

Open Working Group on Sustainable Development- 10th Session
31 March- 4 April 2014
Cyprus-Singapore-United Arab Emirates

Remarks for Monday 31st 2014

A. General remarks on methodology

Our Troika believes that so far the OWG has been working well, in an open and transparent manner and a spirit of collaboration, teamwork and partnership. The method of work of the OWG has proved successful and we wish to see it continue with the same format.

It is our view that the consensus based approach envisaged in paragraph 5 of our methods of work, should continue to be the basis of our work. Any attempt to change our methods of work at this late stage will only cause delay to the process and we may even face the risk of not fulfilling our mandate on time.

We stand ready to continue rendering our support to the co-chairs and to look for their guidance and leadership in the process ahead.

We Thank the co-chairs for the new amended document which we find comprehensive and balanced and largely based on the discussions of our last session. Many thanks also for the supporting documents.

Our Troika feels that it is perhaps time to begin considering streamlining and clustering in order to come closer to fulfilling our task that is to develop a set of SDGs which, among others, should be limited in number. In this respect we welcome assurance by the co-chairs that the clustering of focus areas in the draft programme of work for the 10th session of the OWG is a way of facilitating our discussions in the following days, and not a basis for the elaboration of potential SDG areas.

On the issue of clustering we think that we should look at not only which focus areas can or cannot be merged but also at the various proposals on action areas in order to select those with highest impact on poverty eradication and sustainable development. Furthermore it seems that a wide consensus has emerged in the room for standalone goals with respect to a number of priority areas such as Water and Sanitation, Energy, Health, Education and Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment. This consensus can be our starting point.

On the issue of goals and targets, we should frame them in such a way that would not be prescriptive. Instead they should be broad so as to give policy space for member states with different levels of development and in different speed to implement them

On the integration of the 3 dimensions, we appreciate the effort by the co-chairs to strengthen in the new document the issue of sustainability but we think that more balance is needed in some focus areas with regard in particular to the environmental dimension. We are also pleased that the document takes fully into account the unfinished business of the MDGs while it moves the benchmark to a higher level.

B. Comments on Focus Areas 1 and 12

The troika finds both focus areas quite comprehensive and inclusive. However our troika would like to see:

1. The environmental dimension strengthened in both focus areas 1 and 12
2. The nexus approach of water-food-energy reflected in Focus area 1 as a means for increasing in a sustainable way agricultural productivity and tackling climate poverty
3. An action area in focus area 1 with regard to universal access to basic services such as water and sanitation, education and primary health care
4. An action area relevant to both focus areas to strengthen institutional capacity for effective delivery of services
5. Potential targets on social protection floors should be developed taking into account national needs and circumstances (poverty eradication –action area c)
6. Women should also be included in the listing of marginalized groups (action areas c in both focus areas)
7. Finally, with regard to focus area 12, we would like to reiterate our position that given the cross-cutting nature of equality we should consider streamlining the proposed action areas under this focus area into the possible SDGs. In this respect action areas (a) to (f) on external inequalities maybe better addressed under focus area 18