

11th Session of the OWG on SDGs

May 6, 2014

**Statement on Focus Areas 5 and 6 by Amit Narang, Counsellor,
Permanent Mission of India to the UN**

Thank you Mr. Co-Chair & Good Afternoon Colleagues,

I would like to share some concrete suggestions on focus area 5 and 6.

Before I do that, I would like to thank you for your introductory remarks this afternoon where you were trying to explain how the proposed focus areas include the elements of universality and the three dimensions of the sustainable development.

I found your explanation very useful and I would like to thank you for that.

However, there was another element that we were trying to flag in our statement yesterday which can be a useful criteria for defining the focus areas and targets under them.

This element is that of 'multilateralism'. This means ensuring that the proposed goals favour international cooperation over mere actions at the national level.

Focus area 6 in the current working document is a prime example of how national actions have been favoured over international cooperation. In fact there is hardly any element of international cooperation in this area.

Ideas such as waste water management, water efficiency, water harvesting, integrated water management, effective sanitation facilities are all laudable objectives and issues we strongly support.

However, the fact is that developing countries are not unaware of these problems neither are they blind to their benefits.

The problem is therefore not of intention and mostly relates to something else. Sometimes it is the sheer scale of challenges, sometimes it is about capacity, about resources and about technology adoption and deployment.

For this reason, therefore, merely setting the objectives will not ensure that we will be able to achieve them. While we realize and recognize the importance of setting good targets and good objectives, I think it behooves us as the group to look a little bit further than merely setting objectives and see how do we further international cooperation to ensure we actually get to these laudable objectives.

To come back to some specific suggestions that we had on focus area 6, Mr. Co-Chair, we listened carefully to those delegations who have said that perhaps the challenge of sanitation could be better addressed as a stand-alone target and we are quite favourable to that idea.

In 6 (b) we would suggest addition of the words "through technology transfer and capacity building in developing countries" at the end of this proposed target .

We would propose, in 6(c) that we delete the numerical percentage "x%" and also delete the reference "with particular focus to agriculture". The rationale behind this has been explained by various speakers before me.

On 6 (d), the concerns regarding 'trans-boundary cooperation' were very well explained by the distinguished Ambassador from Brazil. We need to bring this in line with the Rio+20 formulation. This is a difficult issue and something which is best done in bilateral frameworks and not as part of international and multilateral template. We therefore request the deletion of the words "including appropriate trans-boundary cooperation".

In 6(e) we find that the formulation bringing fresh water extraction in line with sustainable supplies to broad and it is almost impossible to measure the way it is currently drafted and we would favour perhaps a redrafting of this target to make it more specific and complete.

In 6 (f) we support the call to delete the word "eliminate" (pollution) and replace it with "reduce" (pollution).

As several other delegations have noted on 6(h) on Disaster Risk Reduction we believe that this issue should be addressed as part of focus area 10 under sustainable Cities and Human settlements where we should bring all disaster related element under one focus area.

Mr. Co-Chair,

In terms of the means of implementation, we also support the following addition which has been suggested by other delegations, to read as follows: "Support the efforts in developing countries on water and sanitation activities and programmes, through provision of financial resources, capacity-building and technology transfer".

Mr. Co-Chair,

On Focus area 5, we have listened carefully to some valuable suggestions which have been made so far. We feel that 5(e) would need some redrafting. The focus in this issue should be on "access to productive resources".

On 5(g), we support the call to delete the words 'early' in terms of marriage. There are definitional challenges on what constitutes 'early'.

On 5(h), we feel that while addressing 'unpaid care work' as was explained by the Representative speaking on behalf of Africa , we need to be very careful of the cultural and national particularities. This issue may also have measurability challenges .

On 5 (j) - we fully support the issue of disaggregated data. But as we have said before the issue of 'data revolution' which comes across in this group often, is more an issue of capacity building. If it is framed as an issue of capacity building, its overall acceptability would increase manifold.

Therefore we would support adding the words "through capacity building in developing countries" at the end of this target. We can also have a more holistic look and keep the issue of data revolution as part of means of implementation which will apply to the whole set of goals in targets.

Finally, Mr. Co-Chair,

We would propose the following means of implementation for this Area: "Use of enabling technologies, in particular ICT for the empowerment of women".

Mr. Co-Chair,

Women's empowerment can benefit substantially if technology is brought to bear on this important intervention. We feel that power of technology if applied to the empowerment of women can be a game changer and we would strongly insist on including this target as part of this goal .

Thank you.