

30 May 2013

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Vuk Jeremić,
President of the 67th Session of the General Assembly,
at the Opening of the High-level Panel of Eminent Persons on the
Post-2015 Development Agenda**

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon,
Esteemed President Yudhoyono of Indonesia,
Respected Ministers and State Secretaries,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great privilege to preside over this briefing, at which the final Report of the High-level Panel of Eminent Persons will be presented to the General Assembly.

At the onset of my remarks, allow me to thank its distinguished members for their commitment, and the Secretary-General for his leadership in advancing the tenets of sustainable development.

Allow me also to welcome back President Yudhoyono to the United Nations. We look forward to his address detailing the Panel's conclusions. They represent the first concrete reference point in the international effort to set the foundation for implementing the post-2015 agenda.

Excellencies,
The core principles of what we need to accomplish in under one thousand days were set by world leaders last June at the Rio+20 Conference, which assigned distinct responsibilities to a number of stakeholders within the UN system including the General Assembly.

We were given three new strategic mandates: to conceive and adopt the Sustainable Development Goals, to design options for financing them; and to create a workable arrangement for monitoring their implementation.

Yet none of the resulting workstreams have moved forward with adequate dynamism, that in my view, is required if we are to meet the envisaged deadlines.

I hope the High-level Panel's Report can serve as a wakeup call, for we are not doing enough to meet the fundamental challenges of our time: to end extreme poverty in this generation and significantly narrow the global gap between rich and poor, without inflicting irreparable damage to the environmental basis for our survival.

I am truly convinced that we must act now to slow the alarming pace of climate change, which poses an unprecedented threat to humanity. And we must act now to profoundly transform the ways our economies work.

This requires us to formulate the SDGs in accordance with the criteria set out in the Rio document, namely that they be “action-oriented, concise and easy to communicate; limited in number; aspirational; global in nature; and universally applicable to all countries.”

Excellencies,

We also need to address the question of how to make a smooth transition from the MDGs to the SDGs a critical issue on which there was no agreement reached in Rio de Janeiro.

Therefore, I believe that we should all attach great importance to the forthcoming Special Event to Follow-up on Efforts towards Achieving the Millennium Development Goals, which will be held on September 25th, during the High-level Segment of the General Debate of the 68th Session.

It will be the final occasion for world leaders to decide on actions that need to be taken to complete the MDG process, and for them to provide guidance to the Secretariat and other stakeholders on the priorities they will need to focus on as the 2015 deadline approaches.

In my opinion, its outcome should be as substantive as possible, and feed directly into the General Assembly’s three workstreams, ultimately converging into a single one. Taken as a whole, the MDGs, in my view, must become the first SDG, which in turn must comprehensively integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development namely economic, social, and environmental into a single, fully coherent whole.

This is a strategic imperative, for there must be no working at cross purposes in the generational task to effectuate the parameters of the global pivot towards universal sustainability. That is why I have initiated coordination between relevant workstreams in the General Assembly. This will give us opportunities not only to exchange ideas and information, but also to evaluate each one’s state of play, as well as identify impediments to more rapid progress.

Excellencies,

In coming to the end of my remarks, allow me to extend an appeal for urgency.

There is a manifest need for bold, audacious, and visionary action.

If we succeed in moving the post-2015 agenda decisively forward, we will have gone a long way to forging a new global compact, thus placing a revitalized General Assembly at the heart of 21st-century multilateralism. If we fail through lack of foresight or ambition we will have taken irreversible steps towards ruin, with devastating consequences for humanity.

Thank you very much for your attention.