

**10th Session of the Open Working Group on the Sustainable Development Goals  
31 March - 04 April, 2014**

Statement by Brazil and Nicaragua

Mr. Co-chair,

Brazil and Nicaragua support the statement by Bolivia on behalf the G-77 and China.

In our national capacities, we wish also to congratulate the co-Chairs for the work in preparation of this meeting. Your letter of 18 March, the revised focus areas and the organization of issues reflect forward movement within the overall parameters of positions expressed by Members last time we met.

The grouping of focus areas into 8 clusters is a useful tool to organize this week's session. Whether or not they are an acceptable basis for streamlining 19 focus areas into something less numerous is a decision that Members of the OWG must take in due course. Brazil and Nicaragua, as I am sure other troikas, will have much to say on clustering as we go along. Essentially, however, they must meet the test of the Rio+20 outcome document, and should not overstate issues that are not central to the Rio consensus, or attempt to introduce elements that may alienate us from the essential goal of devising an agenda on growth, social inclusion and environmental sustainability.

We need to work on the transformational nature of the SDGs, their global scope, universal applicability and the common but differentiated responsibilities that should apply across the board, as appropriate. Leadership from the developed countries is warranted on key issues, such as promoting more sustainable consumption patterns and committing to means of implementation commensurate with the ambition of the goals.

On the 19 focus areas, we wish to make the following comments, taking the Rio+20 document as our basis.

The overall content of the focus areas does not translate the systemic dimensions of universality with the clarity we are looking for. Most areas are described in ways that seem to be addressing challenges of less developed countries only, not those of developed ones. On the other hand, very little is said about differentiation in accordance with "respective capacities" when it comes to the means of implementation. As a result of this double distortion, the text as currently drafted places disproportionate burden on

developing countries -- they not only have to commit to attaining the goals, they also are expected to find the means to do it.

"Peaceful and non-violent societies, capable institutions" was the only focus area left unclustered, out of 19. This says something about it being a "point outside the curve", or the odd man out in relation to the mandate of Rio+20. We found no grounds for dealing with it in the Rio consensus, and insisting on this divisive issue might prove to be a costly distraction, keeping us from making good progress on the core social, economic and environmental challenges facing us in the 21st century. The agenda of fighting organized crime, dealing with violence, corruption and conflict already has its appropriate venue in the UN. Some issues that currently appear under the peaceful and non-violent societies cluster, including "rule of law" (to the extent that it means things like access to justice or the legal empowerment of the poor), could, perhaps, find acceptable formulation under other existing areas, such as means of implementation. The concerns and special needs of conflict-affected countries may be addressed under different topics, as they are relevant to developing countries more broadly.

Rio+20 speaks of the international dimension of the rule of law, and this element is absent from the co-Chair's text. Rule of law, internationally, means state and non-state actors fully respecting legally binding treaties and commitments as well as engaging in the reform of existing global governance mechanisms with a view to increasing the voice and representation of developing countries, making them more democratic and accountable. The concept of "policy space" also needs to be clearly recognized and reaffirmed in the document, in its multiple dimensions, especially to safeguard national specificities, plurality and diversity. There is no "one size fits all" concept of the rule of law for different sovereign nations, unless, of course, issues have been codified internationally and are binding for that state.

We take note of the reference to means of implementation under each focus area, but we expect to incorporate concrete proposals and to further develop this issue, including on its systemic dimensions. We need to learn the lessons of MDG 8, which fell short of expectations in part due to a disconnect with the substantive and action oriented other goals.

Mr. Co-Chair,

Nicaragua and Brazil support a short narrative in the form of a Chapeau to the SDGs, referencing key principles from the Rio+20 document, without reopening it, in particular the principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities -- CBDR.

As to methodology, Nicaragua and Brazil believe it would be useful for the Group to receive from the co-Chairs a suggested timeline with expected outcomes for the next meetings, following the example of the Committee on Finance for Sustainable Development.

We would also support requesting the Secretariat to mobilize the help of the UN Development System, under the leadership of DESA, to contribute information that might be useful for the elaboration of targets and indicators in each specific area, within the respective attributions and mandates of consulted UN entities.

I thank you, Mr. Co-chair.