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Cluster 2: Gender Equality and women's empowerment; Education, Employment and decent work for all; health and population dynamics
Joint input of Montenegro and Slovenia for the 10th Meeting of OWG SDG

I have the honour to speak on behalf of Slovenia and Montenegro.

Gender equality and women's empowerment:

The future post-2015 development agenda should be built through human rights based approach, with particular focus on the rights of women and girls and their empowerment. Without recognizing and unlocking vast potential of half population of the world we cannot achieve sustainable development. We support standalone goal on gender equality and empowerment of women and girls, as well as the strengthening gender-specific targets across other focus areas.

Issue of gender equality needs to be mainstreamed also in other goals as a cross cutting issue. Concrete targets are needed in relevant goals, including eradicating poverty, education, health, employment, economic growth, food security, energy, environmental sustainability, rule of law, peace and security.

Within this goal we should target ending all forms of discrimination against women of all ages. In particular the persisting issue of violence against women and girls must be eliminated in all its forms, within this and other goals, with a special focus on elimination of violence against girls. It must be a centerpiece since it constrains their ability to fulfill their true potential and carries great economic costs for them and for society as such. Boys and men should be included in the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and girls.

Additionally, we would favor seeing targets on ensuring access to justice for women and girls, as well as women's equal participation in decision-making positions, including in humanitarian and conflict-affected societies, which we see as key prerequisites for fair, equitable and sustainable development.

We actively support endeavors on sexual and reproductive health and rights, most importantly for young women and girls. We support targets on ensuring respect, promotion and protection of the sexual and reproductive health and rights as many gender inequalities stem from and are reinforced by violations of reproductive health and rights.

We must ensure equal access to education, including human rights education, at all levels. Men and boys must play a more proactive role in the issue of gender equality; their role should be therefore carefully incorporated also in this goal.

While creating equal employment opportunities for women, we must ensure women's full, equal and effective participation in all fields and leadership at all levels of decision-making in the public and private sectors, equal work must be compensated by equal pay. Women and girls must be ensured equal access to assets and resources, including natural resources. Burden of unpaid care work must be reduced and more equally distributed.

Harmful customary practices, including child, early and forced marriage must be ended.

Protection and promotion of human rights of elderly women should be taken into account with a life cycle approach, which would address the needs of women throughout their lives in a more comprehensive manner.

New technologies must be an integral part of gender equality and women empowerment: availability of gender disaggregated data to improve gender equality policies, including gender sensitive budgeting, must be therefore part of such a goal.

Education:

Education is a fundamental right and remains one of the key challenges for development, as well as a precondition for the long term competitiveness and sustainability of all societies. Under this goal the priority should be given to ensuring universal access to education, increasing the number of children able to access and complete primary education as well as ensuring their access to lower secondary education and achieving adequate learning outcomes.

We must ensure equal access to education, including human rights and sustainable development education, at all levels.

We would like to see an explicit target on the quality of education, particularly in terms of building the necessary competences and skills of youth and future generations for sustainable development. In this regard continued education for teachers to improve their subject knowledge, teaching methods and other skills and competencies should be ensured.

We would also need to increase the access to technical and vocational training, as these skills are important components of inclusive growth.

Employment and decent work for all:

In area of employment we believe that SDGs and post-2015 agenda should promote ensuring full, decent and sustainable employment. We also point out importance of equal pay for equal job.

We believe that coordination of macroeconomic policies should promote job creation and sustain employment and not vice versa. In this regard, macroeconomic policy and employment issues are strongly connected. It would be important to appropriately address this connection in inter-linkages and proposed areas for action in both priority areas.

We believe that employment is a basis for social security (net) and should form a basis for decent pensions when person is retire.

We also welcome that Focus Areas document point out importance of promoting youth employment and promoting participation of women in the labor force, including reducing gender-pay and pension gap. We believe that attention should be dedicated also to other vulnerable groups, including elderly.

We support your approach to encouraging transition from informal sector to formal sector employment; to promoting non-farm employment opportunities in rural areas; to training and re-skilling for displaced workers; to protecting the rights of migrant workers and displaced persons in compliance with the ILO norms and standards.

Health and population dynamics:

This goal should maximize healthy lives as human health is interconnected to all three dimensions of sustainable development. In this regard it is important to promote policy cooperation and across government approach to health.

Priority should be given to ensuring universal health coverage with quality health services for all and to strengthening the health systems. This should include also access to safe, quality and effective medicines.

The goal should among others also tackle remaining MDGs gaps. In this regard ending the preventable deaths in children under five and decreasing the maternal mortality ratio would be a priority. It will be important to ensure women's access to health care, including their sexual and reproductive rights.

Furthermore, it would be important that we increase the number of children and youth, as well as older people that are fully vaccinated.

Through promotion of maximizing healthy lives attention should be given to health and long-term care needs of ageing population.

We support the introduction of a target on the non-communicable diseases to prevent and reduce the number of people affected by non-communicable diseases. This can be achieved through promotion of healthy lifestyles and improved treatments. Strong focus should be given to the sustainability of the health sector financing and good governance.

Moreover, health needs to be assessed in the context of its environmental and socio-economic determinants.