

**3<sup>rd</sup> Session of Intergovernmental Negotiations on  
the Post-2015 Development Agenda  
March 23-27, 2015**

**Intervention by Mr. Amit Narang, Counsellor,  
Permanent Mission of India to UN  
March 26, 2015**

**Mr. Co-facilitator,**

Thank you for giving me the floor.

I would like to take this opportunity to share our views on the issue of so-called 'technical proofing' of the SDGs that has been proposed.

We have heard the views expressed by delegations since yesterday very carefully. We have had a very interesting exchange on this issue so far, which we found quite useful.

Let me start by saying that we fully endorse and strongly support the statement made by Group-77 which was also echoed by the African Group and the CARICOM and of course some of my colleagues who have spoken just before me.

**Mr. Co-facilitator,**

When we saw your list of the 19 targets which you proposed for 'proofing' we actually found it quite a useful exercise. We had heard this call for technical proofing of the targets for quite some time, but your list represented perhaps the first definitive 'technical verdict' on the target set, pronounced by the technical experts-people in the agencies who are following not the 'political science', but the real science of SDGs and targets.

This means of course that out of the 169 targets, the technical team identified only these 19 targets that needed to be fixed and that's it.

If that was to be the case, this would have been fairly useful exercise. But then we heard yesterday that this is in the view of some delegations, was just a 'promising start'. If this is indeed just a start, then perhaps it is not that promising!

**Mr. Co-Facilitator,**

As the statement made by the European Union yesterday testified, even this small package of 19 is fraught with deep divisions and disagreements.

It was clear from the discussions we have had so far that there is wide disagreement not just about *whether* to carry out proofing, but even in identifying the targets that need to be improved as also on the criteria which may be applied to this process.

There is disagreement also on what constitutes 'technical'. Several suggestions we have heard since yesterday, while extremely valuable, in our view constituted not a 'technical' but 'political' proofing.

There is no agreement also on what constitutes 'ambition' which is one of the criteria several delegations spoke of. In fact, the changes proposed by the technical support team to make some of the targets more ambitious were actually questioned by delegations in the room saying that they are making the targets *less* ambitious.

There is also no agreement on what to do with the Xs in the document. The manner in which the technical support team treated the Xs in your document, which for the record we found useful, was itself contested by many.

In other words, this notion of 'technical proofing' is not as straightforward as it would seem.

**Mr. Co-Facilitator,**

Does this mean that my delegation is fully satisfied with what we achieved on 19<sup>th</sup> July last year? Not quite.

After the SDGs were adopted, we have had a series of Inter-Ministerial consultations in India and several of our line Ministries have expressed concerns with the package.

Many of those concerns arise from the perceived challenges in implementing many of those objectives particularly as they are not accompanied with an enhancement of international support and resources.

Several challenges arise out of lack of full incorporation of national circumstances, as many of the targets seem to be generalized across geographies and development levels.

There are also challenges arising out of definitional issues which many of our line Ministries have found deeply problematic.

It is in this context that the Chapeau of the document was found useful by us in explicitly mentioning some of the key political understandings that underpin the SDGs. This is why we have called for the Chapeau to be fully integrated into the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

**Mr. Co-Facilitator,**

We are also, in other words, not fully satisfied with the outcome of the OWG. It is clearly far from perfect.

We are conscious however, of the imperfect world we live in and of the political realities in the room and outside it.

We are conscious that this is a political document, and not a technical document.

We are conscious that the issue of measurability is very important but we are also conscious that most likely this notion will not be applied on several elements contained in Goal 16, which are political in nature and, as we have cautioned several times, not measurable. This was actually confirmed by the UN Statistical Commission which launched, earlier this month, a 5 year long work programme to

start *understanding* how to measure several of the targets related to issues such as governance and rule of law.

We are conscious of the need to enhance ambition of the package, but we also know that this criterion will not be applied to Goal 17 of global partnership which remains the weakest link of the SDGs package.

We are aware of the importance of consistency of SDGs with international agreements. But our understanding is that SDGs do not override, supersede or substitute other international agreements. We all want a complementary international agenda. To take the example of the Sendai conference, which the distinguished Ambassador from Japan pointed out, it doesn't mean that the SDGs somehow nullify what was agreed in Sendai. We stand fully by what was agreed to in Sendai and to our commitment to that process.

By this logic of harmonizing the SDGs with international agreements, we may need to have an 'OWG Bis' every six months starting with December this year after the Paris Conference! But that is perhaps not the way in which we conceptualize this entire package.

Clearly therefore, Mr. **Co-Facilitator**, none of these criteria can be applied without violating the most important criteria mentioned by distinguished Ambassador from Kenya yesterday - that of not revisiting the Open Working Group.

**Mr. Co-Facilitator,**

In sum, let me emphasize once again that we are fully supportive what was said by G-77 and that after the discussions of yesterday and today, we are even more convinced that the risks of re-opening the SDGs package far outweigh any perceived benefits.

If we do re-open the package, we will run the risk of losing the SDGs we want or rather the *SDGs we All want*.

Let me conclude by repeating what my PR said in the first session. We firmly believe that we must build on what we have already achieved and move forward. We have several issues of importance to address in the coming few months and we should focus on those in right earnest.

I thank you.

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