

OWG 11th session – Statement delivered by Ambassador David Roet on behalf of Canada, United States and Israel

- I am honored to make this statement on behalf of Canada, United State and Israel.
- I would like to express my appreciation to both co-chairs for your leadership in producing the latest version of the Focus Areas document and for your efforts to consolidate the focus areas and sharpen the possible target areas. We continue to appreciate and support your constructive approach to guiding our discussion. We have especially appreciated your transparency and intensive work to reflect the specific suggestions that various colleagues made last time in this latest draft. We appreciate the extensive cross-referencing and footnotes.
- As we continue the difficult task of focusing and refining our goals and targets, leadership of this kind will be particularly critical. We would encourage you to maintain the open and transparent process that you have led thus far, and to continue to offer the quality and rigor that you have brought to this task thus far. We have heard calls today for informals. We need to reach consensus and will look to the co-Chairs to solicit advice and present options.
- Allow me to offer a few general remarks before delving into the focus areas on our agenda this morning.
- First, we wanted to be explicit about the considerations our team is trying to reflect in refining our own views

about targets. We think we should use criteria including ambition, achievability, clarity, and impact to assess potential targets appropriate plans and strategies.

- Second, we note that the targets in the current draft mix global aggregates, national-level ambition, absolute numbers and rates of change.
- We welcome hearing more from the co-chairs about how they envision handling questions of consistency, but our own view is that it is fine for different issues to have differently formulated targets. Neither our problems nor our solutions are one-size-fits-all, so nor should be our goals and targets. The MDGs showed us potential pitfalls of this approach.
- Third, a word about numbers. For targets where the ambition is global and absolute – such as eradicate extreme poverty, or double the rate of renewable energy in the global energy mix – the number is built into the target. However, where numbers are most relevant to set at the national level, our own view is that the numbers are highly likely to be best set by countries themselves. Our job here should be to formulate a strong target, but we should let countries set their own level of ambition. This will ensure that our framework is truly owned by all countries. we would thus recommend that this group NOT fill in all x's and y's, but instead leave them as they are, to be determined by individual countries - who will be the best judges of how to integrate this framework into their national development plans and strategies.

- This is also the best way, in the context of universality, to build in real and meaningful differentiation – in effect allowing maximum differentiation based on what countries are prepared to do.
- Alongside this approach, we remain very attracted to the proposal that any target will only be considered met if it is met for the lowest quintile of any population, which is a way of hard-wiring a commitment to combat inequality and reduce vulnerability into all aspects of our agenda.
- Two final introductory points, while our team has joined others in calling for gender mainstreaming throughout relevant focus areas, we believe this could be strengthened in the current draft. Together with data that can be disaggregated by gender, this would make our framework a powerful tool to promote women's equality and empowerment. We also strongly support a dedicated goal on gender equality as we have previously noted.
- In a related vein, we note that references to persons with disabilities has diminished in this draft, and our team will be making suggestions on ways to integrate the needs of persons with disabilities throughout the focus areas.

Focus area 1. Poverty eradication, building shared prosperity and promoting equality

- Allow me to move on to the first focus area, poverty eradication. Poverty eradication is a fundamental imperative of this agenda and we appreciate it being put in the context of “shared prosperity.”
- Our team would like to offer a few specific thoughts on the targets that are presented under this focus area:
- Target (a) is strong and widely agreed.
- Target (b) is an extremely important concept to incorporate. Rising inequality undermines poverty reduction, and poverty in some form exists in every country in the world. A target to “reduce by x% the proportion of people living below national poverty lines” is one option; we would welcome hearing from the statisticians also about alternatives such as raising median incomes by x% or boosting the incomes of the poorest 40%.
- Regarding target (c), we recommend further discussion despite its popularity and potential. We strongly support the expansion of social protection systems as a means to provide safety nets, build pathways out of poverty, and reduce economic risks for the most vulnerable – but we also acknowledge that, as a target, this may prove exceedingly difficult to measure.

- Social protection systems vary substantially in approach, scope, and scale; and investments in social protection can involve difficult tradeoffs with promoting inclusive, poverty-reducing growth. We should think carefully about whether social protection makes the most sense as a target, or, instead, as a top-line, cross-cutting approach to poverty reduction, resilience, and ensuring other important development outcomes across goal areas. If it is retained, we would suggest including specific reference to social protection coverage that ensures safety of persons with disabilities and their access to poverty alleviation programmes, education, health and livelihood.
- Target (d) is important and relevant to all communities. We see scope to sharpen it further to “reduce loss of critical infrastructure from disasters by x% while improving the accuracy and lead times of forecasts and warnings by 50 percent.”
- On Target (f), we support equality of opportunity but see that language as vague and would rather focus the target on the other elements of asset ownership. We could also make it more specific for example by saying: “Ensure secure tenure and rights, including customary rights, to land and other assets for men and women.”

Focus area 2. Sustainable agriculture, food security and nutrition

- Allow me to move on to the second set of issues on our agenda this morning. Our team supports a dedicated goal on sustainable agriculture, food security and nutrition. The proposed focus area 2 is compelling and has improved in clarity of targets that capture the multidimensional nature of food security, though there is still scope for refinement.
- We would focus primarily on four key areas.
- Target (a) would be stronger if formulated around an outcome. Specifically, we suggest “End hunger and raise the proportion of well-nourished children by x%.”
- As formulated it will be almost impossible to measure comparably - identifying universal standards for “safe, affordable, diverse, and nutritious” food, not to mention measurement of “access” will prove immensely difficult and it is stronger in any event to focus on the core outcome – ending hunger. We also see scope for a reference to pregnant women in this target area.
- We would then focus target (b) on stunting, wasting, and anemia: End malnutrition in all its forms, including stunting by x%, wasting by y% and anemia by z% for all children under five. Possible figures here could cut stunting by 50%, keep wasting under 5% for children under 5, reduce anemia by 60% for women of reproductive age and for all children under 5. Anemia in pregnant women can lead to low birth weight and increase the chance of infant mortality. It’s also been linked to low productivity in adults, slower cognitive and

physical growth in children, and increased vulnerability to infection.

- We support the intent of Target (c) but suggest simplifying it by focusing on “increasing total factor agricultural productivity by X% with a focus on sustainability, smallholders, and access to irrigation.” Target (d) as formulated is too focused on inputs and falls short of capturing outcomes. Total factor productivity is a more reliable measure of agricultural efficiency, which should be the key outcome we’re seeking—with the additional focus on sustainability and benefits accruing to smallholders.
- We think that also captures the intent of Target (c) and (d) and (f) and therefore allows for some consolidation.
- And finally, for the fourth target, we see important scope for something that addresses waste and loss. One suggestion for target (e) would be to include reference to bycatch. This target area would have obvious benefits and be truly universal. Indicators could focus on what causes food waste and losses.
- We thank you, Mr. Co-chair.