

U.S. Statement on the Political Declaration
Post-2015 Intergovernmental Negotiation Process, February Session
As delivered by Tony Pipa, U.S. Lead Negotiator for the Post-2015 Process
February 17, 2015

Thank you to the Co-facilitators for your hard work to pull together this Elements Paper. We believe it to be a very good starting point, and look forward to the discussion that will follow. Thank you also for your flexibility on the work program in the week ahead of us, and just a brief word about our process.

As we have said in previous statements, **we benefited immensely from the interactivity of the Open Working Group**, and relatedly, the extent to which the co-chairs encouraged this back-and-forth directly during that process. Member states talked directly to one another, about ideas. We see this week as an opportunity to discuss the elements and building blocks, with member state interaction to forge agreement on what the declaration needs to speak to and how.

We look forward to making as much headway as possible this week on the elements of the declaration but see the outcome in September as an integrated whole, which requires openness and flexibility to ensure we have the chance to ensure that the key elements of the outcome reinforce each other.

Substance

As you have referenced when kicking us off, we strongly believe that the declaration should be visionary about a new future for our global community. We greatly appreciate the frame of the Political Declaration as a **call to action** by all. The inspirational, affirmative and clear vision embodied by the Millennium Declaration stands as a model, a standard of excellence that compels us once again to capture the nature of the historic achievement and opportunity that we face. We see this declaration as a mean both to inspire and reflect the depth of our political commitment, and it should offer a concise, clear, and focused vision that speaks in plain terms to our mothers as well as our ministers - compelling citizens, development practitioners, and leaders at all levels.

We face the challenge of being relevant right now but timeless in our approach. That necessarily requires both empiricism and flexibility. There is value in recognizing that the world has evolved over the last fifteen years in ways that none of us may have imagined 15 years ago, and this is likely to happen once again. The universality of our current agenda, and the shared responsibility that comes with it, means that we will be compelled to continuously learn together, to apply the latest knowledge we have at every step, helping us build a theory of the case for sustainable development and ensuring this agenda will be infused with cutting-edge knowledge, practice, and trends.

Turning to the Elements Paper, we commend you particularly on **Section 1 – “the Collective Vision of the Road to 2030.”** We believe that this section should be the crux of our discussion this week – the core vision and understanding of our shared purpose here, and constitute the central body of the political declaration. Over the past several months – and the years implementing the Millennium Development Goals before that - we have built considerable

common ground in global development. We all know the political divides which will surface as we move through this process, but we also know that we have a great deal that unites us. This declaration can and should be about *that*.

Given the importance of communicating to multiple audiences, we see considerable value in using a small and easily communicated set of organizing themes or elements to frame the declaration. Building on the statements of many colleagues here today already, we see value in those pillars proposed by the Common African Position, as well as the Secretary General's six elements.

However we organize such themes, we recommend a few central concepts, which can and should be tied together into a clear theory of change, and vision of work:

- **Leave No One Behind.** We believe we've achieved near consensus around the idea that inclusion must be at the heart of this agenda. We have the tremendous potential to significantly reduce poverty and to end extreme poverty over the next 15 years. We must also craft an agenda that speaks to the most marginalized in our societies – and reiterate our belief that we should consider no goal or target met unless met by the bottom quintile of the world's population. We must also explicitly highlight the unique needs of women and girls. We have the potential to make historic progress on gender equality within this agenda, and are all well aware of the statistics – without women and girls, we will not realize the aspirations of this agenda. In essence, we stand at a threshold where we can now make substantial progress in advancing dignity, well-being, empowerment, and human rights for all citizens. We all share the responsibility for meeting this promise.
- **Shared Prosperity.** As a key underpinning to leaving no one behind, we have collectively returned often to the theme of continued economic transformation. We know that the vast majority of the extreme poverty ended during the MDGs is attributable to inclusive economic growth. We know that the strength of an economy must be measured by the degree to which it meets the needs of people, and by how sustainably and broadly it does so. We know also that this will require real investments in developing country infrastructure, greater economic diversification, healthy and well-educated workforces, financial inclusion, social protections, and an active private sector. And finally, we know that we need a comprehensive approach to promote innovation, technological solutions, and strong scientific knowledge.
- **Sustainability.** There has never been more awareness or a clearer need for humanity to fundamentally transform its relationship with the natural environment. Climate change represents a profound threat to our future, and to that of our children. But we can also take from this threat an opportunity – to see our development, growth, and sustainability efforts as coherent and mutually reinforcing. To ensure that all of our development is climate-resilient development. To ensure that conservation and the sustainable use of our oceans, forests, and other ecosystems are central to our development thinking. This too must be a part of our Political Declaration.

- **Strong, Accountable Institutions and Peaceful Societies.** We have all established well the critical importance of strong, accountable institutions – which reflect the aspirations, needs, and potential of their citizens - to the achievement of every element of this agenda. We echo also the statement of our colleague from Mozambique on behalf of the Africa group, peaceful societies are fundamental to inclusive development as well as a development outcome in its own right. We all know that our track record in poverty reduction has been uneven, and that countries affected by conflict have both been the most trapped by persistent poverty and the most unable to achieve the aspirations of the MDGs. With 80% of the extreme poor projected to live in conditions affected by conflict or fragility by 2025, this must be a central element to how we think about “leaving no one behind.”
- **Global Partnership.** The challenges confronting humanity continue to increase in their complexity and gravity. Only through collective action and shared responsibility can we deliver on the hope for a better future that drives this agenda. This new partnership must be broader than member states – it must also include civil society, the private sector, as well as our multilateral institutions.

In addition to these core concepts, we would also welcome a focus on country ownership, central to any development success; the importance of mutual accountability, transparent data, and robust implementation. We join the chorus of voices suggesting that the declaration address the needs of countries in special situations as they tackle issues of extreme poverty, sustainability, growth and resilience, including least developed countries, Small Island developing states, land-locked developing countries, and countries affected by conflict, as well as reflect Africa's priorities.

Many of these concepts rightly feature in your sections 2, 3, and 4, and we applaud them. We recognize that each of these sections – in heading at least – is tied to a theme of discussion for the coming three months. We look forward to revisiting these sections of the Declaration often as we have those discussions, as well as after, once we have discussed the full suite of ideas within this agenda.

We believe the hallmark of a universal agenda, and of successful development, is that effort and implementation is tailored to national and local contexts to maximize national relevance and to evolve as conditions change. We believe this should be our focus in our discussion here, and do not believe CBDR to be a proxy for that. Since our views on CBDR are well-known (even though I personally have just arrived), I will not repeat them here and we are prepared to discuss this issue further at a much later stage in our deliberations. For now, I will just underscore that our priority – and we believe it should be our collective priority – should be to prioritize the most vulnerable and use our framework to spur strategies to address their vulnerability in practical and specific ways. We have also seen reference to topics that are more politically sensitive within a development context and look forward to dealing with such issues in a constructive way throughout the process.

We thank you for this opportunity, and look forward to further opportunity to raise ideas over the course of the week and beyond.