

Intergovernmental Negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda
Follow-up and review: Comments on the “Preliminary Impressions”
20 May 2015

Statement by Mr. Takeshi Osuga, Ambassador,
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I wish to present my reactions to some of the questions raised by the Co-facilitators in their “Preliminary Impressions”.

First and foremost, I would like to read out loud the sentence in the paper that struck me because they whole-heartedly reflect the views of my country. It says;
“It cannot be that the UN keeps continuously adding processes without letting others go.”

The preceding sentence ends like this;

“We should also discontinue some activities on other tracks so as to free time and resources.”

Being transformative does not mean adding something new. We need to transform what we already have into something more useful. And identifying what we will let go is the most difficult part of our task. Designing a new system or mechanism is an easy and pleasant job.

You asked many questions on the functions of HLPF. I agree with the Co-facilitators that we should have a common understanding on the scope of our work before tackling these questions.

We are working on a summit document and not a Second Committee resolution. Therefore, such questions as how the secretariat should be structured should not appear on the outcome document. The outcome should state the principles as well as the overall framework of the follow-up and review process. Also, some of the questions posed by the Co-facilitators can be fully answered by the GA Resolution 67/290. We should not unduly overburden the HLPF by adding additional mandates to it.

On the issue of how HLPF can cope with the multitude of tasks, I have three points:

First, as I stated yesterday, HLPF should be supported by the widest possible network of existing review mechanisms, including the ones within and outside the UN. 8-day HLPF is not the only forum. The entire network of UN bodies and other frameworks should share the tasks. ECOSOC is especially important in this regard. The Integration Segment, established by the resolution 68/1 as the result of the last ECOSOC reform, is very much suited to follow-up the agenda and to ensure the integration of three dimensions of sustainable development.

Secondly, HLPF is the forum that provides political leadership and guidance. The HLPF alone is not supposed to do everything, nor does it have to accomplish all the tasks in one year. CSD with multi-year work programme is a good example. We can expect HLPF to complete its tasks within its 4-year cycle.

Thirdly, I wish to respond to the point made by the distinguished Co-facilitator about the possibility of HLPF meeting twice a year. I have some concerns that by increasing the number of meetings, its convening power, a prerequisite to function as the hub of the world-wide network, will diminish and the level of participation will come down. Moreover, with the 4-year-cycle and network approach, I doubt if there is a need to meet

twice a year.

However, if it is proven that eight days are not enough for HLPF to cover all its tasks, then in such case, we will need to review the functions and schedules of all the relevant forums and identify where the mandates duplicate and how we can make use of those in favor of HLPF. Based on the review, we should reallocate the number of days used by other related UN meetings and forums.

In doing so, it will be useful to look at effective and efficient division of labor between the 2nd Committee, other relevant Committees and the ECOSOC. The function of the plenary of the 2nd Committee, including its general debate, as well as the number of days allocated to each meetings should also be reviewed.

Such an exercise will need to be supported by the strong political will of the Member States, but also by the strong leadership within the Secretariat. We have initiated an ambitious “mandate review” in the past. Japan is ready for such exercise for UN functions related to sustainable development, if the other Member States agree.

As I pointed out in the begging, we cannot simply add-on to what we already have and overburden ourselves with more meetings and papers. I would personally prefer allocating the limited resources to JICA or to UN Funds and Programmes to deliver on the ground and serve the capacity building of the developing countries in the field of data and others.

Thank you very much.