

Sustainable Development Goals and the relationship to a post 2015 global development framework: a *Beyond 2015* discussion paper

[Beyond 2015](#)¹ welcomes the attention that is being given to the need for a global over-arching cross-thematic development framework by the international community, and hopes that the thinking around Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will be a constructive contribution to this ongoing conversation.

Beyond 2015 believes that the post-2015 framework for development must be an urgent priority for the international community. It needs to draw learning from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and address the multiple interlinked global challenges of: eradicating poverty, ensuring environmental sustainability, achieving economic equity, ensuring gender equality, tackling climate change, building resilience, managing equitable distribution of natural resources, realising human rights, and reducing inequality between and within populations.

The following outlines *Beyond 2015*'s recommendations regarding the concept of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which was proposed by the Colombian government and is currently seen as one likely outcome from the Rio+20 conference on sustainable development in June 2012.

Relationship to the post-2015 framework

We support the following agreements made at the Tarrytown retreat on 'Sustainable Development Goals, Rio+20 and the Post-2015 Development Agenda' held in New York in January 2012:

1. SDGs are understood in the context of the post-2015 development framework. SDGs will be further elaborated and complemented within the post-2015 process.
2. There should be a single unified process leading to the definition of the post-2015 framework, building upon government consultations as well as inputs from stakeholders and expert and scientific advice.
3. There should be a single set of international development goals putting poverty eradication as the overarching focus of sustainable development
4. The outcome from Rio+20 should be guiding principles for SDGs and not a fully fleshed out set of goals.

The current over-arching development framework of the MDGs expires in 2015.

¹ *Beyond 2015* is an international campaign aiming to kick-start and accelerate the post-2015 (and post Millennium Development Goals) planning process. The campaign brings together more than 300 organisations in over 70 countries - this includes over 70 organisations in Africa and 38 in the Americas.

Any plans for SDGs coming out of Rio+20 must be fully integrated into the global overarching post-2015 development framework. To develop SDGs and the post-MDG development framework in parallel would be both inefficient and short-sighted, and could lead to a number of negative scenarios:

- **Hinder full and effective linkage between environmental sustainability and poverty eradication:** There is a danger of losing, instead of strengthening, the integration of environmental sustainability into poverty eradication efforts, negatively impacting the full realisation of human rights and environmental justice.
- **Inefficient use of resources in a time of financial crisis:** It is difficult to justify two separate SDG and post-MDG processes, including experts groups and High Level Panels, in parallel, especially given the current financial climate and the cost associated with global policy processes. Negotiations on finance for sustainable development are proving difficult, increasing the risk of failing to locate adequate financial support for additional commitments.
- **Inducing policy process fatigue:** The high level of political commitment necessary for agreement on a post-2015 development framework needs to be carefully nurtured and managed. Two separate global policy processes running in parallel may lead to fatigue, lowering levels of ambition on the part of political decision-makers.
- **Endanger meaningful stakeholder participation:** Two parallel processes would lower the quality of participation as stakeholders would be required to double efforts to input into policies and decision-making. Additionally, resources and attention would be split. Meaningful stakeholder participation at this level is already a difficult task and parallel processes would make matters worse.
- **Miss the right moment to connect the processes:** The current principles and priorities of the SDG discussion and the post-MDG discussion are very similar, meaning they could be easily merged. The longer the processes run in parallel the greater the risk that they develop in different directions, requiring more effort, time and resources to pull them back together again.

In addition, we recommend that delegates at Rio +20 should consider the report of the UN Task Team on a post-2015 agenda due in May 2012 which will include an appraisal of the current MDGs, an identification of gaps and challenges as well as vision and road map for the post-2015 development framework. It must be made clear how the SDG process will link with the process to agree a post-2015 framework and to how the process going forward will make an extra effort to reach vulnerable groups and people directly affected by poverty and injustice.

Principles

Principles of participation, accountability, equality and non-discrimination must cut across any post-2015 framework to ensure outcomes which are effective, just and sustainable. Principles of Agenda 21 should similarly be embedded throughout.

To illustrate this, Beyond 2015 have identified four principles which must be the foundation for any guidance coming out of Rio+20 on a future development framework:

- **Holistic** – the future framework must capitalise on synergy across different sectors, and understand and respond to the complex interrelations between global development challenges. It is imperative that SDGs reflect an integrated and balanced treatment of the three dimensions of sustainable development.
- **Inclusive** – the process through which the future framework will be formed must be transparent, open and participatory, recognising access to information and decision-making as the foundation of good environmental governance, through engagement with people affected by poverty, particularly those who experience marginalisation, such as women, disabled people, and indigenous people. This is consistent with Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and Agenda 21 which recognise that issues involving sustainable development are best handled with participation of all concerned citizens.
- **Equitable** – ensuring that the targets achieve reductions in inequality both within and between nations, and that fair allocation of resources is given to both people and countries which face the greatest challenges of sustainable development and poverty to allow a just transition to a world in which social, economic and environmental dimensions are equitably and sustainably managed.
- **Universally applicable** – in order to address the global challenges we face all countries, whether from global north or south, need to have obligations, ownership and accountability through the new framework. Global goals should be set aiming for the eradication of extreme poverty by addressing its root causes. Contextualised national targets are needed for developed and developing countries (inspired by the principle of common but differentiated responsibility) to measure and track progress towards sustainable development and ensure accountability.

Beyond 2015 believes the successor to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) should have sustainable development at its heart. It should build on lessons learnt from the MDGs as well as take into account shortcomings, specifically their failure to address structural causes of poverty, inequality and exclusion, and shortcomings in MDG7 to address environmental sustainability.. It should incorporate the aims and ambitions of the existing initiatives which seek progress in all areas related to sustainable development, bringing together disparate frameworks, and create an enabling environment for greater progress within those fora.

Fundamentally, any global development framework must be based on, and fully ensure, equal enjoyment of all human rights for all people.

Process

A clear timeframe must be outlined at Rio +20 for the development of a comprehensive and inclusive framework and at what stage the process will be merged with the currently ongoing post-2015 process. There should be no attempt to rush a set of goals to secure a political success from Rio +20, which would not only severely undermine the potential to fully develop a robust, holistic and equitable post-2015 development framework but would be counterproductive for the process going forward after the Rio+20 conference. In terms of the post-2015 process, Rio+20 is an opportunity to carry out valuable groundwork.

Specific recommendations for the development of a future framework emerging from Rio:

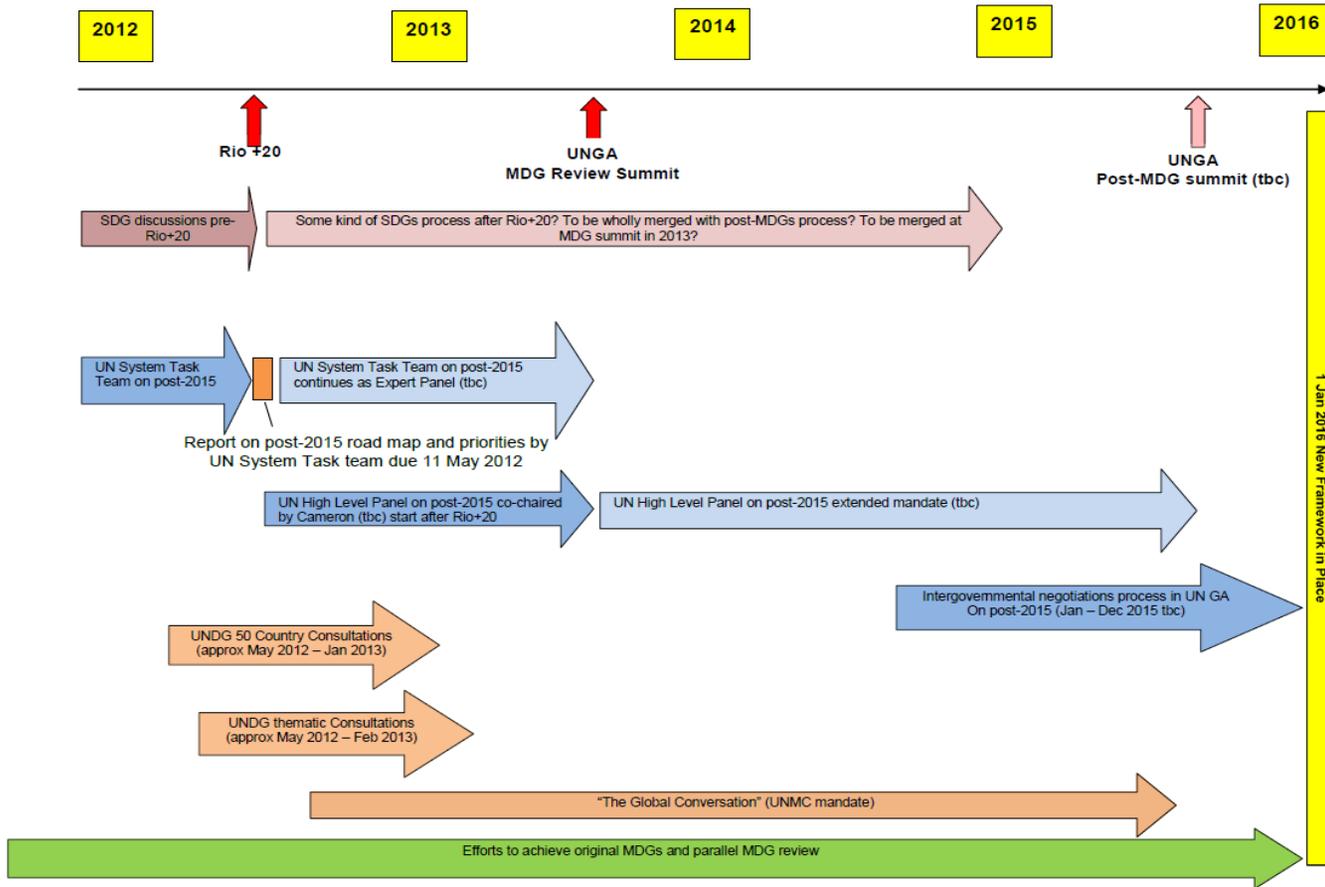
- The development of the framework (and its monitoring) must include a formalised and meaningful process for civil society engagement at local, national, regional and global level to ensure participation by those directly concerned by the challenges of sustainable development.
- National governments must have primary ownership of, and accountability for, the framework and its delivery.
- National processes must involve consultation and scrutiny by parliament and civil society.

Results at Rio +20

Good outcomes from Rio +20 include:

- Definition of the vision of Sustainable Development and its implementation.
- Recognition of the nexus between environment and poverty.
- Recognition that Sustainable Development requires the respect for, protection, promotion and fulfilment of all human rights.
- Upholding the principles and process for Sustainable Development, and their integration into the post 2015 development framework.
- Commitment to a global mandate to put Sustainable Development at the heart of the successor framework for the current MDGs.
- Agreement that a post 2015 framework for development should be an urgent priority for the international community.
- Agreement on a single process within the UN to develop a global development framework post 2015, leading to fully elaborated goals that encompass the environmental, economic and social dimensions of sustainable development, with targets and support structure.
- Agreement that the process for developing a post 2015 development framework should be transparent, participatory and engage people living in poverty, particularly marginalised groups such as women, disabled people and indigenous people.
- A clear timeframe for the follow-up process after-Rio +20.

APPENDIX 1: DIAGRAM outlining the processes for SDGs (red), post 2015 framework (blue), post-2015 consultations (orange) and current MDGs and review (green)



(Provided by CAFOD based on position paper '[Post-2015 policymaking: What is being planned, what might actually happen, and CAFOD's current policy lines](#)')