

## SEVENTH SESSION OF THE OWG ON SDGs

6 – 10 January, 2014, New York

### **Statement by Cyprus on behalf of Troika of Cyprus-Singapore-UAE**

Sustainable cities and human settlements; Sustainable transport; Climate change and disaster risk reduction; Sustainable consumption and production, including chemicals and waste.

Mr. Co-chairs,

I deliver this statement on behalf of Cyprus-Singapore and UAE.

Half of the world's population lives in cities therefore a successful transformational sustainable change of our **cities** and towns is in fact half way towards universal achievement of sustainable development and poverty eradication. Our troika would like to thank the UN team for the very comprehensive and thorough TST issues brief. All themes of this session are fundamentally linked and interrelated. If we successfully manage to meet the sustainability challenge for our cities and human settlements we can tackle at the same time multiple other pressing challenges we are facing today. No city can achieve sustainability, enjoy inclusive and sustained economic growth, and have an economically productive, healthy and robust society without having in place policies that promote **sustainable transport, sustainable patterns of consumption and production**, resilience of its citizens to face **natural disasters and climate change** and a sound management of **chemicals and waste**. A sustainable city is a micrograph of what we ultimately want to achieve globally that is to eradicate poverty and to have economic and social development in a sustainable way. It is not therefore a hyperbole to say that there can be no sustainable world without sustainable cities. Their role in achieving global sustainability is vital and for that reason a SDG on cities is worth considering.

Cities and human settlements that are planned and developed through integrated planning and management approaches – i.e. governance - can contribute significantly to poverty eradication and sustainable development. There is a need for a holistic approach to urban development aiming at among others, affordable housing, reduction of slums, securing basic living standards and social services for all citizens without discrimination, in particular women and children, while seeking to achieve a sound and balanced management of natural resources and a safe and healthy environment for all. Urban sprawl should be regulated so that valuable land should be efficiently utilized while ensuring that the basic facilities, which include sustainable transport, water and sanitation are adequately met, taking into consideration the financial implications on the society. Fundamental changes in the way societies in particular urban societies consume and produce are indispensable for achieving global sustainable development.

Affordable and **sustainable transport including non motorized mobility**, the promotion, protection and restoration of safe and green urban spaces, the implementation of green infrastructure policies, the provision of safe and clean drinking water, sanitation and healthy air quality, are vital requirements for human well being and for the protection of biodiversity and natural resources. This is particularly true for cities that remain- as noted in the TST brief- large scale consumers of water, energy and natural and processed products as well as generators of green house gas emissions and waste. It is essential however that policies should be implemented that reduce the movement of rural populations to cities by providing jobs and adequate standard of living in the rural areas, thus making the problems of large cities easier to be handled.

**Chemicals and sustainable management of waste** through the 3 Rs (reduce, reuse, and recycle) are critical and so are disaster risk reduction, resilience and climate risks considerations in urban planning. The important role of municipal and local authorities in the transformational process should also be pointed out, as well as the importance in this respect of natural and cultural heritage and of sustainable tourism.

Mr. Co-chairs,

**Climate change and disaster risk**, as rightly mentioned in the TST brief, are fundamental threats to sustainable development and the eradication of poverty. They are both cross-cutting issues and should be mainstreamed in all policies and sectors. Special links can be seen in relation to the sustainable cities and the risks that coastal cities are under due to climate change and sea level rise. Within the UNFCCC framework, we look forward to adopting a new climate agreement in 2015 in Paris and hope that the UNSG's climate summit in September 2014 will give the appropriate political impetus for that. Disaster risk reduction and the building of resilience to disasters should be given appropriate consideration in the post 2015 development agenda. However, there should be a complementary and coherent approach to the relationship between the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction and the post-2015 development agenda.

The Rio + 20 Conference recognized that **sustainable production and consumption** is a prerequisite for sustainable development and should be approached in a holistic way. It is about implementation of the new development paradigm in our daily lives and activities and about putting theory into practice. SCP is all about improving the quality of life and well-being of people without increasing environmental degradation nor compromising the opportunities of future generations. It is therefore essential to decouple economic growth and environmental degradation in terms of exploitation of resources and pollution, apply life-cycle thinking to minimize the social and environmental impacts from all stages of the production and consumption process and guard against the re-bounce effect, where efficiency gains are cancelled by resulting increases in consumption. Sustainable Consumption and Production needs to be mainstreamed in all policies which need to be supported by regulatory, economic, communicative and voluntary instruments. In this regard we welcome the establishment of the board of the 10YFP of action and hope that 10YFP will help countries integrate SCP patterns in all sectors, plans and programs of their economies.

In short, Mr Co-Chairs, there is a clear indication that a SDG on sustainable cities and human settlements is practical and implementable, with possible targets such as slum reduction, governance, water and sanitation, energy, transportation, chemicals, disaster risk reduction and sustainable consumption and production. That is why our partner Singapore, which is a city-state, is co-organizing a side event on 7 January with China to showcase their flagship bilateral project – the Sino-Singapore Tianjin Eco-City – which is a model of sustainable urban development.

Mr. Co-chairs,

At the seventh session of the OWG, our vision begins to get flesh and bone and goals and targets will soon start to get form and shape. As we are entering soon in the second and final phase of our work which is to put in paper our recommendations to the General Assembly, we would like at this stage to join others in asking not to lose focus from our mission which is to develop global sustainable development goals and to submit a report, to the General Assembly containing a proposal for sustainable development goals for consideration and appropriate action. Finally our Troika would like to express its full support to the co-chairs and its readiness to cooperate with them as well as with all member states and other stakeholders in order to reach on time a successful final conclusion of our work.

Thank you.