



**Meeting of the General Assembly Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals
United Nations - New York – 9-13 December 2013**

**European Union and its Member States - Speaking Points on “Needs of countries in
special situations, African countries, LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS, as well as specific
challenges facing the middle-income countries”
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**delivered by
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- As we enter the post-2015 era, the EU and its Member States stand by their commitment to Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS). We will continue to work together to deepen our partnership with them.

AFRICA

- The Africa-EU Strategic Partnership, established in 2007 reflects the shared vision and commitment to work towards common goals of Africa's 54 countries and the European Union's 28 Member States and a combined population of 1.5 billion citizens. Next April in Brussels, Europe and Africa will meet for the 4th Africa-Europe Summit to take this partnership to a new level. We will advance further in promoting sustainable development in our two regions, in nurturing and defending democracy and basic freedoms and in offering a better future to our citizens.
- We are – and are committed to remain - Africa's most important partner, as far as development aid, trade, investment, security and people-to-people contacts, are concerned

LDCs

- The EU and its Member States remain committed to the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action and determined to accompany Least Developed Countries in reaching the ambitious objectives they have set themselves, notably to meet the criteria for graduation for half of them by 2020. Last year, we confirmed our strong, transparent and predictable engagement to accompany LDCs in their national transition strategies to graduate from the LDC category, and encouraged other partners to do the same.

- Indeed, our development policy and aid will be increasingly focused on countries which need it most and where it has the greatest impact. In fact, the EU is the primary donor and trading partner to LDCs.
 - We have been a reliable development partner in our commitments relating to the LDCs, notably in terms of market access and ODA
 - LDCs will continue to benefit from duty-free quota-free market access to the EU market for all their products except arms and ammunition under the EU's reformed Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP), which will enter into force in January 2014. The EU's new GSP scheme focuses on countries most in need, thus creating considerably more space for LDC exports. Also, we are improving our aid for trade to target capacity building in LDCs;
- Looking beyond 2015, the EU and its member states will continue to accompany LDCs in their structural reforms to enhance productive capacity and unlock domestic potential for sustainable and inclusive growth. This includes through promoting effective government and inclusive institutions.

LLDCs

- With regard to Landlocked Developing Countries, the EU and its Member States will engage constructively in the preparation of the United Nation Comprehensive Ten-Year Review Conference, aiming at assessing progress made in the implementation of the Almaty Program of Action (APoA).
- We look forward to fruitful discussions to ensure a focused and efficient preparation so as to concentrate efforts on key bottle necks, including high transport and commercial transaction costs, transit, and unleashing the potential of trade.

SIDS

- The EU and its Member States also recognize the challenges and vulnerabilities faced by SIDS, in particular the impact of rising sea levels, changing weather patterns and other long-term effects of climate change, on top of the increasingly frequent natural and man-made disasters.
- The sustainable development of several SIDS is also threatened by a number of other factors, such as: geographic dispersion, isolation from main markets, food insecurity, problems with energy access, limited fresh water resources, fragile eco-systems and vulnerable biodiversity, land degradation, dependence on vulnerable coastal and marine resources, and often a high dependence on tourism. By fully integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development, the future post-2015 development agenda will contribute to tackling the specific difficulties and challenges faced by SIDS. Again, effective and inclusive institutions are essential in this regard.
- We welcome the convening of the 3rd UN conference on Small Island Developing States, and the theme proposed for the conference on “sustainable development of small island states through genuine and durable partnerships”. We look forward to a focused, effective and action oriented-conference. Partnerships - at different levels, anchored on national ownership, based upon mutual trust, equity, respect and mutual accountability, and engag-

ing the private sector, civil society, and other stakeholders - can be critical to a new paradigm moving beyond the traditional donor-recipient relationship.

- Aside from the above countries in special situations, the EU and its Member States will continue their political dialogue with middle-income countries, on poverty reduction, the fight against inequalities and sustainable development and other important themes such as trade, culture, open and inclusive government and security. This will require new forms of strategic cooperation based on shared interests and allow for joint initiatives to address global challenges.
- We acknowledge that progress in MICs is conducive to global efforts in realizing internationally agreed development goals and in achieving sustainable development, as well as welcome MIC's engagement in global efforts taking into account their needs and capacity to mobilize domestic resources.
- In this regard, we welcome the proactive role in particular of more advanced economies in the context of the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation and consider it instrumental to further work together with emerging donors.
- We also recognise that the world has evolved over the last decades, including the nature and magnitude of our global challenges, their cause and effects, and respective capabilities of each country to address them. The post-2015 development agenda should recognise such evolving dynamics.