

Statements for the Stocktaking Session
January 21, 2015

Thank you, Mr. Co-chair.

As this is the first time that I have taken the floor as Canada's Chief Negotiator, I would like to provide a brief overview of Canada's Post-2015 priorities before I turn to the issues at hand.

The post-2015 development agenda must take up the unfinished business of the MDGs, but it must also improve on them by focusing on evidence, quality, and actionable outcomes. This is challenging because the Agenda, incorporating all three elements of sustainable development, will be so much broader in scope than the MDGs. This makes it all the more important that our objectives be focussed, measurable and achievable.

The importance of these factors has been underscored by our experience with maternal, newborn and child health, which is Canada's foremost priority for the Agenda. We owe it to the women and children of the world to maintain attention to this unfinished business from the MDGs.

A second Canadian priority is job creation and sustainable economic growth. We are advocating for an Agenda that includes improving the investment climate, business growth, productivity, competitiveness, and skills development. The economic elements must focus on the poorest and most vulnerable, particularly with an emphasis on women's economic empowerment.

There are other issues Canada holds dear which echo across many targets, and many goals. These include empowerment of women and girls, child protection, and child, early and forced marriage.

Mr. Co-Chair,

Allow me now to turn to the Means of Implementation.

With an ambitious Agenda, the Means of Implementation also need to be ambitious. Official Development Assistance continues to be central to development work, in particular in the least developed countries, and in those affected by conflict. It is important that we sustain our efforts in this regard. However, it is also clear that the investments required to implement the post-2015 Agenda will vastly exceed ODA flows - even if those flows were to be radically increased. We must therefore look to maximize all inputs, financial and non-financial, public and private. We will need to bring in new partners and new funding models. Canada is taking the lead in exploring blended funding models, which are being considered in Davos this week. We believe in the power of the public sector as an enabler and a catalytic investor. Used creatively, ODA can leverage many times its own value in private investments.

Leveraging human capacity is equally important. Our efforts will not be sustainable without the active and full engagement of all key stakeholders—governments, parliaments, civil society, private sector, academics, scientist, researchers, and above all the poorest and most vulnerable. We must look for and find ways to harness all available resources from all sources. Sometimes the best ideas come from the grassroots. Most often, these ideas come from a constructive dialogue among stakeholders.

While there are a number of fora which promote multi-stakeholder dialogue, Canada believes the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation is particularly well placed to play a key role in supporting and monitoring the implementation of the Post 2015 Agenda.

The Global Partnership is also a great venue for sharing lessons learned. The means of implementation and our partner relationships will need to evolve as we implement. We will need to be practical and concrete, but also mindful not to be overly prescriptive, so as to encourage innovation and learn as we go.

Mr. Co-Chair,

Canada attaches high priority to the issue of monitoring and review, as we are convinced that the credibility and legitimacy of the post-2015 agenda will depend on a robust, effective and efficient monitoring and accountability framework. In our view, this framework must be developed together with the elaboration and design of the post-2015 development agenda. We cannot afford to wait until the entire post-2015 agenda is set before we undertake this critical discussion. This is one of the most important lessons we can learn from our MDG experience.

Of course, the framework we are working to establish is inherently different from the MDGs. It covers a broader set of issues, and many more stakeholders are involved in the design and implementation of the new agenda. We need to explore innovative monitoring and accountability mechanisms that are guided by principles of efficiency, flexibility, openness and transparency. This will not come without challenges – but we have a number of good experiences to build on. On this point, we believe a structured mapping of existing mechanisms, including details about their strengths and weaknesses, would help us make informed decisions about how we can best take advantage of models that have shown success.

The accountability framework should be a participatory and inclusive process, one that promotes cooperation and dialogue between the many stakeholders involved. The Global Partnership could potentially play a significant role in engaging stakeholders.

The framework will need to be supported by quality, timely, disaggregated, comparable and open data. We are pleased to see an emerging consensus for a data-driven monitoring system. Data and knowledge gaps will have to be narrowed, and the data revolution will have to be pursued to allow for more timely, nuanced, responsive and effective decision-making, planning and programming.

There have been many discussions about how to operationalize the data revolution in support of the new agenda. Improvements in civil registration and vital statistics, in particular, will be required to enable more citizens to access basic services and protections - and to literally and metaphorically be counted. As the Independent Expert Advisory Group told us, a well-functioning CRVS system is vital for policy making and for monitoring, for generating statistics for policy formulation, planning and implementation, and for identifying inequalities in access to services and differences in outcomes.

Of course, more data does not necessarily translate into better policies on the ground. Good quality real-time data needs to be synthesized and analyzed to ensure that our decision-making is evidence-based. It will therefore be critical to enhance the statistical capacity of developing countries at the national level, to ensure better measuring, monitoring and managing for development results.

Lastly, Canada believes that the monitoring and accountability framework should aim to advance integration and coherence. It must therefore take into account existing mechanisms. Since Rio+20, we have established the High Level Political Forum, and strengthened ECOSOC. We need to ensure that whatever framework we develop can be accommodated by the institutional instruments we already have at our disposal.

Unquestionably, the need for a strong monitoring and accountability framework must inform how we approach other aspects of the Post-2015 Agenda. For example, if we adopt targets which cannot be effectively measured, we not only jeopardize the implementation of the post-2015 Goals, we risk undermining the long term credibility of the broader Agenda. Equally importantly, we need to take into account the burden which monitoring the Agenda will place upon our national statistical systems. We all agree we need an ambitious, aspirational Agenda, but it must be one that can realistically be tracked and measured.

Finally, in terms of ensuring that the SDGs continue to resonate with our publics, we must address the issue of nomenclature. While the name "Post-2015 Development Agenda" may serve a functional purpose for now, it may not be an inspiring choice for the title once it has been finalized, nor would it make much sense in 2020. We look forward to exploring alternatives as we move forward with the process. Thank you.