

## **11<sup>th</sup> Session of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals**

**5 - 9 May 2014, New York**

### **Opening Session**

During the opening remarks and presentation of the focal areas document, the Co-Chairs stressed that the focal areas needed to be universal and balanced, and that the targets needed to be specific and actionable. Reference was made to the compilation text, nicknamed “Encyclopaedia Groupanica”, which reflected the substantive inputs from Member States and stakeholders to the OWG. It was noted that OWG11 would be the last session to follow the current format, and that subsequent OWG sessions would switch gears and focus on negotiations of a zero draft.

Following the Co-Chairs’ remarks, Member States made general comments on the revised focal areas document and the future working modalities of the OWG. Many countries commended the Co-Chairs for their work to condense and consolidate the focus areas, while others voiced concern that the current draft did not reflect their views, and that key issue areas were not adequately addressed in the revised document. These included the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, needs of countries in special situations including countries in Africa, small island developing states (SIDS), least developed countries (LDCs), and landlocked developing countries (LLDCs); integration of climate change; inequality; means of implementation (MoI) including finance, capacity building and technology transfer; human rights and a human rights-based approach; and taking into account needs of vulnerable and marginalized groups, women, children, older persons and persons with disabilities. Some countries voiced their satisfaction with the current working modalities, while others called for intergovernmental discussion during the intersessional periods including through convening of “informal informals.”

### **Focus area 1: Poverty eradication, building shared prosperity and promoting equality**

Many countries emphasised that poverty eradication should be an overarching priority for the SDGs. A number of representatives highlighted the importance of leaving no one behind. The importance of an enabling environment for poverty eradication, through a supportive economic and financial architecture for sustainable development in developing countries was stressed by some. Some countries suggested a goal to “eradicate poverty in all its forms by 2030”. Many countries welcomed and supported focus area one and the proposal of a goal to end poverty for all in all its forms everywhere and recommended that appropriate means of implementation be included in the focus area. Many observed the multidimensional nature of poverty and stressed that the implementation of the goals in all focus areas should contribute to ending poverty. Interlinkages of poverty with other areas were also highlighted, including education, food security, health, energy, and climate change.

On “inequality”, several countries called for a greater focus on the most marginalized and vulnerable groups including women and girls, children, older persons and persons with disabilities. Some representatives suggested that inequality should be addressed as a separate goal, while others pointed out that it was a cross-cutting issue linked to many areas.

On “building prosperity” it was noted that while economic growth was necessary to reduce poverty and inequality, it was not sufficient in and of itself. In this regard, many countries stressed the need

for economic growth to be sustainable, inclusive and equitable. With regard to employment, some countries supported the language calling for “full and productive employment” while others supported the formulation “decent employment”. On the issue of “reducing economic losses related to disasters”, many countries suggested broadening the language to call for reducing economic losses in general (due to numerous factors), including related to human-generated and natural disasters.

Some countries recommended balanced well-linked targets from social, economic and environmental pillars of sustainable development aligned to the goal on ending poverty. Many recommended the elaboration of a chapeau to emphasize and reflect the overarching nature of the poverty eradication goal. Some countries suggested that the means of implementation should target ending poverty in LLDCs, with particular consideration of their special needs and challenges related to production diversification and value addition in LLDCs through capacity building and technology transfer, as these will ensure competitiveness and performance of LLDCs in international markets. Most countries supported target (a), eradicate extreme poverty by 2030, which was viewed as a very strong target. Target (b), on reducing the proportion of people living below national poverty lines by 2030, was also welcomed by many. However, some countries expressed an interest in receiving expert advice from the Statistics Division in DESA on alternatives such as raising the median income by x% or boosting the incomes of the poorest. Many recommended deleting targets (c) and (d), or consideration of moving (d) to a more relevant focus area, such as focus area 8.

## **Focus area 2: Sustainable agriculture, food security and nutrition**

Member States stressed that ending hunger and ensuring nutrition security, as well as sustainable agriculture, are a growing challenge for all Member States and should be addressed prominently in the SDGs. Most countries welcomed and supported a dedicated goal on sustainable agriculture, food security and nutrition. Many expressed that such a goal is related to the realization of the right to food, by ending hunger, ensuring food security and nutrition for all and sustainable agriculture based on the Secretary-General’s “Zero Hunger-Challenge”. They stressed the centrality of the five targets in the working document based on the Zero Hunger Challenge and supported the two targets on access to adequate food for all year round as well as on ending malnutrition in all its forms.

On “sustainable agriculture”, key issues highlighted included: increasing agricultural productivity; promoting sustainable agriculture practices, including strengthening resilience and adaptability of farming systems to climate change; improving water efficiency in agriculture, and the key role of smallholders, family farmers, women, indigenous peoples and local communities in agriculture. Key challenges included: the need to reshape trade policies to remove harmful agricultural subsidies (which were seen as barriers to sustainable agriculture in developing countries), the need for improved access to credit and markets; and means of implementation including capacity building, investment, and research and development and building rural infrastructure for sustainable agriculture. Some countries voiced their objection to the use of the term “climate-smart agriculture” as not being widely accepted, and suggested replacing this term with “sustainable agriculture”. On the issue of use of chemicals in agriculture, there were divergent views, with some countries calling for development of non-chemical alternatives, while others stressed that a flat reduction of chemical use, including fertilizers and pesticides was not realistic.

On the issue of “food security and nutrition” there was general support for the need for adequate food that was safe, affordable, diverse and nutritious. While there was support for the language in the focus areas document on ending malnutrition, some countries noted that language on ending hunger needed to be reintroduced to this focal area. Increasing food production was seen to be vital, and the need to reduce the global rate of loss and waste along the food supply chain was generally supported. In this regard, however, some countries noted the need for differentiation between developed and developing countries, to reflect the varying levels of food production and consumption. On the target of reducing the global rate of loss and waste along the food supply chain by 50 percent by 2030, some countries expressed reservations and stated that differentiation was required between waste and loss of food, and recommended either including a reference to technology transfer to developing countries to address the loss of food, or, alternatively, splitting target (e) into two targets, one focused on food waste, and another on food loss.

Throughout the discussions on FA 1 and 2, many countries welcomed a specific stand-alone goal on means of implementation in order for the SDGs to be truly effective.

### **Focus area 3: Health and population dynamics and 4: Education and lifelong learning**

On both focus areas, several countries emphasized the need to agree on quantifiable global targets rather than non-quantifiable global targets with a view to maintaining the level of ambition in the international community and keeping the existing targets and commitments. Some countries proposed targets on means of implementation related to finance, transfer of technology and capacity building.

On health and population dynamics, there was general support for a stand-alone goal of health as part of the unfinished MDG businesses as well as the inclusion of the target areas such as neglected tropical diseases and non-communicable diseases, among others.

A number of countries called for a greater focus on vulnerable groups across the target areas to address inequality. Several proposed the inclusion of road safety as an issue in the existing target areas. Divergent views on the proposed target areas on deaths and illness from air pollution and other forms of environmental degradation<sup>1</sup>, and on narcotic drug and substance abuse<sup>2</sup> in terms of their measurability and placement in the document were expressed by some countries.

Additional targets related to migration not contained in the current document were proposed. Some countries stressed the need to incorporate rights-based policies, including in the target areas related to sexual and reproductive health, while others suggested a careful approach to the issue be taken according to national circumstances in accordance with the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) decisions.

On education and lifelong learning, there was broad agreement on a stand-alone goal of education as part of the unfinished MDG businesses, stressing that its importance to all countries, regardless of their development status, embodies universality.

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<sup>1</sup> Focus area 3. g) decrease by x% the number of deaths and illnesses from indoor and outdoor air pollution and other forms of environmental degradation

<sup>2</sup> Focus area 3. h) eliminate narcotic drug and substance abuse

Some countries proposed including tertiary education and the link to the job market in the target areas. Others called for a greater focus on traditionally marginalized groups such as indigenous groups, persons with disabilities and migrant communities across the target areas. Some representatives proposed including in education curricula other elements such as sustainable consumption and production and natural resource management, in addition to the existing elements.

#### **Focus area 5: Gender equality and women's empowerment:**

Interventions overwhelmingly supported both a stand-alone and a cross-cutting goal on gender equality and women's empowerment. Countries also overwhelmingly supported the inclusion of men and boys in efforts to promote and achieve gender equality, and urged addressing structural inequalities and the results and language of the 58<sup>th</sup> Commission on the Status of Women. Countries proposed addressing structural inequalities within the overall SDG framework, and an overwhelming number of countries proposed adding a clause to the target on ensuring equal access to, and control of, assets and resources, including natural resources management. Many supported promoting the use of gender disaggregated data to improve gender equality policies, including gender sensitive budgeting.

#### **Focus area 6: Water and sanitation**

Many countries observed the noticeable absence of a target on sanitation and sanitation infrastructure, and requested the target's inclusion. Many countries called for the inclusion of the protection of ecosystems in line with Aichi target 14. On the target focused on improving water-use efficiency, many countries asked that the clause 'with particular focus on agriculture' be removed, while others suggested the inclusion of other productive sectors such as industry and cities.

#### **Focus area 7: Energy**

Many countries called for a stand-alone goal on sustainable energy. Some, particularly developing countries, felt that the targets under this focus area would not translate into national-level implementation, particularly for developing countries and LDCs which are on different sustainable energy development levels. Several countries emphasized the importance of common but differentiated responsibilities. Some called for a target on phasing out harmful fossil fuel subsidies, while several countries called for green economy and a strong gender focus to be included in this focus area.

#### **Focus area 8: Economic growth, employment and infrastructure**

Some countries expressed concern that the targets under this focus area did not fully address all dimensions of sustainable development, and that further clustering was needed in order to maintain a balance between the three pillars. A number of delegates preferred to split this focus area with suggestions to merge the infrastructure element with industrialization or sustainable cities. Several governments supported having a stand-alone goal on economic growth and a separate one for employment. Some countries encouraged incorporating women's economic empowerment and green growth and social protection in this focus area. Suggestions for MOI included ODA and other sources of financing, debt relief and trade preferences, as well as a UN global technology facilitation mechanism.

### **Focus area 9: Industrialization and promoting equality among nations**

Some countries expressed concern that targets under this focus area were skewed towards the environment dimension of sustainable development, and further clustering was needed in order to maintain a balance across the three pillars of sustainable development. Some governments also called for re-clustering cross-cutting issues such as equality, industrialization, and cities in other focus areas. Countries noted that “the equality among nations” element of the industrialization focus was not represented in any targets, and many suggested that inequality should comprise its own focus area. Some developing countries called for support to make industrialization inclusive and sustainable. Suggestions for MOI included ODA, concessional loans for developing countries and market and technology access at affordable prices.

### **Focus area 7: Energy**

There was general consensus on support for a stand-alone goal on energy within the framework of the SE4ALL initiative. Many countries called for more environmental considerations in the targets, particularly in reducing water pollution and depletion of ecosystems from primary and secondary energy production. Some expressed concern about various concrete targets, and countries’ abilities to meet these targets within the proposed timelines. While there was general agreement on ensuring universal access to sustainable energy services, increasing the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix, and increasing the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency, there was no agreement on the phasing out of fossil fuel subsidies.

### **Focus area 8: Economic growth, employment and infrastructure**

This focus area was revised drastically from OWG-10, and the revisions were met with mixed responses. Many countries called for informal-informal consultations to address the focus area, while others expressed overall satisfaction with the current formulation, but with environmental issues addressed more directly. For many countries, the merging of employment, infrastructure and economic growth into one goal watered down the focus area. Some suggested a target to promote an open and inclusive rules-based trading system, including by increasing the LDCs share of global trade and market access and improving trade efficiency, including by carrying out trade facilitation measures, tackling non-tariff barriers to trade, and removing harmful tariffs. Countries also proposed a target to increase global foreign direct investment to LDCs, and to implement national natural resource management regulatory frameworks to improve sustainability.

### **Focus area 13: Conservation and sustainable use of marine resources, oceans and seas and 14: Ecosystems and biodiversity**

Many countries reaffirmed the importance of both focus areas for achieving sustainable development. There were calls for a greater integration of the targets in both areas with other areas including poverty eradication, sustainable agriculture, food security and nutrition, and sustainable consumption and production or climate change. References were made to the Rio+20 outcome document (para 4), where the need for sustainable management of natural resources and ecosystems to achieve sustainable development is explicitly stated. The African Group suggested merging Focus Areas 13 and 14 into one Goal, to address all types of ecosystems and biodiversity comprehensively. Many other countries were of the opinion that the two areas should be addressed separately.

### **Focus area 13: Conservation and sustainable use of marine resources, oceans and seas**

Several countries specifically representing SIDS focused their interventions on oceans and seas, provided amendments to existing text, and stated their priorities. There was consensus on prevention of pollution, including ocean acidification of oceans and seas, elimination of illegal fishing and on sustainable small fisheries. Views on Marine Protected Areas, subsidies for fishing, and international regimes for governing seas and oceans beyond national jurisdictions raised divergent concerns among several countries, because these areas are heavily regulated under international, often legally-binding agreements, or are currently under negotiation at various forums.

### **Focus area 14: Ecosystems and biodiversity**

The G-77 & China called for the recognition of the contributions of SFM to sustainable development, and proposed enhanced cooperation and coordination on the relationship between climate change, loss of biodiversity and desertification. In addition, the Group called for mobilization of resources for SFM to contribute to poverty eradication/socio-economic development and environmental sustainability. Many countries proposed language compatible with the Aichi Targets consistent with the Global Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2022, while LDCs proposed text to ensure prior and informed consent related to traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples.

Some countries proposed a target to improve the condition of ecosystems affected by desertification and to reduce the total area affected by desertification; others called for more measurable and numerical targets, and for a target on environmental and social accounting. A few called for a stand-alone goal on ecosystems and biodiversity and targets on deforestation and creating protected areas.

A few countries suggested that biodiversity be reflected through inter-linkages to poverty, water, energy, health, education, equality and gender. Some called for mobilization of resources for SFM to contribute to poverty eradication/socio-economic development and environmental sustainability. Reference was made to para 195 of the Rio+20 outcome document in which the CPF was invited to continue its support to UNFF. Some forest-related suggestions for targets included a more specific, quantitative (X ha of forests by 2030) target on deforestation and reforestation.

Other proposals included a target to strengthen forest governance frameworks and promote SFM; addressing halting deforestation and restoring degraded forest ecosystems; the inclusion of community-based forest management and mountain development, and a target on SFM and mountain ecosystems.

Some countries proposed a stand-alone goal to ensure the sustainable management of natural resources and productive, healthy and resilient ecosystems and biodiversity. They proposed a target on tenure rights of natural resources, and another on nature-based mitigation and adaptation to climate change and disaster risk-management.

The African Group proposed an additional target: “Reinforce incentives for developing countries to advance SFM and enhancement of forest carbon stocks”. Some countries called for biodiversity and ecosystem areas to be spread through focus areas on poverty eradication, sustainable agriculture, and food security. Targets on accounting and the valuation of ecosystem services, and

providing economic incentives for sustainable management of natural resources were also proposed.

### **Focus area 15: Means of implementation/Global partnership for sustainable development**

On means of implementation/global partnership for sustainable development, there was general support for a stand-alone goal and the elements contained in the focus area, namely, trade; technology transfer, technological capabilities; financing and debt sustainability; capacity building, and strengthened global partnership for sustainable development. Conversely, there were divergent views on whether means of implementation should also be addressed in other focus areas. The G-77 & China called for clarifying the proposed targets to refer to specific requirements of developing countries, and emphasized the need for a time-bound financing target; technology transfer to assist developing countries; using Monterrey and Doha as a basis for the targets; distinguishing between MOI and the global partnership; separating the target on trade and financial systems, and adding a target on ensuring debt sustainability.

Many developing countries proposed a cross-cutting stand-alone goal that addressed all focus areas to serve as a catalyst for the achievement of the SDGs. They suggested that trade targets should focus on equality and fairness among trade partners, and a new target on adding value to LLDCs' primary products, as well as technical support for regional, sub-regional and national programmes for LLDCs. They proposed reforming international financial institutions to promote inclusive, participatory decision-making, removing trade barriers, and recovering all stolen resources by 2020. They also called for a renewed ODA commitment that allocates 15% to LDCs and for debt relief, including "the right for development" in the subtitles, targets to eliminate harmful subsidies in relation to trade, increasing LDCs experts, and improving the capabilities of SMEs and their participation in regional and global supply chains. They called for a target to "reduce by x% distortions in international trade", and proposed references to a technology facilitation mechanism, data collection, and regulating the international financial system. SIDS stressed that MOI was a critical prerequisite for SIDS to achieve their goals, and proposed including references to SIDS in targets on market access and exports, an additional target on the implementation of the Frameworks Convention on Tobacco Control in all countries, and achieving ICT access to all, including SIDS.

Some countries stated that the work of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing (ICESDF) and the Financing for Development (FfD) conference should not be duplicated or prejudged. They called for a strong, cross-cutting partnership to possibly be elaborated at the FfD conferences. A few countries proposed considering other ongoing discussion on finance for development and all financial flows when setting MOI targets. They suggested referencing sound fiscal and microeconomic mechanisms, removing barriers to entrepreneurship and innovation, promoting low-cost and scalable technologies that make relevant public data accessible and protecting space for civil society.

### **Focus area 16: Peaceful and inclusive societies, rule of law and capable institutions**

On peaceful and inclusive societies, rule of law and capable institutions, there were divergent views as to whether this focus area should be addressed as a stand-alone goal or as a cross-cutting enabler across other goals. A few countries proposed deleting the focus areas and including the reference to migration in focus area 8 on economic growth, employment and infrastructure. Many

countries called for two separate stand-alone goals for the focus area, one on “peaceful and inclusive societies” and another on “rule of law and capable institutions”. Some countries proposed incorporating the elements or addressing the issues contained in this focus area in the narrative part of the text, as opposed to addressing them in the focus area, in view of their enabling effects on sustainable development.

The African Group called for realizing that peaceful and inclusive societies are not ends in themselves, but means for achieving the overall goals, and suggested that issues covered in this focus area required actions on poverty inequality, governance, and environmental degradation. The Non-Aligned Movement called for more attention to the international dimensions of the rule of law, and equal opportunities for all states to participate in law-making processes. Others suggested revising several targets to address “people from all social groups”. Others emphasized “inclusivity” in relation to the goal on peace, and suggested adding targets to reducing the number of displaced persons and enhancing the security sector. Other countries stressed that the target on access to justice should go beyond for property and business; proposed enhancing the professionalism and accountability of police, adding a reference to the inclusive publicly available data about governments and public expenditure and including marginalized groups, including women and youth, in participatory decision-making processes.

A few countries proposed moving all targets on “peaceful and inclusive societies” to other focus areas and retaining a goal on rule of law and capable institutions that refers to both national and international levels. They added that the corruption target should place greater emphasis on international cooperation in criminal affairs and strengthening capacities for monitoring, and zero tolerance for impunity.

### **Closing: The Way Forward**

The Co-Chair presented the Co-Chair’s views on the next iteration of the working document and the way forward. He informed the session that issues of equality would be included in the next working document of OWG12. He observed that there appeared to be willingness for flexibility among supporters of a stand-alone goal on climate change if their concerns were addressed elsewhere in the document; climate change will remain in the next version of the document. MOI as a focus area would also remain in the document with an increase in directive language on MOI throughout the document. Focus area 16 still remained divisive, and would remain in the document. The OWG12 working document will have a total of 17 focus areas with many more targets and will be available by 27 May, while the draft chapeau will be available on 9 May. The Co-Chair proposed that OWG12 place greater focus on discussing targets. In response to requests for more informal discussions, he informed the meeting that the week before each of the remaining two sessions would be dedicated to informal-informals, which will not pre-empt the OWG. The first informal-informal will be held from 9-11 June.