

8 February 2017

71st session of the General Assembly

**Statement H.E. Peter Thomson,
Briefing to Member States: Alignment of work of GA and ECOSOC
on the 2030 Agenda**

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very pleased to be here at today's briefing with you all.

When the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted in 2015, it provided humanity with a universal masterplan to move our way of life towards a safe, secure, prosperous, and sustainable future for all.

Nearly one and a half years on from the adoption, it is clear that far more needs to be done to ramp up implementation at the speed and scale necessary to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

While national Governments have primary responsibility for leading these efforts, driving implementation on the scale necessary will require all stakeholders to play their part.

For the General Assembly, as the United Nations' main deliberative and representative organ, and as the body which brought the 2030 Agenda into existence, we have a particularly important role to play in helping to ensure that these transformative commitments are turned into action.

This includes by firstly ensuring that the General Assembly has frameworks in place to support implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals at the global level; and secondly, that these frameworks operate coherently with those under the Economic and Social Council and other relevant bodies. In the complex landscape of the United Nations and its structures, this is not always an easy task.

During the 70th Session, under the leadership of Ambassador Mejía of Colombia, the Group – comprising the Chairs of a number of the General Assembly's main committees, and the President of ECOSOC – began work to examine the General Assembly's agenda compared to the SDG targets.

The results of the Group's comprehensive mapping exercise were shared with the General Assembly membership, last September. This detailed preparatory work undertaken by the Group given the groundwork to help delegations take the process forward in an informed way.

Indeed, the General Assembly took note of the Group's report in resolution 70/305, recalling "the need to enhance synergies and coherence and reduce overlap where it is found to exist in the agendas of the

General Assembly, especially of its Second and Third Committees, the Economic and Social Council, and its subsidiary bodies, and the high-level political forum on sustainable development” and calling “for the continuation of such efforts in the seventy-first session”.

In line with this call, in December I appointed the Permanent Representatives of Australia and Argentina – Ambassador Gillian Bird and Ambassador Martín García Moritán – to lead these consultations during the 71st Session. I thank them for taking on this important challenge.

Excellencies,

The overarching aim of the alignment process is one that we are all committed to – ensuring that the relevant intergovernmental bodies of the United Nations are configured to enable them to substantially and coherently follow-up and support implementation of the SDGs.

Indeed, if we are fully committed to realizing the world envisioned by the SDGs it is incumbent on us to make sure our house is in order by having in place all necessary foundations for success.

For the intergovernmental arms of the United Nations, this includes ensuring that the agendas of the General Assembly, ECOSOC and its functional commissions, and the High-Level Political Forum, are able to deliver on their mandates in a way that is complementary and coherent.

This in turn will enable the UN’s SDG-related intergovernmental fora, as well as Member State delegations, to work efficiently and effectively.

Excellencies,

Finding a way forward on the alignment process that adequately responds to the transformative ambitions of the 2030 Agenda will require careful consideration.

It is for this reason that when I appointed Ambassador Bird and Ambassador Moritán, I asked them to begin their consultations in a deliberative way – by engaging with Member States and other stakeholders and building a common understanding on the way forward – one that all Member States are able to support, and which includes a realistic timeline for aligning the relevant agendas, in line with the mandate provided in resolution 70/305.

For my part, I am committed to seeing meaningful progress in this process. My office and I stand ready to provide the co-facilitators with any support necessary.

I thank the co-facilitators once again for taking on this crucial task and urge all Member States to extend to them their full cooperation and to seize this opportunity to ensure our intergovernmental forums are up to the task of supporting SDG implementation.

I thank you.