



**SEVENTH SESSION OF THE OPEN WORKING GROUP OF THE GENERAL  
ASSEMBLY ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

*New York, 3 – 7 February 2014*

Statement by the Ambassador Permanent Representative of Spain,  
H.E. Román Oyarzun

**Interactive exchange of views on  
“Promoting equality including social equity, gender equality and women’s  
empowerment”**

I have the honor to speak on behalf of Spain, as well as Italy and Turkey, with whom we are pleased to share the membership of this Open Working Group.

As usual, following the directives of our co-Chairs, we will highlight the key messages of our statement, and post the full version on the Group’s website.

Let me start by congratulating both keynote speakers –the Executive Director of UNWOMEN and the Director of UNFPA – for their excellent presentations.

**Distinguished co-Chairs, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

- 1. The international community is confronting the challenges of a new geopolitical and economical situation, very different from the 2000 context, when the MDGs were settled. One of the major challenges today is the persistence of severe inequalities at global, regional and national levels. Statistics indicate that while extreme poverty has declined, relative poverty has increased, rising inequalities in the same way, so a correlation between economic growth and equitable growth does not necessarily exist. Moreover, the Task Team issues**

**brief reminds us that income inequalities have become especially pronounced in middle income countries.**

2. **If sustainable human development and poverty eradication are to be at the center of the future agenda, inequities must be addressed based on a human rights approach.** Inequality is not only a problem of individual dimensions, but it also has deep consequences for society, and even globally: inequalities are typically the source of violent conflicts. The international community must then consider lack of equal access and opportunities as a global challenge, and this can only be done through an equitable development for all.
3. Moreover, inequities cannot be tackled only from an economic point of view. Inequalities are multi-dimensional. Gaps and barriers can be social, political, ideological, cultural, etc. In order to address inequities in a multidimensional way, a deep reflection must be done on its underlying causes, as well as the development of a globally applicable and sound methodology and data.
4. **It is of paramount importance to recognize that when we talk about inequalities we talk about the lack of equity in the access to opportunities and to capacities, and in a way that covers the specific needs of each person.** Also, we are talking about individuals and groups suffering multiple human rights violations or different forms of discrimination and deprivation. In this sense, every person, situation, context and needs are different when it comes to achieve equitable development, and each of the areas must be reflected by policies.
5. Inequalities are deeply imbedded in structural drivers and also in barriers in the economic, social, political, cultural and environmental domains, leading systematically some specific groups to discrimination, exclusion and poverty.
6. In addition, **the technological revolution that we are experiencing is the key.** Up to the present, it has been part of the problem; a limited access to technology is favoring the highly educated and skilled **The Post 2015 Development Agenda should aim at turning technology into part of the solution.**
7. Recently, a number of countries have experienced an economic growth moving out of low income status to MIC. Nevertheless, these countries have had a process of

economic growth that has not always been accompanied by an equal pattern of wealth distribution so a decline in the economic and social inequalities in their societies has happened. **In this sense, development policies should ensure the improvement of public administration, mainly in the areas that have a greater impact on social inclusion and cohesion, such as budgetary and fiscal policies.**

8. Several challenges must be tackled in the current international context. Firstly, the challenge of identifying and quantifying where and how inequality arises, and where the differences in the levels and dimensions of poverty are within a country which is in the process of development and progress, considering its heterogeneity. In the second place, to undertake the necessary policies to deal with this phenomenon within countries, learning from what has so far worked out and adapting good results in countries and similar situations. And finally, to carry out a proposal of matching international measures and policies in order to make possible a comparative analysis between countries.

9. **The post-2015 agenda, and the identification of the future global goals and its targets and indicators, should be elaborated as the result of an inclusive and highly participatory process including disadvantaged and discriminated people, in order to reduce inequity gaps. In the future agenda, there are several options to tackle inequalities: from the design of the new goals - focusing on excluded groups - to a stand-alone goal, as well as a horizontal approach. Our team is in favor of exploring all possibilities, within this Open Work Group, with a view to find the most efficient approach.**

10. **As stated in the High-Level Panel Report on the Post-2015 Development Agenda “We can be the first generation in human history to end hunger and ensure that every person achieves a basic standard of wellbeing. There can be no excuses. This is a universal agenda, for which everyone must accept their proper share of responsibility”.**

## **Distinguished Colleagues and Participants,**

- 11. One of the biggest and most widespread forms of discrimination in today's world is Gender-based discrimination -- including the denial of the rights of women and girls, and their disempowerment to take control of their lives and bodies. Gender discrimination has been widely acknowledged and condemned at the Global Thematic Consultation on Inequities celebrated a year ago. We need to get to zero tolerance of all forms of violence against women and girls.**
- 12. Data provided at UN reports and documents, as well as Global Conferences still in force (CEDAW 1979, Beijing 1995, CIPD 1994, Conference on Human Rights in Vienna 1993, Resolution 1325 2000), reveal global problems and carry them to the agenda of international community. This challenge becomes more complex when multiple discriminations occurs – gender discrimination together with caste, race, ethnic and indigenous identity, disability, marital and family status, HIV status, and sexual orientation, or when it happens in a situation of extreme poverty, armed conflicts or humanitarian crisis, or when it is linked to human trafficking, female genital mutilation, child and forced marriages or gender-based violence. Female poverty and exclusion is evident, but at the same time women are invisible drivers of development, sustainability and peace in any region in the world.**
- 13. Considering that the future development agenda must be people-centered, and that no one should be left behind, it goes without saying the need to include gender equality through the double strategy proposed by UN-Women: by setting a transformative stand-alone goal to achieve Gender Equality, women's rights and women's empowerment; and by mainstreaming gender into other goals through appropriate targets and indicators towards eliminating all forms of discrimination against all girls and women and diminish gender inequalities.**

14. **This stand-alone goal on Gender Equity must also envisage specific actions to move forward on the fulfillment of the economic, social and cultural rights for women – such as reproductive and sexual rights, right to water, right to land or right to food.** There is a need to acknowledge and highlight the important role that women play in taking care of persons and households, in preserving natural resources and sustainability, and in guaranteeing food security and nutrition. In this sense, it is essential to empower women and women's organizations to make them participate in the decision-making processes, to be able to access to natural resources and their use, and to be an active part of the development process and in the fight against poverty.
15. Moreover, as women's and girls' control over their own bodies has been internationally recognized as a human right, the inclusion of universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights in the context of universal health coverage, at the future agenda must be strongly considered, in the promotion, protection and fulfillment of all human rights. This should be done in the context of the full and effective implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development. **The international community has taken too long to start on the path towards gender equality. We cannot afford any step back.**

**Distinguished co-chairs,**

16. Therefore, we call for a reflection on the importance of overcoming any kind of inequalities and any form of discrimination as the only way for the eradication of poverty and global stability, with gender equity at the center of any action. With the design of a new development agenda we have the opportunity to do so, with an inclusive approach and based on human rights at the centre of the three dimensions – social, environmental and economic.
17. **Finally Mr. co-Chair, I would like to take this opportunity to announce that Spain is planning to organize, together with UNDP, a seminar to discuss**

**on possibilities to reduce inequalities at Middle Income Countries. The result of this seminar will be a document of conclusions that will serve as a direct input to the Meeting of the Global Alliance of Development Efficiency, to be held in México in April, and also to the Post-2015 Development Agenda.**

**Thank you very much for your attention.**

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