

**2<sup>nd</sup> Session of Intergovernmental Negotiations on Post-2015 Development Agenda  
February 20, 2015**

**Intervention by Mr. Amit Narang, Counsellor, Permanent Mission of India**

**Mr. Co-Facilitator,**

Thank you for sharing the Discussion draft. We align ourselves with the statement delivered by South Africa on behalf of G-77.

Even though we had a rich exchange of views on your initial Elements paper, we feel there is still a long way to go before we get the 'Declaration we Want'.

At the outset, we would note that this is just a Discussion draft, meant to elicit comments and reactions. This would have no status going forward and will co-exist with the Elements Paper.

We would also reiterate that these papers are not a substitute to nor a basis for the zero draft that we expect to receive in May this year and which will then be negotiated intergovernmentally for adoption by member states.

Generally, while we are happy that the Discussion draft does capture many of the issues, it does so in manner that is selective and somehow disturbs the balance of the SDGs.

Before I turn to substantive comments on paras, I would like to share some views of the overall nature of this document.

**Mr. Co-Facilitator,**

Simplicity is a virtue. Communication is important.

Leonardo da Vinci is supposed to have said that simplicity is the ultimate sophistication. However, just as we should avoid over-sophistication, we should also eschew the tendency to be over-simplistic.

We wholeheartedly agree with the proposal of Netherlands that our Declaration should be understandable to a 13-year old. At the same time, it should not be over-simplified to such an extent that it is *only* understandable to a 13-year old.

At the end of the day, or at the beginning of it, the Declaration is a high political document. We must recognize this fact. It will be adopted by our Heads of State and Governments. It

can neither be casual about some key principles and precepts, nor can such concepts be discarded in the name of ease of comprehension, nor for any perceived disdain for 'agreed language'.

Communicability cannot be at the cost of substance.

**Mr. Co-Facilitator,**

We would like to underscore that for us, the chapeau of the SDGs is of considerable importance, but this has somehow been relegated to the background of our discussion.

The chapeau in itself contains a political balance and in addition some important understandings and guidance, which cannot be separated from the SDGs themselves. The chapeau should therefore be integrated into the Declaration. Of particular importance of para 18 of the Chapeau which must be reproduced as it is, given its key importance.

**Mr. Co-Facilitator,**

The document also confuses principles, purposes and values.

The reference to some values from the Millennium Declaration is selective. We should refer instead to the timeless principles that are in the Preamble to the UN Charter and not those which need to be defined.

The notion of 'shared responsibility' for example does not take into account the evolution of the development agenda since the year 2000.

SDGs are markedly different - broad, integrated and comprehensive – from MDGs. They also incorporate, for the first time, the environmental dimension both within and across goals.

Therefore we see no contradiction in the application of Rio principles to this entire agenda. In fact, we feel it extremely important that the Rio principles, in particular the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, must be explicitly and unequivocally reaffirmed in an early part of the Declaration.

We do not agree with those who feel that this principle applies to a bygone era and nor too with their claim that it is somehow inconsistent with the notion of universality.

CBDR is relevant to the current agenda and has been reaffirmed several times by consensus and at the highest levels even in recent months. In fact, in the MDG Special Event outcome document of September 2013, which launched intergovernmental negotiations on Post-

2015 Development Agenda world leaders had reaffirmed this principle, thus establishing clearly its links with this process.

For those who claim to dislike the so-called North-South dichotomy would do well to recount how this dichotomy is being willfully perpetuated even today, through unequal international governance structures which protect the privileged position of some over others, or through exclusive settings in which policies relevant to the entire agenda, for example the norms for development aid, continue to be made.

The second claim, of inconsistency of this principle with universality is equally problematic. Universality is dear to us too, because it means that for the first time, developed countries would also be held to account for their actions. This is in turn linked with the integrated nature of the agenda, which speaks to issues such as unsustainable consumption patterns (an issue that is conspicuous by its absence in the draft), which are particularly, if not entirely relevant to actions by developed countries.

Turning to specific paragraphs **Mr. Co-Facilitator,**

In Para 2, the emphasis on completing unfinished business is welcome. However, equal emphasis must be given to the lessons on *why* the achievement has been uneven, in particular the failure to deliver on the global partnership for financing and technology transfer.

In para 3, some caution in crafting language about today's challenges would be in order. The manner in which they are listed is problematic. Poverty eradication is itself the greatest global challenge and must be mentioned as such.

For others we need not be selective. The current global consensus on global challenges is contained holistically in the SDGs.

Moreover, a document of the 21<sup>st</sup> century cannot *not* mention the digital divide.

**Mr. Co-Facilitator,**

The Declaration should fully endorse the SDGs not contextualize them. The SDGs are not the *basis* of the new agenda, they are its actionable *core*.

We agree with the United States that para 7 on poverty eradication needs to be moved upfront. Apart from reiterating that eradication of poverty is the greatest global challenge, the Declaration should recognize it as an indispensable requirement for sustainable development and as the central and overarching objective of the agenda. For us, this is self-explanatory and of central importance.

While the ideal of no target to be considered met is an important one, this should not be at the cost of recognizing progress. We need to ensure that all progress will nevertheless be duly measured and accounted for.

Para 5 is an example of selective cherry picking from the SDGs thus disturbing the delicate balance of the package. We agree with the distinguished Ambassador of Ethiopia that these are important issues, but then so are the other 16 goals. In case there is any hierarchy in the SDGs, we are not aware of it. We do not therefore visualize this para in the final Declaration.

We support the call for giving higher prominence to gender equality in the Declaration.

The lack of a strong reference to technology, which holds the golden key to the problem of sustainability, is jarring by its absence. We must embrace the notion that technology is key and that meaningful cooperation of sharing its fruits is not only useful, it is also essential if we are to combat climate change and save our planet.

We support a reference to climate change in the Declaration, which must be accompanied with a reference to the principles and provisions of the UNFCCC. However, we would not support language, as in the current draft, that incorrectly classifies the new agreement or indeed prejudices or prejudices the outcomes of current negotiations under UNFCCC.

We support the call by AOSIS for giving more prominence to 'resilience'.

In para 12, we should talk not only strengthening the UN but also reforming it, including its primary organs. On the one hand we insist on incorporating political issues into the agenda, but then we artificially want to restrict the inclusion of elements that are most germane to international governance.

Para 15 should recall the linkage between the Bretton Woods institutions, the WTO and the United Nations and the failure of the institutional framework created 70 years ago evident in absence of reform of global governance institutions.

**Mr. Co-Facilitator,**

The reference to Synthesis Report needs calibration - it is a prism not a reference structure through which SDGs can be seen.

The six elements proposed by the SG cannot be considered a basis for framing without adequate discussion. There is a lot of disagreement on the number and nature of elements required. We clearly need to also agree *whether* we need such elements or that they would provide value-addition to the Declaration.

On our part, if the intention is to aid communication, we prefer the 4 Ps – People, Prosperity, Planet and Partnership, which speak to the three dimensions of sustainable development plus the means of implementation.

The notion of ‘Justice’ seems better replaced by a concept such as ‘Equity’, which speaks to equality, dignity and inter- and intra-generational solidarity.

The reference to the Addis Ababa is factually incorrect. While it would certainly complement and support the post-2015 Development Agenda, we would not at this stage like to prejudge the nature and outcome of this fundamentally important conference.

The para on follow-up and review must make a reference to the review of the revitalized global partnership, a key weakness of the MDGs. We suggest deleting the term ‘mutual accountability’.

I thank you once again for this opportunity to share some thoughts.