Statement

by

Ambassador Raja Ali Ejaz
Director General (United Nations),
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Pakistan

at the Plenary of the Second Committee

on Agenda Item 19: Sustainable Development

(New York, 4 November 2013)
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Madam Chairperson,
Excellencies and distinguished colleagues

I would like to commence by expressing my appreciation for the able manner in which you and the bureau are conducting the affairs of this Committee.

2. Pakistan aligns itself with the statement made by the distinguished representative of Fiji on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. We would like to make the following points in our national capacity.

Madam Chairperson,

3. As we deliberate, global evidence of depleting natural capital, relentless spike in global inequality and stubborn poverty is mounting.

4. The International Panel on Climate Change has warned, “We may have just about 30 years left until the world’s carbon budget is spent if we want a likely chance of limiting warming to 2 degrees”. Recent data suggests that the top 10% of the world population owns 86% of global wealth compared to barely 1% for the bottom half of all adults. More specifically, 3.2 billion adults own virtually nothing at all. Finally, as the World Bank confirms, about half of the world population lives on less than US $ 2.50 a day. If we stretch it around US $ 10 a day, this makes up 80% of the 7 billion of humanity.

5. In a world that has experienced unprecedented prosperity since the dawn of industrial revolution, such figures only reveal that current growth patterns are not just unsustainable but also deeply flawed.

6. The need for a new global development framework for both today’s and future generations has never been greater. Pakistan agrees that we cannot act as we do because we can get away with it. Surely, future generations can neither vote in this house nor can they challenge our decisions. But our decision today would determine their fate and that of the planet.

Madam Chairperson,

7. Our agreement at Rio+20 on the “The Future We Want”, was aimed at laying foundation of a reconfigured policy framework that can overcome these intractable and complex challenges that we are facing.

8. Pakistan is pleased at the progress to-date and has reasons to be optimistic despite significant work that lay ahead in consolidating a new development paradigm.

9. We note that deliberations at the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals are progressing in shaping both the thematic and substantive contents of the Sustainable Development Goals that would lie at the heart of post 2015 development framework.
10. In achieving our mutual objectives, it is also important that the Open Working Group and other processes conclude their work well in advance of the 69th session of the UN General Assembly. This would help assist in launching an integrated inter-governmental mechanism that will eventually shape the post 2015 framework.

11. From Pakistan’s perspective a strong foundation of the new framework must take into account the following:

a. Avoid excessive focus on any one of the three pillars of sustainable development, as had been the case with MDG framework.

b. While, Sustainable Development is an unavoidable imperative, the new framework should clearly and unequivocally promote economic growth that is vital to generating productive jobs and poverty eradication.

c. Accelerate progress towards the achievement of the existing Millennium Development Goals (MDGs);

d. Ensure that poverty eradication remains the overarching objective;

e. Address the interlinked challenges of energy, demography, climate change, food security, and water.

f. Establish mid-term targets for the achievement of SDGs, and;

g. Encourage positive development in areas that are vital for growth prospects of the developing world notably, climate change and trade.

Madam Chairperson,

12. Let me briefly outline how development in Pakistan bear enormous similarities with our work here.

13. During the past two decades, Pakistan has faced numerous economic, political and social challenges. Terrorism, energy shortage, instable regional political environment, and increasing exogenous shocks from natural disasters have impeded sustained economic gains in a country of more than 170 million people.

14. Within Pakistan we are focused on governance, accountability, political maturity and strengthened democratic traditions. Similar historical achievement in economic sphere requires further determined institutional reforms and impartial economic governance.

15. The twin challenge of economic growth and sustainable development of Pakistan demands overcoming structural constraints of energy, education, governance, and employment generation. Besides, improving the overall environment to unleash private sector’s productive potential is another fundamental vital for Pakistan’s economic development and productive utilization of burgeoning middle class and youth bulge.
16. We are pleased to see these issues receiving deep attention at the United Nations. Pakistan, therefore, would measure the UN’s post 2015 Development Agenda through its complementarity with the complex economic transition we aim at and the incentives it would provide us to achieve the home grown economic objectives. To this end, we believe that post-2015 agenda should aim at:

   a. Promoting self-reliance and exploitation of indigenous resources and endowments as well as promoting regional trade.

   b. Overcoming the constraints on growth and jobs due to the absence of reliable energy and modern services. Pakistan has welcomed the UN Secretary General’s initiative to launch Sustainable Energy for All.

   c. Guaranteeing transformation towards stability, good governance and environmental sustainability without compromising economic growth.

**Madam Chairperson,**

17. Pakistan attaches importance to the objectives and work of the high level political forum and the commencement of the work by the Expert Group mandated to forge sustainable Development Financing strategy.

18. At the inaugural meeting of the forum, the Prime Minister of Pakistan underlined that despite all the efforts that have been made by the United Nations, poverty is still stalking the earth. Climate change has made our planet extremely fragile and vulnerable. Nobody is immune from it – rich or poor; developed or developing countries. And as the world economy grows, lifestyles have become unsustainable. He expressed the hope that this intergovernmental forum will help us deal with the three integrated dimensions – economic, social and environmental – of sustainable development. We look forward to translating this vision into reality.

**Madam Chairperson,**

19. As a country highly vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change, Pakistan looks forward to the UNFCCC led climate change talks at the 19th Conference of the Parties scheduled to commence next week in Warsaw.

20. Consistent with Durban Agreement at 17th Conference of Parties, Pakistan firmly believes that it would be in collective interest to ensure that we reach an agreement at 21st Conference of the Parties in Paris. We would like to particularly welcome the leadership of France in steering the on-going negotiations. We assure the Government of France that Pakistan would stand shoulder to shoulder in achieving collective objectives. The forthcoming negotiations in Warsaw should help craft building blocks to this objective. From our perspective, among others, some of the key deliverables that can form the basis of agreement on 2015 include:
a. Indications of enhanced and time bound mitigation commitments by all parties particularly the developed ones;

b. Reconfiguration of market mechanisms that can facilitate transition towards green economy and climate resilient growth pathway;

c. Firm political commitments towards initial capitalization of the Green Climate Fund, whose operationalization process must conclude by June next year;

d. Announcement of pledges in overcoming the finance glut in addressing adaptation. We especially look forward to such commitments towards Adaptation Fund;

Madam Chairperson,

21. Pakistan’s support to the UN Hygo Framework for Action (HFA) 2005-2015 is a natural consequence of our high level of vulnerability. The framework catalysed serious national policy frameworks for the integration of risk reduction as an essential component of national development policies and programs.

22. Pakistan is transitioning from a rural and agrarian society to an industrial, service-based and urban economy. Rural urban migration, with limited spatial planning and construction norms, a high rate of population growth, environmentally damaging practices, Climate Change particularly alteration in monsoon and rainfall patterns, severe and less predictable flooding and drought episodes have all contributed to this vulnerability.

23. We are pleased that Hygo Framework led to tangible developments at the national levels. However, much remains to be done. On our part, our recent assessment suggests that there is yet a low level of risk awareness and knowledge amongst the population. Besides, development processes are still not “risk conscious” and do not yet effectively integrate DRR. Finally, we are conscious that the scale of our vulnerability does not match the level of DRR capacity needed at all levels of society.

24. We must intensify efforts in preparing for the 3rd World Conference on Disasters scheduled for 2015 in Japan. Besides, launching successor of the Hygo Framework for Action after 2015, we believe that these preparations should also push forward DRR integration in post 2015 Development Framework. To this end, establishment of an open, representative and inclusive preparatory process for the Conference would be critical and must commence its function sooner than later.

Madam Chairperson,

25. Pakistan welcomes the convening of the 3rd International Conference for Sustainable Development of Small Island States (SDIs) scheduled for 2014 in Samoa. We note that intensive preparations are already underway. We are confident that building on the outcome document of July regional preparatory meeting in Barbados, the Conference would deliver on important challenges that the SIDs face.
26. We are sensitive to the development challenges they face most notably compounded by rapid unfolding of the climate change and the warming of oceans. I wish to assure our SIDSs partner that Pakistan would accord priority to delineation of a comprehensive, substantive and implementable outcome through this multilateral discourse.

Madam Chairperson,

27. The past 20 years of experience must guide us in crafting a cohesive framework that integrates economic, social and environmental concerns together and in manner that it would pull more than a billion people out of poverty, 1.3 billion access to basic electricity, and millions of children a chance to go to school. Also, it creates conditions that would allow developing world realise its development potential through sustained economic growth that does not undermine sustainability.

28. In this daunting task, Pakistan would work with you, your team and the Secretary-General in preserving the ideals of the UN Charter to employ international machinery for the promotion of economic and social advancement of all.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.