



SRI LANKA

Statement

by

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At the first meeting of the

Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals

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(Please check against delivery)

Mr. Co-chair,

Let me congratulate you on your election as Co-chairs. We would also like to express our satisfaction over the successful conclusion of informal consultations on procedural matters under your leadership as co-facilitators.

My delegation associates itself with the statement delivered by India, on behalf of the South Asian troika of India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. We also associate ourselves with the statement made by Fiji, on behalf of The Group of 77 and China, which will continue to play a key role in developing SDGs in the future.

Mr. Co-chair,

We have taken much time and effort to determine the composition and the working methods of the Open Working Group. We must not now delay discussions on substantive matters. Many speakers have commented on procedural matters and their contributions have been vital. I will focus more on the post-2015 period and substantives, including some issues that are central to us.

Youth issues are important to us and to the world. A large proportion of the developing world's population consists of youth. Millions will be entering the job market but employment options are far from rosy. We need to maintain critical focus on this issue. Lack of opportunity could result in youth unrest. Expanding educational and relevant vocational opportunities would be critical. Similarly, we must continue our efforts to mainstream women's issues as the gender perspectives in the global development agenda. Facilitating the proper integration of women's issues into sustainable development could contribute to rapid development, as has been Sri Lanka's experience.

Water is now a matter of global concern. A severe shortage of water is posing a critical challenge to many countries. As climate change threatens the very existence of many small-island and coastal states, we have to give utmost priority to this area. Oceans will be an increasingly important resource base for an ever increasing global population. Ocean pollution, ocean warming, over exploitation and a plethora of issues related to the oceans need addressing.

Sustainable consumption and production is another top priority, as we have to walk the tight rope of balancing all three pillars of sustainable development. We must strategically revisit our resource wasting socio economic structures, which are built upon the over exploitation of our natural resource base. In this regard, the ten year framework of sustainable consumption and production should be effectively integrated in implementing the SDGs.

Mr. Co-chair,

As we formulate the SDGs, we will need to keep in mind the experience gained with the MDGs. The critical funding needs require to be addressed. All our efforts will be brought to zero if there is not adequate funding to implement SDGs. Although our emerging development challenges are becoming increasingly complex, we must not forget the humane approach of the MDGs when developing SDGs.

Sri Lanka has done well with the MDGs. Our success story can be made available to all stakeholders of the SDG process. Education, health and information and

communication technology are some of them. We will actively contribute in the thematic consultations related to these areas.

Reforming global financial institutions for the benefit of a larger proportion of the global population, who live mostly in developing countries, will be crucial in easing many of their financial burdens. An incremental approach to help address indebtedness as well as innovative financing modalities beyond ODA must be a part of our exercise. Therefore, we wish to urge the expert group on financing sustainable development, which will be established soon, to look into these areas in consultation with the Open Working Group on SDGs.

Mr. Co-chair,

Behind all of this is the need to coordinate the work of the Open Working Group and other parallel efforts on the post-2015 development agenda.

I thank you Co-chair.