



## Gearing up for the Post-2015 Agenda: Will we be ready to hit the ground running?

June 30, 2015

Conference Room 7, United Nations Headquarters

### *Event Summary*

On June 30, 2015, the Permanent Missions of Mexico and Denmark to the UN, Save the Children and the United Nations Foundation hosted a side event on **“Gearing up for the Post-2015 Agenda: Will we be ready to hit the ground running?”** Over 120 participants from a range of developed and developing countries and civil society were in attendance.

Panelists included: H.E. Ambassador Carlos Arturo Morales López, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Permanent Mission of Colombia; Anthony Pipa, Special Coordinator for the Post-2015 Development Agenda of the United States; Dr. Felix Addo-Yobo, Deputy Director of the National Development Planning Commission of Ghana; Sara Luna Camacho of the Permanent Mission of Mexico; Glauco Seoane from the Permanent Mission of Peru; and Debra Jones, Director and UN Representative of Save the Children. The discussion was moderated by Minh-Thu Pham, Senior Director for Policy of the United Nations Foundation. H.E. Ambassador Macharia Kamau, Permanent Representative of Kenya and H.E. Ambassador Ib Petersen, Permanent Representative of Denmark, responded to the panel remarks.

All of the panelists discussed the efforts that are underway in their countries to prepare to implement the SDGs and the challenges they are confronting. Several of the countries represented on the panel were part of a series of dialogues at the country-level to bring together different parts of government provide a reality check on readiness to implement the new goals. The outcomes of these dialogues are captured in a report called [From Declaration to Delivery: Actioning the Post-2015 Agenda](#). In addition, we’re pleased to share [IISD’s read-out](#) from the panel discussion.

Here are some highlights from the discussion:

#### **Country efforts to get ready for implementation**

- The High-Level Summit to adopt the SDGs in September should be about **delivery** as well as announcing the goals: we can’t afford a slow start. We only have 5000 days to deliver on the SDGs—delays are costly and will undermine progress. There is a **need for short, medium and long-term planning** at the country level, acknowledging that flexibility is critical.
- To be taken seriously SDG implementation and follow-up need to be **led from the highest level of government, ideally the President or Prime Minister’s office**. However, that will pose challenges for sub-national implementation.
- **Colombia decided by Presidential decree to align their national development plan with the SDGs** and ensure they are advancing the three pillars of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental.
- **Ghana has established a High Level inter-ministerial commission** on SDG implementation with sectoral groups working together to build synergies.

- **Peru is building a system of participatory monitoring** to ensure accountability at the national level and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is proposing a decree like Colombia in order to institutionalize follow up on the SDGs.
- **The United States** is taking universality seriously and **has established an inter-agency process that includes foreign and domestic agencies** to put in place the necessary processes for SDG implementation. The breadth and integrated nature of the agenda offers a critical opportunity to **break down silos across government**.
- **Mexico** has recognized the need for structural changes in government to respond to the integrated nature of the agenda. Like Colombia, they have **raised SDG implementation to the highest level with the establishment of a committee in the President's Office** with the support of their autonomous Statistical Agency.

#### Data needs and challenges

- There is a need across all countries – developed and developing – to **strengthen the quality, availability, accessibility and usability of data** to implement and monitor the SDGs. These are each unique data challenges that have to be addressed.
- Different countries find themselves at different stages of readiness, and capacity building in this area will be needed. **Mexico, for example, is one of two countries in the world that already tracks the relevant indicators to monitor progress on Goal 16. Even developed countries like Denmark find themselves unprepared to monitor a proportion of the SDG targets.**
- **Data needs to be seen as development capital**, a critical means of implementation for the SDGs. The establishment of a **Global Partnership for Data** can leverage political attention for data, help get countries ready for measurement, and advance the principle of open data that is accessible and usable by all for follow-up and review. It will also be important to ensure the integrity and independence of National Statistical Systems.
- **Non-governmental sources of data** present unprecedented opportunities for SDG implementation and monitoring, but we need to think through how this data will be validated and used by National Statistical Systems which will remain the anchor for monitoring.

#### Is the agenda workable?

- All governments are working on the 17 goals in some way – there is a ministry for each goal in most countries – but **what is lacking is an integrated framework that brings it together in a cross-cutting set of objectives**.
- We should not be afraid of **prioritization**: it will be inevitable in such a broad agenda. We must realize, however, that the goals are, by nature, indivisible and intertwined—progress in one thematic area will lead to gains in multiple other sectors.
- Getting **all parts of government and all stakeholders to pull in the same direction**, exploit synergies and ensure that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts is what makes this agenda truly transformative.

#### Need to engage all stakeholders

- **National parliaments** will be an essential player to ensure a focus on all three pillars of sustainable development, to advance a truly universal agenda, and to ensure continuity through changes of government.
- **Bureaucracies and political elites will be encouraged or embarrassed to implement**—they will not be difficult to engage. Rather, we need to **focus our attention on the big middle and**

**bottom layer of ordinary citizens** to ensure they are not left behind, and that they're actively engaged in implementing and monitoring the SDGs.

- Civil society and ordinary citizens will be the **custodians of this agenda** and need to be part of implementation and monitoring to ensure continued action through 2030.

#### **Follow-up and Review**

- **Do we need indicative national delivery frameworks to ensure that we're all pulling in the same direction?** Working from a similar platform in each country will allow us to compare progress across countries.
- We need to ensure we're collecting and analyzing data in a way that allows **global comparison and empowers national decisions**.
- Some suggested that the **High Level Political Forum** should be the place to review global progress, determine whether we're on track, and share lessons and experience. It should be a forum to drive action at the political level.