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UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Intergovernmental negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda
Fifth session

New York, May 19, 2015

STATEMENT

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Assessing progress in sustainable development is certainly an important part of the future joint work to implement the new agenda. Such monitoring should be an additional tool to help countries interested in comparing their actions with other states and in exchanging best practices.

The high-level political forum on sustainable development seems to be the most suitable place for a systematic review based on the common interests of implementation of the new agenda, including sustainable development goals. We are interested in a forum that is a dynamic intergovernmental process on sustainable development. Mechanisms to review implementation of the new agenda will help add the forum more significance and relevance.

The monitoring mechanism within the political forum, which has yet to elaborate, should meet a few key principles. It should be voluntary in nature, serve as a unifying force and promote constructive dialogue and exchange of experience. The review should use a differentiated approach to the progress that states, given their priorities, achieve on the road to sustainable development. Monitoring should not be used as an instrument of pressure on any country – indeed, it is ruled out by the mere logic of the agenda dedicated to the development and prosperity. A more complete review would mean not only an assessment of progress in the implementation of the SDGs, but also in the field of financing for development and the availability of means of implementation. Finally, the review mechanism should take full account of the interests of all countries and categories of countries, including middle-income countries. In our view, such plain and simple principles of follow-up and review would most effectively implement joint potential of the UN system and member states for the successful implementation of the sustainable development agenda.

In addition to the future arrangements within the political forum, on a multilateral level it would be useful to think about the possibility of inter-parliamentary cooperation in the field of assessment and review. The involvement of parliaments that anyway interact with governments on national economic policies would meet the interests of states and societies.

However, the leading role in the implementation of sustainable development should belong to the assessment of the progress countries perform on their own based on national priorities and clear indicators. States should be interested in having their own options of national monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the sustainable development agenda. This work can take many forms, including regular reports on national progress, governmental reports to parliaments, interaction with civil society. I think that it would be useful if the interested structures of the UN system and the secretariat would provide different forms of support to strengthen national capacity to assess the implementation of the new agenda.

As I understand, the United Nations Statistical Commission continues its work on the elaboration of universal indicators. In continuation to the discussion on this topic in March I would like to note that these indicators are intended to characterize the processes measurable in all countries. We believe it is important to use existing agreed international indicators, including in the framework of the approved MDGs. Otherwise, in addition to resources needed for the implementation of sustainable development goals, countries will require additional funding for their national statistical systems to monitor full implementation of the SDGs.

In conclusion I would like to say a few words about the proposed themes of interactive dialogues during the summit. The very name of these events means open, interactive nature of the discussion. No matter how we may literally define the themes of discussion for these meetings, a flexible form of interactive discussions should allow the heads of delegations and all participants to raise topics, one way or another related to the UN Summit in this anniversary year. The themes proposed by co-facilitators, in our opinion, meet such an understanding of the task of the interactive dialogues.