



Permanent Mission  
of the Federal Republic of Germany  
to the United Nations  
New York

## **Statement**

by  
**H.E. Ambassador Dr. Peter Wittig**  
**Permanent Representative of Germany**  
**to the United Nations**

**First formal meeting of the Open Working Group**  
**on**  
**Sustainable Development Goals (OWG SDGs)**

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*(check against delivery)*



Thank You, Mr. Co-chair for giving me the floor. Let me also congratulate the two co-chairs for their election. I wish them all the best for their future work.

At the outset allow me to thank the two co-facilitators who have worked very hard over the last days to reach agreement on all issues related to the organisation of this first formal meeting of the group.

Let me also associate myself with the statement made by France, which is chairing the French-German-Swiss team in the Open Working Group in the month of March.

Germany is very committed to contribute to the work of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals and keen to start the substantial work. We have the task to deliver no less than a meaningful contribution on how our countries, our economies and our societies may prosper sustainably in the decades to come. We will need courage and inspiration to create the future we want.

Development can only be sustainable if all three dimensions of sustainability are taken into account on equal footing. Today there is no doubt that sustainable development concerns all of us, not merely the South or merely the North.

Eradicating poverty, improving the living conditions worldwide and securing the planet's ecosystem services are the great challenges of the future. They are interlinked and must no longer be treated in isolation. Their growing interdependencies require a much more holistic approach to development than the one we practiced in the past.

Let me mention three key aspects, which we need to address in our future work:

First: These new goals are going to be universal and valid for all countries, yet they need to be meaningful and applicable for each and every individual state. They need to reflect all three dimensions of sustainability in an appropriate manner, yet be concise and easy to communicate. And we need to have them measured so that we can see the progress.

Second: We also need to take into account the interlinkages between different sectors, for example between water, energy and food.

Third: We need convergence. We need to merge the post-MDG-process and the SDG-process. As the SDGs are supposed to be integrated in the overarching post-2015-UN development agenda, both processes must be coordinated and dealt with as one process as early as possible. The world needs one set of goals to respond to the global challenges of poverty eradication and sustainable development. These goals are going to address all

countries worldwide. And: A strong national commitment for sustainable development in every country is key to cope with the global challenges we are facing today.

Mr. Chairman, let me also stress the importance of stakeholder participation. Effective and innovative participation mechanisms are of utmost importance to give them visibility and make their voice heard. I am convinced that input from stakeholders and experts will enrich our discussions and contribute to our work substantially.

To conclude let me remind us all that a historic chance is given to us here: to jointly elaborate a strategic document that will globally serve as a guide for sustainable development. It is in this spirit that I want to encourage us all to do start our substantive work and fulfil the task given to us by our heads of state and government in Rio – to submit a proposal for SDGs to the General Assembly in autumn next year.

I wish us all fruitful discussions today and a successful work in the months ahead.

Thank you.