

Intergovernmental negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda

Negotiation session 17-20 February 2015 on the Declaration

Statement by the Permanent Representative of Belgium on the 17th of February

- *Belgium aligns itself with the declaration made by the representative of the EU. I would like to take this opportunity to share some thoughts about the need to have a concise, clear and accessible declaration.*
- *A clear and accessible declaration is important, because our leaders at country level but also the leaders of towns small and big, our members of parliament, business leaders at all levels, NGO's and the citizens of the world, all should understand what the SDGs are and why they are important. And above all, by reading the declaration, people have to feel engaged and mobilized to participate in the global effort to implement the SDGs. This is even more so important because of the technical and complex nature of the SDGs and the targets themselves. One cannot expect that people will get inspired by the 17 SDGs and the 169 targets without a clear guidance about what the agenda is all about. The declaration should give this guidance. We want and we need a broad constituency for our agenda, let's write the declaration in such a way that it speaks to a broad constituency.*
- *This means that we should avoid typical UN language. We must use a language that is also meaningful outside of our New York bubble. I understand that this might not be an easy task. But there are good examples. Many things have been said about the 6 elements of the UNSG synthesis report. But the UNSG synthesis is also useful in many other ways. I would like to suggest that we reread again the first chapter of the synthesis report. It is clear, it is compelling, it is visionary and ambitious and it calls the reader to join the action. This chapter could be an inspiration to all of us in the discussions we are having this week.*
- *And we have to be honest. If we want this declaration to be different, if we want a 'no business as usual declaration', we might also have to change the way we draft it. We therefore would like to repeat the invitation to all to exercise restraint and avoid specific thematic proposals for the declaration. Let's focus our discussions this week on the fundamentals of the agenda and on the role the declaration should play. Belgium in particular thinks that the co-facilitators will have a major role in drafting of declaration; we believe it should be their task to translate our discussions into a meaningful declaration. We trust and fully believe in the capacities of our co-facilitators to do so.*