

STATEMENT

delivered by

to the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals
on behalf of Bulgaria and Croatia

I have the honour to share with you some issues we consider of special relevance to the today's discussion on behalf of Croatia and my own country, Bulgaria.

Mr. Chair,

In our days half of the humanity, about 3.5 billion people, lives in the cities and it is expected that almost 60 per cent of the world population by 2030 will be concentrated in urban areas. This fact by itself is important enough to give a pretty strong reason for having the present discussion.

The cities around the world occupy just 2 per cent of the surface of the Earth but account for 60 to 80 per cent of energy consumption and 75 per cent of carbon emissions. Rapid urbanization is exercising pressure on fresh water supplies, sewage, the living environment, and public health. In addition a close to one billion people live in slums and this number is increasing every day. With this statistics in mind it is not surprising that we have to deal with challenges like the pollution, the inability to ensure enough funds to provide basic services, the shortage of adequate housing and declining infrastructure. At the same time there is no doubt that the cities is where the human life gets shaped – hubs of social, economic and cultural development and prosperity. Building sustainable cities will contribute both to poverty eradication and to achieving sustainable development. The challenges before the sustainable cities are multidimensional and concern the three pillars of the sustainable development. We face issues like deprived housing conditions with lack of basic services like water, sanitation, durable housing, sufficient living area, access to education, energy or security of tenure; pressure on natural resources; air pollution; waste management; physical security and safety and the need to increase the resilience to natural disasters.

All of the above mentioned bring the following question, which, Bulgaria and Croatia believe, the post 2015 development agenda should answer, namely: how can we shape our cities so that everyone can enjoy a decent quality of life while protecting the environment? Allow me to quote here the report of the Secretary-General's High Level Panel on the post-2015 development agenda: "Cities are where the battle for sustainable development will be won or lost". Also, it should be highlighted that the urbanization has a great potential in achieving greater equitability, economic growth, social cohesion and poverty eradication while protecting the environment. This is why Bulgaria and Croatia believe that cities are one of the important cross-cutting areas to be reflected across multiple goals.

Transport

Transport was not included in the MDGs and thus it was not given the attention it should. In our days it is widely recognized that it is a prerequisite for both poverty eradication and sustainable development. The link with and the impact of the transport on the three pillars of sustainable development is evident and

- Well-designed transport systems and access to these systems provide mobility for all groups in society. It also contributes to food security, to education and to health. In this sense the transport can be considered as a driver of social inclusion;
- Transport has an important impact on the economic growth by creating jobs opportunities and facilitate the trade. A well-developed infrastructure is the appropriate way to integrate countries economically and socially. It is especially true for the landlocked countries;
- Transport is also closely related to the environment. It is important to work towards an environmentally friendly transport system which will contribute to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions and to transform it in a driver for sustainable low carbon societies.

The challenges before sustainable transport influence directly our life. Being not part of the MDGs those challenges have increased and deepened and now we have the chance to integrate them in the elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda thus giving them a proper consideration. The transport is crucial for the sustainable development and it could be reflected as targets across multiple goals.

Thank you.