



ForUM's response to revised SDG targets May 2015

ForUM, a network of 50 Norwegian NGOs, recognizes a number of improvements in the "[Revised targets document](#)" released by the Co-Facilitators on 7 May 2015 compared to the 23 March 2015 version. As discussed in our meeting with the Norwegian delegation 13 May and previously, ForUM strongly believes that any revision of the **targets should increase the level of ambition** from the previous OWG document and should not result in backtracking from existing international commitments.

ForUM strongly **recommends the following text changes** in order to strengthen some of the proposed revised targets:

- ▶ ForUM welcomes the alignment with the Aichi Targets timeframe and the recognition that further action is needed by 2030 under revised targets **15.1** and **15.5**. However, ForUM strongly suggests removing the sentence "*and take further action as needed by 2030*" from targets 15.1 and 15.5 and substitute it with the following formulation to ensure continued and effective action through 2030: "**ensure that the progress is surpassed by 2030**".
- ▶ ForUM is **concerned about the proposal to postpone the timeline to halt deforestation from 2020 to 2030** in target **15.2**. This is severely weakening the original target agreed in the OWG. The argumentation for delaying the timeline is to make it more consistent with the Aichi Targets. However, Aichi Target 5 states to at least halve deforestation before 2020, and to bring it close to zero where possible. Keeping the original OWG formulation of target 15.2 would therefore be more in line with Aichi Target 5 than the new proposal to revise the timeline to 2030. Still, it is positive that a reference is added to "in line with obligations under international agreements", since this must be interpreted as an obligation to work for the Aichi target to bring deforestation close to zero till 2020 where possible. ForUM also recommends adding at the end of 15.2 the sentence "**ensure that the progress is surpassed by 2030**" in order to make it consistent with the proposed revised targets 15.1 and 15.5.
- ▶ For target **15.3** on combatting desertification, ForUM recommends reinserting the 2020 deadline to ensure alignment with the Aichi Targets and to avoid the risk of lowering the level of ambition and delaying action. Furthermore, as proposed for revised targets 15.1, 15.2 and 15.5 ForUM suggests adding at the end of the target the sentence "**ensure that the progress is surpassed by 2030**".

ForUM notes with satisfaction the following improvements in the proposed “Revised Targets Document” and finds it **important that Norway supports these**:

- ▶ The inclusion of “*including through assistance to those affected by complex humanitarian emergencies*” in **1.5**.
- ▶ The inclusion of “*all countries aiming to reduce (...)*”, and the addition of numerical targets for preventable deaths of newborns and children under five years of age in target **3.2**. These additions complement existing ambitious promises, and bolster accountability of commitments.
- ▶ The proposal that the text on the use of TRIPs flexibilities to provide access to medicines for all stays in **3.b** instead of being removed, since the implementation of the current WTO agreement does not always work satisfactory.
- ▶ The inclusion in **4.4** to “*ensure that all youth and adults*” have relevant skills.
- ▶ The inclusion in **4.6** to “*ensure that all youth and adults, both men and women, reach a proficiency level in literacy and numeracy sufficient to fully participate in society*”.
- ▶ The inclusion in **4.c** that “*all learners are taught by qualified teachers*”.
- ▶ The inclusion of the wording “*at least doubling*” in target **6.3** on improving water quality.
- ▶ The inclusion in **8.7** to take immediate and effective measures to eradicate recruitment and use of child soldiers.
- ▶ The inclusion of “*fragmentation*” under target **15.5** on reducing the degradation of natural habitat as it reflects a stronger alignment with the Aichi targets.
- ▶ The proposal for target **14.c**, which makes it consistent with the annual GA omnibus resolution on oceans and the law of the sea.

In addition, target **6.6** is proposed to be revised from “**By 2020, protect and restore water related ecosystems/including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and lakes**” to “**By 2030, water related ecosystems, including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and lakes have been fully protected and restored**”. Our reading is that **although the language has been strengthened, the timeline is weakened**. Hence, we encourage the Norwegian delegation to review this target with reference to existing commitments including Aichi target 14, which states that: “*By 2020, ecosystems that provide essential services, including services related to water, and contribute to health, livelihoods and well-being, are restored and safeguarded, taking into account the needs of women, indigenous and local communities, and the poor and vulnerable*”, and ensure that this commitment is not weakened.