

10th Session of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (OWG-SDG 10):
31 March - 4 April 2014

Cluster #3: Gender Equality and women's empowerment, education, employment and decent work for all, Health and Population dynamics

Statement by Mr Waruna Sri Dhanapala, Minister Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Sri Lanka to the United Nations, New York

1st April 2014

Mr Co-Chair,

My delegation associated itself with the statement delivered by the Preeminent Representative of Bolivia on behalf of G77 and China.

A universal health coverage is a must under the SDGs. Considering the capacities of disadvantaged countries to mobilize financial and non-financial resources, different country-specific targets and mid-term targets could be agreed upon.

Sri Lanka wishes to thank you for accommodating our proposal to recognize the importance of traditional knowledge in the dissemination of medical and public health knowledge (action area 'd' in Focus area 3), and for considering youth as a group that needs specific attention when considering the health needs of societies.

We are particularly happy to see your identification of ensuring affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all (action area 'c' of the Focus area 3) and reducing road accidents (sub area n). Most of the health related targets could be directly derived from MDGs so the Group must not waste much time on those obvious choices of potential high consensus among the OWG members.

We support a stand-alone goal on gender equity and women's empowerment.

Mr. Co-Chair,

On education: As indicated in the action area (a), Universal free primary and secondary education for girls and boys is essential, provided that the resource flow from affluent countries to developing countries. However, the quality of school education must be addressed as children must acquire skills for the different demands in the job market - both local and international as recognized in action area 3e. We propose a substantive target of equipping global youth in vocational/technical education by 2030.

Another potential target is the share of the contribution of SMEs in national economies. It will reflect the quality of professional/entrepreneurial skills acquired through the primary, secondary and tertiary/vocational education streams, especially by youth and women.

We propose a 80% - 100% target of universal ICT literacy by 2030, which will directly and indirectly leverage all three pillars of sustainable development.

Mechanisms for imparting knowledge and resources from leveraged partnerships is a must under means of implementation. Focus areas of economic growth, industrialization and agriculture could be sustained with such a skilled labour force.

I thank you Mr. Co-Chair