

**Intervention delivered by Mr. Vincent Rigby, Assistant Deputy Minister, Strategic Policy, Canada**  
**Session on Declaration- February 20, 2015**

- I would like to thank the co-facilitators and their team for all the hard work that went into preparing this discussion document. Canada commends you for your efforts to find convergence among the many diverse statements made by member states.
  - We appreciate that this is a discussion paper, and our comments reflect the fact that today's conversation is an exchange of ideas, and not a drafting exercise.
  - Allow me to share some of Canada's preliminary thoughts on the discussion document, which provides a solid foundation. I will start starting with the positive elements from the document, and then move on to areas we believe could be strengthened once the drafting of the text begins.
- 1- Firstly, I would like to compliment you on reaffirming the need to keep the declaration concise. We strongly encourage you to continue on this path. This Declaration is not an outcome document, and we see a real opportunity to break from past traditions and draft a tight and focussed Declaration that inspires and resonates with people around the world.
  - 2- We appreciate the clear focus on poverty eradication and on the poorest and most vulnerable, as set out in paragraph 7. We believe, as others have said, that progress for this group—the poorest and most vulnerable—should be our ultimate marker of success.
  - 3- We strongly support references to the rule of law and peaceful and inclusive societies, as well as mutual accountability.

**With regards to some areas that could be strengthened in the actual declaration:**

- 1- As we have stated many times, we strongly agree with the need to highlight the unfinished business of the MDGs. However, we think

paragraph 2 could be framed in a more positive tone. Success is a motivator—and it is important to acknowledge and celebrate the progress we have made over the last 15 years, notwithstanding some of the shortfalls we have experienced in achieving specific goals.

- 2- We strongly support the reference to gender equality and women's empowerment, and we would suggest that as the text is fleshed out, this reference is reinforced. The Declaration needs to underscore the role of women as change makers, as innovators, and as leaders. In a similar vein, we believe we must be explicit about children and their role in carrying this agenda forward, as also expressed by my colleague from the Netherlands.
- 3- Similarly, we think the language on sustainable economic growth could be strengthened. It should be recognized as a key driver of poverty reduction.
- 4- Like others, we believe that the integrated nature of the agenda needs to be further amplified. It is not just some of the challenges mentioned in paragraph 3 that are interlinked; they are all interlinked.
- 5- We appreciate the reference to the six elements enunciated in the Synthesis Report, and believe further discussion is needed about how will use these elements to frame our Declaration and communicate our agenda writ large. We would suggest dedicating a session at some point soon to exchange ideas on how we might do this, because it is fundamental to our agenda ultimately resonates with publics around the world.
- 6- There is no doubt that effective implementation will depend on the ability of the UN to adapt itself to the new agenda, and Canada agrees with others that this objective should be given additional momentum by being highlighted in the Declaration.

Finally, we believe that alongside references to the health of our planet, the Declaration should highlight the importance of healthy people, including women and children. Health is an essential precondition for virtually everything we hope to achieve as part of the post-2015 development

agenda. It is both a contributor to and an outcome of sustainable development, and we strongly believe it merits mention in the Declaration.