

**First Session of the General Assembly Open Working Group on Sustainable Development
Goals
14-15 March 2013**

JOINT STATEMENT

Intervention delivered by Louise Kantrow, Permanent Representative of the International Chamber
of Commerce to the United Nations on behalf of:
Business and Industry, Scientific and Technological Community, and Local Authorities

Thank you Mr. Co-Chair.

Mr. Co-Chair, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, it gives me great pleasure to address the first session of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals. While I represent the Business and Industry Major Group, my statement reflects the views and concerns of three major groups: Business and Industry, Local Authorities, and Scientific and Technological Community.

But before I go any further, I would like to congratulate the newly elected officers of the Open Working Group and wish you success in the very important task that lies ahead of you.

The United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) served as a useful framework for global action and cooperation on development. While they did not accomplish every aspect of their objectives, the MDGs mobilized minds, catalyzed action to combat poverty, and highlighted urgent priorities for the neediest and most vulnerable. The MDGs have provided a valuable learning process and this experience needs to be built on as we devise the SDGs to be an integral part of the post-2015 development framework.

It is commonly accepted that the majority of poor people now reside in middle income countries. The new international development agenda will have to address not only national but also local issues, including the consequence of a rapidly growing urbanization such as slum development. The process of developing the SDGs should work closely with the Post-2015 Development Agenda, engaging all countries, while providing enough space for each country to develop its own approach. The experience of the MDGs has taught us quite clearly that processes of top-down and bottom-up have to meet for future SDGs to be successful. We see strong potential for the SDGs to be more than the sum of their parts and the convergence of the MDGs and SDGs into a single coherent post 2015 development framework to be an important and desirable outcome.

The objective at the “centre” of each SDG should be well defined. It must be a “fundamental” that underpins all three dimensions of sustainable development and be viewed from both sustainability and development standpoints. Enabling conditions for sustainability will need to be front and center, building on a foundation of economic growth, improved quality of life, good governance, inclusion and strong institutions as key drivers of development. The SDGs should be based on best available knowledge on the environmental, economic, and social dimensions of sustainable development and their interrelations.

The measures required to assess progress in implementing the SDGs must be thought out now and the means to monitor and report on results must be devised. There is a widely recognized need for accurate, detailed, disaggregated statistics which do not look at the overall national numbers but take into account the reality on the ground. Indicators and data collection are required at the local and sub-national levels if real impact and process are to be achieved.

SDGs should address planetary boundaries, as identified by science, including climate change, loss of biodiversity and diminishing ecosystem services, and looming global water crisis among others. Addressing these environmental concerns should be combined with economic development and social goals that meet the needs and ensure the welfare of the present and future generations.

The development of the SDGs should consider how to mobilize and channel resources most cost-effectively – for business, stepping up investment in and deployment of financial and technological resources, innovation and knowhow will be one of the most critical success factors for SDGs that are not unmet promises. It will be indispensable to reflect economic circumstances, opportunities and risks in designing the goals and targets as well as their necessary “support structure.”

The SDGs are an opportunity to bring “sustainability” and “development” together in a mutually reinforcing and measurable way, and 1) animate global cooperation and 2) draw on and mobilize the resources of non-governmental constituencies and the Major Groups. We now need to work on ensuring proper reflection of the consultations at the key decision making levels, ensuring this process is open and transparent and identifying key actors that are needed to make a difference.

Rio+20 highlighted the importance of engaging all stakeholders and major groups in the process going forward. To this end, we encourage member states to build on the recommendations of the Rio+20 outcomes and make the best use of the collaboration mechanisms that have been created through the Rio+20 process through further enhancement of the participation of major groups and other stakeholders, staying true to the multi-level and multi-stakeholder nature endorsed by the Future We Want.

Substantive, recognized opportunities for business, local authorities and science and technology to inform the SDG discussion as soon as possible are critical to both their proper design and successful implementation. We encourage the OWG to take advantage of the expertise that these three groups can share, which would be essential to inform deliberations, analysis and implementation.

We are encouraged by the opportunity provided to non-governmental stakeholders to address the very first session of the Open Working Group and are hopeful that this is only the first of many.

Thank you.