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STATEMENT

by Mr. Valentin RYBAKOV
Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs
of the Republic of Belarus

Without diminishing the importance of the areas under this cluster, let me start however with the issue not present here – **the institution of the family** and its contribution to sustainable development.

We consider the family as a foundation for sustainability and prosperity, for tolerance and equality, especially equality between women and men, an important pillar naturally providing safety and freedom from violence.

The notion of sustainable development is commonly characterized as inclusive and people-centered. It should benefit and involve all people, including youth and children. Human beings are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature. At the same time we have to recognize that current demographic, social and economic changes affect the institution of family. The international community has to undertake appropriate actions to meet the needs not only of individual members of the family but also of the family as social institution, contributing to overall development efforts, to advance the institution of the family and rebuild the family culture in society, as well as to promote the value of the family among youth. In this connection we should **strongly highlight in the new SDG framework the role of the family as a natural and fundamental group unit of society in sustainable development of mankind.** It needs no additional proof that the family as the basic social unit of reproduction, education and socialization of children, social coherence and integration plays an important role in achieving sustainable development including but not limited to contributing to eradicating poverty and hunger, achieving universal primary education, promoting gender equality and empowering women, reducing child mortality, improving maternal health, combating HIV/AIDS and other diseases.

The SDG framework should be set in such a way as to recognize that the achievement of any development goals depends, to a significant extent, on how families are empowered to fulfil their important social functions and to benefit society at large. Future sustainable development goals should promote and enhance national family policy as well as keep the family focus within the UN system and other relevant international organizations. Without consistent efforts to sustain and uphold the institution of the family the global sustainable development will be put into question.

How do we see the family issue in the future SDG context? – This is the question we all have to think about. **A stand-alone goal on supporting family as a contributor to sustainable development could seem a rather bold option,** but after all aren't we trying to set an ambitious development framework for the sake of the current and future generations? If we talk about poverty eradication as a factor of the survival of humankind, we should also talk about the family as guarantor and center of centuries-long social cohesion pattern inherent to all cultures and civilizations of the Earth.

As for the **other topics of this cluster**, let me underline the equal significance of all of them when it comes to sustainable development.

For example, much remains to be done to make gender equality a constant and irreversible feature of our everyday life. We see **gender equality as inseparable from the topic of family**. One of the reasons behind the apparent family's decline worldwide has been related to abuse of masculine power that resulted in domestic violence against women. If we succeed in redressing this grave challenge we will be able to lay ground for a more healthy and sustainable family, and thus, for better human life. It would be reasonable to elaborate **stand-alone goal on gender equality and integrate it through targets and indicators into all goals of any new development framework**.

At the same time Member States should build on the lessons from the elaboration and implementation of the MDGs as the new post-2015 development agenda is being shaped. All these lessons call for comprehensive approach to the issue of the family in the post-2015 development agenda by integrating this issue firmly in the future SDG framework as a cross-cutting theme and designing, implementing and monitoring at the national and international levels **family oriented policies** in the **areas related to the future sustainable development goals**.

As for **education**: we certainly share the view to have a stand-alone goal that would equally embrace access to and quality of education and would foster skills and talent among youth.

The area of **employment** has not been substantially addressed in the MDGs framework. As a result, there is a strong argument – which we support – in favor of having a stand-alone goal on employment with the breakdown into a number of specific targets, such as, creation of new jobs, setting higher youth employment objectives, providing equal employment opportunities for both men and women, ending working poverty etc. Of course, this is not the final list and it might be further developed and expanded.

Health, demographics and population dynamics are clearly interrelated and will have to be recognized as such through a separate sustainable development goal, to complete the unfinished business of the MDGs.