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Employment and decent work for all, social protection, youth, education and culture
MNE–SI speaking points for 4th meeting of OWG SDGs
(focus on education)

- Themes under discussion are of great relevance to sustainable development and also have relevance to current world situation and thus their importance should not be overlooked or underestimated. They're also interconnected. However, we especially emphasize role of education, one of important cornerstones in building better livelihoods.
- As we have stated before, we support human rights based approach in designing and implementing future framework. At this point, we'd like to point out social security as human right. In ensuring this right, equality and inclusiveness are of key importance. Decent work and providing social protection also visibly contribute to eradication of poverty.
- A critical point in our earlier addresses has been the focus on the linkages between the advancement in education and the advancements in sustainability of all areas we have discussed so far. Despite many improvements and progress achieved, however, education still remains one of key challenges for our development, as it is not only an objective on its own, but a precondition for the long term competitiveness and sustainability of our societies at large. In this context, we support the proposal that education within SDGs is dealt both within a separate education goal and as a cross-cutting issue across all development goals.
- Underlining the perspective of Montenegro as a middle-income country, the MDG objectives related to universal access to education have been fulfilled to the largest extent.
- However, ensuring high level quality and consistency in its availability across all societal actors and groups remains a key challenge on a global level. Consequently, addressing the inequalities in education, resulting from social, economic, gender or other differences, has been and needs to remain in the focus of our endeavors.
- We believe that the quality of education should be central in the SDG approach, with clear and easily communicable sub-targets addressing gender and other inequalities and give appropriate attention to marginalized groups. As preconditions for ensuring quality, the challenges related to the teachers' education and competencies need to be more vigorously addressed and followed by adequate financial commitments and investments in infrastructure aimed at creating safe and healthy working environments.
- In formulating the SDG on education, of utmost importance will be to recognize that the objectives and the need for education have shifted from mere knowledge accumulation to stimulating the development of competences, attitudes and transferable skills. This change in the conceptual framework has been, *inter alia*, driven by:
 - the continuously transforming dynamics within the labor markets,
 - the need to adapt to the new technologies that dominate all aspects of our activities,

- but, equally important, by the change in our understanding of the role social capital plays in creating responsible and productive citizens as bases for sustainable development of our societies.
- In this context, in addition to the adjustments within the formal system of education, the future SDG framework on education needs to clearly address the need for adequate vocational education and training systems that are prerequisites for the young people to join the labor market, but also for ensuring life-long learning for all workers necessary for them to have decent jobs throughout their lives. In this regard, promoting the skills for decent green jobs is also important. The engagement of the private sector is crucial in this respect.
- An important part of the future SDG on education will be to recognize the need for the formal education to address the issues of sustainability all throughout its outreach. Starting from the preschool education, we need to ensure that the educational curricula contain clear messages on the linkages between all subjects and their impact on the overall sustainability of our societies, both at the local, regional and national levels as well as on the global scale. We underline the importance of global learning and stress the importance of cross-curricular integration of education for sustainable development in all subjects, and ensuring that throughout education emphasis on sustainable choices and lifestyles is in focus.
- Our experience, thus far, has shown that only by allowing countries to adapt globally set goals vis-à-vis their national circumstances the educational objectives and concrete targets can become the engine of change. Nationalizing the goals allows for more adequate development of monitoring systems and accountability mechanisms. It is our firm belief that for SDGs to be successful there needs to be a strong emphasis on measurable indicators and a clear ownership and responsibility structure set in place for their achievement.
- It is important to keep in mind that a particularly worrying trend is rising youth unemployment. This issue cuts through all topics under today's discussion and we believe that it needs to be addressed appropriately.
- Finally, we would like to, once again, reiterate the need for the integration of the work OWG is doing and the discussions on the post 2015 development agenda. Ensuring not only synergies, but the integration and full compatibility of the two processes into one universal overarching framework is a precondition for our common vision of sustainable, equitable and inclusive world to be realized.