

Joint Statement to the Open Working Group on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

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Delivered by H.E. Ambassador Nozipho Mxakato-Diseko of South Africa on behalf of the following countries: Albania, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cape Verde, Chile, Colombia, Cook Islands, Costa Rica, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kiribati, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Mexico, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Portugal, Romania, Samoa, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Ukraine, United Kingdom, Uruguay, Vanuatu.

We reaffirm our commitment to developing Sustainable Development Goals and a Post-2015 Development Agenda that leaves nobody behind, places people at the centre of development, and is rooted in human rights. The future agenda should aim at tackling the root causes of structural inequalities and discrimination for *all* members of humankind, and to achieving gender equality, the empowerment of women and girls and ending gender-based violence, throughout their life cycle, with particular attention to those living in poverty, vulnerable groups, adolescents and youth.

In order to complete the ‘unfinished business’ of the Millennium Development Goals, and building on the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and related agreements, the respect, promotion and protection of sexual and reproductive health and rights for all must be an essential foundation of a universally-relevant, transformative, high-impact and cost-effective sustainable development agenda across its social, economic and environmental dimensions. They are key for addressing inequality, achieving poverty eradication, educational attainment and public health outcomes, fostering productivity, labour force participation and economic growth, reaping the rewards of demographic dividends, and improving environmental management, energy, food security, water and sanitation, and easing pressures on limited resources and ecosystems.

As fundamental human rights and freedoms for all people are critical to the sustainable development of all nations, we consider that the following targets should form an integral part of the Sustainable Development Goals and Post-2015 Development Agenda to be achieved by 2030:

- Under the proposed goal on Health:
‘Achieve universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights for all, including quality, comprehensive, integrated and affordable sexual and reproductive health information, education and services that include modern methods of contraception’
- Under the proposed goal on Gender Equality:
‘Ensure the respect, promotion and protection of sexual and reproductive health and rights for all’
- And under the proposed goal on Education:

'Achieve universal access to comprehensive sexuality education for all young people, in and out of school, consistent with their evolving capacities'.

We respectfully request that this joint statement and its main contents be reflected in the report of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals to the 68th Session of the General Assembly.