

**Statement on the sustainable development agenda item
in the Second Committee**

by

**Mr. Thomas Gass, Assistant Secretary-General
for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs
Department of Economic and Social Affairs**

Wednesday, 15 October 2014

Mr. Chair,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

At the opening of this Committee, you heard the statement of the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, Wu Hongbo, which addressed the wide-ranging issues concerning sustainable development that are before you. Therefore, I will confine my remarks to introducing the reports of the Secretary-General under consideration.

First, I would like to draw your attention to the **Report of the Open Working Group of the General Assembly on Sustainable Development Goals (A/68/970)**. This report is the result of the in-depth and inclusive work of the Open Working Group consisting of governments and enriched by inputs from civil society, academia and the UN system.

The Sustainable Development Goals and targets proposed by the Open Working Group encapsulate a transformative agenda. The General Assembly has decided that this proposal is the “main basis for integrating sustainable development goals into the post-2015 development agenda”, while recognizing that other inputs will also be considered in the post-2015 negotiation process.

The Goals build on and advance the core agenda of the MDGs, while adopting a more universal approach. The proposed goals break new ground on energy, economic growth, reducing inequality, sustainable cities and sustainable consumption and production. There is also a stand-alone goal on climate change. The environmental dimension of sustainable development is fleshed out in goals on oceans and marine resources, and on ecosystems and biodiversity. The proposed SDGs thus solidify the integration among economic, social and environmental dimensions. They bring core issues of the global commons within a goal and target framework. Goal 16 focuses on promoting peaceful and inclusive societies. Goal 17 sets the basis for strengthened means of implementation and a revitalized global partnership for sustainable development.

Distinguished Delegates,

Financing for sustainable development is addressed in depth in the **Report of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing (A/69/315)**

The Committee was established as follow up to Rio+20 to assess financing needs, consider the effectiveness, consistency and synergies of existing instruments and frameworks, and evaluate additional initiatives. The report of the Committee is faithful to the conceptual framework of the Monterrey Consensus and the Doha Declaration on Financing for Development. It provides a range of options for the mobilization of resources from different sources and for their effective use to support implementation of the post-2015 development agenda. The report emphasizes the use of all forms of financing. It proposes a range of options to align private incentives with public goals, and for creating a policy framework that encourages investment, while mobilizing public resources for essential sustainable development activities.

The report concludes that there is no one simple policy solution. Instead, a basket of policy measures will be necessary, encompassing options from which governments can choose appropriate policy combinations. The report also recognizes the need for international support and cooperation, in particular through a strengthened global partnership for sustainable development. The Committee's report will be an important contribution to the Addis Ababa Conference on Financing for Development next July.

With these two reports, the intergovernmental consultations to elaborate the Post 2015 development agenda can start on a firm footing. Work is also underway on the Secretary-General's synthesis report which will also inform the negotiations.

Another major intergovernmental outcome before you is the **Report of the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States (A/CONF.223/10)**.

This conference rekindled the spirit of multilateralism and cooperation for SIDS. Its outcome, the "SAMOA Pathway", provides a roadmap for addressing the challenges SIDS face, and outlines concrete actions to advance their sustainable development.

The report of the conference also refers to the numerous partnerships launched in Samoa. These should be seen as an integral part of the conference's outcome, in line with the overarching theme of the Conference: "The sustainable development of small island developing States through genuine and durable partnerships".

A strong message – including at the ECOSOC stock taking event – was: "let us get on with implementation". DESA stands ready to facilitate implementation in any way possible. We have already undertaken a series of actions, and are looking into the development and maintenance of a partnership framework to monitor progress toward fulfilling partnership pledges and commitments. We look forward to continuing our close partnership with Member States in a way that characterized the preparatory process and the Conference itself.

A report of the Secretary-General on the **follow-up to and implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States** is also before you (A/69/319). It was prepared in the run up to the Samoa Conference, and underlines how the International Year of SIDS helped to draw attention to the special situation of SIDS.

Distinguished Delegates

The **Overview report on the follow-up to Agenda 21 and Rio+20** [A/69/312 - *Report of the Secretary-General on implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development*] looks at the various tracks for Rio+20 follow up. Besides the Open Working Group on SDGs and the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing, it refers to the conclusions of the General Assembly dialogues on technology facilitation.

The report highlights the role of the high-level political forum on sustainable development in the context of implementation of the post-2015 development agenda. It examines how coherence and synergies could be achieved across the different functions of the forum in order to best support the new development agenda.

This theme of coherence and synergies also runs through the report of the **Secretary-General on the mainstreaming of the three dimensions of sustainable development throughout the United Nations system** (A/69/79-E/2014/66).

This report and its predecessor have identified some important building blocks for mainstreaming the three dimensions of sustainable development in the work of the UN system. A critical one is a strong enabling intergovernmental mandate, which was provided by Rio+20, and which can be amplified by this Committee. This mandate needs to be reflected systematically in the strategic plans of individual organizations.

Efforts are already under way within the CEB, through the strategic plans of some organizations, or through a framework on social and environmental sustainability piloted in a few organizations. The report makes a few recommendations on the role of environmental and social assessments and evaluations. It also points to the role of the HLPF in keeping the UN system focused on mainstreaming sustainable development.

The next report of the Secretary-General is on the sustainable development of the Caribbean Sea for present and future generations (A/69/314).

The report describes a range of activities undertaken at the national and regional levels to advance the sustainable development of the Caribbean Sea. Member States of the Caribbean region have continued to work together to preserve their shared resources in partnership with the international community. The possible legal and financial implications of designating the Caribbean Sea a special area within the context of sustainable development, is also considered.

Distinguished Delegates,

Another report before you is on the promotion of new and renewable sources of energy (A/69/323).

Renewable energy technologies are becoming more affordable – a result of technological advances, lower costs and innovative financing. Nevertheless, major economic and technological challenges are still hindering its large-scale deployment. Global investment rates in renewable energy have been slowing down. There has been some progress since the launch of the Secretary-General's initiative of Sustainable Energy for All (SE4All), but much more is needed to make renewable energy self-sustaining, and to pursue the accelerated deployment necessary to achieve universal goals. There is a continued need to increase investments in renewable energy deployment and development, and to improve energy infrastructure and efficiency.

The next report is on reliable and stable transit of energy and its role in ensuring sustainable development and international cooperation (A/69/309).

The growing dependence of consuming countries on imported energy has greatly increased the volumes of energy traded across borders. Transit occurs principally through fixed infrastructures and via an increasing number of sovereign jurisdictions. This poses a number of management challenges. Energy transit requires extensive international cooperation to promote reliable transportation to international markets. The value of having a balanced and efficient framework for developing partnerships, is widely recognized. The ultimate goal of reliable and stable transit of energy – whether for trade or consumption – is to ensure continued progress towards sustainable development.

The last Report of the Secretary-General that I am pleased to introduce is on Harmony with Nature (A/69/322).

This report starts by addressing the social dimension of sustainable development. It examines the holistic relationship that indigenous people have had with the Earth since ancient times, and how this has paved the way for scientists in the modern world to look at the Earth as a holistic system.

This, Mr. Chairperson completes presentation of the reports from DESA.
Thank you.