

General Assembly

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General Debate

H.E. Ms. Tine Mørch Smith
Ambassador
Deputy Permanent Representative

Chair,

Norway is powered by its natural resources, but not by these resources alone. One factor has contributed even more to Norway's economic progress and stability than energy exports, and that is having women in the workforce. So, when we talk about development and equitable distribution, we also have to talk about gender equality. The link between women's empowerment and economic and social development is clear – Norway is a prime example of this. Gender equality is smart economics, and the full and equal participation of women is both a moral and an economic imperative. If we want development, we simply cannot afford to exclude half of the work force. If we want development, it makes no sense – in economic terms – to leave this potential untapped. In our experience, legally founded parental leave is the key to enabling women to work. But one reason why we can afford generous parental leave in the first place is the high level of women's participation in the Norwegian workforce. Together, such factors create a mutually reinforcing upward spiral. Being able to choose when to have children, and when not to, also helps women to participate in the workforce. Women's full and equal participation in society can only be achieved if women also fully enjoy all human rights. Sexual and reproductive health and rights are particularly important in this regard.

To reiterate, gender equality and women's empowerment are not just a question of morale or equal rights. They are good economics. The post-2015 development agenda must reflect this fact.

Chair,

We now have three years left to achieve the goals set out in the Millennium Declaration. In our discussions on the post-2015 development agenda, we must not lose focus on the work at hand. Norway remains committed to achieving the MDGs, and we will continue our intensive efforts in particular when it comes to the health related goals, education and gender equality. This was reflected when the government today confirmed that 1 % of our GNI will be ODA also next year.

Focusing on the tasks at hand does not mean that we should not look to the future. On 21 September, the Norwegian Government launched a white paper on UN policy, which emphasized the importance of the post-2015 agenda. We would like to see a post-2015 agenda that will be able to vitalize the global community, mobilize resources, and renew political commitment for development. Over the last 12 years, economic growth has lifted many countries out of the low-income bracket into the middle-income group. But the number of poor people has remained more or less constant, which means that only a small proportion of people are benefiting from this economic growth. In other, traditionally richer countries, the financial crisis has taken its toll. The picture now is more complex than 12 years ago. We need to rethink our policies so that the redistribution of wealth within and among countries is given a central place in the preparation of the post-2015 agenda.

Norway would like to underscore the need for developing countries to mobilize more of their domestic resources – through broadening their tax base, fighting corruption and increasing transparency and accountability. Norway is actively working to put the issue of illicit financial flows from developing countries higher on the international agenda. These flows are many times higher than total annual development assistance. This is a drain on important resources for development and it must be stopped.

Chair,

The Rio+20 outcome document left it up to the General Assembly to agree on a set of sustainable development goals. The outcome document stresses that the process of developing these goals should be coordinated and coherent with the processes considering the post-2015 agenda. We firmly believe that we must avoid ending up with two sets of goals that compete for political attention and resources. Instead, we need processes that are mutually reinforcing. The two processes should be integrated into one framework, and into one set of goals that is development-oriented, and integrates all dimensions of sustainable development.

Chair,

Over the years, the UN has faced growing criticism for inefficiency and the duplication of structures. In response, it has implemented substantial reforms. The “Delivering as One” pilots has been a success story in this regard. The pilot countries, as well as the self-starter countries, have demonstrated clear leadership and determination in following up UN reform and promoting system-wide coherence. Now, the pilot phase is over and we have seen the recommendations from the independent evaluation. When we later this year review the United Nations operational activities, we believe it is time to integrate and recognize “Delivering as One” as the main modality for UN country operations.

Lastly, we would like to note the words of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, that urbanization is the dominant socio-economic trend of the 21st century. Each week the population of the cities in the developing world grows by three million people. We would like to stress the importance of UN-HABITAT’s activities. We appreciate UNHabitat’s work to develop new norms and standards for urban development, including the planning of the Habitat III conference in 2016. We encourage all member states, local governments, civil society and private sector to take an active part in the preparations leading up to this milestone conference.

Thank you.