



**Post-2015 intergovernmental negotiations session
22-25 June 2015**

**Statement on behalf of the European Union and its Member States
22 June 2015**

**delivered by
Mr. Karl Falkenberg
Director General - DG Environment
European Commission**

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the EU and its Member States

First of all, we wish to thank you co-facilitators for your hard work in preparing the zero draft. We welcome the fact that the document is concise, communicable and political in nature, and we support the overall structure of the draft. We are confident that we can work constructively on this basis with all partners and reach consensus by the end of July as you envisage. While we heard your rationale on current annexes, we trust that we will not need them in the final draft.

Furthermore, we attach great importance to your continued guidance and leadership of the process and have full confidence in your ability to guide us to a successful outcome. We look forward to working with all Member States over the next days and weeks. Moreover, continued engagement by all stakeholders, including civil society, in this new phase of negotiations will be vital for the success of our collective endeavour.

Starting with your proposed title, we are ready to work on it with others.

The Preamble text is a welcome effort. It can contribute to communicating what we are set to agree on in September in a way that inspires action by all. We can build on your suggested elements so that they can work as communication messages conveying the political ambition of the agenda, as well as its integrated character and the balance of the three dimensions of sustainable development. It will be important to ensure coherence between the political messages as well as consistency between the Preamble and the various parts of the agenda.

We welcome the fact that the draft Declaration is a rather concise and political document, which does not rely simply on UN agreed language. The draft puts forward valuable new language laying out the ambition and scope of the post-2015 agenda. It broadly reflects the

discussions so far on the Declaration, including its structure. We would now like to put forward proposals for further improvements, as well as to raise some concerns.

We believe the Declaration should better set out, and infuse throughout the text, the purpose of the agenda and its universality, balance, integration and transformational nature, as contained in the SDGs. As stated in the zero draft, the post-2015 agenda is of unprecedented scope and significance.

In this respect, the Declaration needs to put more emphasis on some key transformative features of the agenda:

- The agenda will address the interlinked challenges of poverty eradication and sustainable development together, in a balanced and integrated manner. We need to clearly set out this purpose, notably in §3. A reference to our commitment to eradicate extreme poverty within a generation would also be welcome.
- A key priority is to fully reflect the balance and integration between the three dimensions of sustainable development. The environmental and climate change dimension in particular needs to be reinforced in order to retain that balance, as well as the links between the different dimensions. One example of where this should be addressed is §15 on “Our vision”.
- The spirit of a new global partnership should be addressed and in this regard universality is fundamental. It marks a true paradigm shift on which the Declaration should put more emphasis, outlining what it means and its implications, in particular in the introduction and in the vision. And universality comes with shared responsibility, as already enshrined in the Millennium Declaration. These are fundamental principles that should be better reflected early and throughout the draft.
- Promoting gender equality, human rights, non-discrimination, peace, justice and the rule of law, democracy and good governance will have a transformative impact. We welcome the references in the draft; they need to be strengthened to reflect the central importance of these issues to the agenda and recognize that people, children as future generations, are active participants and not only recipients of this agenda. Particular emphasis should be put on the human rights of women and girls, as well as on gender equality and women's empowerment. The Declaration must reaffirm the commitment to the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, the Cairo Programme of Action, and the outcomes of their review conferences, and the fulfilment of the obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
- We believe it is important to reinforce the narrative around the new Global Partnership, which should transform and strengthen the way in which the international community works together. All can contribute meaningfully to achieving the agenda:

we need to mobilise all means of implementation, financial as well as non-financial, as well as action by all countries and all stakeholders at all levels. This includes the role of local and sub-national authorities who will also be at the forefront of implementing the post-2015 agenda. This is particularly important in the Implementation section of this Declaration.

Co-facilitators, it is essential to ensure that the narrative of the Declaration faithfully reflects and is consistent with the key characteristics of the SDGs throughout the text. We all agree that we need to preserve the achievements of the OWG outcome.

We agree that the Declaration needs to include language on the scope and priorities of the agenda, but we are concerned by the tendency in some parts to quote or paraphrase selectively from the OWG outcome, particularly in §22-28 on the 'New Agenda'. While we believe there is some very valuable language in these paragraphs, it is necessary to preserve the important political balance that the OWG represents. Therefore we would suggest to better frame §22-28: we could start by recalling the full scope of the 17 SDGs and what they are set to achieve, as well as the importance of maintaining the transformative and integrated approach set out in the OWG outcome. We need to highlight the need to maintain and strengthen synergies, coherence and inter-linkages across the whole agenda.

We see concrete opportunities to better reflect the integrated and balanced nature of the agenda in §22-28. The section could, for example, emphasise the links between economic growth and sustainability patterns, in all countries. We also see room to strengthen the language on specific issues. For instance, on climate change, we would like to see a reference to the 2°C objective, as well as a better reflection of the inter-linkages with other parts of the agenda. We would also welcome strengthened language on issues such as promotion of decent work, human rights, peace and gender equality. We are ready to engage with partners on how to best address and improve these paragraphs. However we need to avoid entering in the details of the full scope of the agenda, which is covered in the goals and targets. To avoid diluting its impact, it is important that the Declaration remains focused.

We think the UN charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights should be mentioned before the UN conferences and summits on sustainable development. We cannot agree with the fact that only CBDR is singled out amongst the Rio principles; other principles are equally important. CBDR does not apply as an overarching operational principle of the post-2015 development agenda. We believe that it should instead be spelled out clearly that the agenda is underpinned by the principle of universality, while taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities, as agreed in the Rio+20 Outcome. We need to recommit and build more clearly on the Millennium Declaration, reaffirming its values and principles, such as solidarity and shared responsibility, and its substantive human rights content. And while we acknowledge the Declaration on the Right to Development, it is important to be clear that it is not on an equal footing with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

We are also concerned by the fact that throughout the draft, there is more emphasis on the international dimension than on the national one. This is for instance particularly problematic in the implementation section. Without downplaying the importance of the international dimension, we need stronger emphasis on the importance of national ownership and action. We believe the draft should not only endorse the Addis outcome, but also clarify that it constitutes the Means of Implementation pillar of the agenda.

We also think there is room for sending a signal to the UN development system to adapt itself to the new agenda and be up to the implementation task. In conclusion we trust in the co-facilitators' stewardship, and look forward to working with others to achieve a Declaration which is not longer than your current draft, captures the importance of the agenda, communicates it succinctly and powerfully and sets the framework for the later sections of the document. We also stand ready to provide you with more detailed comments on the various sections of the draft declaration. Thank you.