



## PEOPLE’S VOICES – ISSUE BRIEF to the SDG OPEN WORKING GROUP...

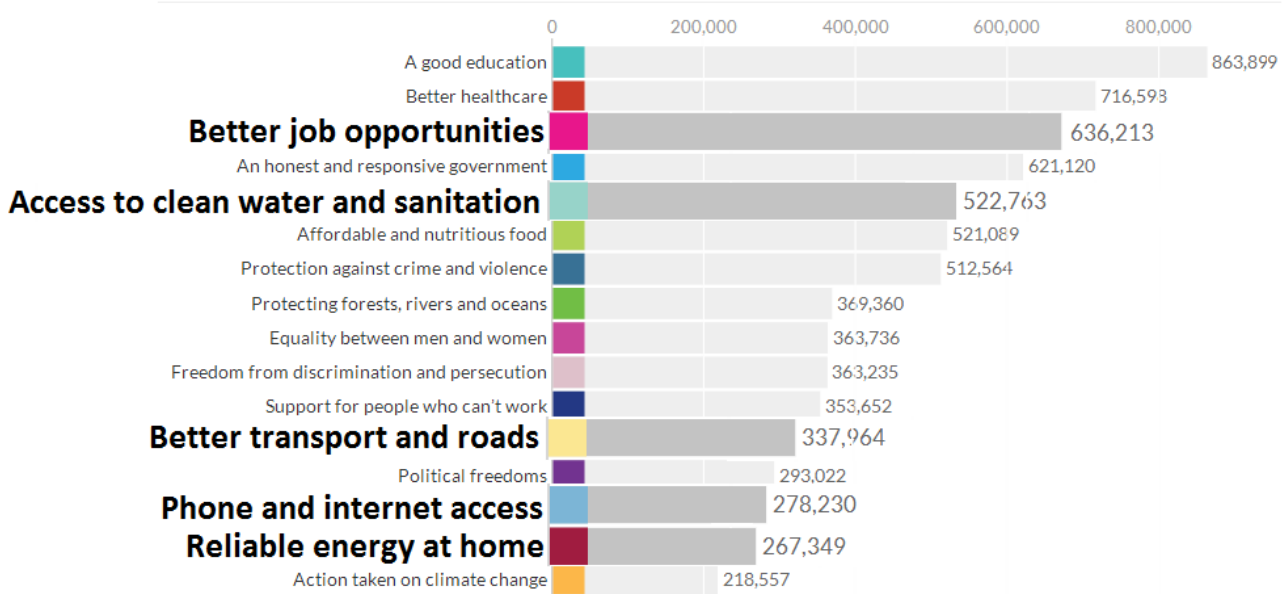
... to convey the views of experts of all walks of life that contributed to the Global Post-2015 Conversation so far via national, regional, thematic consultations and the MY World survey<sup>1</sup>

5<sup>th</sup> session (25-27 November 2013): sustained and inclusive economic growth; macroeconomic policy questions (incl. trade, financial system, debt) & infrastructure development; industrialisation and energy

People around the world are calling for more attention on the quality of growth. They feel that the benefits of economic growth are distributed unequally, and so demand decent jobs and livelihoods. They want their governments to do a better job in representing them – delivering key services, encouraging growth while regulating markets, and preventing insecurities associated with compromising the planet and the well-being of future generations.

### MY World total votes as of 8 November 2013

1,227,743 votes for All Countries & Country Groups / All Genders / All Education Levels / Age Group (All Age Groups)



Participants in the global conversation recommend a number of policies to realise the **objectives not only of sustained but sustainable and inclusive economic growth**. Markets alone do not provide the right incentives. Changes require active government policies coupled with increased accountability of the private sector and governments at all levels.

<sup>1</sup> The UNGD comprises 32 UN funds, programmes, agencies, departments, and offices that play a role in development. For over a year, it has been facilitating a global conversation to help realise the Secretary-General’s vision that the discussions on the future development agenda be open and inclusive. This initiative aims to provide a space for people’s voices, with a particular view to reaching out to poor and marginalised people. So far, the process has involved over 1.6 million people in 88 national dialogues, 11 thematic consultations, regional discussion fora, via a web platform ([www.worldwewant2015.org](http://www.worldwewant2015.org)) and global survey ([www.myworld2015.org](http://www.myworld2015.org)).

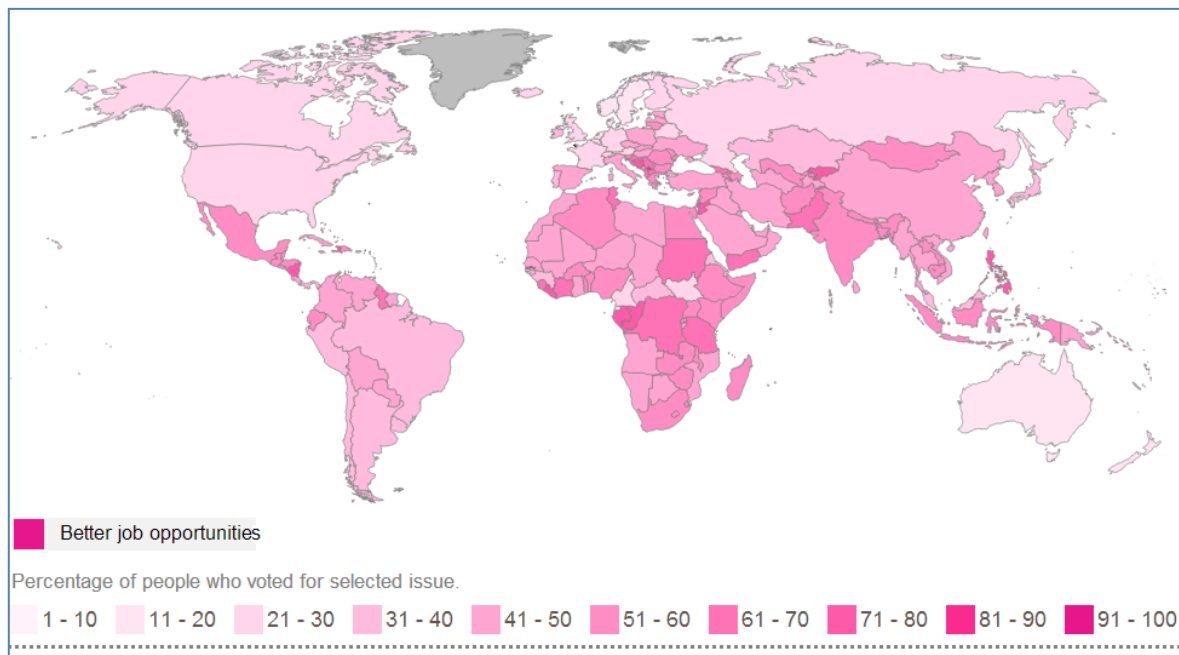
They highlight the role of **industrial sectors**, which have the potential to stimulate growth, increase employment and lead to sustained improvement in living standards. Discussants, however, recommend a more nuanced treatment of industrial progress in the post-2015 agenda—diversifying away from commodity production toward higher value-added production, upgrading to higher-skill production, building linkages between capital-intensive industries and the rest of the economy, and incentivising industries with more resource-efficient technologies.

*“The only way of sustaining benefits from the exploitation of non-renewable resources is to make sure that benefits from these resources are invested into alternative capital, such as human capital and infrastructure to ensure that the productive capacity of the economy is not declining as the resources get depleted.”*

- National consultation, Tanzania

A specific perspective is provided by the consultations in countries with extensive extractive industries including some Arab states, where the economies depend on exports of fossil fuels and remain very vulnerable to world energy prices and demand fluctuations. Discussants in that region want a shift from export-led growth towards the creation of sustainable productive sectors which can create added value and jobs in agriculture, services, tourism and manufacturing.

Participants in the consultations note the dual nature of the **service sector**. Market services, such as distribution, retailing or financial services, follow the ‘productive’ sectors. But services also include large informal sectors with low productivity and poor-quality jobs, which become ‘employers of last resort’ for poor people in urban areas and those migrating from rural areas. Recommendations include raising productivity and improving working conditions, together with normative interventions to ensure fair remunerations and compliance with regulations and safety and health standards.



**Heat Map** (above): This is where MY World voters prioritise ‘Better job opportunities’ around the globe (the darker the colour, the higher the proportion of votes for this specific issue)

The consultations highlight that **micro, small and informal enterprises** suffer from various impediments due to their size, whether they are in agriculture, industrial or services sectors, in both urban and rural

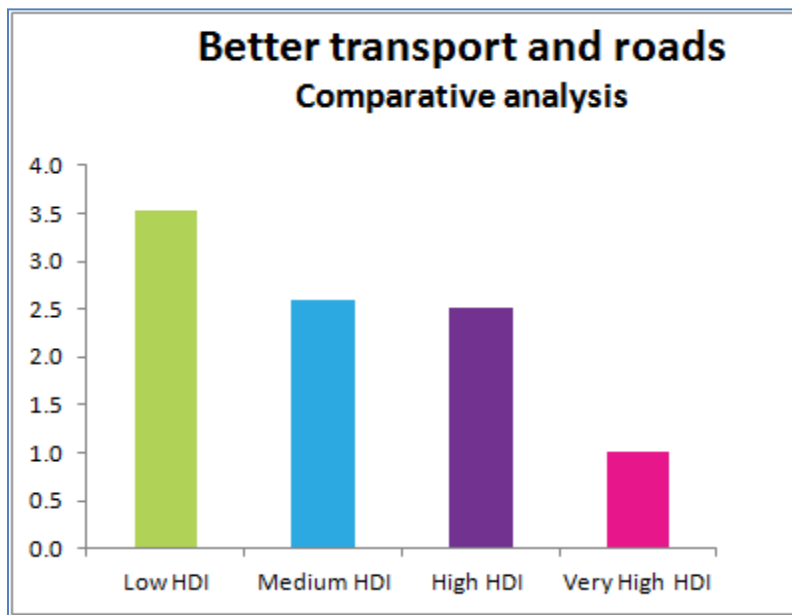
areas. Consultations recommend special support measures for these enterprises, such as better access to finance, business development services; strengthening their legal, commercial and property rights; streamlining regulatory processes; encouragement for forming associations and cooperatives; and linking these enterprises to large firms in the formal sector.

Discussants suggest that countries use **coherent economic policies** aimed at addressing their specific development needs. These policies include an expanded toolbox of macroeconomic policies to generate employment by scaling up public investment, enhancing access to finance, and promoting exports. They also recommend policies to reduce income gaps, such as social protection, collective bargaining and minimum wages, progressive taxation, and legal and regulatory measures.

It is also recognised that poor **infrastructure** (road, rail, electricity, telecommunications and irrigation) is still acting as a major constraint to transformation. However, discussants also detect signs of increasing political will to form partnerships aimed at investing in infrastructure such as through the New Partnership for Africa’s Development. Participants in the consultations also called for greater consideration of quality and location of infrastructure, for example to provide safe educational infrastructure so that children are less vulnerable to disaster risks.

*“We harvested large quantities of corn this year, but have no market to sell it to... To make matters only worse, there is no adequate infrastructure (roads and railways) that we can use to sell our goods across the country.”*  
- Women farmers, Togo

**Comparative Analysis** (below): ‘Better transport & roads’ is a significantly greater priority for MY World voters from developing countries than for those from developed ones (for every vote from a country with a very high Human Development Index, HDI, there are 3.5 votes from low HDI respondents)

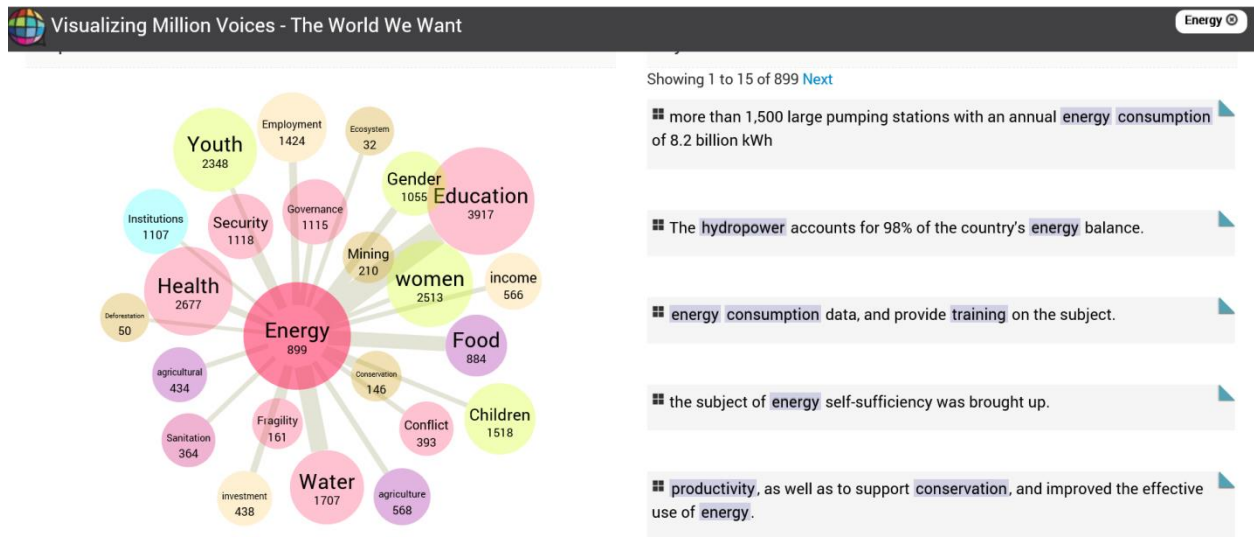


Access to clean, reliable and affordable **energy** is seen as crucial to achieving sustainable economic growth and social well-being, and should therefore be deeply rooted in the future development agenda. People are forthcoming with numerous examples of how lack of access to energy hampers obtaining a decent education, running a healthy and productive household, operating a successful business, and obtaining adequate health services — all with detrimental and lasting effects.

Diverging opinions exist in positioning expanding access as a business opportunity. Some, for example in the Latin American consultation, argued that the most urgent investments are needed at ‘the bottom of the pyramid’ to create a long-term market opportunity, particularly for rural access, which would require distribution under universal service obligations. There is broad agreement to increase support for research and development to drive innovation and support clean energy technologies. Many call for financing mechanisms that balance high initial costs against low operational costs. While governments must establish targets and policies, public funds are generally insufficient to implement transformative programmes and therefore must be effectively leveraged with private capital.

Strong consensus is emerging around the need to adopt an inclusive approach to energy provision. In this regard, the role of the community in decision-making is underscored, in particular, in regard to large, investment-intensive construction projects (e.g. hydropower or nuclear). It was often reiterated that all partners — governments, civil society and the private sector — must work together to support the large-scale transformation needed in the energy sector. Each has a role in identifying, implementing and monitoring policy and action, mobilising social innovation and grass-roots action, leading behavioural change and helping to spread best practices and build capacity at all levels.

*“Promoting gender equality in the energy sector is required at all levels of energy policy formulation and decision-making... With 70% of the people in developing countries living on less than one dollar a day being women, energy poverty has a disproportionate effect on women.”*  
 – Sabina, during thematic consultation on energy, 18 January



**Keyword Analysis** (above): People do not think in silos – they see energy interlinked with a multitude of aspects that are central to sustainable development, in particular access to clean water, food security, and education (the thicker the connecting line, the more often the link was mentioned)

The discussions reflect growing concern for the **environmental sustainability** of growth. In the poorest countries and communities, discussions revolve around the impact of climate change and growing scarcity of resources on people’s livelihoods. In urban areas of middle-income countries, there is greater awareness and a call for taking actions to change consumption, production and infrastructure systems. Participants from developed countries voice the need for policies to limit wasteful consumption and make investments in more resource- and energy-efficient infrastructure, and underline the urgency of these actions.

Participants also recommend various policy and regulatory measures, such as standards, taxes, subsidies and public procurement as incentives for less polluting activities, as well as international systems and institutions to regulate and finance the management of global public goods.

The consultations made clear that domestic policy measures toward these objectives require supportive **global institutions and international policy coherence**, since policies made in one country increasingly affect development outcomes in other countries.

The discussions show that the international community is expected to continue supporting its weakest members in the post-2015 period. While recognising the continued importance of official development assistance (ODA), participants acknowledge fiscal pressures in developed countries and call for diversifying sources of **development finance**, enhancing domestic resource mobilisation, tackling tax evasion and avoidance, and introducing international taxation measures. The consultations also call for creating an international environment that is conducive to employment generation, particularly in less developed countries, and to the reduction of global inequalities.

The participants call for enhancing the development gains from **international trade**. Many comment on the deleterious effects of sudden liberalisation of trade and capital flows on low-skilled workers, farmers and other groups. For example, in the consultations in several Asian countries, concerns are voiced about the impact of trade agreements on small traditional industries and local livelihoods. These are expressed in calls for 'fair trade not free trade'. It is noted that countries striving to undertake structural transformation face challenges due to the globalisation of trade. Participants also warn that the proliferation of bilateral, regional and subregional trade agreements should be watched for their development impacts. They call for reforms in the international trade system to provide an enabling environment for countries to build their productive capacities.

*"Globally, those who are doing the worst off in terms of trade are rural farmers in low- and middle-income countries... the way that trade works means that they generally get the least share from everyone."*

- Participants in thematic consultation on growth & employment

Participants underscore the need to manage the **international financial system** to limit volatilities, excessive risk-taking and inequalities in pay and rewards, with which vulnerable economies and vulnerable sections of societies are less able to cope. They note that financial systems should support productive sectors. Acknowledging positive steps in this direction with the onset of the global economic and financial crisis, the participants suggest that much more needs to be done.



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