

11th Session of the OWG on SDGs

May 7, 2014

**Statement on Focus Areas 7 and 8 by Amit Narang, Counsellor,
Permanent Mission of India to the UN**

Mr. Co-Chair,

First of all, thank you for your response to the question posed by the distinguished Permanent Representative of Bolivia on behalf of *G77* this morning in terms of process.

We would like to reiterate that we continue to be concerned with the current mode of working in the *OWG*. The concerns expressed by a large number of developing countries and indeed by the *G-77* itself deserve to be properly addressed.

Mr. Co-Chair,

While we welcome the level of specificity in the comments made by delegations, it still needs to be assured that views heard from member states will be duly reflected in the zero draft, and not relegated to the so-called *Encyclopedia Groupitica*.

Given that we are at the last stages of this *OWG* we need to inject more urgency in our work. Our concern stems from a genuine desire to see this Group reach an ambitious and mutually acceptable outcome in July. We are concerned that the current way of working may not allow the Group to reach that outcome. We need to move from a statement-mode to a problem-solving mode which requires a direct mode of engagement among member states through informal consultations.

Mr. Co-Chair,

I am happy to present concrete suggestions on behalf of my delegation on focus areas 7 and 8.

Focus area 7-Energy:

Firstly, the title of this goal needs to be amended to add the word 'services' after modern energy. It would therefore read as "Ensure access to affordable but sustainable and reliable modern energy services for all". This is in line with the formulation used in Rio+20.

Secondly, in terms of additions, we propose to add a stand-alone target which would read as follows:-

"By 2030, reduce by x% the per-capita energy consumption in developed countries"

Mr. Co-Chair,

Our acceptance of the proposed targets (b) and (c) will depend on an ex-ante clarification on how these will be translated into national level actions. WE have raised this concern several times before.

While these targets are framed at global aggregate level, without adequate and necessary clarification, the burden for their achievement would fall disproportionately on developing countries. In the absence of these clarifications, we propose that these two targets (b) and (c) be deleted at this stage. In any case, we do not see any value in the inclusion of specific sectors of 'buildings, industry, agriculture and transport' as part of target (c).

In terms of energy access, we need to take into account the need to provide adequate policy space for off-grid solutions for energy access.

In target 7(d) the 'x%' should be deleted. We also call for deletion of the phrase "low or zero emission" when qualifying energy technologies.

Target 7(e) on fossil fuel subsidies, the way it is formulated, is not acceptable and must be deleted.

We need to recall the way this issue was treated at Rio+20 and we must not depart from that international consensus. As formulated, this target disproportionately focuses on consumption subsidies in developing countries to the detriment of production subsidies which are high in developed countries. Moreover, the issue of subsidies in developing countries is directly linked to providing energy access to the poor. As Rio+20 mandated, there needs to be an explicit recognition of the need to minimize the possible adverse effects on the development needs of developing countries and on the poor and the vulnerable.

Mr. Co-Chair,

We would like to propose the following as specific proposals for means of implementation under this focus area

- Encourage the use of TRIPS flexibilities in relation to promoting the use of environmentally sound energy technologies
- Strengthen international cooperation, including the provision of financial resources, building and technology transfer to developing countries to support their efforts towards universal energy access
- Enable greater access by developing countries to affordable access to clean energy technology, and in this regard, operationalize the UN Global Technology Facilitation Mechanism
- Remove by 20xx, barriers that developing countries face or may face, in obtaining access to clean energy technologies

Focus area 8 - Economic growth, employment and infrastructure:

Mr. Co-Chair,

First of all, given that there was no mandate from member states for the merger of the focus areas of employment and infrastructure with economic growth, we strongly insist that focus areas of employment and infrastructure be reinstated as independent focus areas.

Mr. Co-Chair,

We propose that the word 'sustainable' in the proposed title of this goal must be deleted. I should hasten to point out that the call for deletion is not because we are not in favour of sustainability. On the contrary, we feel that the sustainability concerns need to be meaningfully addressed, and not by such stop-gap and ad-hoc solutions like adding the words sustainable before every activity. It has become fashionable to do so, as if by merely adding the word sustainable, the problems can be addressed. We therefore hear about sustainable growth, sustainable social inclusion, sustainable infrastructure, sustainable industrialization, cities, villages, perhaps even sustainable rule of law. Unfortunately, when it comes to sustainable consumption patterns in the global North, we find that the enthusiasm for sustainability evaporates rather quickly.

Mr. Co-Chair,

These are quick fixes or band-aid solutions which do not contribute anything meaningful. It needs to be recalled that the concept we are working on is that of 'sustainable development' which calls for sustained and inclusive economic growth to be accompanied by social inclusion and environmental protection. This is also the formulation agreed at Rio+20. We would therefore not support adding such conditionalities or qualifiers to what itself is a subset of sustainable development.

Mr. Co-Chair,

We propose to add the following additional targets under this focus area 1, "Attain trend economic growth of at least 6% per annum in low income countries and near to that level for other developing countries".

We strongly support the retention target (f) as proposed.

Another target should read "Support the development and improve the provision in particular in developing countries of reliable, sustainable transport, including road and rail links, ports, air and trade routes, financial services and ICT activity.

In proposed target 8 (c), the word 'halve' should be deleted and replaced with "substantially reduce".

Target (d) should be deleted. As formulated it does not differentiate between the developmental conditions in developing and developed countries and is also contrary to the provision of special and deferential treatment for developing countries under WTO rules.

We would like to propose the following means of implementation under this focus area:

- Facilitating international technology cooperation and technology transfer, particularly for environmentally sound technologies
- Developing countries to be provided with international financing to enable them to implement growth and development strategies
- International trade and investment rules should be designed to promote growth and development of developing countries, especially low income countries
- Debt relief for developing countries

- Establishing a UN Global Technology Facilitation Mechanism
- Create conducive regulatory and financial systems at all levels to promote sustained growth in developing countries
- Promote trade facilitation and market access for developing countries
- Provide support to developing countries in planning and building resilient infrastructure including for disaster risk reduction

I thank you Mr. Co-Chair.