

**General Assembly Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals
Seventh Session
6-10 January 2014, UNHQ**

Summary

The seventh session of the General Assembly Open Working Group (OWG) on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) took place at the United Nations Headquarters in New York from 6 to 10 January 2014. Representatives from Member States, the UN system, Major Groups and other stakeholders gathered in the Trusteeship Council Chamber and, with the help of keynote speakers and panellists, conducted stock-taking exercise in three focused thematic areas: 1) sustainable cities and human settlements, sustainable transport; 2) sustainable consumption and production (including chemicals and waste); and 3) climate change and disaster risk reduction. Presentations and statements from this session could be found at the OWG-7 webpage: <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?menu=1679>

Opening Session

On Monday 6 January, Co-Chair H.E. Mr. Macharia Kamau of Kenya recalled the OWG's agreement in December on the way forward, noting that the Group would meet for two more stock-taking sessions and then convene over five week-long sessions from March through July to agree upon a proposal for a set of SDGs.

I. Sustainable cities and human settlements, and sustainable transport

The topic of sustainable cities and human settlements and sustainable transport was taken up from Monday morning through Tuesday afternoon. This segment included two keynote speakers and two sessions led by panel speakers, who set the tone of the interactive discussions that followed.

Keynote speakers

Dr. Joan Clos, Executive Director, UN-HABITAT, highlighted the increasing rate of urbanization, noting that the number of urban dwellers will double in the next 40 years, and discussed important issues related to the three basic pillars of good urbanization: rules and regulations, urban design, and financial planning. The most important issues included legal rights and protection of common spaces, particularly land; public infrastructure and control of development rights; the need for smart urban planning and provision of basic services, including water, sanitation and energy; integration of low-and higher-income housing; how to budget for and finance the management and maintenance of roads, sewage and other public services; and how to support local governments in generating employment and economic opportunities for their cities.

Ms. Adriana de Almeida Lobo, Executive Director, CTS Embarq Mexico, discussed sustainable urban transportation, highlighting increasing urbanization, automobile use and air pollution as challenges to sustainable cities. She suggested possible indicators addressing proximity and connectivity to all-weather roads, rapid access to health services, road safety, and reducing GHG emissions. She also advocated for a reallocation of funding for transport infrastructure, and development of national sustainable development financing facilities.

Panelists

Professor Harriet Bulkeley, Durham University, addressed the topic of climate change in relation to sustainable cities. She observed that increasing awareness of climate change and its effects has led many scientists to note where the most heavily concentrated greenhouse gases

are coming from, noting that cities emit about 70 percent. The carbon footprint left by rural areas is significantly less by comparison. She advocated for a strategic and social agenda with regard to climate change that could identify how to improve cities through sustainability, to become more energy efficient and decrease pollution. She stressed that specific urban goals should also be created to improve cities and mitigate the future effects of climate change.

Dr. Ousmane Thiam, President, Conseil Exécutif des Transports Urbains de Dakar, discussed mobility in urban cities, identifying solutions to improve the mobility of people and provide access to transportation, so that the urban poor would be better able to lift themselves out of poverty. He stressed that transport is essential to allow the poor to have access to economic opportunity, and that it would be difficult to achieve the MDGs without good urban transport systems in place. He proposed doubling the share of public transport from 16 percent in 2005 to 32 percent by 2025.

Mr. Aromar Revi, Director, Indian Institute for Human Settlements, advocated for an urban SDG, with the goal of empowering inclusive, productive, and resilient cities, including targets on holistically improving agricultural systems and raising rural prosperity in connection with urban development. He noted that Mayor Paes of Rio de Janeiro stated that “without an urban goal, the SDGs would be incomplete”, and that a billion people are still living in urban slums worldwide; and also observed that the Sustainable Development Solutions Network has proposed an SDG on “making all cities socially inclusive, economically productive, environmentally sustainable, secure and resilient to climate change and other risks”. An urban SDG could be inspirational, aspirational, “operationalizable” and could bring together multiple sectors, actors, and processes in new ways that focus on the synergy among opportunities to overcome the main current systemic and structural challenges. It would require reimagining the institutional and financial architecture, must be politically and economically viable, and would need commitment from member States, regional and local governments, private enterprises and the knowledge sector.

Dr. Lewis Fulton, Institute of Transportation Studies, University of California, Davis, posited that transport is also a sector that deserves to have an SDG and a set of targets, noting that transport enables almost all social and economic activities and is not only an urban sector, but also a complex global service with international aspects. He described the SloCaT partnership, which work with 88 global partners to implement a new paradigm that requires avoiding unnecessary motorized transport, shifting transport to the most effective mode, and improving the environmental performance of transport including vehicles and fuels (Avoid + Shift + Improve). He proposed an SDG on “providing sustainable transport for all” with targets for urban access, rural access, road safety (to halve traffic fatalities), air pollution (to halve premature fatalities from air pollution), and climate change.

Interactive panel discussions

During the interactive panel discussions, the OWG and other participants made many useful points and suggested a number of proposals, including the following:

- The world is rapidly urbanizing, and cities are where “the battle for sustainable development will be won or lost”. Addressing the needs of the urban poor in informal settlements and slums is crucial for poverty eradication.
- It was emphasized that urbanization should be seen as a process involving urban-rural flows of people, goods and services and that urban-rural linkages were essential for both rural development as well as the provision of essential goods to sustain urban life.

- The cross-cutting nature of sustainable cities and human settlements was repeatedly stressed, necessitating an integrated approach addressing its linkages with other sustainable development issues.
- Key factors contributing to sustainable cities and urban development are forward-looking, effective and inclusive urban design and land-use planning processes, including effective protection of public spaces; affordable housing and spatial planning to promote social inclusion; infrastructure development as means to serve planned urbanization and rural-urban integration; sound finances to support provision of affordable and accessible public services and to provide social protection; policies that promote economic dynamism, small-business formation and formal sector job creation, to name a few.
- The inclusion of an urbanization-related goal in SDG framework was widely supported. Many cautioned that the rural-urban dichotomy would create territorial segregation and stressed that the focus on urbanization should not detract from addressing rural development. An alternative proposal was raised to have an infrastructure development goal with all issues of cities incorporated.
- Social inclusion was emphasized as an integral part of sustainable urbanization. Goals and targets should strive to overcome the social, economic and physical restrictions of the vulnerable marginalized groups and ensure their access to safe, affordable and sustainable forms of basic services.
- Many emphasized the importance of localizability of goals and targets, as well as the true engagement of multiple sectors and actors, particularly national governments, local authorities, civil society, community-based organization, the private sector, women and youth.
- It was highlighted that old urban centers in the developed world and new urban centers in the developing world have different priorities in their sustainable urbanization agenda. The relevant goal should observe the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and address these differences.
- It was underlined that transportation is crucial for sustainable development addressing the mobility of people and goods. It is particularly important for the development of land-locked countries. The importance of its inclusion in SDGs was well recognized. Some were advocating for a stand-alone goal on transportation, however many called for it to be included at the level of targets under other goals.
- Many referred to the complex nature of the transportation challenge, which included air quality, public health, road safety, congestion, GHG emission and climate change, and suggested to include transportation-related targets under other relevant goals. Specific targets related to road safety, pollutant emissions, and commuting to gain access to primary goods and services were proposed.
- Many called for the SDGs to ensure access to safe, affordable and environmentally friendly forms of transportation for all. This entails avoiding unnecessary transport with smarter land use planning and improved access to information and communication technology, shifting to public transportation systems, rail and waterway freight modes and safe convenient non-motorized transport facilities where appropriate; improving environmental performance of existing forms of transport with innovation and improved engineering and design.

II. Sustainable consumption and production (including chemicals and waste)

During this part of the session, delegations interacted with one keynote speaker and three panellists on the topic of sustainable consumption and production (including chemicals and waste).

Keynote speakers

Dr. Ernst Ulrich von Weizsäcker, Co-Chair of the International Resource Panel, echoed the report of the UN High-level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda that the MDGs fell short by not addressing sustainable consumption and production (SCP). By citing a recent paper by Ashok Khosla commissioned by IRP, he recommended incorporating resource efficiency in the SDGs. A possible target could be doubling resource productivity over the next 15 or 20 years. Total material requirement per GDP or GHG emission per GDP could serve as indicators. Eurostat publishes measures of resource efficiency scoreboard for all 28 member countries. Examples as such show that statistical capability is not in the way. He believed that resource productivity lends itself well to be integrated into other goals but a stand-alone one could serve as a visible flag telling the public why SDGs are vital for all.

Based on the Kuznets Curve, Dr. Weizsäcker emphasized the importance of decoupling socio-economic development from rising resource use and consumption. He believed that it is feasible both in the North and the South and that policies exist to foster resource efficiency. Recalling the Principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities, he called for absolute decoupling for the global North and relative decoupling for the global South. He stressed that developing countries have an opportunity to avoid the costly clumsiness of wasteful habits and infrastructures of the developed countries. Companies pioneering in resource efficiency would be the game winners in the world of scarce resources.

Panelists

Mr. William McDonough, Founder of McDonough and Partners and author of the book *Cradle to Cradle*, shared his views on sustainability from the design perspective. Quoting the Brundtland Commission definition of sustainable development as meeting our needs without compromising the needs of future generations, he argued that sustainable development is a human rights issue and that design is the first sign of human intention. He called for moving from “doing less bad” to “doing good”, doing the right things by optimizing designs to be beneficial from the start, combining cost efficiency with cost effectiveness. Mr. McDonough addressed this as a design problem of removing what we don’t want and growing what we want to grow, for future generations. He outlined an ‘upcycling chart’ that has all undefined options and opportunities on the left, filter of values, and ways of improving in all these cases on the right. He saw materials as nutrients in two optimized metabolisms – the biosphere and techno-sphere - and argued that product design should aim at not contaminating the biosphere with toxins and designing products that are endlessly reusable by human generations in the techno-sphere.

Mr. Karti Sandilya, Advisor, Blacksmith Institute and the Global Alliance on Health and Pollution, brought the attention of the participants to the devastating effects of toxic exposure on growth and health, calling it “a new under-recognized global epidemic”. According to the database of the Global Alliance, more than 200 million people in the developing world are exposed to toxic pollution through chemicals and waste at several times higher than what regulatory agencies perceive as safe for humans. He argued that to some extent, this is an unintended consequence of globalization, where wealthy countries shift manufacturing and mining overseas to low-cost areas without adequate pollution controls. It is also a poverty eradication problem as the poorest bear the burden. The database also shows that large multi-nationals are rarely the ones responsible, because of their reputational concerns. In many

cases, they actually contribute to raising local standards, while smaller local companies, abandoned sites, or artisanal sites are the main source of exposure.

Mr. Sandilya argued that cleaning up requires prioritizing where health effects might be the worst, especially for children. Solutions have to be designed appropriately to each situation and, where possible, the polluter should pay. However, he stressed that rather than remediation, prevention through education, regulation, enforcement and controls is more important. Formal private sector companies can play an important role in tackling toxic and chemical waste by recycling their products in safe environments and working with informal recyclers for collection. He urged that the SDGs should incorporate chemicals, wastes and toxic pollution and a clear environmental public health target under the health goal. Chemicals and wastes, especially from contaminated sites, should not be a burden on the health of local populations and children.

Mr. Helio Mattar, President, Akatu Institute for Conscious Consumption stressed that if the same model of production and consumption were to be maintained and if all of humanity were to consume as the average consumer of the most developed countries, we would need five planets to supply that volume of consumption. Citing relevant statistics, he also pointed out that today's society is socially unfair, environmentally unsustainable and economically vulnerable. The distribution of consumption is unfair with one out of seven billion population contributing to almost 80% of total consumption. And the world's growing middle-class following the large-scale mass consumption patterns of the developed world requires radical changes in areas such as technology, industry, agriculture, food, hospitality, transportation and energy, and fast action towards a 75% reduction in the use of natural resources per unit of products and services in 20 years.

For this change to happen, in addition to radical changes in technology and in public policies at the national and international level; Mr. Mattar believed that three more elements are required: new consciousness of consumers leading to new lifestyles; new products and services to enable these new lifestyles, as well as a new organization of society to enable the new lifestyles. The new lifestyles must be different and desirable. New products and services to enable these new lifestyles will have to be durable, foster shared use, local rather than global production, virtual rather than material products and healthy products. The new organization of society would have companies creating shared values for all stakeholders, redistribution of time towards a better balance in people's lives, and a gradually reduced and redistributed global workload, which would transform the society of consumption to a society of wellbeing, where we have enough for everybody, everywhere, forever. He recommended achieving this through indicators measuring efforts, such as number of schools engaged in or campaigns promoting sustainable development, and indicators measuring outcome, such as the percentage of people above the minimum level of wellbeing or environmental impact per unit of GDP. A bottom up process based in a multi-stakeholder dialogue should be established to guarantee the consistency of measurement and the transparency in communication.

Interactive exchange of views

During the ensuing exchange of views with panellists and national statements, many useful points and a number of proposals emerged, with the following highlights:

- The cross-cutting nature of SCP was well recognized. Some delegations strongly advocated a stand-alone goal on SCP, while others favoured the incorporation of SCP under relevant goals in areas such as energy, water and sanitation, food and agriculture, health and cities.
- Several possible targets on SCP and resource productivity were proposed, including: to double the shares of renewable sources in the energy mix by 2030, to restore agricultural

productivity of a third of severely degraded abandoned land by 2030, to reduce the share of overexploited ocean fish stocks by 20%.

- Targets were also proposed on decoupling of resource use from economic growth, possibly with a relative decoupling (intensity) target for developing countries and an absolute decoupling target for developed ones. A cap on per capita energy consumption, as proposed by a few delegations, was raised as one variant of a decoupling target.
- On sustainable consumption, many emphasized the need to change consumption patterns – through a combination of measures including awareness raising, consumer information, and appropriate pricing and regulation – beginning with energy and resource intensive patterns of wealthy consumers. Non-discriminatory sustainable procurement policies and criteria were also cited as an important instrument, one that could build markets for sustainable products and might lend itself to a target. Standards of energy efficiency in buildings and other energy-using infrastructure and products were also mentioned.
- On sustainable production, actions that could potentially lend themselves to targets include increasing the numbers of products and services with sustainability standards and labelling and increasing company reporting on sustainability performance.
- The Rio+20 decision to adopt the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production (10YFP) was widely lauded, and many called for early and generous contributions to its trust fund to enable timely implementation.
- A mix of policies will be needed to promote SCP, including fiscal instruments like taxes and product charges and subsidy reform, education and awareness raising, voluntary certification schemes, public procurement, and regulations, standards and legislation.
- Many stressed the need to take a life-cycle approach in addressing SCP, considering that the consumption patterns of consumers can have multiple impacts around the globe following the lines of supply chains back to source.
- Design of products is critical to life-cycle management of impacts and encouraging recycling and reuse. It was noted that efficient will not be sufficient, given rapid economic growth, so we will need to make major adjustments to consumption patterns and lifestyles and design products for endless re-use.
- Inequality was raised as a driver for certain societal values that encourage unsustainable consumption patterns. Some stressed that sustainable lifestyles must be based on a different way of inhabiting this planet in harmony with nature.
- It was recalled that extant agreements that address SCP call on developed countries to lead in shift towards sustainable consumption and production. It was also observed that it can be easier to convince citizens in developed countries to do so if they are confident that developing countries will follow. In fact, it was noted by some that developing countries are already among the leaders in areas like renewable energy.
- Regarding chemicals and waste, several noted that strong linkages exist between sound chemicals management and other sustainable development issues, including health. The poor and vulnerable are the first victims of harmful chemicals and waste.
- Reference was made to the need to reaffirm commitments to relevant Conventions relating to chemicals and waste. Also mentioned was the need to build capacities, as many developing countries, including LDCs and SIDS, lack capacity to manage

chemicals and waste sustainably. SAICM (the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management) was cited favourably as an effective vehicle for international multi-stakeholder cooperation, and the SAICM 2020 target was proposed as a reference point for any possible SDG target relating to chemicals. Mention was also made of the need to extend SAICM's life beyond 2020.

III. Climate change and disaster risk reduction

The seventh session of the OWG proceeded to the topic of climate change and disaster risk reduction on Thursday afternoon. During the two half-day sessions, two keynote speakers and three panelists actively engaged in the deliberation of the OWG.

Keynote speakers

Mr. Andrew Steer, President and CEO, World Resources Institute, started his keynote address by warning that climate change can wipe out hard-earned development gains, highlighting the importance of addressing climate change in the development agenda. He argued that climate change impacts development through four paths - temperature change, sea-level rise, natural disasters and shifts in the hydrological cycle - which interact with each other making the situation even more complicated and exacerbated. He called for resilient development with climate adaptation and low-carbon development. He believed that the SDGs should be coherent with relevant processes for maximum impact, including post-2015 development agenda, the next phase of the Hyogo Framework for Action on disaster risk reduction, the Conference on Financing for Development, and COP21 under the UNFCCC process. According to Mr. Steer, to be climate-smart the post-2015 development framework should explicitly connect development and climate change in its chapeau text recognizing the urgency of addressing climate change with a breakdown of the carbon budget. It has taken 200 years to use half of the carbon budget, and only 30 years for the other half at current rate. In order to stay within 2 degrees of warming, we must peak world emission by 2020. While doing this, he emphasized, we must also tackle the disproportional impacts on the poorest and strive for fair share of actions, fair access to technologies as well as inter-generational equity. He believed that development and climate change linkages could be reflected within individual targets around building resilience, adaptation, and supporting low carbon growth. He also gave concrete examples on how to reflect these linkages under possible goals on sustainable energy, food and nutritional security for all, inclusive, productive and resilient cities, and global partnership for development.¹

Professor Jiahua Pan, Director-General of the Institute for Urban and Environmental Studies, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), echoed Mr. Steer in emphasizing the crucial importance of climate change in sustainable development. He reviewed the negotiated goals under the legal framework of the UNFCCC process to hold global temperature increase within 2°C and the possibility to look at within 1.5°C in the Copenhagen Accord and subsequent documents. It was also noted that consensus has not been reached on the implementation of such goals, which is not simply mitigation, but also issues such as adaptation, finance, technologies, capacity building. Drawing on the IPCC stabilization scenarios to meet the 2-degree warming limit (The IPCC 5th Assessment Report Chart, WGI, SPM, 2013), Prof. Pan called for a paradigm shift, moving away from “industrial civilization” of utilitarian, materialism and profit maximization to “ecological civilization” which is characterized by harmony and inclusiveness, built on the ethical foundation of justice, and driven by ecological, economic and social efficiency and quality human development. China's new Green Goals and targets were shared as an example.²

¹ For details of these examples: <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/5593steer.pdf>

² For details: <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/5588jiahua.pdf>

Prof. Pan considered it fundamental to the SDG framework to include a climate sustainability goal with targets in line with the agreed 2 degree limit. He further pointed out that factors such as population, income, energy intensity and GHG intensity are important, but they are matters of public choices only, therefore not effective primary drivers to regulate. Primary drivers include consumer behavior, technology, governance, resource availability, infrastructure, development, industrialization and urbanization. They have direct impacts on mitigation and can be policy relevant. Ultimately these primary drivers would be powered by actions such as information provision, R&D, planning, economy incentives, non-climate policies and direct regulation. On the indicator level, Prof. Pan stressed that all targets should be measurable, reportable, and verifiable and should reflect the Principle of Common But Differentiated Responsibilities. Industrialized nations may use indicators such as emission budgets and percentage reduction in absolute terms, while developing nations may use indicators such as percentage intensity reduction.

Panelists

Ms. Debra A.K. Johnson, DuPont Sustainable Solutions, representing private sector interests, gave a presentation on how “possibilities motivate change”. While climate change is posing a severe threat to humanity, she suggested that it can also serve as a catalyst for positive, necessary change. She argued that climate and non-climate related disasters are at odds with business: disaster related economic losses amount to hundreds of billions annually; enterprise development, infrastructure, supply chains, and business continuity are all at risk; demands on the private sector are increasing in number and impact, and the time remaining to respond and adapt is decreasing. The private sector, like the international community, is willing and motivated to address climate change and disaster risk. Actions are already taken for example to improve supply chain resilience, and scorecards are being distributed that are altered based on lessons learned from previous disaster events. Following Hurricane Katrina opportunities were identified for improving business continuity management—to proactively reduce vulnerability and minimize damage at DuPont sites against future hurricane events. Benefits from adapting within the private sector include an increase in safety, lower insurance (or re-insurance) costs by several million US dollars, a reduction in operations disruption, and lower recover costs. Ms. Johnson included direct suggestions for what is needed next: 1) Guidelines, standards, and practical regulations that support the uptake of private sector DRR and resilience solutions and innovations; 2) Strong local level collaboration that reduces investment uncertainties; 3) SDGs that clearly define and frame the risks—especially those that matter most. She further stressed that in the past the international community held the perspective that the private sector’s role is limited to contributions of dollars, but if contribution is limited to this, addressing climate change and disaster risk will fall short of what is needed.

Dr. Peter deMenocal from the Earth Institute at Columbia University presented on “Sustainable Development in a Changing World” and specifically focused on the important role of climate change scientists in shaping the sustainable development discussion. It was pointed out that overly technical discussions can block knowledge sharing while there would be greater uptake when information is calibrated to what matters to development – how climate change impacts food, water and shelter, and how to find energy solutions. Climate change threatens the world we want: climate change is dramatically changing access to water for drinking, agriculture and power; for each degree of warming crop yields lower by 5-10%; ocean acidification affects the base of the food chain; climate change and conflicts are related. He argued that climate shouldn’t be just an SDG theme, because it impacts most SDG themes, including health, education, growth and employment, environmental sustainability, governance, conflict and fragility, population dynamics, hunger, food and nutrition security, energy, water and sanitation.

Mr. Ronald H Jackson, Executive Director of the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency, presented on how disaster risk management should be treated within the SDG framework. He highlighted the development challenges of the Caribbean SIDS – high vulnerability, high exposure, already extensive climate variability, recurring extreme weather events and a changing climate paired with high debt and limited fiscal capability to address them. Life loss and major economic costs, especially in coastlines, are threatening the Caribbean livelihood, which are highly dependent on coastal and natural resources. Mr. Jackson introduced the Comprehensive Disaster Management (CDM) in the Caribbean region, which was already being linked to development planning in 2001-2006 and included a Results Based Strategy and Programming Framework for 2014-2024. He suggested that the various agendas for climate change, disaster risk reduction, sustainable development and resilience can be seen as complementary. Quoting the ISDR Global Assessment Report in 2013, he suggested that “more work is needed to address the underlying risk factors / drivers. The SDGs provide an opportunity to do this.” Resilience building should be a feature of the SDGs, and indicators should address climate vulnerability explicitly, also social, economic risk factors that are part of the underlying vulnerability to climate change and disasters. The desired outcome is lower exposure of people and assets, reduction in losses and impacts to livelihoods. Furthermore, he suggested the following for moving forward 1) reducing the underlying risk drivers, 2) seeking sector integration, 3) addressing the financing needs of risk reduction, and 4) focused indicators on resilience.

Interactive exchange of views

- The urgency of action on climate change and disaster risk reduction was widely acknowledged, and it was emphasized that for a number of countries climate change represents an existential threat.
- Climate change poses a real and imminent threat to sustainable development, putting at risk development gains of recent decades and, among other things, threatening food security, intensifying water scarcity and flooding as well as sea-level rise. The exposure of SIDS, LDCs – including those in Africa – as well as other countries to the impacts of climate change was highlighted. Several underlined that the poorest are most at risk from disasters, and disasters deepen their poverty.
- There was wide support for addressing climate change as a cross-cutting issue in the SDG framework, without a stand-alone goal, and while respecting the negotiating role of the UNFCCC. In this regard, a particular focus was laid on the principles of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities; however, the view was also expressed that CBDR has evolved over time.
- Several supported targets that reflect the challenges of addressing climate change in key areas and that are consistent with commitments under the UNFCCC, including resilient infrastructure, protecting forests, sustainable cities, sustainable energy, food security, and SCP.
- Some favoured inclusion of the below 2 degree C warming target; others considered that this target could not be referenced in isolation from the UNFCCC context. The need to consider means of implementation was noted.
- The inter-connected nature of risks posed by climate change and natural disasters was recognized. Strong actions on climate change mitigation and adaptation are among the most effective means of reducing disaster risks. Without such actions, the frequency and intensity of, and the vulnerability to, disasters will only intensify in coming years and decades.

- Disaster losses have major and growing impacts on lives and economies, but tools to address them are available, in particular the Hyogo Framework for Action. Mention was made of the need for an ambitious second Hyogo Framework for Action and that SDGs should reinforce efforts on disaster risk reduction under that Framework.
- Proposals were made for targets on disaster risk reduction, including to reduce by a significant degree the severity of impacts as measured for example by loss of lives and economic losses.
- It was stressed that we must think and act through managing systems to reduce disaster risks and build resilience. One expert referred to the need to consider three dimensions of risk mitigation: risk prevention through development pathways that minimise risk generation; risk reduction; and fostering resilience by improving the ability to deal with shocks.
- There is a need for a range of solutions, including access to technology and early warning systems for disaster management, and enhanced stakeholder capacities at all levels. The role of good governance and incorporation of lessons learned from indigenous knowledge were also recognized.

Closing Session

On Friday afternoon, Co-Chair Amb. Körösi of Hungary led the group to the closing session with his presentation of highlights from the work of the group this week. The Co-Chairs' summary bullet points were distributed among delegations as usual. Amb Körösi was pleased to note that the proposals in recent sessions had become sharper and more concrete as the next phase approaches. Comments to the summary were taken from the floor.

Co-Chair Amb. Kamau of Kenya shared some thoughts on several possible options for the way forward: 1) The Co-Chairs would pool together a report, documenting all the stock-taking sessions, as an aide memoire for the Group. It could be made available 10 days or so after the February session; 2) The first meeting of the next phase would take place from 3 March for three days. For this meeting, the Co-Chairs could prepare a document to serve as the basis for the work between March and July. The document could be either a tighter synthesis list of possible goals and targets or a "looser text", more conceptual in nature, discussing where the main trends might be. Alternatively, Amb. Kamau also suggested that the Co-Chairs could refrain from providing any text and wait for members of the Group to make proposals to be discussed at the meeting; 3) The Co-Chairs could also formulate some criteria, based on the Rio Principles and the Rio+20 outcome document, making it transparent how SDGs should be formulated.

The initial reactions from the floor reflected various interpretations of the Co-Chairs' proposed options as well as divergent views on the way forward. Some were in favour of a compendium of possible goals and targets, relatively long, inclusive, "including the proposals that are less politically popular". Others cautioned against listing and supported a "looser" textual document, providing more comfort for consultation and coordination. Some argued that the document, no matter which format it would be, should not serve as basis for negotiation; while some held the view that the OWG should start text-based negotiation towards a final outcome. After extensive discussions, the Group resolved to convene an informal inter-sessional consultation to exchange views on this matter before the February session and to leave final decision making to the February session. The details of the inter-sessional meeting were to be announced.