



**SIXTH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OPEN WORKING GROUP ON SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

9 -13 December 2013

„Human rights, the right to development, global governance“

Key Notes on behalf of Bulgaria and Croatia

Statement by Danijel Međan, Deputy Permanent Representative

Permanent Mission of the Republic of Croatia to UN

Mr Co-Chair,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of Croatia and Bulgaria.

As we all know, development and human rights are two of the three pillars constituting the foundations of the United Nations; likewise, the EU member states have recognized the crucial importance of the economic and social development and of the promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms. These are goals in their own right, but they are also deeply interlinked, and together form the basis for the sustainable development of any society.

With the adoption of the Millennium Declaration in the year 2000, world leaders made a historic decision and a commitment to create a more equal and just world, recognizing equality and solidarity as essential elements to international relations in the twenty-first century. Since then, due to the MDGs we have reached the goal of halving the number of people living in poverty. Enormous progress has been made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals in many areas; in majority of the countries we have witnessed economic growth and substantial improvements in terms of poverty eradication.

We are proud to say that Croatia and Bulgaria have made efforts to contribute to that progress by our commitments to development aid. Our objective is to engage even more towards ensuring decent life for all. That means basic living standards to empower people; inclusive and sustainable growth to benefit all; sustainable resource management to preserve environment; justice and equality to ensure fundamental human rights; and peace and security. We use development aid to improve human rights situation and our Governments are committed to ensuring that human rights are at the forefront of our development cooperation with third countries.

The Millennium Development Goals contain no requirement that the states integrate human rights standards into MDG policies and programmes. The MDG framework falls short of the Millennium Declaration, but a human rights-based approach to development is now widely

recognized as essential to the post-2015 goals. As the 2015 deadline approaches, we have to keep pursuing all MDGs to the end and accelerate progress of their implementation. At the same time the gains must be consolidated. Therefore, the next important step is to create a single agenda through which we will complete the unfinished business and make sure that the positive effects will last even in the light of tremendous challenges facing the world.

As new goals are defined, the focus should remain on eliminating poverty, achieving gender equality, improving health and providing education for girls and boys. This also requires addressing the global sustainability challenge, building on the commitments made in Rio. In the process of formulating the new goals we need integrated approach. We believe that without human rights, especially Economic, Social and Cultural rights, there will be no development. And as we learned from experience – without MDGs there is no human rights either.

It is Croatia's and Bulgaria's firm conviction that all human beings everywhere have the right to live in dignity; that human rights abuses are a disgrace to us all and that they destabilise regions and countries. We also look at our own human rights record in a self-critical way striving for improved implementation of the human rights standards. Human rights have to be considered in our consultative process that provides a platform for the fostering of deeper interactions on how the international community should view a Post- 2015 development agenda. Human rights instruments can effectively be deployed to achieve peace and to build effective and accountable institutions for all. Without accountable Governments, safety, freedom of speech, free political choice, the rule of law and the elements of good governance and peace we cannot eradicate poverty.

We absolutely agree that within ongoing policy dialogues donors should encourage countries to fulfil human rights obligations. Three of the areas are particularly important – the empowerment of women; the needs of poorest and education. Gender equality and empowerment of women should remain a separate goal. At the same time, gender equality should be mainstreamed in all the areas across post – 2015 development agenda. We consider gender equality to be a goal in itself, and a prerequisite for development and a driver of economic growth.

The central role of the right to education in accelerating the progress towards the Millennium Development Goals is widely recognized. The importance of the right to education remains critical to the empowerment of individuals and for the full realizations of all rights including right to development. We support the recommendation of the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education in his recent report that the right to education is overarching and should be considered as one of the foundations of the post-2015 development agenda.

Human rights-based approach to development is critical in global and national efforts to overcome disparities, marginalization and exclusion. Special focus on equity and non-discrimination will ensure that the new framework is inclusive of the rights of persons belonging to vulnerable and marginalized groups. In this regard, Croatia and Bulgaria favour the inclusion of the rights of persons with disabilities as a cross-cutting issue throughout the new agenda.

In articulating a Post-2015 development agenda, the need to promote the use of human rights indicators is crucial to measuring the successful development of development goals. We have to find indicators that are based on reliable data. Special attention has to be given to the aspects of measuring sustainable development goals because misconceptions can lead to incorrect results, wrong interpretations and inefficient actions.

Mr. Co-Chair,

Croatia and Bulgaria reiterate their commitment to engage constructively during the upcoming phase of work of this Group, on elaboration of a human rights- based approach to development.

Thank you.