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Statement by ITALY, SPAIN and TURKEY

Cluster 2

- Cluster 2 is composed of a broad range of thematic issues some of which directly connected to the MDGs. The issues under this cluster are the basis for human capital empowerment by providing better services and needs. The MDGs agenda is not fully accomplished, therefore this cluster represents an essential element of sustainable continuity in shaping the new development framework. It is a very critical cluster and we need to work effectively to contribute to its definition, boundaries and interlinkages with other clusters. In doing so we should avoid proposing a Business-As-Usual approach on these themes and deal with them defining a new and transformative framework.
- We appreciate the inclusion of a Focus Area on gender equality and women's empowerment and the specific reference to sexual health and reproductive rights. The proposed Focus Area however does not sufficiently acknowledge the importance of gender equality and women's empowerment for environmental and social sustainability. The post-2015 agenda should address the challenge of gender inequality in itself with a transformative standalone goal, as well as recognize the need to advance gender equality across all relevant dimensions of the agenda.
- We should also integrate gender-specific targets into other focus areas in order to address the specific gender-based discriminations that limit prospects for eradicating poverty, creating sustainable consumption and production patterns, promoting transparent and accountable governance, ensuring access to high quality education and health care, and ensuring food security, nutrition, sustainable water and energy access while protecting the environment.
- The MDG framework has failed to address education in an holistic and integrated manner focussing on access to education rather than on the quality and relevance of education systems. More achievable goals are privileged, and others, such as adult literacy, pre-primary education and life long learning- are relegated to a lower priority. The goals are also not adequately targeted to reach the poor and marginalized. The new framework should address these issues.
- The new post 2015 agenda should give more prominence to the integration of sustainable development into the learning processes at all levels and consider this concept as central for quality education. Better linkages should be established between education and training and employment opportunities and employability, especially for women and the girl-child. In many countries education systems are failing to equip children, particularly youth, with the relevant skills and competencies for securing decent work.

- Employment and decent work are essential for promoting equality and poverty eradication. These issues should play a pivotal role in the post-2015 agenda. Better linkages should be established with other focus areas and in particular with inclusive economic growth in focus area 8. Targets of this cluster should address decent income and benefits of employment aligned with productivity. Additionally, measures to eliminate child labour should be considered.
- We need to do more towards a comprehensive employment strategy. The document of the co-chairs does not take into full account some crucial points of discussion, such as the need of linking education and the job market, specially in what concerns youth unemployment, the need for minimum social floors the full participation of women in the labour force and universal social protection. In fact, the only provision of “social security for those retired from the labour force” will leave out all those working in the informal sector or in the ‘care economy’, most of which are women. In order to support women employment, child care facilities should be increased. Finally, the support to the small and medium sized enterprises, should be considered not only at the start up phase but through the whole in order to ensure sustainability”.
- Universal social protection implies extending globally a minimum income security and access to essential goods and services for all those in need. This means including the unemployed and informally employed, the poor, the disabled, pregnant women, the elderly and children and the provision of quality public services such as sanitation, health and education. Social protection should be conceived as a key instrument strictly linked to economic policy to ensure equitable and socially sustainable development. Interlinkages should be established between this area and gender equality and women empowerment.
- Health is closely intertwined with economic growth and sustainable development. It is also strictly linked to water and sanitation and food security and nutrition through sustainable and diversified agriculture and nutrition and food security. Better linkages should be established with these focus areas. The post-2015 development agenda should set more ambitious health targets and universal health coverage should be seen as a central element for achieving health goals. It should tackle social and environmental determinants of health and address also non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and mental health promoting inter alia healthy diets and lifestyles, including for youth. Eliminating the risk factors that are threatening health should be included in this focus area.
- To this end it is important to strengthen our efforts in implementing the commitments of Cairo and Beijing in order to eliminate discrimination in ensuring universal access to health care for women, to support reproductive health and rights and to end harmful practices such as FGM and early and forced marriages.
- Finally let me stress the fact that migration is not yet well integrated in the co-chair’s document and we should think about how best to incorporate the contribution of migrants in the future agenda. As an example education and employment could be two areas where specific issues on migration could be tackled.