Mr. President,

My delegation would first like to congratulate you and the members of the Bureau on your election to lead the Second Committee. We look forward to working with you and all delegations as we deal with the important issues on the Committee’s agenda this session.

We approach the Second Committee this year mindful of the new prominence of global development on the international stage. We are counting down the Millennium Development Goals and determined to make every last day count. We are intensifying our discussions, both here in New York but in capitals, to set a new development agenda after 2015 and in our communities. We are reminded every day in countless ways of the rapidly changing world in which we live—a growing and changing population, new technologies to combat poverty and disease, new opportunities to grow economies in ways that build wealth while sustaining the natural systems on which we depend, new demands for inclusion and participation, and a degree of interconnection between and within our societies that would have been unfathomable a generation ago. We are also aware of the many challenges before us grappling with impediments to development—from lack of equal opportunities for women and youth to conflict and instability that can erase decades of development overnight.

In his State of the Union address earlier this year, President Obama called for an ambitious drive to eradicate extreme poverty over the next two decades. We believe we have a historic opportunity to make decisive and irreversible gains against extreme poverty, and that this ambition should inspire both our continuing commitment to the Millennium Development Goals and our work to forge an even more ambitious post-2015 development agenda. Secretary Kerry reiterated this determination just a few weeks ago at the Special Event on the Millennium Development Goals at the General Assembly, and reinforced the United States’ commitment to a future development agenda that also integrates all aspects of sustainable development: social, economic, and environmental.

The United States will continue to press forward on the MDGs through major initiatives such as the Global Health Initiative, the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS relief, Feed the Future and the Global Climate Change Initiative, as well as through a range of development activities that tackle key drivers of development like good governance and the rule of law or the equality and empowerment of women and youth. The essential ingredients for development are not a mystery, and we must focus our ambitions and our strategies around what works.

While the MDGs have seen enormous progress, we are all aware of the gaps. MDG targets on slum-dwellers have been met, but rapid urbanization can overwhelm those gains. More people have access to safe drinking water, but the number of people without access to sanitation, and who die from preventable diseases, is unacceptable. Many populations have been lifted out of poverty, but people living in low-income, conflict-affected states remain very far behind. We can learn from these trends and patterns, and both MDG acceleration and our future development agenda should be informed by evidence of what has succeeded and why. Tackling complex, and
frequently interrelated, development challenges will demand our best thinking and our most creative ideas.

Mr. President, we see particular scope for progress by redoubling efforts to include those who have often been marginalized from development progress. We need to empower women, educate and engage youth, and provide equal opportunities for persons with disabilities. Mobilizing women to contribute fully, bolstering youth employment, and enabling persons with disabilities, all will contribute to economic growth and build skills and knowledge that can transform entire societies. We know that narrowing gender gaps in health, education, labor markets, and other areas reduces poverty, stimulates higher economic growth, achieves greater agricultural productivity and ensures better health and education for children.

We also need to mobilize ideas, innovations and perspectives from all stakeholders including civil society, youth, the private sector, and academia and the research community. When we address the modalities for major upcoming conferences on Small Island Developing States and Landlocked Developing States, we therefore want to see the UN serve as a platform for mobilizing state-of-the-art knowledge and ideas about development solutions relevant to their unique development challenges. We will need to ensure modalities that can mobilize innovative ideas, practical solutions, and relevant, meaningful outcomes.

In addition to being open to outside voices and sources of expertise, we also need to explore the development potential of new technologies and ways to harness non-traditional data. Vastly cheaper processing power and data storage as well as the rise of mobile telephony with flexible access to the internet and (importantly) financial services, gives us an opportunity to look to new approaches to development problems.

As we work towards a future agenda, we must also acknowledge that the landscape of development finance is changing. Official development assistance now only comprises a modest share of capital flows to developing countries. Trade, foreign investment, public and private financing, and remittances, have had critical important impacts in improving the lives of millions. Achieving our goals will require that we look beyond traditional forms of development cooperation assistance and seek new ways to expand innovative partnerships with the private sector. This includes effective intellectual property protection and creation of an environment conducive to trade and investment in innovative products and services and domestic innovation. We will need innovation in multiple forms to reach our broader development goals, and we need to nurture innovators worldwide.

Mr. President, let me conclude by expressing the commitment of the United States to active engagement in the various processes looking at the post-2015 development agenda. We see the Second Committee as an important venue for such collaboration, with the aims of ending extreme poverty and building a more prosperous, just, and sustainable future for us all. My delegation looks forward to a productive session that will further our efforts in the important areas I’ve highlighted in my remarks.

Thank you very much.