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Topic: Turning Political Commitments into Action

Finland: Mr. Stefan Wallin, Secretary of State, Ministry of the Environment

Mr. Chairman, distinguished Ministers, Ladies and Gentlemen

Finnish Government sets the eradication of extreme poverty and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as the main goal in our development cooperation. The Government's commitment includes a reaffirmation to reach 0,7% ODA of our GNP and a pledge to promote coherence of all our policies in support of the poverty eradication target.

The UN Major Event in September this year will provide the international community with an opportunity to step up our collective efforts towards meeting the MDG's. It is important to recognize the complementarity between the MDG's and, for example, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. MDG 7 on ensuring environmental sustainability, sets obligations for both developed and developing countries. Water, sanitation and human settlements are key areas for achievement of other MDG's.

We are all aware that a major breakthrough is needed for achieving the MDG's. On the one hand, developing countries must fulfill their commitments and mobilize their domestic resources, reform their institutions and adopt effective economic and social policies. Developing countries must also follow-up their broader commitments to democracy, human rights and good governance.

On the other hand, developed countries must carry out their responsibilities by increasing and improving development assistance, promoting technology transfer, embracing wider and deeper debt relief, programmes, and making commitments for accelerated progress in completing the Doha trade negotiations.

Mr Chairman,

In his report to Major Event the Secretary General underlines that our whole existence and development depends on environmental sustainability. Desertification, biodiversity and climate change must be addressed as part of a wider security. The report calls for a more inclusive international framework beyond 2012 to mitigate climate change. This is needed e.g. for sufficient drinking water and arable land.

The Major Event in September must be made more than a simple stocktaking exercise. It must be used as an opportunity to accelerate the implementation of the MDG's, but also to strengthen the United Nations. The Secretary General's report is bold, but his recommendations are achievable. We commend him for that approach.

The commitments cannot be achieved unless the multilateral system is supportive of them. For this reason Finland supports the proposal to strengthen international environmental governance.

We are convinced that the time for action is now if we are to meet the MDG's by 2015. Nor can the action wait if we are to forge a much needed new security consensus based on the recognition that threats are interlinked.

Thank you!
