



B E L A R U S

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STATEMENT

by

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ON BEHALF OF THE CONSTITUENCY THAT INCLUDES
THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS AND THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

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I have the honour to speak on behalf of the constituency that includes the Republic of Belarus and the Republic of Serbia.

Our delegations commend the Technical Support Team for providing well-prepared materials on the substance of the issues we are to discuss today.

We try to cover in our discussion these days a number of vital areas. Let me briefly outline the stance that Belarus and Serbia jointly take on each of them.

Employment

Let me begin with employment. This area has not been specifically addressed in the MDGs framework. As a result, there has been a strong argument in favor of rectifying the situation in the context of the post-2015 UN development agenda. We certainly agree with this point. I would rather refrain from elaborating on how significant employment is to every country, society, or a working-age individual. It is obvious indeed. In our view, it would make a lot of sense to have a stand-alone goal on employment with the breakdown into a number of specific targets. At this stage it is important to fully use the potentials of creating new, green and decent jobs in the spirit of Rio+20 outcome document. We are quite flexible at this point to discuss any appropriate proposals.

Social Protection

Next I would like to dwell a bit on social protection. Both Belarus and Serbia prefer to have a stand-alone goal on social protection. We think a possible alternative option that would place social protection as a target under the poverty reduction goal would not be sufficient to address the growing social needs of people. Both Belarus and Serbia have recently completed their national consultations on the post-2015 UN development agenda. The outcomes of both processes prominently featured the need for enhanced social protection as seen by ordinary people. This point has been strongly stressed by the representatives of the UN Country Teams from both Belarus and Serbia during their presentations at the recent regional conference on MICs in the context of sustainable development in Minsk. We believe that the situation elsewhere in the world is very much the same.

Education

As for education we would like to point out the following. We certainly share the dominant view about the need to finish the business launched in this area in the frame of the MDGs. Having a stand-alone goal here would be wise. However, against the background of the MDG framework, which has tackled education well enough, we should attempt to set a far higher goal, as well as respective targets than those present in the MDG setting. In particular, what we have in mind in the context of education targets is to have an indicator that fosters skills and talent among youth. Beside that, we would like to highlight the importance to ensure the rights of education for all and stress in this regard the importance of implementation of inclusive education policies in different levels. Further development of all types of formal and non formal education for sustainable development should be promoted in accordance with the UN agenda, such as the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development.

Youth

This brings me to the area of youth proper. Belarus and Serbia are of the view that youth should be adequately reflected in the next development agenda. We believe that there should be a separate goal on youth. It shouldn't be integrated into some other goal because this subject is complex enough as it is alone. All the richness and comprehensiveness of the youth policy issues wouldn't be visible and noticeable as it should be and as it deserves to be if we consider or implement the idea to integrate it with some other issue.

Culture

Moving to culture now, I would like to say that both Belarus and Serbia find the proposal of UNESCO to have a stand-alone goal on culture very appealing. Various studies increasingly demonstrate that culture and development have a very close relationship. Thus, let us indeed try to incorporate culture in the future sustainability framework.

Health

As far as health is concerned, Belarus and Serbia's joint point of departure is this. We highly appreciate how the health-related goals and indicators contributed to improving health of people across the world since 2000. Nonetheless, like in the case with education, we have an unfinished business in this area, too. The preference of Belarus and Serbia would be to have a separate health goal in the future development framework to complete still outstanding health issues. In this regard special attention should be given to health and environment considerations as well as to the health impacts of climate change.

Demographics

Last, but far from least, let me say a few words about demographics. This area is clearly related to international migration, and both, in turn, affect development, perhaps more than anything else. Belarus and Serbia would opt for a stand-alone goal on these two interrelated issues. We believe that if managed properly, both can significantly contribute to the cause of global development. Having said that, we would like to point out that we would favor a very cautious approach in this effort that fully takes into account the interests and concerns of all countries and groups of countries.