



# BELARUS

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United Nations General Assembly  
High-Level Dialogue of the President of the General Assembly  
"Building Sustainable Peace for All:  
Synergies between the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Sustaining Peace"

New York, January 24, 2017

**Statement**  
**by Valentin Rybakov**  
**Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belarus**

A year and a half ago, the President of Belarus began his statement at the UN Summit with the following words: **"Sustainable development is impossible without peace and security."**

Since then, the value of this absolute truth has not changed for us. We can only welcome the fact that understanding of the importance of the relationship for peace and development is gaining ground in the UN. Today's meeting of the General Assembly serves as a vivid example. Yesterday, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Suriname and the United Nations Development Programme organised an informal discussion of how responsible governance, disarmament and non-proliferation can impact the effectiveness of sustainable development in individual countries and globally. I hope that collectively we will continue the logic of the integrated examination of topical UN processes, primarily through the prism of sustainable development and sustaining peace.

Belarus can offer its contribution, initiatives and practical suggestions into this process.

First, we all need practical measures **to overcome the global alienation in political and security spheres**. More than 40 years ago the Helsinki process was required to defuse tension between the West and the East. It produced the principles of peaceful cooperation between the countries in the conditions of the bipolar world. The current situation in the world requires similar global action. With this understanding **the President of Belarus proposed the idea of a new process similar to the Helsinki process**. There is an imminent need for meetings of the the leaders of major countries and organisations to conduct frank, non-ceremonial dialogue on the causes of the crisis in international relations and the possibilities of its overcoming. It is necessary to apprehend the new rules of multi-polar world, while respecting each other's interests, chosen ways of progressive development, cultural and other diversity. **Belarus is ready to contribute to this process, including through hosting various meetings.**

Second, in addition to the political process today more than ever we need to **create the conditions for economic and trade cooperation not only for individual countries but also for regional integration entities**. Regional integration has become one of the most important trends of the modern world. The United Nations should pay attention to the harmonisation of these efforts through dialogue with integration associations and among them. Such dialogue is required in order to avoid unnecessary confrontation between integration models, to achieve compatibility, mutual complementarity and benefit. To facilitate such wide-ranging discussion Belarus and the UN Economic Commission for Europe recently held in Minsk an international conference on creating

foundations of economic integration and sustainable development in the UNECE region. The conference demonstrated the ability to discuss issues of cooperation between the countries in areas such as transport, trade, energy and the green economy, and laid the foundation for in-depth dialogue. Belarus will continue such work as **chair of the Central European Initiative in 2017** under the topic of **promoting connectivity in a wider Europe**.

Thirdly, I believe that the need for a thoughtful integrated approach to **disarmament and non-proliferation** is long overdue. Twenty years ago, Belarus refused to possess nuclear weapons, demonstrating its commitment to peace and security. Today we are prepared to facilitate discussion of the various initiatives on disarmament and arms control, aimed at reducing tensions and strengthening security in Europe and Eurasia. We can conduct such work not only in national capacity, but as a party to regional organisations such as the Collective Security Treaty Organisation where Belarus currently holds presidency.

Fourth, the **integrated implementation of sustainable development goals** requires involvement of the whole society, from the highest leadership to business and scientific communities, common people. Accordingly, there are increased requirements for national coordination of this process. Belarus has established the **institution of national SDGs coordinator**. We believe that this step will facilitate systematic national work on sustainable development synchronising it with the international agenda. Belarus is ready to share its experience in the SDGs implementation by presenting its national voluntary report later this year. At the same time, we should not forget that the achievement of sustainable development in any country should be **supported by international assistance**. This requires coordinated use of all the available international resources and mechanisms and processes approved by the 2015 summit. The United Nations can and should serve to assist interested countries as a **coordination center** that accumulates and provides expert assistance, finance, technology, and means of implementation.

Finally, fifth, we should take a **sober view of the UN working methods**. If we want not only to implement all the SDGs by 2030, but to do so in preserving the synergy with preserving and sustaining peace, the UN working methods should not be blindly subordinate to formalism. Synchronising the UN system to the sustainable development process should not be nominal. We cannot allow that countries and the UN itself become hostages to formal rules and procedures. After all, the development agenda is about real destinies of nations, every single person, family and society.