

**Worker and Trade Union Major Group Response to Focus Areas Document**  
**9th Session of the Open Working Group**  
**4 March 2014**

The Trade Union and Workers major group congratulates the co-chairs on a commendable effort to try to satisfy all of the diverse and critically important priorities which the OWG has discussed over the last year--it is a sound foundation from which to proceed. We recognize then, that this is something of a new starting point from which to move forward and work remains in further elaborating the focus areas and prioritizing them into a concrete set of goals and commitments. In interest of time I'll share some feedback on just a few of the focus areas but look forward to offering more comprehensive feedback in writing.

Generally speaking, and following on several interventions already made, if human rights and the human rights based approach is meant to underpin the SDG framework it needs to be better captured across all focus areas. This process presents the international development community an opportunity to really boost policy coherence between development promotion and human rights commitments. Real progress in development is measureable by the degree to which people can enjoy fundamental human rights in practice and effectively exercise democratic participation and as a result create accountability at all levels--this is the essence of the human rights based approach and should be central to all focus areas.

Next, references to Social Protection need to be significantly ramped up, if not added as an additional focus area in its own right. At the very least more concrete references to social protection must be introduced in several additional focus areas especially as it is an issue that responds to the three pillars. A sustainable development framework that does not include specific commitments to Universal Social Protection, through the creation and implementation of Social Protection Floors, will be a grave oversight. We emphasize that the Social protection Floor approach is neither a prescription nor a universal standard. It is an adaptable policy approach that should be country-owned and responsive to national priorities and resources.

On the focus areas already identified we first and foremost express our full support to the inclusion of Employment and especially Decent Work for All as one of the focus areas. This is an area that is critical and must be maintained in the SDGs in its own right. We would offer that decent work needs be fully articulated in all its dimensions and that priorities be organized under the four strategic pillars--creating jobs, social protection, rights at work and the social dialogue. In this way we can strengthen certain elements like fundamental principles and rights at work, the importance of labor market institutions, and the need to respect and uphold internationally agreed labor standards which are currently underrepresented in the current list of priorities. In addition, employment and decent work need to be better integrated across relevant focus areas. References to job creation in other focus areas do not seem consistent with the spirit of decent work as articulated under focus area 11. We also add that the link between employment and the different issues related to the environmental pillar need to be strengthened as we know for example adequate investments to achieve a low carbon future has the potential to create millions of decent and green jobs.

Thank you for your attention.