

MALTA



**Statement by Mr. Bernard Charles Mifsud
First Secretary
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Malta to the United Nations
8th Session of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals**

**Promoting Equality, including Social Equity,
Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment**

Thursday, 6th February 2014

United Nations, New York

Co-Chairs,

At the outset we would like to reiterate our full support to ending inequalities and discrimination against women based on gender. It is indeed unacceptable that a basis for discrimination is founded solely on a person's gender. We do also understand that despite pronouncements at the United Nations and beyond to the contrary, gender discrimination is still very much present in society, and that includes all societies. We do not see gender discrimination as a problem only for developing economies.

Co-Chairs,

We reiterate once again that we recognise the seminal and important progress made since the adoption of the ICPD, a major contribution to the development agenda. We reiterate that the Cairo and Beijing documents are our point of reference. It is for this reason that we underline that the achievements obtained through these documents, including the delicate understandings that led to their adoption and acceptance by UN Member States, should not be unnecessarily disturbed. My delegation would like to reiterate that on certain aspects of the ICPD, Member States' legal position needs to be taken fully into account. We also reiterate that on the matter of sexual reproductive health and rights, any future understandings or proposals in this respect should fully reflect the sensitivities of Member States, including our own. For Malta, abortion remains illegal at law, and therefore any SDG or undertaking resulting from this process should not result in any commitment on UN Member States that contravenes their national legislation on this sensitive matter. We reiterate our position; that the question of SRHR should be reflected in accordance with the ICPD, which we consider to be the gold standard in providing a way forward in our deliberations.

We strongly believe that if there is genuine willingness to achieve a universal consensus, there are formulations and existing language that ensures that different viewpoints are

reflected. We do see the Agreed Conclusions from the 57th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women as an ideal formulation, as well as already agreed by all.

I thank you.