

**Remarks by Ambassador Elizabeth Cousens, U.S.  
Representative to ECOSOC, for the US/Canada/Israel Team,  
10<sup>th</sup> Session of the SDG Open Working Group, on  
Consolidation of Focus Areas: Means of  
Implementation/Global Partnership for Sustainable  
Development**

**Elizabeth Cousens**

*U.S. Representative to ECOSOC*

New York, NY

April 4, 2014

---

AS DELIVERED

Thank you, Mr. Co-Chair.

Let me first underscore the importance that our team attaches to implementation in general. We are committed to a strong and actionable Post-2015 Development Agenda, and that agenda will stand or fall on the degree to which we are genuinely committed to it and prepared to take actions to implement it.

If we succeed in agreeing a focused framework of goals and targets, it will be because we are genuinely committed to acting on them. We therefore already need to be thinking about what actions will be required to achieve the targets under discussion – what we need to do together, what we need to do individually, to make progress on specific targets ourselves and in partnering to support each other.

The menu the Co-Chairs have given us has much to work with. The challenge we face, here, is how much and how to address Means of Implementation at this stage in our discussion, and we appreciate your indulgence, Mr. Co-Chair, because we have more questions than proposals about precise targets at this stage.

We would also draw your attention to the remarks we made in December on this topic that particularly focused on issues of science, technology, innovation, knowledge-sharing and capacity.

First, on finance. Financing is clearly at the heart of implementation – it's not the only issue, but it's a fundamental one – necessary to success, if not sufficient. We have a dedicated Expert Committee on Financing and the prospect of a Financing for Development

Conference in the next year. So the question is how this Open Working Group can make the most constructive contribution to those efforts. We are genuinely open-minded on this point and welcome hearing more from colleagues.

However we decide to discuss finance here in the Open Working Group, we believe we need an ambitious approach in line with the Monterey and Doha agenda that seeks to mobilize the full spectrum of possible flows for development – ODA, including ways to direct it more strategically to advance key development priorities and to leverage other flows; private investment; reducing the cost of remittances; domestic resource mobilization, including issues of capacity for tax collection and broadening the tax base and boosting savings; as well as illicit flows. We need to seize the opportunity presented by the Post-2015 Development Agenda to capture significantly greater financial flows for development with a more comprehensive approach.

We also need to look at financing in context – not only the quantity mobilized but how it can be best spent to ensure development impact. That leads us to want to look at institutional environments that can attract and make best use of productive capital; investment climates that are stable and predictable; property rights that are clear and contracts that are enforceable; and policy environments that encourage businesses and help them operate with confidence, including the small and medium-sized enterprises that generate so many jobs globally.

Regarding non-financial means of implementation, we spoke at length about these issues in December, as noted, especially focused on innovation, scientific capacity and diffusion of technologies. And earlier this week we addressed some aspects of those issues, including the need for sustained investment in human capital. Later today we will also speak about some of the institutional and policy conditions that promote entrepreneurship, innovation and knowledge generation.

We see scope for targets that would help promote increased regional and international cooperation for science and technology and solution-oriented research; greater connectivity, including through mobile broadband and expanded access to scientific knowledge and data, which can foster knowledge-sharing and innovation across issues, regions, and platforms.

On science, technology, and innovation, there are many cooperative mechanisms from which to learn – from platforms like the CGIAR in agriculture, to bilateral and regional science cooperation that could be scaled for greater impact, to new ideas like the Technology Bank for LDCs. This is among the most exciting areas to explore, as we detailed in December, and we think it could be given greater emphasis in the documents by

the Co-Chairs. In this regard, we were also intrigued by the suggestion of our colleague from China yesterday that the issue of data collection, disaggregation, and analysis might belong under an MOI goal. This seems like a productive suggestion that we are interested in pursuing further.

Helpfully, there are also a number of MOI targets that we have already talked about – appropriately – under other goal areas, such as increased investment in agricultural research; investment in human capital and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills; increasing the number of women and underrepresented groups in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics fields; and infrastructure like energy and water. Indeed, this is one of the reasons we so strongly support a sustainable energy goal.

Let me speak briefly to the question about having a Means of Implementation target under every goal. As colleagues are aware, we are skeptical on this point. This is not because we don't want to implement goals, in fact, it's the opposite. We take implementation seriously and when we look across the range of targets, as well as goals, each of these should spur significant actions individually and collectively that are relevant for the specific issue at hand – whether it's education, food security, water, poverty, etcetera. But how that is organized, what constitutes the right mix of ideas, resources, partners, and instruments – these are issues that require a more dynamic and context-specific approach. What works for infectious disease may not make sense for access to modern energy services or for increasing the number of startups and SMEs. And what works for different countries and regions will vary.

In virtually every policy arena, the best policy ideas and instruments emerge after trial and error and learning. Different contexts respond to different instruments, and policies and tools almost always need to be adapted over time. If we define specific Means of Implementation ex ante in any arena, we are concerned that we are just likely to get it wrong. Approaches and methods need constantly to improve and evolve, and all evidence tells us that we must maintain flexibility in implementation as our knowledge, and frankly, our resources grow.

Finally, we want to thank the Co-Chairs for identifying in their document issues for additional consideration such as partnerships, greater involvement of public and private sector, and multilateral financial institutions and inclusive initiatives to support specific goals and targets. All of these will be critical tools for serious action. Means of Implementation ultimately need to be considered both in the context of a strengthened global partnership, but also in the context of stronger practical partnerships around specific goals and potentially even targets. Effectively mobilizing the finance, knowledge, skills and capacities that we need to support implementation will not be possible without

dynamic, practical, multi-stakeholder partnerships that draw in the private sector and civil society in particular. We need also to recognize the crucial role that women, youth, and other actors, especially those with the best ideas, can play to deliver on our goals.

Thank you very much.

###