

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

**Health and Population Dynamics  
Education**

Mr. Co-Chair,  
Excellences,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to make this intervention on behalf of **Croatia and Bulgaria**.

On **health**, we do see a standalone overarching health related goal and we welcome the proposed targets focusing on universal health coverage and highlighting the importance of reaching vulnerable and most marginalized groups, including women, children and persons with disabilities. As very important aspects we would like to underline following areas: reducing the maternal mortality ratio, ending preventable new-born and child deaths, providing for the health needs of vulnerable groups, ending the epidemics, achieving universal access to medicines and vaccines as well as treatment for HIV/AIDS. The very important issue, we would like to highlight, is sexual and reproductive health and rights, so we propose the following target on it: ensuring the promotion and protection of women's sexual and reproductive health and rights as well as universally accessible and available comprehensive sexual and reproductive health care services, commodities, information and education, in accordance with the Program of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences.

In addition to the invaluable list of targets presented under Focus Area 3, we would like to add a target on reducing irrational use of antibiotics so that it reads: ***By 2030, reduce to zero the irrational use of antibiotics in general and the non-therapeutic and preventive use of antibiotics in livestock production to protect adequate and affordable healthcare for all.***

On education, Croatia and Bulgaria strongly believe that **education** is a prerequisite for breaking cycles of inter-generational poverty and instrumental for fostering active citizenship, therefore we have been advocating it as a core stand-alone goal, fulfilment of which will be critical for delivering the whole agenda by 2030.

Our particular focus needs to be directed towards the younger generation who are custodians of the future we want for this World.

Ensuring the universal, free, equitable access to quality primary and secondary education for every child, providing for truly inclusive education, skills development and vocational training, increasing the access and complete quality of pre-primary education and improving the quality of education for all in a lifelong perspective both within formal and non-formal education especially by increasing literacy and providing vocational education and training with the particular focus on women and most marginalized are necessary targets for eradicating poverty and achieving sustainable development. In that sense, target c. needs to be complemented with creative skills in addition to technical, engineering and scientific skills. Developing quality and innovative programs, professional, technical and vocational training and lifelong learning will

help to gear to bridging skills gaps for advancing sustainable development objectives. Indeed, there is an important link with the private sector and job creation, which needs to be addressed here.

We need to promote sustainable development and integrate it more actively into education beyond the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, since it equally addresses all three pillars of sustainable development – society, environment and economy – with culture as an essential additional and underlying dimension.

Thank you for your attention.

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