

**SIXTH SESSION OF THE OPEN WORKING GROUP ON
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS
9-13 December 2013**

**CYPRUS-SINGAPORE-UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
FINAL JOINT STATEMENTS**

Topic 2. Needs of countries in special situations, African countries, LDCs, LLDCs, SIDS, specific challenges for middle-income countries

Joint statement

Mr. Co-Chairs,

The Cyprus-Singapore-UAE troika notes the particular challenges associated with countries with special situations, namely African countries, Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries, Middle-Income countries and **Small Island Developing States**, which **Singapore** is one of them.

While much progress has been made in meeting MDGs for example on education, healthcare, women's empowerment, the TST issues briefs have once again reminded us of significant development challenges that remain in many of countries with special situations,

Particularly in **Africa** where over half of Least Developed Countries and Landlocked Developing Countries are found.

Persisting poverty, lack of access to modern energy, inefficient infrastructure, and increasing environmental degradation are just a few examples of challenges in these countries.

Widening gaps between countries with special situations and the rest of the world as well as within these countries are also of great concern.

The UAE is a major donor country, providing not only substantial amounts of foreign aid but also sharing experience and expertise with developing countries, including on sustainable energy.

In 2012, the UAE disbursed a total of **1.6 billion USD** in support of development, humanitarian, and charitable projects in 137 countries and territories. Almost **22 per cent** of this assistance went to Africa and was provided for a wide variety of projects.

Cyprus as member of the European Union after 2002, is committed to increase its ODA to 0.33 per cent of **Gross National Income** by 2015. Despite the current budgetary constraints due to the financial crisis Cyprus' ODA in 2012 was **0.12 per cent** of **Gross National Income**. Almost **50 per cent** of Cyprus program countries are countries of the African region.

At the same time, we acknowledge that with **appropriate support** and **technology transfer**, there are potentials for Least Developed Countries to transition to a **green economy growth path** given their low-carbon profile, rich natural assets and early stage of structural transformation.

The UAE has been contributing to this effort and have funded a 15 MW solar PV (photovoltaic) plant in Mauritania in 2013 which meets 10 per cent of the country's energy demand and is one of the largest PV (photovoltaic) plants in Africa.

Mr. Co-Chairs,

Small Island Developing States also face their unique challenges given their small size, limited resources, geographic dispersion and isolation from markets with little space for diversification.

Both their economy and food security heavily depends on the health of the oceans. In this regard, UAE strongly supports the statement made by the representative of Papua New Guinea yesterday.

In this connection, the OWG's recommendations on possible sustainable development goals would need to take into account the upcoming negotiations on the possible outcomes from **the 3rd UN Small Islands Development States Conference** in September 2014.

The UAE is hosting a **Blue Economy Summit** in January 2014 to discuss how to utilize the blue economy as a tool to shift development in Small Island Developing States and coastal states towards a sustainable development trajectory.

Furthermore, the UAE has established the **UAE-Pacific Partnership Fund**, which allocates 50 million USD in grant funding for renewable energy projects in developing Pacific island countries between 2013 and 2018 to assist them with improving their energy security.

We urge the **Open Working Group** to keep in mind of the needs of countries in special situations as we move forward on goal settings to ensure that sustainable development goals contribute to poverty eradication and sustainable development.

Thank you.