



Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

UN Headquarters

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Remarks at inaugural meeting of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development

I am honoured to speak at this inaugural meeting of the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

I thank Brazil and Italy for ably steering the negotiations, and all Member States and others who have contributed to shape an innovative and ambitious forum.

This is a significant step towards realizing the vision adopted at Rio+20.

I am pleased to see such high level representation here today.

Your forum is a key platform for examining today's challenges in a holistic and integrated manner.

Sustainable development consists of three equal and interdependent dimensions.

Your work can help overcome institutional and operational separation between economic, social and environmental policies and responsibilities.

I am pleased to see Major Groups represented.

We need your ideas, expertise and leadership.

The forum will engage the full range of sustainable development actors.

It will review progress, generate political impetus and launch partnerships and actions to advance shared goals.

This forum can be the catalyst for a strengthened global partnership for sustainable development, providing political leadership grounded in solid science.

To further inform the debate on sustainable development, I have decided to create a Scientific Advisory Board.

It will comprise renowned scientists representing various fields of natural, social and human sciences.

We must strengthen the interface between science and policy, so that the latest scientific findings are reflected in our high-level policy discussions.

I have asked Ms. Irina Bokova, the Director-General of UNESCO, to establish the Board. UNESCO will host the Secretariat.

Excellencies,

This Forum is integral to shaping our common vision for future decades.

This work has many strands.

The General Assembly Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals is working on universal goals and targets.

At the same time, many have contributed ideas about the priorities of a universal post-2015 UN development agenda.

These opinions have informed my own report, "A Life of Dignity for All" prepared as input to tomorrow's General Assembly Special Event on follow-up efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

We must build on the achievements of the MDGs and expand our ambition.

Progress must be inclusive.

Poverty eradication must be our priority, sustainable development our guide and principle.

Combating climate change is central to our efforts.

We need to finalize an ambitious, legal agreement on climate change in 2015.

To add momentum to this process, I will convene a Climate Summit in September 2014 for leaders at the highest level – from government, business, finance, civil society and academia.

The goal is to generate the political commitment that will keep global temperature rise below the agreed 2-degree Celsius threshold.

I count on the support of all here to support this objective.

Excellencies,

This is a new forum, but we are not starting anew.

We have more than 20 years of work on sustainable development behind us.

The forum can build on what has been learned through its parent bodies, in particular the Commission on Sustainable Development.

At the same time, it will take us in new directions, guide the UN system and hold it accountable.

By establishing the forum, Rio+20 imagined new ways of pursuing our common agenda.

We must be bold as we lay the ground for the Forum's next sessions.

Let us make the best use of its collected expertise, wisdom and influence.

Let us make a real difference in the well-being of current and future generations.

The UN system will support you.

Thank you.