

Statement by
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at the 17th Session of the Committee for Development Policy

23 March 2015
New York

Excellency,
Madam Chair,
Members of the Committee,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to meet the members of the Committee for Development Policy. Though I joined DESA only two months ago, I am very familiar with the work of the Committee, in view of my previous experience as the Director of Economic, Social and Development Affairs in the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, and as the United Nations Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative in Turkmenistan. I am glad to have this opportunity to meet the Committee members in person.

As the Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development, I oversee a wide portfolio of areas crucial for this defining year of global action, including preparing a monitoring framework and financing for sustainable development.

I thank Ambassador Khiari for sharing his perspectives on the intergovernmental aspects of the post-2015 sustainable development agenda. Let me share with you some of the latest developments in global processes towards the formulation of the post-2015 development agenda, and DESA's role in it.

As you are all aware, the Open Working Group of the General Assembly on Sustainable Development Goals has proposed a set of goals and targets, with poverty eradication and sustainable development being the top priorities. Last December, the Secretary-General has presented his synthesis report to the General Assembly, which summarizes the full range of inputs available on the post-2015 development agenda.

Building on these inputs and other contributions by the UN system, the intergovernmental negotiations to define the post-2015 agenda have begun. The final document of the post-2015 development agenda is being elaborated through an intensive consultation and negotiation process, starting in January and continuing every month through September. Two sessions, stocktaking and declaration sessions, have already taken place. The third session that starts today, at this very minute, will address the

sustainable development goals and targets. The session in April will deal with the means of implementation and global partnership for sustainable development, while the May session will address the follow up and review architecture. DESA serves as substantive secretariat and is providing full support to the process.

After a series of negotiation sessions, the United Nations summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda will be held in September this year, convened as a high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly.

These are encouraging developments in the preparation process of the sustainable development agenda. But successful implementation of this agenda will, by no means, be an easy undertaking. Allow me to suggest a couple of complex issues for your consideration.

First, what will it take to keep the promises that we make in the post-2015 agenda?

One of the things that become clear is that reaching a consensus on goals and targets and having an agreement on possible strategies to foster sustainable outcomes will not be sufficient to ensure that those policies are adopted and implemented. We need a strong monitoring and accountability mechanism to track progress and to hold all stakeholders accountable for their actions and commitments.

Obviously, there is tremendous interest in setting the monitoring framework in the post-2015 development agenda. The Statistical Commission held its annual session earlier this month. It was attended by an unprecedented number of delegates, as well as representatives from international and regional agencies and NGOs. The Commission will continue to work with highest priority on the elaboration of an indicator framework for the post-2015 development agenda to be adopted in the next meeting of the Statistical Commission in March 2016. Considerations around the call for a data revolution to underpin the post 2015 development agenda will have a strong focus on national statistical capacity building.

DESA is providing full support to this process, in coordination with the statistical programmes of the Regional Commissions and with a large component of statistical capacity building at country level.

Additional efforts will be needed towards the development of an enhanced global accountability mechanism to track the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda. A robust accountability mechanism will contribute to strengthen the political commitments made and will create incentives for improved policy-making and allocation of resources.

Precisely because this accountability and monitoring are difficult and complex issues, moving forward and operationalizing these ideas will require careful and sound analysis and a great deal of innovative thinking.

In this sense, I share the view of Ambassador Khiari that a strong monitoring and reviewing mechanism is a crucial element to track progress towards the new development goals, and that an effective review system is critical to ensure implementation of the agenda.

As noted by the Secretary-General in his Synthesis Report, a universal review process that is voluntary, State-led, participatory, evidence-based and multi-tiered could be initiated at the national level, which would inform the national, regional and global level reviews. At *all* levels, review discussions should be public, participatory, broadly accessible and based on facts, data, scientific findings and evidence-based evaluations.

Indeed, during the stock-taking session in January, Member States reconfirmed the need for an open, transparent and inclusive follow-up and review mechanism. Such a mechanism would provide a space for mutual learning and assurance that governments are meeting their commitments, and it would allow for the inclusion of diverse views. The High-level Political Forum, under the auspices of ECOSOC, will have an important role to play. As of 2016, it will be an overarching platform for follow-up and review of the SDGs.

I am confident that the Committee will be able to provide the most-needed intellectual support to the Member States and the UN system on this matter.

Second, how do we finance sustainable development?

One of the major tasks in this year involves a milestone event in July, the Third International Conference on Financing for Development. The conference is an opportunity to address the challenges of financing an agenda for sustainable development. It will take place in Addis Ababa under the leadership of UN DESA's Under-Secretary-General Mr. Wu Hongbo, who has been designated as the Conference Secretary-General.

We all expect a very strong commitment to a policy framework that will guide the implementation of effective policies, appropriate regulatory frameworks and improved incentives towards the mobilization of resources to finance development in the years to come. The delivery of a cohesive and holistic financing framework with concrete deliverables and with a strong follow-up process will mark the success of the Conference in Addis Ababa.

The outcome of the conference is critical, as large financing gaps remain, particularly in the poorest and most vulnerable countries. Commitments on delivering ODA remain unfulfilled, including promises made to the least developed countries (LDCs). International public finance will play an important role to address the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable in developing countries, particularly in those countries that have limited capacity to raise resources domestically, such as the LDCs. International trade has proven to be an engine for development and a source of resources for consumption,

investment and public expenditure in many countries, and yet LDCs have insufficiently benefit from the international trading system.

In this regard, the Committee's views on ODA in the context of the mid-term evaluation of the Istanbul Programme of Action will be very relevant to the ongoing discussion. I have no doubts that the Committee will be able to provide a solid analysis which can be referred to in the preparatory process towards the third International Conference on Financing for Development.

In view of this historical year of global action, I would like to invite the Committee members to reflect upon these issues. I expect the Committee to continue playing a critical role in the new development agenda, as an independent advisory body of the Council. I am confident that the Committee will break new ground in ensuring that the UN system is ready to support Member States through the implementation of an ambitious universal development agenda.

Thank you.