



4 February 2013

Excellency,

In his letter of 11 January, the President of the General Assembly, H.E. Mr. Vuk Jeremic, announced our appointment as Co-Facilitators for the preparatory process of the Special Event, which is to be held in 2013, to follow up efforts made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

As conveyed by the President, until the arrival of H.E. Ambassador Kingsley Mamabolo, Permanent Representative-designate, the Chargé d'Affaires of the Permanent Mission of South Africa, Mr. Doctor Mashabane, will perform the facilitator work on his behalf.

As Co-Facilitators, we are committed to an open, transparent and inclusive consultative process throughout our mandate. To initiate discussions, we have pleasure in inviting you to a first round of informal consultations on **Friday, 15 February 2013 at 10:00 am**. (Venue will be announced in the Official Journal).

To help inform these initial discussions, we are attaching a Food for Thought paper for your consideration. The paper sets out some reflections on the modalities and substance of the Special Event and, in particular, underlines the urgency of moving to an early decision on modalities.

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

H.E. Anne Anderson
Permanent Representative of Ireland

Mr. Doctor Mashabane
Chargé d'Affaires a.i. of the Republic
of South Africa

**Informal Food for Thought Paper on the Special Event in 2013
to follow up efforts towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals
(MDGs)**

Background

The 2013 Special Event is a critical milestone as we approach the target date of 2015 for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The chronology so far is as follows:

- The Millennium Summit held from 6-8 September 2000 adopted the UN Millennium Declaration, which enshrined the Millennium Development Goals.
- The 2005 World Summit, 14-16 September 2005, adopted the World Summit Outcome which reaffirmed commitments made at the Millennium Summit.
- New commitments to meet the MDGs were announced at a high-level event convened by the Secretary General on 25 September 2008.
- The 2010 High Level Plenary Meeting, held from 20 to 22 September 2010, reviewed progress made towards achieving the MDGs and adopted a resolution entitled: "Keeping the promise: united to achieve the Millennium Development Goals".

Paragraph 79 of the Resolution adopted at the 2010 High Level Plenary Meeting reads as follows:

We request the General Assembly to continue to review, on an annual basis, the progress made towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, including in the implementation of the present outcome document. We request the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session to organise a special event in 2013 to follow up efforts made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

On 11 January, the President of the 67th General Assembly, Mr. Vuk Jeremic, appointed the Permanent Representatives of Ireland and of the Republic of South Africa to co-facilitate preparation of the 2013 Special Event.

Work of the Co-Facilitators

The efforts of the Co-Facilitators will be directed towards eliciting the views and securing agreement among the UN membership both as to the modalities and substance of the Special Event.

I. Modalities (date, duration, format)

In discussing the appropriate procedural approach, it is perhaps worth noting at the outset that a "Special Event" is not a formal event of the General Assembly but an ad hoc meeting convened on a specific theme (thus warranting different procedures from, for example, a High Level Summit).

As regards **date**, the choice is between:

- (i) September 2013, during or around the High Level week of the 68th session of the UN General Assembly (Note: the general debate begins on Tuesday, September 24th);
- (ii) During a later period of the autumn session of UNGA 68.

Holding the Special Event during the High Level week has the key advantage of facilitating the participation of Heads of State and Government. However, this is an extremely busy week and an early decision will be essential in order to secure appropriate times.

Events already scheduled or which may be scheduled for the High Level week include:

23 September 2013

High-level meeting of the General Assembly on disability and development

26 September 2013

High-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament

Beginning of the 68th session of the General Assembly

Consultations are ongoing on the first session of the High Level Political Forum, including its timing which may be at the beginning of the 68th session of the Assembly.

The desired **format** will obviously have to be consistent with the desired **duration**. A high level plenary session, allowing for at least a limited number of statements, would seem essential. It would also seem desirable to allow for interactive debate on some key issues.

Views of Co-facilitators on modalities

To help inform discussion by member states on modalities, the Co-facilitators set out their views as follows:

- That the Special Event should preferably take place in the High Level week, sufficiently early in the week to facilitate attendance by the maximum number of HOSGs, and avoiding clashes with other High Level meetings already scheduled.

- That a high impact shorter event would be preferable to a more extended event, especially given the competing demands on HOSGs' time during that week.

These considerations lead the Co-facilitators to suggest a one day meeting on **Wednesday, 25 September**. A possible format might be a short opening plenary, allowing for a limited number of statements, followed by round table(s) discussion, and concluding with a short wrap-up plenary. (The precise structure – including issues for interactive discussion and arrangements for engagement by civil society and other stakeholders - will require further detailed consultation with member states).

For consideration: Would modalities along these general lines find acceptance among member states?

II. Substance (scope, inputs, outcome)

Scope

As set out above, the 2010 decision refers to a Special Event “to follow up efforts made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals”. It is clear therefore that a review of progress made to date in achieving the MDGs, and consideration of work which remains to be done prior to 2015, will be central to deliberations at the Special Event.

However, there is also a general expectation that the Special Event will in addition look forward to the post-2015 landscape. The 2010 Resolution requests the Secretary General to make recommendations for further steps to advance the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015. The August 2012 report of the Secretary General on “*Accelerating progress towards the MDGs: Options for sustained and inclusive growth and issues for advancing the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015*” envisages a two-step approach and suggests that the Special Event “could play an important role in providing the basis for subsequent decision-making on the characteristics and content of the post-2015 development agenda”. (A/67/257 paras. 61-63)

The Rio+20 Outcome Document (Paragraph 248) makes clear that HOSGs consider it important to ensure coherence between the post Rio and post 2015 processes. There is accordingly a widespread expectation that deliberations in the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals will in some way feed into the Special Event.

Inputs

In the run up to the Special Event, relevant processes and inputs include:

1. The High Level Panel of Eminent Persons expects to submit its report to the Secretary General by 31 May 2013.
2. The Panel report will inform the annual report on the MDGs of the Secretary General to the General Assembly.
3. The Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, established by the General Assembly on 22 January, is expected to begin its work shortly.
4. The UN Development Group (UNDG) is conducting a national consultation process on the post-2015 development agenda, which includes support to an initial 66 national-level dialogues as well as a number of thematic consultations.
5. A web-platform to consult civil society and others is at www.worldwewant2015.org

For consideration: As well as the key focus on efforts towards achieving the MDGs, to what extent will the Special Event begin to map out the post 2015 landscape and in what way will account be taken of the work of the OWG on Sustainable Development Goals?

Outcome

The Co-facilitators will wish to hear from member states what kind of outcome they consider appropriate for the Special Event. To help inform the discussion, the Co-facilitators express their own view that a short concluding document - succinct, focused, and future-oriented – would best reflect both the specific character of the Special Event and the stage of discussion that is likely to have been reached by September 2013.

For consideration: With the content to be developed at a later stage, is there general acceptance of the concept of a short and future-oriented outcome document?

Next Steps

For practical purposes an early decision is required on the date, duration, and the broad format of the Special Event. It will be necessary, therefore, to move ahead very expeditiously with a decision on modalities. It would also seem important to initiate exchanges on issues of substance, although the discussion will obviously be conditioned by the various inputs outlined above as they become available.

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