

**FOURTH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OPEN WORKING GROUP ON
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS
17-19 JUNE 2013 – Trusteeship Council (Conference Building)**

Co-Chair's meetings with the Major Groups and other Stakeholders

The Co-chairs and Member States of the Open Working Group continued the interaction with the stakeholders established in the third session of the group and organized three hour-long morning meetings with the Major Groups and other stakeholders during the fourth session. Each morning presentations by two stakeholder panelists were followed by several interventions from the floor. Panelists and speakers as well as content were agreed upon by a self-determined steering committee of Major Groups and other stakeholders.

Co-chairs highlighted throughout the sessions that implementation remains a key open question – by what mechanisms can we increase access to and improve the quality of education, health care and social protection, and how can we finance this? On means of implementation, the participants raised issues such as reallocation of fossil fuel subsidies and military expenditure, tackling tax evasion and tax havens and creation of international transaction and green taxes. It was also noted that regulation of informal work would not only increase domestic tax revenues but would also promote better social protection for the individuals. The vital role of enterprises in jobs creation and enhancing the tax revenue base was also stressed.

On the cluster of Employment and decent work for all, social protection, youth, education and culture, it was noted that social protection should be addressed from a human rights perspective; protection should be de-linked from employment in order to ensure that children, people with disabilities etc. will not be left out. The possible targets on social protection, decent work and education should tackle inequalities at all levels. All in all, it was raised that social protection is a key enabler for sustainable development that strengthens the social contract between states and citizens.

The participants stressed that national governments are responsible for addressing issues of social protection and decent jobs through domestic policies and tax revenues but at the same time technical support from global actors in harmonizing social protection levels was called for. Domestic economic growth was raised as the number one source of funding but it was noted that ODA is still a very important part of funding for social protection and education systems especially in LDCs.

It was also noted, that social protection systems are at the heart of a just transition to green economies; jobs will be created in some areas, but also lost in others. Therefore social protection nets and investments in education are needed. Jobs creation and preservation should not be used to legitimize environmental degradation; indeed, environmentally harmful activities can undermine future job creation through damage to the natural resource base as well as the health of local communities.

Unequal distribution of care work, affecting especially women, and the gender pay gap should be addressed in the SDG framework. It was also noted that people with disabilities need support in entering the job market and finding employment.

Youth unemployment was raised as one of the key future challenges in both developed and developing countries and employment should be seen as a tool for empowering young people.

Participants highlighted that education is at the core of sustainable development and the most effective way to poverty eradication. Education as an enabler for progress in other fields was stressed, including health and employment. Need to shift focus from the mere access to education to quality education, including adequate facilities, qualified teachers, good home-conditions, promotion of innovation and civic-mindedness as well as measurable learning outcomes, was stressed by many. So was the need for free and equal access to education for all, including people with disabilities, children living in remote rural areas, and marginalized groups. Importance of life long learning was also raised.

Social protection floors and the importance of child sensitive social protection systems related to abuse, neglect and social exclusion were highlighted. Quality cash-transfers were raised as an effective way to help the most vulnerable.

On the cluster of health, and population dynamics, the participants noted the need to take data on population dynamics into account in all policy planning. Information on key trends, such as the youth bulge in some countries, ageing population in other, migration and urbanization should guide planning. It was raised that the SDGs should cover issues not dealt with in the MDGs; such as non-communicable, neglected tropical and zoonotic diseases.

Universal health coverage was raised by many as a possible goal and an important tool to foster healthy populations. It was pointed out that in order to make this coverage feasible in all countries, the cost-effectiveness of medical care should be taken into consideration when planning health care systems. Elimination of user fees and focus on access for most marginalized groups was highlighted.

Many participants stressed the importance of sexual and reproductive health education and rights for young people and their linkage to the ability to get education and employment, especially for girls. This was also seen as a way of empowerment.

Greater youth participation and input in the SD agenda and work was called for since the youth provide a fresh perspective on the evolving needs and concerns of the younger generation. At the same time, it was noted that the growing number of elderly people needs to be reflected in data collection and policy planning, especially in health and social care.

Concrete targets for the SDGs were proposed for full employment and decent work for all, social protection floor for all, living wage for all, elimination of gender pay gap, regulation of informal work, universal unemployment insurance, increased allocation of GDP to social protection systems, life free of violence, animal welfare,

universal health coverage, prevention of NCD deaths, malnutrition, healthy life expectancy, family planning, reduced tobacco and alcohol use, and reduced tax evasion, among others.