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STATEMENT

by H.E. Mr. AKA

Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation

at the High-level Segment of the 2008 Substantive Session of ECOSOC on
"Implementation of the internationally agreed goals and commitments
in the area of
Sustainable Development"
(New York, 1 July 2008)

Mr. President,

The issue of sustainable development has been consistently asserting itself among
the dual priorities of the international community. A key role in this area assignment
belongs to the UN as a universal mechanism for the elaboration of agreed
most important source of environmental law.

Over the past few years, certain progress has been achieved within the UN system
in implementing the sustainable development goals. However, it is obvious that there is a
need to further sustain political will and concrete results oriented efforts by all members
of the international community to ensure a timely and full implementation of the
Johannesburg Plan.

Furthermore, recent months have clearly shown that on the way to the
implementation of the internationally agreed development goals, there are serious
difficulties and obstacles, resulting, among other things, from insufficient regard for or
considerable underestimation of complex interlinking of the economic, social and
environmental components of sustainable development.

The unfolding food crisis and the ongoing financial instability not only threaten to
slow down our progress towards the sustainable development goals but also
setbacks.

To neutralize those trends, as the Secretary General rightly observes in his report,
there is a need to take measures to protect natural resources, to ensure their more efficient
use, to implement a transition toward a less
increase agricultural productivity, especially in developing countries.

Mr. President,

In our view, in addressing this common task, a particular contribution is to be made
by the UN Commission on Sustainable Development, the main high-level organ of the
UN system designed to ensure the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg
Plan of Implementation, which in 2009 is to elaborate and adopt important political

recommendations on a range of ever-important issues of agriculture, rural areas development, land resources, environment and urbanization.

We hope that by making joint efforts the international community will succeed in coming up with relevant responses to the challenges it faces in the area of sustainable development, in particular in food security.

For our part, we are ready to assist in every possible way. Russia has been taking active steps to comprehensively develop its agricultural production and to increase food exports. As early as last year, when only the first signs of the global food crisis were visible, Russia exported a record of 17 million tons of grain, thus for the first time in many years becoming a major world supplier of agricultural products.

In the context of the food crisis, it is impossible to neglect an acute and sensitive problem of producing biofuels from agricultural resources. In our view, this problem can only be resolved on the basis of observing the principles of sustainable development.

This implies a transition to 'second generation' technologies which in the production of biofuels uses non-food products: first of all, cellulose, animal farm and

We approach this issue from the point of view of broad diversification in the context of renewable energy resources – in the light of an urgent need to ensure a qualitative change in the field of energy efficiency and efficient use of resources. We are convinced that only this approach will ensure the attainment of our development goals, including those regarding global climate change.

Russia's commitment to this policy has been confirmed by President Medvedev's recent decision to reduce by 2020 Russia's GDP energy intensity by at least 40% as

This must be advanced through the implementation of a package of measures designed to enhance energy and environmental efficiency of the electricity sector, construction, housing and public utilities and transportation sectors. These include economic mechanisms for stimulating a transition to energy efficient and environmentally friendly technologies, an increased liability for violation of environmental regulations as well as direct budget financing of energy-saving measures, renewable energy resources and environmentally friendly technologies.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, I would like to note that in general we positively view the Secretary General's report on the issues before the High-level Segment. We support the recommendations it makes and hope that together with conclusions made during round table discussions in the framework of the High-level Segment, they will advance cooperation in this area to a qualitatively new phase.

Thank you.