



United Kingdom  
Mission to the  
United Nations

**Barbara Hendrie**  
Counsellor, DHR  
UKMIS New York

Tel: +1 212 745 9318  
Fax: +1 212 745 9316  
Barbara.Hendrie@fco.gov.uk

By email to: [vaturi@un.org](mailto:vaturi@un.org)  
Cc: [soltau@un.org](mailto:soltau@un.org)

Dear Sir/Madam,

In response to the "Questionnaire related to the development of Sustainable Development Goals", transmitted to Member States by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs on 28 September, please find attached the contribution of the United Kingdom.

The UK looks forward to continuing to work closely with partners on these important issues.

With best wishes,

Barbara Hendrie  
Counsellor, Development and Human Rights  
UKMIS New York



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## **Response by the United Kingdom to Questionnaire related to the Development of Sustainable Development Goals**

The UK aligns itself with the response to the UN DESA questionnaire submitted on behalf of the EU and its Member States.

The UN DESA questionnaire raises a range of pertinent questions, the answers for which will require a level of international debate and eventual consensus not seen yet. We hope that the acceleration of the post-2015 elaboration process, including the establishment of the High Level Panel, the beginning of the 'My World' and 'Participate' consultations and the imminent beginning of the Open Working Group, will bring this debate to the fore. The EU has made a submission in response to this questionnaire, which we fully support. To complement this, here are further reflections from the UK Government on some of the issues raised by the questionnaire: priority themes, relationship between the SDGs and post-2015 and the means to ensure coherence, purpose of the framework, universality and national relevance, and underpinning principles.

The UK believes that the overriding purpose and central theme of the post-2015 development agenda should be the elimination of poverty and creating the building blocks of sustained growth, which sustainable development can deliver. The MDGs helped to catalyse the greatest period of poverty reduction in history. But the job is barely half done and hundreds of millions of people still live in poverty now and will continue to do so unless we take further action.

The challenges facing the world have changed since 2000 and will change further by 2030. Both the UN Secretary General's High Level Panel on the post-2015 development agenda and the Open Working Group have been tasked with incorporating all three dimensions of sustainable development in a comprehensive way. We advocate these processes working towards a coherent and integrated post-2015 framework.



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The UK underscores the importance of the sustainable use of natural resources in human development and eliminating poverty. There is a direct dependence of poor people in the poorest countries on natural resources (water, land, forests, fish) for their livelihoods. This must be considered as central to delivering the human development improvements we seek. For these reasons, the UK advocated food, water and energy security as priorities in the build-up to Rio+20. The UK also argued that the inter linkages between issues need to be properly captured, for example water security should also cover water for agriculture or the importance of climate change adaptation for food security. This remains relevant for the overall post-2015 framework, including the Open Working Group.

Indeed, since the Rio+20 conference, many UN member states and other actors have demonstrated an understanding that the Sustainable Development Goals could be the totality of the post-2015 development agenda. In this context, there are a range of other issues that would be relevant, such as health, education, security, accountability and transparency.

To enable people to pull themselves out of poverty, the wider post-2015 framework should recognise the conditions that build open economies and allow open societies to thrive: the rule of law, the absence of conflict and corruption, and the presence of property rights and strong institutions. It is only when people can get a job and a voice that they can take control of their own destiny and build a future free from poverty.

This highlights the importance of ensuring coherence between the High Level Panel and the Open Working Group. We consider that regular interactions between the groups – formal and informal – will be important. There is also a potential role for the MDG review summit proposed for late 2013 to draw on both their outputs towards an agreed final outcome.

To be effective, there should be a small number of goals – ten or fewer. Learning lessons from the experience of the MDGs, the new framework will benefit from being simply expressed accompanied by metrics which incentivise results and track progress.