

**First Meeting of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals**  
General Assembly Hall 14-15 Marc 2013

**CLOSING REMARKS**

Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have now come to the close of our first meeting.

Going forward, we can tap into the enormous amount of information and recommendations from all the strands of the post-2015 UN development agenda. Your statements have highlighted our shared objective - a coherent, ambitious development agenda, with a concise set of SDGs at its centre.

As you have emphasized, our goals must address our shared challenges as well as our diverse national realities and priorities. We must ensure ownership by all and that no country is left behind.

Eradication of extreme poverty and hunger was repeatedly re-affirmed as the defining challenge of our times. Thus the SDGs should build on the MDGs, taking on board the lessons learnt along the way. Our discussions have universally affirmed the imperative of defining ambitious, action-oriented goals that address in a balanced way the three dimensions of sustainable development.

You have also underlined that the SDGs should be people-centred, that universal human development should be put on a sustainable ground. It will have to go hand-in-hand with the sustainable management of the Earth's finite resources and her fragile ecosystems. In that regard, we were reminded that the three dimensions of sustainable development are inextricably linked. If unmitigated, environmental degradation threatens and undermines precious social development gains. Equally, sustained and inclusive economic progress will underpin sustainable management of the Earth's natural resources and ecosystems.

We also heard from you a wide variety of issues that the SDGs could cover. Probably not all our wishes can be fulfilled if we want to reach a compelling, concise, action-oriented set of goals, but the essential needs to promote sustainable development must be there. At the same time, it is comforting that there are many common views.

Many of you have recalled the priorities contained in key intergovernmental agreements and outcomes beginning with Agenda 21. Several of you mentioned specific priority areas, and without being exhaustive I'll mention a few recurrent ones. In addition to eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, these include: employment and decent jobs, a concern that cuts across countries at different levels of development; sustainable consumption and production; the critical importance of gender equality and empowerment of women; access to and good management of essential of human well-being like food, water, health, and energy. Many of you

highlighted that an ambitious, yet realistic set of goals must be accompanied by the means to make their implementation possible.

Indeed, we are looking forward to work together with the Working Group of Experts on Financing Sustainable Development, as soon as it gets ready for action.

My distinguished Co-Chair and I share your eagerness to roll up our sleeves. As many of you have stated, going forward we will need to gather and digest the best available evidence and ideas from all quarters, taking stock of the best available knowledge. We will be in dialogue mode. Our aim is to develop a shared understanding of the challenges ahead of us.

We have made the first step. The Member States shared their official general statements. We hear your encouragement to embark to the next phase of a more flexible and informal type of interaction.

We will endeavour to ensure that each of our meetings deepens this shared understanding, moving us closer to our common objective. We will also seek a productive cross-fertilization with other processes. We will revert to you shortly with proposals for a work programme for the next few months. We would also like the group to meet again in the next month. 18-19 of April are the target dates but allow us to reconfirm it after a short consultation.

A summary of this meeting will be posted on the OWG webpage, hosted by the Secretariat on the following website: [sustainabledevelopment.un.org](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org). This website is also the place for delegations to login-in to the pass-word protected webspace that has been established to efficiently share documentation related to the OWG.

Stakes are high. We have heard how the SDGs will be vital in guiding our future development pathway. We have the great honour to be part of this daunting but exciting process.