



REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY!

STATEMENT

BY

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PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA

AT THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT RIO+20
"THE FUTURE WE WANT"

RIO DE JANEIRO, 21 JUNE 2012

President Rousseff,
Mr. Secretary-General of the United Nations,
Mr. Secretary-General of the conference,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me begin with words of gratitude and appreciation to our Brazilian hosts and to the beautiful City of Rio for their warm hospitality.

Twenty years ago it was here, in Rio, where the International community, at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, approved a vision towards a cleaner, greener and more humane world. As a result, hundreds of millions of people all over the world have been saved from poverty. More children and young people than ever have access to education. Modern technologies broaden peoples' horizons and expand their choices and capabilities.

There is a global consensus that the speed of our progress so far has been slow and unsatisfactory. One billion human beings around the world still are undernourished. Millions of children die from starvation and diseases that can be prevented. As natural resources are depleting, the world population is rapidly increasing. Global warming, demographic problems and restricted energy resources threaten the long term future of our children. Focusing only on growth, the world economy rapidly produces the biggest ever waste depot in the history of human mankind and that is our atmosphere.

We have repeatedly renewed our political commitments to sustainable development since 1992. But it is also obvious that many of our strategies and action plans remain on paper. Let me share some thoughts on what is needed and how my country - Bulgaria will contribute to our common goals:

First, we welcome the proposal for adopting Sustainable Development Goals. We need clear, tangible outcomes with goals, operational targets and actions to be implemented at both international and national level within agreed timeframes. We should also pursue a coherent post-2015 development framework building upon the results of the Millennium Development Goals review. The elaboration of new

benchmarks should be an inclusive process at every level – local, national and global.

Second, Bulgaria supports an improved and more effective UN role for coordination, monitoring and review of implementation process. We need to strengthen and improve the current institutional framework, working on the basis of existing structures where possible. But we should not hesitate to transform, upgrade and even create new institutions, particularly in the field of environmental protection.

Third, achieving sustainable development is a matter of partnerships and networking. It will require the biggest demonstration of collective will, courage, and leadership, that history has seen so far. We all – every country, every organization, every individual, must unite our efforts and implement, within our capacities, policies, economic models, social behaviour and personal lifestyles. Commitment and actions are required by all countries, both developed and developing. Each state must contribute according to its capabilities by creating the necessary regulatory and implementation framework. We need to fully harness the energy and creativity of the private sector, to encourage its efforts to conduct business in a socially and environmentally responsible manner. Active involvement and participation by NGOs and civil society is also a must. Since we take now long term commitments and decisions young people should take part in the decision-making process today.

Every individual must embrace sustainable development as a personal cause and constantly think and act in a “green” and sustainable manner. Such a commitment will require a fundamental change in thinking and mentality which cannot happen without raising public awareness and educating people.

Bulgaria welcomes yesterday’s launch by UNESCO and other partners of the Higher Education Initiative for Sustainable Development. Bulgarian institutions work on our long term National Development Plan 2020. Achieving economic, social and environmental sustainability, good education, investing in innovations, renewable sources of energy and energy efficiency is

among the top priorities of Bulgaria 2020. Let me assure you that the principle “Grow now clean up later” is not valid for Bulgaria.

Working on 2020 Strategy the Bulgarian Presidency has applied three basic principles, we believe can help politicians and governments around the world:

First basic principle: When growing, be sure you make progress too. Some grow, but do not make progress. Others grow at the cost of the next generation. This is not the growth we believe in Bulgaria. My country has extremely low government debt, just 16% of GDP, and is the only European country with increased credit rating during the crises. All this is a result of the culture of stability and fiscal discipline the Bulgarian governments embraced.

Second basic principle: By growing, focus on qualities, not just numbers and quantities. Spending billions should not overwhelm politicians’ imagination. Getting better is more important than getting bigger. Better educated, more productive and competitive nations are those which get richer and prosperous. I believe that the cheapest energy is the saved one. Therefore, achieving energy efficiency is our main priority and we have already started our national efficiency program.

Third basic principle: Growth should be sustainable – please invite next generation.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Beyond political declarations and agreements simple actions are needed. Let me sum up the three basic Bulgarian 2020 principles: Sustainable growth that expands qualities and propels human and environmental progress is achievable.

Let us stay united, committed and cooperate beyond our national responsibilities and limitations. By doing so, we will succeed on our way towards sustainable human and environmental well-being for all. Thank you for your attention!