Statement by

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at

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Sustainable Development Plenary

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Mr Chair,

Thank you for the opportunity to address this plenary session on sustainable development. Ireland’s remarks are aligned with the statement made by the European Union.

We are at an important juncture in the work of the Second Committee as we continue to work towards a coherent approach to addressing poverty eradication and promoting sustainable development in the context of the post 2015 development agenda. While there have been many developments since this time last year when we welcomed the outcome of the Rio+20 Conference, continued implementation of the commitments in the outcome document, The Future We Want, is essential if we are to address the many shared global challenges.

It is important to build on our combined efforts which have made great progress under the Millennium Development Goals, lifting millions of families out of poverty. However we must equally recognise that serious work remains as we strive to achieve the MDGs and prepare a successor framework. If a stark reminder were needed we only need to recall that every single day 18,000 children die needlessly from preventable causes. Our leaders at September’s Special Event of the President of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals were clear in their message – we are determined to free the world from the degradation of poverty and hunger, and to ensure a life of dignity for all.

All countries are affected by the range of sustainable development issues under consideration by the Second Committee. Climate change, land degradation, biodiversity loss, energy security and economic shocks are universal phenomena whose affects are most sorely felt by the poorest and vulnerable.

Solid institutional foundations underpinning our work are vital for success. Therefore, Ireland welcomes the establishment of the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and changing the designation of the Governing Council of UNEP to the United Nations Environment Assembly of UNEP. The universal nature of these forums demonstrates the shared responsibility ahead in addressing the challenges that face current and future generations.
Coupled with the reform of Eco Soc we have created the tools we need. Now we must use them wisely. Ireland supports the work of these forums in presenting the evidence base we need to guide our decision making and welcomes the crucial input to this task of civil society, academia, business, the scientific community and others.

The Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals has become a valuable forum for taking stock of the challenges to sustainable development. The contribution of women, youth, civil society and others – including in the OWG’s daily meetings with civil society – help ensure the connection between the UN process and the reality of people’s daily lives. Empowering grassroots practitioners and giving them a platform to share these realities and to discuss the solutions needed makes a compelling case for change and a compelling case against inaction.

Ireland will continue to work within the OWG to advance the principles of equality, inclusion and fundamental human rights. This dovetails with developments at the national level in Ireland with the recent launch of Irish Aid’s new policy, One World One Future. The OWG should continue its effective review of the critical issues we face – from food and nutrition security, sustainable consumption and production, energy, climate change, and biodiversity loss, through to countries in special situations, gender equality, post-conflict peace-building and the promotion of durable peace, rule of law and governance. We look forward to the frank and in-depth discussions that are necessary as the OWG sets about preparing its report. Ireland believes that agreement can be reached on a unified set of clear and measurable global goals.

Ireland looks forward to engaging with a further outcome to Rio+20 – the Third Global SIDS Conference - which will take place during UNGA 68. The specific vulnerabilities and sustainable development challenges of SIDS have long since been recognised. Implementation is again the key word. The focus of the Conference on genuine and durable partnerships has the potential to make innovative and lasting impacts which can also read across to and enthuse other processes.

We are aware Mr Chair of the urgency of the challenges we are faced with. Let me assure you that Ireland will work with you and contribute to a successful session.