



PERMANENT MISSION OF NIGERIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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**STATEMENT**

DELIVERED BY

**H.E. AMBASSADOR USMAN SARKI**

*DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF NIGERIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS*

AT THE

FIRST SESSION  
OF THE OPEN WORKING GROUP  
ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs)

HELD ON THURSDAY, 14 MARCH 2013

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**Co-facilitators,**

On behalf of my delegation, I want to thank the President of the General Assembly for convening this important meeting and I wish to express appreciation to him and the Secretary- General for their inspiring statements. Similarly, we welcome the election of the Permanent Representatives of Kenya and Hungary as co-facilitators. We pledge our full support to them as they lead us to a successful outcome of this process.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered by the distinguished representatives of Fiji and Chad on behalf of the G77 and China, and the African Group respectively.

**Co-facilitators,**

The lifespan of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) would terminate in less than three years from now. Despite the challenges faced, the MDGs have galvanized the global community to pursue specific development programmes. Nigeria views the MDGs as desirable and important in addressing global cross-cutting challenges such as poverty, illiteracy, diseases, malnutrition, and so-forth. It is our view that concerted efforts should be geared towards supporting countries that are still off the track in the attainment of the MDGs.

With regard to the Sustainable Development Goals framework, Nigeria is of the opinion that it should build on the achievements of the MDGs. To this end, we would like to reiterate that the SDGs should ensure a balanced integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development namely social equity, economic transformation and environmental sustainability.

We reaffirm that the formulation of the SDGs should focus on the core issues of poverty eradication, job creation, gender equality, sustainable energy, environmental sustainability, qualitative education and good governance.

### **Co-facilitators,**

Given the fact that countries are at different levels of development, we are of the view that the formulation of the SDGs should take due cognizance of national priorities, circumstances and capacities. In this connection, within the SDGs framework, we should develop programmes that are specifically tailored to the needs of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Landlocked and Small Island States. In doing so, the peculiar conditions of these countries would be addressed while advancing globally agreed development objectives in the post-2015 era.

Similarly, we believe that the categorization of countries according to their levels of social and economic development as well as environmental priorities would make the SDGs more focused, action-oriented and implementable. Furthermore, my delegation would like to propose that Regional Economic Communities (RECs) should be specially consulted on the modalities of the SDGs framework and broader post-2015 development objectives. This is with a view to learn from their experiences and also develop viable programmes with them for the implementation of all agreed development goals. In addition, we would like to stress that the key issue of national ownership should not be overlooked.

### **Co-facilitators,**

The challenges at this point in time, both regionally and internationally, are different from what they were at the beginning of the Millennium. For instance, many developing countries including Nigeria are experiencing a rapid increase in youth population and lack of social safety nets for the elderly. Nigeria is of the view that the changing demographic dynamics could result in the exacerbation of the inequality gap, put incredible strain on resources and infrastructure especially in the health sector, increase levels of social volatility and political instability. Nigeria therefore stresses that the SDGs should accommodate the yearnings of the

youth for better lifestyle including decent employment and also cater for the needs of the elderly in the society.

Furthermore, Nigeria believes that global partnership and mechanisms for accountability should be properly articulated and embedded in the SDGs framework. We suggest that partnership in the SDGs should place emphasis on relevant issues to development such as Agriculture, Trade, Investment, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Technology Transfer, Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs), Research and Development (R&D) etc.

Also, it is our firm conviction that the SDGs must be premised upon the sovereign equality of all States and the recognition of their interdependent and mutually reinforcing roles in ushering in and sustaining all internationally agreed development objectives. Nigeria also asserts that peace and security are indispensable to the achievement of sustainable development. The proliferation of conflicts and their debilitating effects on the promotion of human rights and human development must be taken into account. Factors that fuel conflicts and drive them on interminably must be addressed within the SDGs dialogue.

Deepening of democracy at the national level and observance of human rights, are a much desired corollary to development. On the other

hand, the global governance architecture must also be democratized. The reform of the UN particularly the Security Council must proceed hand in hand with the entrenchment of the rule of law at the national and international levels.

Imposition of unilateral sanctions against States is an issue that must be examined within the greater discourse on the SDGs. It is our considered view that Member States should seize this opportunity to reflect on the negative impacts of sanctions on the attainment of development objectives.

**Co-facilitators,**

Regarding procedural matters, Nigeria reaffirms that the SDGs process should be guided by the principles of openness, inclusiveness, transparency and consensus. In this regard, we are of the view that the engagement of all relevant stakeholders including Member States, Regional Grouping, Civil Society and others would significantly contribute to the formation of goals that addresses the challenges confronting humanity and in particular the vulnerable groups.

We would like to also emphasize the need for a consensual outcome that accommodates the desires and aspirations of all stakeholders.

I thank you.