



## UNECE Regional Conference on Monitoring and Accountability for the Post-2015 Agenda

Opening session  
Geneva, 15 September 2014

Intervention by H.E. Ambassador Martin Dahinden, Secretary of State and Director-  
General of the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation SDC

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Ministers,  
Mr. Executive Secretary,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure for me to welcome you here in Geneva which has become today's foremost center of global governance. Home to 30 international organisations, the European headquarters of the United Nations and many civil society organisations, academia, philanthropy and private sector addressing sustainable development, Geneva is a place for synergies which will play a pivotal role in designing an effective review mechanism for sustainable development.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the organisers at UNECE for their hard work and commitment to making this meeting happen. In particular, I would like to thank and congratulate the Executive Secretary, Mr Christian Friis Bach, on his appointment. I am pleased, both as a host country and as a member state of the UNECE, that we have such an engaged and experienced person to lead this organization.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The question of accountability and assessment of progress will be a fundamental cornerstone of a successful post-2015 agenda, and it is a priority for Switzerland. The Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals has adopted its report proposing 17 Sustainable Development Goals. This is an important achievement. The Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing has also issued its recommendations. And later this year, the UN Secretary-General will share a report that brings together the different elements of a post-2015 framework: I expect an ambitious vision for the world, action-oriented goals and targets, ambitious means to implement them, and options of mechanisms for monitoring and accountability. We need also a new understanding of how countries and all stakeholders work together, in a New Global Partnership for Sustainable Development.

We are now at a critical juncture. The discussion over the next day and a half can make a substantial contribution to the future post-2015 sustainable development framework.

The vision of the post-2015 agenda is to include a broad scope of issues and all three dimensions of sustainable development in a single, universal agenda for sustainable development and poverty eradication. In other words: There are **two paradigm shifts** that will have significant impact on the monitoring and accountability of the implementation of the agenda:

Firstly, the **scope** of the agenda is both a challenge and an opportunity: bringing together the three dimensions of sustainable development with an agenda for poverty eradication will require significant commitment towards “breaking the sector silos” to ensure an integrated approach to sustainable development.

And secondly, a **universal** agenda means that all countries, regardless of their level of development, will have to make contributions and changes in their behaviour. A universal agenda also means that governments have to work together and need the

engagement of all stakeholders in order to deliver on a transformative post-2015 agenda.

I would like to give you **three key messages** that might guide your deliberations:

- 1) **First: We are not starting from scratch.** Many of the reporting mechanisms that will be required for the Post-2015 Agenda already exist in different sector processes. It will be a significant challenge to ensure coherent reporting and to bring together what already exists without duplication and without overburdening. **We must leverage existing mechanisms.** Furthermore the mechanisms must be integrated in a framework. This is true both at regional and global levels, where we see the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development having the key role in this regard. The UNECE Conference of European Statisticians has been working for some time to develop recommendations on measuring sustainable development. A framework that can represent the basis of the monitoring scheme has equally been proposed by a task force composed of experts from UNECE, OECD and the European Union.
  
- 2) **Second: We must build on experience. The important role of a wide range of actors, such as UN organisations, civil society, the private sector, academia, foundations, and local governments needs to be reflected in an inclusive accountability mechanism.** Their experience and expertise on the ground is highly relevant for successfully advancing sustainable development. We can benefit from their inputs and advice, not only in the elaboration and implementation of the agenda, but also in holding us accountable for the commitments we will to take.
  
- 3) **Thirdly: We must be ready for change.** A universal agenda will require **significant changes from all countries.** A country like mine will have to report on its actions in areas such as energy, consumption and production, management of chemicals and waste, or on our contribution to poverty eradication worldwide. Member states have agreed that the follow-up and review of the agenda must be seen as a whole, including the means of implementation.

This will be a powerful illustration of universality and we must ensure that we fulfill this commitment.

Switzerland is willing and ready to address these challenges – together with you, in a strong new Global Partnership for Sustainable Development. We believe that at the highest level the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development is the central locus for monitoring and accountability. All relevant UN organs and platforms, such as the UN General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the Development Cooperation Forum (DCF) as well as other existing platforms, such as the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation shall contribute to ensuring accountability in the implementation of Agenda for sustainable development post-2015 in accordance with their mandate.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Before closing, one final – but also quite important! – information: You are all cordially invited to a reception which Switzerland is hosting at 6pm this evening, just around the corner at the Serpent Bar for a well-deserved drink!

Once again, I reiterate the Swiss commitment to making progress on all promising issues. I wish you fruitful discussions!

Thank you for your attention.