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**Note to the Secretary-General**

Negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda  
(23-27 March 2015)

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OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

The third session of the intergovernmental negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda concluded on Friday after an eventful week. It made progress on a number of areas which will facilitate the continuing work.

30/03/15

**Goals and Targets**

The session focused on SDGs and targets. It reconfirmed the overwhelming satisfaction with the outcome of the Open Working Group on SDGs.

While all support the 17 SDGs and the bulk of the targets, there continues to be some disagreement on whether some of the targets should be reviewed from a technical perspective. It is widely recognized that a few of the targets adopted by the OWG require further work. Some were adopted with an "x" instead of a precise numerical value, due to lack of time. Some others need to be aligned with current agreements.

Many developed countries would thus like to review and adjust such targets to make them clearer and easier to measure and implement. But most developing countries and some within the EU oppose such an exercise, which they fear might lead to reopening political agreements. They want the report of the OWG to be incorporated, as it is, in the post-2015 development agenda.

There were mixed reactions to the paper shared by Co-facilitators with proposed technical adjustments to 19 targets, based on the work of the Technical Support Team. Ultimately, no consensus was reached on this issue. But the co-facilitators said they would produce a revised document with evidence-based proposals to: (i) adjust targets which fall below existing UN agreements; and (ii) replace "x"s with numerical values. The paper will be shared in the coming days to give sufficient time for Member States to decide on whether to use it at the May session.

**Indicators**

The other main topic during the session, indicators, proved less controversial. The Chair of the UN Statistical Commission presented a paper on the process to develop indicators for the post 2015 development agenda. The paper foresees that the Commission would adopt a global indicator framework in March 2016. This proposed roadmap was widely supported, as many concurred that developing a robust indicator framework is a technical exercise, and requires time.

Member States clearly want to engage in the Commission's work. Many said that the proposed Inter-Agency Expert Group on SDG Indicators should consist of Member States and include international organizations as observers - which the Commission's Chair said was the intention.

It was decided that the negotiations on post 2015 will continue providing political guidance to the Commission's work on indicators. The Commission's Chair will brief negotiators on the post-2015 development agenda again in May. There is also a proposal that the outcome of the September Summit could note this work and provide broad guidance.

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Already, a number of principles were mentioned in the discussions. In particular, it was suggested that the Indicators should directly, systematically and faithfully respond to the OWG goals and targets and steer away from introducing new or contentious issues.

There were repeated references to the need to keep the global indicators set manageable and to the importance of quality and disaggregated data. Almost all spoke of the need to build national statistical capacity.

While it is now clear that no one expects indicators to be adopted at the special summit in September, there clearly remain outstanding questions, such as the link between national, regional and international indicators. Developing countries underscored that the Statistical Commission is developing "global indicators" and that each country will develop its own national indicators.

#### ***Organization of work for the April session***

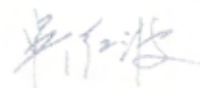
The meeting also discussed the organization of work of the April session, which will be a joint session with the preparatory process for the Addis Conference on Financing for Development. The intention is to build synergies and coherence between the two negotiation tracks and reflect on how to incorporate the Addis outcome into the post-2015 development agenda. During the discussions, attention was paid to the need to ensure that Addis addresses all important aspects of SDGs' means of implementation. The Co-Facilitators will revise the programme in light of the discussions.

#### ***Other aspects***

The session also discussed the possible themes for the roundtables at the September Summit, based on a proposal by the Co-Facilitators. While the proposal was generally well received, many delegations also proposed to give greater attention to social themes, including vulnerable groups, or some sectoral themes such as oceans or desertification. The discussions will continue in May.

Throughout the session, it was comforting to hear that some countries are already working to align their own national development plans and strategies with the SDGs. This involves both developing and developed countries -some of which confessed that this would be challenging.

Overall, the session had the same constructive spirit that has characterized the elaboration of the SDGs and the agenda thus far. Over 100 delegations spoke on each topic. There was a lively dialogue with major groups and other stakeholders, who are actively and productively engaged in the process.



WU Hongbo  
30 March 2015

cc: Deputy Secretary-General