



**Meeting of the General Assembly Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals
United Nations - New York – 31 March 2014**

Statement on behalf of the European Union and its Member States

delivered by

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Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the EU and its Member States. The statement will be made available on the website.

First of all, we want to thank the Co-Chairs for their dedication and for the revised text. We continue to support their efforts and the useful format for discussions for forthcoming sessions. The comprehensive texts and supporting documents are welcome and helpful. They show that if we are serious about eradicating extreme poverty, achieving sustainable development and leaving no one behind, we must draft all goals and targets in accordance with principles such as universality, non-discrimination, equality, participation transparency and accountability.

At this stage we would like to convey the following main observations on the co-chairs' document:

a) The SDGs and associated targets should build on the progress made with the current MDGs and ensure the achievement of existing goals, and integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development in a balanced way to ensure basic living standards; promote drivers for inclusive and sustainable growth; ensure sustainable use, management and protection of natural resources and the ecosystem services they provide; and respect, protect and promote all human rights, justice, equality and equity, the empowerment of women, good governance, the rule of law and peaceful societies. By doing so, the SDGs will support our shared commitment to freeing humanity from poverty and hunger as a matter of urgency.

b) We stand ready to contribute to work towards a prioritized list of inspiring, easy-to-communicate SDGs through the streamlining of some focus areas, while addressing inter-linkages and cross-cutting issues for a truly transformative agenda. In this context, the annex on inter-linkages is helpful. We are happy to work on the basis of clusters in order to move the work forward, but with the understanding that for this week's meeting the clustering is proposed to help the organisation of work and does not prejudice the future formulation of goals.

c) In relation to the cluster 7 issues, we reaffirm the importance we attach to means of implementation and a new global partnership for the success of the post-2015 framework. When discussing such

issues, the role of the private sector, civil society and other stakeholders, and of policy coherence, should be fully considered and appreciated. However, we should remember that work in the OWG on SDGs can only be a partial contribution to a new global partnership fit for a transformative post-2015 framework. Other processes, including the Monterrey/Doha processes and the work of the Intergovernmental Expert Committee on Sustainable Development Financing, given its mandate to propose options on an effective sustainable development financing strategy, will also have to contribute to the essential building blocks needed. Policy coherence for sustainable development and development effectiveness (drawing on the valuable experience of the Busan Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation) are also key. In this context we are not supportive of the OWG on SDGs addressing means of implementation under each SDG in a separate and fragmented manner.

d) Regarding the focus areas, we would like to raise some common general points:

1. The proposal under each focus area is useful and thorough. We will need to be selective to gradually get to a limited set of key targets per area.
2. Some important issues could be addressed as indicators.
3. It is already agreed that many focus areas are interlinked. Therefore, progress under each area is dependent upon work in other areas. Acknowledging and further developing these interlinkages in the framework should also help to reduce the number of targets.
4. It will be important to ensure a human rights based approach across the focus areas. We also continue to call for gender equality and women's empowerment to be considered as a priority in the elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda and for the integration of a gender perspective into the new development framework.
5. With respect to sustainable production and consumption, we consider that it is important to stress that current patterns are not sustainable resulting in negative impacts on health, the environment and the economy. It should also be recognized that moving towards more sustainable consumption and production offers opportunities by creating new markets and generating jobs, and enabling "leapfrogging" to more environmentally sound technologies.
6. Given its importance to sustainable development and poverty eradication, we are pleased to see that the importance of climate change is recognized. We consider that the way forward in relation to climate change is to actively embed climate related actions in several goals and targets, without interfering with the UNFCCC negotiations. Another related area that also deserves active mainstreaming is disaster risk reduction and resilience.
7. As previously stated, we appreciate that the document addresses peaceful and non-violent societies and capable institutions under focus area 19. We recognize the interlinkages between the issues but we believe that the issues of peaceful and safe societies on the one hand, and human rights, good governance, effective institutions, democracy and the rule of law on the other, should be considered as two distinct focus areas, as the detailed content of the document actually shows. Moreover, we would also like these two focus areas to be better reflected in the interlinkages across many of the other focus areas.

8. Finally, we would like to reiterate that those who have been left furthest behind require the most attention. The needs of countries in special situations, as well as fragile countries and those affected by conflict, require further consideration if the future SDGs are to be relevant to all countries.

With this general understanding, we look forward to contributing to the process.

Co-chairs

We are confident we can keep working under your leadership and look forward to further discussions on how to continue this process together based on proposals from you that reflect in a balanced manner the views expressed in this open working group, including those of stakeholders.