

His Excellency
Ban Ki-moon
Secretary-General of the United Nations

C.c.: His Excellency Vuk Jeremić, President of the 67th Session of the UN General Assembly

22 July 2013

Excellency,

As we approach another key milestone in the Post-2015 process in September, we write to provide feedback on the report by the High Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda and to share our general recommendations for the process. We are committed to continue to contribute civil society perspectives to the discussions and to work closely with the United Nations to support the development of an effective Post-2015 framework which truly leaves no one behind.

We welcome the efforts undertaken by the Panel to reflect on inputs from a wide range of actors. Among these inputs were a letter of 15 May 2013 (co-signed by 18 ICSOs), as well as outcomes of the discussions held during the conference *Advancing the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda* which took place in Bonn on 20-22 March 2013. Some essential benchmarks and principles for an effective Post-2015 framework were therein affirmed and widely endorsed among civil society organisations: the need for the Post-2015 agenda to reflect human rights, respect planetary boundaries, address inequalities and enable structural transformations; the necessity for it to be universal and to ensure accountability as well as meaningful participation.

We have assessed the High Level Panel's report against those benchmarks and once again underscore the importance of a number of points which are central to the Post-2015 framework.

Human Rights

In the Panel's report, human rights are seen as a key principle for global partnership, and poverty eradication and development are placed within the context of human rights. More specifically, the report states that "new goals and targets need to be grounded in respect for universal human rights" and that we must "achieve a pattern of development where dignity and human rights become a reality for all". We also welcome the Panel's recommendation to ensure universal sexual and reproductive health and rights as laid out in target 4d.

However, the report is inconsistent. It recognises economic and social rights, but also refers to such rights as 'basic needs'. This is a backward step particularly given states' existing obligations under international law. There is no recognition that governments are bound by pre-existing human rights standards. Moreover, individuals ought to be recognised as rights holders. These rights should not be narrowly limited to civil and political rights, but include and explicitly embrace economic, social, and cultural rights. Rights are indivisible, and there are a range of mechanisms to uphold and enforce human rights that need to be strengthened through increased legitimacy and recognition. Nowhere does the report, in terms of accountability, talk about the right to effective remedies for violations of human rights. For instance, for women to enjoy living in stable and peaceful societies (the subject of proposed Goal 11), what matters besides access to justice mechanisms and due process, is whether policy and law challenge gender discrimination and promote gender equality and women's empowerment.

In addition to the fulfilment of human rights for all, the development framework must focus on:

- ensuring that people whose rights have been violated have access to recourse,
- strengthening (access to) judicial systems,
- promoting children's and women's human rights and gender equality with specific measures to address the special circumstances of women and the needs of children,
- guaranteeing that everyone has the right to security of land tenure,
- ending all forced evictions,
- providing stronger transparency and access to information as a right.

The Post-2015 Agenda must be rooted in the existing human rights architecture with an explicit reference to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. By using the human rights architecture, and including concrete means of implementation, the Post-2015 Agenda will have a strong non-negotiable basis and powerful instruments for monitoring and accountability to ensure that all human rights are respected, fulfilled and protected.

Planetary Boundaries

We welcome the emphasis on sustainable development in the Panel's report, as well as the close alignment of the environment and development agendas, in recognition of the inter-dependency between all of our lives and the natural world. It is encouraging to see climate change mentioned prominently. It makes clear that the well-being of the planet's people cannot be secured without addressing the extreme pressures on natural systems supporting human life.

However, the Panel's report stops short of providing the tangible and effective global solutions which we so urgently need. In particular, the emphasis on promoting sustainable consumption and production is at odds with the report's focus on economic growth. It is impossible to have continuous growth in the use of natural resources without serious consequences for the future of the planet. Moreover, there is an over-reliance on market solutions, technology and growth to solve problems that require fundamental changes in our economic and political systems. A new approach is needed that transforms our international priorities towards a framework that ensures prosperity for all people within the limits of the planet's resources. This means looking at equality, wealth and consumption in a new and integrated way. The principles of climate justice as well as historic and common but differentiated responsibility and polluter pays must be the foundation for any just transition.

For this reason, we would like to see the following points affirmed much more strongly in the Post-2015 development framework:

- an integration of the stability of the planet's ecosystems and of targets which assure that planetary boundaries are respected,
- support for a global greenhouse gas mitigation goal,
- new mechanisms and sources for generating additional climate finance above and beyond ODA,
- massively scaled-up support for climate change adaptation helping those living in poverty to cope with the effects of a climate-damaged world considering historic responsibilities,
- mechanisms to deal with the inevitable loss and damage that is already resulting from climate change impacts.

The Post-2015 framework must fully recognise that global poverty will never be eradicated unless we begin to respect planetary boundaries. This includes a rapid transition towards a

low-carbon and climate resilient economy since current science proves the planet to be on a pathway towards above 4 degrees Celsius of global warming which would eradicate all chances of sustainable development.

Inequalities

We welcome the recognition that inequalities are growing and must be addressed. We also acknowledge the strong statement of the Panel to consider targets achieved only if they are met for all relevant income and social groups. We welcome the recognition of gender equality and women's empowerment as a central pillar of the Post-2015 framework, as reflected in the recommendation to have a stand-alone goal on gender equality – as well as the call to have women's and girl's rights addressed across all goals. The special reference to youth and children is also highly welcome.

However, a major omission of the report is that it does not propose a self-standing goal to address inequality and does not formulate global ambitions to address inequity and the structural drivers of marginalisation and inequality. Furthermore, the targets and indicators proposed for the illustrative goals do not reflect the intention of addressing inequalities stated in the narrative. The only way to leave no one behind when implementing the framework is by specifically recognising marginalised groups and to include indicators on the progress made on their special needs. In addition, the report does not adequately highlight the importance of tackling underlying causes of gender inequality and discrimination, including discriminatory social norms and gender relations. Moreover, given the nature of international development challenges, and the related growing inequality within and between countries, delegating responsibilities to address income inequality to national governments is not a sufficient measure.

We therefore recommend that the new framework includes:

- a standalone goal to address inequality and discrimination, including specific indicators to monitor income inequality (for instance GINI, Palma ratio, or others), as well as indicators to monitor progress, gender disaggregated for the most marginalised and disadvantaged groups,
- agreement about the role of the international community to address inequities globally as well as nationally,
- the proposals by the Panel to consider any target met only if it is met for all people, and monitor progress using disaggregated data at the national and international level,
- an emphasis on addressing and tracking change in the underlying causes of gender inequality and discrimination (including social norms and power imbalances) and on gender mainstreaming across all goals,
- specific indicators in all goals to ensure that children and young people are not left behind and are actively taken into account in the monitoring and evaluation of the framework.

The need to address inequalities must lie at the heart of any future development framework. The structural causes leading to inequalities and marginalisation require a holistic approach translated into far-reaching structural solutions for the framework to pursue and procure social justice for all.

Structural Transformations

We welcome the Panel's demand for "a profound economic transformation to end extreme poverty and improve livelihoods" as well as for "fair and accountable public institutions, and

inclusive and sustainable business practices”. These transformations are crucial for the Post-2015 agenda.

Nevertheless, we are concerned that the Panel’s report stops short of recommending specific reforms of economic and social structures. These reforms must include the regulation of financial markets, the restructuring of unfair trade regimes and of intellectual property rights regimes, the termination of tax havens, the redefinition of progress away from GDP towards measures of sustainability and well-being, and policy coherence for development. All these reforms are necessary since the current global economic and financial regimes increase the inequality gap, impose obstacles to poverty eradication and the full implementation of all human rights. New rules have to be created and others removed to ensure that the global frameworks do not constrain human rights and development goals. Furthermore, political, social and economic structures should not merely aim to “enable business to flourish” but foremost to bring justice and improve the well-being of people and planet.

More specifically, the Post-2015 framework must:

- aim to reform financial, tax, trade and property rights regimes on a global, regional and national level in line with human rights obligations to ensure fair trade, just sovereign debt workout mechanisms, redistribution of wealth and to stop illicit tax flows,
- recognise that there are limits to the growth paradigm and that especially economic structures in the Global North need to be reformed,
- specify the necessary transformations needed for sustainable consumption and production for specific regions of the world – each of which will need different measures alongside existing interdependencies,
- include a target on child labour and links to international trade cooperation.

Universality

The High Level Panel recognises that the Post-2015 development agenda must be universal. Therefore, everyone must accept their proper share of responsibility. This is highly welcome. Responsibilities in different fields for the developed countries are clearly outlined, such as developing a global enabling environment, catalysing long-term finance for development, reducing illicit capital flows, promoting sustainable patterns of consumption and production. The report also calls for a responsibility of ‘other countries’ – which implicitly means the broader group of stakeholders involved in South-South cooperation – suggesting they should move toward voluntary targets for complementary financial assistance (Goal 12). We welcome this.

Unfortunately, the report does not address systems of power that shape the universal landscape; the “we” referred to in the report, is a vast imaginary “we, citizens and institutions in this world” which consists of actors with completely opposite agendas and huge differences in power and opportunities. The report calls for a new global partnership but fails to indicate how this new global partnership will be stronger and more effective than the one envisaged in MDG8. Another weakness of the report is that it neglects the role of global goal setting in addressing income inequality and discrimination. The report considers income inequality as a cross-cutting issue that national policy in each country should provide answers for. Instead, global goal setting with a truly inclusive process and participation of all marginalised groups is necessary.

We would like to alert you to the following aspects which are paramount to an effective implementation of the future framework:

- universal, clear and measurable targets on global partnerships,

- an inclusive understanding of possible partners and a special consideration of the inclusion of those most affected in every partnership,
- a strong focus on policy coherence for development,
- decisive steps paving the way to innovative and sustainable financing for development.

Only if there are clear commitments will the benefits of a renewed partnership truly bear fruit.

Accountability

Accountability must be one of the cornerstones for the design and implementation of a transformative and effective Post-2015 framework. The issue of accountability is clearly recognised in the report, which incorporates this concept into two of the five “big transformative shifts” that the report outlines: “Build peace and effective, open and accountable institutions for all” and “Forge a new global partnership”. As the report states “We are calling for a fundamental shift – to recognise peace and good governance as core elements of well being, not optional extras.” We support the call for peace and personal security as foundation for development, although the role of international actors in fuelling and sometimes sustaining conflicts is insufficiently addressed. The report also reflects that accountability is to be mutual across states, among institutions and directed at citizens. These dynamics are noted in the report, which states “the most important transformative shift is towards a new spirit of solidarity, cooperation and mutual accountability” and that “everyone involved must be fully accountable”, including actors in the public and private sectors and at the national and local levels.

However, the report does not go into specific details about which mechanisms are to be used. It also is insufficient in recommending how accountability will be addressed if the proposal of global goals and national targets and indicators is adopted. If the Post-2015 commitments are to lead to change, there must be a means to see whether promises are being delivered. This is taken up partly by the report, which calls on the Post-2015 agenda to include monitoring and accountability mechanisms involving all parties: states, civil society, the private sector, foundations and the international development community. The specific goals on governance, peace and security, and a global enabling environment do link back to issue-areas that help to create greater accountability, such as rule of law and the judiciary, freedom of information and participation, and prosecuting corruption and bribery.

More specifically, the new development framework must include:

- a stand-alone goal for open, accountable and participatory governance with measurable, intermediate and progressive targets,
- governance principles of transparency, accountability, integrity and participation into all other proposed goals, each with measurable, intermediate and progressive targets,
- accountability mechanisms that are universal, participatory and empower all people to monitor and hold governments, financial institutions, development actors and the private sector to account in order to be legitimate and effective,
- a mandatory reporting regime for businesses,
- an emphasis on the role of good governance and institutions that guarantee the rule of law and freedom of speech in relation to conflict transformation.

Participation

We welcome the Panel’s call for active citizen engagement and participation in political processes and the recognition of the intrinsic value thereof in driving development, as well as the reflection of this demand in target 10c. The report moreover acknowledges the central and vital role of civil society in the design, realisation and monitoring of the new agenda, in

recognising and affirming the voice of the people, and in holding duty-bearers to account. The emphasis on the access to information and on the availability of disaggregated data, two aspects of the report which, if taken up, will greatly support the participation of people in decision-making processes, is also welcome.

However, the enabling conditions for such meaningful participation are far from being secured. All too often, those living in conditions that render them vulnerable and marginalised are excluded from these processes. We are moreover concerned that the political space and sphere of influence for civil society are shrinking.

Therefore, we reaffirm the crucial need for the following points to be strongly reflected in a post-2015 framework:

- provide reliable mechanisms ensuring that participation of socially excluded communities in the design, implementation and monitoring of the Post-2015 framework, as well as local and national laws, policies and programmes is guaranteed,
- ensure that information is not only accessible but also timely and easily comprehensible. This means, for instance, that it must be provided in minority languages, adapted in content or format to different levels of education or to persons with disabilities.
- establish an enabling legal environment for CSOs which recognises the right of freedom of association, the rights of freedom of expression and of assembly as well as the right to carry out their work without fear of harassment, reprisal, intimidation and discrimination.

A truly people-centred agenda that really leaves no one behind should put in place the enablers for full participation in the decision-making processes at all levels of all people regardless of age, race, ethnicity, disability, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, place of birth and legal or other status.

We warmly endorse these recommendations drawn from civil society consultations and positions. The effectiveness and transformative character of a Post-2015 framework will much depend on the reflection of these parameters and thus on the public ownership and global support it will generate.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of our highest consideration,

Signatories



ADRA Germany



Amnesty International



Asociación Nueva Vida
Pro-Niñez y Juventud, El Salvador



African Youth Initiative
on Climate Change (AYICC)



Association Bariq 21 for promotion of
renewable energy and sustainable development



BRAC



Bolivian Platform on Climate Change



CARE International



Center for the Development of
Civil Society, Armenia



Centro Alexander von Humboldt



Studies Center for Governance and Democracy
(CEGODEM) – GCAP Nicaragua



Mesoamerican Center for Studies on
Appropriate Technology (CEMAT)



Panamenian Women Center (CEMP)



ChildFund Alliance



Çocuk Hakları Zirvesi Derneği
çocuklar için çocuklarla birlikte...

Children Rights Summit and Development Association (CHZD)



Conseil Inter ONG en Centrafrique (CIONGCA)



CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation



Climate Change & Development
NGO Alliance, Azerbaijan



Coordinación de ONG y Cooperativas
(CONGCOOP), Guatemala



Council for NGOs in
Malawi (CONGOMA)



Cameroon Youth Movement
for Citizenship (CYMC)



Ecosystems Work for Essential
Benefits, Inc. (EcoWEB), Philippines



Foro Ciudadano de Participación por
la Justicia y los Derechos Humanos Argentina



Fundación Cosecha
Sostenible de Honduras



Fundación Étnica Integral, Inc



equidad de género
ciudadanía, trabajo y familia s.c.
Gender Equity: Civil participation, Work and Family



Global Call to Action against Poverty-Uganda



The Global Call to Action Against Poverty (GCAP)



Global Call to Action against Poverty-China



Green Life
ගීන්ලයිෆ්
காணலயிப்

Green Life Sri Lanka



Greenpeace



International Alliance of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples of the Tropical Forests



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
www.ifrc.org Saving lives, changing minds.
International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)



International Network of Women's Funds



Islamic Relief Worldwide



Journey



The Finnish NGO Platform KEPA



National Confederation of Dalit Organisations (NACDOR)



Oxfam International



Pakistan NGOs Forum



Pelangi Indonesia Foundation



Population, Initiatives & Impacts dans la Societe
People Initiatives and Impacts on Society (PIIS)



REPEM
RED DE EDUCACIÓN POPULAR ENTRE MUJERES DE LATINOAMÉRICA Y EL CARIBE
Con status consultivo ante ECOSOC Naciones Unidas
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Rotaract Club Bombacaceae



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Association for Reintegration of Youth/Children in Social Life (SCARJoV)



Seed Institute Kenya



Alianza Hondureña ante el Cambio Climático (AHCC)

Alternativa Salvadoreña de Cooperativas (ALSACOOP) de El Salvador

Movimiento Salvadoreño por la Defensa de la Vida frente al Cambio Climático (MOSDEVI), El Salvador