

OWG 11 – Statement by Norway, Ireland and Denmark on FA 3: Health and Population Dynamics

Check against delivery

- **We support an ambitious goal and a set of actionable and measurable targets on Health.**
- Pleased to see that most of the central issues that should be included as targets under a Health goal are covered in the present text. Among them, we would like to highlight in particular the following five:
 1. (a) Elimination of preventable **child and maternal deaths** is a key target (or two targets, as suggested i.a. by the Netherlands), and must be included. The exact figures and phrasing of the target may need to be further refined as we move forward.
 2. (f) Achieving universal access to **sexual and reproductive health and rights** is closely linked to the elimination of maternal mortality and must also be kept as a target. The current text has omitted the reference to rights, which is a crucial component. We would also like to stress that family planning is just one of many elements, others are information, education and services.
 3. (b) We support a target on preventing and treating **communicable diseases**, in particular HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis. We may want to look for more measurable language than on “ending the epidemics”.
 4. (c) Reducing mortality from **non-communicable diseases** (NCDs) is another important target we support, including its focus on prevention and control.
 5. (g) We are pleased to see included a target on reducing death and illnesses from **environmental** degradation. Such a target should focus on reducing **indoor and outdoor air pollution** in particular, being the largest single environmental health risk today. Exposure to harmful substances should also be taken into account.
- (d) In addition to these five, we are also pleased to see the reference to **Universal Health Coverage (UHC)** in target area d). The way this concept is referred to still need some further deliberations. Universal health coverage must address the needs of women, girls and the most marginalized. It should

also address the strengthening of health systems factoring among other issues planning, development and training of the health work force.

- (e) Access to affordable essential **medicines and vaccines**, as referred to in (e), is essential to achieve an ambitious health goal. Providing such access has been an important part of our efforts to achieve the current health MDGs, through partnerships like GAVI and the Global Fund, and these efforts must continue. We are not sure, however, whether these essential efforts should be treated as a means or as a target in the SDGs.
- Finally, there are many important **social, economic and environmental determinants** of health that we must keep in mind as we further refine the SDG framework. Health is closely linked to many other focus areas, nutrition and water being two obvious examples. We need to come back to how and under which goals these key issues are reflected as targets.