



MINISTRY FOR FOREIGN  
AFFAIRS OF FINLAND

## MEETING OF THE OPEN WORKING GROUP ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

MARCH 31 – APRIL 4, 2014

Statement of Finland by Ms Kirsti Aarnio, Ambassador, Post-2015  
[check against delivery]

Thank you, Mr. Co-Chair,

As I am speaking for the first time, I would like to align my delegation with the EU statement from yesterday.

Water represents an opportunity for true transformation towards sustainable development, while at the same time finishing the unfinished business of the MDGs. The latest IPCC report also gives yet more reason to be concerned about our water resources. Therefore, water must feature prominently in the SDGs and the prospective Post-2015 agenda.

I would like to highlight the letter by 62 Permanent Representatives in New York on March 22 – on the occasion of the World Water Day – calling for a Sustainable Development Goal on Water and Sanitation. In the same spirit, I find the ideas on water, sanitation and hygiene put forward by the Swiss delegation on various occasions worth further consideration. Finland has also been committed to promoting issues related to water as an active member of the Friends of Water.

Against the background of the multidimensionality of water, I would like to thank you, Mr. Co-Chair, for the comprehensive approach you have assumed in Focus area 6 on water and sanitation. The listing of issues in this Focus area addresses WASH (that is, water, sanitation and hygiene); Water Resources Management; Wastewater Management and Water Quality; and Water-related Disaster Risk Reduction in a comprehensive manner providing valuable food for thought when considering specific water-related targets. As such, the listing could be shortened by combining various sub-areas without losing in content.

On WASH, I would like to underline the importance including the H – hygiene – in this formulation. Also an element on eliminating open defecation should be added. Under Water Resources Management, I would emphasize the significance of trans-boundary water cooperation. Our delegation would encourage you to recognize these three important topics in your further work.

Investing in water, sanitation and hygiene has a great multiplier effect, and this should be kept in mind when considering the interlinkages. In this respect, I would like to highlight the interlinkages between water and gender equality and empowerment of women; water and climate; as well as water and peaceful societies and rule of law, that were not mentioned in the Annex on Interlinkages.

I thank you, Mr. Co-Chair.