

**Closing Statement by
H.E. Ambassador Masood Khan of Pakistan on behalf of Troika of India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka at the
Third Meeting of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (OWG-SDG)**

UN General Assembly

24nd May 2013

Mr. Co-Chair,

I have the honour to make some reflections on behalf of the India, Sri Lanka and my own delegation.

2. We would like to express our appreciation to you and the team behind you for successfully steering the work during this session. From difficult procedural birth of this Group to substantive discussions and analysis, we have come a long way. We are particularly pleased to note that our discussions have been engaging and we are now getting into the substance.

3. We have started to challenge ourselves by asking what is nature of goals the world is ready to adopt, what targets are realistic, what lessons can we draw from our experience in delineating the SDGs and more importantly how to enhance the depth and scope of existing MDGs. One key conclusion from three days of deliberations is that despite challenging nature of our work discussions have revealed that our task is doable and that we are ready to take bold steps. To this end, we also note the useful inputs provided by the Technical Support Team on the themes of this session.

Co-Chairs,

4. Five elements need urgent attention.

5. First, we need to improve our working methods and allocate more time for interaction amongst ourselves and with experts that we will invite in future. To this end, we would propose that you issue a scenario note prior to the 4th session outlining a set of guiding questions both for the experts and the Governments to respond for a more focused discussions.

6. Second, the use of panelists must continue. We believe that this process could be deepened to bring regional and global development perspective before us. To this end, we should also extend invitation to Regional Development Banks, UN Regional Setup, national development banks to also share their experience. In addition, the role of private sector remains a critical element of our work. We are yet to specifically focus and fully explore on their possible role and contribution to sustainable development.

7. Third, we have noticed concerns regarding the role of MDGs in the post 2015 time period. Emphasis and focus on fully implementing MDGs must remain the overarching objective in the near term while SDGs should provide a long term perspective with intervening mid term benchmarks for the global community. MDGs should cascade into SDGs seamlessly.

8. Fourth, we remain concerned that while thematic discussions have progressed, the emphasis on the means of implementation has remained limited and negligible. We would particularly urge you that the set of guiding questions to the presenters/panelist for the next session must put an equal emphasis on determining what would it take to embark on a robust sustainable development pathway.

9. Finally, during this session discussions, a vast majority of the developing countries have highlighted structural impediments in pursuing sustainable agriculture, food security and achieving water secure

environment across the globe and at the national levels. Most notably, the question of agricultural subsidies and how they are negatively impacting upon the sustainable development prospects must be clearly understood and addressed. To deepen this dialogue further, we would urge you to address a letter to the Director General of the World Trade Organization highlighting the concerns expressed here and seeking his views. We would also welcome if an invitation were extended to him to address the next session of the OWG as a keynote speaker of the next session.

Co-Chairs,

10. Let me reiterate three additional elements:

- a. Poverty alleviation remains the over arching challenge in promoting sustainable agriculture as well as food security and nutrition. A credible goal towards rural development would be critical in this regard.
- b. Enhancing the role of women and gender equality should be a centerpiece of our efforts. Enhancing food security is not just a question of equitable distribution of resources within a society and a country but also amongst countries. To this end, framework of sustainable production and consumption is highly relevant to our work.
- c. All efforts must take into account the fundamental Rio Principles, the varying circumstances and capacities of the countries in pursuing goals, particularly the principle of the common but differentiated responsibilities.

I Thank You Co -Chair.