

PERMANENT MISSION OF DENMARK  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS



PERMANENT MISSION OF NORWAY  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

**Statement on behalf of Denmark, Ireland and Norway on the  
occasion of the first meeting of the Open Working Group on  
Sustainable Development Goals**

**by Ambassador Anne Anderson,  
Permanent Representative of Ireland**

**United Nations Headquarters  
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*Check against delivery*

Ireland, Norway and Denmark welcome the establishment of the Open Working Group and would like to congratulate the Co-facilitators, Hungary and Kenya, on their leadership in preparing for this first meeting. In particular we welcome the work of the Co-facilitators in proposing the draft agenda, draft programme of work and methods of work for this Group.

We have all, necessarily, focused on process and procedure over recent months. The priority now is to demonstrate that we have the will and the capacity to respond to the magnitude of the task at hand. We must mobilise our collective will and effort to address the needs of the hundreds of millions of children, women and men who daily face the challenges of poverty, hunger and climate change. Their needs and their views are fundamental to our deliberations.

We are determined to engage constructively and with imagination in the Open Working Group in the months ahead. Let me emphasise that we do not come to these discussions with a pre-determined agenda. We come to listen, to engage and to join forces with all the views, experiences and interests represented here.

We are ready to assume our collective responsibility in imagining and realising a set of coherent and ambitious goals for humanity. They must provide a unified, global approach to the eradication of poverty and the achievement of sustainable development. We affirm the role of the United Nations in leading this vital international process.

Let me be clear on one fundamental point. All of our contributions in this Group will be based on the firm view that the objectives of ending extreme poverty in our world, and of achieving sustainable development for the planet and all its people, are intrinsically linked and mutually reinforcing. That conviction will permeate our input throughout: we will work to develop goals and targets that will help us ensure sustainable development, including the eradication of poverty in all its manifestations.

The process towards developing the post 2015 framework will be complex. The High Level Panel of Eminent Persons, the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, the UN consultations process, and the MDG Review are all important elements of the architecture. The process must build on the enormous strengths and achievements of the MDGs, but also recognise gaps in implementation and areas not addressed.

In this complex landscape, we will be seeking the maximum possible coherence. We are committed to ensuring convergence between the work and outputs of the Open Working Group and the work and outputs of the broader process on the post-2015 development agenda. Our aim must be to work towards agreement on a single set of new goals and targets, which speak clearly to people in their daily lives and which will guide policy and the allocation of scarce resources such as water, food and energy.

An area for early consideration by the Open Working Group should be what we mean by global and universal goals; what does the concept entail? We also need from early on to work towards a common understanding of how we can develop goals that incorporate all three dimensions of sustainable development and their inter-linkages.

While we are agreed that the process on which we are now embarking should result in a set of clear, time-bound and achievable targets, we are also clear that, at this stage, it is not appropriate to focus only or prematurely on the definition of specific goals and targets. These must emerge from a process of learning from what has and what has not worked so far in the experiences of people, communities, the private sector, states and regions. We recognise that civil society and other partners including the scientific community and the private sector have a wealth of expertise to contribute to this discussion.

Our approach will also be defined by recognition of the importance of listening to the experiences and views of other teams; of ensuring outreach to relevant and related international processes and of ensuring we capture and reflect upon the lessons of scientific evidence and the strengths and weaknesses of the current Millennium Development Goals.



As we begin our work towards a new, unified and coherent framework for sustainable global development, we consider that it would be useful to agree some overarching principles for the development of the SDGs. Let me briefly summarise what we view as guiding principles:

- The MDG review process and follow-up to Rio+20, including the elaboration of SDGs, should be brought together in an overarching framework for post-2015 to respond to the inter-linked, universal challenges of poverty eradication and sustainable development.
- Underpinning our work, there are three key objectives and essential requirements for sustainable development: poverty eradication, changing unsustainable patterns of production and consumption, and protecting and managing the natural resource base of economic and social development.
- SDGs should be clearly stated, ambitious, achievable, results-oriented and limited in number.
- While they need to take into account different national circumstances, policies, priorities, capacities and levels of development, the SDGs should be global in nature, relevant and applicable to all countries.
- The formulation of the goals must also be coherent with existing internationally agreed goals and targets and build on existing agreements on the effective use of development finance.

We thank the co-facilitators once again for the work which you have undertaken so far. On behalf of Denmark, Norway and Ireland, I affirm our commitment to working closely with you in the months ahead and of constructively contributing with you and other members of this Open Working Group. At a time of global economic change, uncertainty and opportunity, let us seize this moment and accept the challenge of creating the framework for a more just, equitable and sustainable future for our world and all its people.