

**Statement delivered by the Representative of
of Greece to the UN
Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals
Cluster 2
1 April, 2014**

Thank you Mr. Co-chair,

At the outset and given the fact that I didn't have the opportunity to do it before, please allow me to thank and congratulate you, the Co-chairs, for your work and dedication. I would also like to thank you for the revised Focus Area document you provided us, as well as for the supportive documents. We are looking forward to working with you in order to ensure a successful outcome of the OWG process.

Before starting, I would also like to point out that Greece aligns itself with the statement made yesterday by the EU.

At this stage, I will convey some points on the focus areas pertaining to gender equality and women's empowerment, education, employment and decent work for all and health and population dynamics.

Mr. Co-chair,

As previously mentioned by many delegations, It is imperative to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls. We must end all forms of legal discrimination against them and improve their economic and social opportunities. There is a need to increase women's representation, participation and leadership in decision-making. We must ensure women's rights and universal and equal access to essential services. It is time to take all necessary actions to close the gender wage gap. We believe that several

issues proposed under this focus area may also be addressed by integrating inter-linkages with other focus areas. We would, also, like to emphasize the importance of personal security for women and girls, and the principle of non discrimination, supported by access to justice and the rule of law. Lastly, we would like to ensure cultural rights for all, notably women, to promote inclusive social development.

As regards education, we must ensure access and completion of education up to lower secondary for all, including persons with disabilities, regardless of circumstances. Every child, youth and adult must have comprehensive basic, transferable and technical skills. I would like to emphasize that quality learning and quality education is very important. There is a need to increase the number of people with access to technical and vocational education, including literacy education. We welcome the inclusion of integrating sustainable development in education curricula, including, in particular, awareness raising on how culture advances sustainable development. Furthermore, we would like to highlight the importance of vocational training within the framework of a “green economy”. As also in other focus areas, some issues proposed under this focus area can be developed as indicators or by integrating inter-linkages with other focus areas.

Concerning employment and decent work for all, one main priority is combating unemployment, and special emphasis must be given to youth unemployment. We must aim at increasing the share of productive employment and decent work within total employment and decreasing the percentage of young people who do not benefit from education employment or training.

In the focus area of health and population, we would like to highlight the importance of some particular items. We need to reduce child and maternal mortality and to ensure sexual and reproductive health and rights. We must reduce the burden of the priority diseases, both communicable and non-communicable. At this point, I would also like to underline the importance of

mental health and its promotion. Lastly, let me stress on the need to achieve universal health coverage, through quality health services for all.

Finally, it should be noted that some of the issues proposed under this focus area can become indicators of the targets to be selected. In some cases, we need to address interlinkages with other parts of the framework, including good governance.

Mr. Cochair,

As we move ahead in this process, we are confident that we can keep working under your leadership and we particularly appreciate your willingness to listen to all Member States, members and non-members of the OWG. We are looking forward to further discussions on how to proceed, based on your proposals, reflecting, in a balanced way, the views expressed in this Open Working Group, including those of stakeholders.

Thank you.