come up with concrete initiatives to gear the youth up for future challenges through scouting and thus contribute towards SDG achievement.

In this plenary session, a speaker will be invited to give a reflection on WSPU activities in the past and suggest the directions towards which the organization should be heading in response to sustainable development. Also, participants will be encouraged to share their experience and best practices to empower the youth and develop the scout movement so that young people will be able to face future complex challenges and take the SDGs forward. It is desirable that the discussion revolve around legislative issues or instruments to pave the way for the said purposes. Furthermore, it would be ideal if this goal-oriented discussion could bring about solid policy recommendations for “creating a better world”, which lies at the heart of the Mission of Scouting.

#### Panel Discussion 1: Roles of the Parliament to Ensure Lifelong Learning

Amidst wide-ranging development challenges, people need to be empowered by essential knowledge and skills. Unequal access to quality education, lack of supportive learning environment and discrimination in education are among the issues that affect knowledge accumulation and development of necessary life skills which would arm people against those challenges. One important step to come up with the said issues is an initiative taken by UN member states to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”, which are SDG 4. This is where related roles of the parliament and scout-oriented parliamentarians need to be discussed.

The parliament is the principal legislative organ of the country in which representatives of the people assemble to undertake their legislative and check-and-balance roles. These include allocating and channeling resources for the implementation of the government’s educational policies towards the achievement of SDG 4. Also, these roles include the commitments of parliamentarians to voice out people’s concerns and oversee state administration. In this panel discussion, the panelists will be invited to give their reflections regarding the issues, and participants will thereafter be encouraged to exchange experience or best practices of their national legislatures in fulfilling SDG 4 with a particular focus on the promotion of lifelong learning opportunities and, preferably, strategic priorities of the World Organization of the Scout Movement (WOSM) on youth engagement and educational methods grounded in non-formal learning environment.

#### Panel Discussion 2: Possible Contributions of the WSPU to Achieve SDGs

After commenced in 2015, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has been integrated into policy-making and implementation of the UN member states. Since achieving as many as 17 goals and 169 targets is not an easy task, it is vital that measures coping with related socio-economic and environmental issues be pushed forward in a consistently progressive direction. Therefore, active collaboration among various stakeholders, supportive roles of parliamentarians and efficient policy implementation by the government of each country are indispensable for the achievement of the said goals and targets as stipulated in SDG 17 on partnerships for the goals.

The WSPU, which unites scout-oriented parliamentarians from all over the world, is also a potential driving force towards the achievement of the SDGs. In accordance with the Mission of Scouting, adopted at the 35<sup>th</sup> World Scout Conference, this panel discussion will focus on possible contributions of the WSPU to achieve the SDGs, particularly SDG 3 on good health and well-being and SDG 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions. The panelists will be invited to give their reflections on the issues, and the floor will thereafter be open for the participants. It is important that scout-oriented parliamentarians take the issues involving SDG 3 very seriously because poor health would undermine children’s abilities, affect their opportunities to enjoy the rights to education and, most importantly, prevent them

from engaging in activities with high social impact, which are part of the WOSM's strategic priorities. The discussion may also involve such closely related issues as the aging society and possible youth contributions to national well-being. Moreover, scout-oriented parliamentarians will be encouraged to discuss how the WSPU can contribute to the fulfilment of SDG 16 with an emphasis on continuous governance enhancement and promotion of diversity and social inclusion through scouting, which is also part of the WOSM's strategic priorities.

### Panel Discussion 3: Scouting and Parliamentary Roles in Synergizing Efforts in Response to Global Challenges

Caused by unbalanced factor-driven economic growth and industrialization, environmental degradation becomes one of the most serious challenges facing our planet. Whereas some effects of environmental degradation can be evidenced by deadly natural disasters in recent years, others appear in the more subtle phenomena, such as a sea level rise, ocean thermal expansion, ocean acidification, coastal erosion and desertification. Under the framework of the UN, SDG 13 on climate action, SDG 14 on life below water and SDG 15 on life on land, along with their respective targets, urge significant actions to meet those challenges. As regards the scout movement, the environmental dimension has long been included in the WOSM's framework. The Scout Centre of Excellence for Nature and Environment (SCENES), the World Conservation Badge and the World Scout Environment Programme (WSEP) were initiated to equip scouts around the world with readiness to dedicate for local and global environment.

International cooperation, be it in the forms of dialogue, partnership, knowledge sharing or technical assistance, is indispensable for the common solutions of these transboundary issues. In this panel discussion, the panelists will be invited to give their reflections on the issues, and the floor will thereafter be given to the participants. The discussion will revolve around the question how efforts can be synergized to support the youth, in general, and young volunteers, in particular, through non-formal education so as to empower them against global environmental challenges. It may also involve scouting and parliamentary roles in supporting the implementation of relevant international laws, such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Paris Agreement, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wildlife Fauna and Flora (CITES) as well as related agreements thereunder.

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