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MDGs - the time to act is now

The real data revolution:
The participation of the poorest people

a multi-stakeholder
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pic: Pierre Lesage

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About Stakeholder Forum

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Outreach is a multi-stakeholder publication on climate change and sustainable development. It is the longest continually produced stakeholder magazine in the sustainable development arena, published at various international meetings on the environment; including the UNCSO meetings (since 1997), UNEP Governing Council, UNFCCC Conference of the Parties (COP) and World Water Week. Published as a daily edition, in both print and web form, Outreach provides a vehicle for critical analysis on key thematic topics in the sustainability arena, as well as a voice of regional and local governments, women, indigenous peoples, trade unions, industry, youth and NGOs. To fully ensure a multi-stakeholder perspective, we aim to engage a wide range of stakeholders for article contributions and project funding.

If you are interested in contributing to Outreach, please contact the team (acutter@stakeholderforum.org or jcornforth@stakeholderforum.org)

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A Life of Dignity for All: Comments on the UN Secretary-General's report

Peter Hazlewood
World Resources Institute

In July, the UN Secretary-General released 'A Life of Dignity for All', his report on accelerating progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and advancing the UN development agenda beyond 2015. This article comments on some of the strengths, weaknesses and key questions from the report's treatment of the post-2015 agenda.

A single, universal development agenda, with sustainability and equity at its core

Perhaps most importantly, A Life of Dignity for All clearly articulates the need to put sustainable development at the core of efforts to eradicate extreme poverty and improve wellbeing—efforts that must integrate economic development, social inclusion and environmental sustainability. Reflecting consistent calls from civil society, it recognises that only a single post-2015 sustainable development agenda informed by a multi-stakeholder consultative process can deliver the transformative change needed to eradicate poverty while respecting the planet's natural limits. Crucially, the report responds to increasingly-significant gaps in the MDG framework, in particular the need to tackle the rising inequality threatening progress on many fronts.

Clear commitment to the four elements of a transformative post-2015 agenda

While global discourse tends to focus on 'the goals', a transformative post-2015 agenda needs a robust and comprehensive framework to translate aspirations into change. The report recognises that, beyond agreed global goals, the agenda needs a compelling and unifying vision; agreed and adequate 'means of implementation'; and a participatory monitoring system to ensure transparency and accountability.

It explains that clear commitments and collaboration are needed to achieve such an agenda, and acknowledges that implementing it will require a wide range of actors working in new combinations.

Synergy with climate issues is underplayed

While the report acknowledges the importance of an international agreement on climate change, it could better explain the potential for greater coherence between the 'development' and 'climate' agendas, how this would especially benefit the poorest and most vulnerable, and should make aid and development massively more effective.

Approach to energy and environment still too narrow

The report underemphasises the importance of clean energy and energy efficiency in delivering development gains and making the transition to low-carbon growth and development pathways.

Similarly, the treatment of environmental challenges presents the environment as a set of distinct resources, but this risks undervaluing intact ecosystems, the services they provide and the livelihoods they support.

As a bright spot, the report recognises both the threats and opportunities of rapid urbanisation. Crucially, it places cities, rural prosperity, and ecosystem services as vital complements to one another. Making such connections will be vital for a successful post-2015 agenda.

The private sector will be crucial

The discussion of the private sector's role in a post-2015 agenda is largely limited to financing. However, the private sector should become a real partner in tackling sustainable development challenges, both in delivering and scaling-up development outcomes and in advocating for development policies and investment.

Indeed, given the private sector's significant roles in health, agriculture, energy, infrastructure and other sectors – as well as businesses' role everywhere in providing decent jobs through fair wages and non-discriminatory employment opportunities – maximising this potential (and curbing bad practices) should be a central feature of the post-2015 agenda.

What to watch for...

- The report calls for Member States to provide clarity on the road forward to agree a single agenda. Will Member States respond and establish a clear timetable and process for a single post-2015 agenda?
- How can leaders of the post-2015 process ensure that the perspectives of the poorest –together with high quality 'ground level' evidence on the reality of poverty—are brought into the debate?
- The report calls for a 'transformative' agenda that is to be universal. But the question remains how to bring governments together and make consensus on a universal agenda achievable? This is a major test for the multilateral system.
- The Secretary-General's report does not outline a specific UN role going forward. How can the UN system most effectively support the intergovernmental negotiation process?

MORE INFO

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See the full report 'A life of dignity for all: accelerating progress towards the Millennium Development Goals and advancing the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015' here: bit.ly/16RUauA

Towards a stand-alone, transformative goal on gender equality, women's rights and women's empowerment

Lakshmi Puri
UN Women

The Millennium Development Goal on promoting gender equality and women's empowerment (MDG 3), and its time-bound targets, have played a critical role in mobilising integrated action to improve the lives of women and girls. While significant gains have been recorded in areas such as girls' access to primary education and women's labour force participation, progress has been uneven. Gender inequality continues to be one of the most pervasive forms of inequality around the world and a serious impediment to the achievement of women's rights and their empowerment. This is why – in the current debate on the post-2015 development agenda – gender equality, women's rights, and women's empowerment must remain central to the discourse. UN Women, along with a growing number of actors, is making a strong call for a stand-alone goal on achieving gender equality, women's rights and women's empowerment.

In a position paper on the issue, 'A Transformative stand-alone goal on achieving gender equality, women's rights and women's empowerment: imperatives and key components,' UN Women argues that this is essential if the post-2015 development framework is to be truly comprehensive and transformational. Embedded in this goal must be actions that address the structural foundations of gender-based inequality and robust monitoring frameworks with timely and reliable data. UN Women calls for an integrated approach that addresses three critical target areas:

- 1. Freedom from violence against women and girls**, with concrete actions to eliminate the debilitating fear and experience of violence;
- 2. Gender equality in the distribution of capabilities:** knowledge, good health, sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights of women and adolescent girls, as well as gender equality in access to resources and opportunities, including land, decent work and equal pay to build women's economic and social security;
- 3. Gender equality in decision-making power** in public and private institutions, in national parliaments and local councils, the media and civil society, in the management and governance of firms, and in families and communities.

Gender-specific targets must be systematically integrated into other goals in order to ensure their meaningful achievement, by addressing specific forms of gender-based discrimination that limit prospects for eradicating poverty, creating sustainable consumption and production patterns, promoting transparent and accountable governance, ensuring access to high quality education and health care, and ensuring sustainable water and energy access, while protecting the environment.

The post-2015 development agenda must be based on existing international commitments, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Beijing Platform for Action.

Evidence abounds on the centrality of gender equality for the realisation of peace and security, human rights, and sustainable development across its three dimensions – economic, social and environmental. A 2010 study by India's Bina Agarwal demonstrates that a higher proportion of women participants in local institutions of forest governance is related to significantly greater improvements in forest conditions and conservation. Similarly, a recent report by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) provides evidence that ensuring women's access to and control over agricultural assets is fundamental for achieving food security and sustainable livelihoods.

In this regard, UN Women welcomes the many affirmations of the centrality of gender equality and women's empowerment to sustainable development and to the new development framework. The Rio+20 outcome, the outputs from the post-2015 process so far, the Secretary-General's report, and numerous voices from civil society, academia, and think tanks have all emphasised this point.

Similarly, at the sessions of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, Member States have repeatedly made the linkage between progress in gender equality and progress in other thematic priorities for sustainable development. They will discuss gender equality and women's empowerment at a session in February 2014. All this attests to an increasing momentum of support for gender equality, women's rights and women's empowerment in the future development framework.

Moving forward, UN Women will continue to engage with Member States, the UN system, civil society, the private sector and other stakeholders to ensure that the rhetoric on gender equality is translated into concrete, gender-responsive commitments at the level of goals, targets and indicators in the post-2015 development framework and, most importantly, in concrete implementation in the lives of women and girls around the world ■

MORE INFO

The UN Women report 'A Transformative stand-alone goal on achieving gender equality, women's rights and women's empowerment: imperatives and key components' can be found here: <http://bit.ly/1cfWU3x>

The Millennium Development Goals will lift people out of poverty for good, but the time to act is now

Justine Greening

Secretary of State for International Development, UK

Thirteen years ago, the international community came together to make a promise to the world: that using our resources and expertise we would work hand in hand to eradicate extreme hunger, improve access to education, reduce child mortality and combat disease.

The years since the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were created have seen some of the greatest development gains in history and the UK is proud to have played its part. This year we will meet the target of investing 0.7 per cent of our Gross National Income in international development, and we are the first G8 country to do so. British investment in international development saves three million people from poverty each year. In the last year alone we have supported 5.9 million children to attend primary school and enabled 33.4 million people to hold their authorities to account and have a say in their community's development. In this way, UK funding is lifting people out of poverty for good, helping them to live more healthy and prosperous lives.

But we all know that there is much still to do. UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon's report 'A Life of Dignity for All' calls us to accelerate progress on the MDGs – we must redouble our efforts to meet the Goals, to make good on our promise.

And we, the international community, must come together again to renew our promise to the world, to build on the MDGs and to go beyond them. On 1 January 2016, when the current MDGs expire, we need an agreed set of goals and targets that are as inspiring as the MDGs have been, that finish the job they started, and which include issues and concerns that go beyond the MDGs but are just as crucial for eradicating poverty within a generation.

I welcome the Secretary-General's bold and compelling call to leave no one behind and, specifically, that no target should be considered met unless it is met by all income and social groups. This echoes a proposal from the High Level Panel on the post-2015 development agenda, which the British Prime Minister David Cameron Co-Chaired. This concept must underpin the post-2015 development agenda, as it is the only way we can reach the poorest and most marginalised people on the planet.

Across the developing world, girls and women continue to bear a disproportionate burden of poverty. If we have a situation where half the population is locked out, prevented from being productive and from pursuing opportunities,



pic: Oxfam International

we do not have a sustainable path to development. We also know it is possible to take effective practical action that enables girls and women to fulfil their potential. It is vital that the post-2015 development agenda responds to this, and ensures women have a voice, choice and control over their lives.

The recent UN Development Group consultation report 'A Million Voices: The World We Want' shows that the MDGs will remain just as valid in the post-2015 agenda. But this report also points to other issues that will need to be in the next set of goals: freedom from fear and violence, the need for honest and accountable governments, and access to justice. These issues matter to people just as health, education and having a job do. As well as being the building blocks of sustainable development they are development outcomes in themselves. As we construct the post-2015 goals we must continue to consult widely and, in particular, listen to what people themselves tell us is important, just as the High Level Panel did.

We must build a development agenda focused on poverty that puts sustainable development at its core. We must build a framework that brings together the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, that leaves no one behind and that eradicates extreme poverty within a generation.

Over the next two years we have the task of turning hopes and aspirations into actions and commitments. The MDGs have shown us how we can do this, and as we accelerate our progress towards them, we must agree a new set of goals deserving of the needs and sheer untapped potential of people around the world. They are telling us what they want – it is our responsibility to make it happen ■

The real data revolution: The participation of the poorest people

Dr. Andrea Rigon
CAFOD

Everyone seems to agree that one of the problematic issues with the MDGs is the poor data available and the shortcomings of measuring progress largely through national averages. The UN Secretary-General's post-2015 High Level Panel's call for a data revolution has therefore been widely welcomed by both civil society and influential governments. The demand for disaggregated data according to different social groups, reinforcing the powerful idea that in a post-2015 framework goals cannot be considered met unless achieved for everyone, are certainly important steps towards 'leaving no one behind'.

But how is this going to work in practice? I've recently heard a lot about how the 'data revolution' should focus on getting full databases, more comprehensive surveys, and better communication and information technologies to gather and manage data efficiently. In other words, it is an extractive process of data collection about the poor – a process that some vulnerable groups (e.g. Indigenous Peoples) may even consider as an attempt to extend the state's control over them. While I agree that data is important, I wonder if there is another way to gather it and ensure that the understanding and evaluation of development progress reflect the realities of people living in poverty.

The problems with current development interventions identified by some of the poorest communities in the 29 countries covered by the Participate research initiative would have not been captured by better disaggregated data.

Research undertaken in rural Uganda for COMPASS 2015, one of the 18 projects that make up the Participate initiative, reveals that, while children with disabilities may go to school, they face several challenges. For example, poorly designed school buildings and toilets expose those with mobility problems to hazards and the lack of trained teachers for those with special needs undermine their learning. 'People with disabilities suffer more in rest rooms; the latrines constructed are not favourable to them and further expose these children to poor personal hygiene. These are problems that the Government needs to put into consideration when it's building schools, even in the villages' (Rose, 53, farmer, Alwa, Uganda). Enrolment of these students may contribute to MDG targets but the inadequate education they receive further reinforces their marginalisation. In this case, disaggregated data will simply show that children with disability attend school like any other child.

Similarly, disaggregated data would not capture the poor quality of education which was raised as a top priority by people living in poverty across various countries. In rural areas, people living in poverty make considerable efforts to send their children to school and expect this investment

to be worthwhile. They argued that without enough trained teachers, packing students into an ill-equipped classroom wastes their time, particularly when they could be contributing to the livelihood of the family through farm work. In remote communities of the Philippines inhabited by minorities, COMPASS 2015 research participants explained that appointed teachers subcontract their jobs to unqualified local youth and go back to the cities. It is only through the direct involvement of students, parents and teachers in the process of monitoring progress that issues such as the poor quality of education can be identified and solutions sought.

There are also many other examples of important issues that cannot be captured by the current focus of the data revolution. For example, in Mexico, indigenous pregnant women are forced to visit a doctor under the blackmail that they would lose other economic support if they do not. However, this involves long and risky travels to the clinic where they are discriminated against and treated without dignity. Disaggregated data may indicate that Indigenous Peoples have access to health services but their experiences of discrimination would not be recognised.

To address these issues, we need to work with those living in poverty to set goals and targets, ensure they are equal participants in implementation, and at the centre of participatory monitoring and accountability mechanisms.

While data presented in accessible and usable ways can be a tremendous tool to hold governments accountable, a more important strategy is through the direct involvement of those living in poverty in the monitoring and evaluation of policy interventions. Their participation can reveal the mechanisms of exclusion and help prevent poorly designed and badly targeted projects. Leaving no one behind means including the poorest people in the planning of development interventions. I hope the post-2015 negotiations over next two years will further expand on the spaces for participation provided by the UN in the past year. The real data revolution will happen through the participation of those living in poverty ■

MORE INFO

The Participate report 'Work with us: How people and organisations can catalyse sustainable change' can be found here: bit.ly/180njy1

Dr. Andrea Rigon, is Research Coordinator for the COMPASS 2015 & Participate initiatives at the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD)

A holistic approach to an environmental sustainability agenda

Mónica López Baltodano
Centro Humboldt, Nicaragua



We believe that we should prioritise the post-2015 intergovernmental process as it represents a real moment for global policy and decision-making.

We must ensure that government representatives from our region assume their responsibilities as official delegates, analyse the policy approaches prevalent in our region, and identify the country groupings that support the issues. All these issues must be discussed within the different civil society groups who work on climate, risk management and environmental sustainability.

We have identified the need to draw up an agenda on environmental sustainability, with an emphasis on key issues such as climate change, biodiversity, drinking water, food security and sovereignty, nutrition, the impact of extractive industries and energy.

That is why, in the various networks in which we work, we are encouraging a holistic approach, which will address all areas that are being adversely affected by the impact of global warming. However, it is not very clear how to “mainstream” the challenges posed by climate change in discussions on sustainable development, so this must be a priority in future talks.

We need to think more creatively, and this reasoning also applies to issues such as biodiversity, integrated risk management and gender equity – issues that are also struggling to be integrated in negotiations on sustainable development in a cross-cutting way.

Listening to local views

As part of a push by the National Roundtable for Risk Management (Mesa Nacional para la Gestión de Riesgo – MNGR) and the Regional Coordination for Risk Management (Concertación Regional para la Gestión de Riesgo – CRGR), Nicaragua and the region have been working on a report that will give ‘Views from the Frontline’ (VFL). Climate networks in Nicaragua have also decided to expand the focus of their

work, from climate change to environmental sustainability. 2015 is an important year. Consequently, we hope that the post-2015 process will contribute to the effective adoption of a fair and binding global climate instrument to be agreed by 2015 and in force by 2020.

We also recognise that, despite the importance of the global agenda, national and regional networks need to link this to local processes and actions. Thus, the adoption of the global agenda should not be at the expense of community, national and regional agendas. Achieving the active involvement of civil society in the post-2015 agenda will require deeper capacity building. At the same time, the breadth and complexity of the process to define the post-2015 agenda has overwhelmed the current capacity of civil society to coordinate and act in consensus.

To date, we believe that the consultation has really been inadequate, both in terms of theme and location. Many of the consultations have been carried out through “existing global networks”, which are not necessarily representative of national issues. Much more needs to be done to give space to the contributions of local and grassroots organisations.

We are planning to conduct an analysis of the impact of the MDGs in Nicaragua but we believe that some of the key principles that should underpin a new global development agenda are: climate justice, gender equity, redistribution of wealth and environmental sustainability ■

MORE INFO

Centro Humboldt was created in 1990. It engages in climate change advocacy at local, national, regional and international level, and within alliances in Nicaragua. Its objectives include working on environmental public policies and promoting efficient environmental management. Centro Humboldt seeks to empower different areas of civil society to provide information, to help build capacity and to carry out monitoring and research on environmental impact.

The organisation is a member of various networks, including Climate Action Network Latin America (CANLA), the Building Bridges Initiative (La Iniciativa Construyendo Puentes), Accra Caucus on Forests and Climate Change, the Nicaraguan Alliance for Climate Change (ANACC) and the Central America Forum on Climate Change. www.humboldt.org.ni

This article was written by Mónica López Baltodano and first appeared in *The World We Want To See: Perspectives On Post-2015*. It is reproduced with permission of Christian Aid.

Read the full report here: <http://bit.ly/15n3Ffe>

Joined at the hip: Post-MDGs and SDGs

Taina Hanhikoski

Kehys, the Finnish NGO Platform to the EU

The post-Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) processes have been simultaneously discussed for some time now. When talking about the MDGs and what comes after them, there has been strong consensus that the future goals need to take issues of environmental sustainability into consideration. Similarly, the Rio+20 outcome document 'The Future We Want' iterates that in order to achieve sustainable development, poverty eradication must be at the core. The outcome document also emphasises the need for coordination and coherence between the two processes, which is a sentiment also generally shared by actors involved in the post-MDG process.

Despite the clear consensus to converge these two tracks, this has not fully translated from words into action. While the SDG track is being negotiated by the General Assembly's Open Working Group (OWG), following an extensive process at the beginning of the year to establish it, the post-MDG track has seen a series of UN-led consultations and reports, starting in 2011. Going forward, the question remains as to whether these two tracks will be dealt with as one and if so, both when and how this will happen.

It would be useful to merge these two tracks as soon as it is feasible (without losing the momentum of the post-MDG consultations and the work done to date by the OWG). Whether it is the post-MDG track that is merged into the SDG process, or vice versa, remains to be resolved. However, the fact is that the longer these two processes run in parallel, the higher the risk of duplication, misconnection, depletion of resources and confusion characterising the post-2015 framework. Delaying convergence will also increase the siloed-thinking which sees environmental issues and development issues a separate (economic issues being a third silo). It also increases the possibility of having two completely different understandings of what needs to be done in order to tackle global issues and how. This is something the world cannot afford.

Discussing whether sustainable development and poverty eradication should be dealt with together or whether they are two separate processes with some interlinkages is actually like wondering whether ying should go with yang or whether human rights should be universal. Poverty eradication

is not possible unless it is sustainable, and sustainable development will not happen unless it tackles poverty. It is impossible for people to flourish unless there is a planet which to flourish on and it is equally difficult to get the planet to flourish unless there are people who have the knowledge, resources and opportunities to enable this. These two issues are joined by the hip (and by the rest of their bodies too); we have just chosen to treat them as separate.

Intergovernmental decision-making on these issues must be coordinated, demonstrate political will and ambition, and provide other stakeholders (private sector, civil society, academia etc.) with a clear roadmap and vision as to how issues affecting us will be solved together. We need states – as well as regional entities such as the European Union, African Union, International Monetary Fund, OECD etc. – to show leadership by demonstrating how they are taking these issues forward and making all their policies work towards both poverty eradication and sustainable development in a joined-up way.

Sustainable environment is not an issue just for environmentalists, poverty eradication is not an issue just for the development community, and the economy is not an issue just for economists. We need policy coherence (for development) to pool our resources and make this world sustainable for both people and the planet ■



Palawan Biodiversity Conservation Project, Philippines

pic: Trees ForTheFuture

Network for South-South cooperation presses for multidimensional poverty measures post-2015

Sabina Alkire

Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative

“South-South cooperation offers real, concrete solutions to common development challenges.”

So said UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon last week, as he stressed the importance of cooperation among developing countries in the run-up to this week’s high level meetings on the post-2015 development agenda.

A real, concrete example of South-South cooperation could be seen yesterday at a side-event held by the Multidimensional Poverty Peer Network: a growing body of developing-country governments who have joined together to share their experiences of adopting multidimensional poverty measures at the national or regional level.

The Network used the side-event to urge post-2015 actors to include a multidimensional poverty index (MPI) alongside the \$1.25/day income measure, to track progress towards non-monetary goals – nationally, and globally. The clear message from the Ministers who spoke was that focusing on ending income poverty alone will mean that policies addressing other deprivations that batter poor people – such as undernutrition, low quality schooling, poor housing, and sanitation – will be overlooked, and successes under-celebrated.

The MPI 2015+, which builds on the global MPI that has been published in UNDP’s Human Development Reports since 2010, would enable policymakers to identify and address interconnected deprivations more effectively, and celebrate their achievements when they target the very poorest of the poor. No wonder countries ranging from Colombia to China, Mexico to Morocco, and Nigeria to the Philippines, are getting behind it.

The MPI 2015+ would be designed as a headline index, with indicators to support the final post-2015 agenda. It could be used alongside national MPIs which reflect country-specific priorities and values. By calculating poverty from the household level upwards, the MPIs would reveal who is poor – to which regions and ethnic or other groups they belong – and also how they are poor: whether they lack adequate sanitation or electricity, quality education, nutrition, or other services at the same time. And because it measures deprivations directly, the MPI2015+ would – unlike a \$1.25/day measure – map subnational patterns, to shed light on the inequalities among poor people, enabling policymakers to target the most marginalised and vulnerable.

What’s more, the MPI reflects improvements quickly, providing policymakers with positive political incentives to ensure that there really is ‘no one left behind’.

The Multidimensional Poverty Peer Network was launched in Oxford, UK in June 2013 by President Juan Manuel Santos of Colombia and Ministers or Vice-Ministers from around the world. It connects the growing number of policymakers engaged in exploring or implementing multidimensional poverty measures based on the Alkire Foster method developed at the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI), an economic research centre at the University of Oxford’s Department for International Development.

Established by Colombia, Mexico and OPHI in response to overwhelming demand for information on implementing national and regional multidimensional measures, the Network enables early adopters of such measures to share their experiences directly with countries exploring the possibility. Through just the kind of South-South learning process extolled by Ban Ki-moon last week, countries such as Colombia – which adopted a national MPI in 2011 – are providing advice to peer network members on how to design a measure and put in place the institutional arrangements to sustain it.

Policymakers from Mexico and Brazil, for example, recently visited Vietnam, where they presented their experiences of using multidimensional poverty measures to set poverty reduction targets and draft social welfare policies. Vietnam announced plans to adopt a national MPI in June 2013, and seeks input from fellow Network members.

Already with more than 20 member countries and institutions on every continent, from Angola to Iraq to Peru, the Network is expanding rapidly. As Ban Ki-moon said, “Developing countries are turning to each other for lessons on innovative policies and schemes to address pressing development challenges.”

As the post-2015 development agenda takes shape – and with research showing startling discrepancies between income poverty and multidimensional poverty trends – what could be more pressing than adopting a framework that measures the many faces of poverty? As the Network shows us, we can set our sights higher than achieving zero income poverty; over the next 15 years, we can – and must – put an end to acute multidimensional poverty as well ■

MORE INFO

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SDGs, South-South cooperation, and climate change

Déborah B. L. Farias and Peter Dauvergne
University of British Columbia

In early 2013, the UN General Assembly passed a resolution calling for ‘a sustainable development financing strategy’ and a move toward ‘options for a mechanism to promote the development, transfer and dissemination of clean and environmentally sound technologies.’ South-South cooperation offers an opportunity to connect Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to mechanisms of climate change adaptation and mitigation.

South-South financing to mitigate and adapt to climate change is of unquestionable importance. But to date South-South financial actions on climate change are narrow and involve few countries. Many developing countries are keen to collaborate among themselves to find common solutions; few, however, have the capacity to sustain actual South-South financial cooperation. To some extent this has been changing over the past decade as countries like China, Brazil, and India become “donors” and “resource providers” to the global South (even while remaining recipients of official development assistance). Not only do these states have more funds to invest, but even more importantly for climate change mitigation and adaptation, they are rapidly developing green technologies. But, as with South-South relations more generally, financing is only one of many mechanisms of cooperation.

Technical cooperation is one of the more promising ways to foster South-South collaboration. Here, the main object of exchange is knowledge. It may simply comprise sharing policy successes and best practices. But it can also involve joining forces to address common problems. Technical cooperation tends to involve relatively little funding: often just airfares, accommodation, and expenses for delegates. Most of the experts are civil servants, and not external (and expensive) consultants. The “cost” of developing best practices and policies is also minimal, as local governments design these first for domestic purposes. South-South technical cooperation, then, is not a “reproduction” of Northern “aid”, with conditionalities and a more top-down approach.

South-South technical cooperation on climate change is growing quickly. One example is the Pacific and Caribbean Small Islands Developing States Network on Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Management. Its goal is to find appropriate solutions and best practices to respond to climate change and natural disasters by exchanging ideas and comparing experiences. A second example is the partnership by Costa Rica, Benin, and Bhutan for Sustainable Tourism, Sustainable Agriculture,



Cuerci National Park, in Central Costa Rica
pic: Ecoagriculture Partners/www.nathandappen.com

Biodiversity Conservation, and Energy Efficiency. These examples demonstrate the global reach of South-South cooperation to mitigate climate change. Yet, as with South-South technical cooperation as a whole, because these involve few expenditures – and because actions and results are difficult to track and quantify – researchers and policymakers tend to overlook these cooperation efforts.

As Jeffrey Sachs emphasises, emerging economies, especially China, India, and Brazil, will need to be SDG leaders for any chance of global sustainability. If SDGs manage to gain the prominence of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), it seems likely that developing states will continue to frame South-South financing for climate change as sustainable development – and not as climate change mitigation and adaptation. Establishing financing mechanisms to promote sustainable development is certainly a valuable contribution to managing climate change; yet we should not lose sight of the importance of South-South technical cooperation as a way of transferring environmental technologies and achieving Sustainable Development Goals ■

MORE INFO

Deborah BL Farias is a PhD candidate at the University of British Columbia’s (UBC) Political Science Department; previously she worked for the International Advisory for the State of Ceará Governor’s Office (Brazil) and the University of Fortaleza’s Faculty of Law. Peter Dauvergne is a professor of international relations and the director of UBC’s Liu Institute for Global Issues.

Towards SDGs that promote sustainable capital markets?

Dr Steve Waygood
Aviva Investors

How can the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) promote sustainable capital markets? The task is far from straight forward, and requires consideration of capital markets, sustainable development and the SDGs process. These are three notoriously complicated areas, and weaving them together creates complexity on a level almost greater than the legendary Gordian Knot. Untying them is a real challenge.

With this in mind, we read the report of the UN Secretary-General's High Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda (HLP) carefully. Keen to find out its recommendations on how the huge power of markets can be harnessed for sustainable development, we were extremely pleased to see such a strong reference to promoting integrated sustainability reporting. This transparency is critical for markets and will help ensure better – more sustainable – investment decisions are made on behalf of ordinary savers and investors. The report is also very clear that the private sector in general and the finance sector in particular have an important role to play, which is also welcome.

However, we were very disappointed that the report fails to set out how the finance sector itself will be harnessed. As capitalism provides the vast majority of the goods and services enjoyed by the global population, neglecting the capital markets will undermine the entire process. While capitalism has delivered some real improvements to global living standards, welfare and poverty reduction – the capital markets have also been rightly blamed for motivating short term profit maximising behaviour by companies that exploits future generations and undermines sustainable development. I would have liked to see some analysis around how to better harness the profoundly positive elements of the capital markets to finance sustainable development, while reducing its propensity to undermine long-term responsible behaviour by companies.

We have a number of specific observations on the illustrative goals and targets within the high level panel report:

First, while integrated reporting is promoted in the text, it is only loosely referenced in illustrative Goal 9, and only then that major companies should publish and use economic, social and environmental accounts. This is not the same as integrated sustainability reporting embedded

in the report and accounts. Surprisingly, this is also the first reference to an active role for the private sector.

Second, Goal 10 relates to 'ensuring good governance and effective institutions.' However, it makes no reference at all to corporate governance. This oversight is an extraordinary missed opportunity to promote integrated corporate governance (as well as integrated reporting) by updating national corporate governance codes.

Our third key issue is Goal 12, which aims to 'create a global enabling environment and catalyse long term finance', but unfortunately includes nothing that will achieve this objective. It may not be within the HLP's terms of reference to correct the many distortions in the pricing system on fisheries, freshwater, climate change and natural resource depletion by setting out specific policy measures that will internalise the negative corporate externalities on society and the environment onto the cash flows of companies. However, I expected to see at least some understanding that these things would need to happen in order to ensure that the price mechanism works as it should. Arguably, target 12b gets closest but needs to be updated as follows: implementing reforms to ensure the sustainability and stability of the global financial services system and encourage stable private foreign direct and portfolio investment flows of capital.

In addition, the critical role of multinational companies in ensuring that the companies in their global supply chain adhere to the standards and norms such as those set out by the International Labour Organization is missing.

I appreciate that these were only ever intended to be illustrative goals and targets in order to catalyse our collective thinking. I hope that this contribution is of use. However, we make no pretence at having successfully cut that knot. This will require far more debate and a much more active intervention on this agenda from investors, companies, policy makers and civil society.

With the intention of playing a proactive and positive role, and helping to inform this debate, Aviva Investors will be working with Stakeholder Forum to run a governance event in New York later this year to coincide with the December session of the Open Working Group on SDGs. Our event will be aimed at UN negotiators and explain to them how the capital markets are structured, how they relate to sustainable development and the importance of integrated sustainability reporting – which has been our focus since before Rio+20, which usefully endorsed our broad aims within paragraph 47 of the outcome document ■

The necessary convergence between post-MDGs and SDGs

Leida Rijnhout
ANPED

Uchita de Zoysa
Centre for Environment and Development

Ashish Kothari
Kalpavriksh

The Rio+20 Summit decided to develop a set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and stated that the process to develop them needed to be coordinated and coherent with the efforts underway to consider a post-Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) framework. A lack of convergence would mean that separate processes could end up with “green MDGs” or “equitable SDGs” rather than a coherent set of goals based on the principles of equity and ecological sustainability.

The MDGs have helped to build international coordination capacity, brought together public, private and political support for poverty reduction, and stimulated the production of new poverty-related data and additional aid commitments. In some countries, the framework catalysed the creation of tools for civil society and other development actors to participate more effectively. It is important that the post-2015 process – both in its design and its implementation – builds on this momentum to further strengthen the voice of civil society organisations at all levels.

Nevertheless, the MDGs failed to address the root causes of poverty, human rights violations, and unsustainable environmental impacts. It was clear that the MDG approach reduced the concept of “development” to an increase in GDP growth and relied upon the trickle-down effect, with inadequate regard for increasing inequities and ecological damage.

If we are to achieve universal eradication of poverty, social and economic equity, political empowerment, and ecological sustainability, we need a fundamental paradigm shift in our economic logics and actions. To succeed in poverty eradication in the Global South we need to emphasise the overuse of natural resources in the Global North. A drastic reduction of energy, materials, and other consumption of the rich are necessary to protect and safeguard resources for wellbeing and development of the poorer populations and of future generations. The Beyond 2015 European Task Force (CONCORD) is very clear in promoting this new discourse in their publication ‘Putting People and Planet First – Business as Usual is Not an Option’ (April 2013). Hopefully this kind of new thinking will be the base for the future SDGs.

Designing the future framework for the SDGs will be extremely challenging since there are a wide variety of interdependent issues that merit inclusion. It will be important not to stick with a wish list of goals, but

really focus on the most important ones and interconnect them. Vision and courage to identify and tackle the key challenges faced by the world today, via their root causes, in a comprehensive manner is an absolute requirement for the world’s decision makers.

The starting point of the SDG/post-2015 framework must be based on the two key concepts in the most frequently cited definition of sustainable development (Brundtland Report): basic needs and limitations of the environment to meet present and future needs, with the addition of or emphasis on further elements of equity and governance. Hence the SDGs are not so much about new commitments, but primarily about ambitious means and targets and strong political will to implement existing international commitments made since 1992.

The proposed framework

For the achievement of sustainable societies, where wellbeing, justice and dignity for all is secured, lifestyles within the earth’s ecological limits are established, people and communities are fully empowered in decision-making, equality is the norm, and life in all its forms and expressions is treated with respect, we propose that the post-2015 framework be structured as follows:

1. An overarching, global consensus stating the vision of sustainable development or wellbeing, and the principles and values that should guide goals, policies and actions at all levels;
2. A set of global goals challenging the status quo and addressing key challenges, including poverty eradication, meeting basic needs, and universal health and learning opportunities achieved through ecologically sustainable and equitable ways;
3. Democratic mechanisms for governance of the framework, monitoring its implementation, and ensuring accountability of those responsible;
4. Clear sources of financing for the framework, including innovative ones;
5. Coherence checks with other (inter)national policies and institutions;
6. Indicators of progress that go beyond GDP and the Human Development Index (HDI), and include aspects of wellbeing such as health, access to basic needs, learning, satisfaction and happiness; and
7. Transparency and access to information, and forums for active participation ■

A water wise goal

Karin Lexén

Stockholm International Water Institute

The Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI) shares the perspective of the High Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda and the Open Working Group (OWG) on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); we must not lose sight of achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). We should move into 2015 with the seamless agility of relay team members, connecting backwards and propelling forwards at the same time. We believe that encouraging collective action through a single converged process is the key to creating the SDGs.

One of the most central themes on the agenda is that of water. This is due to its unbreakable link to almost every aspect of our existence on earth. Energy is another equally important theme, and in order to coordinate over the right water-energy related issues, it will be given special

visibility on World Water Day and at the 2014 World Water Week in Stockholm.

The OWG noted in their most recent report that 'Water scarcity and water variability...and therefore sustainable water management need to feature prominently in the post-2015 development agenda.' They note that consultations to date show, 'broad support for a dedicated water sustainable development goal.' We believe that in order to secure a fair balance between the competing demands for water within global development frameworks a dedicated water goal is essential.

We must care for our world with local solutions to global problems, and identify and respond to the pivotal role water has to play in addressing the challenges of our shared future.

Stockholm Statement 2013 - Stockholm International Water Institute and the World Water Week

As an outcome of broad consultations prior to and during the 2013 World Water Week in Stockholm, we call upon the United Nations and its Open Working Group to propose a Sustainable Development Goal on Water.

Water is at the core of sustainable global development and is a cross cutting resource. Within the post-2015 development agenda, water should be considered and integrated into all relevant areas, such as energy and food security. Given the centrality of water for individuals, ecosystems and economic development, water is a powerful tool for cooperation across borders, sectors and communities. A dedicated goal on water is necessary for a world where all people can live in safety and dignity.

By the year 2030 the following should have been achieved:

A doubling of global water productivity

The demand for water resources is increasing dramatically and this presents significant development risks. Growing population and economies coupled with urbanisation and climate change, exert mounting pressure on water resources all over the world.

To meet the demand, there is great potential to use water more productively and derive significant benefits from cross-sectoral coordination. Allocating water equitably and efficiently within ecological constraints will require improved management of water quality, use and reuse of water resources. These measures will help manage the increased demand – allowing the required growth in the provision of food, energy, goods and services, underpinning socio economic development.

Through stronger and smarter incentives for water use and innovative governance, it is possible to globally double the value from each litre of water used.

A realisation of the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation

Investing in water and sanitation is a moral imperative, a basic requirement for safety and dignity and is compelling from an economic reality.

Women and children often carry a disproportionate share of the burdens of water provision and lack of safe sanitation with serious repercussions on their health, security and education as well as their opportunities for development and prosperity.

Political leadership and innovative governance are of critical importance to the realisation of the human right to safe water and sanitation.

Increased resilience to water related disasters

Water is the fundamental link between the climate, the human society and the natural environment and water-related disasters such as floods and droughts are the worst and most frequent natural calamities.

Increasing resilience to water related disasters by comprehensive risk management, sustaining healthy ecosystems and improving water quality are prerequisites for the provision of safe water, food, energy and other basic needs for people and societies in the future we want.

Wise water management, building on ecosystem-based approaches, is a prerequisite for securing resilience. Integrating water resource management at all levels in the planning, building and governing of our societies will save lives, livelihoods and assets ■

Ensuring an enabling environment for civil society

On Monday, on the fringes of the UN General Assembly, US President Barack Obama, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, and other UN, government, foundation, and civil society leaders announced a 'Joint Statement on the Promotion and Protection of Civil Society.' The Statement reaffirmed the commitment of major governments and UN bodies to 'enforce the central role of civil society in working with governments to address common challenges and to coordinate action to promote and protect civil society in the face of ongoing assault around the world.' They did this in response to growing international limitations on civil society which undermine the ability of its organisations (CSOs) to operate, ultimately threatening a truly responsive development agenda.

In the post-2015 process, civil society actors are nearly universally referred to by UN bodies and governments as critical to development, due to their expertise and proximity to local and marginalised communities, and have promised to enable CSOs to maximise their contribution to this agenda.

Despite this recognition, restrictive laws and policies have proliferated around the globe to limit core civil society freedoms of expression, association and assembly, which are enshrined in international law and necessary for CSOs to operate effectively.

Since October 2011, more than 40 restrictive laws have been passed or considered worldwide that would restrict the formation, operation, and funding of CSOs, as well as the right to peaceful assembly. In the first few months of 2013 alone, more than ten countries adopted restrictive laws.

CSOs working in many areas – particularly those that challenge the status quo, such as promoting a healthy environment, fighting corruption, or advancing other important development needs – are at risk of arbitrary closure or other severe sanctions and unwarranted government interference and harassment.

Governments are also increasingly attempting to effectively nationalise CSOs. Laws and policies in many countries increasingly require CSOs to "harmonise" their activities with government priorities in national development plans. While justified in the interest of aid effectiveness, these requirements often limit the ability of CSOs to carry out activities that might benefit marginalised communities or focus on issues neglected by governments.

Even more severely, members of CSOs continue to be persecuted in many parts of the world. Many civil society workers and journalists have been killed for advocating for basic development rights. It is now critical that an "enabling environment" for civil society is included in the post-2015 development agenda with due focus on governance and legal frameworks, as well as socio-economic and socio-cultural factors.

The basic rights necessary to create an enabling environment, as set out by the UN Task Team on post-2015, should be incorporated into the new development framework:

1. Include a target and indicator(s) to promote an enabling environment for civil society;
2. Link the target and indicator(s) to an equivalent to MDG8, focusing on partnerships for development or to a new goal, such as good governance, human rights, or the enabling environment for development writ large; and/or
3. Make an enabling environment for civil society a cross-cutting element across many goals.

Finally, to provide an enabling environment for civil society, governments must commit to do the following:

- Respect, protect and fulfil the rights to freedoms of association and assembly, as well as the freedom of expression, including the right to information, in accordance with international human rights standards;
- Establish an enabling legal and regulatory environment for CSOs which recognises their independence and right to carry out their peaceful work without fear of harassment, reprisal, intimidation and discrimination;
- Take all necessary measures to ensure that all sectors of society –including women and vulnerable groups– are able to exercise their right to impart and access information without discrimination, including through the media and information and communication technologies (ICTs); and
- Take proactive measures to promote the effective participation of civil society, including the marginalised and discriminated against, in the design and execution of development strategies.

Global development – including aspirations on the eradication of poverty, good governance, reduction of inequality, environmental sustainability and end to conflict – risk being undermined by the rising tide of restrictions and threats to CSOs unless these are urgently addressed ■

MORE INFO

This article is based on the submission of the Civic Space Initiative, a consortium of the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law, ARTICLE 19, CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation, and the World Movement for Democracy, to the High Level Panel.

The full submission is available at: bit.ly/11kUdXR

The Joint Statement on the Promotion and Protection of Civil Society is available at: l.usa.gov/14ABM2C

UN General Assembly events calendar

Date	Time	Location	Event	Host
Wednesday 25 September	08:00 - 09:30	Getting to Zero: How a post-2015 agreement that tackles inequality and poor governance will finish the job of the MDGs	Hudson Room (2nd floor) at Convene, 730 3rd Ave, NY	Save the Children, co-sponsored by Permanent Missions of Benin and Denmark (tbc)
	08:00 - 09:30	Looking to 2015 and beyond: The role for anti-corruption and governance	CR-7 (NLB), UNHQ	UNDP, UNODC and Transparency International
		Contacts: Craig Fagan - cfagan@transparency.org; Aida Arutyunova - aida.arutyunova@undp.org; Steven Malby - Steven.malby@unodc.org		
	10:30 - 13:30	The voices of people living in poverty in the post-2015 agenda: Inclusion, participation and dignity	Danny Kaye Visitors Centre, UNICEF building 3 UN Plaza, E 44th	Caritas Internationalis, CAFOD and Trocaire
	11:00 - 12:30	Health for the post-2015 development agenda	The Japan Society, 47th St, between 1st and 2nd Ave	Permanent Missions of Japan and France, World Bank, UNDP, WHO
		Contact: Robert Hewitt - robert.hewitt@dn.mofa.go.jp		
	12:00 - 15:00	A Transformative agenda for SD in Nigeria and Africa: Lessons, actions and emerging perspectives	UN Millennium Plaza	Nigeria
		Contacts: Emmanuel O.Oguntuyi - darexajik2005@yahoo.com; Ife Falegan faleganji@yahoo.com; Sering Falu - sering.njie@undp.org		
	13:15 - 14:45	Freedom from Violence for Every Woman and Girl, A Priority for the Post-2015 Agenda	West Terrace Dining Room, Conference Building, 4th floor, UNHQ	Governments of Finland and Liberia, together with UN Women
	Contacts: Marjo Pekkanen - marjo.pekkannen@formin.fi; Gail Farnago - zakwahf@yahoo.com. RSVP by 19 Sept to rsvp.yke@formin.fi			
14:30 - 16:30	Inter Community in Reality: Towards a new platform for achieving MDGs and welcoming Post-2015 Development Agenda in Indonesia	Ford Foundation HQ (TBC), NY	International NGO Forum on Indonesian Development, Ford Foundation, Oxfam	
	Contact: Hamong Santono - among@infid.org. RSVP: Nindi Sitepu - nindisitepu@mdgsindonesia.org			
18:15 - 20:00	MY World Partner Recognition Event and Award Ceremony	Danny Kaye Visitors Centre, UNICEF House	United Nations Millennium Campaign, UNDP, ODI and core partners	
Thursday 26 September	08:30 - 10:30	FP2020 Roundtable Discussion	Population Council, NYC office	Population Council, Govt. of Norway and Norad
	09:00 - 13:00	Health in the Post-2015 Development Agenda: Health NGO Strategy Meeting	American Heart Association, 122 E 42nd Street	NCD Alliance, UNF, Save the Children
	10:00 - 12:00	Beyond 2015 stocktaking following the Special Event on MDGs and the post-2015 agenda	TBC	Beyond 2015RSVP to smason@beyond2015.org
	10:30 - 12:00	Tackling Inequalities Beyond 2015 through Social Protection	CR-A (CB), UNHQ	Belgium, Brazil and ILO
		RSVP to: newyork@ilo.org (Possession of a UN Grounds Pass is required to attend this event)		
	12:30 - 14:00	Children's Voices in post-2015 agenda	Danny Kaye Centre, UNICEF House	MY World - the United Nations global survey for a better world and ChildFund Alliance.
		RSVP to sstevenson@childfundalliance.org		
	13:15 - 14:30	"Fulfilling the Rio+20 Promises" Report Launch Event	Ford Foundation, B Level Conference Room	NRDC and Stakeholder Forum
	Invite only. Contact: John Romano - jromano@nrdc.org and Amy Cutter - acutter@stakeholderforum.org			
17:00 - 18:30	Norwegian Debt Audit and the UNCTAD Principles on Responsible Sovereign Lending and Borrowing "From Principles to action"	UNHQ (TBC)	Norwegian Govt., Norwegian Coalition for Debt Cancellation and UNCTAD	
19:00 - 21:30	Lives on the Line: How we can save 4.6 million and children in less than 1000 days	Scandinavian House (58 park Ave)	Save, WVI, FCI and Path	
Friday 27 September	08:30 - 14:30	Global Development after 2015: The Role of Foundations and Civil Society	Ford Foundation	UNDP, Ford and Rockefeller Foundations (in collab. with WINGS, OECD net FWD and EFC)
	09:00 - 12:45	Women Leaders Forum: Connecting Women's Health and Girl's Education for Scalable and Sustainable Development	The Pierre, 2 East 61st St.	Advance Development for Africa Foundation and Global Partnerships Forum (in collab. with ITU and UNAIDS)
		Contact: Adama N'Diaye - adamandiaye@partnerships.org		
10:30 - 12:30	Global partnership and sustainable growth with equity: Making development work in a post-2015 world	Trusteeship Council, UNHQ	Indonesia	
	RSVP to: indonesia.ungaevent@ukp.go.id. Contact: natasha.ardiani@ukp.go.id			

Reflections from the High Level Political Forum

Ivana Savić

UN Major Group for Children and Youth (MGCY)

One of the main outcomes of Rio+20 was to create a new international High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) to replace the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD). The CSD itself represented a milestone for international deliberations on sustainable development, but the Commission was also pivotal to furthering the participation of non-state actors in intergovernmental processes. One must ask, therefore, whether the same will apply to its successor, the HLPF.

The inaugural HLPF was indeed a 'high-level' forum, with many Heads of State participating. However by the end of it, it could be better described as a half-empty forum. It is interesting that despite the great deal of political commitment required to create the body, a commitment to attendance was lacking for its first meeting.

The HLPF definitely marks a new era for the sustainable development narrative. At the beginning of the meeting in particular, we could frequently hear commitment to gender equality, poverty eradication, and the need to combat climate change if we are to achieve sustainable development. Also, issues of children and youth, human rights and the rule of law in the context of sustainable development were emphasised. Moreover, the narrative of the HLPF seems to have evolved from that of the CSD, reflecting a 'new', post-Rio+20 approach to sustainable development that talks of dimensions not pillars, and integration rather than silos.

When it comes to children and youth, it was very pleasing to hear that governments recognise the challenges millions of young people face and that they are prioritising the creation of solutions to these obstacles. But, as many Member States pointed out on multiple occasions, this can only be done in partnership, and not just any partnership, one with young people directly involved. One which sees them become agents of change, rather than victims of it ■

Yunus Arikon

ICLEI

The opening of the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) undoubtedly marks a new era in the institutional framework of sustainable development, as an area of concrete progress in the implementation of the outcomes of Rio+20.

It is possible to expect that this unique body and process may induce fresh blood for the much needed vision and political leadership for the transformation of our societies in the 21st century towards a more sustainable path. However, national governments and the global community should also acknowledge that this new work is to be designed and implemented in a world where majority of the population will be living in cities and urban settlements.

It is obvious that discussions and visions at the national and global level can turn into action only if these urban communities, together with their Mayors, Governors and all elements of their local and subnational governance institutions are effectively engaged in the work of the HLPF.

Indeed, it is these cities globally that will prosper economic growth, preserve natural resources, provide guidance for sustainable patterns of consumption and production for communities, lead innovation on new solutions, and adapt their towns and cities with the changing climate.

Unfortunately, in this inaugural session, and despite the invitation of the President of the General Assembly for the members of the Forum to be provocative, the majority of the speeches from Heads of State fell short of addressing the opportunities that can be seized through the new realities of the urbanised world of the 21st century.

Still, the intervention of Mayor Kadir Topbas to report outcomes of the Special Event on Sustainable Cities – convened in collaboration with UN DESA, Member States Friends of Cities, and the Local Authorities Major Group – can at least be seen as a positive start to implementing Para. 42 of the Rio+20 outcome document, which recognises the important role that local and subnational governments can play in delivering sustainable development, in particular in the context of the HLPF.

Considering the fact that today is only the start of another journey, ICLEI, in collaboration with other local and subnational government networks gathered under the Local Authorities Major Group, is committed to establishing new modalities with national governments so that sustainable urbanisation is placed at the core of the post-2015 development agenda ■

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