

**U.S. Statement on the Goals and Targets Session of the
Post-2015 Intergovernmental Negotiation Process
Delivered by the U.S. Coordinator for Post-2015 Development, Mr. Tony Pipa
March 26, 2015**

- Thank you, Mr. Co-Facilitator. Before I address goals and targets, I again want to offer our thanks for the productive sessions thus far this week. I want to particularly highlight the excellent panel Tuesday afternoon on member states' implementation and the interactive dialogue yesterday morning. These afforded a very important opportunity to ground our discussion here in the hopeful reality of work already underway. We look forward to more such conversations.
- We want to begin our discussion of goals and targets by first **reinforcing our appreciation for this group's collective effort during the Open Working Group**. That experience built a strong foundation of shared vocabulary, a formidable evidence base from which to draw, understanding of mutual interests and concerns, and of course a report that serves as a guide for our discussions here.
- We recognize as well that we build these goals and targets on a **strong lineage from the Millennium Development Goals and the Rio+20 Conference**, and that we must thus use their lessons wisely.
- Rio+20 directed us to create goals that are "action-oriented, concise, and easy to communicate, limited in number, aspirational, global in nature and universally applicable to all countries". The MDGs made plain the power of a common vision – to mobilize action and cooperation and to develop a drive for better metrics. They showed us that the targets that most easily translated to clear actions were also the most achievable, and – as we mentioned in during our stocktaking session – they remain a model for the effective and transformative use of the multilateral system.
- We remain as committed as ever to this overarching objective: to define a set of **clear, ambitious, and actionable strategic priorities**, each based on **evidence and implementability, with a convincing rationale for how they will drive action and achieve results**.
- Through this lens, the goals and targets from the Open Working Group set us on a good path - they are ambitious and aspirational, and move us closer toward a common vision. But as an integrated framework for action – especially if intended to be implemented as a complete package – they still pose real challenges. This framework is too variable in technical rigor and clarity of intent to be acted upon consistently.

Yesterday, you reminded us of the journey taken during the OWG. Yet while the process itself stretched for 18 months, we reflect that the negotiation of goals and targets occurred predominantly during the final three to four months – and with no sense of finality. Indeed, as we and others said when that process drew to a close, we believed that we

could advance further in prioritizing cutting-edge issues, and that many of our targets could be stronger – and we pledged to work with others in this forum and process to make them so. We think our work here should help us make good on that pledge.

- Throughout the sessions this week, we have heard calls to avoid prioritizing any one part of the agenda over any other. Without improvement of the targets, we do not see a pathway to this outcome. We thus argue here that – as a starting point - we should work to **raise the agenda to a common technical standard and to a common degree of achievability**.
- Our motivation is simple: we want this agenda, and the goals and targets in it, to succeed. We believe that improving the credibility and clarity of our targets will strengthen – not weaken – our political bargain, and will give us a more salient common cause around which to rally.
- Yesterday morning we spoke of having a sense of urgency to implement this agenda. Our experience shows that the clearer we all are about what we are trying to achieve, the more successful we all are in mobilizing action to achieve it. Doing this upfront work will indeed help us accelerate our efforts and progress – and build and maintain that sense of urgency.
- **From our own review, we have become firmly convinced that improvement is possible, critical, and motivating in its own right.**
- We must, as we have argued from the outset, iteratively and continually ground our thinking in the best available evidence and experience. Since the OWG ended, we have not had a chance to look at where it landed and ground it – in the lessons compiled from years of development experience and in the latest, most cutting-edge evidence and science – and indeed, political science is a part of that, since it is indispensable in understanding how we accelerate development progress.
- As yesterday morning’s panel demonstrated, technical experts have been doing just this since the report came out. We appreciate and are interested to hear their ideas. .
- In this context, we want to thank the Technical Task Team for their hard work and analysis. **We believe their contribution to be a thought-provoking and important starting point** to an essential conversation.
- When applying the same criteria of **specificity and measurability**, our own analysis found additional opportunities for refinement – for example, we found 32 of the agenda’s outcome targets to lack specificity. We also found 16 additional targets to be insufficiently **implementable or feasible**, according to the logic we are articulated above - clear actions delineated, and based on latest evidence and achievability, or in line w agreed upon international ambition. We would welcome a full review of the task team’s work to further the conversation.

- Looking across the entirety of the agenda, we found **32% of targets to be excellent as is; half to be in need of modest work** - implementable but in need of added clarity, and **18% in need of considerable work** to be made actionable. We also found a few specific points worthy of note.
 1. **Specificity of target language.** In more than half of the targets, our exact level of ambition is unclear – so it would be helpful to review and ensure we are being as precise and ambitious as we want.
 2. **Quantification.** 70% of targets lack any specific, quantifiable metric. While we are not advocating that every target be quantifiable, we should ensure we are getting the balance right throughout the agenda.
 3. **Separation of environmental and economic elements of the same challenge.** Despite a clear demand for integration, there remain some instances where targets are divided unnecessarily.

- **What does it mean in practical terms to make meaningful technical improvements?**
 In our view, it means taking a target like target 8.3, on business enabling environment:
 - Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises including through access to financial services

There is little disagreement around the importance of this issue, but the target itself can be strengthened by prioritizing particular actions that are proven drivers of investment, just as an example,

- Increase the rate of business startups by 50% and the value-added of new products and services, by fostering an enabling environment for entrepreneurship, creativity, and innovation
- We can use as our model and guide the suite of already exemplary targets – ones that are time-bound, actionable and clear – e.g. target 3.1 by 2030 reduce the global maternal mortality ratio to less than 70 per 100,000 live births. **We see every reason to make our outcome targets *this* clear and precise, wherever possible.**
 - We see the potential for more to be done between member states and other external experts to improve targets as we suggest here, through engagement with each other and with the technical task team, and welcome ideas on how best to tackle this challenge.

We also recognize that ours will ultimately be a negotiated and normative process, and in that context, we continue to have some outstanding substantive concerns about certain targets that we would expect to be able to address at a later stage.

In response to comments yesterday however, we briefly want to reiterate our position that we need to avoid overtly political issues that do not belong in the post-2015 process, and that are being handled comprehensively through other UN processes.

We look forward to working with all of you to strengthen all pieces of the post-2015 agenda to make it all the more successful, and to your continued leadership on these points, Mr. Co-Facilitator. Many thanks.