

Saudi Arabia Intervention: Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, March 3, 2013

I would like to begin by thanking the co-chairs for their leadership throughout this process and for the documents they have provided.

Saudi Arabia aligns itself with the statement made by the Ambassador to Bolivia on behalf of the G77 and China.

I would like to express my agreement with the statements made by my colleagues from Kazakhstan, China, Indonesia, India, and Egypt.

In addition to their statements, I would like to stress a few points regarding the focus document as well as the way forward more generally. In our view, the Focus Document should not be viewed as an inclusive and complete document.

1. Poverty Eradication is and will continue to be our overarching goal.
2. The SDGs should reflect the three pillars of sustainable development: social, environmental, and economic in a balanced matter.
3. The MDGs should not be forgotten and continue to serve as the basis for our work.
4. Common but Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR) should underpin our discussions. This principle was agreed upon in Rio and reiterated by numerous countries and groups in the past year. Developed countries should take the lead in issues such as SCP.
5. The right to development and sovereignty should be respected and each member state has the right to set their individual national priorities.
6. It is our belief that Climate Change should not be a stand-alone goal. The UNFCCC is the appropriate platform for detailed climate change negotiations and the SDGs should respect and adhere to UNFCCC principles.
7. Means of implementation is crucial to the success of the SDGs and they should feature prominently throughout our outcome document. Developed countries should take the lead, especially in financing.
8. The issue of energy should focus on access to energy to the billions who do not have it and not linked to climate change. Moreover, access to energy will have positive effects on many developmental issues such as education, health, water, and agriculture, among others. Technology transfer should play an important role on this issue, such as in cleaner fossil fuel technology and carbon capture and storage. Furthermore, it is our view that implementing energy subsidies is the sovereign right of each country and coincides with respective national circumstances and lifting the subsidies will have negative effects on sustainable development in many countries. In addition, the Rio+20 document places subsidies under Consumption and Production including tax restructuring.

9. Sexual and reproductive issues present a sensitive cultural, moral, and religious topic and as such we should respect countries' culture and religion in this regard.
10. We would like to agree with our colleagues on the issue of focus point 19. This issue should not be a stand-alone goal.
11. Finally, we are concerned with the inclusion of initiatives or processes such as the SE4ALL initiative that are outside our intergovernmental process. This group is an open intergovernmental one and we should maintain that spirit. These other initiatives will distract from the bigger picture and take our focus away from poverty eradication, our main goal.

In closing, we look forward to offering more views throughout the process as this is our initial view.

Thank you.