

Statement
by H.E. Mr. Dmitry Medvedev, Prime Minister of the Russian Federation,
at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20)
(Rio de Janeiro, 21 June 2012)

Ms President, Mr Secretary-General, Your Excellence, ladies and gentlemen.

I'd like to begin by thanking Brazil for the cordial welcome, hospitality and excellent organisation that went into this conference.

The UN conference held in Rio de Janeiro 20 years ago set out the main principles of sustainable development – environmental, economic and social. We have gathered today to discuss the results achieved by the world community and our countries in these areas and, of course, map out plans for the future. I'd like to emphasise that global development is not a goal with a concrete endpoint but a dynamic process. Apart from benefits, globalisation also creates challenges and threats. But it also gives us new opportunities for moving forward and resolving difficult issues facing our states.

I'd like to spell out Russia's position on the issues on the conference's agenda. The first issue is the eradication of poverty. Though a complex country, Russia has achieved some success in combatting poverty in the last few years. Poverty in Russia has declined by 60% since the 1990s. We have improved the quality of medical services and made them more accessible, as a result of which maternal and infant mortality rates have been cut in half in the last few years. We are ready to share our experience with other countries, and we have launched relevant programmes. I invite all of you to join these efforts.

The second issue is our response to the economic and financial crises. The G20 is the main forum in this regard, and we are taking an active part in common programmes and projects aimed at preventing a new recession. We are making considerable contributions to the activities of the International Monetary Fund, and I hope this will help many countries cope with problems that arise. Next, the G20 should intensify its dialogue

with other countries with a view to considering the interests of each state when taking decisions on the world's future financial arrangement.

Third, I'd like to point out that the best way to counter threats to global development is to create good jobs. This is a priority of our domestic policy. A favourable business climate, especially for small and medium-size companies, is the best option in this respect. No less important is the stable operation of financial agencies, including development institutions. I think it would be useful to recommend that the World Bank and regional financial institutions be more persistent in tackling these issues.

Fourth, we must elaborate stable models of production and consumption in order to ensure sustainable economic growth and remove all critical threats to the environment. Society, the economy and nature are inseparable. This is exactly why we need a new paradigm of development that can ensure society's prosperity without excessive burdens on nature. We must balance the interests of the economy with conservation in the long term. That said, we must achieve innovative, energy efficient and green economic growth that will benefit all countries. Russia is an environmental donor. It has substantial natural resources spread across one seventh of the world's surface. We are meeting our commitments, including those under the Kyoto Protocol. I would like to reaffirm that greenhouse gas emissions in Russia will be cut by 25% by 2020 relative to 1990. We expect other countries to take similarly active measures in this regard. We are prepared to become part of a global agreement on this issue with 'global' being the operative word here, since we want all countries to participate, not just several leading economies.

With regard to the green growth model, we believe there are no reasons whatsoever to bureaucratise this process. Each country is free to follow its own plans. Importantly, these plans should be publicly announced and they should be good enough to reach the goals of sustainable global growth. There must be an ongoing exchange of green growth-related best practices and techniques. The United Nations and international organisations should play the leading role in this sphere.

Fifth. A host of issues have to do with the sustainable development of forest and water resources. Russia possesses 19% of global forests and 22% of global fresh water supply. We are aware of our responsibility and we understand that the future of the world, not just that of Russia, depends on how we use and preserve this potential.

We are focusing, in particular, on eliminating existing environmental damage and creating a modern waste management system. In this sense, we are just at the beginning. The legacy of the so-called Soviet period is very large. We are working on the basis of public and private partnerships, and we believe that getting individuals and non-governmental organisations involved in this process should be at the foundation of the work of the government at all levels. There are about 80 environmental organisations in Russia today, including the World Wildlife Fund and Greenpeace. Of course, it's not always easy to work with them: environmental organisations are complex partners, but that's precisely why the state should support them.

We believe that better coordination in the use of ocean resources is also important. We firmly believe that the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea should serve as the legal basis for all activities in this area. Russia will participate in discussions on continuing the sustainable management of marine biodiversity as part of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the UN General Assembly.

Sixth. I am in no way trying to downplay the significance of commodities in the Russian economy. Russia is rich in commodities. We are building an economy based on knowledge and high technology, increasing funding for basic and applied science and implementing new technologies. This is exactly why we proceed from the belief that it is extremely important to pay attention to the sustainable development of large urban areas. We also believe that respect for nature is one of the essential factors behind the implementation of major industrial and infrastructure projects, a factor that will ultimately determine the future competitiveness of our economy. We are consistently implementing energy efficiency programmes and environmentally friendly manufacturing technologies.

Unfortunately, our economy is very energy-intensive, but we are cutting energy use by more than 4% per year, which is good. We also believe that it's critically important to ensure consistency in energy policy in all leading global economies. Of course, Russia is particularly responsible, since it's the world's largest supplier of energy.

Only this will make it possible to achieve an optimal combination of energy sources globally. We can get back to discussing Russia's initiative regarding energy security in the United Nations.

Seventh. Monitoring dangerous natural processes, prevention of natural and man-made disasters (we've had a fair share of them over the past few years) and minimising their impact is an area that requires consistent and coordinated efforts both globally and locally. We would like to see these initiatives worked through at the international level.

Eighth. Russia is ready to play a leading role in accomplishing yet another global task – food security. We cannot allow food shortages and excessive price increases on the global markets to happen, although this is what we have seen in recent years. Given that Russia has the largest agricultural land in the world, we have very good opportunities for doing so. We invite all investors and all interested partners to cooperate with us in this sphere. This also applies to investment and the introduction of innovative technologies.

Ninth. While providing answers to all of these questions, we should not forget that the world has undergone major changes during the global crisis. Unfortunately, this crisis is not over yet. It coincided with a period of rapid growth of social networks that have dramatically increased the speed of information exchange across the globe. The crisis stepped up global competition for jobs, which ultimately led to growing protectionism, which is not good for the global economy. Finally, it dramatically increased requirements for the level of finance and the overall political responsibility of public authorities both within their respective economies and worldwide. There must be a common answer to all of that. The principle of mutual responsibility of all participants in the global economy

and politics is something that we'd like all our partners to adhere to and, of course, we are going to act accordingly.

And finally, there is a very simple truth: we can make this world a friendlier, safer and more comfortable place for the current and future generations only if we work together. Without false humility we should say that we have already achieved a lot on the way to Millennium Development Goals. However, we are far from achieving everything. I have no doubt that we are able to achieve even greater success. Let's wish ourselves all the best.

Thank you.