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**Equality, social equity, gender equality and empowerment of Women**  
MNE–SI speaking points for 8<sup>th</sup> meeting of OWG SDGs

- Tackling inequalities is important for both reducing poverty as well as for achieving sustainable development. Promoting social equity remains one of crucial elements of social dimension of sustainable development, strongly linked with other two dimensions.
- Despite widely recognised progress in promoting equality, inequalities remain unacceptably high across all main dimensions of human life. In order to reduce inequalities we should focus on their underlying causes and structural reasons and also prioritise areas, which were not sufficiently addressed in the framework of MDGs.
- To truly leave no one behind, we need to dedicate special attention to the rights and the need to empower the most vulnerable groups, including children, youth and elderly.
- Overall developmental strategies and related legislation of Montenegro and Slovenia are rooted in the principle of sustainable development, and include the perspective of social sustainability aimed at ensuring equitable human development, reducing social risks and improving the social inclusion of all individuals.
- As we have pointed out at previous sessions, we believe that SDGs should be formulated through human rights based approach. Respect for human rights is an important prerequisite for achieving sustainable development.

- Human rights-based approach to development places particular emphasis on providing accountability and equity. The approach should also address justice, equality, good governance and accountability, democracy and the rule of law with strong focus on the empowerment and rights of women and girls and gender equality, as well as on preventing and combating violence against women as essential preconditions for equitable and inclusive sustainable development and important values and objectives in themselves.
- One of the most pervasive forms of inequality is gender inequality which is present both in private and in public sphere. Women represent half of world's population therefore their views must be taken into consideration. Their equal participation in all spheres of life represents an advantage for the improvement of lives for all and in all areas.
- Gender equality and empowerment of women both is an objective on its own and a means to improve the life of families, communities and societies as a whole and it has catalytic positive implications in many areas of development, including environmental sustainability. In our efforts to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development we should put improvement of lives of all girls and women in the centre of the global development framework beyond 2015. Thus, a stand-alone goal on gender equality and women's empowerment should be defined, while, in parallel, gender-specific targets and indicators should be integrated across other goals.
- By integration of gender perspective into the SDGs the advantages brought by different skills and competences of both men and women will contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Therefore we believe that women should have access to education, health care, justice, employment, economic opportunities, including natural resources, politics and decision making positions, media and culture, etc. that will enable them to participate in all spheres of live on equal footing with men. We stress the importance of participation and full involvement of women in all endeavours to maintain and promote peace

and security, which are key prerequisites for fair, equitable and sustainable development.

- The cooperation of men and women as well as awareness-raising and education of women and men, including human rights education, are an indispensable precondition for the achievement of gender equality.
- We actively support endeavours on sexual and reproductive health and rights, most importantly for young women and girls. In developing the post-2015 agenda we should keep in mind the gender inequalities that stem from and are reinforced by violations of reproductive health and rights. Human rights norms provide guidance to states about how to overcome gender inequality and ensure substantive equality, particularly with respect to reproductive health and rights.
- Interrelated and mutually reinforced human rights and sustainable development goals request that human rights gaps should be addressed for achieving truly sustainable development.