

**Fourth Session of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development**  
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**Statement delivered by DPR of the Republic of Cyprus  
On Behalf of Cyprus-Singapore-UAE  
18 June, 2013**

**EMPLOYMENT AND DECENT WORK FOR ALL, SOCIAL PROTECTION, YOUTH, EDUCATION AND CULTURE**

**Mr. co-chairs, I deliver this statement on behalf of Cyprus-Singapore-UAE.**

**Full and productive employment and decent work for all**, social integration and social protection are prerequisites for eradicating poverty and hunger. It is of particular concern, therefore, the continuing high levels of unemployment, both in developing and developed countries, particularly among young people. The lack of jobs is even bigger especially for the **youth**, in post-conflict or conflict affected countries where targeted measures are required to alleviate the problem.

The TST issues brief indicates that based on today's trends, by 2030 some 470 million new jobs will be needed. It requires a major effort to ensure that these jobs are decent, quality jobs, which contribute to inclusive growth and sustainable development. Our group believes that it is high time for full employment and decent work for all, to get a prominent place in the new development agenda to galvanize greater world attention and mobilization of efforts and resources. Any goals, targets and indicators should be developed with different national circumstances and priorities in mind, for example, the special needs of women, youth and the vulnerable segments of the population.

Ensuring employment and decent work for all entails a holistic approach. It must be combined with improvements in wages, working conditions, employment standards and practices, social protection and education and training. Thus cross-sectoral efforts must be made. Governments need to work closely with the business sector and academic institutions to explore growth potentials and innovative, new economic opportunities, such as on green economy/green growth and economic diversification, through practice sharing and international cooperation

Mr. Co-chairs, **social protection** is vital in tackling inequalities and in ensuring that no one is excluded. It helps fostering growth, resilience, social justice, and cohesion. As 80 % of the world's population today have no access to social protection we think universal access to social protection systems including by establishing nationally determined social protection floors is critical, though it should not discourage the incentive to work. Social protection including targeted safety net programs help the poorest and most vulnerable people stay out of extreme poverty. In this context ILO recommendation 202 on national floors for social protection provides us guidance in that direction. Achievement of the objective of universal access to social protection contributes to the achievement of many other goals like poverty

reduction, health improvement and access to education. Therefore, we should bear in mind of its cross-cutting nature as we proceed with the goal setting.

On **education**, there is a growing concern that despite the remarkable progress in the achievement of MDGs 2 and 3, progress is uneven between and within regions and countries while it has not been fast enough to meet the goals by 2015. In the Post-2015 dialogue new needs have been identified like the need to address quality of education, in particular, foundational literacy and numeracy, in addition to quantity of education. It should also be acknowledged that education plays a positive contribution to the achievement of other development goals such as poverty eradication and improved food security. With regard to next steps we would like to make the following points:

**First** we must build and maintain pressure to achieve existing goals including those in the Dakar Framework for Action.

**Second** the Post-2015 development agenda must be guided by a broader vision on education. Early childhood care and education, youth and adult literacy, vocational skills development and concern for the improvement of the quality and relevance of basic learning, are aspects that need to be captured in the new education agenda. The new education goals and targets must ensure equitable access to, and completion of early childhood, primary, lower and upper secondary education and recognize the importance of post-secondary education. This would enable multiple pathways for individuals to pursue their education in their own way.

**Third** inequalities must be effectively addressed so that the right to education irrespective of gender, disability, ethnic or social origin is fully achieved.

**Fourth** for the education global agenda to be achieved political will and commitment to ensure sufficient funding and resources to implement it, are required.

Mr. Co-chairs,

**Culture** is a powerful driver for development impacting on all 3 dimensions of sustainable development. It is a cross-cutting issue and should be integrated in policies at all levels. The important contribution of cultural sector to economic development and poverty eradication is well documented and acknowledged by all.

In this light we would like to draw attention to **sustainable tourism** in particular **ecotourism** and **cultural tourism**, their activities of which are very important for revenue generation. Ecotourism in the context of sustainable tourism promotes, conserves and protects the environment, respects biodiversity, ecosystems and cultural diversity and improves the welfare and livelihoods of local communities. In Rio we have decided that in the Post-2015 development agenda there must be an enhanced support for sustainable tourism activities and our group reiterates its support in that position.