



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

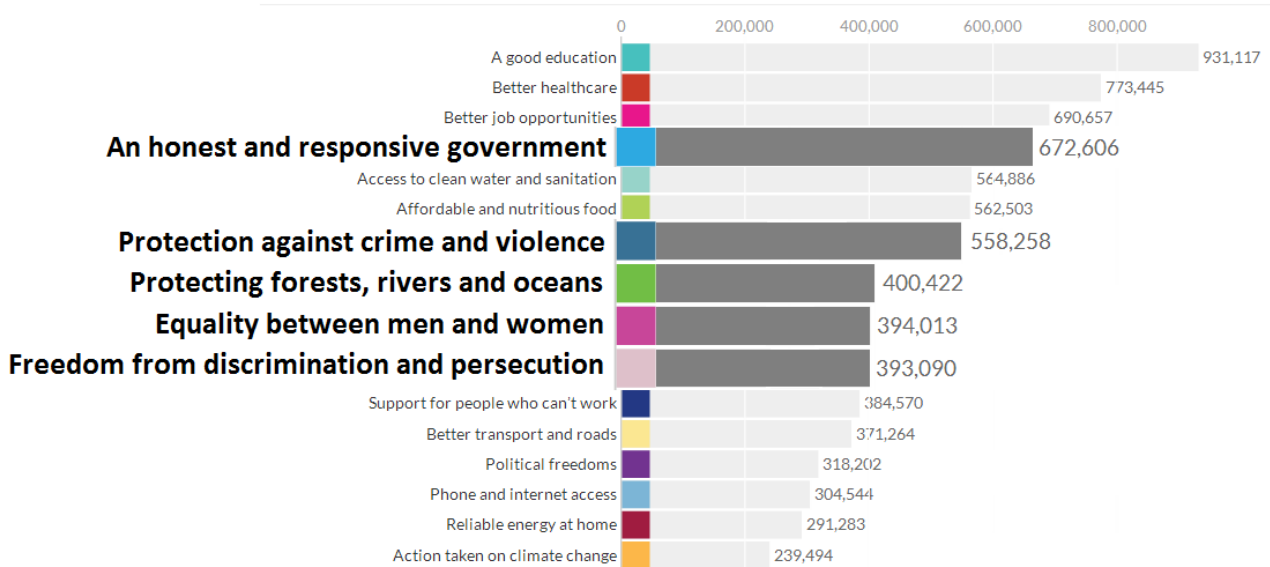
... to convey the views of experts of all walks of life that contributed to the Global Post-2015 Conversation so far via national, regional, thematic consultations and the MY World survey¹

8th session (3-7 February 2014): oceans and seas; forests and biodiversity; promoting equality, incl. social equity, gender equality and women's empowerment; conflict prevention, post-conflict peacebuilding and promotion of durable peace; rule of law and governance

Participants in the UNDG post-2015 consultations are indignant at the injustice they feel because of growing inequalities and insecurities, and they want to live without fear of violence or conflict. They seek to improve their lives and those of their families and request that governments create opportunities for their full and equal participation in decisions that affect them as well as in the strategies to address them. They ask that these issues be part of a new agenda that includes but goes beyond tackling the unfinished business of the Millennium Development Goals. For example, they call for urgent action on healthy ecosystems and biodiversity to ensure human well-being and resilience.

MY World total votes as of 24 January 2014

1,329,605 votes for All Countries & Country Groups / All Genders / All Education Levels / Age Group (All Age Groups)



People see **biodiversity** as underpinning ecosystem functioning and the provision of ecosystem services that are essential for human well-being. It is described as pivotal to food security, health, the provision of clean air and water; it contributes to local livelihoods and economic development. In addition, it is a central component of many belief systems, worldviews and identities. However, the rate at which species are becoming extinct is higher than at any time in the Earth’s history.

¹ The UNDG 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 1.7 million people in 88 national dialogues, 11 thematic consultations, regional discussion fora, via a web platform (www.worldwewant2015.org) and global survey (www.myworld2015.org).

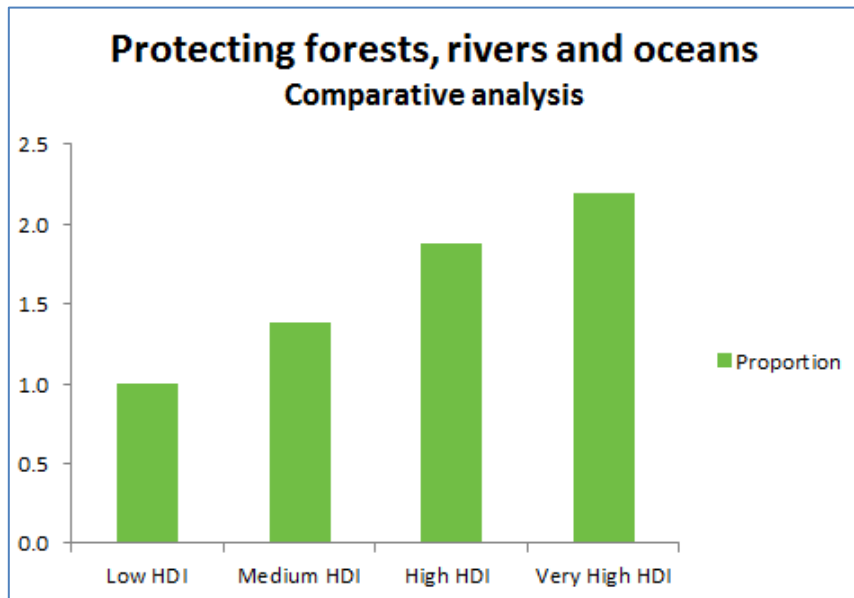
People see that efforts to promote the well-being of a growing world population increase the pressure on all natural resources, including land, forests, water, oceans and the atmosphere. Around the world, there is great concern about the levels of **deforestation**. Similarly, people lament the **overexploitation and degradation of marine and coastal environments**. The effects of climate change, especially extreme weather events and ecosystem

"[There] is scarcity of water in areas which had never experienced water scarcity like in some rural areas of Kilimanjaro and Meru due to destruction of forest cover"
 – National consultation, Tanzania

"The government imposes a 600 Turkish Lira sanction for fish that have been caught in the wrong season, but does not apply any sanctions for thousands of fish that die during the construction of hydroelectric power plants."
 – National consultation, Turkey

degradation, threaten the livelihoods of many, amplifying insecurities particularly for people living in poverty and those directly dependent on land, agriculture and fishery for survival. Some even realise that their homes will disappear from the map because of sea level rise.

The call is for a new development agenda to address an increasingly tenuous situation not only for many poor people in developing countries but also in wealthy ones.



Comparative Analysis:

'Protecting forests, rivers and oceans' is accorded a greater priority by MY World voters from developed countries than by those from developing ones (for every vote from a country with a low Human Development Index, HDI, there are about 2 votes from very high HDI respondents)

Markets and the private sector, on their own, are seen as incapable of ensuring growth that is socially and environmentally sustainable. Discussants suggest that a better way of valuing biodiversity and ecosystem services needs to be found and that governments have to be proactive in ending policies, subsidies and corruption that drive the destruction of natural resources. It also requires much **stronger governance and resource management**, including ensuring equitable access to resources, fighting transnational organised crime, and better institutional coordination. Participants in the consultations argue that the international community has a role to play in managing global public goods and getting the incentives and accountability mechanisms right for tackling, in particular, carbon emissions, ocean acidity and natural resource depletion. Civil society organisations that participated in the consultations advocate for a transition to a zero-net degradation approach. They also call for the future development agenda to support broad-based action to realise – and go beyond - the Strategic Plan 2011-2020 adopted by the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

“Environmental issues are best handled with the participation of all concerned citizens, at the relevant level, especially youth participation — they will inherit the ongoing inter-generational challenges of environmental and ecological sustainability. Youth-inclusive and youth empowering governance is crucial to tackle environmental challenges.”
- Governance consultation, final report

People request a stronger emphasis on **rights-based approaches**, including the right to food and the right to secure and sustainable tenure of land, forestry, fisheries and natural resources. They point very clearly to the potential benefits of more opportunities for participation by communities in managing local ecosystems and natural resources, and of more conscious efforts to make linkages between the local and global levels. They also highlight that **indigenous peoples** are often among the most vulnerable to

climate risk and environmental degradation. However, they also have a wealth of traditional knowledge about biodiversity and the protection of land and forests that could help provide a pathway to a sustainable future. Discussants therefore stress the importance of ensuring that indigenous peoples have an equal voice and participation in decision-making.

The **Rio Dialogues** provided a direct channel for people to offer their views to world leaders during the Rio+20 Sustainable Development Conference in 2012. Drawing upon the findings of online debates, 10 concrete recommendations were put to a global vote in which more than 60,000 people participated. The top three actions people wish to see governments take to advance sustainable development are:

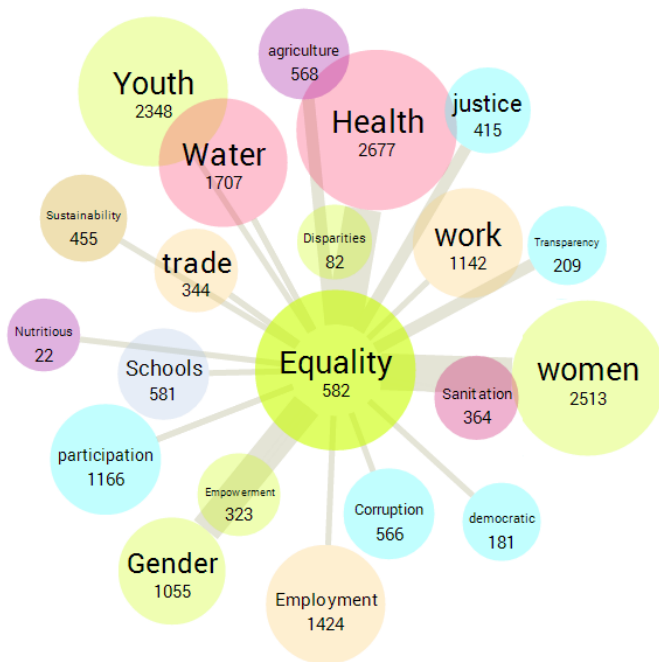
- 1) Take concrete steps to eliminate fossil fuel subsidies
- 2) Restore 150 million hectares of deforested and degraded lands by 2020
- 3) Secure water supply by protecting biodiversity, ecosystems and water sources.

The consultations highlight that the obligation to **address inequalities** is born from international human rights treaties and shared human values. Translating equality into practice is crucial to improving the wellbeing of both today’s and all future generations. People see inequalities as a global challenge – they persist both within all countries and between them. Further, inequalities are not just problems for those directly affected, but have deep consequences for everyone in society. They undermine social cohesion, productive capabilities, now and in the future, and the sustainability of economic growth.

People feel that market economies tend to favour the interests of those already at an advantage, resulting from unequal control over natural resources as well as productive and financial assets. They see inequalities predominantly affecting people who suffer multiple human rights violations and

“Discriminatory social norms contribute to perpetuate gender inequalities, as they constrain women from doing certain things. For example, in many countries women have unequal rights to land or inheritance, which means they are unable to open a bank account due to lack of collateral... Understanding the root causes of gender inequality is crucial and should be an integral part of the post-2015 agenda.” -- Estelle Loiseau, thematic consultation on addressing inequalities

and discrimination based on, for example: age, caste, race, ethnic and indigenous identity, minority status, (dis)ability, HIV status, sexual orientation. **Gender-based discrimination**, including the denial of the rights of women and girls, remains the most widespread driver of inequalities in today’s world. **Gender-based violence**, taking many forms, is a major element of this massive and continuing failure of human rights. **Indeed**, discussants are very clear in identifying persistent gender inequality as a governance failure. They call for gender-responsive governance systems to enable the realisation of women’s rights and to ensure that related priorities are not undermined by other public policies.



Keyword Analysis: In the consultations, equality is emphasised especially with regard to gender and women’s empowerment. It is also mostly referred to in the context of health and frequently linked to justice and transparency. (the thicker the connecting line, the more often the link was mentioned)

Discussants argue that efforts to reduce inequalities necessitate **reform of legal frameworks**, accompanied by concerted action to actively foster positive **social attitudes** and build a universal demand for equality, tolerance and social justice. Macroeconomic policy is also identified as key, such as tax policies that seek to improve collection from sectors and agents that have benefited disproportionately from aggregate income growth and that can provide adequate resources for redistribution.

The framework should be universal in nature, in order to tackle the global challenge of inequalities. Goals that aspire to **‘getting to zero’** - in terms of conditions such as poverty, violence, preventable deaths and malnutrition - will assist in moving towards the realisation of human rights for all. Participants in the consultations agree that addressing inequalities should cross-cut the entire post-2015 framework, with a particular focus on the situation of the most disadvantaged groups. In addition, some argue for a standalone goal on inequalities, others for a standalone goal on gender.

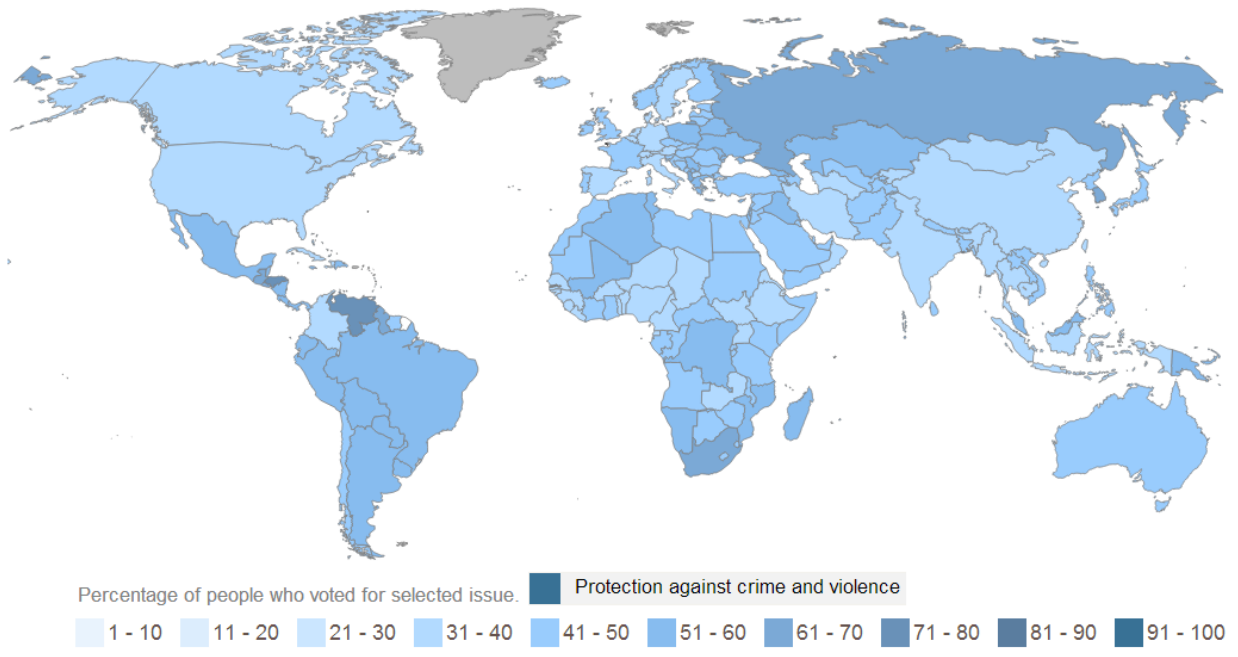
“For youth, academics and civil society, addressing social ills and deficiencies and the promotion of social and political stability are essential conditions required to realise peace and safety. For women, freedom of mobility in public spaces without risk of harassment or attack is considered a measure of peace and security.” - National consultation, Algeria

The most urgent problems that people around the world face are personal security and the ability to live their lives in **peace**. Discussants trace drivers of **conflict and insecurity** to development deficits, such as inequality, the marginalisation of women, the lack of effective policies for children and youth, and the misuse of natural and state resources. People see how prolonged insecurity and violent conflicts impede or destroy livelihoods and discourage investment critical to job creation, poverty eradication and economic growth. The consultations reveal a clear understanding that there can be no development in the absence of peace and security.

Therefore, participants argue that eradicating violence requires primarily a **development response**, not only a security response. This should include efforts to increase access to and trust in security and justice provision among all groups of society, greater fairness in opportunities for economic, social and political participation, and access to social services and resources, especially for young people, whose vulnerability

to exclusion can quickly translate into participation in violence and crime. Discussants also call for conflict-sensitive education, and education that promotes tolerance, peacebuilding and conflict resolution.

The consultations find that the impact of conflict on development is a **universal issue** that should not be perceived as a problem only of fragile and conflict-affected countries. All countries face episodes of instability to varying degrees and experience shows that countries can sometimes rapidly move from stability to instability. Discussants propose a standalone goal to reduce violence, promote freedom from fear, and encourage sustainable peace – one that goes beyond the absence of violence to address prevention and the drivers of peace.



Heat Map (above): This is where MY World voters prioritise ‘protection against crime and violence’ around the globe. (The darker the colour, the higher the proportion of votes for this specific issue.)

People around the world point to the role of good **governance** in addressing social and political violence, inequality, state fragility, increased demands on the natural environment and a global crisis of confidence in the integrity, capacity and legitimacy of the State to deliver human development and quality public services. It is seen as a development outcome in its own right, as well as a key enabler for implementing measures to achieve development goals.

People emphasise that the future agenda will require robust and **well-capacitated institutions** in the private and the public sectors to be responsive to the needs of people and communities and to provide the services on which all citizens - but especially poor people - depend. Discussants see the strengthening of **local authorities** as critical to ensure empowerment, civic engagement and better service delivery because they are the primary point of institutional contact for the majority of individuals.

“Our direction in the post-2015 agenda must aim to create capability, invest in people and reverse inequality. With inclusive democratic governance, effective leadership and political will, this is possible.” – Archbishop Ndungane, African Monitor

Corruption contributes to poverty, impedes economic growth and reduces the capacity of governments to respond to the needs of the people. Participants in the consultation call for the post-2015 agenda to

“Governance is no longer the prerogative of parliamentarians and legislators...[it is a right for all]” - Aruna Roy, Governance consultation, final report

address corruption decisively and to promote greater transparency. Integrating corruption risk assessments as a preventative tool, for example, and opportunities for greater public oversight of the use of public resources could ensure that funds are not siphoned off.

Participants agree that **rule of law**, access to justice and effective justice administration are enablers for development and human rights: at present, many institutions and services often do not reach out to the most disadvantaged people effectively. They demand that a post-2015 agenda ensure that justice institutions and services are more inclusive, innovative and accessible to all.

The role and regulation of the **private sector** is seen as pivotal, and businesses need to be accountable to the public, especially for the management of public goods and services. Discussants emphasise the need for partnerships with a vibrant private sector that has a stake in contributing to enhancing development at national and local levels. They suggest that the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (2011) be included in the post-2015 framework.

People very clearly see **empowerment and meaningful participation** of individuals and civil society in policy-making processes and governance systems as key to tackling inequality and promoting social inclusion, with a particular eye to providing opportunities for marginalised people to actively engage in matters that concern them. They emphasise the imperative of women’s empowerment and involvement. They also agree that youth must be involved in policy shifts towards sustainable development, as they

“The first step is for poor people to learn to trust themselves. Because we’re poor and because we live in slums, nobody trusts us, nobody believes in us. We don’t have money, our jobs are illegal, our communities are illegal, our connections to electricity and water are illegal. We are the city’s big headache. This is the entire perception of people outside the communities. But we are human beings too and we have lives in this city. If we are given space to be part of the decisions and plans, we also can be part of the solution.” --Ruby Papelera, thematic consultation on addressing inequalities

are the primary inheritors of the future framework. In seeking to foster active participation from the ground up, authorities should ensure that it is facilitated in a way that protects and promotes freedom of information, expression, movement, association and assembly.

There is consensus around the notion that country-specific **measurements** and international standards are important to assess progress in governance, as in other areas. This should include extensive and publicly available measurements on the performance of governmental institutions, both in terms of their effectiveness in delivering results as well as the legitimacy of the processes through which these results are delivered. Discussants agree that governance is measurable and can be monitored. A combination of strengthened national and sub-national monitoring and evaluation, data collection and analysis along with locally-led citizen monitoring is needed. They insist that **accountability** be central both to the design and to the implementation of the new framework, future policies and actions.



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THE WORLD WE WANT**

A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE WITH DIGNITY FOR ALL

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