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STATEMENT BY
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AT
THE FOURTH SESSION OF THE OPEN WORKING GROUP ON
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

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New York

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Co-Chairs,

I thank you for giving me, on behalf of my delegation, an opportunity to address this Open Working Group on the important matter of developing a set of global sustainable development goals in the areas of “*Employment and decent work for all, Social protection, Youth, Education and Culture*”.

I also thank the Technical Support Team (TST) for the valuable Issues Briefs that it prepared to facilitate our work.

Uganda aligns itself with the statements delivered by Permanent Representatives of Fiji, Djibouti and Benin on behalf of the G77 and China, the African Group, and LDCs respectively.

Co-Chairs,

The post-2015 development agenda needs a renewed and comprehensive focus on structural transformation to tackle the root causes of underdevelopment and not just its symptoms. Uganda’s experience with MDG 1, for example, where we’ve already achieved the MDG target, shows that the impressive performance in poverty reduction that we have achieved has been closely linked to an expansion in more secure and productive forms of employment for poorer households and not necessarily increased social spending. Therefore, the thematic areas under consideration today are very pertinent to the formulation of the new SDGs.

Employment and decent work

My delegation is of the view that employment and decent work are legitimate and fundamental goals in their own right.

If we agree that the principal route out of poverty is through work and income, then labour remains the most important asset in the hands of the poor that must be nurtured and harnessed to transform it into decent work for all. To reduce and eventually eradicate poverty, we need a growth process that creates more and better jobs with adequate social protection.

We therefore need specific goals focusing on creation of jobs, sustainable livelihoods and equitable, inclusive and sustained growth with a corresponding set of targets and indicators.

Social protection

Co-Chairs,

Social protection is an important means to reduce inequality and foster solidarity in a society. However, this protection should comprise basic social security guarantees that ensure at a minimum, over the life cycle, access to essential health care and to basic income security for those in need as defined at national level.

Youth

Co-Chairs,

The youth represent an important human resource for the future of all our societies. It is therefore essential that appropriate policies are formulated and implemented to equip and empower the youth to actively participate in all development processes. This participation should span the exercise of their political, civic and socio-economic rights in decision making. The formulation of the SDGs should address the need to increase opportunities of employment for the youth and to facilitate their meaningful involvement in national development efforts that will respond to their needs and aspirations.

Education and Culture

Co-Chairs,

Education has, and will always be central to the development agenda. It is a prerequisite for our populations' awareness of their fundamental human rights, responsibilities and sense of identity as reflected in their cultures.

We should not try to reinvent the wheel because we already have the benefit of important lessons from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Education for All (EFA) agenda to ensure that education is universal, free, compulsory, inclusive, equitable and based on partnership. The post-2015 development goal on education needs to address the three key elements of equity, access and quality in a manner consistent with labour market dynamics. The new framework must enable the attainment of a strategic balance between vocational, skills training and tertiary education to drive economic transformation.

Culture is what distinguishes one society from another and it should be accepted, protected and preserved in its diversity.

Furthermore, its close nexus with education makes it an enabler and a strong driver for sustainable development. In this sense, we need to look at culture as an important resource for addressing each of the three dimensions of sustainable development, as well as to foster peace and reconciliation.

There is need to ensure cultural rights for all to promote inclusive social development. The focus must be on safeguarding cultural and natural heritage, promoting cultural institutions, cultural tourism and the culture sector in general. This should include clear targets and indicators that relate culture to all dimensions of sustainable development.

Co-Chairs,

In concluding, my delegation looks forward to the elaboration and formulation of a new set of goals and targets on the important areas of Employment and decent work for all, Social Protection, Youth, Education and Culture that are consistent with our aspiration for balanced integration of the social, economic and environmental dimensions of development.

I thank you for your attention.