



**Meeting of the General Assembly Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals
United Nations - New York – 3/5 March 2014**

Statement on behalf of the European Union and its Member States

**delivered by
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I have the honour to speak on behalf of the EU and its Member States. The statement will be made available on the website.

First of all, we want to thank the Co-Chairs for their dedication. We are determined to work actively with you and all partners to elaborate a proposal on Sustainable Development Goals to the General Assembly by the end of July. As reaffirmed at the 25th September Special Event on the MDGs, this will be an important input in the design of the post-2015 development agenda to be adopted at the summit next year.

The document on focus areas represents the broad discussions that have been undertaken during the OWG's stocktaking phase and is a useful basis to start the second phase of work in the OWG. Poverty eradication and sustainable development are intrinsically interlinked, and a more effective and balanced integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development is called for.

At this stage we would like to convey the following main observations on the co-chairs' document:

a) We welcome the concept of interlinkages. These interlinkages will need to be further elaborated and should be a key part of the work in the next stage of the OWG. If the new universal framework is to adequately respond to the urgencies of the post 2015 period, business as usual won't do. We are engaged in the design of a truly transformative agenda and we have to be innovative and creative in the ways in which we address interlinkages.

b) It will be important to ensure a human rights based approach across the focus areas. We welcome the recognition that providing equal opportunities for men and women, boys and girls, is necessary for the full realization of their rights, their potential, and their contribution to sustainable development, and that therefore achieving gender equality and women's empowerment is of the utmost importance. This dimension was highlighted by virtually all delegations during the consultations.

c) We appreciate that the document addresses peaceful and non-violent societies and capable institutions. We recognize the interlinkages between the issues but we believe that the issues of

peaceful and safe societies on the one hand, and human rights, good governance, effective institutions, democracy and the rule of law on the other, should be considered as two distinct focus areas, as the detailed content of the document actually shows. Indeed, people around the world consider that 'freedom from violence and personal safety' and an 'honest and accountable government' are among the top priorities (cf. the UN's MyWorld Survey). That merits much more prominence, since violence, instability and conflict are amongst the greatest impediment to poverty eradication. The case of conflict affected and fragile countries also needs further consideration if the future SDGs are to be relevant to these countries. Other cross-country challenges, such as illicit financial flows or organized crime should also be recognized. Moreover, we would also like these two focus areas to be better reflected in the interlinkages across many of the other focus areas (for instance, good and democratic governance, effective institutions and the rule of law makes a very significant contribution to promoting equality and economic growth; key aspects of the rule of law, such as birth registration and legal identity, are a prerequisite to access to health services or education; and of course an independent justice system with full respect for due process is essential to ensuring implementation in all other areas).

d) We recognise the importance of means of implementation for the success of the framework. The issue relates closely to the concept of the global partnership. When discussing means of implementation we should recall that it is the Expert Committee on Sustainable Development Financing that is mandated to propose options on an effective sustainable development financing strategy to facilitate the mobilisation of resources and their effective use in achieving sustainable development objectives. In this regard we welcome the exchange of views that is organized on Wednesday. For the work falling under the responsibility of the SDG OWG, the importance of domestic resource mobilisation, the role of the private sector, civil society and other stakeholders, and of coherent policies, would need to be fully considered and appreciated. Development effectiveness also needs to be ensured, building on established principles of inclusive partnerships, transparency and accountability, focus on results and country ownership. The Busan Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation can provide valuable experience in this area.

e) Economic growth needs to be both inclusive and sustainable, in order to ensure human wellbeing and dignity today, while simultaneously respecting the needs of generations to come. In general, we would welcome environmental sustainability featuring more strongly across the whole framework.

While there are several other additional comments I could make on specific points that are dear to us, I will limit myself to what I have said and we will listen with interest to the interventions of other delegations.

Co-chairs

We are confident we can keep working under your leadership and look forward to further discussions on how to continue this process together based on proposals from you that reflect in a balanced manner the views expressed in this open working group, including those of stakeholders.