

## Responses to the Questionnaire related to the development of SDGs

15 November 2012  
The Government of Japan

1. Please list a limited number, preferably between five and ten, of the important priority areas that must be addressed through the SDGs to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.

(A) As we agreed in Rio, the SDGs “should be coherent with and integrated into the the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015”. We understand that this means the SDG process should be converged eventually into and formulate one set of post-2015 development goals. The Government of Japan believes that sustainability should be well-reflected in the post-2015 development framework and submits this Response in an attempt to answer a broader issue of formulating the post-2015 development agenda.

Based on this understanding, the Government of Japan is of the view that, in formulating the post-2015 development goals, emerging and re-emerging issues, including sustainability, such as food/energy/water security and the nexus among them; disaster reduction and resilience; sustainable cities(urbanization); building a low carbon society; and environmental preservation should be well reflected in addition to the so-called unfinished business of the current MDGs. Regarding disaster reduction in particular, Japan, having endured several experiences in which its growth was hindered by large natural disasters, sees it as an indispensable element for sustainable development. Also, as the CO2 emission as well as water consumption in cities is increasing with the rapid growth of urban populations, building sustainable cities is critical for sustainable development.

2. How might the SDGs strive to balance the economic, social and environmental pillars of sustainable development?
  - a. Reflect social, economic and environmental dimensions within each SDG, possibly through the associated targets
  - b. Integrate the MDGs, suitably modified/updated for post-2015, into a larger sustainable development framework
  - c. Expand MDG7 (“environmental sustainability”) into a number of goals with a natural/environmental resource dimension (water, food, energy, etc.)
  - d. Other (please describe)

(A) Since the SDGs will be integrated into the post-2015 development agenda, it would be difficult to answer this question definitively at this juncture as the discussions on the post-2015 development agenda

have just started in a full-fledged manner.

However, at least we can say that Option b does not reflect the agreement in Rio; it is the SDGs that should be integrated into the post-2015 development framework, not vice versa. Option a can be useful if it addresses as follows: 'Reflect social, economic, and environmental dimensions within each goal possibly through the associated targets, and possibly through positioning sustainability as one of the guiding principles of the post-2015 development agenda'. The Government of Japan considers it important that the three dimensions of sustainable development are properly reflected.

3. Based on your experience with MDGs or other existing goals, what would be the key use of SDGs for your country (select at most two)?
- a. Defining national policies
  - b. Influencing national budget allocations
  - c. Reviewing the impact of national policies
  - d. Addressing key pressure leading to unsustainability
  - e. Helping to balance economic, social and environmental pillars in policy making
  - f. Guiding development cooperation
  - g. Other (please describe)

(A) This question is slightly misleading. As we mentioned above, Japan believes that sustainability should be well reflected in the post-2015 development framework, rather than having a separate set of SDGs, so it is difficult to judge 'SDGs' role/key use. However, if we answer the question in terms of the post-2015 development agenda, the answer would be f.

Please explain your choices if you would like:

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4. How can "universally applicable" SDGs be made practically relevant for countries at different levels of development? (Please refer to your country's situation as appropriate.)

(A) The post-2015 development goals, which will incorporate the SDGs, could have universally applicable target items that reflect social, economic, and environmental dimensions within each goal. For instance, the Sustainable Energy for All has a social target (energy access), an economic target (energy efficiency) and an environment target (renewable energy), and this approach can be applied in other areas of development. Based on this, the actual target figures (levels of

ambition) can be differentiated according to the each country's situation.

5. The SDGs are supposed to be "global in nature". Should targets associated with those goals be:
  - a. common to all countries?
  - b. defined by each country? or
  - c. common but differentiated depending on country characteristics and level of development? If c, please explain how.

(A) We believe that target items could be common to all countries, but the target figures (the levels of ambition) and the indicators could be different according to the country's characteristics and the development levels. For instance, experts group including international organizations could establish several benchmarks for target figures, differed according to the development levels. The Member States, taking the benchmarks into consideration, could decide and pledge their own specific targets through consultation with the UN organizations. Such a "pledge and review" system could be useful for the realization and the implementation of the goals and targets which are 'universally applicable' and 'global in nature'.

6. Which existing goals and targets (e.g., MDGs, goals/targets in Agenda 21, JPOI) do you think should be incorporated – perhaps in updated form – in a proposal for sustainable development goals?

(A) We should take into consideration the existing goals/targets and lessons learned from them.

But, with a view to maintaining the conciseness/crispness of the current MDGs, only a limited number of goals and targets should be established in the post-2015 development agenda.

It would not be appropriate for us to incorporate ongoing politically sensitive discussions in the other frameworks into the discussions on the SDGs.

7. What specific steps can be taken to ensure that the SDGs are coherent with and integrated into the UN development agenda beyond 2015?

(A) We hope that the High-level Panel of Eminent Persons on Post-2015 Development Agenda will be creative and provide the view on how to integrate sustainability/SDGs into the new framework and prioritize the issues to be tackled in the new framework. The Government of Japan will support the efforts of the Panel and the Secretariat in this regard. The Secretary General should provide his own view in his report on how to integrate the process on the SDGs into the UN development agenda beyond 2015.

**8. How should assessments of progress toward the achievement of the SDGs be carried out at the global levels?**

**(A) As we mentioned above, the SDGs should be integrated into the post-2015 development agenda. We should discuss the assessment of the post-2015 framework as a whole at a later stage.**

**9. What measures should be taken to make the process of developing a proposal for SDGs inclusive and participatory? How should civil society and other relevant stakeholders be engaged?**

**(A) We believe that in the negotiation process of Rio+20, inclusiveness and global participation were ensured, since all relevant stakeholders had an opportunity to express their views. We can arrange inclusive and participatory processes to formulate the post-2015 framework as a whole. Each Member State should have dialogues with multi-stakeholders so that the Member State can utilize their views as important inputs. The wide usage of electronic devices and social media could be an option. Also, in the process of the post-2015 development agenda, the UNDP started thematic /national consultations and also has set up an interactive web platform as well. This could be a good tool to be utilized in the process of the SDGs, too.**

**10. What principles should underpin the development of the SDGs? (the UN TT report, for example, recommended adding (i) reducing inequalities and (ii) promoting human rights (iii) ensuring sustainability);**

**(A) They should be the same principles of the whole post-2015 development framework, since the SDGs should be integrated into the post-2015 framework. The Government of Japan believes that human security, equity, resilience, sustainability, and mutual support should be the guiding principles of the new framework.**

**11. How should a new Global Partnership for Development be constructed within or around the SDGs?**

**(A) Recognizing the significant role of various stakeholders in development architecture, it is vitally important to enhance partnership with emerging donors, including emerging economies and private**

sector, from the standpoints of both effective policy coordination and implementation. In this context, the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation (GPEDC), which was agreed at Busan HLF in 2011, is expected to be an inclusive forum for such cooperation. GPEDC's discussion will contribute to enhance co-operation among wide range of stakeholders to achieve sustainable development.

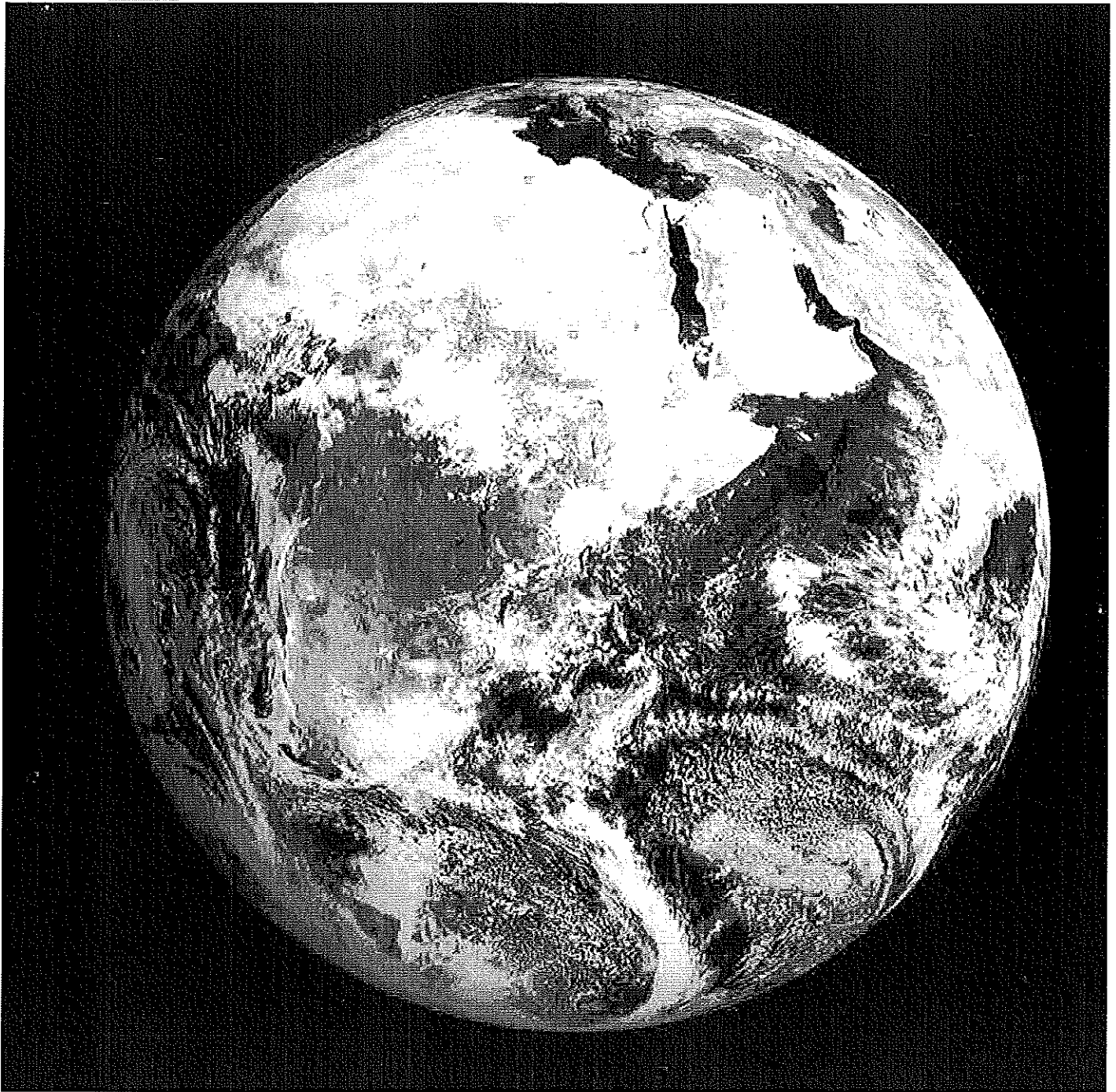
12. Do you have any other observations, ideas or inputs you would like to offer to inform the initial work of the open working group on sustainable development goals?

Please find the attached, the Summary of the Tentative Chairs Note of the Post-MDGs Contact Group.

(End)

TENTATIVE CHAIR'S NOTE  
POST-MDGs CONTACT GROUP  
-SUMMARY & FRAMING QUESTIONS-

*SEPTEMBER 2012*



The following is the summary of the Tentative Chair's Note of the Post-MDGs Contact Group (CG). The CG is a forum for informal policy dialogue on the development agenda beyond 2015, launched at the end of 2011 on the initiative of Japan. Participants from about 20 countries, as well as major international organizations, foundations, research institutions and NGOs exchange views and ideas informally, free from their official positions. The CG held four meetings so far.

The first meeting: December 2011, New York

The second meeting: February 2012, Mexico City

The third meeting: May 2012, Tokyo

The fourth meeting: September 2012, New York

The Note is compiled under the responsibility of the Chair (the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan). The summary reflects the Chair's observation and the contents are not intended to represent the positions of the governments/organizations to which the participants belong.

The CG will continue to hold meetings on a regular basis in order to contribute to this important agenda. The CG hopes to play a role in continuing discussions through informal dialogues of the same format, in order to promote and support the official process for establishing the post-2015 development framework. The results of future meetings will also be reported.

# Summary

## 1. The need for a post-2015 framework

- A new development framework acceptable to the entire international community should be adopted for the period beyond 2015.
- Discussions and consultations regarding this post-2015 framework should not distract efforts toward the achievement of the current Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Rather, they should be conducted in a manner which strengthens and accelerates the efforts to achieve the current MDGs.

## 2. Lessons from the current MDGs

- The set of goals, targets and indicators of the post-2015 framework should be simple, clear, and easy to understand. They should be measurable.
- The post-2015 framework should basically maintain the strengths of the current MDGs framework, with a focus on poverty reduction as well as social and human development, which are morally persuasive.
- Taking into account experiences from the implementation of the current MDGs, as well as various changes to global realities that have occurred during the past 10 years, the new framework should build on the current MDGs while making necessary modifications. In particular, the following issues are important: growth and employment; equity and equality; setting national targets; emerging and re-emerging issues including the environment, disaster reduction, access to water, food and energy, demographics, and governance; improving the current set of goals/targets/indicators; and responding to the diversification of development stakeholders.
- The new framework should be adopted as a whole package including a political declaration with a philosophy and guiding principles, as well as a set of measurable goals, targets and indicators, like the current MDGs framework. The philosophy and guiding principles incorporated in the Millennium Declaration are still relevant and important.

## 3. Basic design of the post-2015 framework

- In order to make effective progress on the new framework, it is appropriate to set realistic goals with clear deadlines, and to require objective forms of evaluation and measurement.
- The process of adopting the post-2015 framework should be inclusive, with



the participation of a wide range of stakeholders, which include not only traditional donor countries, international organizations and the national governments of recipient countries, but also emerging countries as South-South cooperation partners, the local governments of recipient countries, civil society and the private sector.

- Some concepts have an overarching importance across the board of issues that the post-2015 framework should address. It is useful to capture those concepts as the guiding principles for the new framework, in order to further clarify its objectives. The following four concepts are important: human security (i.e. a people-centered approach), equity, sustainable development, and resilience. However, further discussion is needed to deepen these concepts and to consider how we can fit these concepts into measurable targets or indicators.
- Rio+20 reemphasized the importance of sustainability. There was a strong argument that the new framework should be about people and the planet, and that 3Cs (Coherence, Coordination, Convergence) are of fundamental importance. The new framework should be a single framework which incorporates sustainability, while maintaining simple, clear, easy-to-understand and measurable characteristics. To this end, the international community should show a strong political commitment and flexibility, in order to avoid the possibility of the post-2015 framework and the sustainable development goals (SDGs) existing separately as well as to avoid a long-list type of agreement. The CG participants hope that the Secretary-General's High-level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda (HLP) can blaze the path toward the integration of SDGs into the post-2015 framework. (In the outcome document of Rio+20, the Member States agreed that *they [the SDGs] should be coherent with and integrated into the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015.*)
- The post-2015 framework should allow some room for setting national targets according to the realities and ambitions of each country, rather than applying the same targets to every country in a rigid manner. (No 'one-size-fits-all'.)
- When considering global targets, we should make it clear what the added value is. Global, regional, national, sub-national targets and indicators should be coherent, while making differentiation based on each context in a broader manner.
- When designing the new framework, it is essential to have clear data requirements. Also, if we are to use any indicator to monitor progress toward

enhancing equity, aggregated national-level macro statistics would be inherently insufficient and inappropriate, and therefore data disaggregated down the sub-national and community levels would be essential. From this perspective, the improvement of the statistical capacities of many individual countries is important. The participation of agencies that can help develop the statistical capacity of recipient countries is needed in both designing and implementing the post-2015 framework.

- Prioritization is the key. The international community already has a long-list. We should consider which elements to pick up and how to link them with each other by putting forward a strong narrative.

#### **4. Improvement of the current MDGs**

- We should continuously aim at achieving universal primary education, and additionally, improve its quality and promote secondary and higher education as well as vocational and technical training toward productive employment.
- Gender equality and empowerment of women are important cross-cutting issues and should be treated as part of the efforts to ensure equity in a cross-sectoral manner in the new framework.
- Considering that there are three health-related goals out of the eight of the current MDGs, the CG participants discussed whether these goals should be integrated into one health goal. Some participants of the CG supported this idea. Others argued that each item of the current set of goals and targets, such as reducing maternal and child mortality, is ethically persuasive, and it is difficult to compile those goals and targets, and we should proceed with the discussion mindfully. There was an opinion that if we compile the health-related goals into one goal, those items which will have a comprehensive impact on the progress of many health-related issues should be selected as the targets, rather than setting the targets according to individual diseases or problems.
- MDG1C can be improved by seeing from the perspective of food security and nutrition. Nutrition status can be taken as a fundamental indicator and determinant of human progress, well-being and future productivity, and the decisive reduction of malnutrition especially among the vulnerable is of significance.
- Paying due attention to the nexus of development issues, the new framework should promote a holistic approach. Comprehensive and multi-disciplinary efforts are very important and should be underscored in the new framework.

## **5. Emerging and re-emerging challenges**

- Equity should be highlighted as one of the guiding principles in the new political declaration, and relevant targets and indicators should be established in the new set of goals.
- Greater importance should be given to economic growth and employment in the political declaration and in the framework. Economic growth generates wealth which in turn is used as a resource for further development. Employment offers opportunities to participate productively in the economic growth process while providing motivation and purpose to individuals. Relevant targets and indicators should be set in the new framework.
- Growth and human/social development should be mutually reinforcing, and growth should generate employment in an inclusive manner. Investments in human/social development are also fundamental for inclusive growth and prosperity. Growth and sustainability should be well-balanced. Growth also needs to be supported by innovative technology.
- In order to enjoy the fruits of development over the long-term, it is important to mainstream disaster reduction into various aspects of development. Disaster reduction should be incorporated into the post-2015 framework and underscored in the political declaration while establishing relevant targets and indicators in the new set of goals. Also, the new framework should promote efforts to overcome the vulnerability of countries especially during reconstruction processes after conflicts or disasters.
- Taking into account the increasing political importance of environmental and sustainability issues, the new framework should deal with those issues. Integrating sustainability into the framework means more than simply adding environmental goals but achieve a good balance among economic, social and environmental dimensions. Water and sanitation, energy, and urbanization and population should be addressed in a cross-cutting manner. Nexus targets and indicators should be established, and the private sector's activities should be taken into account. It was also pointed out that due attention should be paid to such new perspectives as sustainable consumption and production patterns.
- It was widely recognized that peace and security are fundamentally important for development. However the CG participants have different opinions on whether and how to deal with this issue to what extent, and there are no concrete conclusions yet. The CG participants shared the recognition that the post-2015 framework should promote efforts to

overcome the vulnerability of countries which are undergoing post-conflict reconstruction efforts.

## **6. Partnership**

- It is necessary to seek effective global partnerships with the appropriate combination of resources among a wide range of development partners, including traditional donor countries, international organizations, emerging countries as South-South cooperation partners, civil society, and the private sector, based on their respective strengths and characteristics.
- Resources for achieving the goals should be taken into consideration as important elements in the new framework. Mobilizing domestic resources is of primary importance, and the CG discussed capacity building and governance issues such as improving tax collection, redistribution and social security system as well as eradicating illegal transactions of public funds. Also, ODA will continue to play an important role in development. In addition, other resources provided by various development stakeholders should be given appropriate roles and importance: for example, South-South cooperation, and contributions by the private sector such as corporations and foundations. It is important to find the best combination of support to development, and the new framework should incentivize stakeholders and ensure accountability.
- Civil society's involvement gives legitimacy to development activities, and the role of civil society has been expanding. Civil society should be given certain positions according to its significance in the new framework.
- The importance of non-aid development factors has been increasing as economic globalization advances. The new framework should deal with non-aid development factors such as technology transfer, trade liberalization, investment, intellectual property rights and immigration policy in an appropriate manner.

## **Framing Questions**

Based upon the above assessment, the Chair would like to present the following framing questions to be discussed in the future CG Meeting as a reference to the HLP.

- What is the most important thing in designing the set of goals to make a difference in the people's livelihood on the ground?

- What do we want to achieve with the new framework? Should we stick to developing countries or broaden the applicability to every country?
- How can we prioritize the issues in the new framework? What are the criteria? How can we articulate a set of focused global development goals?
- How can we ensure that the agenda can be dealt with by more holistic and inclusive approaches? (ex. In what ways could the aim of reducing various forms of inequality in development outcomes be best reflected in the new framework?)
- Should we deal with not only the end results but also means and the process?
- How can we deal with various issues while keeping a simple, clear, easy-to-understand format of the new framework?
- Regarding the relationships between goals, targets, and indicators, which of these should be settled at the global/regional/national or sub-national level?
- How can we make the process both inclusive and coherent in order to make the new framework widely supported and well respected?