

A Brief Overview of Discussions

11th Session of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals

5 - 9 May 2014, New York

Key Points and developments of OWG -11 included:

- OWG-11 discussed 16 focus areas¹ and close to 150 potential targets related to the focus areas. On Monday, 5 May, the meeting discussed focus area 1 and 2. Following discussions on each focus area, there was a general agreement of the interlinkages of poverty with other areas, and that poverty eradication, food security, education, health, gender and water focus areas should be included as goals in the new framework.
 - The multidimensional nature of poverty required the implementation of all goals in focus area 1. In this regard, many strongly proposed a stand-alone goal on poverty eradication in all its forms by 2030 with recommended appropriate MOI.
 - On inequality, many called for greater focus on the most marginalized and vulnerable groups.
 - There was also general support for a stand-alone goal on sustainable agriculture, food security and nutrition related to the realization of the right to food, ending hunger and ensuring food security and nutrition based on the Secretary-General's "Zero Hunger Challenge".
- On Tuesday, 6 May, OWG-11 continued to discuss focus areas 3, 4, 5 and 6. Most countries supported stand-alone goals on each of the four focus areas, revealing emerging consensus on some targets under the focus areas. Many also proposed specific MOI for each focus area.
- On Wednesday, 7 May, the meeting continued with discussions on focus areas 7 and 8. Some countries suggested dividing focus area 8 on economic growth, employment and infrastructure, with suggestions to combine the infrastructure element with industrialization or sustainable cities. Some governments wanted issues of equality, industrialization, and cities to be addressed through targets in other focus areas. Some continued to suggest that inequality should comprise its own focus area. The Co-Chair informed the meeting that OWG-12 will continue discussions on equality.
 - Targets in focus area 8 on economic growth, employment and infrastructure were also viewed to not fully address all dimensions of sustainable development, and required further clustering in order to maintain a balance across the three pillars of sustainable development.

¹ OWG-11 focus areas (FA):

FA1: Poverty eradication, building shared prosperity and promoting equality; FA2: Sustainable agriculture, food security and nutrition; FA3: Health and population dynamics; FA4: Education and lifelong learning; FA5: Gender equality and women's empowerment; FA6: Water and sanitation; FA7: Energy; FA8: Economic growth, employment and infrastructure; FA9: Industrialization and promoting equality among nations; FA10: Sustainable cities and human settlements; FA11: Sustainable Consumption and Production; FA12: Climate change; FA13: Conservation and sustainable use of marine resources, oceans and seas; FA14: Ecosystems and biodiversity; FA15: Means of implementation/Global partnership for sustainable development; and FA16: Peaceful and inclusive societies, rule of law and capable institutions.

- On Thursday, 8 May, the meeting discussed focus areas 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14. Many proposed having each of the focus areas as stand-alone goals, while others suggested integrating the targets into other focus areas or merging the focus areas.
 - On focus area 12 on climate change, many suggested adding related targets to each of the focus areas and not retaining a stand-alone goal, especially in light of the ongoing negotiations under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. However, there also appeared to be willingness for flexibility among supporters of a stand-alone goal on climate change. The Co-Chair informed the meeting that climate change will remain a focus area in the next work document, with an aim of addressing the issue in other areas of the document.
 - Focus areas 13 and 14 and were viewed as important for the achievement of sustainable development, with calls for greater integration of the targets in these focus areas with other areas, including poverty eradication, sustainable agriculture, food security and nutrition, and sustainable consumption and production or climate change.
 - Proposals to merge focus area 13 on oceans and ecosystems were presented, with opposing views to have an oceans stand-alone goal.
 - On focus area 14 on ecosystems and biodiversity, there were calls for the recognition of the contribution of SFM to sustainable development, and proposed enhanced cooperation and coordination on the linkages with climate change, loss of biodiversity and desertification; and the mobilization of resources for SFM to contribute to poverty eradication, socio-economic development and environmental stability.
 - A stand-alone goal to ensure the sustainable management of natural resources and productive, healthy and resilient ecosystems and biodiversity was also proposed.
 - Further proposals on the targets for these two focus areas included suggestions with regard to SFM, desertification, land degradation and drought, among other issues.
- On the final day, Friday, 9 May, the session discussed focus areas 15 and 16. Means of implementation/global partnership for sustainable development as a stand-alone goal was overwhelmingly proposed, using Monterrey and Doha as a basis for targets in this focus area. There were many suggestions for having MOI as a cross-cutting stand-alone goal that addresses all focus areas, to serve as a catalyst for the achievement of SDG.
- OWG-11 was the last meeting before direct negotiations on SDGs begin. In response to requests for more informal discussions, the Co-Chair informed the meeting that the last two OWG sessions will be preceded by informal-informals to discuss the proposed working document.