



**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC TO THE
UNITED NATIONS**

**STATEMENT BY H. E. JOSÉ MANUEL TRULLOLS
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REPUBLIC
AT THE PLENARY OF THE 68 GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE UNITED NATIONS**

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Check against delivery

Mr. President.

Mr. Secretary-General.

Heads of Delegations.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election to preside over the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly.

I wish you every success in your performance and in the efforts you undertake to promote the initiatives that have been proposed to mark the presidency of the Assembly during your term.

Mr. President:

I am here as a representative of the Dominican Republic, one of the signatory nations, in 1945, of the founding Charter of this Organization, in which it was assigned the monumental purpose of saving succeeding generations from the scourge of war.

There has not been a world war since its founding, 68 years ago. But now we are facing a cataclysm as lethal and destructive as a war of planetary dimensions: global poverty.

It is a war with millions of casualties, which poses the need for a radical change in the economic paradigm and for the emergence of a new culture, the culture of sustainability.

As I stand here before you, there is no doubt in my mind that to triumph over such a daunting challenge, all nations must make difficult decisions, which will require the full weight of our collective responsibilities.

Distinguished Heads of Delegations:

Allow me to bring up the detailed and lengthy document adopted at the Rio+20 Conference last year in Brazil.

You all remember it. Its title is “The Future We Want.”

In this text, the Member States renewed their commitment to sustainable development and to the promotion of a sustainable future from an economic, social and environmental point of view for our planet and for present and future generations.

This declaration shows that the leaders of the world’s nations are committed to do all they have agreed is necessary to build that future. It is a road map with profound implications.

Mr. President, Heads of Delegations:

Let us acknowledge that we are taking on an overwhelming responsibility, because we are committing ourselves to building a totally unprecedented reality in the modern world.

Let us acknowledge that the development we have known has not been sustainable in any way. It has not been sustainable socially or economically. And much less has it been sustainable from an environmental perspective.

The systems of production that we have used to achieve economic growth have been based on methods that have proven to be harmful to the environment.

And the systems that we have used to distribute the wealth produced have created deep chasms of social inequality and exclusion.

Over time, we have reached a situation we now consider to be intolerable:

A world where more than a billion people are living in a state of extreme poverty and are suffering from hunger.

A world where millions and millions of human beings lack adequate healthcare, drinking water, quality education or decent employment.

A world where malnutrition and social exclusion prevail to extremes morally unacceptable.

If we aspire to a world where development is sustainable, we first have to accept shared responsibility; in all sectors of every society and that it is time for action, not words.

In order to make this a reality, a commitment of this magnitude must be based on achievable actions and goals, and we must be prepared to take bold action. To do, as we are doing in the Dominican Republic, what has never been done before:

- Putting citizens at the center of our policies and making the fight against poverty and inequality a first priority.
- Implementing a new development model, based on a long-term National Strategy, built on the pillars of three fundamental social pacts: A Fiscal Pact, a Pact for Education and a Pact for Electricity.
- Surrounding government actions with transparency, creating citizens groups to serve as public observers, who will monitor systems of purchasing and contracts.
- Prioritizing support for small-scale agricultural producers.
- Doubling the budget for free and compulsory public education.
- Extending the school day.

- And putting a permanent end to illiteracy.

Mr. President:

Following the commitments of Rio+20, we have taken a few steps forward, and we are moving forward to agree on the roadmap that will lead us to sustainable development and to the eradication of extreme poverty.

We have implemented a process to determine as accurately as possible what the Sustainable Development Goals for the Post-2015 International Development Agenda should be.

And we are pleased to note that we all agree that the greatest challenge the world faces is the eradication of poverty, and that for this reason, this goal has been given top priority on our agenda in this Organization.

Our countries have common problems, Mr. President. But our economic, social, historical, geographical, demographic and cultural realities are different. And each of these dimensions play a role in the way in which these problems may or may not be addressed and resolved.

Our countries have common problems. But our responsibilities for the creation or the aggravation of these problems, such as climate change, are clearly differentiated.

My country, the Dominican Republic, suffers the consequences of this change, being geographically located in the path of annual hurricanes and tropical storms.

For this reason, we have been endeavoring to strengthen and improve our preparedness for the management of risks associated with natural disasters. We are building a collection center for emergency assistance and working on the creation of a Center of Excellence, which is dedicated to the education and training of human resources for assistance in cases of disasters, which we are going to place at the service of the nations of the entire Caribbean region.

And from the 18th to the 20th of next November we are going to hold the Third International Conference on the HOPEFOR Initiative, to which all members of this organization are cordially invited.

Mr. President:

Universal sustainable development is a goal which requires a new vision and approach on the international stage.

In order for development to be sustainable in our nations, we must undertake structural reforms that will change many of our policies and our economic and social systems, turning them inside out, the way a sock is turned inside out.

With sustainable development, we have taken on a commitment of biblical proportions: a universal commitment to care for our brothers and sisters, especially for those who most need to be elevated to the conditions required for dignified human life.

This Organization, with the launch of the parallel processes of study, discussion and analysis, with panels of eminent persons, consultations with regional economic commissions, with the Leadership Council of the Sustainable Development Solutions Network and with the Open-ended Working Group, is helping to point out the way.

Therefore, we want to take this opportunity to express our appreciation for the efforts of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to put documents in the hands of the Member States that serve as a guide for our debates and our decisions.

One of these documents, the Plan of Action, prepared by the Leadership Council of the Sustainable Development Solutions Network, is a bold and optimistic platform. It is an exhaustive and practical plan that requires a collective commitment that we cannot avoid.

All reports agree that we cannot continue treating the part of the planet that each of our nations occupy as if the resources that nature has generously placed within them were inexhaustible.

The world's forests and supplies of water and minerals are decreasing and animal species are endangered, while on the other hand, we continue to use methods of cultivation that poison or impoverish the earth and methods of industrial production that poison the air we breathe.

We must revise the very methods by which our economic growth is driven.

This is not a new concern for this Organization, Mr. President. We have been talking about sustainable development for decades.

What is new now is that the situation has become urgent.

Mr. President:

The time for words and promises is over.

The time for action is now.

We must step up the pace to establish the foundations of sustainable development, because time is running out. We must address this purpose, knowing that what we do or do not agree upon in this session of the General Assembly may determine whether the future of our peoples, or rather, the future of humanity, will be promising or miserable.

This presumption may seem exaggerated to representatives of larger or more highly developed nations.

If so, we invite you to look beyond your borders, and to consider the peoples of the nations from which you seek cheap labor.

Look at the peoples whose human resources you employ to produce your goods and services.

Look at the peoples in the countries that need your industries to process their minerals, or the peoples in the countries where you want to market your products.

For many of these peoples, the situation is intolerable.

That is why we are pleased to note that the documents which have already been written, which are intended to serve as a platform for our debates and decisions have an optimistic tone.

They give us, for example, the assurance that if we act now, the problems we face will not become insoluble.

Mr. President, Heads of Delegations:

A universal sustainable development, which addresses the challenges that have been so clearly identified, will translate into social justice in the world. It will also translate into peace, international peace, the achievement of which is a strategic goal of this Organization.

To speak of eradicating extreme poverty - as measured in terms of living on an income of less than \$1.25 a day - sounds like an enormous goal, especially because it is estimated that some 1,200 million people in the world suffer from poverty.

But in reality, it is just one step in a long journey.

If those who are now below the income level of \$1.25 per day are elevated to an income level of \$2.00 per day, we will have eliminated what we now call extreme poverty. But we all know that human beings cannot meet their basic needs on an income of \$2.00 per day. And the difference in hardship between the one income range and the other is not very noticeable.

What happens is that talking about poverty in statistical terms does not allow us to visualize, much less feel, the reality of the human misery and desolation behind the numbers and the percentages.

How can we understand the pain of a father and mother who have suffered the loss of their child when the words in which we are informed about this family tragedy are that every ten seconds a child dies from hunger-related causes in the world?

Let us put ourselves in the place of parents of families living in a state of extreme poverty: They have to raise their children in extremely unsafe living conditions, without sanitation and drinking water. Without sufficient resources to buy medicine or to provide each child with food to ensure their proper nutrition. Without the resources, without beds or mosquito nets to protect them from insects that transmit serious diseases. They have to decide which of their children can go to school and which cannot, or which of their children have to work, and which do not.

Mr. President:

We know that a difficult road still remains ahead, before we can agree on a satisfactory agreement for all regarding the Post-2015 International Development Agenda, and what are the most effective ways to implement it. But let us remember that what we need is not a new commitment.

We have had many commitments to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger: The World Food Summit of 1996. The Millennium Summit in 2000. The World Food Summit: five years later, in 2002. And the recent Rio+20 Summit on Sustainable Development in 2012.

What we need now is for these commitments to be, finally, translated into political action.

Although sustainable development may sound like an economic concept, it is a political concept. That is why we are discussing it here, in this Organization, which is a forum of States, and therefore, a political forum.

Economists measure the dimensions or the pillars of reality in economic terms, and they and other specialists can set the goals that must be reached for sustainable development meet their exact specifications. But political decisions are the driving force. Political decisions are what ultimately determine whether or not the goals are achieved.

We, then, have the primary responsibility. It depends on us to put the declarations of good intentions into action.

Thank you very much.

