



SECOND SESSION OF THE OPEN WORKING GROUP ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

New York, 17-19 April 2013

**Statement of Mr Paolo Soprano
Director for Sustainable Development
Ministry for the Environment Land and Sea of Italy**

Closing remarks

Distinguished Co-Chairs,

as per your guidance, I will focus my remarks on your schematic option for the program of work and, in doing so, I will try to be as brief as possible.

My comments are made also on behalf of our team partners, Spain and Turkey.

We thank you for your constructive proposal.

We are aware of the challenge that you face in steering this important exercise and we are cognizant, in this context, of the practical need to define the program of work for the months to come. The sooner we agree on the program of work, the sooner the Secretariat can start working at the concept papers and the better the Member States can prepare themselves for the substantive discussions.

We also understand that your proposal does not intend in any way to prejudge the subsequent work of this working group on the identification and elaboration of the SDGs, but rather aims at establishing a general line of discussion, around which additional themes can always be raised and discussed. To be more explicit, we understand that the list of issues contained in this program of work will not be considered as an initial list of SDGs and will not limit the possibility for Member States to raise and discuss other themes.

On the basis of these considerations and this understanding, our team can look favorably at your proposed program.

It will be wise, however, to maintain a certain degree of flexibility in fine tuning the agendas of the next meetings, also to take into account the work currently undergoing or to be conducted in other relevant fora (among which, a mention goes to the UN Statistical Commission and to the

Intergovernmental Committee on Financing for Sustainable Development). We have to make the best use of our time and we need all possible tools to develop meaningful outcomes for this SDGs process.

My final comment is on the format of our meetings. We share your appeal for an increasingly open and interactive debate. To this end, we would be favorable to device an interactive setting aimed at a more fruitful and operational exchange of views on the various clusters. In this context, we think that the role of eminent panelists has proved very useful and we would like to encourage you to preserve this pattern also for the future meetings.

I thank you.