

**Third session of the OWG (22-24 May)**  
**Co-Chair's meetings with the representatives of Major Groups and other Stakeholders**

The three hour-long morning meetings with the Major Groups and other stakeholders provided a platform for them to express their views and contribute to the process of defining the SDGs, including by reporting back on relevant consultations held under the UNDG/Post 2015 agenda. Each morning presentations by two stakeholder panellists were followed by several interventions from the floor. Panellists and speakers as well as content were agreed upon by a self-determined steering committee of Major Groups and other stakeholders. The breadth and depth of the interventions highlighted the challenge of distilling a wide range of complex, inter-related issues into a concise set of goals to which everyone can relate and respond.

In general, Major groups and other stakeholders emphasized the need for a transformative agenda post-2015, noting that the development of the SDGs provides a unique opportunity to set such an agenda. They stressed the importance of multistakeholder engagement in agenda setting and appreciated the initiative of the co-chairs to facilitate this inter alia through these dialogues. They expressed appreciation of the willingness of the OWG process to engage with all stakeholders. On monitoring the SDGs, many noted the importance of good indicators to measure progress, including disaggregated ones to reflect marginalized peoples, gender, etc., as well as for a multistakeholder process for monitoring progress.

On the cluster of food security, nutrition, land degradation, desertification and drought, a strong SDG on food security and agriculture was seen as key to poverty eradication and sustainable development. One participant highlighted, that those who face the daily scourge of hunger, the very poor, also face each day struggling for human dignity in a world where they are treated as though the world would be better off without them. Agricultural job creation was also highlighted as a means for poverty eradication. The right to food as a basic human right was emphasized by many along with governments' particular responsibility for ensuring freedom from hunger.

Major Groups and other stakeholders also stressed that the whole food chain matters to food security as well as to sustainability; each link must be geared to meeting people's needs for affordable, nutritious food in ways that are environmentally sound. This requires consideration of the full food life cycle, including minimization of pre- and post-harvest losses and food waste.

Among the challenges in defining the food security, nutrition and sustainable agriculture agenda are key relationships, interdependencies and possible tensions, between, e.g. consumption and production, where what and how farmers produce is conditioned by consumers' food preferences; the more wastefully people consume, the more food needs to be produced, straining land, water and ecosystem resources. They also point to the responsibilities of agribusiness to communities and to the protection of the natural resource base on which they depend. There was a call for the establishment of a legally binding framework for corporate social and environmental responsibility.

There was much emphasis on enhanced support to small-holder agriculture and livestock herding, as well as small-scale fishers, including through farmer-centred, knowledge-based support programmes. The need for increased investment in agriculture was emphasized, including both public and private investment in agricultural R&D, and the rebuilding of state-provided agricultural services like extension that have atrophied or been dismantled. It was also emphasized that women's central role in agricultural production as well as in household nutrition needs to be reflected in relevant targets and indicators. Especially important is to secure women's (and also indigenous peoples') right to land and security of tenure. The speakers supported the provision of basic services for rural areas, including social a protection floor.

Among concrete targets proposed under a food security, nutrition and sustainable agricultural SDG were: universal access to nutritious food; toxin-free, GMO-free food for all; halving the rate of conversion of forests and other ecosystems to agricultural use; phasing out harmful subsidies; increasing agriculture's share of ODA, focusing on smallholders; reducing food waste; increasing soil carbon stocks; and improving water efficiency in agriculture.

On water and sanitation, many participants stressed that the possible goal on these issues should be firmly based in the human right to safe drinking water that can be found also in the Rio+20 Outcome document. It was stressed that the SDGs should tackle water issues from a wider angle than the MDGs have done and also include water efficiency, wastewater treatment, integrated water management, trans-boundary waters, among others.

The issue of whether water and sanitation should be addressed in a single goal, or as a target under many others was tackled by several speakers. Several speakers stressed that water and sanitation should have a stand alone goal, but also hoped that due to its strong interlinkages with energy, food and agriculture, health, education, among others, it should be reflected in sub-targets for such goals. Stakeholders stressed that choosing proper targets, indicators and monitoring schemes is vital in order to avoid unnecessary trade offs. With the sanitation MDG, shared latrines were excluded from the Joint Monitoring Programme to avoid double accounting. At the same time this also meant that in the implementation phase actors were less incentivized to invest in public latrines in schools and hospitals.

On sanitation, several stakeholders noted that universal access to safe water and sanitation can be achieved, provided there was additional effort to meet the sanitation target of the MDGs, which had been lagging behind. They also highlighted that women and girls should be prioritized when setting the goals, especially regarding privacy issues and menstrual hygiene and their link to girls' school attendance. Speakers also raised the need to take into consideration the special needs of vulnerable groups, persons with disabilities and indigenous peoples.

Among concrete targets proposed under a possible water and sanitation goal were: universal access to safe water; improved sanitation and hygiene for all; 100 percent waste water treatment; participatory, democratic water management at the watershed level; decreasing water pollution; increasing water efficiency in different fields; and an end to open defecation.