

## **Third Meeting of the Open Working Group of the General Assembly on Sustainable Development Goals**

### **Co-Chair's Summary**

The third session of the Open Working Group (OWG) of the General Assembly on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was convened at United Nations Headquarters in New York from 22 to 24 May 2013. OWG Co-Chair H.E. Mr. Macharia Kamau of Kenya welcomed the Group's members and highlighted the two clusters of issues under discussion: food security and nutrition, sustainable agriculture, desertification, land degradation and drought; and water and sanitation. He stressed that these areas are fundamental to human survival, and must be at the core of the SDGs. In his words, food security is “where the rubber meets road”, reminding participants that 2030 will be a very different time from today and from when the MDGs were formulated, so our agenda and goals for the future will need to reflect this. He noted the interlinked nature of food security, agriculture, land, and water issues, which has implications for how the OWG chooses new targets. Finally, he emphasized the importance of a common vision for post-2015 driven by the SDGs.

#### **Food security and nutrition, sustainable agriculture, desertification, land degradation and drought: Keynote address and exchange of views**

Ms. Maria Helena Semedo, Deputy Director-General of FAO, provided the keynote address for the first cluster of issues, speaking on behalf of the Rome-based food and agriculture institutions: The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Food Programme (WFP), who are working together in partnership for a more comprehensive approach to sustainable food security and nutrition. She delivered three key messages: *first*, that hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition can be ended sustainably by 2025. Hunger, malnutrition and lack of access to clean water are both symptoms and causes of poverty; ending these should remain at the heart of sustainable development. She noted in this connection that many countries are embracing the Secretary-General's Zero Hunger Challenge. *Secondly*, she stated that to end hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition it is important to increase resilience in agriculture and food systems by building healthy and dynamic ecosystems that are better able to cope with and respond to climate change, extreme weather events, emerging diseases, shifts in population patterns, and economic disruptions and shocks. Finally, to accomplish this, she said that it is critical to invest in critical agents: women and men small producers, and their organizations, fishers, livestock keepers, forest users, rural workers, rural entrepreneurs, and indigenous peoples who will underpin the degree of success of the post-2015 development agenda. She stressed the importance of guaranteeing access to and control by small producers of the financial and productive resources they need.

Mr. Amir Abdulla, WFP Deputy Executive Director, introduced the Issues Brief on Food Security and Nutrition that was prepared by the UN Technical Support Team (TST)<sup>1</sup> for this

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<sup>1</sup> The Technical Support Team (TST) brings together the collective knowledge and expertise of around 40 UN entities, to address the conceptual issues that the OWG faces in agreeing on a set of SDGs. The TST is co-chaired by the Department of Economic

session of the OWG. Recalling the key message from Rio+20 that there can be no sustainable development if we do not eradicate hunger and poverty, he stressed the close link between poverty and hunger, particularly when food insecurity and undernutrition are primarily problems of access to food. He added that, while poverty reduction through inclusive economic growth is one of the most effective means for improving food security and nutrition, evidence suggests that poverty reduction alone will not end hunger. Mr. Abdulla said that it is possible to end hunger in our generation, by focusing on the thousand days from conception to a child's second birthday when irreversible damage linked to cognitive capacity, brain growth and proper development can arise if the right nutrition is not provided to mother and child. He also underlined the important gender dimension of the issues under discussion, noting that improving women's access to food, as well as access to natural resources, land, credit and other productive resources, has the potential to be a significant driver of economic productivity gains at national level. Finally, Mr. Abdulla urged the OWG to transform the vision of the Secretary-General's Zero Hunger Challenge into a sustainable development goal.

Mr. Carlos Seré, Associate Vice-President of IFAD, introduced the TST Issues Brief on Sustainable Agriculture, reminding the OWG that agriculture is at the center of life and that it provides food, jobs, and other goods and services to most people living in poverty in the world. He said sustainable agriculture could be addressed under the SDGs in its different dimensions, including increasing productivity, promoting decent farm incomes and jobs, promoting healthy ecosystems and improving nutritional value and safety of food, adding that the SDG agenda should examine how to put in place the needed drivers and processes to foster a shift towards sustainable agriculture globally, as well as in different country contexts. He outlined objectives that IFAD expected would be addressed in a comprehensive agenda for agriculture and the measures to achieve them, and summarized the recommendations provided in the TST brief on possible goals and targets in this area.

Mr. Luc Gnacadja, Executive Secretary of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), presented the TST Issues Brief on desertification, land degradation, and drought (DLDD). He emphasized productive land as central to the food-water-energy nexus, and recalled the agreement at Rio+20 to strive to achieve a land degradation-neutral world in the context of sustainable development. He proposed an overarching SDG on "sustainable land use by all and for all", including three targets: zero net land degradation by 2030, or net restoration of degraded lands by 2030; zero net forest degradation by 2030; drought policies and drought preparedness measures in place in every drought-prone country by 2020. Monitoring and assessing progress using agreed indicators would also benefit from establishment of an internationally agreed scientific mechanism on land and soil, to ensure a sound scientific base of knowledge and data.

### ***Interactive exchange of views***

Members of the OWG agreed that food security and nutrition, sustainable agriculture, desertification, land degradation and drought were among the most pressing challenges for the world today and for achieving sustainable development. Many speakers mentioned that including

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and Social Affairs (DESA) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) The referenced briefs can be found at: <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?menu=1630>.

food security and nutrition in the post-2015 agenda and the SDGs would help recognize them as human rights and mobilize appropriate actions. In this view, a goal on food security, nutrition and sustainable agriculture should have the right to food at its core, including equity of access to resources and social inclusion. One country proposed the goal of “access for everyone to safe, sufficient, affordable, adequate and appropriate food.”<sup>2</sup>

Many highlighted existing initiatives and targets that must be incorporated into a possible SDG in these areas—including the IPOA target to eradicate hunger by 2020, the Secretary-General’s Zero Hunger Challenge, and outcomes of Rio+20 including the goal on zero net land degradation. Many welcomed the increased coordination among FAO, IFAD and WFP and highlighted the results of the High-Level Consultation on Hunger, Food Security and Nutrition in the Post-2015 Development Framework held in Madrid in April 2013. Speakers reiterated the agreement in the Rio outcome document on the need to empower small holder farmers, support measures for climate change adaptation and mitigation, increase water and energy efficiency, minimize food losses and waste, reduce biodiversity loss, reverse soil degradation, implement humane livestock systems, and strengthen urban-rural food system linkages especially in countries lacking adequate infrastructure.

Several noted that a holistic, ecosystem-centered approach to agriculture, food security and land can support sustainable increases in production while meeting the nutritional needs of an increasing population. To do this, many said that national governments must focus on implementing policies that support small holder and family farms, including pastoralists and fisherfolk; provide rural women farmers with access to credit and technology; and link markets at the regional level including through farmers’ cooperatives. Knowledge sharing among farmers on sustainable practices needs to be supported. Speakers also called for possible SDGs in this cluster to focus on sustainably increasing agricultural productivity in conjunction with job creation and income generating activities, improving efficiency of resource use, prioritizing rural development in developing countries, and supporting regional centers for agricultural research.

The role of women in agricultural production, nutrition, and rural development was recognized as critical; one speaker stated there is clear evidence that empowerment of women correlates with economic prosperity and food security. The importance of secure tenure and ensuring rights to land were stressed, and several raised concerns about “land grabbing” in the wake of the 2008 food price crisis. Protecting the land rights of smallholder and women farmers was seen by many as essential to ensuring the sound land stewardship needed to achieve zero net land degradation. Some called for the rights of women and girls to be incorporated throughout the SDGs.

Some groups stressed that oceans, sustainable fisheries and aquaculture were also important components of food security, especially for Small Island Developing States (SIDS), and that climate change was a cross-cutting element closely related to and impacting these sectors. An SDG on oceans linking to sustainable fisheries, healthy marine environments and food security for SIDS was suggested.

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<sup>2</sup> For a table outlining concrete proposals made during this session, please see Annex I.

Noting that sustainable agriculture is generally low-cost yet knowledge-intensive, some groups called for governments and the private sector to increase investments in sustainable agriculture through research and development, knowledge-sharing, and diffusion of low-cost technologies in rural areas.

Some speakers were concerned with the impact of financial speculation in commodity markets on food and nutrition security in developing countries and stressed the importance of appropriate regulation to reduce volatility, with one group proposing the establishment of a food bank for LDCs for humanitarian emergencies. A number of speakers called for phasing out trade-distorting subsidies to allow developing country farmers to reach their full potential, and a successful conclusion to the Doha Development Round.

Discussion on how to address food losses and waste underlined the importance of promoting sustainable consumption and production, managing food stocks effectively, and raising awareness of consumers and producers. It was stressed that the primary challenge facing many developing countries is to reduce losses in food production, storage and transport through improvements in technology and infrastructure. In developed countries, wasteful consumption practices pose the major challenge. Food waste should be addressed all along the value chain. One speaker suggested UNEP's "Think-Eat-Save" campaign should reach a wider audience.

The coexistence of both under- and over-nutrition was recognized. Speakers called for measures to eliminate global malnutrition, better address under-nutrition, support nutrition in the first 1000 days of life in the context of sound development of children, and include targets on wasting and anemia. Over-nutrition should be considered in the context of non-communicable diseases. One suggested that all countries prepare national action plans for food and nutrition with participation of all stakeholders.

Numerous calls were made to link means of implementation to national actions for each goal and target, with one group stating that development partners should support LDCs' efforts to establish or strengthen safety nets such as access to agricultural finance and insurance; and provide LDCs with high-yield and climate resistant crop varieties through transfer of appropriate technology and know-how. Several countries highlighted their successful "zero hunger" programs with a multisectoral approach, including school feeding programs and support for small family farms, as well as policies facilitating market access.

Some emphasized the food-water-energy nexus in creating "win-win" targets and measures; others said the nexus approach focuses on environmental aspects and downplays social and economic aspects of these issues. Discussion ensued on how to articulate linkages among agriculture, infrastructure, jobs, and energy within goals and targets. Several cautioned that sustainable agriculture policies must not be used for trade protectionism.

Several countries proposed specific targets on access to safe, sufficient, adequate, affordable, appropriate nutritious food; sustainable food systems; and addressing both food losses in production and waste in consumption. There was agreement that multistakeholder participation at every step is important for gathering information and data, and achieving goals and targets.

Several reaffirmed the role of the Committee on Food Security (CFS) as an appropriate global platform for defining common global goals on agriculture, food security and nutrition.

On land and soil degradation, the group noted the importance of implementing the UNCCD and achieving a land degradation-neutral world in the context of sustainable development, and some called for a target related to drought based on the IPOA. Some speakers mentioned that including the issues under this cluster in the SDGs would assure a better management of natural resources. It was stressed often that linkages, interrelationships and synergies across different issues should be explicitly addressed, and several speakers asked the TST to help identify key targets that focus on the interlinkages. Some speakers noted that the battle against desertification could only be won at the local level.

Many speakers also mentioned the importance of monitoring, and building capacity for data collection and planning. Some speakers stressed the value of partnerships bringing together all relevant actors for effective implementation, and the importance of adopting a holistic and systemic approach action; this required, some speakers pointed out, the Group to agree on how to define the systemic and structural changes they were talking about.

### ***Interactive panel discussion***

Opening the afternoon session, OWG Co-Chair H.E. Mr. Csaba Körösi of Hungary asked the group to consider what kind of goals we are seeking; what are the key components of the goals; what are the concrete indicators to pursue the goals; and where are the critical points of action needed to reach these goals.

Dr. Hans Herren, president of the Millennium Institute and the Biovision Foundation, presented the findings of a discussion paper entitled “Nourish Our People, Nurture Our Planet”<sup>3</sup> published by a consortium of research organizations giving high priority to sustainable agriculture, food security and nutrition due to their overwhelming relevance for sustainable development and poverty eradication. He supported calls within the OWG for a holistic, integrated, and inclusive approach to sustainable development that promotes sustainable agriculture and food systems, and provided examples of “ecological solutions to ecological problems” to illustrate the need for a transformation to sustainable, diverse, resilient and multifunctional agriculture and food systems.

Dr. Herren advocated a multi-stakeholder approach to sustainable agriculture that places small farms, farmers’ organizations and civil society at the core of SDGs related to agriculture. He added that women play a major role throughout the food chain, and their needs should be taken into account on all levels of decision making. He proposed the goal of achieving food and nutrition security through sustainable agriculture and food systems, proposing, among others, targets to minimize food waste and post-harvest losses and increase productivity and income for smallholder and women farmers. Implementation of these targets should be informed by multi-stakeholder assessments of agriculture at all levels, and progress must be evaluated by independent bodies to ensure inclusive and transparent processes.

Dr. Dennis Garrity, Drylands Ambassador, UNCCD, described land degradation as a global problem, occurring on all continents and countries, in both the North and South. He noted that 40

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<sup>3</sup> The referenced discussion paper is available at <http://www.biovision.ch/sdg>.

per cent of degraded land is found in areas with the highest incidence of poverty and that land degradation currently affects 1.5 billion people, with a disproportionate effect on women and children. He expressed his appreciation for the Rio+20 goal to strive for zero net land degradation, which should involve actions not only to reduce degradation of land but also to increase the regeneration of degraded land. He presented a case study on reversing desertification through farmers' efforts toward regeneration in Southern Niger, to show that land regeneration is possible on a large scale. This process of greening 5 million hectares in the Sahel was achieved with diffusion of knowledge and very little outside support. Such large-scale reforestation and land reclamation initiatives, besides promoting local livelihoods and poverty eradication, also contribute to absorbing and storing carbon.

During the ensuing interactive exchange, many speakers agreed with the need to address the multidimensional nature of food security and nutrition through a holistic approach, and that the eradication of poverty, food security, and land regeneration should be at the center of the SDGs. Other speakers questioned whether the issues of food security and nutrition, sustainable agriculture, and DLDD should be individual goals or a joint goal, presumably with several targets. Speakers also discussed the difficulties of goals that are either too general or too focused, and the tension between having a serious level of ambition and being credible and realizable.

Numerous speakers supported the panelists' recommendations on the need for investment in small holder farmers, sustainable land and forest management, ecosystem restoration programs, knowledge transfer and capacity building, and partnerships among all stakeholders. Several called for further study on how urbanization could affect and play a role in sustainable agricultural processes.

There was some discussion on the role of monitoring and how it would be carried out, with several groups highlighting challenges in collecting data, and others calling for elaboration on the role of local and central governments, as well as the private and non-profit sectors. Many speakers also requested more information on how to balance local, national, regional, and global level efforts on the SDGs, which generated some discussion on whether bottom-up or top-down approaches, or a combination thereof, are most useful. Dr. Herren recommended a roadmap and targets that are well established at the country level, with multi-stakeholder input, adding that countries must agree where they can be at a certain point in time and base their monitoring and assessment on what can be done in an independent way. Dr. Garrity stated that it would be possible to use previous data and standards from institutions like FAO and WHO, but it is important for countries to decide what will work best for them. He also stressed that synergy among stakeholders working on different goals is critical, noting that different ministries working together could save perhaps 11 to 15 per cent on their investments.

Many agreed that price volatility and market distortions such as subsidies, trade barriers, and financialization of commodities hurt small farmers and often give unfair advantages to developed countries and multinationals, and that the SDGs should address these concerns. Additionally, many stressed that the SDGs should promote and support opportunities for rural development and small-scale farmers, including access to markets and to knowledge, capacity building, and technology transfer.

Objections by some countries to using large-scale agriculture for biofuels development sparked a debate on the difference between sustainable and unsustainable agriculture, in particular, in the case of biofuel feedstock production. There was also discussion of the use of agroforestry practices in large-scale agriculture and for land regeneration, whether it could offer a solution for food insecurity, and how pastureland development and conservation of economically viable trees have the potential to boost agriculture production and job creation. Dr. Herren elaborated that, if linkages within the production and consumption systems are taken into account and sustainable production methods applied, it is possible to double agriculture production to grow more food as well as more nutritious food, and also reduce land degradation. Based on questions from the floor, Dr. Garrity elaborated on how to monitor land degradation through net biomass productivity using satellite imagery and map the trends across time, asserting that investment in land has a very high internal rate of return and costs much less than imagined. Rehabilitating degraded land is investment in a key productive asset of the poor. Both panelists agreed that knowledge on sustainable agricultural practices is widely available, and is more easily shared than knowledge protected by intellectual property rights.

***Exchange of views (continued)***

On Thursday morning, Co-Chair Kamau moderated a continued exchange of views within the OWG. Many of the views already expressed were reiterated and supported. There were numerous proposals that nutrition should be reflected in all its forms, with one group advocating a goal on food and nutrition security. Many speakers continued to discuss the Zero Hunger Challenge as a good model. Several said that timelines should be flexible and adaptable to national circumstances.

A number of speakers focused on the need for diffusion of up-to-date scientific knowledge on sustainable agriculture, including both modern inputs and local knowledge. One country noted that responsibility of ensuring food security falls to the national level, and therefore policies of governments and their agricultural budgets are of great relevance; another acknowledged that global partnerships are also essential. One called for clear targets for technology transfer, including assistance to African countries on knowledge and technology.

Some countries elaborated on the need for management and protection of shared waters and sustainable fisheries, proposing targets on rebuilding fish stocks, implementation of science-based management plans, curbing unregulated fishing practices, and removing subsidies that promote overfishing.

Many discussed possible targets for countries suffering from desertification, land degradation and drought, with one country proposing a stand-alone goal on land degradation. Noting serious challenges in areas suffering from famine, others advocated targets on land regeneration, dryland farming, food-producing trees, and improved seeds and chemicals to overcome shortcomings in land fertility.

Gender equality and empowerment of women was continually emphasized, with one group also highlighting women's social and reproductive rights.

## **Water and sanitation: Keynote address and interactive panel discussion**

On Thursday afternoon, Co-Chair Körösi introduced the topics of water and sanitation. Michel Jarraud, Secretary-General, World Meteorological Organization, and Chair of UN Water, provided the keynote address and introduced the TST Issues Brief on Water and Sanitation. In his presentation, he noted that the Rio+20 outcome document reaffirms that “water is at the core of sustainable development” and stressed the fundamental human right to water and sanitation. The brief provides an integrated vision for water management and illustrates linkages and interdependencies with other areas. He said that, although the MDG target on drinking water has been met, more is needed to realize fully the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation; in particular, the sanitation target is “the most lagging of the MDGs”. He outlined the two broad categories of SDG proposals presented in the brief, noting that UN-Water supports the option of having one SDG relating to water and sanitation.

Dr. Rabi Mohtar, Executive Director of Qatar Environment and Energy Research Institute, discussed the conceptual framework of the water-energy-food nexus and presented an interactive analytical tool that was developed by his institute in order to help governments plan their food security and water policies.<sup>4</sup> He recommended that the scientific community identify and quantify linkages of the “water system” (food and energy); create a global Water Knowledge Hub that is relevant, visible, credible and low-cost; establish “water value” as an economic, social and political good; deploy tools for managing and planning water resources and risk management strategies; and deploy technologies to improve water use efficiency at local and regional scales. He called upon policy makers to avoid using food for fuel; improve resource conservation and awareness; facilitate dialogue of policy makers and scientists; include all stakeholders in water discussions; create intergovernmental structures for water; promote nexus friendly and site-specific technologies; develop local capacity for R&D in sustainability; develop renewable sources of energy; and regulate virtual water and water trade.

Dr. Letitia Obeng, International Water Management Institute Board Member, shared her expertise on the issue of sanitation as part of a proposed SDG on “sustainable water security”. She defined water security as “the availability of an acceptable quantity and quality of water for health, livelihoods, ecosystems and production, coupled with an acceptable level of water related risks to people, environments and economies”. She discussed possible target areas under such a goal, including sanitation, water supply and hygiene for all; pollution management, wastewater treatment and reuse; increased resilience to water related disasters such as floods and droughts; and management and development of water resources, taking into account social equity, economic efficiency and environmental considerations.

Presentations were followed by questions from the OWG to the panelists and an interactive discussion. Almost all speakers recognized that water is at the heart of sustainable development and SDG discussions. Several member States recalled that sustainability should guide global water policies and promote poverty eradication, human rights, and empowerment of women. Important links between water and climate change, were acknowledged by many speakers, as were links among water, poverty eradication and health. The TST Issues Brief was acknowledged to be a good starting point for the discussion.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.qeeri.org.qa/>



Many speakers mentioned that the SDGs should build on the experience from MDGs. The progress in water discussions since the creation of the MDGs was noted by several speakers. Among lessons learnt from the MDG process, speakers mentioned that the goal or goals on water should first and foremost finish the business of MDGs and then incorporate new dimensions. It was also noted that a better coordination of efforts at international and national levels was crucial to success.

With regard to incorporating water concerns into the SDG process, the two proposals on how to define water goals were debated. The first approach, supported by the world water community, would require all different water-related aspects to be incorporated as targets into one goal. The second approach proposes that water-related targets be part of different goals. One speaker questioned whether it would be possible to have both a stand-alone goal on water and also water-related targets incorporated under other goals. Some possible targets were proposed on water-related disasters and on rural water.

Answering several questions on possible targets from Member States, Mr. Jarraud noted that it is possible to build on the work done for the MDGs when it comes to “WASH” targets; however, targets in the area of waste water and water management are more difficult and require more investigation. UN-Water is starting to work on this.

Sanitation was recognized as essential for public health and key to socio-economic development. Adequate public sanitation facilities – e.g. in schools and health clinics and hospitals, with particular regard for the needs of women and girls – were raised as a priority concern. Accelerating progress on the sanitation MDG target requires stronger political leadership, but several countries noted that faster progress is also a matter of resource availability, including technology transfer. Several speakers raised the issue of wastewater management in the context of sanitation, including solid waste management and human waste disposal, and the specific need to address it in developing countries.

Many speakers mentioned the importance of taking a holistic approach to water and moving toward an integrated water-food-energy nexus approach, asking the panelists how this conceptual framework could be reflected in concrete, workable proposals for SDGs.

Debate around the term “water security” emerged, with some speakers expressing concern over the use of the word “security”. It was suggested that work on water should be carried out under the notion of cooperation rather than security. Some speakers supported the term “sustainable water security”. The panelists explained that water security refers to securing access to safe water, and is not intended to be mixed up with national security issues. A number of countries stated that “water security” is not an issue to be addressed by the UN Security Council. The concerns were acknowledged and work on definitions was identified as an important part of the follow-up work.

Several countries stated that water value should not be defined in market terms: privatization models should be left in the past and work on water should be built on the notion of social and

public goods. The essential role of ecosystems and maintaining quality and quantity of water was stressed as an important factor to be kept in mind when investing in infrastructure.

Several speakers mentioned that water is a global issue that would require global solutions. Concerns over trans-boundary water resources were raised by several countries; with one noting that shared water basins require forming a community of interest between neighboring countries. Dr. Obeng added that neighboring countries would also need to learn how to share costs and benefits of managing shared water resources.

Several member States agreed that OWG members needed help from technical experts; the role of local knowledge and national contexts in developing and implementing water policies were also mentioned. In the context of collecting reliable data on water, Co-Chair Korosi noted the need for international investments to reverse the decline in data-gathering and ensure adequate data collection.

### ***Interactive exchange of views on water and sanitation***

On Friday morning and afternoon, Co-Chair Körösi moderated an interactive exchange of views among the OWG members on water and sanitation. Many speakers outlined specific challenges to meeting water and sanitation goals that were present in the MDGs, such as communities spread over large distances, urbanization, inadequate infrastructure, limited human and financial resources, and water pollution. These issues must be addressed in the SDG framework. Many speakers said there should be a normative framework on water and sanitation, which would state that it is a fundamental right for all people and ensure special emphasis on women, children, and developing countries.

Numerous speakers also stressed the importance of strengthening governance institutions related to water scarcity and poor sanitation in order to ensure that steps taken in the post-2015 development framework are realizable in all countries.

OWG members remarked on the need for joint responsibility in addressing water and sanitation issues. This would include public-private partnerships for financing, support from development partners to developing countries for achieving water and sanitation goals, access to knowledge capacity, and technology transfer. Several speakers discussed the role that cross-border cooperation in water resource issues could play in strengthening international ties and creating lasting peace. At the same time, respect for national sovereignty in water matters was also emphasized. There was a call to avoid considering water as a commodity to be bought and sold.

Because of the many challenges countries face in meeting their water and sanitation goals, numerous speakers addressed the need for integrated sustainable management of water resources at local, national, regional, and global levels as well as the pursuit of disaster risk reduction strategies. There was specific emphasis on SIDS, who do not have much access to freshwater sources and are more affected by climate change, variability in weather, extreme weather events, and pollution of coastal waters. It is not enough to respond to disasters; disaster risk reduction strategies should limit the negative impacts of natural events and focus on prevention as opposed to response.

On Friday afternoon, the continued exchange of views on water and sanitation elaborated on the need for a rights-based approach with corresponding responsibilities, involving civil society and the private sector, but also recognizing individual responsibilities for sustainable consumption of water. One group highlighted the disparity among regions, emphasizing that water and sanitation are at the center of the development agenda among the LDCs. Speakers continually emphasized the importance of water as a critical element for health and food security, for sustainable ecosystems, as a social good, and for all life. Several appreciated the importance given to local solutions throughout discussion, and supported suggestions for a modular approach, sharing ideas on integrated water planning in cities, on inter-linkages between governance and urban pressures on water, and on the need for disaggregated data and standardized methods for collecting data.

### **Concluding remarks by the OWG Co-Chairs**

The OWG Co-Chairs presented their concluding remarks, sharing their views on the overall outcome of the discussions they had heard during the meeting of the OWG.<sup>5</sup> They also presented a list of key points on which there was some degree of convergence.<sup>6</sup> Co-Chair Kamau remarked on the paucity of discussion on means of implementation at this meeting; Co-Chair Körösi urged Member States to support the process to establish a Committee on a financing strategy for sustainable development.

During the closing discussion, several speakers reiterated the importance of concentrating on making the post-2015 agenda universal and truly transformational, noting that it is important not to overburden developing countries and to have strong commitment as well of developed countries. Many added that, without means of implementation, it will not be possible to achieve the SDGs, and one suggested that means of implementation be better integrated into the Issues Briefs and the panel presentations; the insufficient emphasis on cross-cutting issues and interlinkages was also noted. Other suggestions included adding “sustainable tourism”, “industrialization” and “science and knowledge” to the Programme of Work; inviting the UN Statistical Commission to be more engaged in the OWG; and compiling proposed goals and targets into a living document.

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<sup>5</sup> Concluding remarks by the CO-Chairs can be found at:

[http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/1824Co-Chairs\\_Concluding%20Remarks\\_OWG3.pdf](http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/1824Co-Chairs_Concluding%20Remarks_OWG3.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/1825bullet3.pdf>