



SUMMARY OF THE FIFTH SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY OPEN WORKING GROUP ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS: 25-27 NOVEMBER 2013

The fifth session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) Open Working Group (OWG) on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) took place from 25-27 November 2013, at UN Headquarters in New York. The meeting brought together OWG members and other Member States, observers, and representatives from UN agencies and Major Groups to address the thematic issues of: (a) sustained and inclusive economic growth, macroeconomic policy questions (including international trade, international financial system and external debt sustainability), infrastructure development and industrialization, and (b) energy.

Macharia Kamau, Permanent Representative of Kenya, and Csaba Körösi, Permanent Representative of Hungary, served as Co-Chairs, and opened the meeting with a summary of the progress made during the OWG's first four sessions, activities during the five-month interim period, and the business ahead. Keynote speeches and panelists offered brief remarks at the beginning of the discussion on both of the agenda items, following which governments, intergovernmental organizations, OWG constituencies and representatives from Major Groups presented their ideas for how the topics could be reflected in the SDGs.

Körösi and Kamau offered a concluding summary on Wednesday afternoon, reflecting on the high level of convergence among delegations during the three days. Their summary highlighted emerging convergence on: the prerequisite of economic growth for poverty eradication; industrialization and infrastructure development as key drivers of economic growth; open, fair and rules-based trade; access to safe, affordable and reliable energy; the important role of renewable energy in the energy system; and the important roles of energy efficiency and conservation as components of sustainability.

The OWG will convene again in one week, from 9-13 December 2013, to discuss: means of implementation (science and technology, knowledge-sharing and capacity building); global partnership for achieving sustainable development; needs of countries in special situations, African countries, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small

island developing states, as well as specific challenges facing the middle-income countries; and human rights, the right to development, and global governance.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE OWG

During the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD, or Rio+20), held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil from 13-22 June 2012, governments agreed to launch a process to develop a set of SDGs. They called for establishing an OWG comprising of 30 representatives from the five UN regional groups, nominated by UN Member States, to elaborate a proposal for SDGs to be submitted to the UNGA for consideration and appropriate action during its 68th session.

The outcome document outlines, *inter alia*:

- the importance of remaining firmly committed to the full and timely achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and of respecting all Rio Principles, taking into account different national circumstances, capacities and priorities;
- the SDGs should be action-oriented, concise and easy to communicate, limited in number, aspirational, global in nature and universally applicable to all countries, and focused on priority areas for the achievement of sustainable development;

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- the need to ensure coordination and coherence with the processes considering the post-2015 development agenda, and to receive initial input to the OWG's work from the UN Secretary-General in consultation with national governments;
- the need to assess progress towards the achievement of the goals, accompanied by targets and indicators while taking into account different national circumstances, capacities and levels of development; and
- the importance of global, integrated and scientifically based information on sustainable development and of supporting regional economic commissions in collecting and compiling national inputs to inform this global effort.

The UNGA endorsed the outcome document, titled *The Future We Want*, in resolution 66/288 on 30 November 2012.

UNGA SPECIAL EVENT ON "CONCEPTUALIZING A SET OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS": On 16 October 2012, the UNGA Second Committee convened a special event on "Conceptualizing a Set of Sustainable Development Goals" at UN Headquarters in New York. The event served as an initial opportunity for participants to discuss how the SDGs can build on the MDGs, and possible elements of the characteristics and architecture of the SDGs.

INITIAL INPUT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL TO THE OPEN WORKING GROUP: On 17 December 2012, the UN Secretary-General released his initial input to the OWG (A/67/634). The report offers a synthesis of the input received from a questionnaire sent to Member States in September 2012. It includes Member States' views on: SDG priority areas; balancing the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development; key use of SDGs at the country level; defining national targets for global, universally applicable goals; incorporating existing goals and targets; ensuring coherence with the post-2015 development agenda; assessing progress; engaging all stakeholders; SDG principles; and a new global partnership for development.

UNGA RESOLUTION 67/203: On 21 December 2012, the UNGA adopted resolution 67/203, which calls for the OWG to report to the Assembly in the early part of its 68th session, preferably before the first meeting of the high-level political forum on sustainable development (HLPF). It also calls for the OWG to report regularly on its progress, taking into account the convening of the first HLPF and the UNGA Special Event to follow-up on efforts made towards achieving the MDGs.

UNGA DECISION ESTABLISHING THE OWG (67/555): On 22 January 2013, the UNGA adopted a decision establishing the membership of the OWG as allocated to the five UN regional groups. According to the annex to the decision, six seats are held by single countries: Benin, Congo, Ghana, Hungary, Kenya and Tanzania. Nine seats are held by pairs of countries, as follows: Bahamas/Barbados; Belarus/Serbia; Brazil/Nicaragua; Bulgaria/Croatia; Colombia/Guatemala; Mexico/Peru; Montenegro/Slovenia; Poland/Romania; and Zambia/Zimbabwe. Fourteen seats are held by trios of countries, as follows: Argentina/Bolivia/Ecuador; Australia/Netherlands/UK; Bangladesh/Republic of Korea/Saudi Arabia; Bhutan/Thailand/Viet Nam; Canada/Israel/US; Denmark/Ireland/Norway; France/Germany/Switzerland; Italy/Spain/Turkey; China/Indonesia/Kazakhstan; Cyprus/Singapore/United Arab Emirates; Guyana/Haiti/Trinidad and

Tobago; India/Pakistan/Sri Lanka; Iran/Japan/Nepal; and Nauru/Palau/Papua New Guinea. One seat is shared by four countries: Algeria/Egypt/Morocco/Tunisia.

FIRST SESSION OF THE OWG: OWG-1 took place on 14-15 March 2013 at UN Headquarters in New York. During the meeting, which included Member States' statements and an interactive discussion on "Conceptualizing the SDGs," participants shared their initial views on both the process and substance of the SDG framework.

SECOND SESSION OF THE OWG: OWG-2 took place on 17-19 April 2013 at UN Headquarters in New York. Discussions addressed conceptualizing the SDGs and the SDG process, as well as poverty eradication. Delegates focused on the overarching framework of poverty eradication and sustainable development, and cross-sectoral issues, including: governance; gender equality and women's empowerment; human rights and rights-based approaches; and means of implementation. Delegates also discussed the Programme of Work for 2013-2014 and for OWG-3 and OWG-4.

THIRD SESSION OF THE OWG: OWG-3 took place from 22-24 May 2013 at UN Headquarters in New York. The meeting was devoted to addressing the thematic issues of: (a) food security and nutrition, sustainable agriculture, desertification, land degradation and drought, and (b) water and sanitation.

FOURTH SESSION OF THE OWG: OWG-4 took place from 17-19 June 2013 at UN Headquarters in New York. The meeting was devoted to addressing the thematic issues of: (a) employment and decent work for all, social protection, youth, education and culture, and (b) health and population dynamics. The session also included a presentation from the lead author for the UN High-level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

FIRST MEETING OF THE HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: The inaugural meeting of the HLPF, under the auspices of the UNGA, convened on 24 September 2013. The session was divided into several segments that featured the following themes: "From vision to action," "Global partnerships for development to create jobs and improve sustainable lifestyles," and "Mapping the way forward for eradicating poverty and achieving sustainable development." Heads of State and Government, Ministers and other leaders articulated a number of concrete proposals on the role of the HLPF: it should include stakeholders; it should emphasize accountability; it should review the post-2015 development agenda and the implementation of the SDGs; and it should examine issues from scientific and local perspectives.

UNGA SPECIAL EVENT TOWARDS ACHIEVING THE MDGS: The High-Level Special Event took place on 25 September 2013 at UN Headquarters in New York. The Outcome Document of the event determined that the work of the OWG will feed into international negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda, beginning in September 2014, and that a Global Summit will be held in September 2015 to agree to a new UN development agenda.

OWG-5 REPORT

On Monday morning, 25 November 2013, OWG Co-Chair Macharia Kamau opened the fifth session of the OWG by presenting, together with Co-Chair Csaba Körösi, on the progress made during the OWG's first four sessions, the activities during the five-month interim period, and the business ahead. They identified the following areas as part of an emerging consensus among Member States: the centrality of poverty eradication to the agenda; the goals must be few, measurable and easy to communicate; the new agenda must build on and achieve the MDGs; new goals must be inclusive and "leave no one behind"; and the agenda must be universal and apply to all countries, while recognizing different priorities and levels of development. They said broad support exists for goals or targets on: poverty; food security; water and sanitation; health; education; employment; and universal attainment of a social development threshold. Körösi summarized key meetings since OWG-4 in June 2013, saying that diverse actors had begun discussing ways to make a paradigm shift to sustainable development. He highlighted challenging issues still on the table, including, *inter alia*: growth and development; sustainable consumption and production; climate change; human rights principle; and inequalities.

SUSTAINED AND INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH, MACROECONOMIC POLICY QUESTIONS (INCLUDING INTERNATIONAL TRADE, INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL SYSTEM AND EXTERNAL DEBT SUSTAINABILITY), INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT AND INDUSTRIALIZATION

The discussion on sustained and inclusive economic growth, macroeconomic policy questions (including international trade, international financial system and external debt sustainability), infrastructure development and industrialization took place on Monday and Tuesday morning, 25-26 November. The discussion began with two keynote speeches, following which coalitions and OWG constituency groups offered statements. An expert panel also took place during the Monday afternoon session.

KEYNOTE SPEECHES: Jagdish Bhagwati, Columbia University, stressed that achieving inclusive and sustainable growth means moving away from the MDGs' approach of having single targets for all countries, since countries' initial conditions are different, and conflating instruments with goals, since the effectiveness of instruments are not always established. Bhagwati further emphasized the importance of sequencing policies, highlighting economic growth as a necessary condition for social spending. He also discussed that absorptive capacities matter for foreign aid to be effective and technologies to combat climate change that are developed with public money should be publicly available to all countries.

Li Yong, Director-General, UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), highlighted that no country in history has achieved economic growth and tackled poverty without significant industrialization. He stressed that inclusive and sustainable industrial development needs to be environmentally friendly and can rely on currently available technologies. He emphasized that global multi-sector and multi-stakeholder partnerships are key to harnessing the available knowledge to

achieve inclusive and sustainable industrial development. He further noted the importance of investments in infrastructure and long-term predictable funding mechanisms to support industrial growth.

INTERACTIVE EXCHANGE OF VIEWS: Co-Chair Kamau opened the discussion, noting that previous speakers had highlighted that growth and development are not synonymous. He asked delegates to consider ways to deal with inequality and redistribution, to differentiate between means to achieve the goals and the goals themselves, and whether the industrialization experience during the past 200 years is the determinative framework for the future.

Fiji, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China (G-77/China), said the challenge is to incorporate macroeconomic concepts that were not part of the MDGs, such as jobs, trade, finance and debt policy. He noted that while macroeconomic concepts are a key part of the goals, translating them into goals might be "risky." He also emphasized, *inter alia*: international trade is a catalyst for development; the World Trade Organization (WTO) must undertake serious institutional reforms; the Doha Round of trade negotiations should come to a timely conclusion, with a balanced outcome from the Bali Ministerial in December; debt relief is important; the reforms of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) should be implemented and the selection of its Managing Director transparent; and industry must play a part by becoming cleaner and more efficient.

Gabon, on behalf of the African Group, emphasized that while Africa is transforming economically, it needs rapid, inclusive economic growth to improve capacity. He stressed that industrialization is a powerful tool for poverty eradication, and that structural improvements will lead to increased opportunities for citizens. The Group proposed a goal on structural transformation and decent work, and emphasized, *inter alia*: market access; trade for development; investment in infrastructure; a "true" global partnership for development; and debt.

The European Union (EU) stressed their commitment to ending poverty, saying that sustainable, inclusive economic growth is necessary but not sufficient to achieve this goal. He said the aim should be for long-term, sustainable and inclusive growth that better reflects environmental and social needs. He also called for addressing: unsustainable consumption and production patterns; the promotion of full employment; investment in infrastructure; engagement in open markets; and improved financial regulation.

Benin, on behalf of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), mentioned that, while some LDCs have experienced economic growth due to the high cost of commodities, this has not led to increased job creation for all. He stressed the importance of preferential treatment in trade for LDCs. He also emphasized a focus on: the transformation of infrastructure; a systemic reform of the international financial institutions (IFIs) to ensure more equitable representation of LDCs; the need to overcome structural debts; and technology transfer and the mobilization of financial resources.

Tunisia, on behalf of the Arab Group, highlighted the importance of infrastructure, industrial development, enhanced agricultural practices and improved public services for achieving

sustainable development, poverty eradication, and reducing inequality. He also stressed: the need for developed countries to achieve their commitments regarding official development assistance (ODA); the right of all states to diversify energy sources and to use nuclear power for peaceful purposes; the need to increase the inclusiveness of the IFIs; the importance of successfully concluding the WTO's Doha Round; and the need to facilitate accession of developing countries to the WTO.

Pakistan said the Co-Chairs' conclusions should underline: the post-2015 development agenda should be about economic transformation in developing countries; economic growth is a prerequisite for poverty reduction; standalone targets for economic growth in developing countries should be explored; and productive employment needs to be a focus. He noted the elimination of all barriers to international migration could produce benefits for the world economy, and new special drawing rights should be issued to developing countries.

Indonesia, also for China and Kazakhstan, stressed that developing countries can derive benefits from an open, fair, and rules-based trading system, and the SDGs need to ensure a durable solution to the debt crisis.

Viet Nam, also for Bhutan and Thailand, mentioned: sustained and inclusive economic growth should be central to an agenda that also addresses climate change and natural disasters; industrialization is important for bringing about structural change and infrastructure development should complement this; and national ownership in planning and implementing sustainable development strategies is necessary.

Singapore, also for Cyprus and the United Arab Emirates, said an SDG on economic growth is necessary to focus efforts on the structure of the economy and infrastructure development. She spoke of the complexities of designing and defining this goal, and emphasized that it is also a cross-cutting issue. She noted indicators to measure sustainability and inclusivity should be simple and universally applicable.

Turkey, also for Italy and Spain, said the economic growth model should address concepts of inequality in income, living standards and intergenerational equity. He highlighted industrialization has the potential for a sustained improvement in capacity, but should be environmentally sound. On integration with the global economy, he said that the global financial system needs to be more resilient and stable.

Slovenia, also for Montenegro, highlighted that since the benefits of economic growth are not equitably shared, the quality of growth is also important. He further emphasized: the need for coherence of economic policies with other policies; the importance of an open, predictable and rules-based multilateral trading system and the central role of the WTO; the necessity of profound transformations to create a green economy, including inclusive economic growth creating decent employment, better use of natural resources, and investments in low-carbon technologies; and the importance for the SDGs to be evidence-based, using both qualitative and quantitative indicators.

Nauru, on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), highlighted the adverse impacts on small island developing states (SIDS) of the global financial and economic crisis and the policy responses to it. She also emphasized: the financial system should serve the "real economy," with attention

to the needs of the SIDS' domestic economies; investments in infrastructure, human capital, institutional capacity and technology are needed to support the transition away from a subsistence-based economy; and progress towards the MDGs has been uneven, requiring attention to diverse forms of financial resources.

Ghana, on behalf of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), stressed that while the growth performance of African States has improved since the early 2000s, this has not translated into economic diversification, jobs or faster social development. He highlighted that industrialization has been key to achieving poverty reduction and that more investments are needed to ensure that commodity-based industrialization can be an engine for growth. He further suggested including in the zero-draft of the OWG a goal for structural transformation and sustainable and inclusive industrialization, while also identifying specific targets for manufacturing, energy and transport.

Ireland, also for Denmark and Norway, emphasized that since growth in many countries has not been inclusive, sustained or sustainable, the new development framework should address, *inter alia*: the measurement of economic performance beyond GDP; the structure, distribution and composition of economic growth; decent and safe working conditions; social protection and universal access to education; women's economic empowerment; and greener growth paths.

Zimbabwe, on behalf of ten southern African countries, underscored that poverty reduction should remain central to the new development framework. He highlighted the importance of industrialization and infrastructure investments, the regulation of financial markets, and a fair trading system, and stressed focusing not just on defining new development goals, but also on implementing those goals.

Serbia, also for Belarus, said the international community must promote sustainable management of natural resources and decouple economic growth from resource use. She stressed monetary flows must be managed in ways that ensure human rights, social justice and sustainable development. On energy, Serbia called on the UN to think of a more ambitious agenda that considers energy in a systematic, coherent and effective manner.

Brazil, also on behalf of Nicaragua, stressed the role of the state in supporting inclusive growth. He said smart public policies can enhance employment, productivity and innovation, and provide the resources to tackle society's most important problems.

Romania, also for Poland, emphasized the need for appropriate policies to internalize negative externalities, account for the use of natural capital, and recognize the true costs of growth. She said goals and targets for industrial and infrastructure development should be compatible with human rights and be built on the right market conditions.

Ecuador, also for Argentina and Bolivia, discussed establishing a new model of development and world governance structure with transparent decision making and equitable participation of all states. He emphasized greater transparency of financial flows and a stop to the flow of finances to tax havens. On debt, he said the priority for developing countries is to pay their social debt rather than their foreign debt.

Workers and Trade Unions highlighted the value of the MDGs for achieving workers' rights and said the SDGs should ensure decent work for all and a fair distribution of economic growth.

Croatia, also for Bulgaria, highlighted the need for economic growth models that balance equality, efficiency and coherent economic policies at all levels. She proposed a standalone goal on sustained economic growth with reference to sustainability to be part of a coherent development agenda.

Colombia, also for Guatemala, stressed the importance of, *inter alia*: focusing the current agenda on convergence between countries; avoiding over-clustering issues in generic goals and instead focusing on what is "goalable"; identifying the multidimensionality of poverty; unpacking the private sector's responsibilities; and infrastructure and connectivity. She also urged all UN agencies to coordinate with Member States in developing the post-2015 framework, but discouraged them from proposing specific goals on their own.

The Republic of Congo, on behalf of the Central African States, stressed finding new financing mechanisms and promoting public-private partnerships. Cameroon emphasized that structural transformations, sustained economic growth, industrialization, infrastructure and energy should figure prominently in the SDGs. He also highlighted the need for partnerships and solidarity beyond ODA.

The Republic of Korea noted the SDGs should contain commitments for social policies and social protection to aim at inclusive, sustainable and balanced growth. He said production and consumption patterns of previous generations are no longer sustainable, and cooperation between the UN system and other international platforms that deal with macroeconomic issues must be emphasized.

Mexico, also for Peru, said the agenda should indispensably establish social and financial inclusions to deal with problems of inequality. He called for a global partnership for sustainable development, and called on the UN to follow-up on the Doha, Monterrey, and Rio+20 processes.

The UK, also for Australia and the Netherlands, said growth, based on openness to international trade and markets, would increase prosperity and eradicate extreme poverty. He stressed the agenda must take into account different country circumstances, address barriers to growth and participation, and focus on access for all to economic and social infrastructure.

Egypt supported Bhagwati's message to focus on the international enabling environment for growth, highlighting that the shift from the MDG to SDG era will represent a move away from the MDGs' donor-recipient approach. He noted Bhagwati's suggestion to focus more on policies than goals, and asked if targets would capture the different approaches needed for countries with different levels of development while still adopting goals that are "universal and applicable to all."

The Russian Federation emphasized the creation of financial and institutional infrastructure is key for industrial development, while highlighting UNIDO's role in developing a science-based approach to support this.

Japan urged that a "human-centered approach" to development, focused on individuals, should be integrated in the goals, targets and narrative of the SDGs. He also stressed taking account the risks of natural disasters in infrastructure planning.

The Women's Major Group expressed concern that a focus on growth precedes care for social needs. She also emphasized the importance of sustainable production and consumption patterns and the promotion of global mechanisms to reverse "race to the bottom" dynamics in taxes, environmental and social standards.

The Marshall Islands spoke of the special characteristics of SIDS that prevent economic growth and industrialization, saying that the structure of growth is as important as its rate. She called for greater investment in infrastructure and social protection, as well as streamlining access to resources for adaptation to climate change.

Bangladesh said a "compartmentalized application of governance won't deliver on the global commons" and that succinct SDGs are necessary to secure transformative shifts. He mentioned the need for a frank conversation about the continuity of international partnership.

Ethiopia stated few countries have been able to overcome the challenges of poverty without industrialization, which is an important phase in growth. He said great emphasis should be given to link sustainable development with agriculture and trade, and the developing world needs structural transformation to completely eradicate poverty.

The US, also for Canada and Israel, emphasized that the OWG needs to consider whether these complex issues can be made into quantitative goals and targets, or are merely policy priorities. She supported a serious discussion about the issue of inclusivity, saying the Group could consider proposals for a single goal or "hardwiring the commitment across the whole agenda." Saying that more must be done to exploit the transformative potential of inclusive economic growth, she referenced issues of rural poverty, investment in women, the environmental impacts of growth, and responsive governance.

Saudi Arabia highlighted: countries should comply with the 0.7% ODA goal; countries' right to development; the significance of technology in economic growth; and the importance of public-private partnerships at all levels.

South Africa focused attention on the African Union's Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa, which coordinates regional infrastructure initiatives. He also stressed funding gaps remain and called for the further involvement of the private sector and the donor community.

Sweden said sustained, sustainable and inclusive economic growth requires: the involvement of all citizens, with special attention to gender issues; good governance and the rule of law; public investments in public services and job opportunities; the mainstreaming of environmental sustainability across policy fields; improvements in public health; and policies to mitigate widening inequalities.

The Inter-Parliamentary Union said the aim of the SDGs should be sustainable livelihoods and sustainable communities, noting that "when people flourish, growth will follow its natural course." He also: said the greening of the economy is necessary but not sufficient to change the underlying dynamics; suggested looking at human happiness, rather than GDP, as an indicator; and stressed the need for a new microeconomics of sustainable development.

The World Bank emphasized that "growth at all costs sows the seeds of its own demise." He said the way forward will include

getting the prices right and addressing subsidies. He highlighted that natural capital accounting can help countries with their policy development and planning, and called attention to the Wealth Accounting and the Valuation of Ecosystem Services (WAVES) partnership in this regard.

PANEL PRESENTATIONS AND INTERACTIVE

DISCUSSION: On Monday afternoon, 25 November, OWG participants heard statements from an expert panel on sustained and inclusive economic growth, macroeconomic policy, infrastructure development and industrialization.

Mukhisa Kituyi, UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), highlighted the role for economic factors in the future SDGs. He stressed that, while the MDGs equated development with specific social deprivations, the SDGs are first and foremost development goals that should focus attention on building livelihoods and productive capacity. He emphasized that the scope of the SDGs will require scaling up investments in clean technologies and productive capacity to reduce poverty and income inequality. He highlighted learning from the past performance of some Asian countries that did not follow orthodox economic policy advice, and stressed the importance of a global strategic framework to mobilize resources and technologies, channel them to the productive sectors, and maximize the development impact on the ground.

Amadou Sy, Brookings Institution, noted the increase of private capital flows to Sub-Saharan Africa since the 2002 Monterrey Conference, with these flows overtaking ODA in importance. He stressed that the growth in such external resources has the potential to complement domestic resources to deepen the domestic financial sector, develop local capital markets, and strengthen macroeconomic policies and an enabling environment for business. He highlighted the need to reallocate global investment towards sustainable development, which encompasses: ensuring foreign direct investment benefits local companies; reducing illicit financial flows; strengthening South-South partnerships; engaging the diaspora and ensuring remittances are directed towards growth-enhancing investments; and using aid as a catalyst for private investment flows, thereby rethinking the partnership between the private and public sector to finance infrastructural development.

Amar Bhattacharya, Intergovernmental Group of Twenty-Four on International Monetary Affairs and Development (G-24), emphasized that the global economy is in the midst of a profound change and highlighted the need for, among others: adequate regulation of financial flows and financial inclusion; a new approach to public finance, improved tax performance and international cooperation to tackle tax avoidance by companies; and infrastructure investments.

Jeffrey Sachs, Columbia University, said the OWG's work is as important as any work in the entire world. He highlighted discussions in the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN), which resulted in recommendations to have no more than ten goals, to use the name "SDGs," and to focus them on: ending extreme poverty; jobs and continued development within the planetary boundaries; social inclusion; education for all; universal health coverage; food security and sustainable agriculture; climate change and sustainable energy; conservation

of biodiversity and ecosystems, including freshwater sources; resilient and sustainable cities; and good governance.

During the discussion, in answer to a remark from Ireland that the ten goals from the SDSN address the three dimensions of sustainable development separately, Sachs responded that having sector-based goals is desirable to engage specific epistemic, policy and business communities. Responding to a question from Bangladesh on the means of implementation, Sachs mentioned these are part of the tenth goal on governance. On the idea of convergence between countries, Sachs noted that global goals cannot exist without the underlying aim of convergence, and that this is part of the larger normative framework of the SDGs.

In response to Pakistan's question on innovation in development financing, Sy noted that policies in the wake of the financial crisis are too focused on increasing the stability of the financial system, while emphasizing the importance of linking capital flows to the SDGs, and of knowledge and technology transfers.

Bhattacharya clarified that a focus on infrastructure and sustainability requires access to technology and finance, which includes innovative means of development finance. He also emphasized the importance of managing the transition period to a new infrastructure system. On a question from Pakistan about subsidies misallocating resources, he stressed targeted subsidies are integral for protecting the poor.

Colombia inquired if panelists had suggestions for how the SDGs could be flexible enough to evolve or "self-correct" over the next 15 years. Zimbabwe suggested that instruments such as the economic dimension and good governance could be considered enablers for the other goals rather than goals on their own. Palau said he felt excluded from Sachs' list, since his country's sustainability depends on the oceans. Kenya noted that industrialization requires energy, and inquired how a goal on sustainable energy would affect developing countries' ability to industrialize. Kenya also asked if the idea was to convert the Aichi biodiversity targets and goals into an SDG. The Netherlands said that, in its extreme simplicity, MDGs were about actions by the South financed by the North, while the framework for various proposed SDGs is about actions in the North benefiting the South, and inquired where real global public goods come in, and how they would link to existing multilateral environmental agreements and address differentiation.

Sachs said the objective is not to supplant international law, but to make it work better by engaging the public, and that oceans would be covered in a goal on biodiversity. Sachs said the renewable energy options for Africa are positive, and added that the internal combustion engine and coal "have no role in the future." Co-Chair Körösi noted that two technological breakthroughs are needed: better energy storage and reducing the price of alternative energy generation.

A representative from Workers and Trade Unions reported on the consultation that Major Groups had with the Co-Chairs on Friday, 22 November. He said they discussed a number of options for SDGs around the themes of: human rights; ending inequalities and poverty; governance; and planetary boundaries. They proposed that the SDGs should pay attention to, *inter alia*, gender, climate change, tax reform, and halting land and resource grabbing. The Latin American Network discussed her

region's experience with the agenda topics, highlighting concerns of transparency. The Scientific and Technological Communities suggested considering wealth in an inclusive manner, as underlying stocks or assets. The Non-Governmental Liaison Service (UN-NGLS) introduced their report on consultations with civil society in eight sub-regions, saying that objectives that emerged from their discussions included the need to: rebalance power relationships; overcome exclusion; and ensure the equitable and safe distribution of resources.

ENERGY

The discussion on energy took place on Tuesday afternoon and Wednesday morning, 26-27 November. The discussion began with three keynote speeches, following which coalitions, OWG constituency groups and Major Groups offered statements.

PANEL PRESENTATIONS AND INTERACTIVE

DISCUSSION: Adnan Amin, Director-General, International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), described the rising importance of renewable energy across the globe. He said that the world is facing unprecedented changes as fast-growing economies become more hungry for energy, but stressed that we are living in a time when "prospects of a clean, feasible energy system, based on indigenous sources, is in reach." Amin gave examples of many countries where renewable energy prices are dropping rapidly, where large-scale investments are creating returns, and where renewable energy is becoming extremely competitive on the grid. He said that policies and robust regulation that create a conducive framework for investment and economic transformation are necessary. Highlighting the targets of the Sustainable Energy for All (SE4ALL) initiative of universal energy access and doubling energy efficiency and the share of renewables by 2030, Amin emphasized these targets can be achieved if the right steps are taken by all actors.

Vijay Modi, Columbia University, highlighted that extending electricity access to people that are currently excluded cannot be done in the short term without the use of fossil fuels. Focusing on Africa, he stressed there is an economic demand to use fossil fuels for internal development instead of for exports. Based on experimental research, he emphasized: poor people are willing to pay for reliable energy provision on an individual-use basis; and demand grows significantly when energy services are provided to them.

Daniel Kammen, University of California, Berkeley, spoke earlier in the day, and highlighted: the challenges presented by the existence of both urban and rural energy poverty in multiple forms; off-grid and distributed energy services complement and do not compete with the central grid; and California's efforts to achieve its carbon reduction goals.

Several delegates inquired about the use of subsidies for renewable energy and the issue of integrating renewable energy with fossil fuel use in a transition period, linking this topic to difficulties in the climate change negotiations. Italy inquired about the importance of energy efficiency, since "the true renewable is the energy we do not use." Peru noted devising goals and indicators on energy needs to take into account the tradeoffs between and relations with other areas of sustainable development.

Amin highlighted that the energy landscape is changing very fast, with renewables having become the baseload in a number of countries and gas/renewable hybrid systems offering a way to achieve reliability. He also noted that fossil fuel subsidies outnumber renewable energy subsidies 10 to 1, and add costs to society from pollution.

Modi said the "complicated symphony" of fuel integration is just developing, and the short term flexibility that gas provides is still important. Answering a question on demand-side access to energy, Modi said that the goal for the next 30 years will be for the world to decarbonize, but that this will not be done "on the backs of the poor." He emphasized that access to low-cost capital at the global scale was necessary to allow the transition to occur rapidly. Responding to a delegate's question about the MDGs, Modi stated that the goals of the current development agenda are still required.

On a question on access, Amin highlighted the potential of the smart mini-grid model, which integrates wind or solar energy with diesel for rural electrification. On cost and resource potential he noted: it is crucial to first identify the technical resource potential, which is part of IRENA's resource mapping initiative; and the cost equation of renewable energy is changing, making wind energy in certain cases cheaper than traditional sources on the grid. He further emphasized that the forecasted wind and solar energy potential can meet demand patterns, which shows the transformational potential of smart grids in which consumers of power also become producers.

The Science and Technology Major Group highlighted conclusions from the Global Energy Assessment report, which mirror the three goals of the SE4ALL initiative. She also provided support for a single energy goal in the SDGs and stressed energy is crucial for all other SDGs.

Several delegates inquired about the special needs of SIDS. Iran asked about the role of intellectual property rights (IPRs) in a goal framework. The Netherlands asked how to assure that large-scale infrastructure investments serve the needs of the poor, what the speakers' top three recommended policies were, how gender issues are figuring into the policy debate, and how to ensure that pricing incorporates the externalities of fossil fuels. Canada asked if the regulatory and investment environment is ready for a massive investment in renewable energy.

Amin noted that, with their rapid, large-scale deployment, some basic technologies are becoming more available, and said transparency around IPRs is needed. He emphasized support for bioenergy, including second generation biofuels, efficiency and end use sectors, and policy frameworks for financing.

Kandeh Yumkella, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on SE4ALL, highlighted that both top-down and bottom-up actions are necessary, and proposed adopting a global goal for secure sustainable energy for all, along with seven targets or indicators on: universal energy access, energy efficiency, renewable energy, energy-health nexus, energy-water nexus, energy-food nexus, and energy-women's empowerment nexus.

The Business and Industry Major Group emphasized extreme poverty eradication should remain the primary objective, with energy access being crucial in this regard. He stressed that

initiatives to promote clean energy should be comprehensive and include the sustainable use of fossil fuels.

The Major Group for Children and Youth offered support for a goal promoting energy access, combined with a campaign to address energy use. She also urged attention be paid to the energy-water-food-security nexus.

The Women's Major Group said that access to energy is specifically needed in remote, underserved communities. She explained that decentralized, fast solutions for clean and reliable energy are necessary in these places, and that the social benefits of low-carbon technologies should be considered.

Amin concluded by stressing that this is an important time in history, as the ways in which economies evolve and are powered are transforming. He said that, in this revolutionary moment, renewable energy must be nurtured by the right policy mix at the national level and goals at the international level, urging delegates to "make sure that energy is one of the goals."

Modi applauded the linkages speakers had made between energy, health, water, education, and food. He said that solutions must be both top-down and bottom-up, and emphasized the role that young people and universities are playing in this process.

INTERACTIVE EXCHANGE OF VIEWS: On Wednesday morning, the EU highlighted energy is an issue that connects the three dimensions of sustainable development, and focused attention on, *inter alia*: the potential of the SE4ALL initiative's goals to achieve poverty alleviation, economic growth and environmental sustainability; energy efficiency; renewable energy reducing dependence on fossil fuels; and adequate and innovative funding mechanisms.

Benin, on behalf of the LDCs, reiterated the energy-related goals of the Istanbul Programme of Action for the LDCs, and focused attention on a high-level event organized in September 2013, which called for the establishment of a common goal on energy in the post-2015 development agenda with particular attention to the special needs of the LDCs.

Gabon, on behalf of the African Group, highlighted African efforts in the context of the SE4ALL initiative, and emphasized the critical issue of funding, noting the importance of ODA, public-private partnerships, and the creation of a conducive international environment for investment.

Indonesia, also for China and Kazakhstan, said energy needs to be integrated into the SDGs, while it is essential that developing countries chart their own energy course. She highlighted the importance of technology transfer and expansion of human capacity, and also recommended that all countries push for an energy technological revolution and advocate for energy efficiency.

Nauru, for AOSIS, emphasized the need for efficient provision of affordable energy, and highlighted that SIDS could revolutionize their energy access using wind, sun and oceans energy. She called attention to SIDS DOCK, an initiative that assists SIDS with renewable energy and energy efficiency, and called for increased energy access for the poor and those in remote areas. She called for sustainable energy for all as one of the SDGs.

Norway, also for Denmark and Ireland, said sustainable energy must be integrated into the SDGs, and suggested setting at least three global targets addressing universal access to

modern energy services and a doubling of the global levels of renewable energy and energy efficiency by 2030. He also highlighted the importance of an enabling environment and attention to women's rights and gender equality.

Trinidad and Tobago, on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), highlighted energy is not just an issue of economic growth but also of climate change mitigation and adaptation and their countries' survival. He offered support for an SDG on energy with attention to the needs of small island states.

The Netherlands, also on behalf of the UK and Australia, highlighted that energy poverty is a basic human need. She particularly highlighted the adverse impacts of energy poverty on women and children, while calling for the active involvement of the private sector, governments and civil society.

Papua New Guinea, on behalf of the Pacific SIDS, stressed the negative impacts of his region's energy insecurity and dependence on imported fossil fuel on economic growth and climate change threats. He highlighted regional efforts to address energy challenges, in particular energy data availability.

Montenegro, also for Slovenia, emphasized energy needs to be treated as one of the cornerstones of the SDGs. He said solutions need to be global but flexible enough to be adopted at the local level, and suggested that mechanisms such as national sustainable development councils be used to ensure stakeholder input to energy decision making. He stressed this goal should be evidence-based, have quantitative measures and involve a strong policy-science interface.

Nicaragua, also for Brazil, said measures for efficiency are important but secondary, since the SDGs cannot be focused on deficiency and efficiency measures are determined by technological capacity. He noted if energy efficiency is included as an SDG, transfer of technology will need to be incorporated.

Singapore, also for Cyprus and the United Arab Emirates, emphasized attention to sustainable energy: must refer to sustainable energy sources as well as sustainable use of energy; should highlight the cross-cutting nature of energy and the role of renewable energy and energy efficiency; and should incorporate the universality, flexibility and adaptability of goals.

Bulgaria, also for Croatia, noted that, by addressing energy issues, we address many of the challenges we face today. She suggested providing guidance on how energy production can be made sustainable.

Italy, also on behalf of Spain and Turkey, called for a specific SDG containing the objectives of the SE4ALL initiative, and said that it should also be embedded in development goals on reducing poverty, combating climate change, sustainable agriculture, and water.

Viet Nam, also on behalf of Bhutan and Thailand, welcomed a dedicated goal and cross-cutting approach for addressing energy in the agenda. He said that there is need for financing, knowledge and sustainable energy technology across the world, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa and South-East Asia.

Switzerland, also on behalf of France and Germany, highlighted that a target on supporting national enabling environments for universal access to sustainable energy should be part of an SDG on energy.

Saudi Arabia said energy is a unique area that can be put into a quantitative goal and provision of finance to achieve it. He

noted that fossil fuels will continue to contribute to world energy needs, and called for promoting cleaner fossil fuel technology.

The Republic of Congo, on behalf of the Central African States, highlighted the potential of the sub-region for producing renewable energy, and said efforts to create the energy infrastructure will be important. He said the issues of energy, water, health and sanitation must be treated separately.

Ecuador emphasized that sustainable consumption and production patterns would improve energy availability for the most vulnerable. He warned that the issue of fossil fuel subsidies cannot be simplified, as many have beneficial effects for the poor and are designed within sustainable development policies.

The Republic of Korea also embraced the objectives of the SE4ALL initiative, and said that special attention should be afforded to SIDS and countries in special situations.

Bangladesh stressed the need for addressing both energy supply and demand factors, highlighting considerations of equity, affordability, regional connectivity, and contextualized business models.

Japan noted its efforts to ensure energy security, use renewable energy technologies and increase energy efficiency following the 2011 earthquake and tsunami. He looked forward to further discussion on the issues of feasibility and appropriateness for the Secretary-General's SE4ALL initiative.

Iran stressed indicators should be based on realities and suggested that targets and indicators should be based on the pillars of production, consumption, bridging linkages, and enabling efforts at all levels.

Marshall Islands, for the Pacific Islands Forum, said energy efficiency is recognized as a key ingredient to address climate change, and noted the small island countries' high dependency on imported fuels.

Uganda emphasized the need for consideration of environmental sustainability issues, from source to destination of energy. He said that investments must be funded in a manner that reinforces the interlinkages of different elements of development.

New Zealand reiterated earlier remarks on the gaps in the MDGs and the centrality of energy access. She also urged decoupling development from fossil fuel use and reforming fossil fuel subsidies.

Palau urged including a focus on oceans in an energy SDG, and drew attention to the energy-health nexus. Ukraine said energy is a multi-sided issue, and that the SDGs should include a diversified approach for energy supply and production. He emphasized that energy, sustainability and security are interlinked issues.

The Indigenous Peoples Major Group explained that indigenous communities have been displaced from their homes and livelihoods because of the construction of large-scale renewable energy projects.

The Children and Youth Major Group said leadership was needed to transition from a growth-focused economy to one that facilitates greater natural resource conservation and management.

The Women's Major Group stressed the need for responsibility in energy production, access, and management, and spoke of the need to embrace a human rights framework.

The Business and Industry Major Group emphasized that all energy options carry risks, and that all options should be deployed while taking steps to manage these risks.

The NGO Major Group spoke of the need for sustainable energy technologies in developing countries, and highlighted that strict patent laws often prevent sustainable development engineering. The NGO Major Group Commons Cluster said energy is already a global commons, and encouraged delegates and individuals to use their positions to bring about internal change.

CO-CHAIRS' SUMMARY AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

Co-Chair Körösi presented the Co-Chairs' summary of discussions and noted that, while the topics were complex, there was a high degree of convergence on many ideas. He highlighted several issues that were discussed, including: the right to development; poverty eradication as a main goal; convergence between countries; the role of well-formulated national policies; inequality; industrialization and the promotion of small and medium sized enterprises; infrastructure deficits; macroeconomic policy coordination; the inclusiveness of the IFIs; trade as a driver for growth; debt relief; domestic resources mobilization; de-carbonization of energy systems and the importance of energy transition paths; and finance.

In response to the Co-Chairs' summary, Pakistan and Nicaragua urged for more attention to means of implementation. Several delegations, including Saudi Arabia, Nicaragua and Benin, emphasized that, while learning from other organizations and initiatives is encouraged, the OWG is an intergovernmental process. Bolivia, Benin and Colombia, among others, called for attention to indigenous peoples, rural areas and peasants. Several delegations, including Colombia, the Netherlands and the EU, stressed the need to give attention to the link between energy and climate change.

Co-Chair Kamau concluded by highlighting that the OWG is starting to focus on clear recommendations and urged delegations to continue to distinguish between goals and means for achieving them. After presenting the topics for OWG-6, Kamau adjourned the meeting at 4:30 pm.

A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF OWG-5

When the fifth session of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals opened on 25 November, over five months after the fourth session, it was clear that participants were eager to get back to the business of stock-taking and discussion, despite a busy time in the UNGA, UNFCCC negotiations, and holiday preparations. From the start, participants said that a notable change in the context of the OWG discussions could be felt. A flurry of activities and meetings during the interim period and attention from the UN General Assembly, the private sector and civil society have brought the post-2015 development agenda into a broader spotlight than it had been in June.

The renewed energy was not wasted, as the OWG turned from considering the more "consensus-prone" topics of poverty, education, health, food security, water and sanitation, desertification and drought, and culture, to the more challenging issues of macroeconomic policies, industrialization, and the

global energy mix. OWG-5 participants seemed to agree on the need for industrialization and structural transformation in developing countries, as well as the threats posed by unregulated global financial markets and sovereign debt. Open and rules-based trade, enabling environments for investment, and the need for truly inclusive growth were consistently highlighted as some of the most important factors for achieving development and eradicating poverty.

Despite this convergence of ideas, delegates questioned how macroeconomic and growth policies could be reflected in the new development goals. Jagdish Bhagwati of Columbia University implored the group to consider whether these issues are appropriate for a goal framework, or are general policy priorities, and thus more instruments than goals. Many delegations picked up on this distinction, wondering aloud how “goalable” economic ambitions could be. Furthermore, while some states saw linkages between the economic dimension of sustainable development and poverty eradication, few speakers mentioned the potential trade-offs between economic growth, on the one hand, and environmental sustainability and social inclusion, on the other.

The discussion on energy brought a dynamic exchange, with many recognizing that energy access should figure prominently in the post-2015 development agenda. Calling energy a “key enabler” of development—a term that some noted had also been applied to the subjects of health, education, water, and food security—the nexus between sustainable energy access and all other issues was repeatedly underscored. Kandeh Yumkella, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sustainable Energy for All, gave an impassioned plea for an SDG on energy access for all, and OWG delegates were invited by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to a dinner on the second night of OWG-5 to consider the same topic, highlighting the “energy” surrounding consideration of an SDG related to this agenda item. This proposal, and a presentation of potential SDGs by SDSN’s Jeffrey Sachs, captured the attention of delegates, who seemed eager to jump from the intentional mapping out of positions to crafting the final list of SDGs. While the topics of macroeconomic policy were abstract and the policy options that were raised often seemed beyond the remit of the UN development agenda or the OWG, more “goalable” aspirations for universal energy access and renewable energy development generated concrete proposals for targets and indicators. Many participants also took part in events and conversations on the sidelines of OWG-5 to discuss how all of the proposals might be brought together as goals, targets and indicators, and how to reflect the calls for incorporating cross-cutting elements.

In their concluding remarks, Co-Chairs Körösi and Kamau emphasized a seemingly high degree of convergence among delegations. One delegate summarized this impression, saying “we are all basically talking about the same issues.” A number of key issues, however, did not enjoy the same level of consensus, including climate change and the role of fossil fuels in the transition to a new energy system.

The next OWG session will open on Monday, 9 December, and will continue to address some of these more challenging issues. It remains to be seen whether the convergence of ideas, which some identified as characterizing OWG-5, will continue

during the sessions ahead. Negotiations on the final outcome cannot be completely avoided, as one Co-Chair humorously wished, but the constructive energy of OWG-5 provides hope for the upcoming sessions of the OWG.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Sixth Session of the OWG on SDGs: OWG-6 will focus on: means of implementation; the global partnership for achieving sustainable development; needs of countries in special situations – African countries, LDCs, land-locked developing countries, and SIDS as well as specific challenges facing middle-income countries; and human rights, the right to development, and global governance. **dates:** 9-13 December 2013 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** UN Division for Sustainable Development **phone:** +1-212-963-8102 **fax:** +1-212-963-4260 **email:** dsd@un.org **www:** <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?menu=1678>

Seventh Session of the OWG on SDGs: OWG-7 will focus on sustainable cities and human settlements, sustainable transport, sustainable consumption and production (including chemicals and waste); and climate change and disaster risk reduction. **dates:** 6-10 January 2014 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** UN Division for Sustainable Development **phone:** +1-212-963-8102 **fax:** +1-212-963-4260 **email:** dsd@un.org **www:** <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?menu=1679>

Eighth Session of the OWG on SDGs: OWG-8 will focus on oceans and seas, forests, biodiversity; promoting equality, including social equity, gender equality and women’s empowerment; and conflict prevention, post-conflict peacebuilding and the promotion of durable peace, rule of law and governance. **dates:** 3-7 February 2014 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** UN Division for Sustainable Development **phone:** +1-212-963-8102 **fax:** +1-212-963-4260 **email:** dsd@un.org **www:** <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?menu=1680>

GLOSSARY

AOSIS	Alliance of Small Island States
HLPF	High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
IFIs	International financial institutions
LDCs	Least developed countries
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
ODA	Official development assistance
OWG	Open Working Group
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SDSN	Sustainable Development Solutions Network
SIDS	Small island developing states
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
WTO	World Trade Organization