



MINISTRY FOR FOREIGN  
AFFAIRS OF FINLAND

## MEETING OF THE OPEN WORKING GROUP ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

MARCH 31 – APRIL 4, 2014

Statement of Finland by Ms Kirsti Aarnio, Ambassador, Post-2015

[check against delivery]

Thank you, Mr Co-Chair,

I would like to concentrate, in this statement, on gender equality and women's empowerment. In building the new sustainable development goals we want them to contribute to eradication of poverty, diminishing inequalities and be in accordance with all human rights agreements and standards. This cannot be fulfilled unless we see to it that there will be a stand-alone goal on gender equality and that the full human rights of women and girls are mainstreamed through all the sustainable development goals and targets. This means, for instance, that women and girls have to be given a chance to fulfill their potential on every field, be it going through all levels of quality education or having equal opportunities to health services, freedom from all forms of violence, access to justice or equal opportunities to equally paid decent work, when time comes.

The subareas – or targets - under the focus area 5 cover a wide range of themes, where special attention is attached to women's and girls' empowerment. All of them would merit another closer look, but at this stage I would like to pay attention only to the reference to sexual and reproductive health and rights which does not adequately reflect the right of every man and woman, boy and girl, to their own sexuality. It is also important to underline the right to comprehensive sexuality education for all, especially for young people. In this connection we refer to the recommendations of the "ICPD Beyond 2014 Global Review Report" (p. 14), which explains that sexual and reproductive health and rights are essential for all people, particularly women and girls, to achieve dignity and to contribute to the enrichment and growth of society, to innovation and to sustainable development.

I thank you, Mr. Co-Chair