

Statement by Mr.Akan Rakhmetullin
Deputy Permanent Representative
of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the United Nations
on behalf of China, Indonesia and Kazakhstan
at the Third Meeting of the Open Working Group
on Sustainable Development Goals
New York, 22 May 2013

Distinguished Co-Chairs,
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, let me express my gratitude to the Co-Chairs, for their diligent preparations for this third meeting of the OWG SDGs, which takes us one step further towards our objective of defining and addressing the SDGs.

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the troika consisting of China, Indonesia and Kazakhstan in the three major areas of food security and nutrition; sustainable agriculture; desertification, land degradation and drought.

First of all, we would like to express our support for the statement made by Fiji, on behalf of the G77 and China.

We also express our concern with regard to the format of the work plan of the OWG on SDGs. We are of the view that the OWG's work should be intended to pave an incremental phase toward the substantive deliberation on the elements of the SDGs, which will be further discussed after February 2014. In this respect, we believe that in order to do so, we need to build our common understanding on the areas of discussion, so as to see where our views may be converging, and to identify areas where further discussions will be needed. In this regard, we are of the opinion that the summary of discussions of each of the OWGs meeting needs to be discussed to ensure that all concerns and views of Member States are captured and addressed. We therefore support the view expressed by the previous speaker that we need to dedicate a specific time slot, at the beginning of each OWGs meeting, to briefly reflect and discuss the summary of the previous OWG meeting.

In regard to **food security**, we propose the following assessment and future actions for our consideration:

- It is our deep conviction that transformation toward sustainable agriculture and achievement of food security, which includes increasing food production in the developing countries, are among the most important issues that need to be addressed in the discussion on SDGs.
- We also noted that while substantial progress has been made in reducing extreme poverty over the past two decades, mostly as a result of robust economic growth in the key developing countries, the issues of hunger and malnutrition continue to persist.

- While the MDG target of reducing extreme poverty (MDG 1a) may have already been reached at the global level, it is projected that achieving the target to reduce hunger (MDG 1c) by 2015, will be difficult. The target related to child nutrition (MDG 1c) is most probably unlikely to be met and is off-track as confirmed by the World Bank's progress assessment.

- The main causes of this rise in global and national food insecurity, among others, are due to trade barriers imposed by major food exporters, the existing biofuels policies, and increased food commodity speculation, combined with inefficient national governance to cope with such shocks.

- These crises have been further exacerbated by environmental and social problems, such as climate change and rising food demand through changing dietary patterns. The ever-growing populations have further strained international food markets and are expected to lead to further rising food prices and unpredictable price volatility.

- The Rio+20 Outcome Document (para 108) reiterates the right of everyone to have access to safe, sufficient and nutritious food, consistent with the right to adequate food and the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger.

- The Rio+20 Outcome Document further highlights the importance of revitalizing agricultural and rural development, notably in developing countries, in an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable manner.

- Food security is built on three pillars: **the availability** of food, **the access** to appropriate foods for a nutritious diet, and **the appropriate use** of food according to the knowledge and principles of basic nutrition and care, as well as adequate access to sustainable water resources, particularly for women, children and the elderly.

The focus on improved practices and higher shares of productive land and pastures, without over grazing, and efficient irrigation systems will therefore positively impact yields, employment and GDP.

- Therefore, while we consider that fulfilling food security is part and parcel of national responsibility, we are also convinced that, considering the complex and inter-linked nature of food security, multilateral cooperation and action should be the integral elements to overcome this global challenge. In this regard, enhanced global partnership, as well as means of implementation, are of the utmost importance.

- We are of the view that while addressing this challenge, we must revisit the key structural issues that determine global food security, especially in the following spheres: enhancing access to high quality research and technology; promoting trade and investment in ensuring food security; and environmental-related challenges in the context of the global food crises.

- It is therefore important that the SDGs address not only the need for sustained-targeted investment to enhance global food production, but also the systemic problems by improving global trade, food stock management, agribusiness (improving seeds, fertilizer, pesticides), infrastructure development, and intellectual property rights for easing access and enhancing agricultural growth in developing countries.

With regard to the issue of sustainable agriculture, we are of the view that sustainable agriculture practices are closely related to the issue of food security, as well as, climate resilience. The Rio Outcome Document (paras 110-113) reiterate the importance of

sustainable agriculture, and the need for increased investment in sustainable agriculture and practices.

Development in the agricultural sector should also focus on enhancing the participation of smallholder farmers; increasing the role of traditional sustainable agriculture practices; and preventing food loss and wastage throughout the supply chain from initial agricultural production down to final consumption. It also needs to maintain natural ecological processes that support food production systems.

- Addressing food security will also mean recognizing its cross-cutting issues, among others, such as effective and long-term land management systems, especially, for women, together with those of rural development, trade, health, employment, social protection, water, and biofuel energy vs food challenges.

And finally, the **problems of desertification, land degradation and drought (DLDD)** which are the most overlooked, are absolutely vital in the overall consideration of food security. Land is a central element that links energy, food, water and environmental health together. Desertification and drought, especially, cause soil and land degradation, which is closely linked to the two major crises of climate change and loss of biodiversity.

Land degradation is very costly and has very immense far-reaching impact. It has brought direct effects on one in every four human beings. Soil erosion in the world's croplands depletes about 20 billion tons of fertile soil.

- In this regard, we are of the view that developing and implementing proactive national drought management policies by dealing with impact assessment, preventive, planning and risk management measures are critical, while at the same time, fostering science, appropriate technology and innovation, public outreach and resource management.

- To tackle DLDD effectively, its drivers need to be addressed and instruments designed to incentivize sustainable land management (SLM). Effective measures can only be introduced by bridging the science-policy gap through knowledge transfers and capacity building.

- Halting and reversing declines of land productivity by restoring and regenerating land that is already degraded call for global processes and commitments to implement strategies and interventions to combat the challenges of land degradation.

These are some initial considerations to set the way forward for our collective thinking. We from the troika of China, Indonesia and my own country, Kazakhstan, stand ready to fully contribute to the deliberations of the OWG SDGs as we continue to delineate concrete and meaningful goals in the post-2015 development phase.

Thank you, Co-Chairs.