

OWG 11: Comments by Denmark/Ireland and Norway on FA 8:
Economic growth, employment and infrastructure

Check against delivery

Economic Growth, Employment and Infrastructure is a large, complex and universal area.

Our thinking on the possibility of a goal in these areas continues and we have yet to decide our final view in this regard. We recognise the good links for instance with the Focus Area on Industrialization.

We have some general points to make on the need for the current Focus Area 8 to balance the three pillars of sustainable development. We will in addition make some specific remarks on the targets.

As regards the targets;

- Gender is not effectively captured in this area. We propose a target promoting the full participation of women in the economy, providing them with equal access to financial services and infrastructure and equality in employment opportunities, including equal rights at work and equal pay for equal work.
- We support the important focus on reducing income inequality in target (a) and stress that economic growth must be focused on the poorest.
- We support Target (b) on achieving full and productive employment and decent work
- We support the important focus on reducing youth employment in target (c)
- We welcome the elements of target (d) and suggest adding the reduction of harmful chemicals.
- Target (e) should focus on creating an enabling business environment through predictable and accountable macroeconomic policies based on the rule of law. This should emphasise creating an appropriate climate for entrepreneurship and innovation at individual, micro and small and medium enterprise levels.
- We support target (g) but suggest that infrastructure address the needs of the poor, be resilient to disasters and the effects of climate change and that incentives to this end are established.
- We support targets (h) and (i) and suggest that (h) should include ensuring safe and secure working environments, including occupational safety and health.
- We support target (j) and encourage a focus on the informal sector.

Our more general remarks are the following:

- First, inclusive economic governance is required to achieve inclusive economic growth, especially in the areas of economic policy and the management of natural resources;
- Second, economic growth must also be environmentally sustainable growth. We would like to see a better balance here. Targets should highlight the positive economic benefits of greener development, factoring in decent green jobs and the promotion of environmentally sound technologies.
- Third, targets should include decoupling between economic growth and environmental impact, promoting environmentally sound technologies and avoiding the lock-in of older environmentally unsound technologies.
- Fourth, social protection is not captured in this Focus Area though it is a key policy for inclusive growth. We encourage strong coherence between FA1 on Poverty Eradication, which features Social Protection, and FA 8 on Economic Growth.
- Fifth, a target on accountable business practices should be encouraged in line with the UN Guiding Principles on Human Rights. Accountability should be promoted through sustainability reporting.
- Finally, sixth, this area should also promote a broader system of capital accounting looking beyond GDP and incorporating social, human and environmental capital.