

Statement by Austria

Focus area 5. Gender equality and women's empowerment

Mr Co-Chair,

We would like to express our gratitude to the Co-Chairs for their excellent work on Focus Area 5 on gender equality and women's empowerment. As work continues on the definition of goals and targets, we believe that an important basis for future discussions on gender equality should be the Agreed Conclusions of the 58th Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women, in which 120 UN Member States engaged. The Commission called not only for a standalone goal on gender equality and the empowerment of women, but also for gender equality to be integrated through targets and indicators into all goals of the new development framework. In light of this strong recommendation, Austria asks the Co-Chairs to ensure the systematic integration of gender equality and women's rights across all of the focus areas of the framework. This should include the comprehensive integration of gender equality targets and indicators across the new framework; and the systematic disaggregation of data by sex.

In detail Austria proposes the following changes:

We would like to strengthen the title of this Focus Area as follows: "Empower women and girls and achieve gender equality and full realization of human rights for women and girls everywhere."

Austria strongly supports target a) and b) but we would like to see girls added in target a). While we appreciate the mentioning of sexual and reproductive health in target i), Austria would like to see a stronger target by referring to "sexual and reproductive health and rights".

On target e) we prefer the agreed language from the CSW58 Agreed Conclusions and would suggest re-wording as follows: "by 2030 ensure equal access to, and control over and ownership of, assets and resources, including natural resources management and equal access to markets, justice systems and financial services."

For target f) we would ask the Co-Chairs to use the CSW wording as well: “ensure full equal participation and effective representation, participation and leadership of women at all levels in all fields of decision-making in public and private spheres.”

Regarding point g) we propose the following wording: “by 2030 end harmful practices against women and girls, especially child, early and forced marriage, FGM and honor crimes.”

We propose that target h) reads as follows: “by 2030 value, reduce and redistribute unpaid care and household work.”

On target j) we suggest the following wording: “ensure the availability of gender and sex- and age-disaggregated data to improve gender equality policies, including gender responsive budgeting.”

Finally, we would propose adding an additional target in this focus area on: “Fully engage men and boys in efforts to promote and achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.”

Focus area 6. Water and sanitation

Considering the importance water and sanitation have in respect to achieving sustainable development Austria supports a standalone goal on water and sanitation. Furthermore, we recommend emphasizing the human right on water and sanitation. In this context, access of vulnerable and marginalized population groups is particularly important.

We therefore propose point a) reads as follows: “by 2030, provide universal access to safe and affordable drinking water, sanitation and hygiene, especially for women and girls and marginalized and/or vulnerable groups.”

Seeing hygiene as a key element for realizing the targets in focus area 3 on health, we highly appreciate the inclusion of hygiene in the document.

We welcome that appropriate trans-boundary cooperation is mentioned in target d) as this helps to avoid and reduce conflicts over water resources. Also, we would suggest that empowerment of women is considered in this target, especially because women are often responsible for providing water. Furthermore in our view mountain ecosystems play a crucial role in providing water resources to a large portion of the world’s population; fragile

mountain ecosystems are particularly vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change, deforestation and forest degradation, land use change, land degradation and natural disasters. We therefore suggest the mentioning of mountain ecosystems not only in focus area 14 (Biodiversity) but also in the water sector.

So taking into account these two aspects, we would suggest the following wording for target d): “implement integrated water resource management with particular focus on mountain regions, including ensuring women’s decision making and equal control and appropriate trans-boundary co-operation”

For target e) we would propose as follows: “by 2030, bring fresh water extraction in line with sustainable supply to provide water-related services, especially from forest and mountain sources, while protecting and restoring those ecosystems.”

Furthermore we would prefer to have an own list of mountain ecosystems in focus area 14 and not mix it with forests.