

MDGs, Sustainable Development Goals and the Post 2015 agenda: opportunities for consolidating the recognition of volunteerism

a discussion paper for IVCO 2012

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Youth working with a local community in Rwanda to fight erosion in the fields. Photo: Annoncée Manirarora / courtesy United Nations Volunteers.

Foreword

This is the tenth in a series of discussion papers produced by the International Forum on Development Service (Forum), which follows on from our research work on trends in international volunteering and cooperation in recent years.

This paper aims to bring together organisations involved in international volunteering in their work on Millennium Development Goals, Sustainable Development Goals and the Post 2015 agenda to consolidate opportunities for the recognition of volunteerism.

The views expressed in this paper are not necessarily those of Forum or its members or of the organisations for which the authors work. The responsibility for these views rests with the authors alone.

Nita Kapoor
Chair of Forum

About Forum

The International Forum on Development Service (known as “Forum”) is the most significant global network of International Volunteer Cooperation Organisations. Forum aims to share information, develop good practice and enhance cooperation and support between its members.

Together, Forum members explore innovative practice and research key contemporary issues, focusing on organisational learning and improved practice. This information is shared in person, at conferences and via the website.

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Acronyms

CAFOD	Catholic Agency for Overseas Development
CBA	Community-based adaptation
CIVICUS	World Alliance for Citizen Participation
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DPI	United Nations Department of Public Information
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ECESA	Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
Forum	International Forum on Development Service
GCAP	Global Call to Action Against Poverty
GDP	Gross domestic product
GEF/SGP	Global Environment Facility and Small Grants Programme
IDS	Institute of Development Studies
ILO	International Labor Organization
IVCO	International Volunteer Cooperation Organisation
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MG+	Major Groups Plus
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
OWG	Intergovernmental open working group on SDGs
PBSO	Peacebuilding Support Office
PNKS	Ponleu Ney Kdey Sangkhum
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SWVR	State of the World's Volunteerism Report
TST	Inter-agency Technical Support Team
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
UNCSD/Rio+20	United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UN-HABITAT	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNICEF	International Children's Emergency Fund
UNISDR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
UNRC	United Nations Resident Coordinator
UNV	United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme
UNTT	United Nations System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda
UN WOMEN	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
VSA	Volunteer Service Abroad
VSO	Voluntary Service Overseas
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

Introduction

The last Forum annual meeting in Kenya in 2011 celebrated and reflected on the work of the International Volunteer Cooperation Organisations (IVCOs) under the banner of the International Year of Volunteers + 10. Since then, IVCOs and volunteer involving organisations (VIOs) of all kinds have had their work recognised by the first State of the World's Volunteerism Report (SWVR), produced by United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme and launched in the UN General Assembly on 5 December 2011, and the 2012 UN Secretary-General's report to the General Assembly on the follow-up to the implementation of the International Year of Volunteers.

Since the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in June 2012 (UNCSD/Rio+20), there has also been increasing global attention for the final push towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015, as well as debates on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the processes and proposals for a new post-2015 development framework. This paper seeks to stimulate thoughts and action to consolidate recognition of the power of volunteerism and its values of solidarity and commitment in order to enhance volunteerism's contribution to the post-2015 development framework and the well-being of individuals and society as a whole.

This paper highlights the current development context, including the processes in place for moving forward; gives insights into key development issues being considered as part of the emerging framework; highlights some opportunities to incorporate the value added of volunteerism; and seeks to initiate a discussion on how to move forward. The emerging post-2015 framework issues and processes are documented in some detail to allow people to draw their own conclusions on where volunteerism can be integrated. The focus for discussion will be to explore potential interest from individual IVCOs and Forum¹ as a whole to participate in and/or support the process of making volunteerism and voluntary civic engagement a more valued and explicit part of a new enabling framework for sustainable development.

¹ Forum members responded to a survey requesting input from their experience for the paper.

I. THE CHANGING INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

The world stands at a turning point in development cooperation. Since the beginning of international development cooperation, and in particular since the adoption of the Millennium Declaration in 2000, major changes have taken place adding new complexity to the international development landscape.

This new reality was recognised by the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan in 2011 and its outcome document² and shaped its discussion on the need for a new global partnership.³ A greater number of stakeholders are participating in development, giving birth to new partnerships including South-South and triangular cooperation and including non-state actors, such as private sector and other private philanthropic actors.⁴ In the years to come, there may be an even greater shift within the aid architecture. In its recent report on the future development of the aid industry⁵, the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) argued that the face of poverty and global development is going to change significantly by 2025, with a shift of poverty concentration from middle income countries to fragile states in Africa, a continued growth of emerging economies and an increased availability of public and private resources for development. For traditional donors and aid agencies, this could entail a fundamental repositioning in terms of geographic priorities, channeling of funding and engaging in cooperation with emerging donors.

Furthermore, a growing number of development stakeholders recognise the need to put human well-being at the very heart of measuring progress of development and thereby question the existing economic-focused measurement standard, as reflected by the recent high-level meeting on well-being and happiness hosted by the Kingdom of Bhutan⁶, or the initiative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to develop a sustainable human development index⁷ building on its flagship Human Development Index and annual Human Development Report. UNV's 2011 State of the World's Volunteerism Report called for alternate measures of human progress beyond gross domestic product (GDP) that capture the depth of human development also in terms of volunteerism and civic engagement, not just GDP.

Global challenges such as poverty and inequality, respect for human rights, rampant armed conflict and the overall challenge of achieving sustainable development are increasingly impacted by multiple crises affecting the world today. All these issues were at the centre of the debates informing the international community in the largest UN conference to date, the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD/Rio+20) that took place in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil from 20 to 22 June 2012. There, under the leadership of the Brazilian Government, the 193 Member States of the United Nations approved an outcome document for Rio+20, entitled "The Future We Want".⁸ After months of negotiations, the international community initiated a process that is attempting to create a new holistic framework in which the three dimensions of sustainable development (i.e. economic growth, social development and environmental sustainability) are to be integrated in Sustainable Development Goals. Such goals will likely take over the baton from the Millennium Declaration adopted in 2000 by the UN General Assembly,⁹ and the Millennium Development Goals that followed.¹⁰

² See Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/54/15/49650173.pdf>

³ The Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation acknowledged the International Framework for CSO Development Effectiveness, which explicitly recognises the contribution of national and international volunteering for development. The CSO framework is available at http://www.cso-effectiveness.org/IMG/pdf/final_framework_for_cso_dev_eff_07_2011-3.pdf

⁴ See para. 5 of the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation.

⁵ Homi Kharas, Andrew Rogerson, "Horizon 2025 – creative destruction in the aid industry", ODI, July 2012, <http://www.odi.org.uk/resources/details.asp?id=6687&title=creative-destruction-aid-industry-development-kharas-rogerson>

⁶ See meeting report at: <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/54/15/49650173.pdf>

⁷ See <http://hdr.undp.org/en/mediacentre/press/>

⁸ See General Assembly resolution [A/RES/66/288](http://www.un.org/Docs/assembly/resolutions/2012/A/RES/66/288)

⁹ The Millennium Declaration General Assembly resolution 55/2 was approved by Member States on 8 September 2000 by leaders of the world community to set forth a shared vision for development based on the fundamental values of freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, respect for nature and shared responsibility.

II. SNAPSHOT OF THE PROCESS LEADING TO THE POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK ¹¹

Today, the consideration of a post-2015 development agenda provides all stakeholders with an opportunity to create an appropriate and systematic new framework for action, building on the best elements of the MDGs to ensure a firm foundation for social, economic and environmental well-being for all.

The 2011 Annual Report of the UN Secretary-General, *Accelerating progress towards the MDGs: options for sustained and inclusive growth and issues for advancing the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015*, says “the post-2015 development framework is likely to have the best development impact if it emerges from an inclusive, open and transparent process with multi-stakeholder participation”.¹² The United Nations as the principal multilateral forum is coordinating this multi-stakeholder process by playing a threefold role: convener of national debates, aggregator of ideas and proposals, and advocator for the new targets.¹³

The UN Secretary-General has set up several mechanisms to initiate and coordinate consultations with concerned stakeholders and advance thinking on the new sustainable development framework.¹⁴ (These various mechanisms are explained in more detail in the appendix.)

1. UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda (UNTT)
2. Post Rio+20 process (Sustainable Development Goals, the Intergovernmental Open Working Group on SDGs and the UN Technical Support Team on SDGs)
3. High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda (and its Secretariat)
4. MDG Task Force of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG)
5. UNDG Post-2015 Consultations (National, Thematic and Global Conversation)

Of particular interest to civil society actors, including IVCO members, is the broad consultation process on the post-2015 agenda launched by the UN Development Group (UNDG) on behalf of the UN system. The consultation process¹⁵ consists of national consultations, thematic consultations and the Global Conversation. The outcomes of these processes will be consolidated in a final report to be launched in 2013. It will inform the special summit on the MDGs and the post-2015 development agenda to be held at the 68th session of the UN General Assembly in September 2013 as well as the work of the High-Level Panel.

1. National Consultations

UNDP, as co-chair of the UNDG MDG Task Force, is organising national consultations led at the national level by the UN Resident Coordinators (RCs). The objective of such national consultations is to “stimulate an inclusive debate on a post-2015 development agenda by providing an analytical base,

¹⁰ The MDGs provided milestones for global and national development efforts, with the overall target date of 2015. See report of the Secretary-General on the road map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration, 6 September 2001, A/56/326, p. 56.

¹¹ For more detail on the processes see the appendix.

¹² 2011 Annual Report of the Secretary-General: *Accelerating progress towards the MDGs: options for sustained and inclusive growth and issues for advancing the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015*, p. 19, <http://www.ipc-undp.org/pressroom/files/ipc629.pdf>

¹³ “The Millennium Development Goals and Beyond: Reflections on an International Development Agenda after 2015”, International Workshop organised by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), in cooperation with German Development Institute (DIE) and the Poverty Reduction, Equity and Growth Network (PEGNet), workshop report, p. 8, available at: [http://www.die-gdi.de/CMS-Homepage/openwebcms3.nsf/%28ynDK_contentByKey%29/MPHG-8JB96N/\\$FILE/0%20Report%20on%20Workshop%20on%20MDGs%20beyond%202015%20-%20Bonn-DIE%2021-23%20Nov%202011.pdf](http://www.die-gdi.de/CMS-Homepage/openwebcms3.nsf/%28ynDK_contentByKey%29/MPHG-8JB96N/$FILE/0%20Report%20on%20Workshop%20on%20MDGs%20beyond%202015%20-%20Bonn-DIE%2021-23%20Nov%202011.pdf)

¹⁴ “The Future We Want: Post-2015 UN Development Agenda – UN System wide preparations”, March 2012, UNDP internal presentation, unpublished.

¹⁵ See <http://www.worldwewant2015.org/sitemap> for more details on specific contacts for consultations.

inputs and ideas that build a shared global vision ... with clear recommendations for governments, civil society and broad stakeholders ...".¹⁶ Expected to run from June 2012 until the end of the first quarter of 2013, the consultations will be organised in up to 100 countries¹⁷ of the global South. The UN RCs are provided with seed resources to organise consultations ensuring the broadest possible participation of national stakeholders, including marginalised groups. Guidance notes from the undg have been disseminated among all UN RCs to support them in the organisation of the consultations, to adapt them to the national context and to produce national reports on the outcome of the national post-2015 consultation process. According to the guidance notes, the countries are a representative sample in terms of region, country typology, development challenges and strategic importance to multilateral processes. High income countries will be excluded from this sample but outreach and consultations with them are expected to take place in other forms.¹⁸

UNV is participating in organising and conducting the consultations in some countries. Indeed, under its project, Volunteering and Sustainable Development: Rio+20 Follow-Up, the MDGs and Post 2015 Agenda, UNV will recruit UN Volunteers to support the consultations in their countries of assignment.¹⁹ Their overall tasks will be to support the RC and UN Country Teams (UNCTs) with multi-stakeholder country consultations; facilitate contributions to national MDG reporting by identifying and sharing good practice on demonstrating the impact of volunteerism and community engagement on MDG achievement; develop capacity of volunteer involving organisations to demonstrate volunteerism and MDG achievement; and facilitate civil society and volunteering organisations' participation in the national consultation process.²⁰

The national consultations provide an opportunity for civil society to contribute to the discussions on the post-2015 development framework. Volunteer involving organisations can take advantage of this process to advocate for the manifold contributions of volunteerism and civic engagement to various areas of development and, equally importantly, to the well-being of individuals, communities and society as a whole. The latter aspect might be emphasised in particular given the holistic approach of the new development framework being advocated by various stakeholders, and the growing attention to well-being and non-economic indicators as new ways to measure progress and development of societies. Organisations that envisage participating in the discussions and consultations should consult the undg Guidelines for Country Dialogues to make themselves familiar with the overall process and criteria as well as the guiding questions for the discussions in order to consider possible input. UNV will also provide support to facilitate the provision of specific contributions with regard to the role of volunteerism and civic engagement in the new development framework.

2. Thematic Consultations

In addition to the national consultations, undg (through UNDP) is supporting different UN specialised agencies, funds and programs in the organisation of nine different thematic consultations on the following issues identified of particular relevance for the post-2015 development framework: inequalities, including gender (co-led by UNICEF/UN WOMEN), health (WHO/UNICEF), education (UNESCO/UNICEF), growth and employment (UNDP/ILO), environmental sustainability (UNEP/UNDP), food security and nutrition (FAO/WFP), governance (UNDP/OHCHR), conflict and fragility (UNDP/PBSO/ISDR, tbc.), and population dynamics (UNFPA/UN HABITAT, tbc.).²¹ Two additional consultations on issues that emerged strongly from the Rio+20 process will address energy, and water and sanitation respectively. An additional consultation might take place later in the process (after completion of all the national, thematic and global consultations) to address the developmental

¹⁶ "Post-2015 Development Agenda: Guidelines for country dialogues", p. 13,

<http://www.undg.org/index.cfm?P=1628>

¹⁷ For the list of the initial 50 countries, see p. 37, Annex A of the Post-2015 Development Agenda: Guidelines for country dialogues". It is now hoped to extend this list to 100 countries.

¹⁸ "Post-2015 Development Agenda: Guidelines for country dialogues".

¹⁹ Countries at this stage will include the DRC, India, Egypt, Sudan, Turkey, Burkina Faso, Malawi, Mozambique, Niger, Tanzania, Zambia, Timor-Leste, Vietnam, Brazil, and Honduras, but it is probable this list will be extended.

²⁰ Annex 1.1 of "Post-2015 Development Agenda: Guidelines for country dialogues". For a detailed description of the UNV2015NC's assignments, refer to the Description of Assignment also presented in Annex 1.1.

²¹ Briefing on the post-2015 process, End Poverty 2015 Millennium Campaign.

metrics. The consultations, which will take place at regional and/or global level, will involve representatives of academia, media, private sector, employers and trade unions and civil society. UN agencies working on the topics will take the lead in organising the consultations.²²

The first consultation on growth and employment has already taken place and was held in Tokyo, Japan in May 2012, co-chaired by ILO and UNDP.²³ UNICEF and UN Women are jointly organising the thematic consultation on addressing inequalities in the post-2015 agenda. A call for papers²⁴ is being organised to help gather academic and research papers that present sustainable strategies for tackling various aspects and dimensions of inequalities. They will provide input for discussions to be held through the online “Global Conversation” (see below) taking place between mid-2012 to early 2013, as well as a leadership meeting convened during the first quarter of 2013.

3. Global Conversation

The Global Conversation aims to capture the voice of civil society and citizens with regard to the post-2015 development agenda. It is being facilitated through the web platform The World We Want (www.worldwewant2015.org), which was launched on 1 August 2012. It is a joint initiative of the United Nations and civil society. The platform aims to take advantage of new communication technologies by making use of social networks and mobile technologies to facilitate interaction at international level. UNV will mobilise online volunteers as well as its on-site and online networks to support the Global Conversation.

The outcomes of the national and thematic consultations as well as the Global Conversation will be consolidated in a final report to be launched in 2013. It will inform the special summit on the MDGs and the post-2015 development agenda to be held at the 68th session of the UN General Assembly in September 2013 as well as the work of the High-Level Panel.²⁵

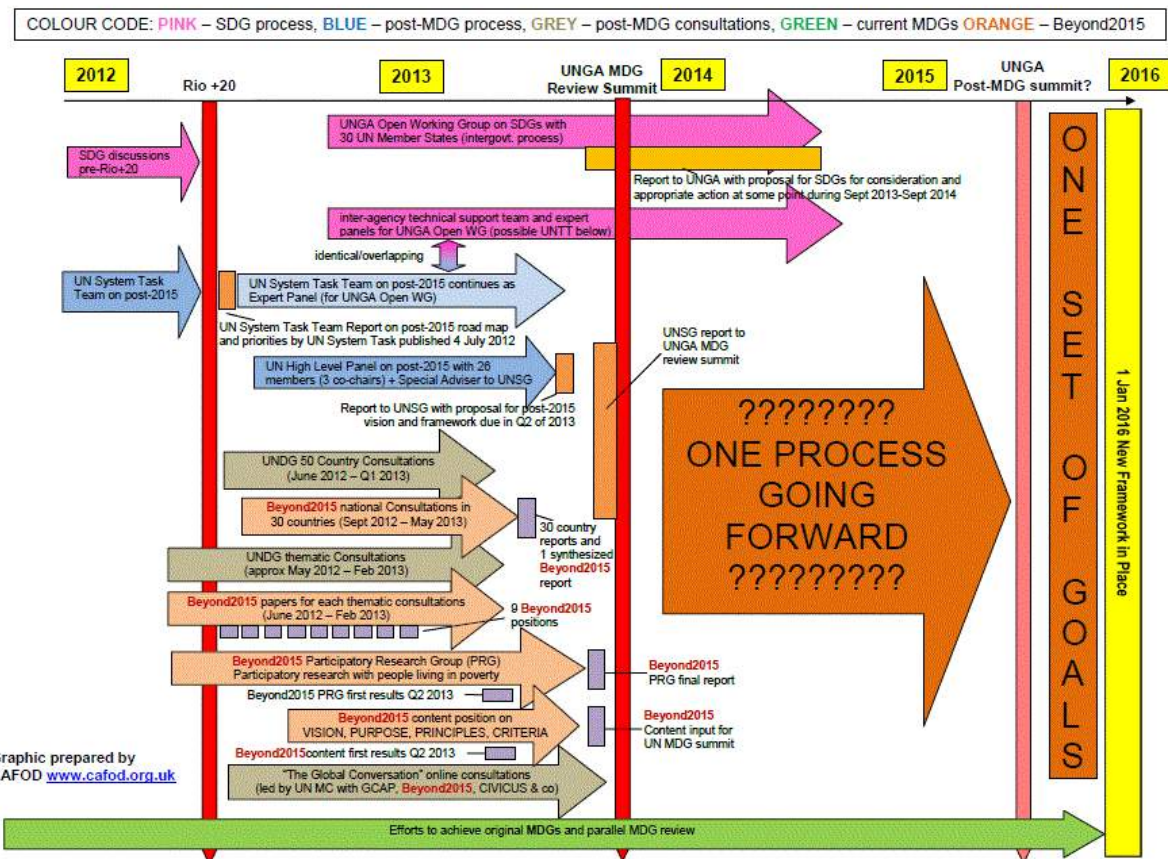
The Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD) produced the graphic below to encapsulate the processes and timing for post-2015. The processes are explained in detail with additional reference sources in the appendix for those who want to consider more deeply possible entry points to engage with the process. It is important to recognise, however, that the process is evolving rapidly and so the current snapshot of the process and specific activities may change as plans proceed.

²² UN agencies co-leading thematic consultations are listed above as indicated in the toolkit for CSO national deliberations of Beyond2015.org.

²³ More information on the meeting and its outcomes is available at: <http://www.ilo.org/global/meetings-and-events/events/setting-development-agenda-beyond-2015/lang--en/index.htm>

²⁴ UNICEF/UN Women Call for Papers: http://post2015.files.wordpress.com/2012/06/call-for-papers_addressing-inequalities_final.pdf

²⁵ Briefing on the post-2015 process, End Poverty 2015 Millennium Campaign.



In addition to the UN-led process and consultations, several other stakeholders, including civil society organisations, think tanks, other intergovernmental organisations and individual governments, are actively engaged in discussing and advancing thinking on the post-2015 development agenda to develop their vision. Key civil society stakeholders include the Beyond2015 platform, Global Call to Action Against Poverty (GCAP), CAFOD, the Berlin Civil Society Center, CIVICUS and the Civil Society Reflection Group. The Overseas Development Institute and the Institute of Development Studies have produced various publications. The United Kingdom and the European Union have held consultations to inform the preparation of their contributions to the post-2015 process.

Immediately prior to the 2012 CIVICUS World Assembly, a conference was held in Montreal, The World We Want: A Civil Society Conference on the Post 2015 Development Agenda. It was organised jointly by CIVICUS, GCAP and the Beyond2015 platform in conjunction with a number of other NGOs. The conference produced the Montreal Declaration and Plan of Action, which called for a clearer place for civil society in the post-2015 process to facilitate the voices of women, youth and people most affected by poverty. It said bold and urgent action was required and that the process “must be founded on the principles of social justice, solidarity, human dignity, and freedom”.²⁶

More detailed information about all of these processes and initiatives is available in the appendix.

²⁶Montreal Declaration and Plan of Action (4/09/2012) available at: <http://whiteband.org/sites/default/files/Montreal%20Declaration%20and%20Plan%20of%20Action.pdf>

4. The Sustainable Development Goals

One of the major, tangible outcomes of Rio+20 was the commitment to develop a set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The proposal to develop SDGs had initially been introduced by the governments of Colombia, Guatemala and Peru.²⁷ The 64th Annual UN DPI NGO Conference held in Bonn, Germany in September 2011 and co-organised by the UN Department of Public Information and UNV provided one of the first opportunities to call on governments to agree on a set of sustainable development goals based on concrete, time-bound targets and indicators.²⁸

The content of the SDGs is being discussed extensively by several constituencies, including civil society.²⁹ An overwhelming majority agrees that the overarching purpose of the SDGs should be the eradication of poverty while addressing major challenges and needs such as environmental protection and sustainable consumption and production. Thereby, the SDGs “address the shortcomings and challenges of the ... MDGs.”³⁰ In addition to addressing and incorporating in a balanced way all three dimensions of sustainable development and their interlinkages, the SDGs should be underpinned by several principles such as universality; should link to the MDG process; include common but differentiated responsibilities; be measurable; take a rights-based approach and be based on equity³¹; be action-oriented; and focus on priority areas such as food security, energy access (including renewable energy), oceans and integrated water management. A concrete proposal for the SDGs is being developed by the intergovernmental open working group (OWG) set up by the UN Secretary-General as a follow-up to Rio+20. The OWG will submit a report containing a set of SDGs to the 68th session of the UN General Assembly to take place in September 2013.

²⁷ Rio+20: Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), An updated proposal from the Governments of Colombia, Guatemala and Peru, November 2011, <http://www.uncsd2012.org/content/documents/539Update%20of%20the%20SDG%20Proposal%20ENG%20DEC11.pdf>

²⁸ See GA document A/66/750: Declaration of the 64th Annual UN DPI NGO Conference, <http://www.un.org/wcm/webdav/site/dpingorelations/shared/Final%20Declaration/BonnEng.pdf>

²⁹ See for instance: Bond for International Development (2012), Sustainable Development Goals: Building the Foundations, for an inclusive process.

³⁰ Earth Summit 2012 website: <http://www.earthsummit2012.org/conference/themes/sdgoalsintro>

³¹ “The Future We Want”, Rio+20 Outcome Document, para. 246.

III. TAKING STOCK OF THE CONTRIBUTION OF VOLUNTEERISM TO THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

With the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the world community set for the first time measurable development goals on a global scale to focus and inspire development efforts and increase accountability.

According to the 2012 MDG Report, progress towards achieving the MDGs has been mixed. Whereas poverty has been reduced and access to safe drinking water improved significantly, hunger remains a major global challenge. Recent natural disasters and the global financial crisis have slowed progress and increased inequality. The report emphasises that achieving the MDGs by 2015 is still possible if efforts are intensified.

Volunteerism is making significant contributions to achieving the MDGs. In 2002, in the context of the follow-up to the International Year of Volunteers, the UN General Assembly (A/RES/57/106) recognised that “volunteerism is an important component of any strategy aimed at ... poverty reduction, sustainable development, health, disaster prevention and management, and social integration and, in particular, overcoming social exclusion and discrimination”. It furthermore emphasised that “volunteering, particularly at the community level, will help to achieve the development goals and objectives set out in the United Nations Millennium Declaration.” Contribution to the achievement of the MDGs is also a high priority amongst all IVCOs and they are commonly reported against to donors, as was noted in feedback by Canadian IVCOs. Given the importance of taking stock of the contributions of volunteerism to the MDGs, Dr Ben Lough is completing research for the Forum Research Working Group on the impact of international volunteering drawing on fieldwork in Kenya with a range of different IVCOs, which will be presented at IVCO 2012. In anticipation of Dr Lough’s more detailed analysis, only a few short examples are presented below from Forum members, collected in response to a survey conducted to help prepare the present paper.

1. Promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women in Zambia (MDG 3)

Volunteers from Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) helped a local farmers’ association in Zambia to advocate for women’s land rights. Women had not been allowed to farm land and to grow and sell their own crops. Instead, they had to work in the fields of their husbands. VSO international volunteers helped raise awareness among local chiefs on the impact of their policies on women and the need to address this situation. Democratic land committees set up by local chiefs helped to introduce a land reform. Women can now have their own fields and sell their own crops, thereby gaining their own revenue. Giving them a more powerful status in the community has helped to address the marginalisation of women and fostered social inclusion.

2. Communities advocating for health rights in India (MDG 1)

In 2010-11, through partnerships with locally based public sector and community organisations across East, West and Southern Africa, and in Asia (India and Nepal), Skillshare International reached hundreds of communities disadvantaged by poverty and built the capacity of its partners to reduce poverty, injustice and inequality by sharing skills and ideas and by facilitating social change. They supported partners through a range of interventions including international volunteer placements as well as leadership development training, financial resourcing, policy and advocacy, and opportunities to network and share learning.

3. Ensuring healthy and sustainable fisheries in Vietnam (MDG 7)

New Zealand’s Volunteer Service Abroad (VSA) helps to secure healthy and sustainable fisheries. Working with the government in Vietnam’s Binh Dinh province, volunteers work on fisheries co-management where communities manage their own local fisheries, taking responsibility for education, awareness and enforcement. Volunteers have been helping to

deliver this approach to three communities, particularly through education and awareness raising. This has involved community roadshows and presentations to schools focusing on threats to sustainable fisheries, such as illegal fishing methods, and the need to protect fisheries habitat. Presentations have also been given at national conferences on aspects of sustainable management and co-management.

4. Addressing the struggle against HIV/AIDS in Burkina Faso (MDG 6)

Uniterra has been working since 2009 to help in the struggle against HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases (STD) in Burkina Faso. Canadian volunteers have worked to build the capacities of partner organisations in the areas of HIV/AIDS prevention by using creative approaches such as theatre performances to raise awareness among the local population on the importance of HIV/AIDS testing. Furthermore, support and care services have been improved and enhanced by creating income-generating activities for HIV/AIDS orphans or vulnerable children. Beyond this, volunteers have helped to strengthen organisational governance and efficiency of local partner organisations, bringing improvements to key areas such as strategic planning, resource mobilisation and knowledge management.

5. Combating poverty and strengthening resilience in El Salvador (MDG 1)

Five international UN Volunteers from Brazil are in El Salvador working on the implementation of the Escuelas Vivas (Living Schools) project in the country. The project is an initiative of the government of Brazil as part of its international actions to fight hunger with the government of El Salvador and in collaboration with UNV and UNDP. The project focuses on disaster risk reduction and food security in one of the most vulnerable areas of the country, with the UN Volunteers working on building capacity in the communities regarding adequate prevention and effective response measures. The Brazilian UN Volunteers are specialists in various areas including agronomy, health, nutrition, risk management, gender and education. Aside from applying their technical skills, they are training youth volunteers in the schools and communities, enabling them to replicate the trainings and acquire leadership skills.

The above examples demonstrate the people-centered approach of volunteerism to development by empowering people to participate in their own development and that of their community. In this way, volunteerism fosters ownership and broad-based, sustainable development that contributes to the achievement of several goals at the same time. These key cross-cutting and participatory features of volunteerism are often not measured by the MDG framework although they are crucial to the achievement of all the MDGs.

The 2012 report of the UN Secretary-General on the follow-up to the implementation of the International Year of Volunteers³² also provides more detailed information on the contribution of volunteerism and volunteer involving organisations to the achievement of the MDGs. The contribution of the International Forum on Development Service and its members is also recognised in the report. The report demonstrates the importance of Forum and the volunteer sector being bold in its advocacy for the contribution of volunteerism to better societies now and post 2015.

³² Follow-up to the implementation of the International Year of Volunteers Report of the Secretary-General (A/67/153) 16 July 2012, available at: <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N12/423/77/PDF/N1242377.pdf?OpenElement>

IV. CRITICAL DEVELOPMENT ISSUES FOR THE POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

1. Context

In implementing and reviewing the MDGs, the international community is recognising a number of challenges to the MDG framework. Some of them are certainly due to the fact that the MDGs were developed in an international context that was very different from the current one.

Today, international development is much more complex. It is characterised by a broader range of stakeholders engaging in development cooperation, which brings new opportunities for shaping partnerships for development. On the other hand, new global challenges such as climate change, the global financial crisis and food and energy insecurity, as well as geo-political instability, shifting demographics and more complex power dynamics put at stake development efforts and ultimately sustainable development. At the same time, they have led to an increased recognition of the interrelatedness of global concerns and development issues and the need to devise more holistic approaches to development that prioritise the achievement of sustainable development and provide alternate measures for society's progress and prosperity.

The development of a post-2015 framework offers a key opportunity to better take into account this new reality and to devise new and more sustainable, inclusive and participatory development paths and benchmarks.

2. Vision for a holistic post-2015 development framework

The following sections give insight into key development issues that are being considered as part of the emerging development framework. It is based on the conceptual outline of the UN System Task Team in its report *Realizing the Future We Want for All*³³. This model highlights three fundamental principles of sustainability, human rights and equality, and proposes four core dimensions for progress comprising inclusive social development, environmental sustainability, inclusive economic development and peace and security. A set of development enablers has been identified to guide policy coherence at global, regional, national and sub-national levels. A graphic of the model from the Task Team is presented below.

³³ "Realizing the Future We Want for All", UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda, June 2012.

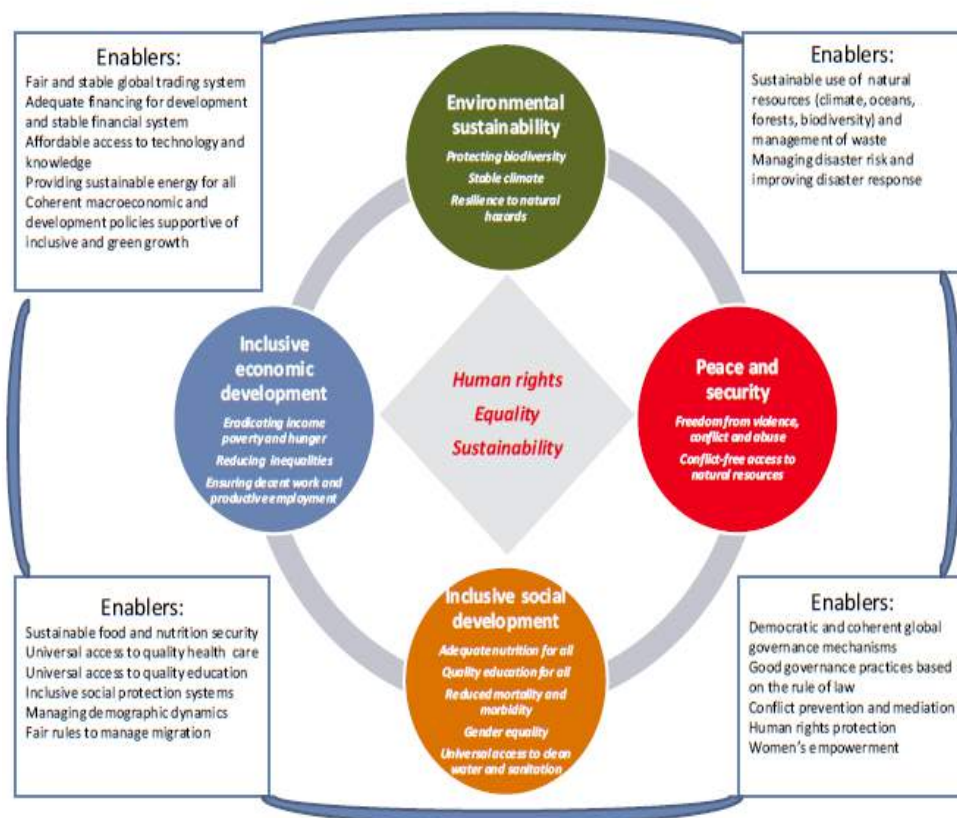


Figure 1. An integrated framework for realizing the "future we want for all" in the post-2015 UN development agenda

3. Three fundamental principles – sustainability, human rights and equality

The UN System Task Team report suggests sustainability, human rights and equality as underlying core values and as key elements of their initial proposal for a new development framework.³⁴

The Task Team says sustainability represents “the key challenge for a transformative agenda: how to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions and achieve more equitable and sustainable management and governance of natural resources while promoting dynamic and inclusive economic and human development.”³⁵ This is in line with requests at Rio+20 that sustainability be the fundamental principle of all aspects of development and for all societies. This requires promoting economic growth within the limits of our planetary boundaries and the availability of natural resources. It also means ensuring that this growth is inclusive and benefits all segments of society now and in the future, which represents a key challenge of the new development agenda.

Taking a sustainability approach addresses the complexity of the current global context as well as the interrelated nature of development issues. Furthermore, it addresses the concerns of both developed

³⁴ “Realizing the Future We Want for All”, UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda, June 2012.

³⁵ See for instance p. 25, “Realizing the Future We Want for All”, UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda, June 2012.

and developing countries³⁶ and would therefore be a mechanism that challenges the traditional North-South approach to development. Stakeholders from the South, in particular, emphasise this as an issue of critical importance.³⁷

Human rights as embedded in the UN Charter and many international standards represent fundamental values for every human being. They encompass social, economic, civil and political rights and are closely related to peace and security and the right to development.³⁸ Human rights are a precondition for development, and a lack of respect for human rights causes underdevelopment.³⁹ Human rights should therefore underpin any new development agenda representing the social foundation of the new framework.⁴⁰

Equality is closely linked to the above two principles of sustainability and human rights. Persistent inequality is a major obstacle to the full realisation of human rights and combating poverty. Achieving equality is therefore an essential precondition for sustainable development. Inclusive approaches are to be taken in all areas of development, as emphasised by the Task Team, in order to address the situation of women, young people and other marginalised groups.⁴¹

4. New ways of measuring progress of development

A focus on sustainability, human rights and equality requires new ways of understanding and measuring development. This is reflected in the growing recognition that gross domestic product (GDP) alone cannot provide an accurate picture of the socio-economic conditions of societies. In line with the above-mentioned discussion for a comprehensive approach to development, a growing number of stakeholders advocate for a broader approach to measuring human progress, arguing for "... the need to complement standard economic measures with a range of indicators covering other dimensions of people's well-being and societal progress ..."⁴² The ongoing discussions on well-being and happiness as a way to understand and reflect human development exemplify this thinking. As explained by the President of the Republic of Costa Rica, "... wellbeing is nourished by the interaction of economic, social, cultural, environmental and spiritual factors." In that sense, integrating well-being or similar approaches with new ways of measuring them would help to consolidate a sustainable approach to development in the post-2015 development framework.

Initiatives developed at various levels have advanced reflection on measuring the well-being of societies and helped to operationalise the concept, including:

- The High-Level Panel on Global Sustainability⁴³ set up by the UN Secretary-General to establish a set of indicators to measure progress towards sustainable development.
- The Institute for Development Studies (IDS) has done significant thinking on well-being, along with Bath University. IDS suggests "A 3D human wellbeing approach adds value to the 'traditional poverty' lens of the MDGs (which define poverty largely as material

³⁶ Rolph von der Hoeven "MDGs post 2015: Beacons in turbulent times or false lights?", published for the UN Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda, June 2012.

http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/untaskteam_undf/rolph_van_der_hoeven.pdf

³⁷ UNDP, UN-civil society dialogue on "Beyond 2015: New goals and partnerships", June 2012, <http://www.beyond2015.org/sites/default/files/UN-civil%20society%20dialogue.pdf>

³⁸ "Realizing the Future We Want for All", UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda, June 2012, http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/untaskteam_undf/untt_report.pdf

³⁹ Rolph von der Hoeven, op. cit.

⁴⁰ "A safe and just space for humanity – can we live within the doughnut", Kate Raworth, Oxfam Discussion Paper, February 2012 <http://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/dp-a-safe-and-just-space-for-humanity-130212-en.pdf>

⁴¹ "Realizing the Future We Want for All", UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda, June 2012.

⁴² OECD, "Better Policies for Development, Recommendations for Policy Coherence", p. 63, 2011,

http://www.oecd.org/topic/0,3699,en_2649_18532957_1_1_1_1_37413,00.html

⁴³ <http://www.un.org/gsp/>

deprivation)” because “it explicitly integrates relational and subjective perspectives on human wellbeing. How people relate to others and what people feel they can do or can be play a strong role in what people will actually do and be able to be. Secondly, it is a positive perspective. A wellbeing focus is respectful of the rounded humanity of all people by focusing on what people can rather than can’t do, be or feel.”⁴⁴

- OECD’s Better Life Initiative⁴⁵ which aims at developing indicators to measure the well-being and progress of societies by looking at the diverse experiences and living conditions of peoples and households.
- The European Commission’s GDP and Beyond Project⁴⁶ which aims at developing indicators that include environmental and social aspects of progress.
- The work conducted by the United Kingdom on developing indicators on well-being⁴⁷ which aim at measuring the quality of life of people in the UK and which include environmental, economic and sustainability aspects. These build on the work of the former UK Sustainable Development Commission reflected, for example, through its report Prosperity without Growth, amongst others.⁴⁸
- The initiative on defining a new economic paradigm based on well-being and happiness⁴⁹ undertaken by the Kingdom of Bhutan, which has adopted the Gross National Happiness Model as a measure of national progress.⁵⁰ The initiative is being supported by the United Nations and numerous of its Member States as reflected by Resolution 65/309, Happiness: towards a holistic approach to development⁵¹, which was adopted unanimously by the 193 Member States of the UN General Assembly in July 2011. It invites Member States to further work on the elaboration of additional measures that better capture the importance of well-being and happiness in development in order to guide policies.
- The 2009 report of the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress, also known as the Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi Commission⁵², represented a key moment in the evolving debate about what societies should strive to achieve. It was established at the initiative of France in order to identify the limits of GDP as an indicator of economic performance and social progress and to consider alternatives.

⁴⁴ McGregor, J.A. and Sumner, A. (2009) '[After 2015: '3D Human Wellbeing'](#)', *IDS In Focus Policy Briefings* 9.2, Brighton: IDS.

⁴⁵ <http://www.oecd.org/statistics/betterlifeinitiativemeasuringwell-beingandprogress.htm>

⁴⁶ <http://www.beyond-gdp.eu/>

⁴⁷ <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/user-guidance/well-being/index.html>

⁴⁸ UK Sustainable Development Commission, <http://www.sd-commission.org.uk/publications.php>

⁴⁹ http://www.2apr.gov.bt/images/BhutanReport_WEB_F.pdf

⁵⁰ <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/29/opinion/the-un-happiness-project.html?pagewanted=all>

⁵¹ <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N11/420/70/PDF/N1142070.pdf?OpenElement>

⁵² <http://www.stiglitz-sen-fitoussi.fr/en/index.htm>

5. Four core dimensions for consideration in the post-2015 framework

A number of thematic issues relating to development are emerging for consideration in the post-2015 framework. Based on the model of the UN System Task Team, they are grouped under four core dimensions of inclusive social development, environmental sustainability, inclusive economic development and peace and security. Poverty being a cross-cutting issue due to its complex nature is included under each of the four dimensions.

a. Inclusive social development

Poverty, shifting demographics, and governance and participation are included in this first category as they are all essential elements that help to foster social inclusion.

Poverty is both a cause for and a consequence of social exclusion. In particular, women, young people, migrants, the rural population, people with disabilities and those infected or affected by HIV/AIDS are most vulnerable to it. Ensuring their access to quality services, particularly in the areas of education and health, should be a critical element in the post-2015 framework. Combating hunger among the poor remains of utmost importance given that progress to eradicate hunger in the framework of the MDGs is uneven, particularly within countries.⁵³ In relation to this, it is important to note that there is currently a major shift of poverty to middle income countries,⁵⁴ which requires taking alternative approaches to development cooperation than just Official Development Assistance. In addition, the Overseas Development Institute draws attention to the fact that beyond 2025 there may be a concentration of poverty in fragile and conflict countries.⁵⁵ This population cannot be easily reached through traditional development aid.⁵⁶

Population dynamics interrelate in several ways to impact on inclusive social development. Today, more than seven billion people live on the earth and there will most likely be nine billion by 2050. The current population growth is characterised by an unprecedented diversity in population dynamics, in particular regarding age structures, distribution of people and growth rates. A growing population requires solid economic, social, education and health systems in order to not deepen poverty and inequalities, including social inequality. Most of the projected population growth is expected to happen in urban areas of developing countries, where it challenges urban planning, good governance and poverty eradication. The urban poor and traditionally marginalised groups such as women, young people and migrants, as well as people living in underserved communities are likely to suffer the most from the negative effects and to stay at the margins of social development.⁵⁷

Age structures are being affected by the population growth both in developed and developing countries. Today, we see the largest generation of youth in the world, most of them living in developing countries. In contrast, developed countries are experiencing a particularly strong increase in the number of older people. Both young and older people are particularly vulnerable to social exclusion due to lack of access to education, health care and economic opportunities. Ensuring focused attention on them and finding additional ways of keeping them engaged with society is crucial to ensure their social inclusion.

Governance and participation is a crucial element of inclusive social development. The delivery of and equitable access to services, participation of citizens in decisions that concern them and taking into account their views, and the empowerment of citizens are key aspects in this regard that help foster social inclusion.⁵⁸ Strengthening citizen empowerment for the poor is crucial for addressing the poverty

⁵³ 2012 Millennium Development Goals Report.

⁵⁴ Sumner, A. (2012) "Where Do The World's Poor Live? A New Update", *IDS Working Paper* 393, Brighton: IDS

⁵⁵ Homi Kharas, Andrew Rogerson, "Horizon 2025 – creative destruction in the aid industry", ODI, July 2012.

⁵⁶ Rolph von der Hoeven "MDGs post 2015 Beacons in turbulent times or false lights?", published for the UN Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda, June 2012, http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/untaskteam_undf/rolph_van_der_hoeven.pdf

⁵⁷ Population dynamics, Thematic Think Piece by UNDESA and UNFPA for the UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda.

⁵⁸ Thematic Think Piece of the UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda.

dimension of social exclusion. For young people, it is also vital to enhance democratic and participatory governance as emphasised, for instance, by the Civil Society Reflection Group.⁵⁹ The absence or the disabled functioning of these mechanisms can have significant impacts on social inclusion and lead to social and political upheaval, as exemplified by the “Arab Spring”. The Arab Spring also demonstrated the power of civic action through ICTs and social media, which can be a powerful catalyst for enhancing democratic and participatory governance and fostering social inclusion.

b. Environmental sustainability

Goal 7 of the MDGs addresses environmental sustainability, but with relatively narrow targets. With the consequences and impacts of climate change becoming more visible across the globe, mitigating and adapting to climate change, protecting the planetary boundaries and promoting environmental sustainability have become the most pressing issues for the international community.

As highlighted by Rio+20 in the context of the debate on the post-2015 development framework, there is a growing consensus on the interconnectedness of climate change, environment and development. Climate change directly impacts on development efforts and jeopardises achievement of the MDGs as it reverses development gains, exemplified by the economic destruction and human losses it can cause. Developing countries are particularly vulnerable in addressing those situations given their lack of financial resources, capacities and high levels of poverty. It is therefore of crucial importance that climate change and the environment become an integral part of development efforts to enhance community resilience.

All human life depends on the integrity of the earth and its natural resources, and ultimately, sustainable human well-being requires a healthy ecological system. There are increasingly vocal calls, particularly from civil society, for human activity and progress to respect planetary boundaries and operate within environmental limits. This is a response to a situation where many countries have become increasingly dependent on unsustainable amounts of natural resources, which puts even national economies at stake.⁶⁰ As the Task Team report emphasises, “The continuous striving for improvements in material welfare is threatening to surpass the limits of the natural resource base unless there is a radical shift towards more sustainable patterns of consumption and production and resource use. Persistent inequalities and struggles over scarce resources are among key determinants of situations of conflict, hunger, insecurity and violence, which in turn are key factors that hold back human development and efforts to achieve sustainable development. Business as usual thus cannot be an option and transformative change is needed.”⁶¹ Or as concluded by the Civil Society Reflection Group, “humanity has to leave this destructive development path”.⁶²

The increased focus on climate change has also provoked new interest in risk and vulnerability of falling into poverty due to the effects of climate change.

c. Inclusive economic development

The current economic model is widely considered unsustainable because it overuses the planet’s natural resources and leaves millions of people living in poverty. The MDG framework only partially acknowledges the importance of economic development as a means to combat poverty. Under MDG Goal 1 relating to the eradication of poverty and hunger, a target on the achievement of full and productive employment and decent work for all is included as well as four related indicators. However, it does not spell out how the target can be achieved and it leaves out other key dimensions related to employment, as explained below. In the debate on the post-2015 development framework, several

⁵⁹ “No Future Without Justice”, Report of the Civil Society Reflection Group on Global Development Perspectives, Executive Summary, June 2012.

⁶⁰ http://www.2apr.gov.bt/images/BhutanReport_WEB_F.pdf

⁶¹ “Realizing the Future We Want for All”, UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda, June 2012.

⁶² “No Future Without Justice” Civil Society Reflection Group on Global Development Perspectives, June 2012.

aspects in relation to inclusive economic development are highlighted to advocate for a more prominent inclusion of these in the new framework.

Evidence shows that inclusive economic development is central to development processes and in particular, to the reduction of poverty. The creation of jobs, sustainable enterprise development and entrepreneurship should therefore be a central element in the economic development dimension of the new framework.⁶³ In line with the sustainable development approach, economic growth and development need to take into account the social and environmental aspects and respect the principles of human rights and equality.

Inclusive economic development needs to address the social and economic vulnerability of many working people by creating decent jobs, social protection mechanisms and by distributing income and growth more evenly.⁶⁴ Women and young people should be given particular attention in this regard as they are more likely to find themselves in poorly remunerated positions.⁶⁵ In societies, individual and family well-being depends on sufficient and decent employment, according to the debate on well-being and happiness.⁶⁶

A study conducted for the UN Task Team⁶⁷ emphasises the financial and economic crisis, which also has sharpened unemployment in many developed countries and puts at stake inclusive economic development. As a consequence, the protection of the poor and socially disadvantaged people in developed countries has become an urgent political and societal problem that should equally be tackled in the new framework. This also highlights the utility of a global development agenda that makes the development framework relevant for both developed and developing countries, as potentially envisaged in the SDGs.

d. Peace and security

The Millennium Declaration referred to fundamental values and goals on peace, security and disarmament such as the freedom from fear of violence and oppression. At the same time, the MDGs assumed the importance of peace and international security but did not address these issues directly. The increasing number of national and regional conflicts, however, increasingly put at stake the achievement of the MDGs.⁶⁸ This reality emphasises the importance to the international community of incorporating peace and security issues more explicitly in the post-2015 development agenda.

The drivers of violence often include a wide range of aspects, including political, economic, social and environmental. They can also include socio-economic inequalities, political exclusion, injustice, natural resource management and corruption. Violent conflict causes death, displacement, destroys physical and social capital, damages the environment and discourages new and inhibits existing investment. As such, the effects of violent conflicts are both immediate and long term. Poverty is equally a major cause of violence and conflict as people lose assets, opportunities and access to markets. Looking beyond 2025, ODI stresses that fragile and conflict-affected countries are likely to be at the centre of poverty concentration.⁶⁹ In conflict areas and fragile states, women and girls are particularly vulnerable. They do not only suffer more frequently from poverty, but often also from gender-based violence.⁷⁰

⁶³ ODI Background Note, “After 2015: progress and challenges for development”.

⁶⁴ Emerging development challenges for the post-2015 UN development agenda: employment, Thematic Think Piece ILO, May 2012 and “Macroeconomic stability, inclusive growth and employment”, Thematic Think Piece ILO, UNCTAD, UNDESA and WTO, May 2012: http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/Think%20Pieces/12_macro_economics.pdf

⁶⁵ The Millennium Development Goals Report 2012.

⁶⁶ Prof. Stiglitz, Defining a new economic paradigm, The report of the High-Level-Meeting on Well-being and Happiness: http://www.2apr.gov.bt/images/BhutanReport_WEB_F.pdf

⁶⁷ Rolf von der Hoeven “MDGs post 2015 Beacons in turbulent times or false lights?”, published for the UN Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda, June 2012.

⁶⁸ UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda (2012), Peace and Security, Thematic Think Piece.

⁶⁹ Homi Kharas, Andrew Rogerson, “Horizon 2025 – creative destruction in the aid industry”, ODI, July 2012.

⁷⁰ Action Aid (2012), Righting the MDGs: contexts and opportunities for a post-2015 development framework.

Addressing sources of conflict requires taking a multi-dimensional approach where development, human rights, peace, security and the rule of law are recognised as interrelated dimensions of well-being.⁷¹ Making peace, peace building and keeping the peace rely on methods such as negotiation, reconciliation, institution building and political and economic transformation. Peace-making processes aim both to resolve existing tensions (violent and non-violent) and prevent new or re-emerging conflicts. However, making peace is a continual process that precedes a ceasefire and continues through peace building and stabilisation of society and the state.

A society that has regained peace often remains fragile and the possibility that conflict may again erupt is likely. It is this dynamic that needs careful consideration in a post-2015 development framework. As such, sustainable development goals should embody the reality that it is not the aim of peace making/building/keeping to prevent conflict altogether, but rather to reduce the potential for conflict to become violent or to help parties involved in a conflict reach sustainable agreements, where no party is labeled as either the victim or victor.

This is in line with the holistic approach to development that is suggested for the post-2015 development framework.

⁷¹ “Realizing the Future We Want for All”, UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda, June 2012.

V. HOW CAN VOLUNTEERISM LINK TO THE POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK?

1. The values and value adding of volunteerism to a post-2015 framework

The UN System Task Team report presents “a vision for the post-2015 development agenda ... that seeks to achieve inclusive, people-centred, sustainable global development”.⁷² The fundamental principles of the integrated framework proposed by the Task Team are human rights, including the enablers of participation, accountability, non-discrimination, empowerment, and rule of law; equality, prioritising addressing women, youth, and the most deprived and impoverished; and sustainability, now and in the future.⁷³ These are all key indicators of individual, community and societal well-being, to which volunteerism significantly contributes. “Volunteerism, being a basic expression of human relationships, infused with values of solidarity, reciprocity, mutual trust, belonging and empowerment”⁷⁴, clearly must be brought to the fore in the developing discourse at global, regional and national levels.

“Human rights are universal and focus on the inherent dignity and equal worth of all human beings.”⁷⁵ Volunteerism is also universal⁷⁶ and provides avenues for inclusive participation, public accountability, enhancing social cohesion and building peace, and empowerment. Time and again, volunteers have supported action on a scale impossible without their involvement, and achieved broad-based social change. Examples include the Arab Spring movement, the Campaign to Ban Land Mines and the international women’s movement.⁷⁷

Inequality refers to variations in well-being among people or groups of people.⁷⁸ Volunteerism focuses on people as assets. It is a means of individual and community capacity development which can enrich self-worth, strengthen social and employability competencies, enhance social cohesion and reduce conflicts.⁷⁹ In 2000, the UN General Assembly recognised volunteerism as an “additional mechanism in the promotion of social integration”.⁸⁰

Sustainable development integrating the economic, social and environmental dimensions now and for the future will be impossible without the vast reservoir of skills, energy and local knowledge for peace and development represented by volunteerism. Examples abound how community-based sustainable livelihood approaches based on volunteer collective action can lead to reduced vulnerability through mutual aid, sustainable use of resources, access to health and education, innovative financial resource mobilisation and political empowerment.⁸¹ The potential contribution of volunteerism to achieving sustainable development was recognised by Rio+20. Its outcome document mentions the need to engage “volunteer groups”, stating “Sustainable development requires the meaningful involvement and active participation of regional, national and subnational legislatures and judiciaries, and all major groups ... as well as other stakeholders, including local communities, volunteer groups and foundations, migrants and families as well as older persons and persons with disabilities.”⁸² Volunteerism has therefore a key role to play in the follow-up to Rio+20 and the conceptualisation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

⁷² UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda (2012), “Realizing the Future We Want for All: Report to the Secretary-General”.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, pp. 23-25.

⁷⁴ United Nations Volunteers (2011), *State of the World’s Volunteerism Report*, page xx.

⁷⁵ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (2006), “Frequently Asked Questions on a Human Right-based Approach to Development Cooperation”, p. 1.

⁷⁶ United Nations Volunteers (2011), *State of the World’s Volunteerism Report*, Ch. 1.

⁷⁷ CIVICUS, UNV, IAVE (2009), *Volunteering and Social Activism: Pathways for participation in human development*.

⁷⁸ McKay, Andrew (2002), *Inequality Briefing Paper No. 1: Defining and Measuring Inequality*.

⁷⁹ United Nations Volunteers (2011), *State of the World’s Volunteerism Report*, p. 61.

⁸⁰ United Nations General Assembly, 2000, Further initiatives for social development (A/RES/S-24/2).

⁸¹ United Nations Volunteers (2011), *State of the World’s Volunteerism Report*, Ch. 4.

⁸² Para. 43 of Rio+20 Outcome Document A/RES/66/288.

The Task Team has just begun the discussion on addressing a monitoring framework that will adequately cover the multiple, complex dimensions. It does, however, acknowledge that measures such as GDP only focus on some economic aspects.⁸³ As already noted, there is increasing exploration of indicators of well-being as a measure of sustainable development. The discourse on quality of life and well-being in relation to the new development framework must recognise the solidarity and reciprocal values of volunteerism that enhance individual, community and social well-being.⁸⁴ In its 2011 publication, *Better Policies for Development, Recommendations for Policy Coherence*, the OECD highlighted the value of activities such as volunteering to the progress of societies, arguing that “A consensus has now emerged on the need to complement standard economic measures with a range of indicators covering other dimensions of people’s well-being and societal progress ... What happens at the level of the entire economy does not necessarily tell us what happens to individuals and households. For example, standard numbers, such as GDP, ... do not cover the many important services that households produce at home. These include, for example, ... volunteer activities. Taking such dimensions into consideration will give a very different picture of performance and progress across countries.”⁸⁵ The post-2015 framework and the SDGs provide an opportunity to better capture the contributions of volunteerism and other elements.

Alongside skill sharing, international volunteering for development is crucial because it “can also promote international understanding, solidarity and mutual learning”⁸⁶. It must also increasingly find ways to be multi-directional and support South-South volunteering. There is great potential for South-South development collaboration, drawing on the experience and good will of the emerging economies. Countries like Brazil and South Africa are already demonstrating their concrete commitments to using volunteerism as a powerful tool for South-South development cooperation.

Given that the three principles of human rights, equality and sustainability are to shape and help inform developing pathways to pursue the four core dimensions proposed by the Task Team, volunteerism clearly has relevance to them all.

2. Volunteerism and the link to the four core dimensions

a. Volunteerism and inclusive social development

As emphasised by the State of the World’s Volunteerism Report, inclusive social development puts people at the very heart of policy-making with the objective of enabling them to fully participate in economic, social and cultural life and thereby improve their own life and well-being. In contrast, social exclusion is a process by which individuals, groups or communities are intentionally or unintentionally prevented from full participation due to, for instance, their economic status or lack of education, employment or health. Women, youth and older people are especially vulnerable to social exclusion.

Volunteerism can be a meaningful contribution to prevent and overcome social exclusion and to promote equality, one of the suggested fundamental principles of the post-2015 development framework. This was also acknowledged by the UN General Assembly, which recognised volunteerism as an “additional mechanism in the promotion of social integration.”⁸⁷ Volunteerism has the benefit of “providing space, which enables people to play a fuller and more satisfying role in the lives of their communities and societies.”⁸⁸ For the individual, volunteerism helps to “overcome feelings of personal

⁸³ UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda (2012), *Building on the MDGs to bring sustainable development to the post-2015 development agenda*, pp. 6-8.

⁸⁴ United Nations Volunteers (2011), *State of the World’s Volunteerism Report*, Ch. 8.

⁸⁵ “Better Policies for Development, Recommendations for Policy Coherence”, page 63, OECD 2011: http://www.oecd.org/topic/0,3699,en_2649_18532957_1_1_1_1_37413,00.html

⁸⁶ David Lewis, *Globalization and International Service: A Development Perspective*, published in *Voluntary Action*, 7, 2, pp. 13-26, 2006, and Howes, A.J. “Learning in the contact zone: revisiting neglected aspects of development through an analysis of volunteer placements in Indonesia.” *Compare* 38/1 (2008), pp. 23-38.

⁸⁷ UNGA, 2002a; UNGA, 2005; UNGA, 2008; quoted from the United Nations Volunteers (2011), *State of the World’s Volunteerism Report*, p. 52.

⁸⁸ United Nations Volunteers (2011), *State of the World’s Volunteerism Report*, p. 52.

isolation and reduced self-worth” thereby enhancing “feelings of belonging and of contributing.”⁸⁹ This is a first step towards addressing underlying causes of social exclusion such as lack in employment, education or health.

Some population groups are more likely to suffer from social exclusion than others. Among them are the economically poor, people infected or affected by HIV/AIDS, women, people with disabilities and youth as well as older people. For them, volunteerism, by purposefully creating ways of participation, can help to enhance integration into society. For people or communities who depend on services by others, for example people living in great economic poverty, people infected or affected by HIV/AIDS or people with disabilities, volunteerism can be a means to move away from being passive service recipients to persons that actively contribute to society. Advocating, for instance, for one’s own cause or engaging in support services not only increases confidence in one’s own capacities. It is also a way to break down stereotypes and prejudices that these groups do not have the capacity of meaningfully contributing to society. This breaks with the misperception that volunteerism is only about giving and highlights the conviction inherent to volunteerism that “everyone is an expert in something, and that we all have something to learn from as well as to teach others”⁹⁰, regardless of our social, economic or health status.

For older people, who make up an increasing share of the world population, volunteerism can be a means to increase social ties, thereby overcoming feelings of loneliness and isolation. Beyond the benefit that volunteerism brings to the individual, the positive effects that engaging older people in volunteerism has on society must also be highlighted. For society, and intergenerational exchange in particular, it is crucial to tap into the knowledge and life skills of older people and to share them with young people.

Participation of people and communities is key to achieving social inclusion. By being empowered, people take the lead and ownership over their own development and contribute to sustainable development. Volunteerism can make a meaningful contribution in this regard, as acknowledged by the 64th UN DPI NGO Conference, which reaffirmed that “civic participation, including volunteering, has been a valuable partner in a broad spectrum of peace and sustainable development activities, with the overriding goal of poverty eradication and the betterment of the human condition ...”⁹¹ Based on the conviction that “everyone has skills and expertise to contribute”⁹² and by nurturing trustful relationships with people and communities, volunteerism purposefully creates opportunities for participation. Therefore, “the most important effect volunteerism has in a society is when the community realises that they can make a difference, and they can contribute to improve their own lives and those of other community members. It’s an encouraging feeling of accomplishment and power.”⁹³

Through empowerment, people can approach development challenges in a positive way.⁹⁴ Additionally integrating relational and subjective perspectives with the material aspect of well-being helps people focus on how they relate to each other, and what they feel they can achieve together as opposed to what they cannot do.

Equally importantly, volunteerism can be a means to improve democratic governance. Voluntary engagement is the basis for a vibrant civil society. Civil society, in turn, is a crucial part of sound democratic structures as it often serves as “watchdog” to governmental action. Moreover, one important *raison d’être* of civil society organisations is to advocate for delivery of a broad range of social services and for human causes such as the respect of human rights. Considering this, volunteerism as part of citizen engagement is crucial to the existence of resilient, participatory, democratic and just societies.

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 53

⁹⁰ McWha, Ishbel (2011), “The roles of, and relationships between, expatriates, volunteers, and local development workers”, *Development in Practice*, 21: 1, 29 – 40, p. 36.

⁹¹ See GA document A/66/750: Declaration of the 64th Annual UN DPI NGO Conference: <http://www.un.org/wcm/webdav/site/dpingorelations/shared/Final%20Declaration/BonnEng.pdf> p. 13.

⁹² McWha, Ishbel (2011), “The roles of, and relationships between, expatriates, volunteers, and local development workers”, *Development in Practice*, 21: 1, 29-40, p. 37.

⁹³ UNV Programme Manager Timor-Leste, in response to IVCO Discussion Paper Survey.

⁹⁴ IDS (2009), After 2015: “3D Human Wellbeing” <http://www.ids.ac.uk/files/dmfile/IF9.2.pdf>

Recognising the contribution of volunteerism to the proposed SDGs, the UN DPI NGO conference called for a SDG focused on public participation and calling for governments by 2022 to “ensure that volunteerism and citizen engagement are incorporated in all global, national and local action plans for implementation of sustainable development and human well-being, to commit to the creation of an enabling environment for citizen engagement and voluntary action”⁹⁵.

b. Volunteerism and environmental sustainability

Achieving the goal of environmental sustainability requires the ingenuity, solidarity and creativity of many millions of ordinary people, particularly through voluntary action. Efforts on the part of governments supported by the international community can only respond to and complement what ultimately requires the active involvement of people all around the world. Recognising this fact is the first step toward harnessing volunteerism – a vast resource – in a global effort to achieve environmental sustainability. Volunteerism has been one of the driving forces behind the birth and thriving of the modern environmental movement. Through volunteerism, people across the world have been able to unite forces and mobilise their communities in campaigns and actions to address both local and global environmental issues and needs. The movement against the Narmada Dam in India and the Kenyan Greenbelt Movement represent just two of the most well known examples of successful community campaigns and grassroots efforts in developing countries. It is this voluntary action of awareness raising, advocacy and empowerment within local communities and individuals that has led to a grand, mass scale social movement for change to improve the environment and protect their own livelihoods and futures.

Recognising the contribution of volunteerism, the UN DPI NGO conference final declaration explicitly recommended “the incorporation of volunteerism, citizen engagement and volunteers in all global, national and local plans and priorities for peace, sustainable development and human well-being to commit to the creation of an enabling environment in which citizen engagement and voluntary action can flourish ...”⁹⁶.

The Volunteer Action Counts campaign equally highlights the power of volunteerism for sustainable development and its potential for the post-2015 agenda. Launched on 24 April 2012 in the lead-up to Rio+20, the campaign so far has received more than 1,200 volunteering stories and counted over 64 million volunteers acting for sustainable development on the campaign website.

Some of the initiatives featured through the campaign have been extremely successful in mobilising volunteers for sustainable development. An example of this is the My Earth My Duty initiative spearheaded by Zee News, India's first cable satellite news channel, as part of its corporate social responsibility strategy and supported by UNDP and UNV as part of the Tenth Anniversary of the International Year of Volunteers in 2011. It aims to educate the nation about taking action to improve the environment, specifically by mobilising people to plant trees. It started in 2010 and has since become an annual event with more than 50 million volunteers involved in 2011 alone in planting and nurturing saplings across the country.

In Mozambique, over 700 volunteers have been mobilised through a VSO-backed initiative to support people living with HIV/AIDS. And 13.1 million volunteers serving with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies are working in health promotion, treatment and services (37 per cent), disaster preparedness, response and recovery (26 per cent), general support services (25 per cent) and social inclusion (12 per cent), helping to build resilient communities all over the world.

Promoting integrated natural resource management with the full participation of local organisations is crucial to building resilience at all levels of society. Valuing traditional and indigenous knowledge for

⁹⁵ See GA document A/66/750: Declaration of the 64th Annual UN DPI NGO Conference: <http://www.un.org/wcm/webdav/site/dpingorelations/shared/Final%20Declaration/BonnEng.pdf> p. 15.

⁹⁶ See GA document A/66/750: Declaration of the 64th Annual UN DPI NGO Conference: <http://www.un.org/wcm/webdav/site/dpingorelations/shared/Final%20Declaration/BonnEng.pdf>

local response strategies is key to promoting environmental sustainability at a community level.⁹⁷ Volunteerism has a significant contribution to make in this regard. UNV partnered with UNDP and the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Small Grants Programme in the implementation of a global program piloting community-based adaptation (CBA) in Bangladesh, Bolivia, Guatemala, Jamaica, Kazakhstan, Morocco, Namibia, Niger, Samoa and Vietnam. These projects are designed to enhance the resilience to climate change impacts of communities whose livelihoods are highly dependent on natural resources and their ecosystems.

UNV has been implementing a project in support of the larger global CBA program. It aims to strengthen and sustain CBA projects through volunteer mobilisation and development of methods to measure and integrate voluntary contributions into adaptation efforts. In Niger, volunteer contributions to the CBA program have already shown significant progress, in particular through the mobilisation of national Volunteers. National UN Volunteers have been constantly encouraging people, inspiring them through concrete actions, and promoting collective action for natural resource management. They have mobilised hundreds of women, men, youth, elderly and people with disabilities to voluntarily contribute their valuable local knowledge, know-how, labour and materials to the successful implementation of CBA activities.

The community-based adaptation strategies being piloted in Niger build on local traditions of solidarity and volunteerism (such as traditional collective work, called *gayya*). By facilitating empowerment and inclusive participation, the project ensures that communities realise the short- and long-term social gains that will emerge from proactive adaptation to climate change. Community, family and individual choices represent real-life examples of good practices and contribute tremendously to the learning process that is at the core of this community-based pilot project.

The UN System Task Team stresses as well the importance of integrating disaster risk reduction into sustainable development strategies by strengthening risk assessment, disaster prevention and humanitarian responses to protect gains of development. Volunteerism has an important contribution to make in this regard as recognised by the UN General Assembly which commended “the contributions from national and international volunteers for their fundamental role in disaster prevention and recovery, most recently evidenced by their performance in the aftermath of natural catastrophes in many parts of the world, such as mass landslides and floods in south-eastern Brazil and the devastating earthquake that struck eastern Japan in March 2011”⁹⁸. As UNV’s State of the World’s Volunteerism Report furthermore said, “There is growing international awareness that nations and communities can and should build resilience to disasters through a ‘bottom-up’ process in the form of volunteer initiatives rooted in the community.”⁹⁹

In Bangladesh, over 60,000 national volunteers affiliated with national NGOs such as the Bangladesh Scouts have been trained, thus building the country’s human capital in disaster management and underlining the importance of volunteerism as a means to build and sustain national capacity. UNDP has undertaken a range of volunteering initiatives with local communities to promote knowledge exchange among them and thus increase the ownership and cost-effectiveness of local development solutions. These case studies are captured in the 2011 UNDP publication “Supporting Transformational Change”.¹⁰⁰

c. Volunteerism and inclusive economic development

Volunteerism makes significant contributions to inclusive economic development. It can, for instance, play a role in enhancing the employability of people. By stimulating interaction with others, volunteerism enables people to build their social and human capital such as social networks, knowledge,

⁹⁷ UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda (2012) “Realizing the Future We Want for All: Report to the Secretary General”.

⁹⁸ UNGA Resolution A/RES/66/67.

⁹⁹ UNV (2001), State of the World’s Volunteerism Report, p. xxiii.

¹⁰⁰ Available at: http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/poverty-reduction/supporting_transformationalchange.html

skills and expertise in specific areas. “For those in search of paid employment, volunteering can boost self-confidence, provide access to workplace networks and an opportunity for the development of specific marketable skills. Volunteering can also lead to the creation of new jobs by developing services, which are later taken over by the state and market and turned into paid jobs.”¹⁰¹ This benefit is of particular importance to women but also to young people who often face exclusion in the economic sphere due to lack of capacities and opportunities of participation.

Especially for young people, the current economic and financial crisis has significant negative impacts on employment opportunities. The crisis is affecting youth employment in developing and developed countries. Examples in Spain and Greece show unemployment of 50% and more among the youth population. If ignored, this can lead to increased crime rates or drug use among young people, worsening the degree and complexity of social exclusion. “Volunteerism offers valuable opportunities for youth engagement and leadership to contribute to the development of peaceful and inclusive societies, while also allowing youth to acquire skills, build their capacities and increase their employability”¹⁰², as emphasised by the UN General Assembly.

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is piloting a volunteer program with a target of 160 young volunteers in Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia and Sierra Leone. The volunteers – men and women aged between 18 and 35 years from the region, with the capacity to adapt to different social, cultural and political environments – are currently being deployed in government institutions, primarily in the health and education sectors. Twenty volunteers (secondary school teachers, nurses, midwives, laboratory technicians) are already serving in Liberia and 80 volunteers (mainly secondary school teachers and nurses) will be deployed in Guinea and Sierra Leone before the end of 2012. During the pilot phase, the ECOWAS program seeks to consolidate peace, recovery, national reconciliation and rehabilitation in crisis-affected communities through the contribution of the volunteers to development activities.

Equally important is to recognise young people’s potential as agents of change and to leverage their motivation, creativity and dynamism for the well-being of society. Volunteerism provides first-hand opportunities in this regard while also transmitting to them values such as responsibility, solidarity and equality. Governments and the United Nations system recognise the importance of mobilising the energies and counting on the ideals of young people in the development of the societies in which they live. It is in this context that the UN Secretary-General announced on 25 January 2012 the creation of a United Nations Youth Volunteer modality under the leadership of UNV. In developing youth volunteerism strategies, youth should be considered as beneficiaries and actors. In this way, the strategies would tackle problems that might hinder youth volunteerism, but also youth must be part of the solution to the problems; as one youth leader once said, “Nothing about youth without youth.”

d. Volunteerism and peace and security

As highlighted earlier, peace and security are crucial preconditions to development. As analysed by UNV, “peace-building requires a fundamental investment in civilian capacities to rebuild local trust, confidence and cooperation – all core prerequisites for reestablishing the rule of law, basic services and a viable economy.”¹⁰³

“Peace and security ... is an area where volunteerism has proved particularly efficient in building trust and confidence among communities in conflict situations.”¹⁰⁴ Volunteerism offers an essential mechanism in this regard as it creates and sustains bonds of trust, societal cohesion and helps to forge a sense of identity and destiny.¹⁰⁵ Volunteer action where people unite in shared endeavours towards a common purpose is a feature of most societies.

¹⁰¹ UN Volunteers (1999), Expert Group Meeting on Volunteering and Social Development, p. 7.

¹⁰² UNGA Resolution A/RES/66/67.

¹⁰³ United Nations Volunteers (2012), Practice Notes, Contribution of Volunteerism to Peacebuilding, p. 4.

¹⁰⁴ UNV Programme Officer Morocco in response to IVCO Discussion Paper Survey.

¹⁰⁵ United Nations Volunteers (2011), State of the World’s Volunteerism Report.

Cord¹⁰⁶, an international organisation working to build lasting peace in conflict and post-conflict situations, has been working in Cambodia since 1975 with a particular focus on human rights. Cord works directly with local organisations to provide support, advice and opportunities for volunteers to help with projects that promote human rights. Cord fostered a particularly strong partnership with Ponleu Ney Kdey Sangkhum (PNKS) that largely works with rural communities in the Kampong Speu and Prey Veng provinces. Knowledge of rights in Cambodia is especially limited in poor rural communities and PNKS endeavours to work with villagers and their councils to address this lack of awareness. Cord is assisting PNKS through the provision of six long-term volunteers and a regional director in country to provide advice and facilitate activities on the ground. The team of volunteers offers mentoring, coaching, training and technical support to its local partner, with an emphasis on creating a local culture that embraces positive change. The organisation has helped to establish commune councils, village development committees, women's groups and local advocacy volunteers with knowledge on a rights based approach. Local volunteers have, in turn, coordinated awareness-raising events on human rights for low income communities, reaching 3,429 villagers in their targeted communities.

To foster cooperation and communication between various groups of society, trust and culturally sensitive approaches are vital in order to ensure open dialogue. Community ownership is equally crucial to set sustainable dialogue processes in motion. Local volunteers therefore play a vital role in connecting their communities in post-conflict situations.¹⁰⁷ In addition to the trust they inspire in local communities, local volunteers offer a strong knowledge of local needs, assets and sociocultural and political conditions. As noted in feedback to the IVCO survey from Afghanistan, "The government of Afghanistan, through the Deputy Ministry of Youth Affairs, recognises that volunteerism at the community level is an important component of the peace and reconciliation process in the country. Volunteerism takes many forms and is adaptable to all cultures and environments. Volunteers (mostly youth) serve in a way that is consistent with conservative, Islamic values in the community ... they are able to function effectively in sensitive and volatile areas ... Volunteers in Afghanistan span tribal, gender and social economic boundaries. They are thus uniquely positioned to work from within communities, bringing citizens together in the spirit of reconciliation and reciprocity".¹⁰⁸

Volunteerism also helps to overcome social, political and physical barriers that hamper the strong willingness and dynamism of people and communities to restore their livelihoods in the aftermath of conflicts. By bringing people together, including those who are marginalised, they help address those situations.

Gender relations are often significantly impacted by violence and armed conflict. On one hand, women can become more vulnerable to poverty and violence when men are absent, injured or killed because of armed conflict. On the other hand, women can also become more empowered through greater responsibility for families, community resilience or the continuation of livelihoods. Volunteerism is exemplified by empowered women who maintain and extend key civic responsibilities in their communities without expectation of reward.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶ <http://www.cord.org.uk/>

¹⁰⁷ United Nations Volunteers (2012), Practice Notes, Contribution of Volunteerism to Peacebuilding.

¹⁰⁸ UNV Programme Manager Afghanistan in response to IVCO Discussion Paper Survey.

¹⁰⁹ United Nations Volunteers (2012), Practice Notes, Contribution of Volunteerism to Peacebuilding.

VI. OPPORTUNITIES FOR FORUM MEMBERS' ENGAGEMENT AND JOINT ACTION

This is an historic opportunity to flag the relevance of volunteerism and the values it stands for to the post-2015 agenda, including the Sustainable Development Goals. IVCOs can use the opportunity to demonstrate the impact and relevance of volunteerism for development and peace across different dimensions and by diverse organisations, based on a concerted and coordinated approach. There will be a transition period of discussions towards the new framework, drawing on national, thematic and regional consultations up until the special UN MDG Summit in September 2013 and continuing in parallel with the intergovernmental negotiations up until 2015.

This discussion paper has attempted to take brief stock of the changing international development framework and recognise the contribution of volunteerism to the MDGs. It has also outlined the processes in place to take forward the post-2015 agenda and some of the central issues they raise. This is designed to provide a mapping to assist IVCOs consider how they might individually and collectively engage with the process. It highlights the central themes outlined by the UN System Task Team in their report *Realizing the Future We Want for All* as a basis for consideration of entry points for volunteerism and civic engagement. The themes begin from a value base, emphasising the fundamental principles of sustainability, human rights and equality, and then move to more specific core dimensions for action under the umbrellas of inclusive social development, inclusive economic development, environmental sustainability and peace and security. The paper provides some indications of key synergies with volunteerism, starting from its strong and coherent value base and then moving to its concrete value-adding to the core dimensions, which are particularly significant because of the cross-cutting nature of volunteerism. Crucial here is the connection between values and action through volunteerism and the importance of developing alternate measures that truly recognise its contribution in community and societal well-being.

This final section of the discussion paper flags direct opportunities for Forum/IVCO engagement with post-2015.

1. Opportunities and challenges of the new development context

The new development context builds on the strengths of IVCOs but also raises some challenges for focus, funding and operations. The changing international development context demonstrates the importance of emerging economies and the increasing significance of South-South cooperation and national volunteering. For example, the ECOWAS and African Union volunteering initiatives deserve support and recognition for the way they respond to issues of inclusive social and economic development. UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/66/67 of December 2011 explicitly highlighted this interconnection when it recognised “the need to further strengthen the link between domestic volunteers and international volunteer-sending organizations in order to facilitate the globalization of volunteer opportunities”.

2. Reaching out to other sectors and constituencies

In future, multi-directional and multi-faceted volunteer opportunities must increase, which will require greater diversity of funding and partnerships beyond aid budgets to include wider sectors of support and engagement, i.e. expanding beyond ministries of foreign affairs to education, environment, labour or youth, for example. The creation of the Sustainable Development Goals may provide particularly useful opportunities for demonstrating the values and value adding provided by volunteering in these broader spheres and in relation to a range of cross-cutting issues.

It will also be important to reach out beyond the aid and volunteerism sectors to build coalitions with non-traditional allies and partners, building on growing work in these areas. This will require collaboration to find common ground with a range of civil society partners beyond those that use explicit volunteer language (even if they rely on volunteers for their work or advocacy) but also include stronger engagement with national volunteering advocates and institutions in the North and South. Engagement with intergovernmental and UN processes and institutions is also now critical, including the process to formulate the Sustainable Development Goals.

There is a clear opportunity for “volunteer groups” in the follow-up to Rio + 20 and the conceptualisation of the SDGs. This is explicitly recognised in the Rio+20 outcome document, as explained earlier. By being explicitly listed as a recognised Rio+20 stakeholder, volunteer groups automatically gain the normative support of the UN to officially become part of what is starting to be named in UN circles as the “Major Groups Plus” (MG+). This makes it particularly relevant for IVCOs to continue flagging the pertinence of their inclusion in all discussion for a and to push for a MG+ mechanism of consultation within the follow-up discussion to Rio+20.

3. Engaging with the post-2015 process

IVCOs need to strive to highlight the visibility and relevance of the volunteering constituency by actively, extensively and substantively engaging in the post-2015 process, and by doing so in a coordinated manner to maximise impact. In parallel, the impact and contribution of volunteerism to date within the current framework must be demonstrated through a concise presentation of evidence collected within IVCO networks and existing studies and research, and linked to reflections on the new framework. The specific differences that volunteering and civic engagement make and the added value they represent should be highlighted in simple and understandable terms, based on the evidence presented. IVCOs finally need to outline how this added value could come to play in a new framework that is more holistic, value based and more inclined to look at root causes and consider cross-cutting enabling factors to achieve the new Sustainable Development Goals. Related conversations which could provide entry points for the value-adding dimension of volunteerism need to be monitored and internal thinking about the linkages developed. In order to do so, IVCOs should identify shared spaces for discussion¹¹⁰, share effective messages and mobilise their constituencies to make the same points with multiple voices in multiple places to ensure that references to volunteerism and related concepts appear consistently in the various consultative processes.

In the survey conducted as part of the discussion paper, Forum members suggested the following broad areas for joint action:

1. Creating joint understanding on the role of volunteerism in order to develop a strategy for a joint approach and advocacy;
2. Sharing information and coordinating research on incorporating linkages between volunteering and empowerment and well-being issues into the post-2015 framework;
3. Advocacy for achieving shared goals. There remains much room to consider how to do this and the following part suggests some specific ways to do this.

Within the overall preparatory processes for the new policy framework, there are a number of opportunities to act collectively. IVCOs (together with other volunteer involving organisations) need to be able to share substantive thoughts and think pieces, jointly formulating the added value that volunteerism represents to ensure that the connection of civic engagement and volunteering with the various dimensions discussed becomes increasingly clear outside the volunteer sector. It may be useful to use the Volunteer Action Counts campaign to highlight volunteerism and the post-2015 agenda on International Volunteer Day and in other fora.

¹¹⁰ UNV has set up a Teamworks Space for stakeholder discussions on “Volunteering for post 2015”. Teamworks is a secure, web-based platform which allows knowledge exchange among peers. The Space is intended to share information and documentation about efforts of IVCOs and other partners to place volunteerism and civic engagement within the discussions about the new framework at all levels.

IVCO's could potentially formulate a joint statement to be circulated among UN Member States and decision makers. Such a statement could draw on existing research being done by the Forum Research Working Group on impact, as well as specific institutional research like UNV's State of the World's Volunteerism Report and VSO's Valuing Volunteering research. The Forum Research Working Group's impact research in Kenya could be expanded, with collaborative proposals developed to complete three to five other country studies in different geographic areas to consolidate evidence-based examples of volunteerism's contribution to the MDGs.

The value added through civic engagement and volunteering should be discussed in the context of the UNDG-led, multi-stakeholder national, global and thematic consultations, as well as other community-led consultation and discussion processes.

Strong impact and engagement in all the countries where the national consultations will be taking place will be critical to place volunteering high up the agenda of UN Member States and UN officials in New York and elsewhere. UNV Field Units will support these consultation processes, particularly through engaging national level constituencies. Good information flow and coordination to link UNV Field Units and national IVCO constituencies will be crucial in order to ensure broad participation. Substantive think pieces and messaging on the relevance of volunteering and civic engagement in the new framework should be made accessible to the national members and partners of IVCOs in order to multiply the voices at the field level.

Furthermore, strong participation in the thematic consultations on inequalities, governance and developmental metrics would be particularly relevant in this regard, but IVCOs are strongly encouraged to input to all the thematic consultations in order to underline the cross-cutting relevance of civic participation across the board. Another opportunity for flagging common concerns on the thematic areas is through inputs to the Global Conversation.

Joint advocacy action at the UN headquarters in New York through the organisation of an informal group of volunteer involving organisations and other "like-minded" organisations will be critical to monitor developments and influence decisions on post-2015 and the Sustainable Development Goals. As the SDG discussion advances and the open working group constitutes itself, opportunities for stakeholder involvement will multiply. In an increasingly crowded environment, it will be increasingly important to take a coordinated and concerted approach.

Another opportunity to exchange views on the new framework and shape a common position is by convening separate side meetings during all upcoming annual or global meetings of IVCOs. As part of the NY stakeholder meeting in March 2012, a number of upcoming gatherings were identified¹¹¹ which could be used for side discussions on common positioning and opportunities for action. As IVCOs connect at HQ levels, it will be equally crucial that the parallel connections are made at the national level through a regular exchange of information, common positioning and joint advocacy. The national members and partners of IVCOs should meet and consult at national level and include other related stakeholders such as national volunteer steering committees to ensure that volunteer involving and civil society organisations have access to the same level of information and can speak with one voice in the lead-up to the national consultations and beyond. Where possible, UNV Field Units will play a brokering and facilitating role in this regard.

IVCOs and the volunteer sector have an historic opportunity to influence a process that will decide how we are going to define progress in the future post 2015. While we embrace the MDGs and accelerated progress to achieve them by 2015, we must highlight and learn from existing contributions of volunteering to development and peace to see what is the best development framework to let this renewable resource shine. Its contribution highlights values of reciprocity, solidarity and well-being, which demonstrate a relational side to development and link well to the foundation for the new development framework based on the fundamental values of sustainability, human rights and equality.

¹¹¹ More information on potential upcoming meetings is available upon request to UNV.

As the State of the World's Volunteerism Report concluded:

Volunteerism is a very old tradition. At the same time it is a novel, and potentially fruitful, approach when thinking about development policy. In a world experiencing unprecedented change, volunteerism is a constant. Even if its forms of expression are evolving, the central values of solidarity and feelings of connectedness with others remain as firm as ever and are universal. People are driven not only by their passions and self-interest but also by their values, their norms and their belief systems. With North-South distinctions becoming increasingly irrelevant, volunteer action is a renewable global asset with huge potential to make a difference in responding to many of the most pressing concerns of the world. It is certainly possible to be optimistic that volunteerism will assume a much higher profile as quality of life is increasingly seen as occupying a place at the core of concerns of all nations. We are increasingly questioning what we value in life. The well-being benefits associated with the volunteering experience, together with bonds of trust and societal cohesiveness that derive from relationships forged through volunteer action, are likely to be at the forefront of such thinking. The moment has come to ensure that volunteerism is an integral part of any new development consensus.¹¹²

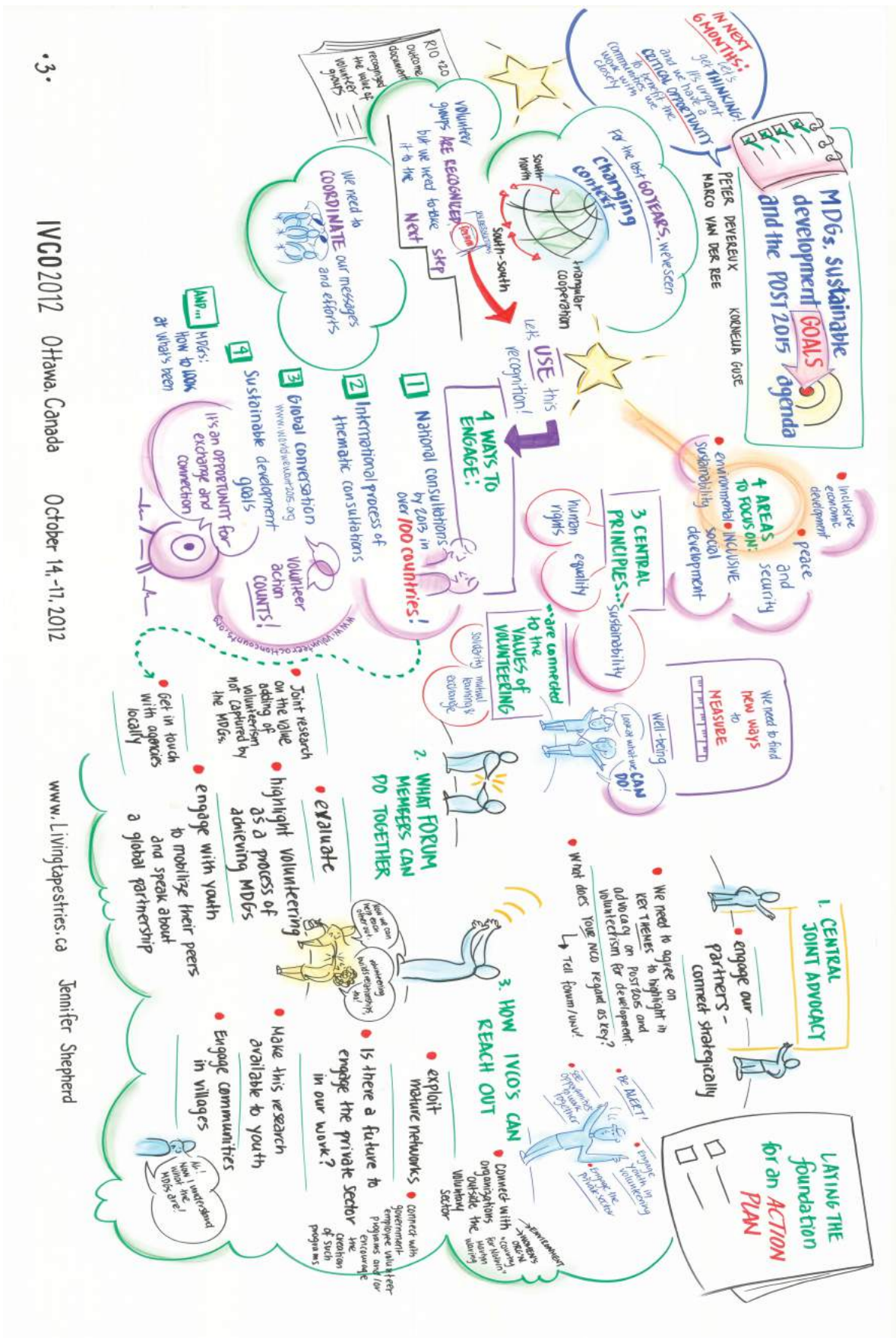
As per the regular format for IVCO discussion papers, the following questions are provided for further discussion at the 2012 IVCO Conference and beyond:

1. What could be central joint advocacy themes for new and increased recognition of volunteerism in the Post 2015 framework?
2. What can Forum members do together to achieve increased recognition of volunteerism in the Post 2015 framework (e.g. research, projects, programs and advocacy efforts, etc.) and how can this be coordinated?
3. How can IVCOs reach out to other constituencies and sectors to find areas of common interest for volunteerism and civic engagement post-2015 and particularly the SDGs?

¹¹² United Nations Volunteers (2011), State of the World's Volunteerism Report, p. 94.

Appendix one

The Big Picture: MDGs, sustainable development and the post 2015 agenda



Appendix two

THE PROCESS LEADING TO THE POST-2015 UN DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

This section provides an overview of the road leading to the post-2015 sustainable development framework.

The first part clarifies the process initiated by the UN Secretary-General within the UN system, highlighting key mechanisms put in place to collect and coordinate inputs and advance consideration of the new framework. The second part emphasises efforts of major civil society stakeholders who advocate for what they think should be taken into account when discussing and formulating the new development framework.

1. UN Coordination

Discussions on the new sustainable development framework have been ongoing for a number of years among politicians and increasingly also among civil society. As mentioned in the 2011 Annual Report of the UN Secretary-General, *Accelerating progress towards the MDGs: options for sustained and inclusive growth and issues for advancing the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015*, “the post-2015 development framework is likely to have the best development impact if it emerges from an inclusive, open and transparent process with multi-stakeholder participation”.¹¹³ The United Nations as the principal multilateral forum is coordinating this multi-stakeholder process by playing a threefold role: convener of national debates, aggregator of ideas and proposals, and advocator for the new targets.¹¹⁴ By building on outreach mechanisms of the UN Millennium Campaign, the Millennium Development Goals Advocacy Group and UN Country Teams, and by involving entities such as the Global Compact¹¹⁵, the UN aims at nurturing relations with key development stakeholders, including at grassroots levels. Through this it is hoped to achieve a credible and legitimate process and a new sustainable development framework whilst creating ownership by governments, private sector and civil society. At this stage, some civil society actors have still expressed concern that there are not clear enough entry points to the process and this was expressed most recently in the Montreal Declaration¹¹⁶ calling for greater involvement and support of civil society to allow its active engagement in the process. This call follows similar statements of concern emerging from a number of civil society organisations and platforms about the Rio+20 outcome document.

The UN system has initiated efforts to coordinate consultations with concerned stakeholders and advance thinking on the Post 2015/new sustainable development framework¹¹⁷. As this is an evolving process, for now we can identify the following initiatives:

¹¹³ 2011 Annual Report of the Secretary-General: *Accelerating progress towards the MDGS: options for sustained and inclusive growth and issues for advancing the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015*, page 19, available at: <http://www.ipc-undp.org/pressroom/files/ipc629.pdf>

¹¹⁴ *The Millennium Development Goals and Beyond: Reflections on an International Development Agenda after 2015*, International Workshop organised by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), in cooperation with German Development Institute (DIE) and the Poverty Reduction, Equity and Growth Network (PEGNet), workshop report, page 8, available at: [http://www.die-gdi.de/CMS-Homepage/openwebcms3.nsf/%28ynDK_contentByKey%29/MPHG-8JB96N/\\$FILE/o%20Report%20on%20Workshop%20on%20MDGs%20beyond%202015%20-%20Bonn-DIE%2021-23%20Nov%202011.pdf](http://www.die-gdi.de/CMS-Homepage/openwebcms3.nsf/%28ynDK_contentByKey%29/MPHG-8JB96N/$FILE/o%20Report%20on%20Workshop%20on%20MDGs%20beyond%202015%20-%20Bonn-DIE%2021-23%20Nov%202011.pdf)

¹¹⁵ 2011 Annual Report of the Secretary-General: *Accelerating progress towards the MDGS: options for sustained and inclusive growth and issues for advancing the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015*, p. 20.

¹¹⁶ Montreal Declaration and Plan of Action, September 2012.

¹¹⁷ *The Future We Want: Post-2015 UN Development Agenda – UN System wide preparations*, March 2012, UNDP internal presentation, unpublished.

1. UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda (UNTT)
2. The post Rio+20 process (Sustainable Development Goals, the intergovernmental open working group on SDGs and the UN Technical Support Team on SDGs)
3. High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post 2015 Development Agenda (and its Secretariat)
4. MDG Task Force of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG)
5. UNDG Post-2015 Consultations (National, Thematic and Global Conversation)

a. UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda

The UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda (UNTT)¹¹⁸ was established by the UN Secretary-General in September 2011 to:

- Assess on-going efforts within the UN system in relation to post 2015;
- Consult with external stakeholders such as civil society, academia and the private sector;
- Develop a system-wide vision and road map to support the deliberations on the post-2015 UN development agenda.

The Task Team, which took up its work in January 2012, brings together senior experts from 60 UN system entities, including all of ECESA Plus and UNDG as well as other international organisations.¹¹⁹ The UNTT is led by the Under-Secretary-General of DESA and the Administrator of UNDP.¹²⁰

The UNTT has evaluated the experience of the MDGs as a framework for development, both in terms of content and processes, reviewed recent development trends and drawn out the implications for a new development framework post-2015.¹²¹ To do that, the UNTT created six working groups to examine aspects critical to its work¹²² and prepared a series of thematic think pieces on issues such as peace and security, migration and human mobility, sustainable urbanisation, and education and skills for inclusive and sustainable development beyond 2015.¹²³ In February 2012, the Task Team organised an Expert Group Meeting¹²⁴ which brought together UN agencies, academics and leaders from civil society, the key messages of which informed the preparation of the Task Team's first report, *Realizing the Future We Want for All*.¹²⁵ The report reviews strengths and weaknesses of the MDG framework, assesses global trends and challenges to be taken into consideration by the post-2015 development agenda and identifies key principles and ideas as well as possible contours of a post-2015 development agenda. It is to serve as a reference for ongoing discussions and broader consultations held by various stakeholders. The report will also inform the work of the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons.¹²⁶

In July 2012, following on the Rio+20 outcome document, the UN Secretary-General further requested the heads of DESA and UNDP to make arrangements for the Task Team to support the intergovernmental open working group to be established to develop a proposal for consideration by the General Assembly on sustainable development goals (SDGs), to "be coherent with and integrated into

¹¹⁸ For more information on the UN System Task Team, see:

http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/untaskteam_undf/

¹¹⁹ The full list of members is available at:

http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/untaskteam_undf/untt_members.pdf

¹²⁰ <http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/about/mdg.shtml>

¹²¹ <http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/about/mdg.shtml>

¹²² More information on the working groups and the issues examined by them is available at:

http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/untaskteam_undf/working_groups.shtml

¹²³ The think pieces are available at:

http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/untaskteam_undf/them_tp.shtml

¹²⁴ More information available at: http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/untaskteam_undf/

¹²⁵ "Realizing the Future We Want for All", UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda, June 2012, available at: http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/untaskteam_undf/untt_report.pdf

¹²⁶ "Realizing the Future We Want for All", UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda, June 2012, pp. 2-3.

the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015”.¹²⁷ The technical support team to assist the open working group will be established under the umbrella of the Task Team in order to ensure coherent support to the processes leading to the post-2015 UN development agenda, including the SDGs.

In recognition of the need to move towards the definition of one unified development agenda for the post-2015 period, with sustainable development at its centre, a main objective for the UNTT in the period ahead will be to help ensure coherence between the work on defining the sustainable development goals (SDGs) and that on the post-2015 UN development agenda.

To do that, the UNTT has a number of interrelated work streams:

- Analytical work in support of the post-2015 UN development agenda, including SDGs;
- Support to the preparation of the annual Secretary-General report, “Accelerating progress ...”, which includes recommendations on the post-2015 development agenda;
- Support to the intergovernmental process on the post-2015 development agenda and the SDGs;
- Support to an effective communications strategy on the post-2015 development agenda;
- Maintaining the inventory of proposals and processes for the post-2015 development agenda, including discussions about SDGs.

b. Post Rio+20 process (Sustainable Development Goals, the Intergovernmental Open Working Group on SDGs and the UN Technical Support Team on SDGs)

In June 2012, the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD)¹²⁸ was held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil to further the implementation of the international agenda on sustainable development. The conference, also commonly called “Rio+20”, marked the twentieth anniversary of the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), which was a milestone in the integration of social, economic and environmental aspects into development. Rio+20 was expected “to secure renewed political commitment for sustainable development, assess the progress to date and the remaining gaps in the implementation of the outcomes of the major summits on sustainable development, and address new and emerging challenges.”¹²⁹ The outcome document of Rio+20 called for a wide range of actions, including:

- Launching a process to establish Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);
- Detailing how the green economy can be used as a tool to achieve sustainable development;
- Strengthening the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and establishing a new forum for sustainable development;
- Promoting corporate sustainability reporting measures;
- Taking steps to go beyond GDP to assess the well-being of a country;
- Developing a strategy for sustainable development financing;
- Adopting a framework for tackling sustainable consumption and production;
- Focusing on improving gender equality;
- Stressing the need to engage civil society and incorporate science into policy;
- Recognising the importance of voluntary commitments on sustainable development.¹³⁰

¹²⁷ United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development Outcome Document: *The future we want*. A/CONF.216/L.1 of 19 June 2012, para. 246.

¹²⁸ Organised pursuant to UN General Assembly Resolution 64/236.

¹²⁹ Conference website: Objective and themes: <http://www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/objectiveandthemes.html>

¹³⁰ See Secretary-General Press Release at the Rio+20 Conference:

http://www.un.org/en/sustainablefuture/pdf/rio20%20concludes_press%20release.pdf

c. The Sustainable Development Goals

One of the major, tangible outcomes of Rio+20 was the commitment to develop a set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The proposal to develop SDGs had initially been introduced by the governments of Colombia, Guatemala and Peru.¹³¹ The 64th Annual UN DPI NGO Conference held in Bonn, Germany in September 2011 and co-organised by the UN Department of Public Information and UNV, provided one of the first opportunities to call on governments to agree on a set of sustainable development goals based on concrete, time-bound targets and indicators.¹³²

The content of the SDGs is being extensively discussed by several constituencies, including civil society¹³³. An overwhelming majority agrees that the overarching purpose of the SDGs should be the eradication of poverty while addressing major challenges and needs such as environmental protection and sustainable consumption and production. Thereby, the SDGs “address the shortcomings and challenges of the ... MDGs.”¹³⁴ In addition to addressing and incorporating in a balanced way all three dimensions of sustainable development and their interlinkages, the SDGs should be underpinned by several principles such as universality; should link to the MDG process; include common but differentiated responsibilities; be measurable; take a rights-based approach and be based on equity¹³⁵; be action-oriented; and focus on priority areas such as food security, energy access (including renewable energy), oceans and integrated water management as suggested by the Stakeholder Forum for a Sustainable Future for BOND-DEG¹³⁶.

d. Intergovernmental Open Working Group on SDGs

At Rio+20, Member States decided to establish an inclusive and transparent intergovernmental process on sustainable development goals open to all stakeholders, with a view to developing global sustainable development goals to be agreed by the General Assembly. An intergovernmental open working group (OWG) will be constituted at the opening of the 67th session of the UN General Assembly and will comprise 30 representatives, nominated by Member States from the five UN regional groups

Also as agreed at Rio+20, once the OWG is constituted, its members will decide on its methods of work, including developing modalities to ensure the full involvement of relevant stakeholders and expertise from civil society, the scientific community and the United Nations system. The initial input to the work of the working group will be provided by the Secretary-General, in consultation with national governments.

The OWG will have to submit a report to the General Assembly at its 68th session (September 2013), containing a proposal for sustainable development goals for consideration and appropriate action.

e. Inter-agency Technical Support Team on SDGs

Furthermore in Rio+20, in order to provide technical support to the process of conceptualising the SDGs and to support the work of the OWG, Member States requested the Secretary-General to ensure all necessary input and support to the OWG from the United Nations system, including through

¹³¹ Rio+20: Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), An updated proposal from the Governments of Colombia, Guatemala and Peru, November 2011, <http://www.uncsd2012.org/content/documents/539Update%20of%20the%20SDG%20Proposal%20ENG%20DEC11.pdf>

¹³² See GA document A/66/750: Declaration of the 64th Annual UN DPI NGO Conference:

<http://www.un.org/wcm/webdav/site/dpingorelations/shared/Final%20Declaration/BonnEng.pdf>

¹³³ See for instance: Bond for International Development (2012), Sustainable Development Goals: Building the Foundations for an inclusive process.

¹³⁴ Earth Summit 2012 website: <http://www.earthsummit2012.org/conference/themes/sdgoalsintro>

¹³⁵ “The Future We Want”, Rio+20 Outcome Document, para. 246.

¹³⁶ Sustainable Development Goals: Building the Foundations for an inclusive process, Bond for International Development, May 2012,

<http://www.stakeholderforum.org/fileadmin/files/Bond%20SDGs%20Paper%20May%202012.pdf>

establishing an Inter-agency Technical Support Team (TST) and expert panels as needed, drawing on all relevant expert advice.

The Technical Support Team will be established under the umbrella of the UN System Task Team, and will be responsible for the following activities:

- Development of the means for initial consultations with national governments on the work of the open working group;
- Preparation of the initial input of the UN system to the working group, in the form of an SG Report;
- Provision of additional inputs and any other technical support at the request of the working group.

While the SDGs are considered a crucial step towards the achievement of sustainable development, the international community also emphasises the importance of linking them to the upcoming MDG review and the current discussions on the post-2015 development framework. The High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons and the intergovernmental open working group are expected to keep each other informed and the panel is then to advise the Secretary-General on how the SDGs relate to the post-2015 framework.

f. High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda (and its Secretariat)

The High-Level Panel (HLP) was launched by the UN Secretary-General on 31 July 2012. It is co-chaired by three heads of state/government: President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono of Indonesia; President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia and Prime Minister David Cameron of the United Kingdom, and is composed of 26 eminent persons.¹³⁷ The panel is expected to advise the Secretary-General on a broad but practical development vision. Its work will be based on the report of the UN System Task Team and is expected to be conducted by engaging and consulting widely with relevant constituencies at national, regional and global levels.¹³⁸ The HLP's work ought to be closely coordinated with the work of the intergovernmental open working group (OWG) tasked to design the Sustainable Development Goals, as both processes are mutually reinforcing.¹³⁹ But the coordination among the two mechanisms still needs to be in place since the OWG still has to be created. The Panel will hold its first meeting at the end of September 2012 in conjunction with the annual high-level debate of the UN General Assembly. Three subsequent high-level meetings of the HLP will take place between October 2012 and May 2013 in the three capital cities of the three co-chairs (i.e. Jakarta, Monrovia and London).

Taking into account the debates and discussions of the four meetings organised for the HLP, the results of the consultations led by the UNDG MDG Task Force (see below) and the engagement of the HLP with the private sector (through the UN Global Compact and the World Economic Forum), and with the academic and research community (through the newly created UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network), the HLP is meant to produce recommendations to be captured in a report to be delivered in May-June 2013. This HLP report will provide the basis for intergovernmental negotiations on the post-2015 development framework. It will also serve as a key input to the Secretary-General's report to the special event on the MDGs and the Post-2015 Development Agenda to be held at the 68th session of the UN General Assembly in September 2013.

The High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda will be serviced by a UN Secretariat (supported in turn by UNDP), to be fully operational by mid October 2012. In June

¹³⁷ Full list of panel members in United Nations Press Release, 31 July 2012, "UN Secretary-General appoints High-Level Panel on Post-2015 Development Agenda", available at: http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/Press%20release_post-2015panel.pdf

¹³⁸ Full terms of references of the High-Level Panel are included in: United Nations Press Release, 31 July 2012, "UN Secretary-General appoints High-Level Panel on Post-2015 Development Agenda".

¹³⁹ United Nations Press Release, 31 July 2012, "UN Secretary-General appoints High-Level Panel on Post-2015 Development Agenda".

2012, the Secretary-General appointed Ms Amina J. Mohammed (Nigeria) as his Special Advisor on Post-2015 Development Planning.¹⁴⁰ The Special Advisor is an ex-officio member of the High-Level Panel and will coordinate the Secretariat work, including the linkages between the UN system and non-Member States and non-UN actors.¹⁴¹

g. MDG Task Force of the United Nations Development Group

The UNDG MDG Task Force¹⁴² was set up by the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) in January 2009 with the objective to move the MDGs forward and to provide direction and operational support to UN Country Teams. The UNDP MDG Task Force is co-chaired by UNDP and UN Women and its membership includes all UNDG members as well as other UN agencies such as the UN Millennium Campaign and a few observers.¹⁴³ In relation to the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda, the UNDG MDG Task Force in close collaboration with the UN System Task Team will, for now, support the UN system in building and leading a strategic coalition of partners that can shape the development agenda through global, broad mobilisation and engagement of government, grassroots, academic, CSO and other stakeholders.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴⁰ <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=42174&Cr=appoint&Cr1>

¹⁴¹ http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/Press%20release_post-2015panel.pdf

¹⁴² For the full 2012 Terms of Reference of the Task Force, see:

<http://www.undg.org/docs/12538/UNDG%20MDG%20Task%20Force%20Terms%20of%20Reference%20-%202012.pdf>

¹⁴³ The full list of members is available at: <http://www.undg.org/index.cfm?P=1294>

¹⁴⁴ 2012 Terms of Reference of the UNDG MDG Task Force.

h. UNDG Post-2015 Consultations (National, Thematic and Global Conversation)

The UN Development Group (UNDG) on behalf of the whole UN system has launched a broad consultation process on the post-2015 development agenda. This consultation process is being serviced by UNDP on behalf of UNDG and includes three levels of consultation:

i. National Consultations

UNDP, as co-chair of the UNDG MDG Task Force, is organising national consultations led at the national level by the UN Resident Coordinators (RCs). The objective of such national consultations is to “stimulate an inclusive debate on a post-2015 development agenda by providing an analytical base, inputs and ideas that build a shared global vision ... with clear recommendations for governments, civil society and broad stakeholders ...”.¹⁴⁵ Expected to run from June 2012 until the end of the first quarter of 2013, the consultations will be organised in up to 100 countries¹⁴⁶ of the global South. The UN RCs are provided with seed resources to organise consultations ensuring the broadest possible participation of national stakeholders, including marginalised groups. Guidance notes from the UNDG have been disseminated among all UN RCs to support them in the organisation of the consultations, to adapt them to the national context and to produce national reports on the outcome of the national post-2015 consultation process. According to the guidance notes, the countries are a representative sample in terms of region, country typology, development challenges and strategic importance to multilateral processes. High income countries will be excluded from this sample but outreach and consultations with them are expected to take place in other forms.¹⁴⁷

UNV is participating in organising and conducting the consultations in some countries. Indeed, under its project “Volunteering and Sustainable Development: Rio+20 Follow-Up, the MDGs and Post 2015 Agenda”, UNV will recruit UN Volunteers to support the consultations in their countries of assignment.¹⁴⁸ Their overall tasks will be to support the RC and UN Country Teams (UNCTs) with multi-stakeholder country consultations; facilitate contributions to national MDG reporting by identifying and sharing good practice on demonstrating the impact of volunteerism and community engagement on MDG achievement; develop capacity of volunteer involving organisations to demonstrate volunteerism and MDG achievement; and facilitate civil society and volunteering organisations’ participation in the national consultation process.¹⁴⁹

The national consultations provide an opportunity for civil society to contribute to the discussions on the post-2015 development framework. Volunteer involving organisations can take advantage of this process to advocate for the manifold contributions of volunteerism and civic engagement to various areas of development and, equally importantly, to the well-being of individuals, communities and society as a whole. The latter aspect might be emphasised in particular given the holistic approach of the new development framework being advocated by various stakeholders and the growing attention to well-being and non-economic indicators as new ways to measure progress and development of societies. Organisations that envisage participating in the discussions and consultations should consult the UNDG Guidelines for Country Dialogues to make themselves familiar with the overall process and criteria as well as the guiding questions for the discussions in order to consider possible input. UNV will also provide support to facilitate the provision of specific contributions with regard to the role of volunteerism and civic engagement in the new development framework.

¹⁴⁵ “Post-2015 Development Agenda: Guidelines for country dialogues”, p. 13,

<http://www.undg.org/index.cfm?P=1628>

¹⁴⁶ For the list of the initial 50 countries see page 37, annex A of the “Post-2015 Development Agenda: Guidelines for country dialogues”. It is now hoped to extend this list to 100 countries.

¹⁴⁷ “Post-2015 Development Agenda: Guidelines for country dialogues”.

¹⁴⁸ Countries at this stage will include the DRC, India, Egypt, Sudan, Turkey, Burkina Faso, Malawi, Mozambique, Niger, Tanzania, Zambia, Timor-Leste, Vietnam, Brazil, and Honduras.

¹⁴⁹ Annex 1.1 of “Post-2015 Development Agenda: Guidelines for country dialogues”. For a detailed description of the UNV2015NC’s assignments please refer to the Description of Assignment also presented in annex 1.1.

ii. Thematic Consultations

In addition to the national consultations, undg (through UNDP) is supporting different UN specialised agencies, funds and programs in the organisation of nine different thematic consultations on the following issues identified of particular relevance for the post-2015 development framework: inequalities, including gender (co-led by UNICEF/UN WOMEN), health (WHO/UNICEF), education (UNESCO/UNICEF), growth and employment (UNDP/ILO), environmental sustainability (UNEP/UNDP), food security and nutrition (FAO/WFP), governance (UNDP/OHCHR), conflict and fragility (UNDP/PBSO/ISDR, tbc.), and population dynamics (UNFPA/UN HABITAT, tbc.).¹⁵⁰ Two additional consultations on issues that emerged strongly from the Rio+20 process will address energy, and water and sanitation, respectively. An additional consultation might take place later in the process (after completion of all the national, thematic and global consultations) to address the developmental metrics. The consultations, which will take place at regional and/or global level, will involve representatives of academia, media, private sector, employers and trade unions and civil society. UN agencies working on the topics will take the lead in organising the consultations.¹⁵¹

The first consultation on growth and employment has already taken place and was held in Tokyo, Japan in May 2012, co-chaired by ILO and UNDP.¹⁵² UNICEF and UN Women are jointly organising the thematic consultation on addressing inequalities in the post-2015 agenda. A call for papers¹⁵³ is being organised to help gather academic and research papers that present sustainable strategies for tackling various aspects and dimensions of inequalities. They will provide input for discussions to be held through the online “Global Conversation” (see below) taking place between mid-2012 to early 2013, as well as a leadership meeting convened during the first quarter of 2013.

iii. Global Conversation

The Global Conversation aims to capture the voice of civil society and citizens with regard to the post-2015 development agenda. It is being facilitated through the web platform The World We Want (www.worldwewant2015.org), which was launched on 1 August 2012. It is a joint initiative of the United Nations and civil society. The platform aims to take advantage of new communication technologies by making use of social networks and mobile technologies to facilitate interaction at international level. UNV will mobilise online volunteers as well as its on-site and online networks to support the Global Conversation.

The outcomes of the national and thematic consultations as well as the Global Conversation will be consolidated in a final report to be launched in 2013. It will inform the special summit on the MDGs and the post-2015 development agenda to be held at the 68th session of the UN General Assembly in September 2013 as well as the work of the High-Level Panel.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁰ Briefing on the post-2015 process, End Poverty 2015 Millennium Campaign.

¹⁵¹ UN agencies co-leading thematic consultations are listed above as indicated in the toolkit for CSO national deliberations of Beyond2015.org.

¹⁵² More information on the meeting and its outcomes is available at: <http://www.ilo.org/global/meetings-and-events/events/setting-development-agenda-beyond-2015/lang--en/index.htm>

¹⁵³ UNICEF/UN Women Call for Papers: http://post2015.files.wordpress.com/2012/06/call-for-papers_addressing-inequalities_final.pdf

¹⁵⁴ Briefing on the post-2015 process, End Poverty 2015 Millennium Campaign.

II. Activities outside the UN System

Discussions on the new development agenda have been taking place all over the world. In addition to the above-mentioned UN-led process and consultations, other intergovernmental organisations, civil society organisations, think tanks and individual governments are also actively engaged in discussing and thinking on the post-2015 development agenda to develop their vision.

The European Commission, on behalf of the European Union (EU), has launched the consultation Towards a Post-2015 Development Framework,¹⁵⁵ to inform the preparation of an EU contribution to the UN process. The call, organised from June to September 2012, is open to a broad range of stakeholders, including civil society.

Similarly, through the House of Commons' International Development Committee, the government of the United Kingdom has launched an inquiry on the post-2015 development agenda.¹⁵⁶ The inquiry aims at collecting papers¹⁵⁷ that provide evidence on lessons learned on the MDGs and various aspects of the future development framework.

Beyond 2015¹⁵⁸, a platform that brings together over 380 civil society organisations active at all levels in more than 80 countries, is a global campaign which aims to contribute to the creation of a post-2015 development framework. The campaign seeks "to create a civil society consensus around a minimum standard of legitimacy for a post-2015 framework, both in terms of the process and the framework itself."¹⁵⁹ In order to achieve that, the platform is encouraging civil society to organise national deliberations on the new development framework with the objective to "reach a minimum consensus on the potential content of a post-2015 global agenda", "to amplify the voices of people directly affected by poverty ..." and "to influence national governments and intergovernmental processes ..."¹⁶⁰. To help civil society in organising and facilitating the deliberations, a toolkit¹⁶¹ was developed jointly by Beyond 2015, Global Call Against Poverty (GCAP) and the Millennium Campaign. According to the toolkit, the outcomes of the deliberations are to feed into the UN-led national consultations. This process might also be of interest to volunteer involving organisations.

The Overseas Development Institute (ODI) is actively involved in the debate about the new development framework. It has launched the web portal Post2015.org to gather information on key events, news and research on the emerging agenda. Furthermore, ODI itself contributes to discussions and advancing reflection on this topic through discussion and research papers.¹⁶²

The Institute of Development Studies (IDS) has equally published a series of papers on various aspects of the post-2015 agenda¹⁶³, including an emphasis on the contribution that well-being could provide to a new framework. They suggested, for example, "3D human wellbeing shifts our focus beyond incomes and narrow human development indicators to take account of what people can do and be, and how they evaluate what they can do and be. Human wellbeing is three-dimensional (3D): it takes account of material wellbeing, subjective wellbeing and relational wellbeing."¹⁶⁴

¹⁵⁵ More information on the consultation is available in the Call for Papers at:

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/how/public-consultations/towards_post-2015-development-framework_en.htm

¹⁵⁶ Inquiry available at: <http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/international-development-committee/news/mdgs/>

¹⁵⁷ The deadline of submission is 5 October 2012.

¹⁵⁸ <http://www.beyond2015.org/>

¹⁵⁹ <http://www.beyond2015.org/what-we-want>

¹⁶⁰ See Beyond 2015 Toolkit for national deliberations, pp. 2 and 6, available at:

<http://www.beyond2015.org/sites/default/files/B2015%20Toolkit.pdf>

¹⁶¹ Available at: <http://www.beyond2015.org/sites/default/files/B2015%20Toolkit.pdf>

¹⁶² A full list of resources produced by ODI is available at: <http://www.odi.org.uk/work/programmes/growth-poverty-inequality/topics/details.asp?id=625&title=mdgs-2015-beyond>

¹⁶³ A selection of papers is available at: <http://www.ids.ac.uk/search>

¹⁶⁴ McGregor, J.A. and Sumner, A. (2009) 'After 2015: '3D Human Wellbeing'', *IDS In Focus Policy Briefings* 9.2, Brighton: IDS.

The publication *100 Voices: Southern Perspectives on What Should Come After the Millennium Development Goals*, emerges from a joint research project of CAFOD and IDS. The 100 voices research drew on the perspectives of 104 representatives of civil society organisations in 27 developing countries. According to the research, whatever reservations they had about the original MDGs, 87 per cent of the Southern civil society respondents wanted some kind of overarching, internationally agreed framework for development after 2015. Eighty six per cent felt that the process of deciding a new framework would be as important as the framework itself. Respondents stressed the need for an open, participative process, including poor citizens in developing countries. They aim to do further, similar participatory research in 2012-13 to help document Southern perspectives for the post-2015 discussions.

The Berlin Civil Society Center is contributing to the discussions on the post-2015 development agenda through a series of meetings organised under the umbrella of the annual Global Perspectives meetings.¹⁶⁵ In particular, the 2012 annual meeting will focus on development beyond 2015 and a separate conference is planned in late March 2013 to directly involve civil society representatives from developing countries.

The report *No Future without Justice*¹⁶⁶ by the Civil Society Reflection Group has become a topical civil society reference point for considering post-2015. It provides a Framework for Global Sustainability Goals with six core goals: 1. Dignity and Human Rights for All, 2. Promote Equality and Justice, 3. Respect for Nature and the Planetary Boundaries, 4. Building Peace through Disarmament, 5. Foster Fair and Resilient Financial Systems, and 6. Strengthen Democratic and Participatory Governance.

¹⁶⁵ See <http://www.berlin-civil-society-center.org/convening/global-perspectives/>

¹⁶⁶ “No Future Without Justice” Civil Society Reflection Group on Global Development Perspectives, June 2012.

Key references and resources for engagement

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High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons, Terms of Reference of the High-Level Panel are included in: United Nations Press Release, 31 July 2012, "UN Secretary-General appoints High-Level Panel on Post-2015 Development Agenda", http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/Press%20release_post-2015panel.pdf

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