

Stocktaking Session of the Intergovernmental Negotiations on the Post-2015 Development Agenda

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Statement by the Republic of Seychelles delivered by

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Co-Facilitators,

Seychelles aligns itself with the statement on behalf of AOSIS, the Alliance of Small Island States, delivered by the distinguished Permanent Representative of Maldives, and with that by the South Africa on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

2015 is an auspicious year, as it marks the end of the landmark Millennium Development Goals and the beginning of an all-inclusive transformative change with the second generation Sustainable Development Goals taking us through to 2030.

As Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon stated in his intervention on 4th December 2014, “The new global agenda must be centred on people and the planet and underpinned by human rights.” He called on all member states to be “innovative, inclusive, agile, determined and coordinated” in negotiating the post-2015 agenda that will usher in an era of sustainable development.

Ultimately, the aim of all development efforts is to bring about sustainable improvements in human wellbeing. This calls for a substantial transformation in approaches to development, one which effectively blends social progress, inclusive and equitable growth, and sustainable environmental management while respecting universal human rights and international norms.

While the SDGs are expected to have universal applicability, they will also need to be adaptable to different contexts and situations. The implementation frameworks should enable different countries, communities and groups to address the goals in terms of their own specificities, and target actions at a range of levels.

Seychelles has achieved almost all the MDGs, especially those relating to education, health and social development. Access to ten years of education provided free at the point of use is at 96%, and free basic health care (including universal coverage for essential medicines and anti-retroviral therapy) is available to all. There is almost universal access to safe drinking water and sanitation, and good housing provision. The country also has a high literacy rate (97%), significantly low infant mortality and high life expectancy at birth (72 years).

However, in the process of working to achieve the MDGs, a number of issues came to the fore for Seychelles which I wish to take a minute to share with you. The main issues were the need for improved data gathering and dissemination, the capacity to undertake sustained monitoring over time, the country's limited pool of qualified and experienced professionals within a small labour force, reduction in external development assistance, and the importance of addressing human development in terms of sustainable development.

It is agreed the SDGs should be universal in terms of presenting a prioritised set of common aspirations for all countries, developed and developing alike. The mutual dependence of economic, social and environmental outcomes is also recognized as an important principle of sustainable development. This implies an integrated approach to the formulation of the goals, rather than the economic, social and environmental aspects of sustainable development being considered as separate pillars with their own sets of specific goals.

The 17 proposed sustainable development goals clearly express a comprehensive agenda aimed at ending poverty, achieving shared prosperity, protecting the planet and leaving no one behind. Seychelles therefore believes the current number and nature of the goals should be retained.

Seychelles notably appreciates Goal 14 to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources, which to us are a cornerstone of our sustainable development as a "large ocean state", as we do Goal 13 to take urgent action to combat climate change. Our oceans, which are the drivers of the Earth's climate, are a common heritage which both developed and developing states share and depend on, providing food, goods and services to even the most landlocked of countries.

Seychelles would also like to emphasize the need to give due prominence to the particular vulnerabilities of Small Island Developing States, which have been repeatedly, and continue to be recognised by the international community as a special case for development. We reiterate the importance of strong and consolidated action backed by adequate financial support for the achievement of the goals as laid out in the SAMOA Pathway, the outcome document of last year's Samoa conference on SIDS.

The strengths of the MDGs should be reflected in the SDGs and there should be clear national targets and indicators to monitor progress. Seychelles also maintains that the SDGs should be concise, easy to communicate, focused, action-oriented, achievable and measurable, backed by strong mechanisms for regular monitoring of their implementation.

The development of a resilience index for SIDS would be a helpful tool for measuring progress.

We stand together now, and need to find a new determination to implement the Post-2015 Development Agenda so as to achieve a life of dignity for all where no one is left behind.

Thank you