

Final Session of Intergovernmental Negotiations on Post-2015 Development Agenda

Statement by Amit Narang, Counsellor, Permanent Mission of India on the adoption of the Outcome Document of the 'Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development'

August 2, 2015

Thank you Mr. Co-Facilitator,

India is happy to join consensus on the outcome document that has just been adopted. It is clearly not perfect and there are areas which we felt could continue to be improved. Nevertheless, my delegation feels comfortable that what we are gifting to our fellow citizens is a visionary and transformative document, a blueprint for common action for the common future of us all.

We are happy that the Declaration of our leaders is grounded on their vision of a world free of poverty and hunger and recognizes that there can be no sustainable development without ending poverty. We are also happy with the unequivocal reaffirmation of the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, which is a clarion call for our common resolve and action, while respecting historical responsibilities.

We are even happier with the fact that we are adopting, with only some minor technical revisions, the whole package of Sustainable Development Goals that were recommended by the Open Working Group. This package in our view is comprehensive, ambitious and visionary. It will lead to concrete actions which in turn we hope will lead to meaningful results.

For us, it is important that the set of SDGs grounds a vision of development that is premised on eradicating poverty as the core of our efforts. The SDGs build on and strengthen our commitment to the MDGs, include the missing MDG of 'Energy', focus on economic growth, industrialization, infrastructure and employment as the fundamental drivers of sustainable development and contain an ambitious set of means of implementation to assist developing countries, a package that is being complemented by the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

The vision on environment in the SDGs is correctly rooted in the pre-requisite of moving our societies towards sustainable lifestyles, combating climate change and ensuring that mankind is in harmony with nature.

Mr. Co-Facilitator,

We believe that the SDGs are in themselves a strong endorsement of the developmental vision articulated by the Indian government under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi. In fact, most if not all the initiatives launched by Prime Minister Modi can be related to one or more of the SDGs. In this sense, the SDGs are already being implemented in India!

This is not just a happy co-incidence, but a necessary one. Synergy between the two – the global development agenda and the Indian one - is important and the two will have to intersect quite closely if either has to succeed.

The world can count on India and we also look forward to the support of the international community for assisting the endeavors of India and other developing countries.

Mr. Co-Facilitator,

This has been a memorable process. It enabled an unprecedented engagement of the global community on an agenda of breath-taking ambition and scope.

All of us member states were joined in partnership by our wonderful colleagues from the stakeholder community – civil society, advocacy groups, private sector, major groups, not to mention the specialized agencies and international organizations and the UN Secretariat. This journey would not have been so rewarding, but for their presence and active engagement. We owe them a debt of gratitude.

Mr. Co-Facilitators,

As our co-pilots on this journey across the ocean of ideas, both of you have been the steadfast compass to our work, our guides across the vast tapestry of subjects we traversed and the several leaps of faith we collectively took.

A great part of the reason why we are here today - an epoch-making moment - is attributable to your sterling leadership.

Ambassador Kamau was with us through the SDGs, while Ambassador Donoghue started us off on the post-2015 process, way back in 2013. Through this time, you have stood by us, and more importantly stood on the side of ambition. You have ensured that through the most difficult of debates, mutual trust was never broken, discussions remained transparent and we remained focused on our common objective.

There is only one problem – you two may have set the bar too high and it will be a brave person who will seek to step into your shoes!

Since profound words of gratitude will simply not do justice, all we can say to both of you and your respective teams is ‘Thank you’.

Let us also not forget another constituency, a set of people who are central to the new agenda, but often left behind. I am talking about this unique set of people who are called, perhaps mischievously, ‘experts’, because no one knows what their expertise is in!

These are the negotiators, who toiled through the long hours and spent more time and more weekends in these windowless rooms than with their families. They read the drafts while grocery

shopping and wrote their statements while on the morning jog. They are more familiar with the 17 goals and 169 targets than with the school grades of their children. For the sake of the world, they often put their own food security at risk, and suffered serious threats to their health, not to mention mental health, by repeating their own arguments and listening repeatedly to those of the others!

So as we complete this process, a big thank you to all the colleagues who made this journey a great pleasure.

Mr. Co-Facilitator,

India is proud to have been an active, constructive participant in this journey. We would like to believe that India's was a voice of reason, a voice of principle and above all a voice of the millions of poor and aspiring who want to be empowered to shape their own destiny and make a positive difference to the world.

Mr. Co-Facilitator,

It was the French poet Anatole France who said that to accomplish great things, you must not only act but also dream, not only plan but also believe.

This new agenda has enabled us to dream of a new world, a new future in 2030. It is founded on our common belief that our common vision of a world free of poverty is achievable, that a sustainable future for the planet is possible.

It is India's hope that this agenda will lead us to a world without poverty and hunger in 2030.

A world which is in harmony with nature, having halted climate change and altered unsustainable consumption patterns; a world where the poor do not have to pay the bill for the excesses of the rich; a world where the international system redistributes wealth not poverty; a world where every developing country is not just an emerging economy, but an emerged one; a world where there is no more a Least Developed Country (all having graduated), where all Landlocked Developing Countries are structurally resilient, where the survival and sustainable development of all Small Island Developing States is ensured; a world where there is no North and no South, a world that is truly flat !

More than anything else, we hope this development agenda will lead us to a world, which will no more require a development agenda. One in which sustainable development would have become a reality.

Mr. Co-Facilitator,

I would like to conclude by quoting the Father of the Indian nation Mahatma Gandhi who gave to us what has since been called Gandhi's Talisman or Gandhi's Mantra. Growing up as kids this

Talisman could be found at the back of our school textbooks and contains a message most relevant to our work.

When he was asked the question "How can I know that the decisions I am making are the best I can make", he said and I quote:

"I will give you a talisman. Whenever you are in doubt, or when the self becomes too much with you, apply the following test. Recall the face of the poorest and the weakest man/woman whom you may have seen, and ask yourself, if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him/her. Will he/she gain anything by it? Will it restore him/her to a control over his/her own life and destiny? In other words, will it lead to *swaraj* [freedom] for the hungry and spiritually starving millions? Then you will find your doubts and your self melt away".

As we adopt this momentous agenda, let us remember these words.

Let us remember that our objective is to enable the poor and the starving a control over their own destinies. Let us not forget our vision of a sustainable world without poverty and hunger.

Because that is the only future worth wanting.

I thank you.
