

Statement of Iceland for the discussion on the Declaration of the Post-2015 Development Agenda

Monday 22 June 2015

Ms. Anna Pála Sverrisdóttir, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Co-facilitators

Once again, let me thank you for all your hard work in helping us find a common way towards the new agenda. Overall, Iceland is of the opinion that the zero draft is a sound basis for going forward, even if there is still some room for improvement.

Regarding structure of the document, we think the preamble is a good idea and we support the “nine bullets.” On to the draft declaration, which I’ll be discussing in this statement; in our view it has some good language but could be even more concise.

Co-facilitators,

Let me highlight a very positive aspect of the text: The reference to poverty as the greatest global challenge. The poorest people and the poorest, least developed countries of this world are an absolute priority in Iceland’s development policy and therefore we strongly support this reference.

Gender equality and women’s empowerment are quite well reflected in the text and we are grateful to see both a mainstreaming of these issues as well as a stand-alone paragraph. We do however have some specific ideas for further improvement, such as briefly referring to this essential issue earlier on in the declaration, and also referring to it as something that is for the benefit of all – women and girls, men and boys. Full realization of the human rights of women and girls is fundamental for success of this agenda and we strongly wish to see it referred to as such. Also important is the participation of civil society and women’s grassroots organisations, as well is women’s leadership.

Certainly, as my US colleague just touched upon, we can support stronger references to non-discrimination, such as on the grounds of sexual orientation.

Co-facilitators.

Let me be clear that we don’t want the declaration to be a repetition of the content of the SDGs. Summing up is therefore useful, and one such overarching reference is the necessity of sustainable use of natural resources, as seen in the preamble. One specific aspect we would like to slightly improve are the references to energy already in the text, which we believe should refer to either sustainable or renewable energy. There’s no other way towards the future, and

without it we won't be able to tackle climate change and stay under 2 degrees global warming.

We like in general the paragraph on "our vision". However, we wonder if envisaging a world free of disease reflects a realistic objective. Perhaps inserting "ensuring healthy lives and well-being", such as in the next sentence, could do. This would be a good way to emphasize the importance of the health-related goals and targets in a manner that is broad enough to capture a broad range of diseases and health issues, such as non-communicable diseases including neurological disorders, which are a particular focus of my Government.

Co-facilitators,

We don't see the necessity or logic of singling out just one Rio principle, that is the CBDR principle. What is more, its presentation in the text does not properly reflect its limited scope.

Regarding the use of 4 Ps at the beginning of the declaration – adding Peace as a sort of a 5th P is a nice gesture; but we repeat our opinion that in communicating the agenda, we will need to properly reflect what a transformative agenda this will be; where all people are equal before the law and in the enjoyment of their human rights. We see that as an absolute prerequisite for leaving no one behind.

Co-facilitators, I might want to revisit some of these issues at a later stage.

And - Let me join my Indian colleague in looking forward to finalizing our common task on July 31st.

I thank you.