Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, let me point out that the Republic of Serbia has aligned itself with the statement delivered by the representative of the European Union.

Mr. Chairman,

This session of the General Assembly is expected to deliver important results with regard to our commitments on sustainable development made in Rio last year. As indicated in the outcome document “The Future We Want” of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012 (Rio + 20), the SDGs should be coherent with, and integrated in, the United Nations Development Agenda beyond 2015, thus contributing to the achievement of sustainable development and serving as a driver for the implementation and mainstreaming of sustainable development.
development in the United Nations system as a whole. The SDGs should remain 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. Serbia also welcomes the Report of the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda “A New Global Partnership” and endorses the view that the post-2015 development agenda needs to be driven by five transformative shifts: leave no one behind; put sustainable development at the core; transform economies for jobs and inclusive growth; build peace and effective, open and accountable institutions for all; and forge a new global partnership.

Serbia is honoured to be among the group of countries that formed the Intergovernmental Open Working Group on the SDGs and the Open Working Group on Financing for Development. During several last sessions of this Working Group, Serbia pointed out that the set of the SDGs, as agreed in Rio, should be based on Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of the Implementation and the Full Respect of all Rio Principles. Poverty eradication, changing unsustainable consumption and production patterns and protecting and managing the natural resource base are overarching objectives and essential requirements for sustainable development. Goals and targets should be coherent with and help to achieve the MDGs and contribute to a comprehensive post-2015 framework. Being the candidate country for membership into the EU, the Republic of Serbia aligns itself with the policy framework of the EU in many areas, including environmental and sustainability policies. One of the main guiding documents is the EU 2020 Strategy for Resource-Efficient Europe. Based on these premises and taking into account national strategic documents, as well as elements of the “Future We Want” document, goals and targets for key natural resources essential for social and economic development should include: water, land and ecosystems (including forests), sustainable/renewable energy, and resource efficiency, including sustainable waste management. We also consider that it is important to address the issues such as food security and nutrition, decent employment, in particular youth employment, social protection, gender equality, as well as other issues, such as sustainable cities and education for sustainable development. Efforts should be made to ensure universal access to water and sanitation and sustainable water use through integrated water resource management and increased resource efficiency. One of the ultimate goals should refer to changing unsustainable production and consumption patterns and promoting sustainable management of natural resources over their life-cycle and eventually reaching an absolute de-coupling of economic growth from natural resource. It is important that the SDGs take an integrated approach, balancing the three dimensions of sustainable development – social, economic and environment.

Mr. Chairman,

The environmental dimension of sustainable development has been successfully regulated and assessed over a number of years by the UN Environment Programme. With an increasing complexity of global environmental problems and in the context of development of appropriate supportive structures for adequate implementation of the SDGs, Serbia believes that there is a need to further strengthen international environmental governance within the context of the institutional framework for sustainable development.

In February 2013, government ministers, decision makers, scientists, civil society
representatives and business leaders gathered at the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) headquarters attending the first ever meeting of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GC/GMEF) under universal membership as a result of the Rio+20 Summit. The GC adopts a decision on institutional arrangements that, inter alia, invites the UN General Assembly to rename UNEP’s governing body the UN Environment Assembly. Serbia acknowledges the subsequent GA resolution 67/25, which provides for the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA). We expect the new UNEA to contribute to the ongoing work of the OWG on sustainable development goals and also the work of the High Level Political Forum on sustainable development.

Serbia welcomes the outcomes of the GC universal session that, in our opinion, took place in the midst of the creation of new institutional arrangements for sustainable development towards framing the post-2015 development agenda. UNEP has so far proved strong in promoting the environmental dimension of sustainable development by building up a strong interdisciplinary programme base geared towards practical outcomes. UNEP may be able to bring greater coherence to environmental sustainability discussions within the sustainable development agenda. When talking about the environmental dimension of a sustainable development agenda, UNEP is competent enough to continue to provide support in conducting up-to-date comprehensive, scientifically credible and policy-relevant global environment assessments, in close consultation with Member States, in order to support decision-making processes at all levels.

We strongly believe that the environmental dimension of sustainable development in the post-2015 period must be characterized by the responsiveness to country needs, promoting a strong science-policy interface, capacity-building and technology support and provision of secure, stable, adequate and predictable financial resources.

Mr. Chairman,

Serbia is committed to transitioning to sustainable energy systems. Together with the access to energy and energy sufficiency, we see this transition as an important part of our energy strategy. We believe that the modern energy services stand at the centre of global efforts to induce a paradigm shift towards green economies, poverty eradication and, ultimately, sustainable development. Serbia also supports all initiatives that encourage states to discontinue domestic subsidies for the consumption of fossil fuels energy and we believe that this can further contribute to the reduction of demand and consequently reduction in CO2 emissions.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.