

**Open Working Group on Sustainable Development- 10th Session
31 March- 4 April 2014**

Cyprus-Singapore-United Arab Emirates

Tuesday, April 1, 2014

Talking points

a. Focus area 5 : Gender Equality and women's empowerment

- Women's role is vital and there is a need for their full and equal participation and leadership in all areas of sustainable development.
- With regard to the proposed action areas we would like to make the following observations:
- Action area (a) is quite vague and it maybe more beneficial to be specific for example, a target on eliminating gender discrimination in work setting could be monitored by indicators on wage or representation in management positions/board
- Action area b on elimination of violence may merit being a separate target although it may overlap with focus area 19
- On action area (c) we view that equal enrollment and completion of good quality education is important and equal access won't necessarily help. Some ideas for possible targets include : achieving 100% enrollment in and completion by girls of gender equal primary and secondary education of good quality by 2030; achieving at least 50% women enrollment in institutions of higher education by 2030
- On action area (d) with regard to equal employment opportunities, possible targets may include : achieving at least 50% women employees in the public sector with at least 50% of management positions held by women
- For action area (e), we would also like to see included equal access to services in the fields of finance and credit , inter alia, micro-finance and micro-credit to generate productive self-employment among women
- We would like to see equal access not only to education but to all basic services such as health , water and sanitation and energy
- With regard to action area (j) while data availability is an important issue, it is a cross-cutting issue not specific to this focus area and should be addressed across the board

Talking points

b. Focus area 4 :Education

- There is a need to address quality, accessibility and affordability of education at all levels in addition to quantity and we would like to see these reflected in the action areas.
- In action area (a) we would like to see a 'gender- equal education of good quality for girls and boys '
- We consider action area(c) as a potential target under this focus area
- It is important to ensure that children during conflict and post conflict periods continue to have access to education and we would like to see this reflected in the action areas.
- On action area (g) we would like to see integrated in education and awareness raising not only culture but also climate change and SCP.

Talking Points

c. Focus area 11 : Employment and decent work for all

- In action area (a) more consideration should be given to the 3 dimensions so that full employment is promoted through macroeconomic policy that leads to new economic opportunities such as green economy and green jobs.
- In action area (b) is important to address youth unemployment in post conflict or conflict affected countries where the lack of jobs is one of their greatest problems
- Promotion of national floors of social protection for all members of society taking into account national needs and circumstances is also very important and closely interlinked with focus area on poverty eradication.
- Ensuring that women and men have equal access to opportunities to acquire job skills.

Talking points

d. Focus area 3 : Health and population dynamics

- We consider universal health coverage an important target for the health focus area. However we should not be prescriptive, given

member states pursue different policies to implement universal health coverage

- With regard to action areas (b), (c) and (d) we suggest streamlining by merging the latter half of (b) and (c) and the front half of (b) with (d) although noting overlaps with Means of Implementation.
- With regard to action area (d) we would like to establish a link between health and education , therefore we suggest to include school education as another means to disseminate medical and public health knowledge
- Action areas (e) and (f) can be merged into one action area with regard to the elimination of preventable child and maternal deaths. Action area (f) can also be a potential indicator for action area (e)
- We also stress the importance of fair / equitable healthcare provision and the role of healthcare in gender equality and women's empowerment
- Mental health is also very important and we want to see it in one of the action areas under the health focus area
- Action area (j) needs more clarity as reference to environmental causes of disease might lead to misinterpretations. Reducing air, water and chemical pollution leads to positive effects on health and we would like to see a targeted action area in that context.
- With regard to action area (i) on NCDs we suggest to include the reduction of harmful substances as another important measure to address NCDs
- Eliminating harmful practices in action area (m) should be better streamlined and clarified in terms of focus.
- We support action area (n) on reducing road accidents as a potential target for the health focus area
- Finally we would like to suggest a potential target which intends to address managing the health of people in the workforce as well as in reducing the burden of occupational hazards and morbidity. And our proposal reads as follows: Addressing occupational health and safety