

**Closing remarks at the inaugural meeting of the high-level political forum on
sustainable development
by the President of the General Assembly, H.E. Dr. John Ashe
24 September 2013**

Excellencies,
Colleagues,
Ladies and gentlemen,

We had a very rich and productive discussion today, which augurs well for the future of the forum.

Today, we confirmed that we are ready to implement the vision of Rio+20, putting poverty eradication and sustainable development at the core of the post-2015 development agenda

We committed to a Forum that ensures sustainability is factored into global and national decision-making and development activities in post-2015 while at the same time respecting human rights, preserving peace and security and improving good governance.

Leaders from around the world agreed to put serious energy and resources toward making our vision for this Forum a reality.

This afternoon's discussions illuminated the fact that we can help the poor break out of poverty, achieve universal human development, and entrust a healthy planet to future generations. All three are mutually reinforcing.

To do this, we will need robust and inclusive growth along with decent jobs, education and access to health services. But we will also need a more equitable sharing of the earth's resources and more equitable and sustainable consumption patterns. We will need to live in harmony with nature and learn to value progress and human well-being beyond GDP. We must be aware of the particular vulnerabilities and challenges of Small Island Developing States and LDCs.

Gender equality is crucial to human progress. None of us can progress if we leave half of humanity behind. We must also empower the youth. We have a responsibility towards future generations.

We all agree that poverty eradication must be our overriding objective as we move forward with post-2015 agenda. We have heard many of you call for a single set of goals within an ambitious, universal agenda. We also have heard you say that, with ambitious goals must go, hand-in-hand, high ambitions for a strengthened global partnership to address financing, technology and capacity building needs of developing countries.

The task ahead is daunting and governments cannot do it alone. The breadth of development actors must join forces to find new ways to partner, combine resources and creative energies for the common good. The forum can act as a catalyst for effective partnerships and a place for international action for development cooperation.

On the path to achieve sustainable development, the private sector is a fundamental partner and sustainability must be part of the way companies relate to stakeholders, do business and create competitive advantage.

The robust participation of the scientific community and civil society is essential to the success of the high-level political forum. The multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder approach required for true transformation means we must embed sustainability into every aspect of our lives.

The decision of Rio+20 to establish a high-level political forum is a powerful step in mainstreaming sustainable development in the post-2015 agenda. The forum will be a home for the international community to address and coordinate the entirety of sustainable development issues. As guardian of sustainability, it can provide a platform for leaders to reflect on today's priorities, not in isolation but holistically.

The most pressing challenges of today such as climate change, water, energy, food security, jobs and persistent poverty can only be tackled if we integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development and make economic growth inclusive, our societies equitable and our resource use sustainable.

The forum should provide a transparent accountability mechanism to monitor commitments and review implementation of the SDGs and post-2015 development agenda.

We need to ensure that these functions of the forum are fulfilled both under auspices of ECOSOC and as we head to the first meeting and the General Assembly in four-years' time.

I hope when we meet again it will be with the same enthusiasm, but also with a sense of accomplishment for achievements already realized.

Many processes will have evolved by then, and it is my firm hope and expectation that we, the international community, will embark on the next phase of our common journey, guided by an ambitious set of sustainable development goals integrated into the post-2015 development agenda.

The President of the GA will prepare a draft summary of today's discussions and share it with you in the near future.