

A Call for Urgency, Zero Tolerance and Universality in the Targets

Speaker: Alvin Leong, Pace Center for Environmental Legal Studies

Contributors

Patrick Paul Walsh	University College Dublin and SDSN, New York
Donovan Guttieres	UN MGCY- EWB
Lloyd Russell-Moyle	Children and Youth International, SDSN Northern Europe
Donna Scheeder	IFLA
Alvin Leong	Pace Center for Environmental Legal Studies

Thank you very much Mr Co-Facilitators, Distinguished Delegates: I speak on behalf of several civil society groups, including academia.

First of all, let me commend you on the revision of the outcome document. However, we would like to convey two concerns. One is to convey a sense of urgency in striving towards targets well before 2030 and the other are changes to the targets that lower ambition below levels that have already been reached by some developed countries. On the first issue, we are concerned about the use of the term “By 2030” that is stated in the majority of the targets. Without further elaboration, this seems to convey an implicit tolerance to leave people behind in the years before 2030.

We believe that nations and stakeholders have the means to begin to achieve the goals and targets, starting right away. Paragraph 3 of the Declaration moves in that direction and uses the term “between now and 2030” in the aim to end extreme poverty. We have a suggestion to address this within the targets, by replacing “By 2030” with “Between now and 2030.” But if it is not politically feasible to change the targets, we suggest changing Paragraph 3 of

the Declaration to state “we should have year on year progress between now and 2030” or a similar kind of statement can be inserted in the sections on MOI and Follow up and Review.

On the second issue, some developed countries have already met some of the revised targets, for example 3.2 on neonatal mortality and under-5 mortality. How can we ensure universality in these cases? One suggestion is to leave these targets “as is”. Another is to insert a statement that countries should strive to further substantially increase or reduce, as the case may be, beyond the targets. These are universal goals for all nations, and should reflect a floor not a ceiling.

In conclusion, the agenda should convey a desire for year on year progress in achieving the goals and a zero tolerance for leaving anyone behind before 2030, and countries that have already achieved certain targets should do better, consistent with the principle of universality.

Thank you.

Annex

(i) Examples of By 2030

4.4 By 2030, ensure that all youth and adults have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent work and entrepreneurship

4.6 By 2030, ensure that all youth and adults, both men and women, reach a proficiency level in literacy and numeracy sufficient to fully participate in society

(ii) Paragraph 3. “We recognize that poverty eradication is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. We recognize that the dignity of the human person is fundamental. We intend, between now and 2030, to end extreme poverty and hunger everywhere; to combat inequalities and build peaceful, just and inclusive societies; to ensure the lasting protection of the planet and its resources; and to create conditions for sustainable, inclusive and sustained economic growth and shared prosperity”.

(iii) Zero Tolerance

3.2 By 2030, end preventable deaths of newborns and children under 5 years of age

3.2 By 2030, end preventable deaths of newborns and children under 5 years of age, with all countries aiming to reduce neonatal mortality to at least as low as 12 per 1,000 live births and under-5 mortality to at least as low as 25 per 1,000 live births