

**CONCORD Cotonou Working Group/Beyond 2015 European Task Force
Joint Briefing Paper**

**PUTTING PEOPLE AND PLANET FIRST: BUSINESS AS USUAL IS NOT AN OPTION
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE POST-2015 FRAMEWORK**

CONTEXT: Towards a post-2015 framework

As the deadline for achieving the MDGs draws nearer, people are increasingly concerned with answering the question 'what next'? There is both unfinished business and new business to be dealt with when we look beyond 2015. Climate change, growing inequality, food insecurity, demographic change, resource constraints, an unsustainable growth, consumption and production model and the financial and economic crises pose complex and interrelated challenges that must be addressed in order to realise the human and environmental well-being and development objectives that have been enshrined in the UN Charter, international law, norms and agreements.

The politics of development have changed significantly since the MDGs were designed in the late 1990s: the geo-political balance of power has shifted, inequality is deepening, poverty is taking on new dimensions and the actors tackling - and creating - development challenges have changed. Implementing the MDGs has taught us valuable lessons on what works and what does not. It is now time to move beyond the traditional development cooperation agenda and identify and address comprehensively the true root causes of the key challenges that the world is facing today.

Process and Timeline

- The UN has been leading a series of country consultations, 11 thematic consultations and an online debate¹, in parallel with a High Level Panel deliberating in order to produce a report for the Secretary-General, which was disclosed on 30 May 2013².
- The September 2013 UN General Assembly is considered to be of considerable importance since it is likely to set the stage for how the framework will be negotiated going forward.
- The Open Working Group, OWG - whose creation was an outcome of the Rio+20 conference - will be increasingly important from mid-2013.

OUR VISION

A just, equitable and sustainable world in which every person can realise their human rights, fulfil their potential and live free from poverty.

ISSUES AT STAKE

1. Scope of the post-2015 framework

In times of globalisation and growing global interrelationships between economies and people, an increasing number of issues require international cooperation, cross-border action and policy coordination. If the post-2015 framework is to truly address the global challenges faced by people in low, middle and high income countries, that framework must be universal. At the same time, implementing the MDGs has taught us that development outcomes last longer when planning and implementation are locally owned. This calls for a framework that allows for priority-setting and implementation at the national or sub-national level as appropriate.

Thus, by a "universal" future framework, CONCORD-Beyond 2015 European Task Force (ETF) recommends a framework in which every country must commit to make improvements in each goal area, but the nature of the improvement must necessarily be tailored at country level to ensure ownership and relevance. The principle of common-but-differentiated responsibility should be applied at more detailed levels of the framework (such as target and indicator levels) in order to contextualise the response to a country's situation *and* to reflect differing historical contributions to current challenges. Every country will therefore have a series of obligations for which they will be held accountable.

As regards the thematic scope of the future framework, it is widely recognised that the MDGs overlooked many important issues, such as equality, peace and security, governance and anti-corruption, decent work and social protection, environmental sustainability, disaster risk reduction etc. Beyond 2015 ETF therefore supports a more comprehensive post-2015 framework which will include other policy areas which impact significantly on the achievement of global sustainable development

¹ See: <http://www.worldwewant2015.org/login>

² See: http://www.un.org/sg/management/pdf/HLP_P2015_Report.pdf

objectives, which will capitalise on the links and synergies which exist between policy areas and which will build on the key principles of human rights (such as participation and empowerment, equality and non-discrimination, accountability) and sustainability (including all three dimensions of sustainability, namely social, economic and environmental).

While the positive aspects of the concrete, measurable and time-bound goals, targets and indicators of the current MDG framework need to be retained, a future framework must reflect our greater understanding of the complexities involved in addressing global challenges, including the risk of increasing inequalities and the difficulty of remaining within planetary boundaries. It will therefore be important to focus on 'zero goals' in the areas of human development, for example, and to ensure that the economic system serves people and planet in the future, not the other way around.

We therefore also believe that greater attention needs to be paid to structural change, **transformative processes** and the **enabling environment** necessary for people to see their rights realised. For that to happen, it will be necessary to move away from **issue-based thinking** – where symptoms – such as poverty or conflict and fragility – are the focus and towards an approach based on root cause analysis. That clearly implies a need to usher in new thinking, new paradigms and a new system based on equality, social justice, sustainability, empowerment, responsibility and accountability. Business as usual is not an option.

2. Accountability

Appropriate, independent and rigorous accountability mechanisms pertaining to all actors are crucial for the success of achieving goals and turning aspirations or 'commitments' into obligations. Accountability is also central to democratic governance and the respect for human rights. The lack of rigorous accountability mechanisms has been widely identified as a weakness of the MDGs framework. A mix of accountability mechanisms will be required and where suitable accountability mechanisms already exist, they should be strengthened and used. On the other hand, where the framework covers issues where there is a gap in effective mandatory accountability mechanisms, such as in the area of corporate transparency and accountability, new mechanisms will need to be put in place.

Policy Coherence for Development (PCD) - or the need for all actors, in both North and South, to ensure that their policies in any area do not negatively impact on people's perspectives for progress or the realisation of their rights and preferably support those objectives - is fundamental to the success of the future framework. There are few policy areas which have no impact on developing countries in one way or another, be that indirectly or directly, while the negative effects of a policy generally hit the most marginalised people on the planet hardest despite their holding no responsibility for those policies. PCD potentially addresses this critical global "accountability gap" more than any other policy instrument. Mechanisms will need to be established to make a reality of PCD, including a monitoring mechanism and a means for redress. Some of these mechanisms should be global, while others may be national or local. Binding regulation should be envisaged for major actors in the global economy and international policy.

Recommendations

We ask Parliamentarians to:

- Support the call for a universal framework, based on the principle of common-but-differentiated responsibility.
- Be ambitious and challenge national leaders to put forward bold and practical proposals for the post 2015- framework, focusing on empowering the poor, marginalised and disadvantaged to have control of their own lives. An enhanced version of the MDGs will not suffice. The future framework must, at the very least, focus on a spectrum of issues encompassing human development, economic and environmental sustainability and just governance.
- Ensure that transformative processes, which focus on the underlying structural, root causes of poverty and human rights violations, are incorporated in the proposals for the next framework.
- Call for strengthened accountability for all actors.
- Meet and listen to the poor and marginalised; encourage them to become informed and get involved in (or create) local and national participatory processes related to the post-2015 agenda.

It is vital that policy-makers and all concerned stakeholders put aside their own interests and work to ensure a progressive, comprehensive and effective post-2015 framework, in order to create a just, equitable and sustainable world in which every person can realise their human rights, fulfil their potential and live free from poverty. To do this will take courage, collaboration and conviction. But it is eminently possible.

For further information, please visit <http://www.concordeurope.org/> or Tel +32 2 743 87 99