

INFORMAL SUMMARY: DISCUSSION DOCUMENT FOR DECLARATION

9 March 2015

From 17 to 20 February 2015, intergovernmental negotiations on the post 2015 development agenda focused on the Declaration. This informal summary highlights comments made by delegations based on a “discussion document for the declaration” prepared by the Co-Facilitators. (<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/6155Discussion%20Document%20for%20for%20Declaration%2019%20Feb.pdf>)

General Comments

There was a broad agreement that the declaration should be a focused, ambitious, action oriented, inspiring and visionary document that speaks to everyone.

Some delegations commented on the title of the declaration. It was highlighted that the title should be specific and concrete and at the same time visionary, catchy and able to draw people’s attention. It should reflect universality and sustainability. A number of suggestions were made, including a title similar to “The Future We Want”– such as “No One Left Behind”, “Transforming Our World – Engaging Globally and Locally”, “Move Together in Global Action for Development”, “Declaration of the Post-2015 Development Agenda”. Some speakers wanted further deliberations on whether a title would be needed at all and felt it would be better to decide on the title after the declaration had been discussed.

When providing general comments, delegations said that the declaration should emphasise what is new in the post-2015 development agenda in terms of its universal applicability, transformative nature, focus on partnerships and the balanced integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development. The declaration ought to be easily communicable and speak to all people from all cultures and ethnicities, especially youth. A cogent and brief narrative early in the declaration could help to connect it with people’s understanding of development and their diverse and common aspirations. “Shared”, “common” and “all” should be key terms throughout the declaration to show that this is an agenda for the people by the people. In the same context, the relevance of the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities was mentioned. It was emphasized that the agenda should focus on the poorest and most vulnerable and take into consideration the needs of vulnerable countries.

Many speakers said that the declaration should express political will to eradicate poverty and foster a world where no one is left behind. The world’s political leaders should express strong commitment to implement the agenda, including through policy coherence at all levels. The declaration is a chance to mobilize collective and individual action based on mutual understanding, trust and respect. By forming a compact among all states and actors, the declaration can serve as a common pledge of the international community to eradicate poverty, leave no one behind, and protect the environment.

The declaration provides an opportunity to reaffirm commitment to the purposes and principles of the United Nations as well as international commitments on sustainable development including those made at Rio+20. It can also reinforce the link between the post-2015 agenda and the UNFCCC process.

There was a strong message that the outcome of the GA open working group on SDGs (OWG) should not be reopened or renegotiated. The OWG's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are the main basis for the post-2015 agenda. Some speakers said that the chapeau to the OWG report should be referred to or incorporated.

All speakers welcomed the focus of the discussion paper on poverty eradication and leaving no one behind. Many speakers also welcomed the strong reference to peaceful and inclusive societies, rule of law, governance, solidarity, shared responsibility and mutual accountability as well as human rights. Speakers concurred that the declaration will need to address in a balanced manner the three dimensions of sustainable development; some also highlighted the need to reflect the three pillars of the United Nations, development, peace and security, and human rights.

It was widely agreed that the Declaration must prominently consider the needs of countries in special situations, as pointed out in para 15 of the Discussion Document.

There was a broad agreement that the declaration should be short and concise. Several countries, however, noted that the declaration has to strike the right balance between length and capturing the full substance of the agenda. There were varied suggestions on how long the document should be --with suggestions ranging from no more than two pages and 15 paragraphs to six pages or to the length of the Millennium Declaration. Some felt it was unnecessary to discuss the length now. Several speakers said that one way of keeping the declaration concise would be to use footnoting wherever possible.

In terms of structure, some speakers suggested that the declaration could be built from building blocks outlining what kind of world we want to live in and what we agree to do to shape that world. It was also suggested that the declaration could be structured around the questions: who, what, why and how.

1. Delegations said that the opening paragraph should highlight that the post-2015 development agenda is universal and transformative and grounded in shared values and principles. It should outline the purpose of this agenda, the need to pursue development differently, and provide a sense of urgency. The text should explain that the agenda builds on the MDGs and refer to the Rio+20 outcome document. It should include the notion of a 'people-centred' agenda and further define it. As an overarching priority, the paragraph should reaffirm that this integrated agenda will provide an opportunity to end poverty in all its dimensions, reduce inequalities, foster sustainable development in all its three dimensions and achieve shared prosperity. It must highlight that poverty eradication and sustainable development are intrinsically linked. Some speakers felt there should be a strong reference to economic growth. It was also reiterated that economic growth must be inclusive and in harmony with nature. Some suggested that reference

will also need to be made to planetary boundaries and the importance of sustainable use of natural resources. Speakers said that the paragraph could outline how to attain these broad objectives. This included promoting sustainable consumption and production; adequate means of implementation and an international enabling environment; social development, wellbeing and prosperity; food security, building resilience; sustained and inclusive economic growth and industrialization. Investing in people and realizing human potential are also essential and the productive capacities of people and economies should be bolstered. It was suggested, by some, that the paragraph could mention ‘the four Ps’ – people, prosperity, partnership and planet. Other issues were mentioned notably the impact of terrorism on development. Some delegations felt that this paragraph should only focus on principles.

2. When discussing the second paragraph, delegations stressed that the post-2015 agenda should build on the successes and lessons from the MDGs and carry over their unfinished business. Paragraph 2 could show how post-2015 is transforming the MDGs into SDGs by including some pressing issues that were not reflected in the MDGs and addressing the factors that made MDG achievement uneven, such as – some delegations said – the inadequate delivery on the global partnership for development and technology transfer. The paragraph should adhere to the conceptual framework agreed upon in the OWG, ensuring the integration of the three dimensions. It should take the OWG proposal as the main basis for future SDGs. Some speakers stressed the importance of ensuring adequate policy space for all countries.
3. The third paragraph should position poverty eradication as the overarching challenge. Other key challenges that need to be reflected are inequalities within and among countries; equity; natural disasters including epidemics; desertification, drought and land degradation; as well as mobilizing financing for development. Instead of unemployment only, the paragraph might want to refer to underemployment and also mention shared prosperity. Some delegations felt that all global challenges should be listed – alternatively, paragraph seven would be a good substitute to such an exhaustive listing. Looking at solutions, paragraph three should include adequate means of implementation including technology transfer, capacity building, innovation and ICT. The economic dimension should be centred on three basic elements: inclusive and sustainable industrialization to reduce poverty and create jobs; infrastructure in terms of transportation, energy and technology; and sustainable agriculture to combat hunger and food insecurity. Sustainable consumption and production patterns had to be pursued. Some speakers wanted this paragraph to reaffirm the need for policy space for all countries. A reference was made to the importance of well-managed mobility of people and goods.
4. On paragraph four, some delegations felt that the term “common fundamental values of the UN” was not clear and suggested to replace it with “agreed principles of the United Nations” or “...from the UN Charter”. A few delegations felt that some of the UN values listed in the paragraph were not relevant to development. Some wanted to include the right to development and the right to the highest standards of physical and mental health and well-being as well as a reference to inclusion. Respect for international law was suggested as an additional overarching value. Some countries supported the notion of ‘shared responsibility’ while others felt it was not an agreed principle of sustainable development and was incompatible with the principle of CBDR. As such, they wanted to use agreed Rio principles and language from Rio+20 – and to

prominently reflect CBDR at the beginning. Some speakers considered that the current reference to some of the values of the Millennium Declaration was selective. It was suggested to include democratic governance, rule of law, non-discrimination and inclusion – along with the full realization of human rights. Some also said that the paragraph must reaffirm respect for sovereignty of states, territorial integrity and the right to self-determination as well as the primary responsibility of states for their people. Acknowledging country differences, the paragraph should stress the need for respecting national ownership and policy frameworks and recognize that national values, heritage and history are guiding principles that determine national priorities. The paragraph must acknowledge the special situation of LDCs. It should also reaffirm the respect for the environment and the sustainable use of natural resources. In this vein, it should specifically mention the responsibility of developed countries to foster sustainable consumption and production patterns. A few speakers said that the paragraph should reflect the contribution of culture to sustainable development and introduce the concept of global citizenship. On the structure, some Member States said the paragraph must clearly differentiate between values, principles and purposes. Some suggested to substitute it with the first part of paragraph 14 or to merge it with paragraph 14 and place it either higher in the text or after paragraph six. Footnotes would help to keep this paragraph short.

5. Some delegations felt that, rather than singling out SDG16, the declaration should speak to all SDGs. They suggested drawing from the language of the chapeau of the OWG's report on this topic or streamlining peace and security into other paragraphs so that all goals will be equally treated in a balanced manner. The Common African Position also provides some language on how to include peace and security. On rule of law, the General Assembly Declaration could be mentioned and it is important to bear in mind national specificities and international dimensions. It was said that any talk of peace should mention countries under foreign occupation. A few said there should be a reference to the need to invest in people and build resilience across economic, social and environmental dimensions.
6. Delegations felt that this paragraph should spell out an ambitious vision. Some said it should outline a vision for global cooperation that benefits all and reflects the needs of developing countries. Reference was made to the vision of a 'just, tolerant and inclusive world where every individual contributes to and enjoys wellbeing'. There was broad agreement that the paragraph must highlight the importance of the interlinkages of the three dimensions of sustainable development and use strong language on how poverty eradication and sustainable development are interrelated. The paragraph could also provide clarity on the interlinkages between the environment, institutions, partnerships and policy space. Some said that the environmental dimension needs to be strengthened in the paragraph. Some suggested that reference to economic growth be accompanied by the principles of resilience, inclusiveness, and sustainability and harmony with nature. Some speakers mentioned that developing countries own the process of their own economic growth. Growth can be generated through infrastructure development, including energy, and industrialisation. All developing countries, especially in Africa, have to be enabled to achieve these objectives. Economic stability should be emphasized as done in the chapeau of the OWG. It was noted that the paragraph on the vision should be placed at the beginning of the declaration and be encapsulated in an innovative paragraph that, some said, outlines people's rights to development and self-determination.

7. There was general consensus that poverty eradication is the greatest challenge facing the world. Addressing poverty eradication should include ensuring food security and nutrition. The contributions of sustainable agricultural practices and reversing land degradation should be taken into account. Reference was also made to the importance of healthy lifestyles. There was wide support for the proposal that no target should be considered met unless met by all relevant economic and social groups such that no one is left behind. Yet, it was also recognized that this sets a very high bar and that all progress towards goals and targets should be credited. Most countries emphasized that addressing the needs of the most vulnerable should take precedence through social protection and empowerment schemes. Reference should be made to prioritizing the needs of people with disabilities, migrants, indigenous peoples, women, children, boys and girls in armed conflicts and critical situations. Progress for the most vulnerable should be the measure of success. Many delegations indicated that gender equality and empowerment of women should be addressed as a cross-cutting issue in the declaration, as a core principle and as part of the vision. Some suggested that gender equality and women's empowerment should be accorded a separate paragraph and called for expanding on references to women as change makers as well as agents to foster inclusive growth. They reiterated that structural barriers to women's full participation in all areas of development should be eliminated. Measuring progress in leaving no one behind necessitates high-quality internationally comparable data, which will require capacity building support to many developing countries. Some delegations recommended including human dignity as a valuable reference. Some asked to include culture as catalyst for sustainable development. Several delegations said that conclusion of the Doha round of trade negotiations and reform of international institutions should be referenced here. It was proposed to move this paragraph higher up in the Declaration.
8. There was broad agreement that this paragraph should reflect the strong commitment to address the needs of countries in special situations (LDCs, LLDCs, African countries, SIDS). Some countries suggested inclusion of conflict affected countries, MICs, and countries under occupation. Some indicated their preference for the LDCs to be addressed separately, while others signalled that the special challenges of the MICs should be addressed in a stand-alone paragraph. The language of Rio+20 and previous programmes of action such as the Istanbul Programme of Action and the Vienna Programme of Action could serve as guidance. Some speakers said that the paragraph should reflect the vision of sustainable development as prioritizing the needs of developing countries through a global partnership to enhance cooperation for the benefit of all.
9. Speakers underscored the importance of the universal character of the agenda. Some asked to refer to the principle of CBDR which they said is consistent with universality. It was underscored that developed countries will also be held accountable for implementing the agenda. Respecting national ownership, leadership, and priorities is critical. Some countries stressed that preserving the policy space for all countries will enable them to develop sustainable development strategies taking into account their national realities, capacities and levels of development. The role of the state in achieving sustainable development was emphasized. Various tools, models and paths

are available for each country to achieve sustainable development according to its national priorities.

10. There was a broad agreement that combating climate change is a key part of the agenda. Many said this paragraph should refer to the principle of CBDR. It should call not only for reaching a universal climate agreement but also for implementing it once it is adopted and reflect the role of the UNFCCC. Some said that the declaration should reaffirm that warming this century shouldn't increase by more than 2 degree Celsius to avoid the worst impacts of climate change. It is important to support LDCs' adaptation measures and efforts to build resilience. A few said that resilience is not only about infrastructure but also about psycho-social resilience. Some said that the paragraph should refer not only to climate change and environmental degradation but also to sustainable management of natural resources and desertification. Non-environmental dimensions should also be reflected, as should the link to SCP.
11. There was general agreement that the SDGs and targets should be the core of the post-2015 development agenda. Paragraph 11 should spell out the commitments of Member States to implement the SDGs. Some speakers considered the six essential elements proposed in the Secretary-General's synthesis report as a good way to group the SDGs and make them easier to communicate and thus better able to mobilize action. An alternative to the six elements was put forward as "people, prosperity, planet and partnership". Some suggested that the Common African Position also provides a useful structure that could be considered. The importance of communicating the SDGs in their entirety was underscored. A number of speakers called for further discussion on how to communicate the agenda, taking into account the three dimensions of sustainable development, the cross cutting nature of the goals as well as the means of implementation.
12. All speakers agreed that implementation will require an ambitious and effective global partnership. Some however saw a need to further reflect on the definition of the global partnership. Several speakers said that the global partnership should be based on MDG 8, with North-South Cooperation at its core. South-South cooperation, triangular cooperation and partnerships with the private sector have important complementary roles. Many said that all kinds of cooperation – international, regional and local – should be encouraged. Reference should be made to the role of all actors and to the need to mobilize resources from all sources. The complementary nature of public and private financing was reiterated. Several speakers said that this paragraph should recognize the shift of paradigm away from a donor-recipient dichotomy, towards a universal agenda and shared responsibility. It should refer to key principles such as national ownership, focus on results, transparency and accountability. Other speakers said that this paragraph needs to describe in detail what the MOIs consist of (financial assistance, capacity building, technology transfer and capacity development). A reference to a technology facilitation mechanism was seen as particularly important by some. Some also indicated the need to address debt relief, multilateral trade, WTO accession as well as unilateral sanctions. The need for a more robust and comprehensive programme of action owned by Member States was stressed. Some delegations underscored the need to preserve the national

policy space of all countries. The majority of delegations were determined to ensure complementarity between the preparations of the financing for development conference in Addis Ababa and the process on the post 2015 development agenda. Some delegations said that the outcome of the Addis Ababa Conference should be an integral part of the outcome of the September 2015 summit on the post 2015 development agenda. Other delegations viewed Addis Ababa preparations as a separate process and cautioned against prejudging its outcome. Some speakers said that, as the most universal and representative organization in the world, the UN should have a greater role in implementing the post-2015 development agenda. They concurred that there is need to strengthen or further reform the UN system. Some said that the declaration should address only UN reforms related to the post-2015 development agenda. It was suggested to refer to the role of the high-level political forum on sustainable development as responsible for the follow-up of the post-2015 development agenda. There were varied views on whether the declaration should encourage the on-going process to make the UN system fit for purpose or not.

13. Many speakers made reference to the need for a robust and transparent framework for follow-up and review of progress on implementation of the post 2015 development agenda at all levels. Some delegations highlighted the importance of advancing national voluntary review mechanisms. It was underscored that the review mechanism would be a universal one. The role of the HLPF was emphasized as a global platform for follow-up and periodic reviews. Some also stressed its role for strengthening the global partnership. Some wanted the paragraph to refer to the role of the entire UN system in reviewing progress, including ECOSOC and specialized agencies. The contribution of different stakeholders must also be taken into account. The review processes must thus be transparent, allow access to information and open up opportunities for participation. Differences in opinion were expressed on the issue of mutual accountability, which many see as relevant only for the national level.
14. Some speakers wanted this paragraph, which reaffirms the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations as guiding the new agenda, to be moved to the beginning of the Declaration. Some wanted the reference to Charter principles/purpose to be separate from the references to outcomes of conferences. It was proposed to refer to “all recognized human rights”. A few speakers said that human rights and rule of law, while important, were not the “cornerstone” of the post 2015 agenda. The SDGs proposed by the OWG are the core of the agenda and their integrity should be preserved. Various delegations emphasized the need to mention the Millennium Declaration, UDHR, Rio+20 outcome, Monterrey, Istanbul Programme of Action, Doha, Common African Position and the Sendai Conference among others. It was proposed to include a footnote with all important conference/summit outcomes.
15. Speakers welcomed this paragraph which aims to be a “final call to action”. It was felt that a broad reference to the role of all stakeholders was needed here. The reference to parliaments was welcomed. It was proposed to mention multi-stakeholder partnerships. Many said that there should be a commitment to ending poverty “in all its dimensions” and to reducing inequalities. It was considered important to refer to today’s children and youth, as the future of

this agenda belongs to them. Some delegations proposed to include references to other actors such as the Bretton Woods Institutions and WTO along with the UN and relations among them. It was proposed by some to address peace and security and culture and cultural diversity in this paragraph.