

**Sixty-ninth session**

Agenda items 13 (a) and 115

**Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up
to the outcomes of the major United Nations conference and
summits in the economic, social and related fields****Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit****The road to dignity by 2030: ending poverty, transforming
all lives and protecting the planet****Synthesis report of the Secretary-General on the post-2015
sustainable development agenda***Summary*

The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 68/6, in which Member States requested the Secretary-General to synthesize the full range of inputs available on the post-2015 development agenda and to present a synthesis report before the end of 2014, as an input to the intergovernmental negotiations.

Drawing from the experience of two decades of development practice and from the inputs gathered through an open and inclusive process, the report charts a road map to achieve dignity in the next 15 years. The report proposes one universal and transformative agenda for sustainable development, underpinned by rights, and with people and the planet at the centre. An integrated set of six essential elements is provided to help frame and reinforce the sustainable development agenda and ensure that the ambition and vision expressed by Member States communicates and is delivered at the country level: (a) dignity: to end poverty and fight inequality; (b) people: to ensure healthy lives, knowledge and the inclusion of women and children; (c) prosperity: to grow a strong, inclusive and transformative economy; (d) planet: to protect our ecosystems for all societies and our children; (e) justice: to promote safe and peaceful societies and strong institutions; and (f) partnership: to catalyse global solidarity for sustainable development.



The report also underscores that an integrated sustainable development agenda requires an equally synergistic framework of means for its implementation, including financing, technology and investments in sustainable development capacities. In addition, the report calls for embracing a culture of shared responsibility in order to ensure that promises made become actions delivered. To this effect, the report proposes a framework to be able to monitor and review implementation, based on enhanced statistical capacities and tapping into the potential of new and non-traditional data sources, and a United Nations system “fit for purpose” to address the challenges of the new agenda. Achieving dignity in the next 15 years is possible if we collectively mobilize political will and the necessary resources to strengthen the multilateral system and our nations.

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“We recognize that people are at the centre of sustainable development and, in this regard, we strive for a world that is just, equitable and inclusive, and we commit to work together to promote sustained and inclusive economic growth, social development and environmental protection and thereby to benefit all.”

Outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), “The future we want”

I. A universal call to action to transform our world beyond 2015

1. The year 2015 offers a unique opportunity for global leaders and people to end poverty and to transform the world to better meet human needs and the necessities of economic transformation, while protecting our environment, ensuring peace and realizing human rights.
2. We are at a historic crossroads, and the direction we take will determine whether we will succeed or fail in fulfilling our promises. With our globalized economy and sophisticated technology, we can decide to end the age-old ills of extreme poverty and hunger. Or we can continue to degrade our planet and allow intolerable inequalities to sow bitterness and despair. Our ambition is to achieve sustainable development for all.
3. Young people will be the torchbearers of the next sustainable development agenda through 2030. We must ensure that this transition, while protecting the planet, leaves no one behind. We have a shared responsibility to embark on a path to inclusive and shared prosperity in a peaceful and resilient world, where human rights and the rule of law are upheld.
4. Transformation is our watchword. At this moment in time, we are called upon to lead and act with courage. We are called upon to embrace change. Change in our societies. Change in the management of our economies. Change in our relationship with our one and only planet.
5. In doing so, we can more fully respond to the needs of our time and deliver on the timeless promise made at the birth of the United Nations.
6. Seventy years ago, in adopting the founding Charter of the Organization, the nations of the world made a solemn commitment in the preamble “to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war ... to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small ... to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom”.
7. Building on this core promise, in the Declaration on the Right to Development (1986), the General Assembly called for an approach that would guarantee the meaningful participation of all in development and in the fair distribution of its benefits.

8. Humankind has achieved impressive progress over the past seven decades. We have reduced violence and we have established global institutions, a code of agreed universal principles and a rich tapestry of international law. We have witnessed stunning technological progress, millions upon millions lifted from poverty, millions more empowered, diseases defeated, life expectancies on the rise, colonialism dismantled, new nations born, apartheid conquered, democratic practices taken deeper root and vibrant economies built in all regions.

9. Since the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (“Earth Summit”) in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, we have identified a new pathway to human well-being, the path of sustainable development. The Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals articulated in 2000 placed people at the centre, generating unprecedented improvement in the lives of many around the world. The global mobilization behind the Millennium Development Goals showed that multilateral action can make a tangible difference.

10. Yet conditions in today’s world are a far cry from the vision of the Charter. Amid great plenty for some, we witness pervasive poverty, gross inequalities, joblessness, disease and deprivation for billions. Displacement is at its highest level since the Second World War. Armed conflict, crime, terrorism, persecution, corruption, impunity and the erosion of the rule of law are daily realities. The impacts of the global economic, food and energy crises are still being felt. The consequences of climate change have only just begun. These failings and shortcomings have done as much to define the modern era as has our progress in science, technology and the mobilization of global social movements.

11. Our globalized world is marked by extraordinary progress alongside unacceptable — and unsustainable — levels of want, fear, discrimination, exploitation, injustice and environmental folly at all levels.

12. We also know, however, that these problems are not accidents of nature or the results of phenomena beyond our control. They result from actions and omissions of people, public institutions, the private sector and others charged with protecting human rights and upholding human dignity.

13. We have the know-how and the means to address these challenges, but we need urgent leadership and joint action now.

14. These are universal challenges. They demand new levels of multilateral action, based on evidence and built on shared values, principles and priorities for a common destiny.

15. Our global commitments under the Charter should compel us to act. Our sense of empathy and enlightened self-interest should compel us to act. Our responsibilities as stewards of the planet should equally compel us to act. None of today’s threats respect boundaries drawn by human beings, whether those boundaries are national borders or boundaries of class, ability, age, gender, geography, ethnicity or religion.

16. In an irreversibly interconnected world, the challenges faced by any become the challenges faced by each of us — sometimes gradually, but often suddenly. However, facing these vexing challenges is not simply a burden, it is, far more, an opportunity to forge new partnerships and alliances that can work together to advance the human condition.

17. The experience of implementing the Millennium Development Goals provides compelling evidence that the international community can be mobilized to confront such complex challenges. Governments, civil society and a wide range of international actors coalesced behind the Goals in a multi-front battle against poverty and disease. They generated innovative approaches, vital new data, new resources and new tools and technology for this struggle. Transparency was enhanced, multilateral approaches were strengthened and a results-based approach to public policy was fostered. Sound public policies inspired by the Goals, enhanced by collective action and international cooperation, led to remarkable successes. In the two decades since 1990, the world has halved extreme poverty, lifting 700 million out of extreme poverty. In the decade between 2000 and 2010, an estimated 3.3 million deaths from malaria were averted and 22 million lives were saved in the fight against tuberculosis. Access to antiretroviral therapy for HIV-infected people has saved 6.6 million lives since 1995. At the same time, gender parity in primary school enrolment, access to child and maternal health care and in women's political participation has improved steadily.¹

18. We must invest in the unfinished work of the Millennium Development Goals, and use them as a springboard into the future we want, a future free from poverty and built on human rights, equality and sustainability. This is our duty, and it must be the legacy we strive to leave for our children.

19. In our quest to shape a global sustainable development agenda for the years beyond 2015, the international community has embarked upon an unprecedented process. Never before has so broad and inclusive a consultation been undertaken on so many matters of global concern. In the two short years since the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development laid the cornerstone for the post-2015 sustainable development process, all Member States, the entire United Nations system, experts and a cross-section of civil society, business and, most importantly, millions of people from all corners of the globe, have committed themselves to this crucially important journey. This, in itself, is reason for great hope. The creativity and shared sense of purpose that has emerged across the human family is proof that we can come together to innovate and collaborate in search of solutions and the common good.

20. Having now opened the tent wide to a broad constituency, we must recognize that the legitimacy of this process will rest, in significant measure, on the degree to which the core messages that we have received are reflected in the final outcome. This is no time to succumb to political expediency or to tolerate the lowest common denominator. The new threats that face us, and the new opportunities that present themselves, demand a high level of ambition and a truly participatory, responsive and transformational course of action.

21. This includes tackling climate change. As underscored by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, climate change exacerbates threats. It makes delivering on the sustainable development agenda more difficult because it reverses positive trends, creates new uncertainties and raises the costs of resilience.

22. This enterprise cannot, therefore, be business as usual.

¹ See *Millennium Development Goals Report 2014*.

23. People across the world are looking to the United Nations to rise to the challenge with a truly transformative agenda that is both universal and adaptable to the conditions of each country, and that places people and the planet at the centre. Their voices have underscored the need for democracy, the rule of law, civic space and more effective governance and capable institutions, for new and innovative partnerships, including with responsible business and effective local authorities, and for a data revolution, rigorous accountability mechanisms and renewed global partnerships. People throughout the world have also stressed that the credibility of the new agenda rests on the means that are available to implement it.

24. Three high-level international meetings in 2015 give us the opportunity to chart a new era of sustainable development. The first will be the third International Conference on Financing for Development, to be held in Addis Ababa in July, where a compact for a global partnership may be realized. The second will be the special summit on sustainable development, to be held at United Nations Headquarters in New York in September, where the world will embrace the new agenda and a set of sustainable development goals, which we hope will mark a paradigm shift for people and the planet. The third will be the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in Paris in December, at which Member States have pledged to adopt a new agreement to tackle a threat that could make it more difficult to deliver on the new sustainable development agenda.

25. The stars are aligned for the world to take historic action to transform lives and protect the planet. I urge Governments and people everywhere to fulfil their political and moral responsibilities. This is my call to dignity, and we must respond with all our vision and strength.

II. A synthesis

“All that is valuable in human society depends upon the opportunity for development accorded the individual.”

Albert Einstein

A. What we have learned from two decades of development experience

26. There is much that is new and, indeed, transformational in the global conversation on a post-2015 sustainable development agenda. But the roots of this conversation are deep, extending to the experience of the development community over the last 20 years and to the visionary outcomes of the global conferences of the 1990s: the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Earth Summit), the Millennium Summit and the Millennium Development Goals of 2000, the 2005 World Summit, the 2010 Summit on the Millennium Development Goals and the lead-up to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) in 2012.

27. The cornerstone for the current global process of renewal was established in Rio de Janeiro in June of 2012, with the adoption of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development “The future we want”. The document described the lessons learned from two decades of development

experience and provided an extensive assessment of the progress and gaps in the implementation of the sustainable development agenda.

28. While insufficient and uneven, progress has been remarkable. Only two short decades ago, close to 40 per cent of the population of the developing world lived in extreme poverty, and the notion of poverty eradication seemed inconceivable. Following profound and consistent gains, we now know that extreme poverty can be eradicated within one more generation. The Millennium Development Goals have greatly contributed to this progress, and have taught us how Governments, business and civil society can work together to achieve transformational breakthroughs.

29. We have witnessed significant progress in several least developed countries over the past two decades. During the same period, middle-income countries have become new engines of global growth, lifting many of their own citizens out of poverty and creating a sizeable middle class. Some countries have shown real progress in reducing inequalities. Others have attained universal health coverage. Still others have evolved into some of the world's most advanced and digitally connected societies. Wages have increased, social protection has been expanded, green technologies have taken root and educational standards have advanced. Several countries have emerged from conflict and made steady gains on the road to reconstruction, peace and development. These wide-ranging experiences demonstrate that vulnerability and exclusion can be overcome, and what is possible in the years ahead.

30. New demographic trends are changing our world. We are already a global family of 7 billion people, and we are likely to reach 9 billion by 2050. We are an ageing world, as people live longer and healthier lives. We are increasingly an urban world, with more than half the world's population living in towns and cities. And we are a mobile world, with more than 232 million international migrants, and almost 1 billion when internal migrants are counted. These trends will have direct impacts on our goals and present both challenges and opportunities.

31. We see how new technologies can open up more sustainable approaches and more efficient practices. We know that the public sector can raise significantly more revenue by reforming tax systems, fighting tax evasion, correcting inequities and combating corruption. We know that there is an enormous amount of untapped and wasted resources that can be directed to sustainable development. We know that forward-looking companies are taking the lead by transforming their business models for sustainable development, and that we have only scratched the surface of the potential for ethics-driven investment by the private sector. With the right incentives, policies, regulations and monitoring, great opportunities may present themselves. We know that a data revolution is unfolding, allowing us to see more clearly than ever where we are and where we need to go, and to ensure that everyone is counted in. We know that creative initiatives across the world are pioneering new models of sustainable production and consumption that can be replicated. We know that governance at both the national and international levels can be reformed to more efficiently serve twenty-first century realities. And we know that today our world is host to the first truly globalized, interconnected and highly mobilized civil society, ready and able to serve as a participant, joint steward and powerful engine of change and transformation.

32. We have already begun to steer our course towards transformation.

33. The discussion on the post-2015 sustainable development agenda has stressed the importance of the specific conditions in each country, an advance in perspective from the Millennium Development Goals framework. Special attention was required for the most vulnerable, in particular African countries, the least developed countries, the landlocked developing countries and the small island developing States. Particular attention should also be given to the challenges faced by middle-income countries and countries in situations of fragility and conflict.

34. Member States have emphasized that sustainable development must be inclusive and people-centred. They have underscored the importance of ecosystems to people's livelihoods — to their economic, social, physical and mental well-being and their cultural heritage — of “Mother Earth” as it is known in many traditions.

35. Member States have also underscored the need to improve measures of progress, such as gross domestic product (GDP), in order to better inform policy decisions. While acknowledging the natural and cultural diversity of the world, they have also recognized that all cultures and civilizations can contribute to sustainable development. Finally, they have called for holistic and integrated approaches to sustainable development that will guide humanity to live in harmony with the planet's fragile ecosystems.

B. What we have learned from the discussion of the post-2015 sustainable development agenda

36. The international community has come a long way in its deliberations on the sustainable development agenda. In July 2013, further to a request by the General Assembly, I submitted my report *A life of dignity for all* (A/68/202 and Corr.1). In it, I recommended the development of a universal, integrated and human rights-based agenda for sustainable development, addressing economic growth, social justice and environmental stewardship and highlighting the link between peace, development and human rights — an agenda that leaves no one behind. I also called for rigorous review and monitoring, better and more disaggregated data and goals and targets that are measurable and adaptable. I outlined a number of transformative actions that would apply to all countries.²

37. Many voices have informed this debate, and there have been valuable inputs from a wide range of stakeholders:

(a) People around the world aired their views through the unprecedented consultations and outreach efforts of organized civil society groups, as well as through the global conversation led by the United Nations Development Group on “A Million Voices: The World We Want”, “Delivering the Post-2015 Agenda: Opportunities at the National and Local Levels”, and the “MY World” survey. Millions of people, especially young persons, took part in these processes, through national, thematic and online consultations and surveys, as mirrored in the “Global Youth Call” and the outcome of the sixty-fifth annual United Nations Department of Public Information/Non-governmental Organizations Conference. The direct and active engagement of parliamentarians, business and civil society has also been critical;

² A/68/202 and Corr.1, sect. III.A.

(b) The leaders of the High-level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda called for five “transformative shifts”: (i) leave no one behind; (ii) put sustainable development at the core; (iii) transform economies for jobs and inclusive growth; (iv) build peace and effective, open and accountable public institutions; and (v) forge a new global partnership;

(c) The academics and scientists convened through the Sustainable Development Solutions Network recommended the adoption of a science-based and action-oriented agenda, integrating four interdependent dimensions of sustainable development (economic, social, environmental and governance);

(d) The key role of business in the post-2015 sustainable development agenda was distilled in the report of the United Nations Global Compact. Companies are ready to change how they do business and to contribute by transforming markets from within and making production, consumption and the allocation of capital more inclusive and sustainable;

(e) The reports of the regional commissions highlighted the importance of regional efforts in adapting globally agreed goals and policy priorities to nationally specific realities;

(f) The experiences and expertise of the United Nations system were set out in the report of the United Nations system task team on the post-2015 development agenda and the work of the technical support team;

(g) At the principal level, leadership and guidance was received through the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB);

(h) The members of the High-level Panel on Global Sustainability recommended a sustainable path to enhance human well-being, further global justice, strengthen gender equality and preserve the Earth’s life-support systems for future generations.

38. Throughout 2014, Member States exchanged views and consolidated their ideas through the work of existing United Nations development entities. The Economic and Social Council and its functional and regional commissions, committees and expert bodies have identified the potential elements of the post-2015 review and monitoring framework and explored how to adapt the United Nations development system and its operational activities to respond to changes in the development landscape. The Development Cooperation Forum provided useful policy space for stakeholders to discuss the implications of a unified and universal agenda, the global partnership, modalities for more effective review and monitoring and concrete actions by development cooperation partners from the global South on common challenges. The high-level political forum on sustainable development has, from its inaugural session in 2013, turned its attention to the post-2015 sustainable development agenda, with leaders calling for a coherent approach and noting the important role that it can play in reviewing and monitoring.

39. At the close of 2014, we note positively the completion of the intergovernmental processes established by the Rio+20 Conference.

40. In a series of structured dialogues on technology in the General Assembly,³ possible arrangements were considered for a facilitation mechanism to promote the development, transfer and dissemination of clean and environmentally sound technologies.

41. The Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing delivered its report on options for an effective sustainable development financing strategy in August 2014.⁴ The Committee proposed a basket of more than 100 options for policymakers, together with recommendations for a global partnership that encompasses key aspects of aid, trade, debt, taxation and financial market stability. It recommended individual, country-owned financing strategies, rooted in enabling national policy environments and complemented by a reformed international enabling environment. It recognized that all sources of financing would need to be employed, public and private, national and international.

42. Throughout 2014, the President of the General Assembly convened a series of valuable gatherings. These included three high-level events on the contributions of women, youth and civil society, on human rights and the rule of law and on the contributions of North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation and information and communications technology for development. Three thematic debates were held on the role of partnerships, on ensuring stable and peaceful societies and on water, sanitation and sustainable energy. These were followed by a dialogue on accountability in the General Assembly and in each region under the auspices of the respective United Nations regional commission. In September of 2014, the President convened a high-level stocktaking event on the post-2015 development agenda.

43. Importantly, the Open Working Group of the General Assembly on Sustainable Development Goals delivered the results of its historic deliberations in July 2014,⁵ providing a narrative grounded in the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, emphasizing poverty eradication, environmental sustainability, inclusive growth, equality and a people-centred agenda for sustainable development.

44. Following more than a year of inclusive and intensive consultative deliberations, the Open Working Group proposed 17 specific goals with 169 associated targets,⁶ which it described as action-oriented, global in nature and universally applicable, taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development. It sought to combine aspirational global targets, with country-specific targets to be set nationally.

45. In addition to reinforcing the commitment to the unfinished Millennium Development Goals, the sustainable development goals break new ground with goals on inequalities, economic growth, decent jobs, cities and human settlements, industrialization, energy, climate change, sustainable consumption and production, peace, justice and institutions. The environmental dimension is articulated across the whole sustainable development agenda. The sustainable development goals are underpinned with a goal on global partnerships for the means of implementation.

³ See [A/69/554](#).

⁴ [A/69/315](#).

⁵ [A/68/970](#) and Corr.1, annex.

⁶ *Ibid.*, para. 18.

46. Mechanisms to review the implementation of the goals will be needed, and the availability of and access to data would need to be improved, including the disaggregation of information by gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant to national contexts.

47. Finally, in its recent report, “A World That Counts”, my Independent Expert Advisory Group on the Data Revolution for Sustainable Development called for the closing of key data gaps between developed and developing countries, between information-rich and information-poor people and between the private and public sectors. It underscored the importance of increasing access to quality data, remedying inequalities in the areas of access to information and data literacy, promoting civic space and enhancing the sharing of data and information. It also called for the strengthening of national institutions to provide capacities for statistics and the interface with new technologies.

C. Shared ambitions for a shared future

48. Across all of these contributions and milestones, a common understanding has emerged that there must be a universal agenda. Humankind faces the same global challenges, and today’s problems transcend borders — even in the richest countries there can be destitution and exclusion. Universality implies that all countries will need to change, each with its own approach, but each with a sense of the global common good. Universality is the core attribute of human rights and intergenerational justice. It compels us to think in terms of shared responsibilities for a shared future. It demands policy coherence. Universality embodies a new global partnership for sustainable development in the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations.

49. All voices have called for a people-centred and planet-sensitive agenda to ensure human dignity, equality, environmental stewardship, healthy economies, freedom from want and fear and a renewed global partnership for sustainable development. Tackling climate change and fostering sustainable development agendas are two mutually reinforcing sides of the same coin. To achieve these ends, all have called for a transformational and universal post-2015 sustainable development agenda, buttressed by science and evidence and built on the principles of human rights and the rule of law, equality and sustainability.

50. All contributions emphasized that we should continue the march to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, but they also stressed that Member States will need to fill key sustainable development gaps left by the Goals, such as the multidimensional aspects of poverty, decent work for young people, social protection and labour rights for all. They have asked for inclusive and sustainable cities, infrastructure and industrialization. They have called for strengthening effective, accountable, participatory and inclusive governance; for free expression, information, and association; for fair justice systems; and for peaceful societies and personal security for all.

51. All voices have demanded that we leave no one behind, ensuring equality, non-discrimination, equity and inclusion at all levels. We must pay special attention to the people, groups and countries most in need. This is the century of women: we will not realize our full potential if half of humanity continues to be held back. We

need to include the poor, children, adolescents, youth and the aged, as well as the unemployed, rural populations, slum dwellers, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, migrants, refugees and displaced persons, vulnerable groups and minorities. These also include those affected by climate change, those living in the least developed countries, landlocked countries, small island developing States, middle-income countries, conflict countries or in areas under occupation, in places struck by complex medical and humanitarian emergencies or in situations affected by terrorism. People have called for an end to all forms of gender inequality, gender-based discrimination and violence against women and against children and young boys and girls.

52. The public discourse has underscored the call for the urgent need to recognize and address the trust deficit between Governments, institutions and the people. Providing an enabling environment to build inclusive and peaceful societies, ensure social cohesion and respect for the rule of law will require rebuilding institutions at the country level to ensure that the gains from peace are not reversed.

53. All parties want action to address climate change, to accelerate the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and to keep the rise in global average temperature below 2 degrees Celsius on the basis of equity for present and future generations and in accordance with common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities. All also want to preserve our oceans, marine resources, terrestrial ecosystems and forests.

54. All participants call for meaningful transformations of our economies. They call for making our patterns of growth more inclusive, sustained and sustainable. People want decent jobs, social protection, robust agricultural systems and rural prosperity, sustainable cities, inclusive and sustainable industrialization, resilient infrastructure and sustainable energy for all. These transformations will also help tackle climate change. We have also heard strong calls to reform international trade, ensure effective regulation of markets and financial actors and to take vigorous action to fight corruption, curb illicit financial flows, combat money-laundering and tax evasion and recover stolen and hidden assets.

55. All inputs have underscored the need to integrate economic, social and environmental dimensions across the new agenda. To make this happen, they want norm-based policy coherence at all levels, corresponding reform of global governance mechanisms and a renewed effective global partnership for sustainable development. These, they tell us, should be based on solidarity, cooperation, mutual accountability and the participation of Governments and all stakeholders.

56. All voices have asked for a rigorous and participatory review and monitoring framework to hold Governments, businesses and international organizations accountable to the people for results, and to ensure that no harm is done to the planet. And they have called for a data revolution to make information and data more available, more accessible and more broadly disaggregated, as well as for measurable goals and targets and a participatory mechanism to review implementation at the national, regional and global levels.

III. Framing the new agenda

“Overcoming poverty is not a task of charity, it is an act of justice. Like slavery and apartheid, poverty is not natural. It is man-made and it can be overcome and eradicated by the actions of human beings. Sometimes it falls on a generation to be great. You can be that generation. Let your greatness bloom.”

Nelson Mandela

A. Setting the stage

57. At this moment, a truly universal and transformational course is being set. From the 2010 Summit on the Millennium Development Goals, to Rio+20 and the report of the Open Working Group of the General Assembly on Sustainable Development Goals⁵ a remarkably consistent vision has emerged.

58. Because human dignity and planetary sustainability cannot be reduced to a simple formula, because their constituent elements are so interdependent and because sustainable development is a complex phenomenon, the proposal by the Open Working Group of such a far-reaching set of goals and targets is to be welcomed as a remarkable step forward in the international community’s quest for effective solutions to an increasingly complex global agenda.

59. As Secretary-General of the United Nations, I therefore welcome the outcome produced by the Open Working Group (see table 1). I congratulate the leadership and all who participated in its groundbreaking work. I take positive note of the decision of the General Assembly that the proposal of the Working Group be the main basis for the post-2015 intergovernmental process.

60. In the coming months, the Member States of the United Nations will negotiate the final parameters of the post-2015 sustainable development agenda. That agenda should include a compelling and principled narrative, building on the outcomes of the major global conferences, including the Millennium Summit, the outcome of the 2005 World Summit, the 2010 Summit on the Millennium Development Goals, the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and the voices of the people as conveyed in the post-2015 process. The agenda should also call for full consistency with current political commitments and existing obligations under international law. It should include concrete goals, together with measurable and achievable targets. This should demonstrate the important interrelationship between the goals and targets. Importantly, it must respond to the capacity challenges of countries with varying capabilities and weaker institutions. Countries must not be overly burdened by an agenda that creates additional challenges rather than alleviating burdens. The agenda will require serious commitments for financing and other means of implementation, including those to be agreed upon at the third International Conference on Financing for Development in Addis Ababa in July 2015 and at the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Paris in December 2015. And it should include strong, inclusive public mechanisms at all levels for reporting, monitoring progress, learning lessons and ensuring mutual accountability.

Table 1

Sustainable development goals

Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere

Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

Goal 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

Goal 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries

Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts*

Goal 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

Goal 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

* Acknowledging that the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is the primary international, intergovernmental forum for negotiating the global response to climate change.

Source: A/68/970 and Corr.1.

61. Success will equally depend on the power of the new agenda to inspire and mobilize essential actors, new partnerships, key constituencies and the broader global citizenry. For this, we will need an agenda that resonates with the experiences and needs of people, that can be understood and embraced. The agenda and goals should also be received at the country level in a way that will ensure the transition of the Millennium Development Goals to the broader and more transformative sustainable development agenda, effectively becoming an integral part of national and regional visions and plans.

62. In this regard, we must recall and take note of the mandate given to the General Assembly by the Member States at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, at which they declared that the:

“Sustainable development goals should be action-oriented, concise and easy to communicate, limited in number, aspirational, global in nature and universally applicable to all countries, while taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities”

(Resolution 66/288, annex, para. 247).

63. Member States have agreed that the agenda laid out by the Open Working Group will be the main basis for the post-2015 intergovernmental process. We now have the opportunity to frame the goals and targets in a way that reflects the ambition of a universal and transformative agenda. I note, in particular, the possibility of maintaining the 17 goals and rearranging them in a focused and concise manner that enables the necessary global awareness and implementation at the country level.

B. A transformational approach

64. I wish to propose an integrated set of six essential elements, which, taken together, aim to facilitate the deliberations of Member States ahead of the special summit on sustainable development in September 2015, and enable them to arrive at the concise and aspirational agenda mandated by the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

65. The essential elements underscore the urgency of a universal call to commit to a set of principles that, applied together, can bring about a truly universal transformation of sustainable development. Thus, as we implement the new agenda, we must:

- Commit to a universal approach, including solutions that address all countries and all groups;
- Integrate sustainability into all activities, mindful of economic, environmental and social impacts;
- Address inequalities in all areas, agreeing that no goal or target should be considered met unless it is met for all social and economic groups;
- Ensure that all actions respect and advance human rights, in full coherence with international standards;

- Address the drivers of climate change and its consequences;
- Base our analysis on credible data and evidence, enhancing data capacity, availability, disaggregation, literacy and sharing;
- Expand our global partnership for means of implementation to maximum effect and full participation, including multi-stakeholder, issue-based coalitions;
- Anchor the new compact in a renewed commitment to international solidarity, commensurate with the ability of each country to contribute.

C. Six essential elements for delivering on the sustainable development goals

66. The following six essential elements would help frame and reinforce the universal, integrated and transformative nature of a sustainable development agenda and ensure that the ambition expressed by Member States in the report of the Open Working Group translates, communicates and is delivered at the country level (see figure I).

Figure I

Six essential elements for delivering the sustainable development goals



Dignity: to end poverty and fight inequalities

67. Eradicating poverty by 2030 is the overarching objective of the sustainable development agenda. We live in a world of plenty, and at a moment of enormous scientific promise. And yet, for hundreds and hundreds of millions across the globe, this is also an age of gnawing deprivation. The defining challenge of our time is to close the gap between our determination to ensure a life of dignity for all, and the reality of persisting poverty and deepening inequality.

68. While we have made important progress in recent years, addressing gender inequality and realizing women's empowerment and rights remain a key challenge in all regions of the world. It should by now be recognized that no society can reach its full potential if whole segments of that society, especially young people, are excluded from participating in, contributing to and benefiting from development. Other dimensions of inequality persist, and in some cases have worsened. Income inequality specifically is one of the most visible aspects of a broader and more complex issue, one that entails inequality of opportunity. This is a universal challenge that the whole world must address. The agenda must accommodate the voices of women and the views of youth and minorities, seek the free, prior and informed consent of indigenous peoples, remove obstacles to full participation by persons with disabilities, older persons, adolescents and youth and empower the poor. It must not exclude migrants, refugees, displaced persons or persons affected by conflict and occupation.

People: to ensure healthy lives, knowledge and the inclusion of women and children

69. Millions of people, especially women and children, have been left behind in the wake of unfinished work of the Millennium Development Goals. We must ensure that women and also youth and children have access to the full range of health services. We must ensure zero tolerance of violence against or exploitation of women and girls. Women and girls must have equal access to financial services and the right to own land and other assets. All children and adolescents have a right to education and must have a safe environment in which to learn. Human development also means respect for human rights.

70. The agenda must address universal health-care coverage, access and affordability; end preventable maternal, newborn and child deaths and malnutrition; ensure the availability of essential medicines; realize women's sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights; ensure immunization coverage; eradicate malaria and realize the vision of a future free of AIDS and tuberculosis; reduce the burden of non-communicable diseases, including mental illness, and of nervous system injuries and road accidents; and promote healthy behaviours, including those related to water, sanitation and hygiene.

71. Today, more than ever, the realities of 1.8 billion young people and adolescents represent a dynamic, informed and globally connected engine for change. Integrating their needs, rights to choice and their voices in the new agenda will be a key factor for success. It is essential that young people receive relevant skills and quality education and lifelong learning, from early childhood development to post-primary schooling, including life skills and vocational education and training, as well as science, sports and culture. Teachers must be

given the means to deliver learning and knowledge in response to a safe global workplace, driven by technology.

Prosperity: to grow a strong, inclusive and transformative economy

72. Economic growth should lead to shared prosperity. The strength of an economy must be measured by the degree to which it meets the needs of people, and by how sustainably and equitably it does so. We need inclusive growth, built on decent jobs, sustainable livelihoods and rising real incomes for all, measured in ways that go beyond GDP and account for human well-being, sustainability and equity. Ensuring that all people, including women, persons with disabilities, youth, the aged and migrants have decent employment, social protection and access to financial services, will be a hallmark of our economic success.

73. Innovation and investment in sustainable and resilient infrastructure, cities and human settlements, industrialization, small and medium-sized enterprises, energy and technology can both generate employment and remedy negative environmental trends. An enabled, properly regulated, responsible and profitable private sector is critical for employment, living wages, growth and revenues for public programmes. Transforming business models for creating shared value is vital for growing inclusive and sustainable economies.

74. The world's richness of natural resources also provides a formidable economic opportunity, if it is translated not only into GDP growth but into shared prosperity. Sustainable approaches to landscape management (including agriculture and forests), industrialization (including manufacturing and productive capacities), access to energy and water and sanitation are key drivers of sustainable production and consumption and job creation, as well as sustainable and equitable growth. They drive sustainable management of natural resources and tackle climate change.

Planet: to protect our ecosystems for all societies and our children

75. To respect our planetary boundaries we need to equitably address climate change, halt biodiversity loss and address desertification and unsustainable land use. We must protect wildlife, safeguard forests and mountains and reduce disaster risk and build resiliencies. We must protect our oceans, seas, rivers and atmosphere as our global heritage and achieve climate justice. We must promote sustainable agriculture, fisheries and food systems; foster sustainable management of water resources and of waste and chemicals; foster renewable and more efficient energy; decouple economic growth from environmental degradation; advance sustainable industrialization and resilient infrastructure; ensure sustainable consumption and production; and achieve sustainable management of marine and terrestrial ecosystems and land use.

76. Sustainable development is at risk as evidence proves that warming of the climate system is now undeniable and human activities are its primary cause. We must limit global temperature rise to below 2 degrees Celsius if we are to avoid the worst effects of climate change. Carbon dioxide is the largest contributor to human-induced climate change. Fossil fuels usage and deforestation are its two main sources. Increasing warming will have severe, pervasive and irreversible impacts more likely. The longer we wait to take action towards sustainable production and consumption, the more it will cost to solve the problem and the greater the technological challenges will be. Adaptation can reduce some risks and impacts of

climate change. Most urgently, we must adopt a meaningful, universal climate agreement by the end of 2015.

Justice: to promote safe and peaceful societies and strong institutions

77. Effective governance for sustainable development demands that public institutions in all countries and at all levels be inclusive, participatory and accountable to the people. Laws and institutions must protect human rights and fundamental freedoms. All must be free from fear and violence, without discrimination. We also know that participatory democracy and free, safe and peaceful societies are both enablers and outcomes of development.

78. Access to fair justice systems, accountable institutions of democratic governance, measures to combat corruption and curb illicit financial flows and safeguards to protect personal security are integral to sustainable development. An enabling environment under the rule of law must be secured for the free, active and meaningful engagement of civil society and of advocates, reflecting the voices of women, minorities, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender groups, indigenous peoples, youth, adolescents and older persons. Press freedom and access to information, freedom of expression, assembly and association are enablers of sustainable development. The practice of child, early and forced marriage must be ended everywhere. The rule of law must be strengthened at the national and international level to secure justice for all.

79. We need to rebuild and reintegrate societies better after crises and conflicts. We must address State fragility, support internally displaced persons and contribute to resilience of people and communities. Reconciliation, peacebuilding and State-building are critical for countries to overcome fragility and develop cohesive societies and strong institutions. These investments are essential to retaining the gains of development and avoiding reversals in the future.

Partnership: to catalyse global solidarity for sustainable development

80. A revitalized global partnership for sustainable development must be built on the foundations agreed upon in the Millennium Declaration, at the international financing for development process undertaken in Monterrey in 2002 and the sustainable development process initiated in Johannesburg in 2002. It must be effective in mobilizing the means and in creating the environment to implement our agenda. Mobilizing the support to implement the ambitious new agenda will require political will and action on all fronts, domestic and international, public and private, through aid and trade, regulation, taxation and investment.

81. Implementation is not just about quantity. It is also about doing things together, uniting around the problem. Inclusive partnerships must be a key feature of implementation at all levels: global, regional, national and local. We know the extent to which this can be transformative. The sustainable development goals provide a platform for aligning private action and public policies. Transformative partnerships are built upon principles and values, a shared vision and shared goals: placing people and the planet at the centre. They include the participation of all relevant stakeholders, in which mutual accountability is critical. This means principled and responsible public-private-people partnerships.

D. Integrating the six essential elements

82. Sustainable development must be an integrated agenda for economic, environmental and social solutions. Its strength lies in the interweaving of its dimensions. This integration provides the basis for economic models that benefit people and the environment; for environmental solutions that contribute to progress; for social approaches that add to economic dynamism and allow for the preservation and sustainable use of the environmental commons; and for reinforcing human rights, equality and sustainability. Responding to all goals as a cohesive and integrated whole will be critical to ensuring the transformations needed at scale.

83. The agenda itself mirrors the broader international human rights framework, including elements of economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights, as well as the right to development. Specific targets are set for disadvantaged groups. Indicators will need to be broadly disaggregated across all goals and targets.

84. The essential elements are further integrated by the application of the principle of universality. In addressing them to all countries and all peoples, we take account of environmental, economic and social interdependence, while also recognizing the realities of differentiated national needs and capacities.

85. Finally, the new framework provides a much-needed opportunity to integrate the broader United Nations agenda, with its inextricably linked and mutually interdependent peace and security, development and human rights objectives.

86. All of this will have important implications for the way that all partners pursue sustainable development, requiring transformations in approaches to leadership, policy coherence, strategy and collaboration. It will also have a beneficial unifying effect on the organization of work within the United Nations system at the global, regional and country levels.

IV. Mobilizing the means to implement our agenda

“Earth provides enough to satisfy every man’s needs, but not every man’s greed.”

Mahatma Gandhi

A. Financing our future

87. Sustainable development is a complex challenge, with urgent requirements, resulting in enormous financing needs. The means to finance the agreed-upon goals will not be found in one solution, nor borne by one set of actors. All financing streams need to be optimized towards sustainable development and coordinated for the greatest impact. An integrated sustainable development agenda demands an equally synergistic financial framework. Governments should work to better align the financing frameworks that developed out of the two major strands of development debate, the Monterrey and Rio processes. In addition, Governments should also be mindful of the need for coherence and alignment with climate-change financing (see figure II).

88. The global conversation on sustainable development finance is progressing. The Open Working Group has proposed a number of targets on means of

implementation. The Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing has presented policy options organized around different financing streams: domestic public, domestic private, international public, international private and blended finance.⁵ These streams address the public, private, national and international facets of the financing challenge to raise new and additional resources, reallocate existing ones and create a supportive enabling environment. The establishment of new institutions of South-South cooperation, such as the New Development Bank (BRICS Development Bank) and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, present new opportunities to finance investments in sustainable development.

89. I welcome the policy options presented by the Intergovernmental Committee and encourage countries to scale up ambition and enhance specificity to meet the demands of the new agenda. To these ends, as Member States prepare for the third International Conference on Financing for Development in Addis Ababa, it will fall to them to set an agreed and ambitious course for sustainable development financing beyond 2015.

Figure II

Flows of funds from international and national financing sources to sustainable development



Source: A/69/315.

* The size of boxes does not represent financing volumes/importance.

** There can be cases where international public finance also directly supports the implementation of international objectives.

*** Sovereign wealth funds handle public money, but are managed like private investors.

90. All public funds must positively impact the poorest and most vulnerable in all societies. Official development assistance (ODA) and other international public funds will continue to play a central and catalytic role, particularly in vulnerable countries, as will a strategic approach and systematic progress in utilization. Member States should honour their commitments in full and in a timely manner. ODA must both respond to the unfinished business of the Millennium Development Goals and address the transition to the new sustainable development agenda. In the current debate on modernizing ODA, it is necessary to underscore the importance of more effective and better targeted ODA funding that leverages other resources. This must include more focus on the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States and countries in vulnerable situations.

91. Responsibility for raising the domestic public revenues necessary for the core economic and social functions, for example to ensure a social protection floor and to remedy exclusion, rests primarily with each national Government. National laws and policies should dedicate adequate and timely resources to these purposes, while public institutions should act in the public interest. This includes environmentally and socially sound policies, the promotion of human rights, strong institutions and the rule of law. Domestic efforts need to be complemented, however, by a supportive international environment.

92. Urgent action is needed to mobilize, redirect and unlock the transformative power of trillions of dollars of private resources to deliver on sustainable development objectives. Long-term investments, including foreign direct investment, are needed in critical sectors, especially in developing countries. These include sustainable energy, infrastructure and transport, as well as information and communications technologies. The public sector will need to set a clear direction. Review and monitoring frameworks, regulations and incentive structures that enable such investments must be retooled to attract investments and reinforce sustainable development. National oversight mechanisms such as supreme audit institutions and oversight functions by legislatures should be strengthened.

93. Efforts to increase the effectiveness of development cooperation need to be enhanced based on basic principles of country ownership, focus on results, inclusive partnerships, transparency and accountability.

94. Long-term decarbonization of our economies, access to energy, water and food and sustainable agriculture, industry, infrastructure and transport will ultimately be achieved through the same investments at the project level. In addition, it will be important to consider that many of the investments to achieve the sustainable development goals will take place at the subnational level and be led by local authorities.

95. In addition, we must move, seriously and expeditiously, to correct the inequities that have long plagued the international system to the disadvantage of developing countries. We need a more equitable multilateral trading system, a conclusion of the Doha round and better access to technology, medicines and long-term investments for developing countries. We need a more fair representation of emerging and developing countries in international financial and economic decision-making, better regulation and more stability in the international financial and monetary systems and sustainable debt solutions. We must continue to remedy the policy incoherence between current modes of international governance in matters of trade, finance and investment on the

one hand, and our norms and standards for labour, the environment, human rights, equality and sustainability on the other.

96. As preparations for the third International Conference on Financing for Development in Addis Ababa in July 2015 get under way, there are high expectations for concrete outcomes that would finance sustainable development and set the stage for a successful outcome of the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Paris in December 2015.

97. I urge Member States to consider and agree in particular to the following recommendations.

98. All developed countries should meet the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national income (GNI) for ODA to developing countries and agree to concrete timetables to meet ODA commitments, including the Istanbul commitments to the least developed countries of 0.15 per cent of GNI by 2015. It is important to ensure that the proportion of ODA going to the least developed countries does not decline, but continues to increase, to be better targeted, more efficient and more transparent and to leverage additional resources. The smooth transition of countries graduating from least developed country status is vital in order to ensure that these countries are eased into a sustainable development path without any disruption to their development plans, programmes and projects. Provision should be made to increase funding to facilitate capacities to implement tax reforms, thus improving domestic resource mobilization. All other international commitments also need to be met.

99. Any effort to modernize ODA and measures of development finance should be considered in an open and transparent forum with the widest possible participation of donor and recipient countries and other relevant stakeholders.

100. Levels of concessionality should take into account different development stages, circumstances and multiple dimensions of poverty and the particular type of investment made.

101. All countries are encouraged to adopt their own national sustainable development financing strategies that take account of all financing flows, based on continuing dialogue among relevant government entities and other stakeholders. Such strategies should review and strengthen the domestic policy, the legal and institutional environment and the policy coherence for sustainable development. All financing flows, including climate finance, should build stronger country ownership and lead to greater use of country strategies and systems. In order to be effective, the component parts of sustainable development financing strategies must have associated investible pipelines. National visions and plans and annual budgets and medium-term expenditure frameworks should be aligned with national sustainable development strategies.

102. Fiscal and macroeconomic policies must include low carbon solutions for sustainable development and investment in adaptation and resilience. Carbon pricing, through different approaches, should be a key consideration. Harmful fossil fuel subsidies, both direct and indirect, should be phased out. Agricultural export subsidies should be removed.

103. **The regulatory frameworks, incentives and risk-return profiles that enable private investments and business models, as well as public procurement policies, must be aligned with the sustainable development goals.**

104. **All countries should consider adopting policies to encourage responsible and accountable investment of private financing in sustainable development, and requiring companies to undertake mandatory economic, environmental, social and governance reporting, accompanied with regulatory changes that ensure that investor incentives are aligned with the sustainable development goals.** Transition periods and technical support would be needed to this effect, especially for small and medium enterprises.

105. **We should work to ensure investment policies that are in line with the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, the core labour standards of the International Labour Organization and United Nations environmental standards. Such policies should also adequately balance investor preferences with the needs of the people in the countries in which they operate.**

106. **Policies are needed to stimulate and support entrepreneurship and to increase access to finance for small and medium-sized enterprises, including through the use of development banks and other financial intermediaries.**

107. **Countries should strive to provide universal access to financial services, emphasizing inclusive access across income, gender, geography, age and other groupings. Specific barriers to women's access to finance should be eliminated. Countries should expand financial literacy and establish strong consumer protection agencies.**

108. **Blended financing platforms could have a great potential, particularly where there is a benefit to the public sector.** Where they are considered, however, it is important to ensure that these arrangements are subject to safeguards in order to verify that they contribute to sustainable development. They must not replace or compromise State responsibilities for delivering on social needs. Such policies also need to ensure fair returns to the public, while incorporating social, environmental, labour, human rights, and gender equality considerations. In addition, risk should be managed through diversification and the use of multiple simultaneous projects, allowing for gains in some projects to offset losses in others.

109. **Member States may wish to call on the international financial institutions to consider establishing a process to examine the role, scale and functioning of multilateral and regional development finance institutions to make them more responsive to the sustainable development agenda.**

110. **While the additional commitments that have been made for climate finance should be honoured, the use of these and other financing flows should not lead to fragmentation but rather to coherence and strengthened cross-linkages within the pillars of sustainable development. An expert technical group should be tasked with developing and presenting to Member States a coherent framework that accounts for climate financing and ODA.**

111. **South-South cooperation and the significant efforts of solidarity by emerging economies is encouraging. More countries will need to commit to increasing their contribution to international public financing and set targets**

and timelines to do so. In turn, South-South technical assistance and the sharing of experiences through regional forums should be promoted.

112. I also strongly encourage countries to consider using innovative ways to raise additional resources to fund sustainable development at scale, drawing from a number of options, including various tax (for example, financial transaction taxes, carbon tax on airline ticket levies) and non-tax (for example, emission allowances) mechanisms.

113. We must strengthen international coordination of macroeconomic policies of major economies and the management of global liquidity and consider more systematic issuance of special drawing rights for continued assistance and counter-cyclical macroeconomic management.

114. We must vigorously implement comprehensive and adequate financial regulations in all countries, as the risk of another global financial crisis has not been sufficiently reduced. However, the design of regulations needs to take into account their impact on financial inclusion and incentives for investment in sustainable development.

115. Effectively addressing illicit flows is urgent. We need more vigorous implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption, as well as measures to overcome impediments to the return of stolen assets. Member States should consider measures to ensure information exchange, judicial cooperation and the establishment of an intergovernmental committee on tax cooperation, under the auspices of the United Nations.

116. Let us also enhance international efforts to strengthen arrangements for transparent, orderly and participatory sovereign debt restructuring. As an immediate step, let us bring together relevant authorities and other stakeholders to develop an informal forum on sovereign debt, while continuing ongoing discussions.

117. Efforts should be intensified to reduce costs on the transfer of remittances in a manner fully respecting the rights of migrants. I welcome the commitment of the countries of the Group of 20 to reduce the global average cost of transferring remittances to 5 per cent.

B. Technology, science and innovation for a sustainable future

118. We live in a period of unprecedented technological innovation and change. New technologies are unlocking possibilities for sustainable development. The solutions that they can generate, and the levels of access that they can enable, will be crucial to our vision for the world beyond 2015.

119. However, access to vital and environmentally sound technologies is today unevenly spread, both within and between countries, with the poor and many developing countries essentially locked out. Large amounts of public resources are allocated to military budgets, while comparatively less is spent on research and development for public goods. Public funding often subsidizes private sector research, at times leading to the public being priced out of the benefits through disadvantageous licensing and patents. This also leads to frequent subsidies for innovations that are not aligned with promoting sustainable consumption and

production patterns. Furthermore, we have a long way to go to reach the necessary level of participation of women and girls in science, technology (including information and communications technology), engineering and mathematics for the world of the twenty-first century.

120. A sustainable future will require that we act now to phase out unsustainable technologies and to invest in innovation and in the development of clean and sound technologies for sustainable development. We must ensure that they are fairly priced, broadly disseminated and fairly absorbed, including to and by developing countries.

121. Developing countries, and the least developed countries in particular, will need the support that will allow them to benefit from enhanced access to these technologies and, ultimately, to expand domestic innovation and the development of their own technological solutions.

122. Historically, significant technological advances have often resulted from multi-stakeholder, solution-driven initiatives. Achieving our sustainable development goals will also require solution-driven technology partnerships among a variety of actors.

123. We must establish effective modalities for multi-stakeholder cooperation and sharing of the costs for the research, development, demonstration, and diffusion of new technologies: public, private, civil society, philanthropic and other sectors, inclusive of indigenous knowledge. We must move to prepare concrete initiatives, including those leveraging technology, ready to launch at the commencement of the new sustainable development agenda and set bold technological goals and resource mobilization targets. And we must facilitate access to the benefits of technology for all, including the poorest, while ensuring that the intellectual property regime creates the right incentives for the technological innovation needed for sustainable development. Such urgency is particularly great in the case of low-carbon technologies, as part of our efforts to mitigate human-induced climate change.

124. There are a number of ongoing international initiatives aimed at accelerating the development, diffusion and transfer of appropriate, especially environmentally sound, technologies. Thus far, however, ambition has not matched the challenges at hand.

125. Having taken into account the recommendations of the structured dialogues of the General Assembly, I propose to establish an online, global platform, building on and complementing existing initiatives, with the participation of all relevant stakeholders, in order to: (a) map existing technology facilitation initiatives, needs and gaps, including in areas vital for sustainable development, including agriculture, cities and health; (b) enhance international cooperation and coordination in this field, addressing fragmentation and facilitating synergies, including within the United Nations system; and (c) promote networking, information sharing, knowledge transfer and technical assistance, in order to advance the scaling up of clean technology initiatives.

126. At the same time, I call upon all Member States to: (a) urgently finalize arrangements for the establishment of the proposed technology bank and science, technology and innovation supporting mechanism dedicated to the least developed countries; (b) significantly scale up cooperation for the sharing of technologies, strengthening knowledge and capacity-building for usage, and innovation capacities, including information and communications technologies; (c) make the adjustments necessary in the national and international policy

frameworks to facilitate these actions; (d) make substantial progress in the development, transfer and dissemination of such technologies and knowledge to developing countries on favourable, concessional and preferential terms; (e) ensure that our global intellectual property regimes and the application of the flexibilities of the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) are fully consistent with and contribute to the goals of sustainable development; (f) make specific commitments to shifting public resources away from harmful technologies and towards the sustainable development goals; and (g) promote the acceleration of the innovation-to-market-to-public-good cycle of clean and environmentally sound technologies.

C. Investing in capacities for sustainable development

127. To achieve our goals, countries need to integrate them into national planning, policy, budgets, law and institutions. They will require integrated institutions that are effective, and human resources equipped with the skills and capacities to deliver sustainable development. Governments, in consultation with all stakeholders, and, consistent with national priorities, will need to review national strategies and policies to support progress towards the goals.

128. These strategies will also have to be reviewed and implemented at the local level, with the full engagement of local authorities. In many instances, subnational and local authorities, including mayors, are already leading the charge for sustainable development. Institutional and human capacities will, in many cases, need to be strengthened for effective implementation and monitoring. This includes bolstering capacities to assess needs, collect data and formulate responses across sectors and institutions.

129. Executive institutions, parliaments and the judiciary will need the capacity to perform their functions in this endeavour. In addition, institutions of civil society must have the capacity to carry out their critical, independent roles.

130. Developing countries will need support for capacity-building. The least developed countries and post-conflict countries will have particularly urgent needs. For this, the United Nations is working to revitalize and improve its role in capacity development.⁷ Here too, ambition will need to be scaled up, especially in the immediate term, not only by the United Nations, but by all partners in the process.

131. As we seek to build capacities and to help the new agenda to take root, volunteerism can be another powerful and cross-cutting means of implementation. Volunteerism can help to expand and mobilize constituencies and to engage people in national planning and implementation for sustainable development goals. And volunteer groups can help to localize the new agenda by providing new areas of interaction between Governments and people for concrete and scalable actions.

132. Finally, we must also mobilize the power of culture in the transformative change we seek. Our world is a remarkable mosaic of diverse cultures, informing our evolving understanding of sustainable development. We still have much to learn from global cultures as we build the world we want. If we are to succeed, the new

⁷ See quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (see, most recently, [A/67/93-E/2012/79](#)).

agenda cannot remain the exclusive domain of institutions and Governments. It must be embraced by people. Culture, in different aspects, will thus be an important force in supporting the new agenda.

V. Delivering our agenda: a shared responsibility

“Development requires the removal of major sources of unfreedom: poverty as well as tyranny, poor economic opportunities as well as systematic social deprivation, neglect of public facilities as well as intolerance and overactivity of repressive states.”

Amartya Sen

A. Measuring the new dynamics

133. Progress in sustainable development will depend on vibrant economies and inclusive growth in order to keep pace with growing populations and longer life expectancies and to generate employment, wages and revenues for social programmes. But for making our economies inclusive and sustainable, our understanding of economic performance, and our metrics for gauging it, must be broader, deeper and more precise.

134. We need to reconsider how to account for sustainable production and consumption patterns in national accounting. Measures that do not distinguish between socially and environmentally harmful activities on the one hand, and social goods on the other, that do not account for equity and the distribution of costs and benefits and do not consider impacts on future generations will not help us to navigate to a sustainable future.

135. Member States have recognized the importance of building on existing initiatives to develop measurements of progress on sustainable development that go beyond gross domestic product. Thus, work on developing alternative measures of progress, beyond GDP, must receive the dedicated attention of the United Nations, international financial institutions, the scientific community and public institutions. These metrics must be squarely focused on measuring social progress, human well-being, justice, security, equality and sustainability. Poverty measures should reflect the multidimensional nature of poverty. New measures of subjective well-being are potentially important new tools for policymaking.

136. To realize the sustainable development agenda, we also need measurable targets and technically rigorous indicators. Here too, Member States have advanced the process significantly by proposing an array of targets, which bring a strong integrating effect and go a long way in defining the substance of what we need to achieve. However, while many remain robust and responsive to the goals, others better serve the ongoing work of developing indicators for the agenda. A few of the targets are less ambitious than those already agreed upon, and some would be better placed where commitments to policy change can be ensured.

137. What is needed now is a technical review to ensure that each goal is framed in language that is specific, measurable, achievable and consistent with existing United Nations standards and agreements, while preserving the important political balance that they represent. To these ends, the technical experts of the United Nations system

are available to review the targets, including on the means of implementation, and to compare and align the level of ambition represented by each to that of existing international targets, commitments, standards and agreements, thus strengthening the overall framework of the goals. This will also contribute to coherence in the discussion on financing for development.

138. In addition, where a proposed target is stated in measurable terms, but no quantitative target has been specified, Member States may wish to seek the input of the United Nations system, in consultation with its partners in academia and the scientific community, concerning evidence for attaching specific global target levels.

139. A set of applicable indicators will also need to be identified to allow us to collect, compare and analyse reliable data, and to do so at the adequate level of disaggregation, as of 2016. For this purpose, Member States may decide to task the United Nations system, in consultation with other relevant experts and through a multi-stakeholder dialogue, to develop a draft set of indicators.

B. Lighting the way: the role of data in the new agenda

140. We seek an evidence-based course for realizing sustainable development, and we must face the complex challenges this presents and respond to the varying realities and capabilities in each country.

141. As indicated in the report of my Independent Expert Advisory Group on the Data Revolution for Sustainable Development, the world must acquire a new “data literacy” in order to be equipped with the tools, methodologies, capacities and information necessary to shine a light on the challenges of responding to the new agenda. Enhanced national and international statistical capacities, rigorous indicators, reliable and timely data sets, new and non-traditional data sources and broader and systematic disaggregation to reveal inequities will all be fundamental for implementing it.

142. In all of this, we must maximize our commitment to public transparency, information sharing, participatory monitoring and open data, while never compromising on the obligation to protect the right to privacy. And we must significantly scale up support to countries and national statistical offices with critical needs for capacities to produce, collect, disaggregate, analyse and share the data crucial to the new agenda.

143. To these ends, I recommend that, under the auspices of the Statistical Commission of the United Nations, a comprehensive programme of action on data be established. This includes the building of a global consensus, applicable principles and standards for data, a web of data innovation networks to advance innovation and analysis, a new innovative financing stream to support national data capacities and a global data partnership to promote leadership and governance.

144. Specifically, we will carry out, in close cooperation with country experts, an in-depth analysis of the existing data and information gaps, and thus determine the scale of the investments needed to establish a modern monitoring system for the achievement of the sustainable development goals. We will catalyse a multi-stakeholder global partnership for sustainable development data to mobilize and coordinate the actions required to make the data revolution serve sustainable

development, promoting initiatives such as the holding of inclusive world forums on sustainable development data.

C. Gauging our progress: monitoring, evaluation and reporting

145. If we are to succeed, the new agenda must become part of the contract between people, including civil society and responsible business and their Governments — national and local. Parliaments must be strengthened to deepen democracy and carry out their constitutional mandates of oversight. All companies must pay their taxes, respect labour standards, human rights and the environment. Empowered civil society actors, through action and advocacy, must rally to the cause and contribute to a sustainable, equitable and prosperous future.

146. We must now embrace a culture of shared responsibility, one based on agreed universal norms, global commitments, shared rules and evidence, collective action and benchmarking for progress. The new paradigm of accountability that we seek is not one of conditionality, neither North to South, nor South to North, but rather one of all actors — Governments, international institutions, private sector actors and organizations of civil society — and in all countries, the people themselves. This is the real test of people-centred, planet-sensitive development.

147. Such a model can only be built on national ownership, broad participation and full transparency. To be effective, it must be aligned with the post-2015 sustainable development agenda and its new goals. To be efficient, it must be streamlined and employ existing mechanisms and processes. To be evidence-based, it must be grounded in the data revolution, and on the indicators and data that emerge therefrom. To be truly universal, it must apply to all actors — in both the public and the private sectors, at both the national and international levels. It must include opportunities for mutual review, and for mutual support at the regional and global levels.

148. In recent months, participants in United Nations consultations have emphasized the need for a voluntary, State-led, participatory, evidence-based and multitiered process to monitor progress.

149. Thus, a universal review process constructed on these principles could be initiated at the national level, which would inform the national, regional and global level reviews. At all levels, review discussions should be public, participatory, broadly accessible and based on facts, data, scientific findings and evidence-based evaluations. The principal components might include:

(a) **A country-led, national component for accountability:** in the overall review process, this national segment, as that closest to the people, should be the most significant. It would be built on existing national and local mechanisms and processes, with broad, multi-stakeholder participation, including the presentation of national and local governments, parliaments, civil society, science, academia and business. It would establish benchmarks, review the national policy framework, chart progress, learn lessons, consider solutions, follow up and report thereon. To that end, a Government report, a national stakeholder report, with contributions from national non-governmental actors, and a report compiling existing information and data from United Nations agencies and international financial institutions, all based upon globally harmonized formats, would constitute the main written inputs on individual country progress;

(b) **A regional component for peer reviewing, tailored to regional and subregional needs, undertaken by existing mechanisms in a participatory, multi-stakeholder process, to consider national reports, identify regional trends, obstacles, commonalities, best practices and lessons learned and to generate solutions and mutual support and solutions:** regional reviews would incorporate and build on the experiences and successes of mechanisms such as the regional economic commissions, the Africa Peer Review Mechanism process, the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development, the Economic Commission for Europe environmental performance reviews and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development/Development Assistance Committee peer reviews;

(c) **A global component for knowledge-sharing, as a forum for participatory, multi-stakeholder and, importantly, universal review, starting at the launch of the new agenda:** this would be convened annually under the auspices of the high-level political forum on sustainable development. It would provide a periodic occasion for individual countries to voluntarily present national reviews of progress, to discuss lessons learned in each country's implementation of the agenda and the opportunity to review both short-term outputs and long-term outcomes related to attaining the goals. Member States should consider multi-annual reviews under the political forum in a five-year cycle;

(d) **A thematic component to chart global progress at regular intervals on the sustainable development framework to help to identify challenges and bottlenecks and to mobilize action to address them:** while such thematic reviews could be carried out under the auspices of the high-level political forum, they would rely on relevant coordination and review "platforms". These could include existing specialized or functional commissions, councils or committees that convene United Nations and other multilateral entities, relevant treaty body reviews and outcomes, as well as Member States, partners from civil society, science, academia and the private sector that could monitor and advance each respective thematic area. Existing partnerships could also be linked to such platforms in order to ensure efficient and effective action and accountability. To support and complement the process, and to ensure continuous gauging of progress, the United Nations would provide annual global thematic reports, aggregating available data, together with the global sustainable development report mandated by Rio+20;

(e) **A component to review the global partnership for sustainable development:** the essential element of partnership and its mobilization of the means necessary for implementation must also be kept under active review. As they prepare for the third Conference on Financing for Development in Addis Ababa, Member States should seize the opportunity to consider how existing structures and processes can help review and strengthen the global partnership for sustainable development, including the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation. An important additional role for the review process under this component will be to address the respective conference tracks targeting the special conditions and needs of the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States.

150. The current structure of our intergovernmental bodies can accommodate the universal review process described above. The establishment of the high-level political forum, which meets under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly, as well as the United Nations Environment Assembly,

were important institutional innovations emerging from Rio+20. And the reform of the Council has been another important step forward.

D. Making the United Nations fit for transformation

151. This new, universal sustainable development agenda requires an international community that is “fit for purpose” to support countries in their implementation of a new generation of sustainable development goals. All who would be engaged in its implementation will need to embrace its new parameters and its transformative elements. The United Nations is no exception, given its role in leading and shaping the sustainable development agenda to 2030.

152. A United Nations system that is “fit for purpose” to deliver on the post-2015 sustainable development agenda is one that must be relevant, innovative, agile, inclusive, coordinated and results-oriented. It must be guided by universal human rights and international norms, integrate the United Nations normative frameworks with its operational activities and be responsive to the differentiated needs of countries. It must provide specialized advice when requested, and be equally adept at ensuring an integrated approach, working across disciplines with relevant skill sets to better support Member States in addressing complex multisectoral challenges. The system must forge effective partnerships to leverage the expertise, capacities and resources of external partners. Such a system requires shared goals, visionary and committed leadership and a global, highly skilled and adaptable international civil service. And it must reach the highest standards of accountability, transparency and impact.

153. In doing so, the United Nations system is committed to working more collaboratively to leverage the expertise and capacities of all its organizations in support of sustainable development. At the country level, United Nations country teams will provide coherent support to national stakeholders to implement their new post-2015 development strategies, while accelerating implementation of the standard operating procedures for “delivering as one” in order to achieve greater results for sustainable development. Emphasis will also be placed on using data and evidence more effectively and transparently and developing greater analytical capacity for addressing inequalities, risks and vulnerability. The United Nations system will continue to pursue the development of more innovative and integrated business models and the implementation of modern operational practices to gain efficiencies and enhanced impact.

154. Ongoing efforts will also be deepened to ensure that a high-performing, mobile and diverse workforce is in place to support the new post-2015 sustainable development agenda. It must be able to leverage the respective expertise and specializations of United Nations agencies and to work across disciplines and functions to better address complex multisectoral challenges. An independent, highly skilled, engaged international civil service that can meet the ever-changing needs of the international community is our major comparative advantage. We will invest in attracting, retaining and deploying high-performing staff across locations, mandates and business models.

155. Critically, for the United Nations to be more “fit for purpose”, Member States must also be more coherent in their support, in particular as it relates to governance and funding of the United Nations system. Sustained development financing for

longer-term support, which enables pooling of resources and brings together development and humanitarian financing, will be critical, as will more coherent United Nations funding mechanisms that unite rather than fragment the development policy framework.

156. In this context, Member States may wish to reinforce current actions being taken as well as to take initiatives to ensure that the United Nations system is “fit for purpose” to support this new transformative agenda and achieve coordination and coherence among development actors at the country level.

VI. Conclusion: together in a universal compact

“If the right decisions are made and kept we could see the beginnings of a better future in 2015.”

Malala Yousafzai

157. Today’s world is a troubled world, one in turmoil and turbulence, with no shortage of painful political upheavals. Societies are under serious strain, stemming from the erosion of our common values, climate change and growing inequalities, to migration pressures and borderless pandemics. It is also a time in which the strength of national and international institutions is being seriously tested. Because of the nature and the scope of this daunting array of enormous challenges, both inaction and business-as-usual must be dismissed as options. If the global community does not exercise national and international leadership in the service of the peoples of the world, we risk further fragmentation, impunity and strife, endangering both the planet itself as well as a future of peace, sustainable development and respect for human rights. Simply put, this generation is charged with the duty of transforming our societies.

158. The year 2015 is hence the time for global action. In the course of this single year we have the unequivocal opportunity and responsibility to adopt the sustainable development goals, to restructure the global financial system in line with our needs and to respond finally and urgently to the challenge of human-induced climate change. Never before has the world had to face such a complex agenda in a single year. And this unique opportunity will not come again in our generation.

159. We must take the first determined steps toward a sustainable future with dignity for all. Transformation is our aim. We must transform our economies, our environment and our societies. We must change old mindsets, behaviours and destructive patterns. We must embrace the integrated essential elements of dignity, people, prosperity, planet, justice and partnership. We must build cohesive societies, in pursuit of international peace and stability. And we must prioritize good international solutions through the prism of the national interest of every Member State.

160. Such a future is possible if we collectively mobilize political will and the necessary resources to strengthen our nations and the multilateral system. We have the means and methods to meet these challenges if we decide to employ them and work together. If the Member States now mobilize the world around action for sustainable development — nationally and internationally — the United Nations will have proved its value as the primary universal body, living up to the principles and purposes of its Charter.

161. Overall, our work now is a sobering and inspiring challenge. We are on the threshold of the most important year of development since the founding of the United Nations itself. We must give meaning to the Organization's promise "to reaffirm faith in the dignity and worth of the human person" and to take the world forward to a sustainable future. With this extraordinary process and the unprecedented leadership that it has witnessed, we have an historic opportunity and duty to act, boldly, vigorously and expeditiously, to achieve a life of dignity for all, leaving no one behind.
