

**MEETING OF THE OPEN WORKING GROUP ON SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT GOALS,**

May 5 – 9, 2014

Statement of Latvia

Delivered by Ms. Inese Freimane-Deksne, Deputy Permanent Representative

**Focus area 5 on Gender equality and women's empowerment; Focus area 6 on
Water and sanitation**

Latvia fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union.

We thank the Co-chairs for their continuous efforts and the revised working document. Recalling the statement made by Latvia during the 10th session of the Open Working Group in April, we would like to convey the following observations:

1. We reaffirm that the **post-2015 development framework** must be universally applicable and place people at the centre of it, tackling the root causes of poverty, inequalities and discrimination against all human beings. A rights based approach encompassing all human rights is fundamental to this and should be appropriately reflected in the new framework.
2. We strongly support **gender equality and women's empowerment** as a stand-alone goal, and as a theme that must be mainstreamed throughout all focus areas of the post-2015 agenda. The new development agenda should promote availability of gender disaggregated data for all targets in all focus areas. We are convinced that gender equality and women's empowerment are crucial for equitable and inclusive sustainable development.
3. We support all targets proposed in the working document under **Focus area 5** and would like to propose the following additions to some of them:
 - under target a) to add: “by 2030 end all forms of discrimination against women of all ages **to ensure full equality under the law, including by revoking all gender-discriminatory legislation and providing access to justice**”;
 - under target c) to add: “by 2030 ensure equal access **to quality primary and secondary education and close gender gaps at all levels**”;
 - under target e) to add: “**Ensure women's equal access to, control and ownership of productive assets and resources, including financial and banking services, markets, information and communication technologies, natural resources management, and women's equal land, inheritance and property rights**”;
 - under target f) to add: “Ensure equal participation and leadership of women in decision-making in public and private institutions, **including in conflict resolution and peacebuilding, and strengthen women's collective action**”;
 - under target h) to add: “**by 2030 reduce and redistribute the unequal burden of unpaid care work and domestic work through shared responsibility by men and women**”.

4. In addition, in order to facilitate informed decision-making and to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women and girls, the importance of **promoting public awareness and developing education programmes**, with full engagement of men and boys, should be also reflected under Focus area 5.
5. Regarding the **title of Focus area 5**, we consider that the title should state *“women’s and girls’ empowerment”* since girls are not empowered from birth everywhere and later it could become much harder to achieve.
6. In order to effectively mainstream gender equality across all focus areas, under **Focus area 3 on Health** we suggest to include the following targets:
 - “by 2030 ensure universal access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health **and rights** for all, **including through universal access to quality, integrated sexual and reproductive health information, education and services that include modern methods of family planning**”; and
 - “ensure **universal access to essential services for survivors of gender-based and sexual violence**”.
7. **Focus area 8 on Employment should also reflect interlinkage with Focus area 5.** Therefore we suggest to include a **separate target under Focus area 8 on women’s equal access to employment and decent work, and equal participation of women in the labour force in all sectors.** It should also include **universal social protection** that acknowledges the burden of women’s unpaid care work and promotes access to quality social services for all.
8. **We support Focus area 6 on water and sanitation.** We consider that universal access to safe and affordable drinking water, sanitation and hygiene, especially for women and girls, is of particular importance.

Mr. Co-Chair,

Latvia will continue to support your work and cooperate constructively in further elaboration of universal and at the same time measurable goals and targets.

I thank you.