

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

Tuesday 21 July 2015

Ms. Anna Pála Sverrisdóttir, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Co-facilitators

Thank you once again for all your hard work to help us reach a common conclusion on the sustainable development agenda for the next 15 years.

I'd like to align with the statement on gender equality made by Costa Rica this morning on behalf of a large number of states.

Co-facilitator. We have come a long way and I am confident that we can achieve a good and timely outcome if we set our minds to it.

At the outset, let me echo the questions and concerns voiced by so many member states so far, regarding the proposed changes to target 14.c, which should have been included in the text with the package of other revisions proposed by the co-facilitators. The position of Iceland is well known: The language as it stands on target 14.c is not acceptable, and we were glad yesterday to hear your encouragement on adopting a revised version of it.

Turning to the declaration, we welcome simple language in the declaration and echo those who have pointed out that we do not need it to be a summary of the whole package.

I would like to welcome the strong emphasis on prioritizing the poorest among us and support the reference to particular solidarity with the poorest and people in vulnerable situations in para 40, as well as the reference to poverty eradication as the greatest global challenge in para 3.

Co-facilitator,

As Ban Ki-moon put it in the foreword of the MDGs report 2015: "Progress tends to bypass women". Co-facilitator, we cannot allow that to happen to this agenda. Experience shows that when gender equality and women's empowerment isn't specifically and explicitly referred to as a major issue, it tends to be forgotten. It's not enough just to mention it somewhere, somehow; to be able to tick the box.

We are pleased with the emphasis the declaration has on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in the revised version, but we sorely miss a strong cross-cutting reference thereto in the preamble. We suggest that this reference be

included in the opening paragraph of the document or under a separate headline within the preamble, as there is strong consensus that the goals of our agenda will not be achieved without the full and equal participation of women and with respect for their human rights. We will submit concrete proposals as soon as possible.

Co-facilitator,

In paragraph 8 we would like to see a minor amendment where there's a reference to "every woman and child" enjoying gender equality. That probably wasn't the intention given the rest of the sentence but it strikes us as odd. First, women and children are not comparable groups. Second, gender equality ultimately benefits everyone; women and men; girls and boys. We therefore propose that the paragraph talks about realizing gender equality for the benefit of all.

Further on paragraph 8, while Iceland recognizes the importance of culture, as referenced to by Peru for instance, yesterday, we insist on striking the reference to cultural values in paragraph 8, as it may in some cases undermine the respect for the human rights of women. "Culture" would be a simple way to get a more agreeable solution.

We will send you our proposed changes in more detail, including on paragraph 19 but allow me in that context to state Iceland's support to the many states who have rightly pointed out that ensuring the human rights of women and girls also includes universal access to and enjoyment of sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Turning to the issue of families, we question the appropriateness of including a reference to the role of the family in the new draft. The family is not referenced in the Millennium Declaration, the 2005 and 2010 outcome documents, nor in the Future We Want. We, as so many others, suggest to delete this paragraph, or in case any reference to families will be included, it needs to be a clear referral to the various and diverse forms of families there are in this world.

Co-facilitators. As Lichtenstein just explained, people can only fulfill their potential when they live in peaceful, inclusive and fair societies, based on the rule of law. Iceland therefore supports calls that have been made so far, for strengthening references in the preamble to justice and to inclusive and fair societies based on good governance and the rule of law.

Co-facilitator, we welcome the text in paragraph 24 on non-communicable diseases. This includes neurological disorders which are a special priority for the Government and people of Iceland, as they affect hundreds of millions of people in developing and developed countries alike and medical science lags behind on this issue. In this regard, Iceland also supports the proposal of Indonesia to include "promote well-being for all" in the preamble.

Co-facilitators. Humanity and its development depends on the sustainable use and management of natural resources. This is a priority issue for Iceland and in this regard, I have a few, simple, specific proposals to strengthen the text:

While reiterating that a strong, bold, cross-cutting reference to gender equality and women's rights is needed before five Ps can even be considered, we have some suggestions on the preamble. In the paragraph in the preamble that is currently under the suggested headline "Prosperity" we have two small but important additions.

Firstly, in the last line, after agriculture, we suggest to add the word fisheries and later in that same line, after "affordable" we would support the proposal of the UAE to include the word sustainable when referring to energy

Sustainable fisheries will be essential to our future prosperity as the oceans provide food security for billions of people and are an important source of employment and income for many communities globally. Therefore, it needs to be included in this paragraph.

As for sustainable energy, Iceland appreciates its inclusion in this revised draft, but as the transition to sustainable energy will be a crucial factor in combatting climate change, we feel the concept needs to be included in in the preamble.

For the same reason, in paragraph 27, we propose the replacement of the word "reduction" with "phase out" or similar. Reduction of global greenhouse gas emissions will be not be ambitious enough to combat climate change; we need to keep our eyes on the vision of a post-carbon economy.

Further on natural resources, co-facilitator, we offer a slight amendment to the beginning of para 28. It is our belief that by making this slight amendment, the interlinkages of sustainable development would better shine through. As Mexico touched upon yesterday, it is also important to refer to sustainable management of all natural resources.

The beginning of para 28 would then read:

"We recognize that human and economic development depends on the sustainable management of our planet's natural resources. We are therefore determined—also to conserve and sustainably use... (oceans and seas, protect biodiversity, ecosystems and wildlife, promote sustainable tourism, tackle water scarcity, desertification, land degradation and drought and promote resilience and disaster risk reduction.)"

At this stage, Iceland has no further concrete language proposals but we look forward to engaging constructively with all member states for the next ten days with a view to finalizing our work by six o'clock on July 31st - or earlier!