

HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
FIRST INAUGURAL MEETING
LEADER DIALOGUE: FROM VISION TO ACTION
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STATEMENT BY H.E. MR. EVANGELOS VENIZELOS, DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER
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Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The international community is nowadays better equipped for addressing the challenging issues of development than how it was in 2000, when the Millennium Declaration was adopted. The HLPF provides the opportunity to establish a strengthened institutional framework for sustainable development. We should ensure the HLPF's strategic role, high visibility and autonomy so that it can successfully work upon and further enhance, in an integrated manner, the three dimensions of sustainable development: social, economic and environmental.

In order to endorse best possible strategies that need to be applied, we should take into consideration contemporary challenges like extreme poverty, climate change, sustainable development, debt and financial crises, social inequality, demographic and migration problems, regional conflicts and security issues.

It is important to focus on our top priority to eradicate poverty, placing it within the broader context of sustainable development. The new development framework should aim at ensuring well-being for all, in all countries, irrespective of the structure of their economy or level of development. Thus, the post 2015 agenda should be aspiring, in order to achieve everybody's access to decent work, education and health, while strengthening and further promoting common values like democracy, human rights, rule of law, security, social cohesion and environmental sustainability.

Furthermore, this new development framework should reflect on the development and socio-economic differences among countries but also within them. In this respect, the indicators of monitoring and evaluation systems have to be simple and measurable, to ensure efficiency and transparency of the respective policies and interventions.

Sustainable development is directly related to the transition to the model of green economy and sustainable, complete and effective management of natural resources. In the process of elaborating on particular SDGs, we come across important issues, such as water management, food security, sustainable energy, all of them being obviously interdependent.

The challenges we are facing are ever more pressing, requiring immediate solutions. We still need to protect and rationally use our fresh water resources, to put an end to unsustainable consumption, to mitigate climate change and to confront the complex relationship between trade, environment and sustainable development. The present ongoing economic and fiscal crisis must be seen as an opportunity for new, people-centered and environment-friendly policies and for a renewed drive towards sustainability.

In parallel, we need to engage both the public and the private sector in our efforts for an effective shift to green economy. Thus, we need to encourage public authorities to put in place the necessary enabling frameworks and tools. At the same time, we need to support the development of international standards and voluntary initiatives undertaken by the private sector, such as corporate social responsibility and corporate sustainability reporting.

As a conclusion, we look forward to a new and sustainable model of development for the post-2015 era for all countries and social groups. To this end, the contribution of a successful review of the MDGs and the definition of the SDGs in a unified set of development goals will be decisive.

Thank you very much.