

## Foreword

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I am delighted to contribute a foreword for a selection of Papers from the 2013 International Conference on Sustainable Development Practice (ICSDP), which was held at Columbia University, New York, in September 2013.

This special issue of *The Economic and Social Review* comes at an important and exciting juncture in our collective work as we strive to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and to craft the post-2015 development agenda.

Ireland's co-facilitation role with South Africa in preparing a Special Event Towards Achieving the Millennium Development Goals which the President of the General Assembly convened in September 2013 showed us the vital importance of a participatory approach which allows the voices of academia, civil society and other stakeholders to be heard clearly in this process alongside the work of UN Member States. Much of the European Union's preparation for the Special Event, furthermore, took place under Ireland's EU Presidency in the first semester of 2013. During that period, the Government of Ireland also launched a new policy for international development, entitled "*One World One Future*".

The Special Event took place on 25 September 2013 at United Nations Headquarters in New York. It was attended by a wide range of world leaders, from developed and developing countries alike. The outcome document which was issued, and which Ireland helped to negotiate, underlined the

commitment of Heads of State and Government to accelerating progress towards the achievement of the MDGs in all developing countries, and particularly in those countries most lagging behind. It called for particular attention to be paid to the most “off-track” MDGs and to the predicament of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged countries. It highlighted the central role of a strengthened global partnership for development. The document also set out a “road-map” to the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda at a Summit in September 2015 and made clear that this agenda should include a single framework and set of universal goals.

The Special Event was of landmark significance in its articulation of a broad international consensus on how best to realise the MDGs and to create an ambitious agenda for the period from 2015 until 2030. It issued action-oriented and accessible conclusions which are underpinning the discussions currently underway in the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (of which Ireland is a member) and which will also underpin the next round of intergovernmental negotiations as we move towards agreement on a post-2015 framework. It tasked the UN Secretary General to synthesise the full range of inputs from relevant processes – including the outcomes of the Open Working Group and of the inter-governmental committee of experts on Sustainable Development Financing. This synthesis will guide the critical deliberations leading up to the proclamation by the Summit in September 2015 of a new post-2015 development framework.

This ICSDP publication makes a very valuable and thought-provoking contribution to the debate. The inaugural ICSDP last September, which I was privileged to attend and to address, illustrated clearly for me the importance of having channels such as the ICSDP and the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network which connect evidence from the ground with the global post-2015 process we are all undertaking at the United Nations. I look forward to further contributions from the ICSDP as we work collectively towards an outcome next year that delivers fully on the eradication of poverty and the sustainable future which we all want.

Go raibh míle maith agaibh,

**David Donoghue**

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