

Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals Summary of 11th Session (Day 3)

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On, 7 May 2014, the OWG continued its 11th session with discussion on focus areas:

- *Energy and Economic Growth, Employment and Infrastructure*
- *Industrialization and promoting equality between nations and Sustainable cities and human settlement*

With the OWG running an entire session behind schedule, the co-chairs expressed their desire to catch-up during the sessions' final days. A number of delegations expressed their frustration at the continuation of the current operating modalities, with further calls for informal consultations. Brazil, for instance, noted that the current process is reaching the point of diminishing returns. The co-chairs engaged more actively in discussions on the clustering of work, pressing delegations to be specific in their interventions and directly asking them for points of clarification.

Compared to yesterday's sessions, the focus areas under discussion saw longer statements, more target proposals and major revision to the working document. The co-chairs noted up to 30 new targets had been proposed during the course of the discussions, notwithstanding their desire to continue cutting back and for the process to become a zero-sum game.

General themes

- Views noting the absence of the economic dimension of sustainable development were expressed by a number of delegations, while developing countries continued to highlight their view that common but differentiated responsibilities should be an overriding principle of the framework. This prompted the co-chairs to ask why many proposals presented during the debate were geared toward LDCs as well as general discussions on the meaning of 'global' goals.
- Countries expressed diverging views on whether targets could be repeated across the framework (e.g. Peru in favor and Iran against) while Brazil's call for a more relaxed approach to the number of goals and targets garnered support. The Brazilian delegate noted for example, that the new agenda would inevitably be bigger in scope than the MDGs and that governments should not get too caught up in trying to reduce the number of goals to a specific number.

Migration

- While not featuring as frequently as in Tuesday's discussions, yesterday's deliberations did see concrete suggestions and target proposals relating directly to migration.
- Notably, in the context of supporting a goal on sustainable inclusive economic growth and breaking down elements of inclusion - **Spain Italy and Turkey** proposed a target on financial inclusion of migrants, speaking to empowerment of migrant diaspora and their entrepreneurship.
- **Brazil and Nicaragua** reiterated their point from earlier sessions that placing migration and migration policies under focus area 16 breeds the misconception that migration is a threat to peaceful societies. As migration is best dealt with in the context of decent work, Brazil called to move migration to focus area 8 (economic growth, employment and infrastructure).
- In discussing a target on worker's rights modeled around ILO-conventions, several states suggested specifically referencing migrant workers (**The African Group, Switzerland, France, Germany, Iran**). The target met some opposition from **Saudi-Arabia** more broadly, whereas **Japan** wanted to put the target on hold, noting that ILO-negotiations impacting the content of the target would come to a conclusion first in 2015.
- As a factor mediating economic growth, reducing the cost of remittances gained continued traction (**Bangladesh, African Group, CARICOM**), as did migration policies and plans prompting target proposals by **Indonesia, China and Kazakhstan** as well as **Egypt**.
- Speaking to economic growth, **Egypt** mentioned well-managed migration as a mediating factor, while also highlighting reducing the cost of remittances, suggesting target proposals on both (in the content of discussing economic growth and industrialization).

Means of implementation

- The increased focus on MoI from yesterday's consultations was further enhanced through clear statements on the centrality of MoI to meeting economic growth targets. Developing countries also increasingly included specific MoI target proposals in their statements, helping to reinforce their view that each goal area should include MoI in addition to it being a stand-alone goal in its own right.
- Financial assistance to developing countries, international cooperation, capacity building and knowledge and technology transfer characterized many of these MoI targets.

Energy

- Many countries expressed appreciation that the document now included a standalone goal on energy.
- Access to modern energy services, renewable energy and energy efficiency were in focus, while phasing out fossil fuel subsidies was a major point of contention. The nexus with the UNFCCC framework was raised as well as the desirability of specific percentage targets.

Economic growth, Employment and Infrastructure

- A number of countries expressed strong discontent with the grouping of this focus area, asking whether it reflected the OWG discussions at all. In particular, governments expressed strong concerns about infrastructure being inadequately reflected, having only one target.



- Target-proposals and amendments were numerous under this area, ranging from language on inclusive economic growth, to increasing and improving access to ICT and safe and reliable transport. LDCs placed strong emphasis on MoI under this focus area.
- Several delegations questioned the feasibility of some targets, for example by asking whether reducing youth unemployment by 50 percent over the coming decades is achievable.

Industrialization and promoting equality

- There were widely divergent views on whether and how to frame and group industrialization and equality. For example, delegations asked whether equality should be streamlined across the framework (United States, Canada and Israel) or expressed through a standalone goal (India). Similar concerns about the importance and interlinkages of industrialization were raised.
- While equality of nations is mentioned in the title of the focus area, many delegations felt it was not adequately captured in the targets, nor across the framework.
- Under industrialization, proposed targets often related to access to ICT.

Sustainable cities and human settlement

- Refining and reformulating targets on enhancing urban planning and waste management were prominent -as was the need to highlight the link between urban and rural areas.
- Discussions often gravitated to the meaning of concepts and lack of agreed language- e.g. what do we mean by ecological footprint?