MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION:
THINKING WITH PEOPLE LIVING IN EXTREME POVERTY

INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT ATD FOURTH WORLD

Current Context, Changing Circumstances and Priorities

Currently, the state of financing for the implementation of development goals is far from ideal. Despite UN resolutions pledging that high income countries would work towards committing 0.7% their gross national product (GNP) to ODA, few have met this target. In 2012, net ODA declined 4% with respect to 2011 levels, themselves a 2% drop from 2010. The portion of ODA which goes towards low income countries has declined, taking the form of soft loans rather than grants.[1] On top of this, it is not at all clear that ODA is going into poverty reduction programmes, or reaching the populations who need it most, whilst much ODA is offset by capital flowing out of low income countries as a result of unfair.

The next set of development goals will be implemented in an international context that is quite different to that of the MDGs. With the rise of the BRICS, there is a growing recognition that, whilst existing ODA promises must be met, more south-south partnerships are necessary for effective provision of the financial means of implementation. Furthermore, low-income countries across the global south – including many of those with the lowest incomes – are experiencing high growth rates. As the resources available to them grow, these countries will also be able to take the main responsibility for the provision of the financial means of implementation for post-2015 development, whilst ensuring ODA pledges are still met. Middle- and high-income countries should concentrate their ODA resources on the achievement of the new objectives of the post-2015 development agenda, for example through the setting up of a "Global Fund for Social Protection Floors".

At present, serious problems arise out of the top-down way in which technology and knowledge sharing can take place. There is often little participation on the part of local communities and few attempts made to ensure a genuine exchange between outside experts and people with on-the-ground knowledge. A participatory research project, conducted by ATD Fourth World over the last two years and involving over 2000 participants – the majority with experience of living in poverty – has underlined the problems this can cause. A failure to take note of the knowledge carried by impoverished communities, as well as experienced local and national development workers, leads to ill-adapted projects that lack community support and fail to help the 'hardest to reach'[2]. Similarly, approaches aimed at building capacity in communities, as well as in local and national institutions, will not succeed if they do not reflect realities on the ground. Indeed, outside experts also benefit from incorporating local knowledge and learning systems into their approaches towards capacity building. [3]

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1 The Millennium Development Goals Report 2013, pages 52 and 53
2 See: *Towards Sustainable Development that Leaves No One Behind – The Challenge of the Post-2015 Agenda,* ATD Fourth World Working Paper, June 2013
3 See: *Hunger · Nutrition · Climate Justice 2013, A New Dialogue: Putting People at the Heart of Global Development, Conference Report.* Irish Aid, April 2013. http://www.dci.gov.ie/media/irishaid/allwebsitemedia/30whatwedo/hncj-post-conference-report.pdf

Structurally, the current way that means of implementation are provided is problematic. The 2008 Reality of Aid Report contends that "less than 30% of all new aid money, disbursed since 2000, was actually available to poverty reduction priorities." As much as 20% of the funding allocated to ODA never leaves donor countries, and as noted above, a sizeable amount of aid ends up flowing back to high income countries in the form of consultancy fees and technical contracts[4]. Most provision is managed by officials in large institutions who, in the words of one former World Bank vice-president, often exhibit a "naive approach" regarding the social impact of the projects they oversee. This is coupled with a "voluntary blindness" that allows staff overseeing financial assistance, science technology and knowledge transfer and capacity building projects to overlook instances in which impoverished populations are clearly not being helped. On the ground, this translates to cases of elite capture, which further undermine the social positions of people living in poverty, as well as the imposition of projects that make their material conditions worse, not better. The means of implementation provided by the MDG framework have not done enough to encourage genuinely participatory development programmes[5].

Reports such as those of the Secretary General and of the High Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, have called for "a new vision" and a "paradigm shift" in the way we think about development. International development goals need to move away from a paradigm concentrated almost exclusively on economic growth and instead focus on reducing inequalities and eradicating extreme poverty whilst respecting planetary boundaries. The way in which less developed states use domestic revenues and ODA should reflect this shift in thinking. To make this possible, all stakeholders in development programmes – including national parliaments, civil society organizations, trade unions and populations living in poverty and social exclusion – must be able to participate fully in their planning and implementation. This should be reflected in the means of implementation provided for each post-2015 development goal. The Secretary General's July 2013 MDG report also emphasises citizen participation and transparent governance. There has not been enough public scrutiny over existing global partnerships or the way financial means of implementation are used. Transparent and accountable means of implementation would help avoid problems such as elite capture, failure to adapt to local circumstances and "voluntary blindness". As states and donors increasingly look to private sector partnerships for the financial means of implementation for future development goals, the importance of transparency and accountability for private funding programmes is also becoming widely acknowledged.

When considering the ways to bring about a "paradigm shift", or the transformation necessary to move towards sustainable development, the value of open knowledge systems is increasingly acknowledged. These systems encourage the participation of non-academic knowledge holders in the co-design, co-production and co-implementation of new knowledge. The 2013 ISSC/UNESCO World Social Science Report suggests that researchers participating in open knowledge systems should be recognised and rewarded, and underlines "the importance of indigenous knowledge and local communities in the co-design of research and policy"[6].

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4 Claire Provost, *Researchers find one fifth of foreign aid never leaves donor countries,* The Guardian, 24th September 2013, http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2013/sep/24/foreign-aid-never-reaches-intended-recipients.
5 See: *Towards Sustainable Development that Leaves No One Behind – The Challenge of the Post-2015 Agenda,* ATD Fourth World Working Paper, June 2013
6 See: *ISSC/UNESCO World Social Science Report 2013: Changing Global Environments*, Summary Document, ISSC/UNESCO, 2013

The human rights perspective

There is also a renewed focus on placing human rights at the heart of the post-2015 agenda. The UN Guiding Principles on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights provide good indicators of the implications a human rights centred approach would have for the means of implementation of future development goals.

In terms of financing, at a domestic level the Guiding Principles affirm that "when designing and implementing public policies and allocating resources, States should accord due priority to the human rights of the most disadvantaged groups, especially persons living in extreme poverty". Furthermore, any states "providing or receiving international assistance (…) should ensure the effective participation of recipient States and all affected stakeholders, including persons living in poverty, and strengthen their capacity and ownership in the context of international assistance." "International assistance should respect partner countries' ownership of their poverty reduction strategies, and should be aligned with partner countries' national development strategies, institutions and procedures". They insist on greater coherence and transparency on the part of donors. Providing sufficient and well thought out financial means of implementation for post 2015 development goals is a human rights obligation for all those involved in process[7].

The Guiding Principles on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights also note the importance of participation at all levels, emphasizing capacity-building and human rights education for persons living in poverty, and the establishment of specific mechanisms and institutional arrangements, at various levels of decision-making, to "overcome the obstacles that such persons face in terms of effective participation." States must ensure that "groups at higher risk of falling into poverty, including those who commonly experience disadvantage and discrimination based on race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status, are not only adequately represented in all decision-making processes that affect them but also empowered and supported to express their views"[8].

Recommendations

Ensure governance over all means of implementation is transparent, accountable and participative, with space given to all stakeholders

Indicators:

- ⚲ Proportion of population able to easily access information within countries about use of means of implementation.
- ⚲ Proportion of interested stakeholders that has access to mechanisms for participation of all in the bodies overseeing the use of means of implementation.
- ⚲ Proportion of national accountability mechanisms related to the use of means of implementation that are accessible to those affected by development projects.

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7   See: *UN OHCHR Guiding Principles on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights,* paras 51, 91 and 93.
8   See: *UN OHCHR Guiding Principles on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights,* paras 37 to 47

Member states should provide the financial means of implementation for each goal in accordance with the principles of common but differentiated responsibilities, with the aim of eradicating chronic poverty and reaching those left behind by the MDGs.

Indicators:

- ⚴ Proportion of financial means of implementation provided by national governments.
- ⚴ Percentage of GNP of high-income countries committed to ODA.
- ⚴ Proportion of financial means of implementation provided by South-South partnerships.
- ⚴ Percentage of participants from the bottom quintile of population, according to any measure (income, Multidimensional Poverty Index, etc), involved in ODA funded projects.
- ⚴ Percentage of ODA allocated to projects with a majority of participants from the bottom quintile of population, according to any measure (income, Multidimensional Poverty Index, etc).

Create cooperation and new forms of science, technology and knowledge exchange between developed and developing countries. **Create science, technology and knowledge exchanges within countries that include local and indigenous knowledge, aimed at eradicating chronic poverty.**

Indicators:

- ⚴ Number of multi-stakeholder governance bodies created to oversee international science, technology and knowledge exchanges.
- ⚴ Proportion of science, technology and knowledge exchanges taking place using open knowledge systems/participatory methodology.
- ⚴ Percentage of science, technology and knowledge exchanges that involve participants from the bottom quintile of population, according to any measure (income, Multidimensional Poverty Index, etc).
- ⚴ Percentage of people from the bottom quintile of population, according to any measure (income, Multidimensional Poverty Index, etc), who have been able to participate in science, technology or knowledge exchange projects that affect them.

Create mutual capacity building projects with the most impoverished and excluded communities, aimed at empowering them to escape from poverty and claim their fundamental rights.

Indicators:

- ⚴ Proportion of capacity building projects taking place using open knowledge systems/participatory methodology.
- ⚴ Implementation of mechanisms for participation of target groups in the design, implementation and evaluation of capacity building projects
- ⚴ Percentage of capacity building projects carried out with participants from bottom quintile of population, according to any measure (income, Multidimensional Poverty Index, etc).
- ⚴ Percentage of population who feel they have enough information about their fundamental rights.
- ⚴ Percentage of people from bottom quintile of population, according to any measure (income, Multidimensional Poverty Index, etc), who have been able to access quality human rights education projects.
- ⚴ Implementation of mechanisms that allow impoverished communities to indicate structural obstacles that prevent them escaping from poverty.