



Remarks

by

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President of the 68th Session of the United Nations

General Assembly

to the

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Second Committee

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Ambassador Diallo, Chairperson of the Second Committee,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning.

Let me begin by congratulating you, Mr. Chairman, the Vice-Chairs and the Rapporteur, for your collective efforts in leading this Committee.

This Committee is in the process of delineating positions on a vast number of important items, which I am pleased to note, will ultimately be both useful and pertinent as we begin “setting the stage” for the post 2015 development agenda. With that in mind, today I’d like to highlight some key areas on where and how your agenda items coincide with preparations for our new global development agenda.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The post 2015 development agenda will be built upon two core goals - sustainable development and poverty eradication - and so I think we can rightly begin there.

During this session, your deliberations under the thematic cluster of sustainable development will provide an opportunity to take stock of how far we have come in translating the vision articulated at Rio+20 into reality. This Committee is well positioned to identify where and how to accelerate efforts, as well as where we need greater coherence and synergies.

Two important meetings, relevant to these discussions, came out of the recent High-level week of the General Assembly this past September. First, we saw the inauguration of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. At that meeting, enthusiasm was palpable about what this new platform might do and become; how it might serve as both a champion - and watchdog - for the global sustainable development agenda and ensure successful implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

To ensure successful follow-up at the Forum's next meeting, to be held in 2014 under the auspices of ECOSOC, close collaboration between the President of ECOSOC and the Bureaus of relevant General Assembly committees will be essential. Through its deliberations, this Committee will provide guidance and important policy and thematic recommendations to its bureau, thus supporting the President of the Council initiate preparations for the 2014 meeting of the high level political forum in a timely manner.

Distinguished Delegates,

During the High Level week, we also convened a Special Event on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which reminded us of the commitments that still need to be fulfilled. In many ways, the MDGs provided focus on the social side of development and rightly so. But the post 2015 development agenda must go further and be more far-reaching. The discussions you have in this Committee can strengthen both the economic and environmental dimensions.

Excellencies,

For my part, I believe that, after a slow start, the implementation of the Rio+20 Outcome Document is proceeding apace. I have consulted with the co-chairs of the Open Working Group on SDGs and the Intergovernmental Committee of Sustainable Development Financing, and while they acknowledge the challenges, they remain optimistic that their processes will achieve ambitious outcomes by September 2014. The co-chairs are determined to continue working together to ensure that the SDGs will be matched by commensurate means of implementation.

Here, I believe your Committee has an important role to play, as these two groups can benefit from the fruits of your discussions. Since you are already helping to define the broad contours of international consensus, your deliberations can offer guidance on areas related to macroeconomic policy, debt, technology and the international financial system.

Let me also add that the General Assembly has gained greater clarity on options for a facilitation mechanism on clean technologies, and we can now take decisive steps based on the Secretary-General's report and the views reflected in it.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As means of implementation will be a critical to any new development agenda, and all attendant goals and targets, let me add a few additional comments on this issue.

The Sixth High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development was held on 7 October here in New York, and I reminded delegates that financial resources are the lifeblood needed to effectively implement our development goals.

While the fulfilment of all Official Development Assistance (ODA) commitments remains critical, it is clear that the financing needs will far outpace public sector resources in many countries, especially the countries in special situations in Africa, the land-locked developing countries (LLDCs), the least developed countries (LDCs) and the Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

New and innovative sources of financing will also be needed to supplement traditional ODA, and South-South cooperation must be further enhanced as a complement to North-South and Triangular Cooperation, in order to provide greater opportunities for sustained economic growth.

Furthermore, in our efforts to advance prosperity for all and long-term sustainable growth, robust and fair international trade is indispensable. In order to fully harness its potential, it is essential to uphold a universal, open, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system that contributes to economic growth and sustainable development in all Member States. In this regard, the Doha round of the World Trade Organization (WTO) must be concluded.

Distinguished Delegates,

I would like to conclude by mentioning that this is an important year for a group of States, which is particularly vulnerable in the face of new and emerging global challenges – the Small Island Developing States (SIDS). As we work to ensure that all people share in the benefits of sustainable development, the International Year of Small Island Developing States

in 2014 will put a spotlight on SIDS' specific needs and challenges. Furthermore, the Third International SIDS Conference and its preparatory process will provide greater opportunities for engagement with and recognition of SIDS in international policy fora. I intend to support this process wholeheartedly so that its outcomes can contribute to the post-2015 agenda.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Having completed your discussions on a large number of agenda items, you are now approaching the action phase on the draft proposals of the Committee's programme of work. I encourage you to continue maintaining a constructive atmosphere, and remain mindful of consensus building. Please also stay mindful of the time and resources allocated to this Committee, which contributes to the overall success of the 68th session of the General Assembly.

My entire team and I stand ready to support you in bringing this session to a successful conclusion. I wish you much success in your deliberations and look forward to your guidance as we clarify critical choices and define a new era in global development.

Thank you.