

JOINT STATEMENT BY THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS, THE REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE AND THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES ON THE FIRST MEETING OF THE OPEN WORKING GROUP ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS, 14 MARCH 2013

Delivered by H.E. Ambassador Nicholas Emiliou, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Cyprus to the UN

Mr Co-Chairs,

1 On behalf of Cyprus, Singapore and the United Arab Emirates, we would like to welcome the convening of the Open Working Group (OWG) on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This is the first step towards implementing a key decision of our leaders at the Rio+20 Conference last year.

2 In this connection, we would like to thank the PRs of Hungary and Kenya for co-facilitating the convening of the first meeting of the OWG. Also thank the PR of Brazil for her efforts in co-facilitating the establishment of the OWG. Without their hard work, we would not be able to start now on the long-overdue discussion of the substance of the SDGs. We also take note and thank the UN Secretary General for his Report containing the initial input to the work of the OWG.

3 We note that we are already behind schedule as the OWG is to submit a report containing a proposal for SDGs to the 68th session of the General Assembly for consideration and appropriate action. Accordingly, let us all try to work more efficiently and effectively in a spirit of consensus to discharge our mandate by the deadline.

4 The work of the OWG should be guided by paras 246 and 247 of the Rio+20 outcome document. It should also be coherent and consistent with the processes related to the Post-2015 Development Agenda, as indicated in para 249. In this connection, the OWG should also keep an open mind and consider the various proposals for SDGs. By drawing from a diverse range of sources, the OWG would be able to put up more robust and informed recommendations to the General Assembly.

5 We note that prior to Rio+20, useful work was done in identifying potential thematic areas for SDGs. This would need to be further elaborated. The OWG should seek where possible to draw on this earlier work.

6 Above all, the OWG should keep in mind that the main message in para 247 in the Rio+20 outcome document is that SDGs “should be action oriented, concise and easy to communicate, limited in number, aspirational, global in nature and universally applicable to all countries while taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities.”

7 Thank you.