

Intervention

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**For the 2nd meeting of the Open Working Group
on Sustainable Development Goals**

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Mr. Co-chairs,

- 1- At the outset, I would like to thank you, Mr. Co-Chairs, for organising this meeting and adapting its program to accommodate members' needs. It has been our understanding that starting the work of the Open Working Group with a conceptual discussion on SDGs would lead to more clarity needed to elaborate the scope and program of work, as well as defining cross-cutting issues and interlinkages. I would like also to associate my remarks with the statement of G77 and China

Conceptualisation of SDGs

- 2- Building on the experience of the MDGs, the SDGs should serve as driver for implementation of sustainable development and integration of its three dimensions, with poverty eradication as its overarching objective.

Shifting from MDGs to SDGs

- 3- SDGs should be servicing and strengthening the MDGs, thus making sure that MDGs are still valid, relevant and that they will not be an unfinished business.
- 4- Having said that, a second generation of a revised set of current MDGs, taking into consideration the new and emerging global challenges should be the core SDGs. Another 2 or 3 new goals addressing the most pressing issues could be added to them. The SDGs should be limited in numbers, so that it can be manageable.
- 5- In this context, MDGs short comings should be avoided when designing the SDGs. The SDGs should address the structural factors that give rise to the crises, and not only set up new goals and targets.
- 6- The MDGs positive aspects relied on its simplicity that is engaging. There are targets that are quantitative. There are objectives that are easy to comprehend. But, as it turned out, the MDGs did not quite serve their larger strategic purpose of changing the discourse on development.

- 7- The limitations of MDGs as a construct, in conception and in design, provide some basis for an evaluation of the MDGs as a framework. In terms of conception, there are some basic problems. The MDGs specify an outcome but do not set out the process which would make it possible to realise the objectives. The MDGs are set out in terms of aggregates or averages which often conceal as much as they reveal because there is no reference to distributional outcomes. An evaluation of MDGs as a framework for monitoring progress in development highlights shortcomings. Furthermore, means of implementation were the weakest link in the MDGs framework.
- 8- Indeed, the time has come to reflect on factors of change which would represent departures from or substantial modifications in the existing framework. There are three imperatives that deserve to be highlighted. First, there should be structural flexibility at the national level. It must be made explicit that MDGs represent objectives for the world as a whole, which are not a scale to measure progress in every country because national goals must be formulated using global norms as a point of reference. Second, there should be cognition of inequality in any assessment of outcomes. This is essential because inequalities exist and distributional outcomes matter. Third, the new framework for the MDGs must incorporate some priors on means rather than simply focus on ends. The message is not only about outcomes but also about process.
- 9- In the international context, the focus of MDGs is much too narrow. The misplaced emphasis on concessional development assistance, attributable to a donor-centric world view, dominates the discourse. Clearly, the international community needs to do better at this unfinished business but far more needs to be done. In any case, for developing countries, access to markets in trade and access to technology for development are far more important than foreign aid could ever be.
- 10- Most important, perhaps, it must be recognised that unfair rules of the game in the contemporary world economy encroach upon policy space so essential for development. We need a better enabling environment, as stated by the Permanent Representative of Fiji on behalf of G77 and China.

Universality

- 13-The framework of the SDGs should be universal, but at the same time adaptable to national priorities, capacities and levels of development. Since the goals will be applied to all countries, the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDR) must be applied in a uniform way when formulating the goals and targets.
- 14-In accordance with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, though the goals are universally applicable, there are naturally differences in treatment of goals for developed and developing countries. The developed countries should take the lead in terms of higher

commitments under each goal, particularly with relation to changing consumption and production patterns. Moreover the developing countries goals will require international support in terms of means of implementation as well as international partnership in terms of enabling or supportive international policies.

Integration

15-Each goal could be multidimensional thus addressing the three dimensions together in a pro-poor, pro-development fashion, with eradication of poverty as an overarching objective.

Means of implementation

16-Developing countries will require external support in order to implement the SDGs. Therefore, the issue of means of implementation must be given due consideration, including ODA, trade, investment, technology transfer, and capacity building.

17-We need to examine how the issue of the means of implementation will be addressed in the framework of the open working group, and in connection to the work of the expert group on financing sustainable development, as well as to the track on facilitating technology transfer.

18-It is suggested in this regard, that means of implementation should be linked to each goal, so that it would be focused on the implementation of such goal. Meanwhile, a goal addressing systemic issues including, global governance, trade, investment, debt and intellectual property rights, could be envisaged.

Poverty Eradication

- 1- Poverty eradication is the greatest global challenge facing our world today and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. It is worth noting that At a global level, a greater number of the extremely poor now live in countries classified as middle income (MICs) rather than those classified as low income (LICs). Poverty eradication should be the overarching objective of sustainable development.
- 2- While MDG1 is addressing extreme poverty, we should be more ambitious when formulating SDGs by eradicating poverty and not only extreme poverty. This level of ambition has been already acknowledged and reflected in Rio+20 outcome document. Thus in post Rio+20, we should be addressing from now on poverty eradication.
- 3- We should preserve the multidimensional approach used in the MDGs to conceptualize poverty, beyond aggregates and metrics to include health, education, access to water and sanitation issues as part of the effort to achieve poverty eradication.
- 4- The linkage between poverty and sustainable consumption and production could be misleading, as the sustainable consumption and production problem is mostly taking place in developed countries and not in developing countries where poverty levels are high. Thus, it is developed countries who should take the lead in shifting to sustainable consumption and production patterns. Moreover, developing countries need to eradicate poverty in order to make progress in shifting to sustainable consumption and production patterns.