



New York, 21 February 2014

Excellency,

During the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development held in June 2012 in Brazil, Heads of State and Government resolved to establish an inclusive and transparent intergovernmental process on sustainable development goals that is open to all stakeholders, with a view to developing global sustainable development goals to be agreed by the General Assembly. In this regard, the Heads of State and Government decided that an open working group shall be constituted, and that it would submit a report, to the Assembly at its sixty-eighth session, containing a proposal for sustainable development goals for consideration and appropriate action.

In January 2013, the Open Working Group was established by the General Assembly to steer the formulation of the proposal on sustainable development goals (SDGs). Having elected its Co-chairs and adopted the methods and programme of work, from March 2013 to February 2014, the Group conducted a total of eight sessions on the various themes identified in the Rio+20 outcome document. These meetings were guided by the principles of openness, transparency, inclusiveness and consensus. In addition special morning sessions were held with various stakeholders on the margins of the meetings to listen to their views and contributions.

Throughout the consultations, there was broad understanding that completion of the unfinished business of the MDGs on poverty eradication and other important social objectives must figure centrally in the SDG framework. The deliberations also took into account all the Principles of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development including inter alia the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, as set out in Principle 7 and in paragraph 15 of “The Future We Want” document, as well as the outcome document of the MDG special event held in September 2013.

The sessions were guided by the consensus that the SDGs should be action-oriented, concise and easy to communicate, limited in number, aspirational, global in nature and universally applicable to all countries, while taking into account the different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities. The goals should address and incorporate in a balanced way the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development and their interlinkages.

Throughout our discussions, the group emphasized that eradication of poverty, inequitable development within and among states as well as protection of the environment are amongst the most pressing sustainable development challenges facing humankind in this century. The Group also reflected on the challenges that most states are facing due to inadequate means of implementation needed to achieve sustainable development. The Open Working Group has been considering the means of implementation relating to the realization of sustainable development, while also recognizing the potential contribution of other related processes to this end.

While the Group recognized that there are ongoing efforts at all levels to address sustainable development challenges, it also emphasized that action on ambitious focus areas on sustainable development could raise the international profile of the issues and intensify actions to address them. The issues will have to be addressed in a comprehensive, holistic, balanced and integrated manner. The highlights are contained in the summaries that were issued at the end of the sessions to serve as aide memoire.

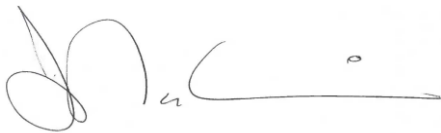
The Group has benefited from useful information provided by Member States as well as other stakeholders. The Co-chairs have consolidated it and are providing it to the Open Working Group in the attached document, in order to start the process of building consensus. As the Open Working Group moves to the next phase of its work, the adopted methods of work shall continue to guide the process. The Co-chairs also reiterate their commitment to respect the international agreement reflected in the Rio+20 outcome document and to uphold the principles delineated in its paragraph 246 while formulating the proposal on SDGs.

The attached document does not constitute a zero draft of the report that the Group has been mandated to submit to the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session. While the document is recommended for further consideration, the focus areas identified here are not exhaustive. Therefore, they do not preclude inclusion of other issues discussed within the context of the thematic clusters but that may not have been captured here.

It is our view that the international community could realize greater impacts of the much sought transformative change if further actions are taken in these focus areas of sustainable development. This is necessary to build prosperous, peaceful and resilient societies that also protect the planet.

Finally, the Co-chairs ask Member States to begin, based on our document, the serious business of identifying SDGs and accompanying targets at the ninth session of the Open Working Group in early March. Going forward, we will at an appropriate time, and in light of discussions in the Group, provide a more concise document.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of our highest consideration.



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cc: All Permanent Representatives and Permanent Observers to
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New York

SDGs Focus Areas

Focus area 1. Poverty eradication

Eradication of poverty in all its forms remains the overriding priority and a necessary condition for sustainable development. The pursuit of this would provide a strong nexus to the realization of the unfinished business of the MDGs. Some areas that could be considered include: eradicating absolute poverty; reducing relative poverty; addressing inequalities at both national and international levels; access to property and productive assets, finance and markets for all women and men; providing social protection to reduce vulnerabilities of the poor, including children, youth, unemployed, persons with disabilities, indigenous people and local communities and older persons. Since poverty is multidimensional, progress is linked to action in all other focus areas.

Focus area 2. Food security and nutrition

Increasing agricultural productivity sustainably and improving food systems is important for economic well being as well as for ensuring food security and nutrition and eradication of hunger. Some areas that could be considered include: ensuring year-round access by all to affordable, adequate, safe and nutritious food; reducing post-harvest crop losses and food waste along food supply chains; improved access to credit and other financial services, land tenure, and agricultural extension services, for all, including smallholders, women, indigenous and local communities; promoting indigenous and sustainable farming practices; boosting agricultural productivity, including through adequate irrigation, seeds and fertilisers, while in parallel halting and reversing land degradation and desertification; eliminating use of toxic chemicals; improving efficiency of water use in agriculture; conserving plant and animal genetic resources; eliminating all forms of harmful agricultural subsidies; provision of market information and oversight on commodity markets, research and access to modern technology; strengthening resilience of farming systems and food supplies to climate change; creating non-farm rural employment opportunities and promoting rural development. Interlinkages with other focus areas include poverty eradication, health, water, energy, climate change, gender equality, oceans and seas, ecosystems and biodiversity.

Focus area 3. Health and population dynamics

Healthy populations are important assets for sustainable development. Improving healthy life expectancy is a widely shared endeavor. Therefore ensuring adequate, affordable and accessible health services for all should be progressively realized. Some areas that could be considered include: strengthening health systems, dissemination of medical and public health knowledge and modern technologies; universal health coverage; elimination of preventable child and maternal deaths; preventing and treating communicable diseases, including malaria, HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and neglected tropical diseases; eliminating harmful practices; ensuring affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all; promoting healthy diets and lifestyles; addressing non-communicable diseases (NCDs); tackling environmental causes of disease, such as exposure to harmful pollutants and substances; providing for the health needs of persons with disabilities and ageing populations; access to sexual and reproductive health; improved indoor and outdoor air quality; and reducing road accidents. Interlinkages with other focus areas include: food security

and nutrition, water and sanitation, economic growth, sustainable consumption and production, climate change, promoting equality, and gender equality.

Focus area 4. Education

Everyone has a right to education, which opens up lifelong opportunities and is critical to achieving poverty eradication across generations. Achieving universal access to and quality of education is also important in promoting gender equality and empowerment of women, and in shaping values and creating the necessary skilled and productive labour force. Some areas that could be considered include: universal primary education for girls and boys, significant progress towards ensuring that every child receives at least a secondary education, and lifelong learning opportunities; ensuring equitable access to education at all levels with focus on the most marginalized; achieving high completion rates at all levels of education; ensuring effective learning outcomes at all levels and imparting knowledge and skills that match the demands of the labour market, including through vocational training; universal adult literacy; improving access to education for persons with disabilities; extending where needed opportunities for early childhood education; and integrating sustainable development in education curricula, including awareness raising on how diverse cultures advance sustainable development. Interlinkages with other focus areas include: poverty eradication, nutrition, health, gender equality, economic growth, employment, and sustainable consumption and production.

Focus area 5. Gender equality and women's empowerment

Provision of equal opportunities for men and women, boys and girls, is necessary for the full realization of their rights, their potential, and their contribution to sustainable development. Therefore achieving gender equality and women's empowerment is important. Some areas that could be considered include: ending violence against girls and women in all its forms; ensuring equal access to education at all levels; ensuring equal employment opportunities for women and equal pay for equal work; ending all forms of discrimination against women of all ages; ensuring equal participation of women in decision-making; equal access to assets and resources; sexual and reproductive health; and promoting gender equality policies supported by gender disaggregated data. Interlinkages with focus areas include: poverty eradication, food security, water, energy, health, education, employment, and economic growth.

Focus area 6. Water and sanitation

Water is an indispensable life sustaining natural resource. For a water-secure world, the whole water cycle has to be taken into consideration to tackle water-related challenges including water scarcity and drought, pollution, water borne diseases, and water related disasters, loss of freshwater biodiversity and spread of invasive alien species in water bodies. Ensuring access to safe drinking water and sanitation systems for all is necessary in all households, schools, health facilities, workplaces and refugee camps. Some areas that could be considered include: providing adequate facilities and infrastructure, both built and natural, for safe drinking water and sanitation systems in rural and urban areas, including for bulk conveyance and storage of freshwater in rivers, lakes, reservoirs, canals and aquifers; improving water-use efficiency; extending wastewater treatment, recycling and reuse; enhancing effective water governance

including catchment area based integrated water resources management and appropriate trans-boundary co-operation; protecting and restoring water-linked ecosystems like mountains, watersheds and wetlands; bringing fresh water use in line with supply; investing in water harvesting technologies; eliminating the pollution of and dumping of toxic materials in water bodies, and protecting aquifers; elimination of invasive alien species in water bodies; reducing risks and impacts of water-related disasters. Interlinkages to other focus areas include: poverty eradication, food security, education, health, economic growth, industrialization, energy, sustainable cities, resilience of ecosystems and biodiversity.

Focus area 7. Energy

Energy plays a critical role as an engine for economic growth and social development. Ensuring access to affordable, modern and reliable energy resources for all is also important for poverty eradication and provision of basic services. Yet, as energy use presents opportunities, it also presents many sustainable development challenges that need to be addressed. Some areas that could be considered include: ensuring universal access, for both women and men, to modern energy services; deployment of cleaner including low- or zero-emissions energy technologies; increasing the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix, including by providing policy space and necessary incentives for renewable energy; improving energy efficiency in buildings, industry, agriculture and transport; phasing out inefficient fossil fuel subsidies that encourage wasteful consumption; mobilizing finance to invest in modern energy infrastructure; sharing knowledge and experience on appropriate regulatory frameworks and enabling environments; promoting partnerships on sustainable energy; building capacity and transferring modern energy technologies. Interlinkages to other focus areas include, in addition to poverty eradication and economic growth, food security, education, health, water, gender equality, sustainable consumption and production, and climate change.

Focus area 8. Economic Growth

Economic growth is necessary for progress on the social and environmental fronts. Achieving sustained and inclusive economic growth remains the surest means of eradicating poverty and attaining shared prosperity. Some areas that could be considered include: promoting an open, rules-based, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system; macroeconomic policy coordination; promoting trade facilitation and preferential market access for LDCs; ensuring debt sustainability; facilitating international technology cooperation and technology transfer; encouraging structural transformation towards higher productivity sectors and activities; technological upgrading and value addition; improvements to energy and resource productivity of economic activities; creating productive, well-paid jobs. Key enabling factors include investments in infrastructure such as roads, electricity, and communications; conducive regulatory and fiscal systems, including improved design and administration of taxation systems, and resource pricing and fiscal policies that encourage greater energy and resource productivity and a more equitable sharing of the benefits of growth; a climate favourable to investment, entrepreneurship, small and medium scale enterprise formation, and innovation; access of all, both women and men, to financial services and to markets. Interlinkages with other focus areas include: poverty eradication, education, health, employment, industrialization, infrastructure and sustainable consumption and production.

Focus area 9. Industrialization

Structural transformation through industrialization is a key driver of growth in productivity, employment creation and improvement of living standards, fostering economic diversification and technological upgrading. Some areas that could be considered include: ensuring adequate policy space for industrial development; investment in sound infrastructure; enhanced science and math, engineering and technical skills; encouraging industrial entrepreneurship and enterprise formation; creation of decent industrial sector jobs; strengthening institutions that support industrial production, technological upgrading and value addition; ensuring favourable market access for industrial products and processed commodities of developing countries; re-industrialization as relevant; promoting new industries that supply goods and services for low-income consumers as well as environmentally sustainable products and services; sustainable industrial development based on energy- and resource-efficient and environmentally sound industrial processes, including phase out of harmful chemicals, waste and pollution, and minimizing material use and maximizing material recovery in industry with technology cooperation and transfer to support such development. Interlinkages to other focus areas include: poverty eradication, education, employment, economic growth, infrastructure, energy and sustainable consumption and production.

Focus area 10. Infrastructure

Efficient, productive and globally competitive economies require well-functioning infrastructure. Provision of adequate and reliable infrastructure for water, sanitation, energy, transport and communications is necessary for social and economic development and improvement of quality of life. Infrastructure design and development should aim to promote efficiency, environmental protection and human well-being. In this regard, some areas that could be considered include: improving water supply systems; developing irrigation and water harvesting and storage infrastructure for agriculture; addressing trans-border infrastructure needs for trade and related challenges facing developing countries; developing sewerage and wastewater treatment; provision of infrastructure for access to modern energy services, as well as provision of reliable transport and communications, including road and rail links, ports and ICT connectivity; provision of technical and financial support for adequate operation and maintenance of infrastructure; accessibility to persons with disabilities; proper use of urban space and related infrastructure planning; due account for environmental and social impacts of existing and planned infrastructure from a lifecycle perspective. Interlinkages to other focus areas include: poverty eradication, food security, water and sanitation, health, energy, economic growth, industrialization, sustainable cities, sustainable consumption and production and climate change.

Focus area 11. Employment and decent work for all

Inclusive and robust economies and societies should provide employment and decent jobs for all those seeking work. Achieving full employment and decent work is necessary for social inclusion. Some areas that could be considered in pursuit of this focus area include: promoting full employment through macroeconomic policy; addressing youth unemployment; facilitating the participation of women in the labour force; encouraging transition from informal sector to

formal sector employment; decent wages aligned with productivity; eliminating gender-based and other forms of labour market discrimination including against persons with disabilities and older persons; training and re-skilling for displaced workers; social security for those retired from the labour force, persons with disabilities and older persons; supporting small- and medium-sized enterprises; increasing access to credit to the youth, women and other vulnerable groups; protecting the rights of migrant workers in compliance with the ILO norms and standards. Interlinkages with other focus areas include: poverty eradication, food security, education, economic growth, industrialization, sustainable consumption and production, and oceans and seas.

Focus area 12. Promoting equality

Inequalities within countries can be socially destabilizing and also have negative consequences for economic growth. Inequalities between countries can have negative effects on global solidarity and international cooperation to address shared challenges. Some areas that could be considered in addressing inequality within countries among social groups include: eliminating discrimination in laws, policies and practices; reducing inequalities between social groups, including economic, social, political and environmental inequalities; empowering and inclusion of marginalized groups, including indigenous peoples, minorities, migrants, refugees, persons with disabilities, older persons, children and youth; strengthening social protection systems; promoting differentially high per capita income growth at the bottom of the income distribution; ensuring equality of economic opportunities for all, including marginalized groups. Some areas that could be considered in furtherance of greater equality between countries through high and sustained growth in developing countries include progress in education, industrialization, infrastructure, energy and means of implementation.

Focus area 13. Sustainable cities and human settlements

Building sustainable cities as well as decent and affordable human settlements for all remains an important undertaking. Sustainable cities and settlements, including settlements of indigenous communities, will be central in addressing socio-economic and environmental challenges and in building resilient societies. Some areas that could be considered include: improving the lives of those living in slums, including by provision of adequate and affordable housing, infrastructure and basic services; access to safe public space and services; enhancing capacities for urban planning; strengthening positive economic and social links between cities and peri-urban and rural areas; providing access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport, improving road safety and urban air quality; improving waste and wastewater management; strengthening resilience to natural disasters; enhancing social cohesion and personal security and promoting accessible cities for people with disabilities. Interlinkages to other focus areas include: poverty eradication, food security, economic growth, infrastructure, sustainable consumption and production, climate change and gender equality.

Focus area 14. Sustainable Consumption and Production

Fundamental changes in the way economies and societies produce and consume are indispensable for achieving global sustainable development. It is expected that industrialized

societies and economies would lead a shift to sustainable consumption and production patterns, with others benefiting from their experience and know-how. Given the urgency of the task, all will need to make efforts, supported by international cooperation. Promoting sustainable consumption and production patterns will be vital in ensuring equal access to basic services to all as well as addressing resource depletion and environmental sustainability.

The 10-Year Framework of Programmes on SCP is the principal framework for international cooperation and will need to be adequately resourced. Some areas to be considered include: sustainable public procurement; sustainable supply chains; sustainable tourism promotion; reducing waste in food production and consumption; improvements in energy efficiency and materials productivity, with differentiated but progressively converging levels of ambition for developed and developing countries; sustainable buildings and construction; sound management of chemicals and hazardous materials in accordance with agreed frameworks; preventing, reducing, recycling and reusing waste; awareness raising, education for sustainable lifestyles; enhanced reporting on corporate social and environmental responsibility, including integrated reporting, and sustainable finance. Interlinkages to other focus areas include: food security, education, health, economic growth, industrialization, infrastructure, energy, sustainable cities and human settlements, climate change, oceans and seas, ecosystems and biodiversity.

Focus area 15. Climate

Climate change poses a grave threat to sustainable development and poverty eradication. Some areas to be considered include: reaffirming and reinforcing international commitments, such as limiting the increase in global average temperature through equitable reductions in greenhouse gas emissions; providing effective means of implementation; building resilience and adaptive capacity in developing countries; with a view to reducing global emissions of greenhouse gases, introducing inter alia economic incentives for investments in low-carbon solutions in infrastructure and industry; developing low-carbon, climate-resilient development strategies and plans. Regard must be paid to the principles of the UNFCCC, including that of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, and to supporting and urging greater ambition in the ongoing negotiations towards a strong and effective agreement in 2015. Interlinkages to other focus areas include: food security, water, education, health, energy, sustainable consumption and production, sustainable cities, oceans and seas, ecosystems and biodiversity.

Focus area 16. Marine resources, oceans and seas

The conservation and sustainable use of marine resources, oceans and seas ensures the provision of economic and social benefits and ecosystem services to humankind. Some areas that could be considered include: reducing marine pollution and debris including from land-based activities; halting destruction of marine habitat including ocean acidification; promoting sustainable exploitation of marine resources; regulating harvesting of straddling fish stocks; addressing illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, and destructive fishing practices; eliminating harmful subsidies; ensuring full implementation of regional and international regimes governing oceans and seas, and establishing Marine Protected Areas. Interlinkages to other focus areas include: food security, water, employment, economic growth, climate change, ecosystems and biodiversity.

Focus area 17. Ecosystems and biodiversity

Humans are fundamentally dependent on the capacity of ecosystems to provide services for their well-being and societal development. Relevant areas that could be considered include: protecting threatened species and halting loss of biodiversity; stopping poaching and trafficking of endangered species; maintaining the genetic diversity of both farmed species and their wild relatives; ensuring fair and equitable sharing of the benefits from the utilization of genetic resources; promoting sustainable forest management; slowing, halting and reversing deforestation and conversion of forests to crop lands; restoring degraded forest ecosystems and increasing area of protected forests; securing land and resource tenure; supporting forest-related employment; ensuring inclusion of indigenous and local communities in decision making and in sharing of benefits derived from forest conservation and sustainable use; promoting and protecting traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples. Interlinkages to other focus areas include: poverty eradication, food security, health, water, employment, sustainable consumption and production, climate change, and the rule of law.

Focus area 18. Means of implementation

The means of implementation are an integral component in achieving sustainable development, including trade, financing for sustainable development, capacity building, and development and transfer of environmentally sound technologies. In this regard global partnership for development has been emphasized as key to unlocking the full potential of sustainable development initiatives. While developing countries still require external support for their domestic sustainable development programmes, their own domestic actions are equally crucial in accelerating quick wins. Special consideration should be given to the needs of countries in special situations, African countries, LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS as well as specific challenges facing the middle-income countries. International development cooperation through a strengthened global partnership for development is critical.

Some areas that could be considered include: further progress on development-supportive trade reforms within an open, rules-based multilateral trading system; recommitment by developed countries to meet ODA targets on an agreed timetable; enhancing accountability in development cooperation based on agreed principles; mobilizing additional financial resources from multiple sources such as remittances, foreign direct investment, institutional and other long-term investors and innovative financing; enhancing scientific and technological cooperation and technology transfer; strengthening capacity building efforts for developing countries and knowledge sharing and technical cooperation among all countries through South-South, North-South cooperation, triangular cooperation. To provide impetus to broad stakeholder engagement, some areas that could be considered include: creating inclusive initiatives and partnerships in support of all areas; such initiatives and partnerships to develop resource mobilization strategies; system of regular monitoring, reporting on achievements of initiatives and partnerships; close coordination and cooperation of multi-stakeholder initiatives and partnerships with government and inter-governmental efforts in support of sustainable development.

Focus area 19. Peaceful and non-violent societies, capable institutions

Creating peaceful, non-violent and inclusive societies, based on respect for all human rights including the right to development, is a cornerstone for sustainable development. Equality within and between countries is a key determinant of peaceful, non-violent and inclusive societies.

Some areas that could be considered include: effective, accountable and transparent institutions; provision of public services for all; improvement of transparency in public finances management; fighting corruption in all its forms; improved public access to information; inclusive, participatory decision-making; strengthening local governments; strengthening of civil society; freedom of media, association and speech; strengthening the rule of law at all levels; curbing illicit financial flows; combating organized crime; reduction of crime, violence, abuse, exploitation, including against children and women; provision of legal identity, provision of property, use and access rights, to all persons; providing access to independent and responsive justice systems. Interlinkages to other focus areas include: poverty eradication, economic growth, sustainable cities, promoting equality, gender equality.