

# **Informal Summary**

## **2013 National Voluntary Presentations**

### ***France, Nigeria, Peru and Viet Nam***

#### ***(Revised)***

#### **BACKGROUND**

Four National Voluntary Presentations (NVPs) were made during the High-Level Segment, on 1-2 July at the United Nations Palais des Nations in Geneva. Volunteering countries were: *France, Nigeria, Peru and Viet Nam*.

The NVPs were linked to the theme of the 2013 AMR, "*The role of science, technology and innovation, and the potential of culture, for promoting sustainable development and achieving the Millennium Development Goals*". Furthermore, the presentations were aimed to add value to key ongoing inter-governmental processes, including the *follow-up to Rio+20 and preparations for post-2015 development agenda*. The Rio+20 mandate called on ECOSOC to play a "key role in achieving a balanced integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development". The ECOSOC Bureau made integration a priority for the 2013 ECOSOC session. As such, NVP countries offered inputs and shared insights regarding integration challenges, opportunities and solutions. All sessions were chaired by H.E. Ambassador Nestor Osorio, President of the Economic and Social Council and moderated by Mr. Richard Manning, Mr. Adnan Amin and Ms. Meera Tiwari.

With less than 850 days remaining till the 2015 target date for the achievement of the MDGs, the national voluntary presentations provided a timely forum for rich discussions based on countries' actual experiences in implementing policies towards meeting the MDGs. In the presentations, countries highlighted policies, successes, and initiatives, which would merit scaling up or could be replicated in other countries, regions, and globally. Challenges confronting both developing and developed countries in the pursuit of the full achievement of the MDGs and the broader global development agenda beyond 2015 were also discussed.

The presentations addressed four themes:

- 1) Key policy successes and lessons-learned;
- 2) Key policy challenges and constraints;
- 3) Emerging challenges and new opportunities; and
- 4) Recommendations for actions to be taken by the presenting country and by regional and international development partners.

#### **NATIONAL VOLUNTARY PRESENTATIONS**

The ECOSOC President opened the session by stating that the national voluntary presentations enabled the Council to explore ways to address lags in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. The presentations provided a platform where national level implementation could connect with international policy making. He hoped that the national voluntary presentations could pave the way for the further strengthening of global coordination and cooperation, and the global partnership for sustainable development.

## Peru

Between 2000 and 2012 Peru had an average growth rate of 5.8 per cent, driven by private investment, primarily in the mining sector, as well as by the dynamism of the export sector. This led to a significant reduction of total poverty from 58.7 per cent in 2004 to 25.8 in 2012. Despite the growth, the share of industry as part of the GDP had not grown at the same rate, having stalled between 13 and 14 per cent in recent years. This industry was highly concentrated in consumer goods, with low levels of sophistication. Peru invested only 0.14 per cent of its GDP in research and development; investment in research and development was not carried out by the private sector; and the trade balance of knowledge was clearly insufficient. Among other challenges, Peru identified that the collaboration between academia and industries was low, and only 11 per cent of manufacturing firms had been associated with universities in the 2009-2011 period to carry out innovation activities; industry personnel were not necessarily suitable for innovation; and there was a low level of patent applications. The Government endeavoured to change this situation and, among other positive developments, the number of patent applications and main indexed scientific publications increased. A national agreement and sufficient funding to promote these activities were also being provided by the Government; moreover, adequate incentives, including fiscal measures were also adopted as part of the legal and institutional framework for the promotion of science, technology and innovation.

Japan said that it was inspired by all that Peru had done to promote innovation through its national policies. It was clear that Peru had invested a lot in the environment and that it had achieved a significant reduction of poverty. The country could do more to strengthen competitiveness in strategic sectors and to promote further social inclusion. Stakeholders in the private sector needed to be carefully identified and included in efforts made by Peru. As a country which attached great importance to the promotion of scientific and technological innovation, Japan admired Peru's efforts, which could serve as a model for many other countries, including Japan. It was encouraging that there was already ongoing cooperation between Japan and Peru in several areas, including solid waste management.

Brazil said that the MDGs had been designed as a commitment by countries to create a better planet, and stressed that it was important to continue the exchange of lessons learned during the implementation of the goals. Peru had been successful in incorporating scientific and technological innovations into its policies, in centralizing its production capacity and promoting biodiversity, while its efforts to enhance the management of national assets and to increase business competitiveness were starting to pay dividends. Peru had also made significant progress in implementing the commitments which it had undertaken, including reducing childhood mortality and extreme poverty. Efforts to improve maternal health and to fight diseases such as HIV/AIDS and malaria should have been made clearer in the national voluntary presentation.

The United States found the presentation compelling and Peru's efforts to elevate science, technology and innovation as a national priority provided important examples in this regard. Concerning education, information and communication technologies and innovation, the increase in GDP growth was remarkable and Peru had achieved significant progress. The presentation was evidence of the Government's determination to enrich this growth with diversification and other measures. Could Peru further explain how the revolution in education would be brought about and how the focus on science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education fit within the larger national plan in this regard? Concerning information and telecommunications technologies, what steps was Peru taking to benefit small and medium enterprises? Finally, concerning innovation, the United States asked about the transfer of technology and what were

the most important steps to address intellectual property issues and create a culture of prevention.

Peru responding to Japan's questions, said that one of the instruments used for enterprises to innovate were tax incentives. All efforts and expenses geared towards innovation were since last year recognized as expenses and additional credit was provided to companies who trained their staff with a view to increased productivity. One of the non-traditional products exported to Japan was the fibre of camu-camu, why could Peru not add value to the processing of this product before it was exported? A similar trend was found with regards to natural dyes and science and technology could contribute to creating additional value for products for which there was a demand. In response to other questions, the Minister said a programme looked at the situation of pregnant women with the objective of providing incentives for regular prenatal checks to provide care for the delivery of their children and support to return to the job market, in order to empower women. The vast majority of city mayors were men and significant challenges remained to empower and provide opportunities for women. Technological innovation centres provided opportunities so that small enterprises could improve their production and the Government was also investing resources to ensure a multiplier effect in patent registration. Education was at the root and a number of initiatives had been implemented, including the improvement of nutrition and the development of technical education.

### **Viet Nam**

Viet Nam was committed to implementing the MDGs, however, like many other countries around the world, faced several challenges. Viet Nam had been affected by the global economic downturn but it had managed to maintain a relatively high economic growth rate. The country remained aware of the importance of science and technology, the effective application of which had helped to improve national competitiveness and reduce poverty. Many of the targets set for 2015 had been achieved or exceeded at the national level. Environmental sustainability and curbing HIV/AIDS infections and the further reduction of poverty remained high on Viet Nam's list of goals, as were empowering women and promoting primary education. The net enrolment rate in primary education in 2010 was over 90 per cent for both boys and girls, and the child mortality rate had been reduced significantly. Viet Nam had intensified efforts to attract further foreign investment and had managed to put malaria under control and to restrain the HIV/AIDS growth rate. Scientific development and innovation were very important to Viet Nam and the country had achieved important results in that area, but still encountered difficulties due to the increasing impact of climate change. Nevertheless, Viet Nam was determined to implement the MDGs and would continue to tackle climate change and its effects for vulnerable populations.

Lao said that the report reflected Viet Nam's commitment to actions to attain the MDGs and commended Viet Nam for the achievements recorded on all aspects of the fulfillment of these goals. New rural development and sustainable poverty reduction programmes, in parallel with economic growth and the support of macroeconomic policies which had created numerous jobs and lifted people out of poverty, assisted in the achievement of the goals concerning poverty eradication. Additional efforts to enhance enrolment rates in primary education and multiple national programmes and strategies for gender equality had also been undertaken. Among the remaining challenges, further reduction in poverty was not sustainable because a number of households remained at risk of falling back into poverty. Primary school completion rates remained low. Environmental sustainability was one of the most challenging issues in the upcoming years.

The Republic of Korea was pleased to comment on the remarkable progress achieved by Viet Nam and celebrated the twentieth anniversary of development cooperation between the two

countries. Viet Nam's presentation had been balanced, comprehensive and forward-looking, and its transformation into a middle income country in 2010 bore testimony to the commitment of its people to its development policies. Among the remaining challenges, income inequality, lack of infrastructure and environmental degradation could become obstacles for further development. The Republic of Korea was implementing policies as part of their partnership, focusing on environmental sustainability, human rights development, and infrastructure, aligned with those areas in which Viet Nam had seen breakthroughs. The Republic of Korea was working with Vietnamese authorities in remote rural areas to ensure that development packages reached ethnic minorities, in cooperation with the private sector and civil society.

Mozambique said that Viet Nam's report had given the Council an accurate picture of the remarkable progress made towards implementing several of the MDGs and achieving a high level of economic growth. Mozambique praised Viet Nam for decreasing significantly the poverty rate within a short period of time, for reducing child mortality, and for having one of the lowest rates of HIV/AIDS prevalence in the world. It also highly commended Viet Nam's achievements in the areas of science and technology, and said that Mozambique was very keen to learn from Viet Nam's own experience. Lastly, Mozambique encouraged Viet Nam to proceed with its implementation programme of the MDGs.

Viet Nam thanked reviewing countries for their feedback and said that Viet Nam was particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change, not only because of its geographical position but also because of its long coastline and mountainous areas. Flooding and other natural disasters had negatively impacted the country's agriculture and economy in general. Viet Nam had established a specific programme for poverty reduction, which also took into consideration natural disasters caused by climate change. The situation of ethnic minority groups was given special attention. Appropriate support and assistance were provided to minority groups affected by typhoons. Viet Nam's legal framework for scientific and technological innovation had been significantly strengthened. That included a new law on the application of science and technology in various areas, and a new intellectual property law recently approved by the National Assembly.

## Nigeria

Nigeria was able to benefit from science and technology to pursue its development goals and could now mainstream sustainable development into national strategies. Nigeria had demonstrated its commitment to the attainment of the MDGs and from 2005, received debt relief which had been dedicated to the achievement of these goals; the Office of the Special Assistant to the President had been created, additional spending by local governments had been disbursed, and significant progress on some of the goals had been achieved. Among the main key bottlenecks, Nigeria noted unequal leadership commitments, weak involvement of beneficiaries, cultural and behavioural challenges, climate change and emerging security challenges. Science, technology and innovation had been deployed in a number of these efforts: a conditional grant scheme targeted those with the greatest need on the basis of poverty mappings, baseline facility inventories, and need assessment activities and benefited from e-registration and e-payment technologies. Specific policies and action plans had been put in place to address environmental challenges. Nigeria was committed to the realization of the MDGs and to a science, technology, and innovation-based development framework.

Namibia commended Nigeria on transforming its telecommunications sector. Within the broader context of the MDGs, Nigeria had achieved significant successes across many areas of intervention, including areas such as primary school completion. Also, enrolment rates of children in primary and secondary education were impressive, as was the reduction of infant and

maternal mortality rates. Namibia was also pleased that Nigeria had mainstreamed the MDG agenda into national policy interventions and strategies, and that it had devised innovative strategies at the local, regional and national levels. Nigeria was implementing its science policy through comprehensive science systems, including governmental bodies dedicated to science and technology. The areas of Nigerian success could be amplified and replicated elsewhere, including in Namibia. Despite numerous efforts made to improve primary and secondary education, the quality of education in many African States remained a serious challenge, especially in mathematics and science, for which a poor infrastructure was mostly to blame.

The United Kingdom said that it was committed to supporting Nigerian efforts to eradicate poverty. The economic dynamism of the country, which was the top destination in Africa for foreign direct investment, was impressive. Even though the economy had grown by almost 7 per cent annually in recent years, a large number of persons lived in extreme poverty. Therefore, sustained effort and attention were needed for the continuing achievement of the MDGs. It was crucial that progress made in terms of reducing maternal and infant mortality be sustained and accelerated. Also, further progress was needed in the areas of water, sanitation and poverty reduction, for which strong and determined leadership were essential. Bearing in mind the dynamism of the Nigerian telecommunications sector, the United Kingdom asked what lessons could be learned from other sectors important to social, economic and environmental development? Also, how could Nigeria ensure that the gathering and dissemination of data contributed to effective policymaking? How could Nigeria ensure that progress in one region of the country spread across the rest of the country?

Responding to the questions concerning remaining challenges, Nigeria said that science, technology and innovation had been used to promote moving away from the mono-production of oil; greater use of technology and innovation in the diversification of agriculture would benefit a greater number of people. Concerning telecommunications, Nigeria said that access to telecommunications had created new ways of doing business, thus reducing travel time and complications. Harnessing alternative energy, for example, from solar sources, was cheaper than oil and gas, and it also provided for the generation of alternative forms of revenue. ‘Nollywood’ was not only about entertainment, but it allowed for the dissemination of common beliefs and for raising awareness concerning issues relating to the MDGs, such as HIV/AIDS. The film industry also created jobs for young people. Technology had been used in the provision of seeds and fertilizers to farmers. The national bureau of statistics was well grounded and provided reliable statistics. Nigeria also highlighted the achievement of gender equality in the field of education.

## France

France said that the MDGs had contributed to an unprecedented decrease of poverty in the world, but a great deal still needed to be done between now and 2015. It was necessary to sketch out a new international development agenda that was universal and inclusive, and the Council had a real role to play when it came to reaching those objectives. Cooperation to advance development continued to be central to France’s multilateral and bilateral relations, and the promotion of sustainable and fair growth, addressing inequality, conserving global public goods, and the institution of the rule of law around the world were all high on France’s agenda. Approaching those issues through the right to development, France had adopted its own development strategy. The transition to real sustainable development should show respect for global common goods, and France was focusing on fairer growth initiatives which cared for the environment, while also being sensitive to issues relating to climate change. Those challenges could only be taken up in an environment of political stability which respected fully human rights. France saw culture as the fourth pillar of development and would like to see culture play a cross-cutting role in

promoting sustainable development. Official aid provided by donors was crucial when it came to sustaining development around the world, although France also attached much importance to various methods of innovative funding, including domestic resources.

Burkina Faso said that France's policy of development cooperation focused on four main objectives: promoting durable and equitable growth, combating poverty and inequality, preserving global public goods, and guaranteeing stability and the rule of law. Concerning the instruments of development cooperation policy, France underscored the mobilization of domestic resources through fiscal reform, increasing transparency and accountability, combating fiscal evasion, financing partnerships and innovative finance. Concerning direct assistance, France was committed to the 2005 European consensus and pursued efforts to increase the percentage of the GDP for assistance. France considered multilateral assistance as an important element of development. Concerning the contribution of science, technology and innovation, particularly in respect of the MDGs, France delivered technical assistance and capacity building for the implementation of their own public policies. France was leading the way concerning bilateral cooperation and providing funds to Burkina Faso.

Finland said that both France and Finland remained committed to the achievement of the MDGs and were actively involved in ongoing discussions on the post-2015 development agenda. Finland commended France on its efforts to promote development research as an intrinsic part of its development policy, and on the considerable resources which France had committed to it. Finland asked whether France took into account the fact that inclusive innovation and bottom-up approaches were often generated at grassroots level. Cooperation in the areas of culture and science could be a great asset from the perspective of promoting human rights, especially the rights of women, girls and other vulnerable groups, such as persons with disabilities. Could France provide further details on how that aspect was reflected in French development policy? Finland also welcomed France's active involvement with emerging economies, which were increasingly important partners and contributors in international development.

New Zealand acknowledged the collaboration with France in the common interest of Pacific Island States and developing a global research alliance on greenhouse gas emissions from agriculture. France led one of the five working groups within the alliance. New Zealand asked about the coordination of the global research agenda for sustainable development, in particular concerning initiatives such as the global research alliance which led to greater coordination.

Concerning the bottom-up dissemination of innovation, France stated that there were two main levers; training for young entrepreneurs and support for local small and medium enterprises. There were several positive externalities to this approach; it was made possible by the contributions from industries, creating a virtuous cycle such as in the creation of the first solar station in Burkina Faso. Access to education was a priority and a significant part of France's assistance was earmarked for education. Concerning Finland's questions about the promotion of parity, the Ministry in charge of development had recently aimed at updating the development strategy to make gender a cross-cutting issue in all areas of activity. It was also crucial to involve civil society and in 2012 France had set aside 45 million euro to be disbursed through non-governmental organizations.

Regarding the channeling of direct assistance through international organizations and the United Nations system, France was committed to multilateralism and intended to continue to use their leverage and expertise. France sought to find a balance between multilateralism and bilateralism and channeled much of its ODA support through the UN, EU and World Bank Group. Concerning the role of culture in direct assistance and the need for local populations to take

ownership, France wished to promote local ownership and inclusion. France was thoroughly committed to promoting innovative funding, such as taxes on air travel and financial transactions. In relation to the question posed by New Zealand, France stressed that coordination was desirable and this was why France had made sure to channel funding through multilateral means and was also interested in co-funding opportunities.