

**Open-Workin Group on  
Sustainable Development Group  
10<sup>th</sup> Meeting**

**Gender equality and women's empowerment  
Education  
Employment and decent work for all  
Health and population dynamics**

I have the honor to make this intervention on behalf of **Croatia and Bulgaria**.

Having in mind the request of Co-chairs to provide as concrete and concise proposals as possible, it is not our intention to repeat our previous statements from previous sessions on today's cluster of focus areas, as they are available on the Group's website.

However, we feel the need to stress several points we deem particularly important for the purpose of defining stand-alone goals and major action areas.

First, we are under impression that most members of this Group have so far expressed, *mutatis mutandis*, their support for the inclusion of **gender equality** and women's empowerment in the core of our joint post 2015 agenda. As we have heard so many times the expression "leave no one behind", we consider that this couldn't be more appropriate in case when still more than a half of global population continues to face different types of violence and discrimination on a daily basis. We would therefore like to believe that we are not much far from agreeing to make this a stand-alone goal.

Nevertheless, we also believe that these topics, multidimensional in their nature, will also require our attention in other clusters, focus and action areas alike as depicted in the Interlinkages paper. As far as specific targets are in question, we are open to work with all parties in determining them. In this regard we are pleased to recognize that many, while maybe not necessarily all, important and specific objectives have been outlined as action areas. At the same time we would like to underline one more action area related to ensuring cultural rights for all, notably women to promote inclusive social development. We also hope that with future sessions, and if necessary with collection of more relevant data, we would be able to collectively come to consensus on the final targets' specificities.

**Education** is critically important be it as an enabler, a driver or a multiplier of the sustainable development. Identified interlinkages only serve as a proof of this fact. That is why we consider education deserves the status of one of the undisputed core stand-alone goals. Investments in education are indeed investments in our collective future. Thus, we need to make it as one of the key targets and ensure equitable and inclusive access to quality education at all levels. We will all depend on educated and skilled population to lead our societies in a sustainable manner to 2030 and, with new ideas and new solutions, even more successfully beyond. We give special attention to following action areas: a) universal free primary and secondary education for girls and boys; b), d), f) and g).

**Employment and Decent work** - Employment and decent work should be considered in the context of inclusive, sustainable and equitable economic growth, social protection, youth and education.

We should address employment and decent work through the prism of creating international common standards regarding Decent Work. It also needs to ensure the creation at national level of adequate legislation creating favorable conditions for investment, and environmentally responsible businesses while ensuring respect for the fundamental principles and rights at work. We think this issue is deeply connected to other focus area such as Economic growth so we will be more specific tomorrow when we will discuss the Economic growth.

On **health**, we do see a standalone overarching health related goal that would have to strengthen the linkages between health and development more coherently than provided in the MDGs framework. We believe health-related targets should be included under other goals such as food and nutrition, education, gender, energy, environmental issues. We welcome the target on providing for the health needs of vulnerable groups. We also would like to see an action area related to the achievement of universal access to treatment for HIV/AIDS and on sexual and reproductive rights. We will come back later with more specific wording on the last one.