

Statement by

H. E. Mr. Heinz Fischer

Federal President of the Republic of Austria

on the occasion of the

Special Event to follow-up efforts towards achieving the MDGs

New York, 25 September 2013

*Check against delivery*

Mr. President,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In 2000 the international community for the first time agreed on a set of concrete goals in the field of development cooperation to which everyone subscribed and that allowed us to focus our collective endeavours. Now, less than two years before the expiry of the Millennium Development Goals it seems unlikely that all of them can be met in all regions of the world.

However, we must not take it as given that the MDGs cannot be achieved. On the contrary, we have to refocus and increase our efforts to fully implement them. Also, the on-going deliberations

on the post-2015 agenda should not distract us from this. We thus need to re-focus our efforts on those most urgently in need – the Least Developed Countries, fragile states, but also on women, children and persons with disabilities.

The case of Syria shows that conflict can throw back a country that was close to reaching the MDGs by 30 years. The Syrian case highlights the negative effects caused by conflict and fragility, and demonstrates the importance of peace and security as a precondition for development.

Mr. President,

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Speaking about the post-2015 agenda, past experience has shown that the development agenda needs to be broadened to include other important aspects such as the protection and preservation of the environment, sustainable financing and economic growth. This approach stems from the conviction that development issues with poverty eradication at their heart require a long-term perspective, sustainability, and need to be linked to other global questions.

When adopted, the new and broadened agenda will necessitate a new form of cooperation. We need to bring all people concerned on board, going beyond government representatives and including civil society, the private sector and science. The active engagement of all sectors of society will enhance the

visibility as well as promote support and interest for the post 2015 agenda.

Austria has therefore been advocating for an active involvement of all sectors of society in the on-going debate.

In addition, the new development agenda will, inter alia, have to implement new initiatives and needs of the international community. In this regard, I wish to especially point to the Secretary-General's initiative on sustainable energy for all and his energy goals which are an essential precondition for the eradication of poverty.

I thank you for your attention.