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Statement by
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Deputy Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations
at the Fourth Session of the Open Working Group of the General Assembly
on Sustainable Development Goals;
Employment and Decent Work, Social Protection, Youth, Education and Culture

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In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Mr. Co-Chair,

Let me first thank you and the other Co-Chair for convening this fourth meeting of the Open Working Group of the General Assembly on Sustainable Development Goals, which is to focus on “Employment and Decent Work”, “Social Protection”, and “Education and Culture”.

I would like to associate myself with the statement made yesterday by the Chair of the G77 and China, and add some points in my national capacity.

I would also like to thank the UN Technical Support Team for their excellent job in providing us with the “TST Issues Brief”, which we have taken good note of, and is in fact creating a kind of “Literature Review” in an academic sense for the delegations, enriched by possible recommendations for the road ahead of us.

Needless to say that the Guiding Questions provided by your Excellencies are very commendable effort in keeping the sessions as focused and viable as possible.

As it is quite clearly explained in the TST Issues Brief, the significance of these issues are very well noted, and my delegation does not intend to reiterate its positions on these points. Therefore, I would like to go straight to the priorities and possible key drivers

behind each of the items under consideration in this part of the fourth session of the OWG.

Mr. Co-Chair,

Before entering into the selected issues, it is noteworthy to say that my delegation believes that ***providing a disaggregated data*** based on age,gender, and other population dynamics (including ethnic groups, migrants, people with disabilities, etc.) should be considered the first step in the whole process of defining ***any sustainable development aspect***, which requires both financial and technical capacity building at all levels.

As for the **“employment and decent work”**, the final document of Rio+20 asks for a concise, concrete and action-oriented set of goals, therefore as it is raised in the Issues Brief, it might not be possible to have all important issues as single goals. In this regard, we believe that **“employment and decent work”** should be a critical aspect of the overarching goal of “Poverty Eradication”.

Accordingly, in order to better address the issue of **“employment and decent work”**, my delegation maintains that it is required to classify the targets under three categories, which consist of 1) structural features and indicators of labor markets, 2) internal and external systemic issues, 3) cross-linked aspects.

{To save time, Mr. Co-Chair, I am not going into the details of these three segments, but I will hand the full copy of my statement including these details over to the Secretariat}

1- Structural indicators of labor markets:

- Level of formal and informal jobs, employment and job flexibility
- Level of incomes
- Technological advance, skillfulness and productivity
- Social protection, including: cash transfers, social services, sickness and health services, disability and old age benefits, maternity protection, employment guarantee and support, etc.
- Household debts
- Other labor standards

2- Internal and external systemic issues:

- Local Systemic Issues:
 - Entrepreneurship and enterprise development, and private sector development
 - Urbanization and rural gaps, industry versus agriculture, etc.
 - Level of application of environmentally sound technologies

- Investment and financing
- Local Consumption and production patterns
- Disasters and Post-conflict situations
- The main external systemic issue should also to be taken into consideration, are:
 - Sound macroeconomic conditions, and international economic environment
 - Trade
 - Technology transfer
 - Foreign investment and finance
 - Global Consumption and Production Patterns
 - etc.
- 3- Furthermore, this goal is closely cross-linked with many of the other aspects and enablers of development, including:
 - food security and nutrition,
 - education and learning,
 - equality and inclusiveness,
 - safety and health of population,
 - environments,
 - etc.

My delegation maintains that simultaneous addressing of indicators, internal and external systemic issues and cross-linked aspects of employment and decent work, in a system-wise package, are a pre-requisite for achieving the main aim of employment and decent work for all.

Additionally, the systemic issues, both internal and external should be considered as the main means for the implementation of the targets in the “structural features and indicators” segment.

Mr. Co-Chair,

There is no need to dwell deeply on the importance of the issue of “**Social Security**”, however, as it is clearly stressed in the TST issues brief, the meaning of Social Protection varies across countries, depending upon national circumstances, institutions and legislations; It is referred to a set of public and private policies and programs aimed at preventing, reducing and eliminating poverty, deprivation and social exclusion, and enhancing resilience and opportunities through promoting human capital and connecting people to decent and more productive employment.

The contribution of Social Protection in terms of building resilience and promoting inclusive and sustainable growth is undeniable. On this account, my delegation believes

that the issue of “Social Protection” should be considered under other relevant Goals, including among others “poverty eradication”, “food security and nutrition” as well as, “employment and decent work”, and – of course- based upon national circumstances.

I would like to reiterate here again that it is a known fact that Social Protection elements and floors are and should be nationally defined sets of basic security guarantees designed by the governments based on their national circumstances, in collaboration with private sector and civil society, and synergized through international cooperation.

Mr. Co-Chair,

“**Education**” has to be considered as a very significant contributor to almost all development goals, lack or short of which would have dire consequences in the achievement of sustainable development; therefore we believe that it should be seen as a cross-cutting issue for all development goals.

At the same time, education should also be considered as a single goal so that the acquisition of knowledge, skills and competencies are prioritized, and the capacities for promoting sustainable development are guaranteed.

My delegation believes that we should think of beyond the unfinished business of the MDGs and secure access and complete equality of all to secondary and post-secondary learning opportunities.

Mr. Co-Chair,

Much has been said about “**culture**” as both an 'enabler' and 'driver' of sustainable development, and that culture enables development as a cross-cutting element which should be mainstreamed in any development program.

That is to show that “one size fits all” formula does not work for every developmental goals and targets, therefore the global sustainable development goals should be culture-sensitive in order to be viable at the national levels.

I thank you **Mr. Co-Chair,**