



Statement

by

Mr. Hassan Abbas

**at the Stocktaking Session
of Intergovernmental Negotiations
on the Post-2015 Development Agenda**

New York, January 19, 2015

Check against delivery

Distinguished co-facilitators,

Lebanon aligns itself with the statement delivered by Yemen on behalf of the Arab Group and the statement delivered by South Africa on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Allow me at the outset, to express my gratitude for your commitment, tireless efforts and wise manner in which you've conducted the consultations phase that preceded these negotiations.

I would also like to take this opportunity to assure you of my Government's confidence in your wisdom and judgment, and that of your team, to drive this arduous negotiations process forward in the few months ahead, so that we arrive at the UN Summit in September with a Final Document and Declaration which express the collective will of the international community in adopting a Post-2015 Development Agenda that promotes a sustainable future for our planet and for our present and future generations, eradicates poverty and integrates the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development and recognizes their interlinkages.

We believe that the Report of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Developments Goals constitutes a good basis for our upcoming negotiations process, and most of the goals and targets outlined by the Open Working Group are consistent with My Government's long standing positions on a wide range of issues that we wish to be reflected in the Post 2015 Development Agenda, particularly poverty eradication, the need to arrive at a just, equitable and inclusive world, the promotion of sustained and inclusive economic growth, social development, environmental protection, tackling climate change, the need for the Agenda to be guided by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and other relevant international legal standards, the importance of freedom, peace and security, respect for all human rights, the rule of law, good governance, universal health and education, gender equality, women's empowerment, eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls, the promotion of inclusive and sustainable industrialization, and encouraging the development and transfer of environmentally sound technologies to developing countries.

However, despite the extensiveness and wide ranging issues related to sustainable development that were highlighted in the open Working Group report, we believe that the report should have also addressed one of the emerging challenges to sustainable development facing the world today, i.e., the forced mass influx of refugees, resulting from war, conflict, occupation and terrorism, and its dreadful impact on the security and sustainable development of host countries, their economic growth, social development and environment.

Distinguished co-facilitators,

Almost 4 years after the start of the Syrian Crisis, Lebanon faces an existential challenge due to the enormous security, economic, social and environmental impact of the mass influx of more than 1.2 million refugees from Syria into its territory since March 2011, without counting those who are still unregistered with the relevant UN agencies.

Adding to this around 400,000 Palestinian refugees who are present in the country as a result of the gradual Israeli annexation and occupation of Palestine, refugees constitute, today, around 30% of Lebanon's population. As a result, the number of poor in the country has risen by nearly two thirds since 2011, economic growth stumbled, unemployment levels among Lebanese doubled. In addition to growing security concerns, the national health, education and infrastructure services are overstretched and a third of Lebanon's young labor force cannot find work. In response to the growing challenge of the refugee crisis, the Lebanese Government, in coordination with the relevant UN agencies and other partners, adopted in November 2014 the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2015-2016, which is designed to:

- Ensure humanitarian assistance and protection for the most vulnerable amongst the local communities and refugees.
- Strengthen the capacity of national and local delivery systems.
- Reinforce Lebanon's economic social environmental and institutional stability.

In this regard, we stress on the need for the international and donor community to step up its efforts and provide its full support to host countries of refugees through their national crisis response plans and other development and assistance mechanisms, to help them in tackling this emerging challenge, based on the principle of burden sharing.

To finalize, I reiterate Lebanon's call for a Post 2015 Development Agenda that seriously tackles the issue of the forced mass influx of refugees and its adverse impact on sustained development in host countries. Lebanon is not the only country in our region or outside it facing this challenge. If not addressed seriously and quickly in the upcoming development agenda, the circle of affected countries and regions can only grow, and the repercussions of the Syrian and other refugee crises will be felt globally.

Thank you