



THE PRESIDENT
OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

15 September, 2014

Excellency,

I have the honour to transmit herewith a Summary of the key messages that emerged from the Stocktaking High-level Event on the Post-2015 Development Agenda: Contributions to the Secretary-General's Synthesis Report, which I convened on 11 and 12 September, 2014.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John W. Ashe".

John W. Ashe

All Permanent Representatives and
Permanent Observers to the United Nations
New York



**High-Level Stocktaking Event on the Post-2015 Development Agenda:
Contributions to the 2015 Secretary-General's Synthesis Report**

11-12 September 2014

**Trusteeship Council Chamber
United Nations Headquarters, New York**

Informal Summary (DRAFT)

Background and objective

Concerted efforts to design the post-2015 development agenda have been under preparation since the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June 2012, where Member States tasked a 30-member Open Working Group (OWG) of the General Assembly with preparing a proposal on a set of sustainable development goals (SDGs). The outcome document of the Rio+20 Conference "The Future We Want" also recognized the need for significant mobilization of resources from a variety of sources and mandated an Intergovernmental Committee of 30 Experts on Sustainable Development Financing (ICESDF) to prepare a report proposing options on an effective sustainable development financing strategy to facilitate the mobilization of resources and their effective use in achieving sustainable development objectives. Both groups submitted their reports to the General Assembly. Member States in Rio also requested the relevant United Nations agencies to identify options for a facilitation mechanism that promotes the development, transfer and dissemination of clean and environmentally sound technologies. The GA has held four structured dialogues on this topic during the 68th session.

During his acceptance speech in June 2013, the President of the 68th session of the General Assembly announced that the theme for the 68th session would be: "The Post-2015 Development Agenda: Setting the Stage." This theme has been operationalized throughout the current session through three (3) high-level events on: "Contributions of women, the young and civil society to the post-2015 Development Agenda"; "The Contributions of North-South, South-South, Triangular Cooperation, and ICT for Development to the implementation of the post-2015 Development Agenda" and "The Contributions of Human Rights and the Rule of Law to the post-2015 Development Agenda"; and three (3) thematic debates on: "Water, sanitation and sustainable energy in the post-2015 Development Agenda"; "The role of partnerships in the implementation of the post-2015 Development Agenda"; "Ensuring stable and peaceful societies in the post-2015 development framework", as well as an interactive dialogue on "Elements for an Accountability Framework for the Post-2015 Development Agenda", and an interactive briefing with civil society organizations. Following the interactive dialogue on accountability and at the request of the Secretary-General, regional consultations are also underway under the aegis of the Regional Economic Commissions.

In preparation for the negotiation phase of the post-2015 development agenda during the 69th session, the President of the General Assembly convened a High-Level Stocktaking Event to reflect upon the

various post-2015 development-related processes which have occurred during the 68th session of the General Assembly, with a view to providing Member States and other stakeholders with an opportunity to identify possible inputs to the synthesis report of the Secretary-General, to the work of the 69th session of the General Assembly, and to the elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda itself.

The objective of the event was to provide participants with the opportunity to: (a) reflect on the key messages from all the high-level events/ thematic debates, and interactive dialogue/briefing, convened by the President of the General Assembly; (b) discuss the outcomes of the various Rio+20 processes, including the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (OWG), the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing (ICESDF), the Structured Dialogues on a Technology Facilitation Mechanism and the updates on the High-Level Political Forum; (c) highlight critical internal processes and events that have an impact on the design of the post-2015 development agenda, such as the 2014 substantive session of ECOSOC, including the Annual Ministerial Review and the Development Cooperation Forum, the 2014 High-level Political Forum under the auspices of ECOSOC, as well as the first session of the United Nations Environmental Assembly, and; (d) highlight critical external processes and events that have an impact on the design and implementation of the post-2015 development agenda.

Key messages from the discussion

At the closing session, on Friday 12 September, the President, in his remarks, highlighted the following key messages from the event:

1. All speakers recognized the importance of a visionary, transformative, ambitious, achievable, monitorable and accountable post-2015 development agenda. Noting that the Secretary-General's synthesis report would be an important input into the intergovernmental negotiations leading up to the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda, the President pointed out that the report should reflect the results of all processes that originated from Rio+20, namely, the report of the Open Working Group, the report of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing and the summary of the GA structured dialogues on a technology facilitation mechanism. Inputs from other intergovernmental processes, such as the upcoming Third International Conference on Financing for Development, would also be important. The series of events hosted by the PGA during the session also provided valuable inputs in the next phase of the process.
2. Many delegations noted that the intergovernmental process should be inclusive and transparent in order to deliver an agenda that reaches those in need, including countries in special situations. It must help to reduce inequalities and provide a decent life for all. The President observed that speakers had called for pursuing the inclusion of all stakeholders, which had characterized the consultations on the post-2015 development agenda. In this regard, the role of youth and children was highlighted, as well as the contribution of the private sector. It was also recognized that the proposals of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were the result of tremendous effort by Member States and had benefited from contributions from academia, business, civil society and other stakeholders. However, the President noted that different views were expressed on the way forward. Some delegations had cautioned against reopening a carefully crafted and balanced outcome. Others called for further enhancing the framework by reducing the number of goals and targets or giving greater attention to issues such as rule of law, the promotion of peaceful societies, human rights, access to justice, and gender equality. Some concerns were also expressed that the implementation of

such a large number of stand-alone goals would be extremely difficult. Many speakers mentioned the reference to goal-specific means of implementation as a promising avenue, as contained in the report of the Open Working Group.

3. There was agreement that the success of the post-2015 development agenda and the SDGs would depend critically on effective means of implementation. It was noted that the ICESDF report provided a comprehensive menu of options that countries could consider. Many countries underlined the crucial role that ODA will continue to play, both as a direct source of financing and as an enabler.
4. The role of private finance and its prominence in the context of the new agenda was a point of debate. The need to recognize the separate and complementary nature of South-South cooperation, in relation to North-South cooperation, was also emphasized.
5. Many speakers saw technology as a key enabler for sustainable development. The structured thematic dialogues on technology had confirmed the need to improve the current fragmented system to support technology development, transfer, and dissemination.
6. The discussion had reiterated that a renewed global partnership for development should reflect the paradigm of the new agenda, particularly its universal nature, and be supported by a strong accountability framework.
7. Such an accountability framework should be inclusive and should engage the wide participation of citizens, at the community, local, national and global levels, in order to ensure broad-based ownership and accountability. In this regard, monitoring and accountability should be based on sound data and evidence. Measurable indicators and mechanisms to support implementation and evaluation would be needed and it would be critical to strengthen statistical capabilities through capacity building. The role of existing accountability mechanisms was underscored, and countries noted that the new institutional architecture, such as the High-level Political Forum under the auspices of the General Assembly and ECOSOC, as well as the UN Environment Assembly, would provide a concrete foundation to build upon.

Key messages from the session on various post-2015 development-related processes during the 68th session of the General Assembly

The thematic dialogues and the stocktaking event of the President of the General Assembly were welcomed as valuable inputs into the Secretary-General's synthesis report. Some noted that a more in-depth treatment of the means of implementation, technology facilitation and poverty eradication could have resulted in a more rounded dialogue.

A key message was that the Open-ended Working Group agreed on a rich and comprehensive set of goals and targets on critical issues such as poverty, inequality, gender equality, energy, water, infrastructure and climate change that go beyond the MDGs. The General Assembly decided that it should be the main basis for integrating the SDGs into the post-2015 development agenda. Some Member States cautioned against reopening a carefully crafted and balanced outcome. Others called for further enhancing the framework by reducing the number of goals and targets or giving greater attention to issues such as rule of law in particular.

In the interactive debate, there were a number of calls for promotion of peaceful societies, a human rights approach based on rule of law, access to justice, gender equality and inclusion of the most vulnerable, especially people with disabilities and indigenous peoples. Some delegations stated that peace and security needed to be approached through a development lens and not vice versa. Reference was also made to the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons, and to the fact that sustainable development goals can only be achieved if such catastrophes were prevented.

The Secretary-General's Synthesis Report would be an input to the intergovernmental process leading up to the September 2015 Summit and the adoption of the post 2015 development agenda. It was agreed by all that poverty eradication should remain at the centre of the post-2015 development agenda.

The Secretary-General should take all processes from Rio+20 as inputs in his report, namely, the report of the OWG, the report of the ICESDF and, the summary of the dialogues and recommendations on the technology facilitation mechanism, as well as inputs from other relevant stakeholders. Many delegations stated that inputs from other intergovernmental processes, notably the upcoming Third International Conference on Financing for Development, also needed to be included in the negotiations for the post 2015 development agenda.

The critical importance of a visionary, transformative, ambitious, achievable and monitorable post-2015 development agenda was recognized by all speakers. It should reach all those in need, reduce inequality and provide a decent life for all. The implementation of the agenda should be universally owned and improve the lives of all people, while ensuring sustainability. The new UN institutional architecture, such as the HLPF under the auspices of the General Assembly and ECOSOC, as well as the United Nations Environment Assembly, was a concrete foundation to be built upon to monitor implementation.

Broad partnerships built on mutual trust and accountability were important and private-public partnerships need to be promoted. At the same time those could only supplement, and not supplant the obligations by governments. The role of science, technology and innovation was emphasized and in this context the importance of the Global Sustainable Development Report.

The means of implementation were underlined by many as a critical element for implementation of SDGs and post-2015 development agenda. In this regard some stated that the report of ICESDF should have provided a more integrated and innovative vision on how financing can be mobilized for sustainable development. Mobilization of financing from all sources, international and domestic was emphasized as crucial as was north-south, south-south and triangular cooperation especially in technology transfer.

The inclusive participation of all stakeholders that characterized the consultations on the post 2015 development agenda so far should be continued, and would be critical to ensuring ownership and implementation of the agenda. The role of youth and children was highlighted as was the contribution of the private sector. Implementation of an ambitious agenda would require an unprecedented mobilization, but continuing on the present perilous path was not an option.

A transformative agenda was the surest way to eradicate poverty and embark on a sustainable development path. All must embrace this vision as critical for survival and prosperity. Communication, branding and innovations would be critical for the SDGs and the post-2015 development agenda to succeed, rise above the Millennium Development Goals and meet the very high expectations of the international community.

Sustainable Development Goals

The Co-Facilitators of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) stated that its outcome report was the result of tremendous effort by Member States, and had benefited from contributions of academia, civil society and other stakeholders. Special reference was made to the inclusive and participatory process of the OWG.

A number of lessons could be learnt from the Open Working Group, including the importance of evidence-based policy-making and the need not to see the forthcoming negotiations as a zero-sum game. Another lesson identified was that the Open Working Group's outcome had put to rest the misconception that intergovernmental processes could not achieve an ambitious result.

It was highlighted that the next key step would relate to implementation, drawing on new forms of cooperation. Goals and targets must now be coupled to policies, programmes and projects. Poverty eradication was seen as a top priority, with other areas being: food and nutrition; strengthening inclusive growth, gender equality, access to sustainable energy, climate change, and peaceful and just societies.

A number of speakers stated that the OWG's proposal on SDGs should not be reversed or re-opened. On the other hand, other speakers expressed the view that Member States should be open to refining the goals and targets. In this regard, concern was expressed that the package of 17 goals and 169 targets was too unwieldy. A more precise and compelling framework would be easier to implement, monitor and review.

Some delegations stated that the OWG's proposal should be the basis for consideration of the post-2015 agenda. Several countries underlined that the one area that required strengthening was the area of "means of implementation." In this regard, the articulation of means of implementation for each goal and the strengthening of global partnership was regarded as critical to the success of the post-2015 development agenda.

Means of implementation of the post-2015 development agenda

The ICESDF report provides a comprehensive menu of options that countries could consider. The report, whose main messages are to be reflected in the synthesis report, will also inform the post-2015 negotiations and the third international conference on financing for development.

Some felt that additional work was needed to go from the report of the committee of experts to a fully integrated strategy for financing the sustainable development goals (SDGs). The preparations for the Third International Conference on Financing for Development and the post-2015 negotiations could make an important contribution to such work. The conference would need to achieve an ambitious outcome to fully support the implementation of the new agenda.

Perceptions differed among Member States as to whether the report of the Committee had struck the right balance in terms of the importance of different sources of financing. Many countries underlined the crucial role that ODA would continue to play, both as a direct source of financing and as enabler. The role of private finance and its prominence in the context of the new agenda was a point of debate. The need to respect the separate and complementary nature of South-South cooperation with respect to North-South cooperation was emphasized.

Other issues that were mentioned as critical to the success of the post-2015 agenda include: the need for developed countries to meet their ODA commitments; consideration of targets on financial governance, including on the reform of international financial institutions and; leaving adequate policy space for developing countries. Several speakers referred to the issue of sovereign debt.

Technology is a key enabler for sustainable development. An enabling environment for technology is important, but private sector-led market approaches alone may not be sufficient to match the ambition expressed in the Sustainable Development Goals, and, thus, further work was needed. The technology dialogues convened by the President of the General Assembly this year confirmed the need to improve the current fragmented system to support technology development, transfer, and dissemination. Three measures were recommended for which there is a broad consensus: develop an online platform to undertake a thorough mapping of existing technology facilitation mechanisms, frameworks and processes for clean and environmentally sound technologies; improve coordination within the UN System; and undertake an analysis of technology needs and gaps in addressing them.

It was noted that the mandate on technology from Rio+20 and subsequent resolutions remained largely unfulfilled. Going forward in the preparation of the post-2015 agenda, there was a need to ensure coherence between intergovernmental processes concerned with financing and the means of implementation.

Monitoring and Review Framework

In the introduction of the session, it was emphasized that accountability should be underscored in the elaboration and implementation of the post-2015 development agenda and as an essential part of the various streams of the post-2015 process. There was a unique opportunity for a paradigm shift to ensure dignity for all. The SDGs, means of implementation, global partnership and an accountability framework were all pieces of the post-2015 process that, together, would lead to a new transformative agenda. These elements therefore should be complementary. Member States had played a critical role in opening up many work streams that would converge in the post-2015 development agenda.

It was stated that the GA President had passed the “baton” on the design of a monitoring and accountability framework to the UN system for further reflection, in support of Member States. Three regional commissions had held consultations on accountability, supported by surveys among member States and other stakeholders. Some of the key messages from the regional consultations were: an adequate accountability framework will be critical to boost implementation; Monitoring and review in the post-2015 setting will need to be comprehensive, multilayered and with multi-stakeholder; It should advance policy coherence and national ownership. Accountability at the country level is critical. It will need to be linked to the regional and global levels, and should allow for the exchange of experiences and lessons learned. The HLPF and regional reviews should play a critical role in this regard.

Many delegations welcomed the opportunity to identify possible inputs for the Secretary-General to synthesize and propose for the consideration of Member States. They noted that one key element of the new agenda should be a robust review mechanism, essential to achieving the SDGs, as highlighted in the Rio+20 outcome. Such a mechanism should be an integral part of the design of the post-2015 agenda. The HLPF would be the main forum for review of progress in implementation that should aim at advancing integration of three dimensions of sustainable development.

A number of delegations stated that the Secretary-Generals should propose a bold and yet concrete vision in the synthesis report. Some stressed the need for full inclusion of sexual and reproductive rights, as well as peace and security and the rule of law; a data revolution was also needed to track progress in

implementing the new agenda. Goals should be aspirational in nature. It was said that this should be kept into account in evaluating progress as should be differences in country capacities and CBDR.

It was also stated that the discussion on an accountability framework should take place only after the agenda is adopted. One delegation noted that an accountability framework should respect the Rio principles and State sovereignty. It was felt that an accountability framework should be voluntary. It should be a facilitator for incentivizing and assisting in the implementation of the agenda. Countries would be encouraged to go through the reviews if those provided opportunities to share information and best practices as well as lead to financial assistance and capacity development for developing countries, including in the area of statistics. Means of implementation should be an important focus of accountability. Many speakers stated that it would be important to build on existing structures and review mechanisms. A representative from the Regional Commissions reported on three regional consultations that had taken place on monitoring and review.

Closing session

In his concluding remarks, the President of the General Assembly highlighted some of the key messages that had emerged from the event (see page 2 above). A President's summary of the main messages would be presented to the Secretary-General as an input to his work going forward. It would also be transmitted to the President of the 69th session of the General Assembly and made available to Member States and other stakeholders. The statement expressed the hope that the goal set last September had been achieved: to set the stage for an ambitious, inclusive and transformative post-2015 development agenda.
