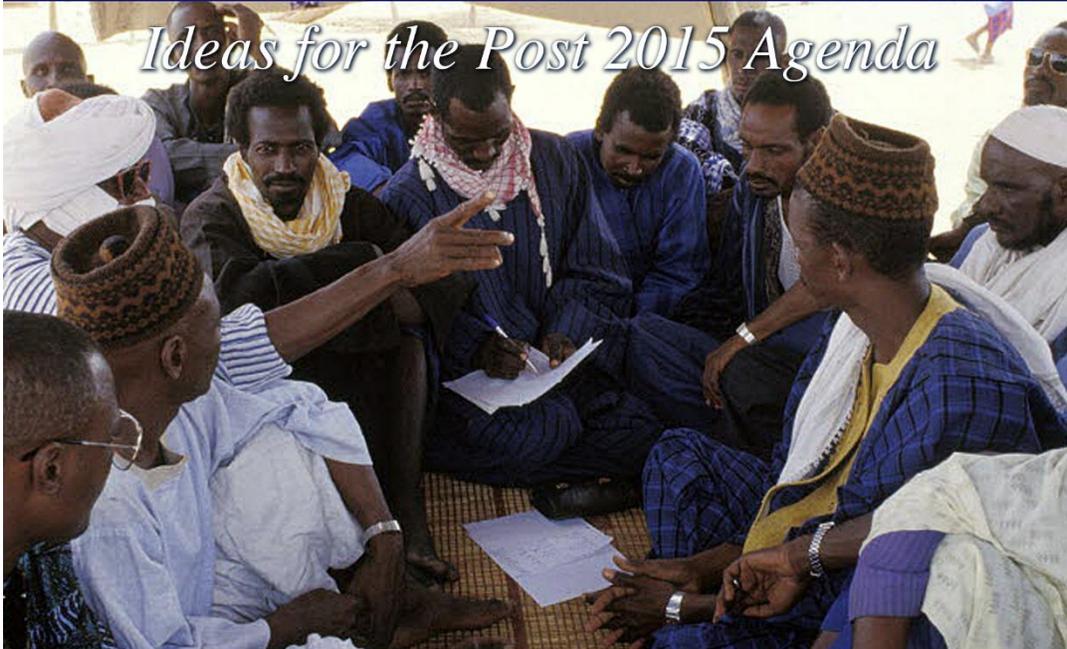


# Governance *for* Sustainable Development

*Ideas for the Post 2015 Agenda*



Edited by the Friends of Governance  
for Sustainable Development



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WORLD MOVEMENT  
for DEMOCRACY



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New World Frontiers is a publishing house that focuses on sustainable development around the intergovernmental process. It publishes papers and Kindle downloadable books that advance the global understanding of how sustainable development can bring about change.

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SENEGAL: Fulani men in a village meeting. Credit: Jeremy Hartley / Panos

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USA, New York: Third Workshop of the Friends of Governance Group. Credit: David Banisar, ARTICLE 19

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# Foreword

**Ambassador Choong-hee HAHN, Ambassador Simona-Mirela Miculescu and Ambassador Jorge Montaña**

The Post-2015 Agenda is an unprecedented effort that embodies universal aspirations for achieving a better, more just, equitable, peaceful and sustainable future. Representatives from 193 governments and multiple stakeholders, from all sectors, have actively participated in its creation. This ambitious and unique exercise represents a paradigm shift in development policy. It materializes years of dialogue and candid ambitions of addressing the most pressing global challenges. In this context, the rule of law, as well as, effective, robust, participatory and accountable institutions is of utmost importance to achieve the 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) and their 169 targets.

The inextricable link between good governance and sustainable development was acknowledged in the Rio+20 Declaration “The Future We Want”. Moreover, the Report of the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda further elaborated on this issue and made a call for all countries to recognize the need for responsive, legitimate and democratic institutions, at all levels.

Mindful of these challenges, the governments of Mexico, Romania and the Republic of Korea, with the technical support of the Tellus Institute and the organization ARTICLE 19, reinvigorated the “Group of Friends of the Governance for Sustainable Development”, which was created in the preparation of the Rio+20 Conference, as a flexible and informal space to discuss issues related to good governance and foster cooperation between multiple actors in the context of the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

The Group of Friends also aims to contribute to the discussions of the institutional architecture for the Agenda’s implementation, follow-up and review. Thus, the Group convened government representatives, UN officials, experts, and civil society in November 2014, January and May 2015 to three participatory workshops on governance and the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

During the first workshop discussions revolved around the relevance of governance in the SDGs context including data collection and accountability. Moreover, participants shared ideas and experiences on public participation. In January, during the second workshop, attendees held engaging discussions on the international, national and regional infrastructure for follow-up and review for the agenda. The third and latest workshop took place in January. It focused on key issues of governance and sustainable development; particularly, on the need of an interlinked and coherent review framework for the Post-2015 Agenda and the Addis Ababa agreement on Financing for Development. At this meeting, participants analyzed and reflected upon the lessons

that existing review mechanisms may have for strengthening a Global Alliance for sustainable development.

It is with great pleasure that we are now presenting this publication which compiles the main elements of the engaging and valuable discussions that governmental representatives, UN officials, several NGOs, experts and civil society had on the aforementioned workshops. In this sense, we would like to thank all the participants for their important contributions. Moreover, we extend our gratitude to the Tellus Institute and the organization ARTICLE 19 who have worked extensively to make these dialogues and the present publication a reality.

We expect the present publication to be a useful input for the ongoing discussions about the institutional architecture for the Post-2015 Agenda. Our generation has now the opportunity to redefine the future and bring real, significant, transformative and universal change for and with the people, leaving no one behind. However, sustainable development will only become a reality if we have the enabling environment for it to happen. Thus, good governance will be pivotal for implementing, reviewing and improving the Post-2015 Development Agenda. We expect that this publication contributes to the colossal, but encouraging, challenges we will be facing during the next 15 years.

## Forward biographies

**Ambassador Choong-hee HAHN** is Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations and was Chairperson of the 47th Session of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL). His previous positions in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs include Director-General for Cultural Affairs, sous-sherpa and Spokesman for the 2012 Seoul Nuclear Security Summit, Director-General for Human Resources, and Deputy Director-General for North Korean Nuclear Affairs. He has also served in the Ministry as Director for North American Affairs and was Director for Policy and DPRK at the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) in New York.

Ambassador Hahn's areas of expertise include North Korean nuclear affairs, nuclear non-proliferation, regional architecture surrounding the Korean Peninsula and Northeast Asia, North American, European and African affairs, as well as public diplomacy. He also served at the Korean Embassy in Washington, D.C., Lagos, Vienna, and Paris. Ambassador Hahn received an M.A. in international relations from the University of Pennsylvania, a B.A. in French from Seoul National University and studied at the University of Paris I (Pantheon-Sorbonne).

**Ambassador Simona-Mirela Miculescu** has been serving as Permanent Representative of Romania to the United Nations since 2008. During her 24 years of diplomatic career, she served as Spokesperson for the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Senior Media Advisor to the Minister (1993 and 1999), Director of the Press Department within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1994 and 2008), as Press Secretary of the Romanian Embassy in Washington D.C. (1994-1998), and as Senior Public Information Officer at the Mission of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in Kosovo (1999-2000).

Between 2000 and 2004, she served as Foreign Policy Adviser to the President of Romania (with rank of minister), becoming the first woman in the Romanian diplomatic history to be granted the rank of Ambassador. Between 2006 and 2007, as part of Bearing Point, she acted as Senior Advisor for Public Outreach to the Government of Iraq, within a USAID-funded project.

Ambassador Miculescu also has an academic background, as well as an extensive experience in public communication. Starting with her PhD in Literature, her academic career - as a professor of International Public Relations at two Romanian universities and as publisher of several books and tens of articles - goes in parallel with her evolution in diplomacy. In Romania, she is known as one of the best experts in the area of the management of international public relations, and developed the first curricula on this topic, which is now used in several Romanian universities.

Since her appointment in New York, Amb. Miculescu held the positions of Vice-President of the UNICEF Executive Board, Vice-President of the Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute

of the International Criminal Court, Vice-President of the Bureau of the Francophonie, Chair of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee of the General Assembly, during its 66th Session, and Vice-President of the UN General Assembly for its 68th Session. She currently serves as Chair of the 53rd and 54th Sessions of the UN Commission for Social Development.

**Ambassador Jorge Montaña** was born in Mexico City. He graduated from the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) in Law and Political Science and has a Master's degree and Doctorate in Political Science from the London School of Economics.

He entered the Mexican Foreign Service in 1979. In the Foreign Ministry he was Director General of United Nations Specialized Agencies and Director General for Multilateral Affairs. He has been Mexico's Head of Delegation in numerous UN conferences and other mechanisms, as well as in meetings of regional organizations.

From 1989 to 1992 he served as Permanent Representative of Mexico to the United Nations and from 1993 to 1995 as Ambassador of Mexico to the United States. In 2010 he was elected by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) as a member of the International Narcotics Control Board, a position he held until June 2013.

Since 1995 he is associate professor and researcher at the Autonomous Technological Institute of Mexico (ITAM). He is a founder and member of the board of directors of the Spanish edition of Foreign Affairs magazine and a founding member of the Mexican Council on Foreign Affairs.

He is the author of several books and articles on diplomacy, sociology, political rights and human rights. He has been a columnist in Mexico's most important newspapers, La Jornada, Reforma and El Universal as well as in Spain's El País. In the private sector he was a founding partner and CEO of the consulting firm Asesoría y Análisis.

In 2013 he was appointed as Permanent Representative of Mexico to the United Nations and presented his credentials on 23 July of that year.

Ambassador Montaña speaks fluent Spanish, English and French. He is married to Dr. Luz María Valdés and they have two adult children.

## **Introduction**

**Hoonmin Lim, Sara Luna and Oana Rebedea, David Banisar, Felix Dodds and Quinn McKew**

The link between achieving sustainable development and the principles of good governance is gaining increasing acceptance. The Rio + 20 “Future we want” Declaration, paragraph 10, stated that to achieve sustainable development goals, “we need institutions at all levels that are effective, transparent, accountable and democratic.”

The Report of the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda further examined and elaborated on the statements of the Rio +20 Declaration, stating:

“We are calling for a fundamental shift – to recognize peace and good governance as core elements of well-being, not optional extras. This is a universal agenda, for all countries. Responsive and legitimate institutions should encourage the rule of law, property rights, freedom of speech and the media, open political choice, access to justice, accountable government and public institutions. ... These are ends as well as means.”

To support the Friends of Governance for Sustainable Development an informal government group was created in the autumn of 2011. It has built on a rich tradition of informal ‘Friends of Groups’ in New York which have served as a useful informal space for governments to discuss ideas and papers relating to a particular topic.

The main objective of the Friends group is to create that informal space for governments to have discussions among themselves, backed up by expert papers when requested, issues relating to good governance and Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development (IFSD) in relation to the development and implementation of the post 2015 development agenda.

It is chaired by the governments of the Republic of Korea, Mexico and Romania. Over the last nine months it has hosted three workshops while supported by Article 19 as the secretariat for the Friends group.

Recognizing that national and international governance of sustainable development are two different but mutually supporting discussions, the Group has been flexible and open to address both, as appropriate and as Member States see fitting.

Achieving sustainable development requires an enabling environment. Governance plays a crucial role in creating those conditions, notably, for our purposes in the post-2015 development agenda process. From creating new institutions to reforming old ones, the process must live up to this

standard and its mechanisms should be geared towards fostering this type of new international environment and cooperation for sustainable development.

The chapters of this book are a reflection of the rich contributions made by governments, intergovernmental bodies and stakeholders to the three workshops that the Friends group hosted between November 2011 and June 2012.

In preparing this book we would like to thank Gabriela Ocampo, Sarah Lawan, Mariana Echániz, William Cole Simons, Leah Komada and John Charles,

## Chapter and editor biographies

**David Banisar** is a Senior Legal Counsel at ARTICLE 19. He has worked in the field of information policy for over 20 years and was previously Director of the Freedom of Information Project at Privacy International. He has authored books, studies and articles on freedom of information, freedom of expression, media policy, whistleblowing, communications security and privacy. He has also served as an advisor and consultant to numerous organizations, including the Council of Europe, the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the UN Development Programme and the Open Society Institute.

Banisar was a research fellow at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University and Policy Director of the Electronic Privacy Information Center in Washington, DC. He has a Juris Doctor in law and public policy from The Columbus School of Law, at The Catholic University of America in Washington, DC.

**Steven Bernstein** is Associate Chair and Graduate Director, Department of Political Science and Co-Director of the Environmental Governance Lab at the Munk School of Global Affairs, University of Toronto. His research spans the areas of global governance and institutions, global environmental politics, non-state forms of governance, international political economy, and internationalization of public policy.

Bernstein's publications include: *Unsettled Legitimacy: Political Community, Power, and Authority in a Global Era* (co-edited, 2009), *Global Liberalism and Political Order: Toward a New Grand Compromise?* (co-edited, 2007), *A Globally Integrated Climate Policy for Canada* (co-edited, 2007) and *The Compromise of Liberal Environmentalism* (2001), as well as many articles in refereed academic journals – including *European Journal of International Relations*, *Science*, *Review of International Political Economy*, *Journal of International Economic Law*, *International Affairs*, *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, *Policy Sciences*, *Regulation and Governance* and *Global Environmental Politics*. He was recently a convening lead author and member of the Global Forest Expert Panel on the International Forest Regime and a consultant on institutional reform for the “Rio +20” UN Conference on Sustainable Development.

**Adedayo Bolaji-Adio** is the Director of Programs and Communications for ARC Development Initiative. She supports efforts to establish and maintain school libraries and provide technical support to teachers. She also manages ARC Development Initiative's online and off-line communications. In the past, Bolaji-Adio has worked on projects for the World Bank, USAID, the UN, and the American Red Cross.

Bolaji-Adio holds an M.A in International Economics and International Development from the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) and a B.A in International Relations from Johns Hopkins University

**Jack Cornforth** is a Big Development DataShift Senior Project Officer at CIVICUS, World Alliance for Citizen Participation. The DataShift is a multi-stakeholder, demand-driven initiative

that builds the capacity and confidence of citizens and civil society organizations to generate and use data to monitor development progress, demand accountability and campaign for transformative change. He plays roles across project coordination, policy and communications.

Previously, he worked at Stakeholder Forum for a Sustainable Future and led its efforts to develop a Global Network of National Councils for Sustainable Development. He was also assistant editor of Outreach magazine and has authored a number of publications on topics ranging from sustainable development governance to deforestation and corporate sustainability reporting. Cornforth has a BA in International Relations & Politics from the University of Sheffield.

**Felix Dodds** is a Senior Fellow at the Global Research Institute at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and is an Associate Fellow at the Tellus Institute. He was the co-director of the 2014 Nexus Conference on Water, Food, Energy and Climate.

Dodds was the Executive Director of Stakeholder Forum for a Sustainable Future from 1992-2012. He played a significant role in promoting multi-stakeholder dialogues at the United Nations and prosed to the UN General Assembly the introduction of stakeholder dialogue sessions at the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development.

He has been active at the UN since 1990, attending and actively participating in UNFCCC, UNCBD, the World Summits of Rio Earth Summit, Habitat II, Rio+5, Beijing+5, Copenhagen+5, World Summit on Sustainable Development and Rio+20, while also attending the UN Commissions for Sustainable Development and UNEP Governing Councils.

In 2011, he chaired the United Nations DPI 64th NGO conference – 'Sustainable Societies Responsive Citizens'. From 1997-2001, he co-chaired the UN Commission on Sustainable Development NGO Steering Committee.

Dodds has written, or edited, eleven books prior to Rio+20 and with Michael Strauss and Maurice Strong, wrote *Only One Earth: The Long Road via Rio to Sustainable Development*. After Rio+20 with Jorge Laguna Celis and Elizabeth Thompson, he wrote *From Rio+20 to a New Development Agenda Building a Bridge to a Sustainable Future* and *The Plain Language Guide to Rio+20*.

He is also an International Ambassador for the City of Bonn.

**Jessica Espey** is the Associate Director of the SDSN and head of its New York office. Jessica also leads SDSN's post-2015 monitoring and accountability initiative, which also explores investments and innovations that could help to strengthen national and global monitoring systems.

Prior to joining SDSN, Jessica served as a special adviser on the post-2015 agenda within the Office of the President of Liberia, supporting the work of The High Level Panel of Eminent Persons (of which President Sirleaf was co-chair) and the development of the Common African Position on the Post-2015 Agenda. For three years prior she was a senior researcher for Save the Children UK, who initially supported her work in Liberia on secondment. She has also worked as a researcher at the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) and the British Institute in Eastern Africa (BIEA). She has particular expertise in the study of inequality, age and gender discrimination.

Espey holds a Bachelor of Arts with Honors in Modern History from the University of Oxford and a Masters of Sciences in the Political Economy of Development from the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. Over the past eight years, she has lived and worked in the UK, US, Liberia, Kenya and Rwanda.

**Hoonmin Lim** is Minister Counselor of the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea to the UN since 2014. He is in charge of Economic and Development issues covering the Second Committee of the UN General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. He is also covering the inter-governmental negotiations of the post-2015 Development Agenda. He has served at the Embassy of the ROK to Italy, Thailand and Ukraine and also in the Permanent Mission of the ROK to the UN in Geneva. His professional career is mainly focused on human rights and development issues in the UN as well as in the OECD. Lim studied international relations in Yonsei University and University of California San Diego (UCSD).

**Sara Luna** is a member of the Foreign Service of Mexico since 2006. Luna is currently posted at the Permanent Mission of Mexico to the United Nations in charge of the post 2015 development agenda negotiation. She also covers economic and development issues at the Economic and Social Council and the Second Committee of the General Assembly. She has served in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Undersecretary's Office for Asia-Pacific and at the Embassy of Mexico in Japan, where her portfolio included academic affairs, science and technology and cooperation for development. Before joining the Foreign Service, she worked as an adviser at a law firm in Mexico specialized on international law. Luna graduated from the International Relations School at Universidad Autónoma de Guadalajara, as well as from the Matías Romero Diplomatic Institute of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and has a Certificate on Global Affairs from NYU.

**Olimar Maisonet-Guzman** is a Policy Coordinator for IREX's Center for Collaborative Technologies where she explores the use of emerging technologies and new media in international development and citizen engagement. Maisonet-Guzman is a 2009 Harry S. Truman Scholar and a 2011 David L. Boren Fellow. During her Master's program, she spent a year in Brazil conducting environmental conflict policy research at the University of Sao Paulo's Climate and Water Resources Research Group. Maisonet-Guzman has extensive policy experience, having previously worked at the U.S. State Department as a Staff Assistant at the Bureau of Oceans, Environment and Science, and as a policy coordinator for the United Nations Rio+20 and the post-2015 negotiations processes. She has participated in international conferences including Rio+20, UN Commission for Sustainable Development, World Water Week, and the Clinton Global Initiative as a speaker and expert on development issues.

**Quinn McKew** is the Deputy Executive Director of ARTICLE 19, an international freedom of expression and information NGO. Quinn leads ARTICLE 19's global programs on ICTs, protection of human rights defenders and the campaign to incorporate transparency and good governance in the Post-2015 Development Agenda. She is responsible for global operations and governance at ARTICLE 19 including the integration of the 8 regional offices and 50+ regional partner organisations. Prior to joining ARTICLE 19, she worked for the largest non-profit management consultancy in Europe, and was a campaign manager for leading environmental organisations in the United States. McKew has a Masters of Business Administration from

Georgetown University focusing on global non-profit management and a BA in International Relations and the Environment from Stanford University.

**Eve de la Mothe Karoubi** is a Manager for the SDSN. Eve joined the SDSN in November 2012 and leads the work on indicators and monitoring for the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as the development and management of regional and national networks in sub-Saharan Africa. Previously she worked for the OECD on various projects: capacity building in developing and emerging economies, strengthening governance in post-conflict and fragile states, and food security and sustainable development in the Sahel and West Africa. In 2007/08, Eve was an Insight Fellow, a fellowship program to pursue effective conflict management internationally, during which she worked in Liberia, Thailand, Lebanon, and at the International Criminal Court in The Hague. Eve has also held positions with Mercy Corps' Conflict Management Group in New York and the UN International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda in Tanzania.

She holds a dual Masters Degree in International Affairs from the Columbia University School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA) and from Sciences Po Paris, and a B.A. with honors from Smith College.

**Alessandro Motter** is Senior Advisor (economic and social affairs), Inter-Parliamentary Union. In this capacity over the last 11 years, Motter follows the work of the UN and helps support parliamentary engagement in major UN deliberative processes on sustainable development. Previously, he worked as a consultant at UNESCO (with a focus on poverty and the informal economy) and as a legislative assistant to a member of the Ontario Legislature (Canada). His personal perspective on sustainable development stems from the "steady state" school of economic thought which questions the foundations of the prevailing growth model - drawing its inspiration from thinkers such as Ivan Illich, Ernst Schumacker and Herman Daly, among others. Motter holds a B.A in political science from the University of Toronto and an M.A. in international political economy from York University, Canada.

**Marcos A. Orellana** is Director of the Human Rights and Environment Program at the Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL) and Adjunct Associate Professor at the George Washington University School of Law. Prior to joining CIEL, Dr. Orellana was a Fellow to the Lauterpacht Research Centre for International Law of the University of Cambridge, UK. Dr Orellana has acted as legal counsel to the Chilean Ministry of Foreign Affairs on international environmental issues, such as the Rio+20 process. Orellana has also acted as legal advisor to several International Institutions, including the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the UN Environment Programme and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

**Bill Orme** is a writer, editor, and consultant specialized in media development and strategic communications, with long experience managing global advocacy campaigns and working to support independent journalism in emerging democracies.

He recently concluded 12 years of service at the United Nations, most recently as Chief of Communications & Publishing for the UN Human Development Report, following an assignment in Sierra Leone guiding the conversion of a UN radio station into a national public broadcaster. He was previously head of External Communications for the United Nations Development Programme and UNDP's first Policy Advisor for Independent Media Development. Orme is

currently working with the Brussels-based Global Forum on Media Development in support of international civil society efforts to secure access-to-information commitments in the UN's next set of global development goals.

A veteran foreign correspondent, Orne served in the 1990s as Executive Director of the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ). He returned to journalism as a Middle East correspondent for *The New York Times* and UN bureau chief for *The Los Angeles Times*. He was founding editor of *LatinFinance*, a business monthly launched in 1988, following a decade of reporting in Latin America for *The Washington Post*, *The Economist*, and other publications.

He is the author of *Understanding NAFTA: Mexico, Free Trade and the New North America* (University of Texas, 1996) and the editor and lead writer of *A Culture of Collusion: An Inside Look at the Mexican Press* (University of Miami, 1997). Books to which he also contributed include the *Encyclopedia of International Media and Communications* (Elsevier, 2003); *Crimes of War* (W.W. Norton, 1999); *Journalists in Peril* (Transaction, 1998); CPJ's annual *Attacks on the Press* reports from 1993 to 1998; and the UN Human Development Reports (2004 - 2014).

Orne is on the advisory board of the National Endowment for Democracy's Center for International Media Assistance and is a proud founding board member of the Brooklyn Bridge Park Boathouse.

**Derek Osborn** has been associated with Stakeholder Forum for many years, first as Chairman, later as President and currently as a Director. He is also Chairman of Cynnal Cymru (Sustain Wales), a similar organisation supporting multi-stakeholder engagement with sustainable development issues in Wales.

In his first career, Osborn was a civil servant in the Department of the Environment, serving as Director General of the Environment for six years in the early 1990s. At that time he led the UK team preparing the Rio Summit in 1992, and other international negotiations as well as helping to shape the UK environmental agenda.

From 1996 he has pursued a portfolio career with appointments in the public, private, academic and voluntary spheres all linked with sustainable development and the protection of the environment.

He chaired the Round Table on Sustainable Development in the UK for two years and subsequently served on the UK Commission on Sustainable Development for several years.

For five years he chaired the Board of the European Environment Agency, and later was a member of the European Economic and Social Committee and was the first chair of its Sustainable Development Observatory.

He was a non-executive Director of the Severn Trent Water Company for a number of years, and is currently a member of Dyr Cymru, the Welsh Water Company.

He was a visiting fellow of Green College, Oxford in the 1990s and subsequently a visiting professor at University College London.

**Neil Pierre** is currently the Chief of Policy Coordination Branch Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, New York.

Previously he was Chief, ECLAC Sub-regional Headquarters for the Caribbean from February 2005 to May 2010. During his tenure, he spearheaded ECLAC's work in the Caribbean in the conduct of applied research and analysis, and provision of technical cooperation and capacity building support to Caribbean Governments.

He served as Deputy Resident Representative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Port of Spain between 2000 and 2004 during which he oversaw the conduct of a poverty assessment for Suriname, represented UNDP on the Board of the Suriname Conservation Foundation (SCF) along with several other programme initiatives with CARICOM. He was assigned to Grenada to coordinate the UNDP support programme in response to the devastation caused by Hurricane Ivan, and spearheaded the establishment there of the UNDP Liaison Office. Pierre began his career as a Foreign Service Officer with the Government of Guyana from 1981 to 1995.

**Oana Rebedea** is currently working with the Permanent Mission of Romania to the UN, covering the works of Second Committee (Economic and Financial) of the UN General Assembly, and in charge with the development portfolio, ECOSOC coordination and the UN Funds and Programmes active in the development field. She was the lead negotiator for Romania in the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals. In the 68th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, Rebedea held the vice-presidency of the Second Committee.

Her professional contribution in mainly is focused on bringing the national and European vision in the larger glue of global interests in order to identify and facilitate win-win possibilities and trying to avoid self - centered mathematics that stop at national or regional borders.

Rebedea holds an MA in Geopolitics and International Relations from the Academy of Economic Studies in Bucharest and two BAs in International Trade and Marketing and European Economic Studies.

**Guido Schmidt-Traub** is Executive Director of the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network. He has served as climate change advisor to the Africa Progress Panel secretariat and was CEO of Paris-based CDC Climat Asset Management, an investment company regulated by the French financial markets regulator. From 2008-2010 Guido was Director and Partner at South Pole Carbon Asset Management in Zurich, a leading developer of greenhouse gas emission projects. Prior to managing the MDG Support Team at UNDP (2006-2008) he served as Policy Advisor and then as Associate Director of the UN Millennium Project in New York, which was tasked with developing a concrete action plan for the world to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Earlier Guido was Partner at IndexIT Scandinavia, a private equity fund for early-stage technology companies, and consultant at McKinsey & Company in Germany. Guido holds an M.Phil. in Economics from Oxford University (Rhodes Scholar) and a Masters in physical chemistry from the Free University Berlin. He resides in Paris with his family.

**Nikhil Seth** is currently the Director of the Division for Sustainable Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA).

During his career with the United Nations since 1993, Seth has served as Special Assistant and Chief of Office to the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, as Secretary of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and the Second Committee of the General Assembly, and, most recently, as Director of the DESA Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination (OESC), where he guided the ECOSOC's work in implementing several new key mandates, including its Annual Ministerial Review and Development Cooperation Forum.

Prior to joining the United Nations, Seth served in the Indian diplomatic service, where his diplomatic assignments included Geneva, DRC, Central African Republic, Gabon and Equatorial Guinea, as well as the Permanent Mission of India, New York.

**Dr Dhananjayan (Danny) Sriskandarajah** is Secretary General and CEO of CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation since January 2013. His previous posts include Director of the Royal Commonwealth Society, Interim Director of the Commonwealth Foundation, and Deputy Director of the Institute for Public Policy Research. Sriskandarajah is the author of numerous reports and academic articles on international migration and economic development who writes and appears regularly in the media on a range of topics. He sits on several boards, including those of the Baring Foundation, International Alert and Ockenden International, and has been a consultant to several international organisations. He holds a degree from the University of Sydney, and an MPhil and DPhil from the University of Oxford, where he was a Rhodes Scholar. In 2012, he was honored by the World Economic Forum as a Young Global Leader.

**Jan Gustav Strandenaes** is a consultant for NGOs on governance issues. Strandenaes has worked with environment, sustainable development, governance and democracy issues since the 1970's and always in connection with the UN system. He coordinated global NGO input into the UN CSD process and into preparatory process for the UN Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012 in Brazil. He has given workshops all over the world on the UN, governance, the environment and sustainable development, evaluated projects and organizations, advised governments on relations with civil society, chaired UN meetings and facilitated UN processes on the environment and sustainable development. His work has also included disseminating information and teaching about UN issues. He has followed and worked closely with the UN Commission for Sustainable Development since 1997.

**Yuko Suzuki** is currently serving as a Team Leader and Policy Adviser-Effective Development Cooperation. In this capacity, she provides substantive policy and analytical support on country implementation and monitoring of the effective development cooperation agenda as part of the Joint UNDP/OECD Support Team for the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation. She also manages a global policy advisory and advocacy portfolio on effective development cooperation including institutional and policy framework for effective development cooperation; transparent systems for planning, monitoring and reporting; and evidence-based accountability frameworks for effective development cooperation. She also provides strategic oversight/guidance on the UNDP coordination role in the Secretariat consortium of the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI). Prior to her current position, she served as an Aid Effectiveness Advisor with UNDP Rwanda/Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning and an Aid Coordination Specialist with UNDP Tanzania.

**Mandeep Tiwana Mandeep** is the Head of Policy and Research at CIVICUS. He specializes in legislation affecting the core civil society freedoms of expression, association and assembly. On joining CIVICUS in May 2008, he was engaged in advocacy to protect and expand civil society space globally, including through the completion of a comprehensive compendium of legal instruments and other intergovernmental commitments concerning core civil society rights. Previously, Mandeep advised the New Delhi Delegation of the International Committee of the Red Cross on due process guarantees for persons detained in Jammu and Kashmir. Mandeep has a keen interest in human rights and comparative law and has also worked with the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, an international NGO based in New Delhi, on campaigns related to criminal justice sector reform.

**Anne Thurston OBE** has worked with governments in lower resource countries for over four decades to share solutions for managing public sector records. Between 1970 and 1980 she lived in Kenya, where she conducted research and worked for the Government's Kenya National Archives. In 1980 she became a lecturer, later a Reader, in International Records Studies at University College London. She established the International Records Management Trust in 1989 and continues to be its Director. From 1996, she concentrated fully on the work of the Trust.

Recognizing the impact of information technology on the public sector evidence base, she structured the Trust to address the requirements for achieving accountability and transparency in the digital environment. She has directed dozens of practical projects across the Caribbean, Africa and Asia; led the development of relevant educational materials that were made available to lower resource countries without charge; and directed a range of research projects. She has regularly monitored international good practice for managing digital records, studied the consequences of the failure to manage records as evidence in the public sector, and related these issues to practical challenges for governance.

Thurston was a member of the UK Lord Chancellor's Advisory Council on Public Records from 1994 to 2000. She was awarded an OBE for Services to Public Administration in Africa in 2000 and the Emmett Leahy Award for Outstanding Contributions to the Information and Records Management Profession globally in 2007.

**Farooq Ullah** is Executive Director of Stakeholder Forum from September 2012 to January 2015, Farooq is now a Director of the Board and the senior public face of the organisation. He joined Stakeholder Forum as Head of Policy and Advocacy in September 2011 after his role with the UK Sustainable Development Commission (SDC) for nearly five years. During that time Ullah worked on strategic assessment at the SDC analyzing public policy, sustainable operations and procurement, strategy, governance, and decision-making in order to hold the UK Government to account and improve its sustainability performance. Key elements of this work included policy advice, stakeholder engagement and capability building. In all, Farooq has over ten years of experience at international, national and local levels in public policy and sustainable development, with a further three years of private sector consultancy experience.

Ullah is also a Specialist Advisor to the UK Parliament's Environmental Audit Committee, a member of Future Earth's Engagement Committee, and a member of the Alliance for Future Generations. Additionally, he is a founding member of Brighter Future, a climate-change action group in London.

Ullah holds a BComm in Management Science from the University of Alberta and an MSc in Public Policy from the London School of Economic

## **Section 1**

**Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels**

# Chapter 1

## The Role of the Right to Information in Sustainable Development

**David Banisar**

*The right of public access to information held by government bodies empowers individuals and communities to be able to engage and participate in decisions that affect their fundamental human, social and economic rights relating to sustainable development. While it has been recognized since the Rio Declaration as important, it is crucial to include it as a key element in the Post-2015 agenda.*

### **Recognition by the UN of the Importance of the Right to Information**

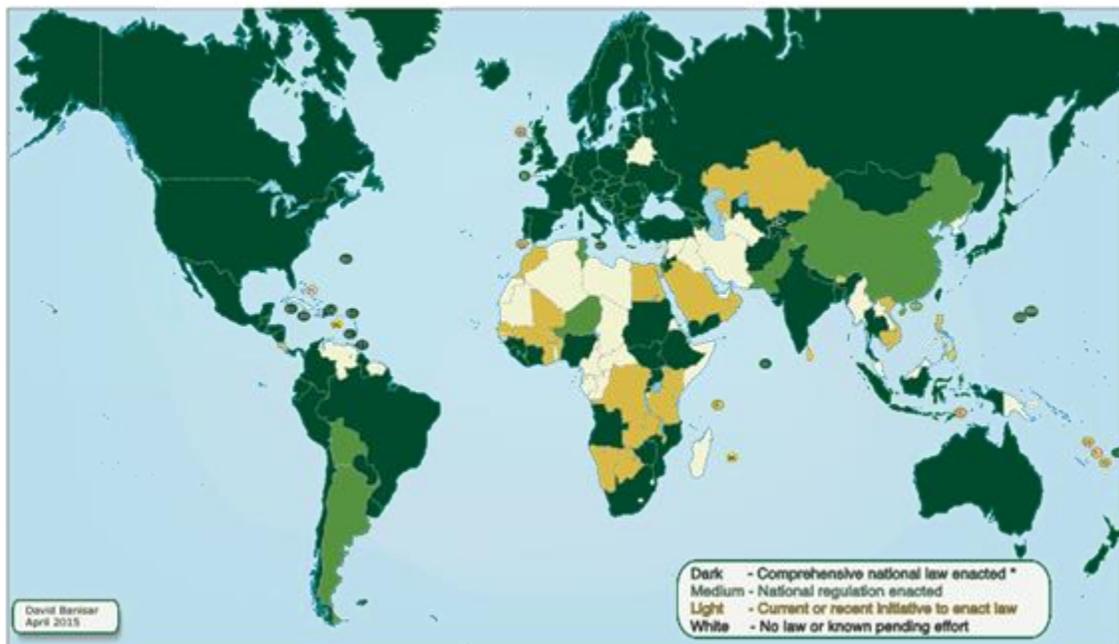
The importance for ensuring access to information was first recognized in Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration, which stated, “Environmental issues are best handled with participation of all concerned citizens, at the relevant level. At the national level, each individual shall have appropriate access to information concerning the environment that is held by public authorities, including information on hazardous materials and activities in their communities, and the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes. States shall facilitate and encourage public awareness and participation by making information widely available.” This was further elaborated in Article 25 of the Millennium Declaration and Articles 42, 43, and 44 of the Rio+20 “The future we want” Declaration.

In the post-2015 discussions, the benefit and merits of its incorporation in the SDGs as an enabler to sustainable development has debated extensively. The High Level Panel stated, “Everywhere, institutions could be more fair and accountable. The key is transparency. Transparency helps ensure that resources are not wasted, but are well managed and put to the best use” and recommended a target of “Guarantee the public’s right to information and access to government data”. In May 2014, an unprecedented 31 UN Special Rapporteurs and experts endorsed the HLPs recommendation and called on the UN and all states to ensure that rights of information were fully recognized and protected in the Post-2015 agenda. Numerous reports from the UN Task Team also recognized the importance of transparency and recommended its inclusion. Finally, the Open Working Group recommended that access to information be included as a target in Goal 16, as well as in specific targets relating to women’s health, sustainable consumption and production, and climate change. The Secretary General’s Stocktaking report summed up all of these as “Press freedom and access to information, freedom of expression, assembly and association are enablers of sustainable development” and “we must maximize our commitment to public transparency, information sharing, participatory monitoring and open data.”

## How it works

The right of access to information has been adopted into law in over 100 countries around the world from the largest countries (China, India, USA, Indonesia, Brazil, Nigeria and Mexico) to some of the smallest (Cook Islands, St Vincent and the Grenadines) covering over 80 percent of the world's population. Many countries, including South Africa, Mexico, Fiji, and Cape Verde have also incorporated it in their national constitutions. Typically, the laws give any person the right to demand information from public bodies, subject to limited exemptions. Public bodies must respond to the requests within a limited time frame and publish information on their web sites and through different forms of media. An appeals and oversight mechanism are also typically provided for. Minimum standards on the laws have been adopted by the UN Human Rights Committee, African Union, Council of Europe, and the Organization of American States.

### National Right to Information Laws, Regulations and Initiatives 2015



\*Not all national laws have been implemented or are effective. See <http://www.article19.org/>

In international human rights law, the right of information is recognized by the UN Human Rights Committee in General Comment 34 on free expression, General Comments 14 (health) and 15 (water) of the Committee on Economic and Social Rights and General Comment 4 of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on Adolescent health and development, and regional human rights bodies, as a key element of the right of free expression. In addition, numerous special rapporteurs of the Human Rights Council, have found that it is essential for promoting sustainable development generally, including fighting poverty, ensuring access to water and sanitation, promoting a healthy environment, and ensuring the rights of health and education.

Further regional human rights conventions in Asia, Europe, the Americas and Africa all require governments to make available information available to the public (1). The UNECE Convention

on Access to Information, Public Participation, and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (The Aarhus Convention), which implements Rio's Principle 10, has been adopted by 47 countries from Iceland to Kazakhstan. A similar instrument is currently being negotiated for the Latin America and the Caribbean region.

## **Benefits of Incorporating the Right to Information in the SDGs**

### ***Ensuring Rights***

These rights to information have been extensively used by people to achieve their social and economic, as well as their human rights. For example, in India, the Right to Information (RTI) Act is frequently used by individuals to ensure their rights to food and employment; communities in rural Brazil are using the Access to Information Law to help them fight for better access to, and a better quality of, water; In Indonesia, parents of poor and marginalized school children used the country's Freedom of Information Law to hold schools to account for how they used school funds; in Senegal, access to information is used to promote better maternal health.

### ***Enabling Participation***

A key impact of the right to information is that individuals and communities are better able to participate in decisions when they have information about the activities and policies of the government. Disadvantaged communities often are not able to engage due to problems with access to the information, literacy and other problems. RTI can reduce these disparities. An example of this are laws requiring Environmental or Social Impact Assessments before major projects are conducted, which have been adopted in over 120 countries. These require that communities are informed about major projects and given facts prior to decisions on the going forward with the projects.

This is especially important for projects, which affect indigenous communities. International law required that communities must provide free, prior, and informed consent (2). As the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous People stated in 2010, "Information is necessary to ensure that indigenous peoples participate in decision-making in an informed way" (3).

### ***Reducing Corruption***

Access to information is considered a key tool in anti-corruption measures as reasons for awarding contracts and other financial transactions must be documented and justified (4). The UN Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) includes several substantive provisions, which promote public access as a means of enhancing anti-corruption measures and promoting partnerships to fight corruption. Similar provisions also exist in the regional anti-corruption conventions.

Access is crucial in many areas of poverty reduction, for example to ensure that Cash Transfer Programs actually help the people needed, that social programs allow beneficiaries to understand the eligibility criteria so they can receive their proper assistance; so that communities monitor the medicines available in their hospitals; and to allow parents to know about the resources available at their children's schools and if the teachers are showing up. In Uganda, a government program to publish information about monthly grants to schools combined with a other reforms led to substantial reduction in corruption and more money going to classrooms (Hubbard, 2007).

## ***Achieving the “Data Revolution”***

The issue of the data revolution is interrelated with the right of access to information. The Data Revolution calls for the collection and dissemination of data relating to the successes and failures of development. But this collection, processing and dissemination needs a proper framework to work within to resolve important questions about how it is collected, how reliable it is, and who gets to see it and use it, and how they can use it to facilitate success. As the Secretary General’s Independent Expert Advisory Group on a Data Revolution for Sustainable Development (IEAG) stated, “Without high-quality data providing the right information on the right things at the right time; designing, monitoring and evaluating effective policies becomes almost impossible.”

Many questions have been raised about the reliability of data collected for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). As UN Department for Economic and Social Affairs (ECOSOC) noted as far back as 2003, some countries “manipulate statistics, by either increasing or, more commonly, decreasing, the numbers of the poor for political, economic or other reasons which have very little to do with combating poverty” (6).

The adoption of right to information legislation has been found to improve record keeping practices of public bodies. This is both due to revised record keeping system to meet the new legal requirements of access but also as noted above to ensure that decisions would appear to be based on rational processes. Some governments have used it as an opportunity to rewrite manuals and other documents. Others keep more information on the decisions. However its done, statistics that must be backed with information are both more reliable and trusted than those that appear from closed processes.

## **Transparency in International Bodies**

The importance of the right to information is not just limited to national bodies. International bodies including the UN, regional bodies, and international financial institutions should also be more open and make information more available for the same reasons stated above. Only a few UN bodies including UNDP, UNEP, and UNICEF have specific policies, while most International Financial Institutions (IFIs) have adopted comprehensive but limited polices. These were recently highlighted by the UN Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Association, who recommended all multi-lateral organizations adopted comprehensive policies (7).

## **Additional resources**

*The London Declaration for Transparency, the Free Flow of Information and Development*  
<http://www.article19.org/data/files/medialibrary/1798/London-Declaration.pdf>

*Empowering Development Website* [www.empoweringdevelopment.org](http://www.empoweringdevelopment.org)

## **Notes**

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Documents (2009); European Court of Human Rights, Társaság a Szabadságjogokért v. Hungary, (Application No 37374/05), 14 April 2009.

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(3) Progress report on the study on indigenous peoples and the right to participate in decision-making, Report of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples\* (2010) FIX

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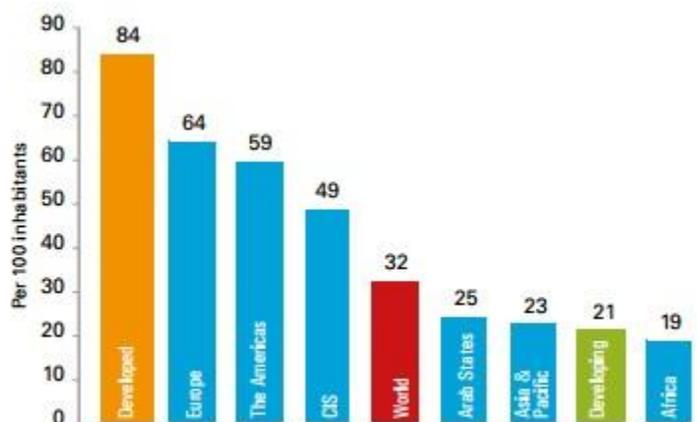
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## Chapter 2

# Information and Communication Technologies: new drivers for development and the post-2015 agenda

Olimar Maisonet Guzman

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) have raised to prominence on the global development agenda and continue to become fundamental for the political, social, and economic structures of today's world. Most importantly, ICTs can facilitate effective governance structures by helping governments connect with citizens and civil society as long as their role is recognized within the post-2015 agenda. ICTs including the mobile phone and Internet have changed the world and have open opportunities for enhancing development efforts to solve the health, agriculture, financial and education challenges that we face. ICTs, like all technologies, are tools and can be effective as long as users' need and local context are taken into account.



Note: \* Estimate

Source: ITU World Telecommunication/ICT Indicators database

**What are Information and Communication Technologies?**

ICTs refer to technologies that provide access to information through telecommunications. ICTs focus primarily on technologies use for communication, including the Internet, wireless networks, cell phone and other communication mediums. ICTs are natural part of the implementation of the right to information, which is protected by Article 19 of the UN Declaration on Human Rights.

*“Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.”* - Article 19, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

New figures released by the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) indicate that, by end 2014, there will be almost 3 billion Internet users, two-thirds of them coming from the developing world (ITU, 2015). This corresponds to an Internet-user penetration of 40% globally, 78% in developed countries and 32% in developing countries.

<b>Active mobile-broadband subscriptions</b>									
	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>
Developed	225	336	450	554	707	828	926	1,026	1,090
Developing	43	86	165	253	475	726	1,027	1,667	2,368
World	268	422	615	807	1,182	1,554	1,953	2,693	3,459

Furthermore, the ITU now estimates there are over 7 billion mobile phone subscriptions in the world, up from 738 million only 15 years prior (1). Internet penetration has increased even more quickly, from 6.5% to 43% of the global population over the same period. Nonetheless, many people are not going to be connected to the Internet or mobile will not have the necessary skills to take advantage of these new technologies. The rapid growth and reach of ICTs is evident and is something that we cannot simply ignore. Globally, 3.2 billion people are using the Internet, of which two billion live in developing countries. Increased access to information and knowledge, underpinned by universal literacy, is an essential pillar of sustainable development.

### **Can ICTs Affect Poverty and Improve Development?**

Despite that increasing access to ICTs has been lauded as an achievement by many organizations, the impact that they can have has been called into question. However, it is necessary to understand that ICTs by themselves do not improve people’s livelihoods, but that ICTs are multipliers. A

recent case study from Foreign Policy on the lack of attribution between democracy and technology adoption over the past 15 years exemplifies this. Digging deeper beyond country-level analysis uncovers a worsening inequality for those without access. Robert Pepper of Cisco points out this alarming trend in a June 2, 2015 World Economic Forum report:

*However, the decrease (over the past 15 years) in global income inequality masks the income inequality increases observed within individual countries. Within-country income inequality appears to be rising in many countries, in both the developed and developing world. The reason for this paradox is that, while ICT improves the standard of living for those who adopt it, those who do not adopt and use ICT do not improve their standard of living as fast or as much.*

These two examples display that we cannot just push for access for its own sake. Telecenters and other such initiatives have shown that access on its own did not change much for the communities targeted. More important is complimentary investments to nurture local capacity, as Kentaro Toyoma advocates (2). Because of these challenges, technology advocates need to get creative in order to provide meaningful connectivity that creates a better and more just world for those who are unconnected.

### **How can ICTs drive development?**

ICTs can indeed drive development if they are truly integrated into development initiatives. For example:

- *The potential of ICTs lies in their capacities to instantly connect a vast number of individuals and organizations across geographical distances at very little cost.*
- *Improved ICT infrastructure can be used to expand communications, speed up the delivery of services and provide access to crucial information particularly in remote communities.*

### **Implementing e-governance: Government Procurement System in Mexico**

Mexico's federal government established "Compranet" for government procurement as part of its efforts to fight corruption by automating procurement procedures. By facilitating a process of bidding and reverse bidding on-line, it seeks to make government purchasing more efficient

and transparent. The system allows the public to see what services and products the government is spending its resources on, and what companies are providing them with these services. There are more than 6000 public sector tenders logged daily, and more than 20 000 service-providing firms are regular users. (Source: UNESCO, 2009)(3).

According to a World Bank, ICTs are becoming the largest distribution platform for providing public and private services to millions of people in rural and poor areas (4). Market information, financial services, education and health services had largely been unavailable in those areas in the past due to lack of connectivity of any kind. Now, ICT platforms are promoting new economic and social opportunities at all levels for the poor population.

### **ICTs for effective governance**

Respondents of the UN sponsored survey The World We Want indicated that effective governance should be considered a priority theme for the post-2015 agenda (5). The importance of effective governance (and the role of ICTs in facilitating this process) was echoed most recently by the UN Secretary General's Data Revolution Group report A World that Counts (6) and the UN High Level Panel on the Post-2015 Agenda A New Global Partnership (7).

Governments are increasingly looking towards ICTs as a tool to implement open government plans and improve e-government service delivery. For example, considerable progress has been made globally on establishing government agencies websites, with all countries having a government web presence in 2014 (8). Additional efforts have taken place to guarantee that documents such as laws are available online and other public services such as taxes, fines, licenses, and others. Furthermore, ICTs can facilitate the e-participation of citizens in rural areas, which are often disconnected from the decision-making processes of a centralized government (9).

### **Implementing e-Services: Facilitating Payments to Farmers**

In Romania, public libraries have worked with the Payment and Intervention Agency in Agriculture (APIA), to assist farmers in the process of completing and submitting agricultural subsidies forms online instead of traveling to the capital to process these. Between 2011 and 2013, Romanian public libraries helped over 90,000 farmers submit applications for farming

subsidies reaching \$155 million. Thus, more than 180,000 working days were saved - two days per person on an average, but some farmers saved as many as five days. (IREX, 2014)

### **ICTs for accelerating health outcomes**

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), malaria caused an estimated 627,000 deaths among African children in 2012, while tuberculosis is one of the leading causes of death in Sub-Saharan Africa (10). The majority of these deaths are related to the lack of appropriate identification and treatment. Access to information is most crucial at the diagnosis stage. More than half of the children who die of malaria die within the first 48 hours. Fast and appropriate diagnosis and treatment of malaria is extremely important in reducing child mortality.

Public Access Computers (PACs) with internet access have the potential of bridging the digital divide and making readily available information on malaria prevention and treatment. A recent survey completed by TASCHA in six countries found that public access to ICT plays a critical role in connecting people to information (11). Furthermore, a majority of the users surveyed came to public access venues to look for specific information; 82% of those that visited a public access point to seek health information reported achieving a positive result for their health.

### **Supporting health system modernization**

Telemedicine uses ICT networks to overcome geographical barriers to increase rural communities' access to health services, while decreasing costs and improving diagnosis (12). Through communication networks a local physician can send images or video to otherwise unavailable specialists to verify a diagnosis or facilitate the remote training of health workers. Countries are already reaping the benefits of telemedicine. In Romania, General Electric and IREX are hosting training programs for rural doctors at local libraries. The project is delivering remote training on clinical electrocardiograms (EKG) in partnership with the Bucharest Medical School. Similar projects and training schemes have been tailored to be adopted in the African context (13).

Public Access to ICTs, especially the internet and other information networks is an essential link in the process to improve health outcomes in developing countries. Improved access to health information and telemedicine can help overcome challenges associated with lack of trained healthcare workers in rural areas and to raise awareness among vulnerable populations. When

people have access to information and the ability to use it, survival rates for malaria and tuberculosis, especially among children, improve.

## **Recommendations**

ICTs can be a powerful tool for promoting development so as long as strong policies are in place to guarantee that all citizens can benefit from these technologies. ICTs can help deliver effective governance structures that can reach all citizens despite geographic distances. To achieve this, governments must recognize the priorities set out by the Lyon Declaration on Access to Information:

1. Acknowledge the public's right to access information and data, while respecting the right to individual privacy.
2. Recognize the important role of local authorities, information intermediaries and infrastructure such as ICTs and an open Internet as a means of implementation.
3. Adopt policy, standards and legislation to ensure the continued funding, integrity, preservation and provision of information by governments, and access by people.
4. Develop targets and indicators that enable measurement of the impact of access to information and data and reporting on progress during each year of the goals in a Development and Access to Information (DA2I) report.
5. Promote the use of Universal Service Funds (USFs) to subsidize a variety of free and rural public access models, telecenters, schools, and libraries to guarantee equitable access to ICTs.

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- (4) <http://live.worldbank.org/information-communications-technology-development>
- (5) <https://www.worldwewant2015.org/>
- (6) <http://www.undatarevolution.org/report/>
- (7) [http://www.un.org/sg/management/pdf/HLP\\_P2015\\_Report.pdf](http://www.un.org/sg/management/pdf/HLP_P2015_Report.pdf)
- (8) [http://www.who.int/malaria/media/world\\_malaria\\_report\\_2013/en/](http://www.who.int/malaria/media/world_malaria_report_2013/en/)
- (9) <http://tascha.uw.edu/projects/cross-european-survey-public-libraries/>
- (10) [http://www.who.int/goe/publications/goe\\_telemedicine\\_2010.pdf](http://www.who.int/goe/publications/goe_telemedicine_2010.pdf)
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## Chapter 3

# Can We Access and Trust Digital Records to Support Development Goals?

**Dr Anne Thurston**

### **Records as Evidence for Sustainable Development**

Despite the growing enthusiasm for using technology to strengthen governance and support openness, as yet there has been little attention to managing the quality of digital information produced using technology. The speed with which information technologies are being adopted internationally has not been matched by the skills and structures needed to manage the digital records they generate. The result is a weak evidence base across many parts of the world that will make it difficult to achieve openness, benchmark and measure the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and support real change.

Records, as defined in international standards, are ‘information created, received, and maintained’ as evidence and as an asset by an organization or person, in pursuit of legal obligations or in the transaction of business. They may be in any medium, form, or format (1). It is increasingly important to link together all of the information required as evidence, whether it is entered directly in a database, maintained as a digital record or kept on a paper file. This holistic approach is known as information governance.

When records are reliable and available, they provide the clearest and most durable evidence of any government’s policies, operations, decisions and activities. They document what the government has promised, what it has done and how it has spent public funds. They are the basis for achieving openness. Right to Information legislation and Open Data programs aimed at engaging the public in oversight of what governments are doing and spending cannot not achieve their potential benefits if records cannot be accessed or trusted.

As digital information systems replace paper-based systems, it is essential that records in digital form are available to provide the evidence upon which governments and citizens depend. Unfortunately, digital records created and held in ICT systems are highly vulnerable, and unless protected by a clearly defined regulatory framework, their value as evidence diminishes rapidly from the point that they are created. In particular, if computerized systems do not systematically capture structured metadata (data describing the context, content, structure and management of the records), the information will lack legal value, simply because it will not be possible to demonstrate that is authentic and reliable.

There is a substantial gap between expectations for the benefits from digital governance (improved transparency, accountability, transparency, services for citizens and economic performance), and

the quality of digital information available in most of the world. It is time to examine the consequences of this gap and to broaden the focus of information technology to also include managing information integrity and access.

### **Digital Information Challenges**

Many government stakeholders and development planners are not aware that ICT systems create records but generally lack the full functionality needed to capture and retain accurate evidence; at the same time, in many cases the structures, controls and skills needed to manage reliable digital information are not in yet place. The risk is that if digital records and data are not managed and protected they can be altered, deleted, fragmented, corrupted or lost inadvertently. With each of these losses, transparency, accountability and the ability to measure compliance and progress toward development goals diminishes.

Digital records may be stored on personal drives, un-networked computers, or unmanaged network drives, rendering them unavailable as a corporate resource. Different versions of the records may be kept without adequate identification. Without structured metadata, it will not be possible to prove who has used, altered or deleted them, nor will it be possible to retain them through technology changes. Interoperability initiatives within and between governments rest on the ability to exchange information easily, but poor quality information without adequate metadata will impede exchange between information systems.

The same issues apply when paper records are digitized. Many digitization initiatives fail to incorporate requirements for legal admissibility, reliability and usability, for instance, requirements for metadata capture, image resolution, and classification structure. When this happens, digitized records are very difficult to retrieve and use, and they lose their legal value.

These issues and management principles also apply to data. High quality data can be used to improve policy decisions and services, for research, planning, and monitoring, and for empowering citizens. However, when public sector data is not protected and preserved systematically, it can easily be lost and its value diminished. Databases are generally used for several years and updated regularly. Without accurate and consistent metadata to provide contextual information, the data can be unclear and may have little or no value. If a database has been in operation for a long period, fields and codes may have changed, and in many cases, database documentation does not include information about the changes. The documentation may be completely lost or available only in paper format. Moreover, databases may be maintained jointly by several authorities but owned by a single office, making documentation difficult to trace.

### **Records, Open Data, and Right to Information (Freedom of Information)**

There is a widespread expectation that Open Data will improve accountability and economic performance by enabling access to public sector information. Any data may be better than no information, but accountability benefits depend on the quality of the information. Data are typically extracted or aggregated from records, for instance agricultural statistics from land use records, payroll data from pay and personnel records. Poor source records result in misleading data, as Bill Dorotinsky, World Bank Sector Manager, Public Sector Performance Global Expert Team, noted recently in discussion:

*Records connect back to economics, economic management, auditing. Poor economic data leads to bad economic forecasting. People assume that good economic data is there, but if it is not, work is flawed or not possible. Data should come from records – the veracity of the data depends upon the record. The quality of the records management system makes you trust or doubt data.*

Similarly, Right to Information and records management are inseparable, whether in the paper or the digital environment. As the UK Lord Chancellor's Code of Practice on the Management of Records, part of the Freedom on Information Act of 2000, explains so well:

*Freedom of Information legislation is only as good as the quality of the records and other information to which it provides access. Access rights are of limited value if information cannot be found when requested or, when found, cannot be relied upon as authoritative.*

### **Illustrations of Risks**

Regular warnings about the risks posed by poor records have featured in audit reports, anti-corruption investigations, expenditure tracking surveys, research reports, and press reports for at least a decade but have not been addressed systematically. Two recent press reports from Africa remind us of the costs of ignoring weak records controls:

*Sierra Leone (2013): At hospitals in the interior, and at the central medical store in Freetown, they have found no records to support the dispensing of drugs worth thousands of dollars; and they could not find records for 23 of the Health Ministry's 55 bank accounts. Record keeping has been abysmal, an anticorruption investigator wrote in a report.*

*Malawi (2014): It is the biggest financial scandal in Malawi's history. Known as "cashgate", it has affected the country's relations with donors and caused outrage among Malawians. ... At the center of the scandal is a computer-based financial information storage system. Some government officials have allegedly been exploiting a loophole in the system to divert millions from government coffers. It is estimated that up to \$250m may have been lost through allegedly fraudulent payments to businessmen for services that were not rendered. According to a report in the local media, an audit by managers of the financial system has established that records of some transactions carried out between July and September 2013 were deleted.*

### **Building High-Quality Digital Information**

Building high-quality evidence requires an interface between interconnected laws, standards, well-defined metadata architectures and technology systems. It involves defining and applying consistent controls as a core aspect of digital governance. Standards incorporate data models, processing rules, and guidelines for standardized structures and mandatory metadata fields. They describe arrangements for registration and retention and for exporting records from records systems to secure long-term storage. Some countries have developed their own standards, while others use international specifications (2).

Systematic registration and metadata capture lays the essential foundation for building information integrity and legal authority. Once a record is registered and its context is fixed, it is difficult to alter it or delete it without authority. Subsequent changes are documented through metadata, providing an audit trail of context and changes in status that makes it possible to identify fraud or illegal actions.

Internationally agreed standards and requirements for protecting and preserving digital records as evidence are frequently in place in wealthier countries, but the need for records standards is not yet on the radar of international development thinking, and the standards are rarely applied in lower resource countries.

### **Benefits of Managing Digital Records as High Quality Evidence**

The key benefits include:

- Records can be opened to the public systematically and privacy rights can be protected. The public can have confidence in the credibility, authenticity and integrity of the information and can rely on records to protect their rights.
- Right to Information requests can be met rapidly and reliably. Restrictions can be justified legally, and documents can be tagged when there is a restriction on release.
- Public sector agencies can use the records confidently to plan and monitor programmes, activities and expenditure. They can trace, relate and compare policies, decisions, actions and expenditure accurately over long periods and identify precedents as a basis for an informed and socially just society.
- Accountability and transparency can be safeguarded and demonstrated. The metadata audit trail of changes to, or unauthorized use of, provides a means of tracking fraud.
- Records along with their essential metadata can be securely and systematically extracted from diverse digital systems and transferred to long-term digital custody, where they can continue to meet legal, administrative, fiscal, or other evidentiary needs through time. They can be migrated safely to new formats and software and hardware environments.
- Standardized interoperability rules can be applied effectively, making it possible to interface dispersed information systems, reuse information and develop cross-organizational services.
- Information loss can be minimized.

### **Issues for the Future**

The challenges are universal, and countries that do not develop requirements for managing digital records will be at a significant disadvantage in the digital environment. Laws, administrative placement, and responsibilities for digital information management need to be reviewed in the light of the changing requirements for using information to support sustainable development and

openness, including achieving anti-corruption, citizen engagement, economic development and digital governance. A simple risk analysis can determine whether relevant laws are in place and have been harmonised, and whether clear mandatory requirements have been developed and implemented for creating, structuring, using and preserving trustworthy records generated by digital systems.

Given the level of risk and cost involved, investment in institutionalizing international records management standards would make a major difference to global aspirations for using information to achieve sustainable development.

## **Notes**

(1) See ISO 30300:2011: Information and Documentation - Management Systems for Records - Fundamentals and Vocabulary.

(2) For instance MoReq®, a specification of modular requirements for digital records systems developed by the DLM Forum, a European-wide organization of national archives, enterprises, and research organizations with an interest in digital records management.

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## Chapter 4

# The Data Revolution for Sustainable Development

**Jessica Espey, Guido Schmidt-Traub & Eve de la Mothe Karoubi**

In July 2014, the Open Working Group (OWG) on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) released its set of 17 recommended goals and 169 targets, of which 40 focus on means of implementation.

Governments will adopt the SDGs in September 2015, and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) will expire at the end of that year. So the world must be ready to start implementing the SDGs on 1 January 2016. By December 2015 the UN Inter-agency and Expert Group on SDGs (IAEG-SDGs) will have reported on its recommendations for SDG indicators. This will be agreed in March 2016. Meanwhile accompanying metrics must be defined, adequate monitoring protocols and data collection modalities agreed, and sufficient resources mobilized to implement the goals. Of course, data systems will require continuous strengthening over coming decades, and many of the improvements required will be implemented over several years, yet, governments and other stakeholders must be ready to act in 2016.

Getting ready to monitor the SDGs will require a ‘data revolution,’ as called for by the High-Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda and many others. The term ‘data revolution’ has different meanings to different people – some emphasize citizen accountability, others new forms of social and geophysical data, new ways of sharing data, and many other facets. Yet, any data revolution for sustainable development would be meaningless if it did not also address the essential nuts and bolts of monitoring the SDGs in every country. As recognized in the OWG document (paragraph 17), there is a critical need to strengthen data collection capacity, as well as data quality.

In September 2014, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon launched the Independent Experts Advisory Group on the Data Revolution (IEAG) to advise on how the data revolution can be implemented. Their report – *A World That Counts* – was released on November 6, 2014. The report emphasizes three main points:

- **Data are essential for decision-making and accountability.** In the context of the SDGs, data should serve as a management tool to help countries develop implementation and monitoring strategies for achieving the SDGs and to monitor progress. Second, the SDG indicators should serve as a report card to measure progress towards achieving a target an

d ensure the accountability of governments and other stakeholders for achieving the SDGs.

- **Data needs improving.** Despite considerable progress in recent years, whole groups of people are not being counted and important aspects of people's lives and environmental conditions are still not measured. For people, this can lead to the denial of basic rights, and for the planet, to continued environmental degradation. Too often, existing data remain unused because they are released too late or not at all, not well-documented and harmonized, or not available at the level of detail needed for decision-making.
- **New technologies are leading to an exponential increase in the volume and types of data available,** creating unprecedented possibilities for informing and transforming society and protecting the environment, but many are excluded from this transformation, because of lack of resources, knowledge, capacity or opportunity. There are huge and growing inequalities in access to data and information and in the ability to use it.

The report proceeds to set out 5 key recommendations:

1. That the UN establish a process whereby key stakeholders create a "Global Consensus on Data", to adopt principles concerning legal, technical, privacy, geospatial and statistical standards which, among other things, will facilitate openness and information exchange and promote and protect human rights;
2. To create mechanisms through which technology and innovation can be shared and used for the common good. The report proposes to create a global "Network of Data Innovation Networks", to bring together the organizations and experts in the field. This would: contribute to the adoption of best practices for improving the monitoring of SDGs, identify areas where common data-related infrastructures could address capacity problems and improve efficiency, encourage collaborations, identify critical research gaps and create incentives to innovate;
3. A call for new investments and strengthening of capacities. In particular a new funding stream to support the data revolution for sustainable development should be endorsed at the "Third International Conference on Financing for Development", in Addis Ababa in July 2015. An assessment will be needed of the scale of investments, capacity development and technology transfer that is required, especially for low income countries;
4. A UN-led "Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data", to mobilize and coordinate

the actions and institutions required to make the data revolution serve sustainable development;

5. The establishment of a “SDGs data lab” to support the development of a first wave of SDG indicators, as well as an analysis and visualization platform.

The report raises a set of important considerations and shines a spotlight upon the need to improve the quality and capacity of the current statistical system. Increased investments are essential and the Financing for Development (FfD) Summit presents a crucial opportunity. To prepare for the implementation of the SDG agenda however, it is important to articulate a clear roadmap for monitoring the SDGs and improving the quality of our data. This should include four key steps:

### 1. Agreement on a limited set of global SDG indicators

Since a very large number of indicators would be required to comprehensively track progress towards all 169 targets proposed by the working group, we recommend that countries consider two sets of indicators. **Global Monitoring Indicators** would be reported on by every country on an annual basis, whilst Complementary National Indicators would track issues that may be applicable to some countries only, such as indicators for neglected tropical diseases (NTDs), or that may give countries greater scope in applying complex concepts, such as inequality, to their specific needs. The **Complementary National Indicators** represent a menu of options for countries to choose from, though the list we include is far from exhaustive.

We underscore the importance of limiting the overall number of Global Monitoring Indicators to no more than 100. Comments received during the public consultation on SDSN’s Indicator Report confirm that 100 Global Monitoring Indicators is the upper limit of what National Statistical Offices (NSOs) can report on under the SDGs (SDSN, 2015). Of course, governments collect vastly more variables than this, some of which respond to specific local challenges or priorities. Moreover, a global SDG indicator framework cannot and must not replace the much more detailed reporting in key areas (e.g. biodiversity under the Aichi targets, malaria control programs, education indicators under Education for All).

### 2. Filling indicator gaps

Many indicators, especially relating to poverty and economic development, are already collected (many as part of the MDG process), but important gaps remain. In developing SDSN’s report – Indicators and a Monitoring Framework for the SDGs – we identified 10 indicator gaps, where a common indicator, proxy or standard does not already exist, for example: an indicator to measure the percentage of population in extreme multidimensional poverty; crop nitrogen use efficiency; functioning programs of multisectoral mental health promotion and prevention; a measure of ICT infrastructure and performance.

For each gap, the competent specialized agencies of the UN System and other international statistical organizations, such as the OECD or Eurostat, should launch a technical process for identifying and reviewing available indicator options. By mid to late 2015 these organizations – working with national

statistical offices and other stakeholders (e.g. academia, business, and civil society) – should propose new indicators for inclusion in the SDG monitoring framework.

In many cases, sound indicators exist, but data is not systematically collected on a routine, harmonized, and comparable basis— particularly in low-income countries. As highlighted in two SDSN Briefing Papers on household survey and indicator coverage, important gaps exist, particularly for key social and environmental metrics (1). National statistical offices and the international organizations should study these data coverage gaps carefully over the next year and identify practical strategies for filling them. In some cases, this will require increased investments in national statistical systems.

### **3. Improving the frequency of SDG data**

Timelines are crucial for data to be a useful management and policy tool. To align with national planning and budgetary processes, SDG monitoring needs to operate on an annual cycle. Ensuring annual and up-to-date data will be a major step towards achieving a data revolution for development.

Annual monitoring on progress does not necessarily mean that new data need to be produced every year. For a number of indicators this may be impossible or inadvisable (2). In such cases producing data every two to three years and doing robust projections, extrapolations or modeled estimates may be sufficient. But even this level of frequency will require a step change in the way data is collected and disseminated.

Given how infrequently some indicators are collected today, it might seem impossible to shift towards such high frequency monitoring for SDG indicators. Yet a careful review of the issues suggests it is utterly feasible. In fact, many countries have shown what can be done with clear commitments, the creative use of modern technologies, institutional innovation, and modest resources. Some 60 countries already report annual figures on multiple social and economic indicators based on annual survey data.

International institutions also have made the effort to generate annual estimates. Such approaches could be applied to other SDG indicators to enable timely annual monitoring of progress (3). In this context, we applaud the World Bank's recent commitment to report annually on poverty and boosting shared prosperity (4).

### **4. Establish a new Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data**

In its report *A World That Counts*, the Independent Expert Advisory Group on the Data Revolution recommends a UN-led “Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data.” The role of the partnership would be to mobilize and coordinate as many initiatives and institutions as possible to achieve a data revolution for development. In practice, this partnership may consist of a high-level multi-stakeholder committee, with representatives from the UN, national

governments, businesses, academia, science and civil society. The committee would perform three essential functions:

- (i) Convening diverse data communities (such as Members of the Open Government Partnership and the G8 Open Data Charter) to foster consensus and harmonize global standards;
- (ii) Incentivizing innovation and encouraging public-private partnerships for data; and
- (iii) Mobilizing additional resources.

**A set of global standards** for data harmonization and use will be essential for national governments and NSOs to effectively compile, interpret, and utilize the broad range of development data sets. Standardization will be particularly important for non-official sources of data, such as business monitoring, which over time may be used to complement official metrics. In the short- to medium term, standardizing efforts may require more methodological research to better understand how unofficial or big data can be used to complement official sources. A high-level, powerful group will be essential to convene the various data and transparency initiatives under one umbrella, in support of sustainable development, and to secure the cooperation of both Member States and businesses.

Second, any new Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data should strive to **foster innovation** in SDG monitoring. The IEAG on the Data Revolution has recommended a web of data innovation networks to advance innovation and analysis. To focus energies and incentivize year on year progress, an annual prize should also be considered, awarded at a “World Forum on Sustainable Development Data” (UN Secretary General, 2015). This award would be given to NSOs, specialist groups, civil society organizations, or businesses that have developed innovative approaches to improve SDG indicators (e.g. by increasing the frequency or disaggregation) or replace existing indicators with new metrics that are better and/or less expensive to collect.

A third core function of the Global Partnership will be to **mobilize additional resources** to support sound monitoring system. SDSN has been working in coalition with more than 15 organizations, including Open Data Watch, PARIS21, the World Bank, and others, to consolidate available data on the levels of investment required for SDG monitoring and statistical capacity development. Our new report, *Data for Development: A Needs Assessment for SDG Monitoring and Statistical Capacity* estimates that the 77 Official Development Assistance (ODA) eligible countries will need to spend approximately \$1 billion a year to upgrade their statistical systems and carry out regular data collection for the SDGs. Although it is hard to estimate an exact funding gap, it is clear that there is a large margin between current expenditures and future requirements. An analysis of National Strategies for the Development of Statistics (NSDSs) shows that countries are planning on aid at a level of 49% of current NSDS budgets. Donors will therefore need to maintain current contributions to statistics, of approximately US\$300 million per annum, and go further, leveraging US\$100-200 million more in ODA to support country efforts (Espey, 2015).

Current financing mechanisms and modalities for data are not only underfunded, they are also fragmented and beset with high transaction costs. In addition to quantifying incremental financing needs, the international community will therefore need to determine how additional resources can

be used most effectively for maximum results. Experience in other areas suggests that pooled financing mechanisms can be very effective by:

- (i) Reducing transaction costs and minimizing duplication;
- (ii) Strengthening national ownership in the design and implementation of programs;
- (iii) Facilitating knowledge transfer and the consolidation of lessons learnt across countries;
- (iv) Facilitating partnerships with the private sector through dedicated windows for public-private partnerships; and
- (v) Supporting transparent criteria for countries' resource mobilization (Sachs and Schmidt-Traub, 2015).

Based on a clear indicator framework and a robust needs assessment, the first steps towards a data revolution can start in 2015, including vital resource mobilization. Given the public attention that will be paid to the SDGs during 2015, it would seem possible to complete the fundraising by the end of the year – in time for implementation in 2016.

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## Notes

(1) See i) Cassidy, M. (2014). “Assessing Gaps in Indicator Availability and Coverage.” Briefing paper. Paris, France and New York, USA: SDSN; ii) Alkire, S. and Samman, E. (2014), *Mobilizing the household data required to progress toward the SDGs*. SDSN Briefing Paper; and iii) Alkire, S (2014). *Towards frequent and accurate poverty data*. SDSN Briefing Paper, Paris, France and New York, USA: SDSN

(2) Indicators unsuited to annual production are indicators that (i) exhibit year-on-year variation that is significantly smaller than the error margin, (ii) require a very large number of observations to be computed, (iii) may be affected or compromised by year on year monitoring, such as attitudinal and behavior change. A preliminary assessment suggests that this applies to at least four

GMI's featured in this report: life expectancy, maternal mortality rate, fertility rate, and prevalence of non-communicable diseases.

(3) See the CME Info online database: [www.childmortality.org](http://www.childmortality.org)

(4) See World Bank President Jim Yong Kim's Speech at Georgetown University (April 2013), online at: <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/speech/2013/04/02/world-bank-group-president-jim-yong-kims-speech-at-georgetown-university>

## Chapter 5

# Monitoring Access to Information in the SDGs: Indicators, Issues and Practical Solutions

**Bill Orme**

*“Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.”* - Article 19, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

In August 2014, after 18 months of negotiations, the General Assembly’s 70 nation Open Working Group (OWG) on the post-2015 agenda recommended the adoption of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The group’s proposed Goal 16 calls on all UN member states to: “Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.” That draft goal incorporates 10 separate SDG16 targets, ranging from reductions in criminal and political violence to anticorruption measures to a commitment to “responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels.”

*The last of those recommended Goal 16 targets - Target 10 – states that all countries should “ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements.”*

In the entire set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets proposed by the Open Working Group, draft Target 10 of draft Goal 16 is the sole provision that would explicitly require UN members to provide the information that would show if the new global goals are on track to being met – or not.

The inclusion of a clear ‘access to information’ commitment in the SDGs has been consistently supported by civil society participants in post-2015 consultations as well as by the UN’s expert advisors on the new global goals, including in the reports of the Secretary General’s High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons and Independent Expert Advisory Group on the “Data Revolution for Sustainable Development.” The factual indicators and institutional mechanisms assigned to monitor progress in this SDGs target area will determine its impact on the achievement of all of the goals. Fortunately, a sound technical and normative framework for UN monitoring of public access to information in the post-2015 agenda is already in place, including:

- The adoption by a growing majority of UN member states of statutory or constitutional guarantees of public access to information.

- Data on national per capita internet access, use and costs from the International Telecommunications Union (ITU).
- Regular reports and data on media independence and the safety of journalists by UNESCO, in collaboration with other UN agencies.

There is a broad consensus from the many UN post-2015 advisory bodies and consultations that universal public access to development information and analysis will be essential to the success of the Sustainable Development Goals:

- **Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon’s High-Level Panel on the global development agenda** (i) called for a post-2015 “transparency revolution,” including access to information guarantees. The “eminent persons” panel - co-chaired by President Ellen-Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia, Prime Minister David Cameron of the United Kingdom, and then-President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono of Indonesia – said the next set of UN goals should include a pledge by UN member states to ensure “the public’s right to information and access to government data.” It said:

*“Every person can actively participate in realizing the vision for 2030 to bring about transformational change,” the Panel said in its report. “Civil society should play a central, meaningful role, but this requires space for people to participate in policy and decision-making. This means ensuring people’s right to freedom of speech, association, peaceful protest and access to independent media and information.”*

- **The UN’s ‘The Future We Want’ on-line consultation on post-2015 development goals** (ii) has attracted more than five million individual responses to date, from all countries and regions of the globe. Asked to rank 16 global development priorities – a topic list drawn up before but roughly paralleling the GA Working Group’s recommended 17 SDGs - the respondents strongly favored inclusion of a goal on good governance and official accountability. The need for “honest and responsive government” ranked fourth among the 16 development priorities in the UN survey, surpassed only by (in order) education, health, and jobs. In the 16-30 age group it ranked even higher, as the third highest priority, above employment.

Even more striking, participants from countries in the bottom quartile in the UN Human Development Index selected “honest and responsive” governance as the second highest post-2015 development priority, surpassed only by education. In the scores of online dialogues in this topic area, respondents from all regions and at all income levels urged

open disclosure of government actions, decisions, laws, spending, and socioeconomic data, both as a civic responsibility, and as a practical tool to ensure that leaders use public resources honestly and effectively.

- **The Secretary-General’s Independent Expert Advisory Group (IEAG) on the promised “Data Revolution for Sustainable Development”** has called for the post-2015 adoption of international principles on public information *which “will facilitate openness and information exchange and promote and protect human rights.”*
- In its November 2014 report, “A World That Counts, (iii) the Data Advisory Group stated: *“All data on public matters and/ or funded by public funds, including those data produced by the private sector, should be made public and ‘open’ by default”,* with narrow exemptions for genuine security or privacy concerns. “The report stressed the importance of the media’s ability to report freely and accurately “on the statistical and scientific evidence available on relevant dimensions of sustainable development” and civil society’s crucial role in providing, analyzing, and disseminating public information.

The Advisory Group emphasized that in order for this “data revolution” to succeed, the rights to freedom of expression for media, academia, civil society, official statisticians and members of the public in seeking, disseminating, and discussing this data “should be recognized and protected.” All individuals and institutions engaged in this global effort to “provide, collect, curate and analyze data need freedom to operate and protection from recrimination,” the IEAG report states.

*“Any legal or regulatory mechanisms, or networks or partnerships, set up to mobilize the data revolution for sustainable development should have the protection of human rights as a core part of their activities, specify who is responsible for upholding those rights, and should support the protection, respect and fulfillment of human rights,”* the report stated.

### **Selecting and Monitoring Indicators for an SDG Access to Information Target**

In February 2014, in an initiative spearheaded by London-based Article 19 and the Global Forum for Media Development (GFMD), a coalition of some 200 national and international NGOs specialized in freedom of information and media issues sent a joint appeal to the General Assembly’s Post-2015 Open Working Group, stating that (iv):

*“We believe that freedom of expression and access to independent media is essential to democratic and economic development. Freedom of speech and the media are means to advance human*

*development and are ends in their own right. We, the undersigned, therefore call on the Open Working Group to fully integrate the governance recommendations of the UN High Level Panel of Eminent Persons Report into the proposed Post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals, specifically in relation to its recommendations to: Establish a specific goal to “ensure good governance and effective institutions”*

They called for including as components of this goal a clause to "ensure people enjoy freedom of speech, association, peaceful protest and access to independent media and information" and to "guarantee the public's right to information and access to government data"

In June 2014, as the Open Working Group (OWG) negotiations entered their final phase, the GFMD and UNESCO jointly convened representatives of this civil society coalition to discuss potential statistical indicators and other monitoring processes for an ‘access to information’ target as proposed by the OWG’s draft Goal 16. A statement to OWG members from GFMD (v) and Article 19 summarizing the results of this consultation emphasized the consensus civil society view:

*“The inclusion of targets on freedom of expression and access to information will help build stronger media and civil society institutions to closely and independently monitor all post-2015 development commitments.”*

The coalition strongly endorsed the inclusion in the SDGs of the proposed Goal 16 as it was then drafted, with targets specifically obligating governments to “improve public access to information and government data” and “promote freedom of media, association and speech.” It further proposed that UNESCO, “as the UN agency mandated to promote free, independent, and pluralistic media, take the lead role in monitoring progress” in this area, and urged broad UN support to “help build national capacities to gather data and promote dialogue on freedom of expression and public access to information.”

The civil society coalition co-organized by the GFMD and Article 19 offered a set of ‘illustrative indicators’ for freedom of information and media in the SDGs, based on international data sets and normative assessments already used in the UN and elsewhere in the international intergovernmental system (vi).

As the OWG continued with its deliberations, subsequent drafts included specific Goal 16 targets obligating governments to provide “public access to information and government data, including on public finance management, public procurement and on the implementation of national development plans” and “promote freedom of media, association and speech.” However, these stipulations were removed from the final version of the proposed SDGs endorsed at the Group’s closing session in late July.

The elimination of specific references to freedom of expression or media, and the addition of the phrase stipulating that access-to-information guarantees must be consistent with “national legislation,” was interpreted by many civil society activists as an endorsement of the status quo, as most UN member states would contend that they are already providing “public access to information” – however those governments may choose to define “access” and “information.” Yet the selection of appropriate indicators for an SDG access-to-information target could remedy those textual gaps. Such indicators are already available. Global data on access to information and independent media is regularly collected and published by specialized UN agencies such as UNESCO and the ITU, including in the statistical indicators for the MDGs.

In contrast to the MDGs, however, the new ‘SDGs’ are intended to apply to all countries, to North and South alike. And as noted by many countries in the GA Open Working Group debates, there is no nation where the availability and independent evaluation of official information cannot be improved.

Even in the most industrially advanced democracies, with strong legal guarantees of freedom of information and media, governments routinely withhold data and documents that journalists and civil society activists contend should be in the public domain. At the same time, many less developed democracies lack the technical capacity to collect and disseminate comprehensive development data or factual reports about government programs – and even if they could and did, few of their citizens could access or make practical use of that information. Other countries with more advanced technological and documentation capabilities actively limit access to information through restrictions on Internet use and independent media.

### **How can ‘Access to Information’ be measured?**

By definition, it will be impossible to achieve ambitious global development goals without open access to information about health, education, the environment, human rights and other critical areas - and that in turn requires independent monitoring by media and civil society. As the High-Level Panel of the post-2015 agenda emphasized in its report to the Secretary-General, the rights to information and free speech and media “are ends as well as means” in the quest to conclude the unfinished business of the MDGs.

There is no single statistic that can fully measure access to this information. But progress towards a goal of such access is nonetheless measurable.

Such an assessment must of necessity be multidimensional, examining compliance by governments with their affirmative responsibility to provide the public with information that should be in the public domain; the objective ability of ordinary people to get and use that information, electronically and otherwise; and the overall legal and political environment for the open public exchange and analysis and discussion of that information and its implications for national and global development. These are interlocking, mutually reinforcing conditions for

ensuring genuine public access to information, and necessarily include different kinds of indicators, from the quantifiable to the analytical.

The June 2014 suggestions from the GFMD-Article 19 civil society coalition for ‘illustrative indicators’ for freedom of information and media in the SDGs reflected this interdisciplinary complexity, yet were based on data sets and normative assessments now used in the UN and broader intergovernmental system. As noted, the coalition further suggested that UNESCO be tasked with coordinating the monitoring of these indicators for the post-2015 agenda.

**There are three core categories of available indicators that could be used to monitor progress towards freedom of information in the context of the SDGs**

***1) Access to information: Constitutional and/or statutory guarantees of public access to public-sector information***

Legal requirements for governments to provide public access to official information are widely seen as a minimal and easily verifiable indication of compliance with an access-to-information target in the post-2015 SDGs. Most UN member-states have already adopted such legislation, most during the past decade; many others have proposed laws that are now under consideration.

The international legal agreements and precedents for ensuring the public’s right to information have been cited in many UN forums and documents, including the thorough 2013 report on the subject by the Rapporteur on the Protection and Promotion of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression in the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (“The Right to Truth and the Right to Access Information” (vii).

An SDG target of universal public access to information by 2030 is attainable - legally, technologically and economically. It is also completely consistent with the overall aims and spirit of the post-2015 development agenda, as well as with the UN Charter and the UN’s binding human rights treaties.

In September 2014, Paraguay became the 100th UN member-state to adopt statutory guarantees of public access to information. Areas covered by these ‘freedom of information’ laws typically include but are not limited to public access to information on government budgets and public works projects; official data on public health, education, national demographics and other areas of human development and public services; texts of laws, decrees, court rulings and executive regulations; and records of proceedings and documents from government meetings and other official proceedings, including in legislative bodies and regulatory agencies.

A respected international coalition of academic institutions, philanthropic foundations and specialized civil society organization collectively monitors the drafting, passage into law and implementation of access-to-information laws (viii). No UN agency or other global intergovernmental organization currently tracks the adoption of such laws; however, as the passage

of legislation is a public and factual matter, such a task should not be difficult, practically or politically.

UNESCO, UNDP or another designated UN agency could independently verify the public reporting on such laws by the International Freedom of Information network, including through direct correspondence with the relevant UN member-states or through another authoritative intergovernmental body, such as the International Parliamentary Union.

## ***2) Affordable, effective Internet access: moving to universality***

This is not only measurable, but is in fact already measured for the Millennium Development Goals, by the ITU (ix). The ITU is an active member of both the UN's MDGs-monitoring Expert Inter-Agency Group (EIAG) and its Working Group on 'Monitoring and Indicators' for the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda, which is co-chaired by DESA and UNDP. There is broad agreement among UN expert advisors that a target of basic Internet access for all people by 2030 is logistically and economically attainable. Universal Internet access is seen as essential not only for the proposed access-to-information target of draft SDG 16, but for tracking and achieving all the proposed new goals, both nationally and globally.

To be truly accessible in the 21st century, information must be available online to all people, openly and affordably. That applies to all information, both governmental and nongovernmental, including official statistics and other public-sector records; independently reported news; academic research; civil society data and analysis; and the full range of exploration and expression in the arts and sciences. People must also have access to the requisite Internet tools to gather and share and discuss all this information from all these sources if an SDG 'access to information' target is to be meaningful. That is the new baseline for informed civic engagement in the digital age. Internet access is also now essential for public education, public health, environmental protection and individual and national income generation – all core components of human development.

Mobile phone penetration and Internet usage data – collected and updated annually by the International Telecommunications Union – provides a good statistical proxy for measuring the availability and affordability of public access to online information. The MDGs already include such metrics as the final entries in their own set of indicators, under Goal 8, which track the per capita number of fixed-telephones, mobile phones and Internet users.

Between 2000 and 2014, the percentage of people worldwide with regular Internet access increased eightfold, to more than 40 percent, while the share of people with mobile phones rose from less than 10 percent to an astonishing 95 percent, the ITU reported. Yet those global figures disguise wide national and regional variances, with most less-developed countries falling far below those international medians. Closing that digital divide will require the kinds of additional resources and policy shifts that global development goals are designed to catalyze.

What more to measure in the digital realm? While fixed-line telephone service may no longer be a significant development indicator, broadband and ‘smart phone’ use and access are likely to remain relevant for many years to come. More important will be data tracking the expansion of fiber-optic cable and high-speed satellite services and per capita online data consumption. As technology continues to evolve, the optimal metrics for measuring online information access will also inevitably change; indicators selected for the SDGs should explicitly authorize and indeed encourage continual innovation in these measurement tools by the ITU and other specialized multilateral agencies.

### ***3) Press freedom and protection of journalists: UNESCO’s role***

Press freedom is a precondition for public access to information. Without independent media dissemination and debate and analysis, information from governments and others - including data directly pertinent to the proposed SDGs - would not even reach most people in world, much less be considered both significant and credible. And that requires a media environment where journalists can operate safely and openly, without fear of legal persecution or physical attack.

The UN recognizes this. In December 2006 the Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 1738, condemning “intentional attacks on journalists, media and associated personnel,” especially but not exclusively in conflict zones (x).

This resolution requires the Secretary-General and others in the UN system to report back regularly to the Security Council on its implementation of this mandate. In November 2013, the UN General Assembly passed a similar resolution, calling on member states and UN bodies to do more to protect the safety of local and international journalists against threats and violence. UNESCO and UNDP have been assigned by the Secretary-General to lead UN agency efforts to provide greater security and legal safeguards and training opportunities for journalists working under threat of targeted attack and armed violence.

All of these UN initiatives and activities provide a basis for UN indicators on freedom of media and information in the context of the post-2015 SDGs.

Several respected international nongovernmental organizations rigorously investigate and document threats against press freedom in all countries, including the many job-related murders and imprisonment of journalists worldwide. Among the most prominent and widely cited are the US-based Committee to Protect Journalists; Reporters sans frontières of France; and such professional journalism associations as the International Press Institute, the World Association of Newspapers, and the International Federation of Journalists. (xi) Their work by its nature must be carried out independently of governments. Yet their case reports and investigative and classification methodologies are publicly available and widely used as source material in the official reports of UN agencies and other intergovernmental organizations, including UNESCO (xii), as well as the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (xiii); and the World Bank (xiv).

## **UNESCO's Measurement and Monitoring Mandates**

UNESCO, uniquely in the UN system, has the mandate and capacity to evaluate and synthesize information from all these sources in tracking progress on access to information in the SDGs, building on its current programs and reports on independent media development and on its already established role as a primary data provider for the MDGs. UNESCO's highly respected Statistics Institute has long been the authoritative source for global and national literacy and school enrollment rates and other education figures; UNESCO is also active in both the MDGs Expert Inter-Agency Group (MDG-EIAG) and the UN Working Group on post-2015 Monitoring and Indicators.

UNESCO research on press freedom and independent media development informs its annual World Press Freedom Day reports and awards as well as the regularly issued statements by UNESCO's Director-General condemning the deaths of journalists killed in reprisal for doing their jobs. In further recognition of its lead role for the UN system in this area, UNESCO recently organized the first symposium (xv) in recognition of the UN's newly established International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists (GA resolution 68/163).

## **The UNESCO-IPDC Framework for Media Development Indicators**

These UN-endorsed guidelines (xvi) for the development and protection of independent news media may be the most useful tool of all for assessing access-to-information progress in the SDGs. The indicators are comprehensive and universal yet can be tailored to different national circumstances. They do not lend themselves to artificially arithmetic rankings. In keeping with the principle of universality that is guiding the SDGs process, all countries can find areas for potential improvement highlighted by these media development indicators.

This 'framework' was developed with support from other UN agencies and unanimously endorsed by the UNESCO-International Programme for Development Communications (IPDC) governing body of UN member-states and has already been used for voluntary national media assessments in more than a dozen countries. The UNESCO-IPDC Framework is also available to guide UN country teams in their support for independent media associations and related civil society institutions; government regulatory bodies for broadcast media; election commissions; journalism training projects; and general assessments of democratic governance.

## **UN Action Plan on Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity**

Endorsed by the UN Chief Executives Board on 12 April 2012, with UNDP and UNESCO sharing responsibility for its implementation, the Plan of Action (xvii) aims to create a "free and safe environment for journalists and media workers, both in conflict and non-conflict situations, with a view to strengthening peace, democracy and development worldwide." It includes a UN inter-agency mechanism to coordinate support for the safety of journalists and assist countries in developing legislation "favorable to freedom of expression and information."

Most important, in the context of the SDGs, the annual reporting to the Secretary-General already required by this UN initiative can readily be incorporated into the annual monitoring process for the post-2015 Goals.

And it should. As the UN's post-2015 advisers have stressed, public access to information is essential to the SDGs, and that cannot be achieved without independent media and guaranteed freedom of expression and inquiry.

### **June 2015 Update: Proposed Indicators for SDG 16.10**

SDG Target 16.10 - Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements

The following two indicators for SDG 16.10 target on access to information were proposed in May 2015 by the GFMD, a Brussels-based international coalition of nearly 200 national, regional and international nongovernmental organizations specialized in journalism training, press freedom advocacy, media law and ethics, and other aspects of independent media support.

**GFMD Indicator 1:** The adoption and implementation of constitutional, statutory and/or policy guarantees and mechanisms for public access to information

**GFMD Indicator 2:** Implementation of the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, as mandated by the UN Chief Executives Board and monitored by UNESCO in accord with recent General Assembly and Security Council resolutions on the protection of journalists and independent media

These indicators were developed in consultation with other international civil society groups specialized in freedom of information and expression, as well as with UNESCO and other UN agencies and advisors with expertise in this field. They reflect a broad professional consensus on indicators for SDG16.10 that are substantively relevant, technically feasible, and draw upon existing UN monitoring processes and mechanisms.

The first could readily be transformed into numerical indicators, should that be considered preferable to the UN Statistical Commission, based on the number of national reports provided at specified intervals to a designated UN agency and/or the High-Level Political Forum verifying the adoption and implementation of such measures. The second draws on an existing UN monitoring process, which includes biannual reporting by UNESCO on the assassinations of journalists and other press freedom violations.

Both of these proposed indicators were considered by access-to-information specialists to be preferable to the two indicators originally proposed by staff specialists in DESA's Statistics Division to member-state representatives on the UN Statistical Commission:

**DESA Indicator 1:** Percentage of actual government budget, procurement, revenues and natural resource concessions that are publicly available and easily accessible

**DESA Indicator 2:** Number of journalists, associated media personnel and human rights advocates killed, kidnapped, disappeared, detained or tortured in last 12 months

These two DESA proposals were seen by many member-states and NGOs alike as conceptually and methodologically problematic, as reflected in their initial negative reviews in a survey of national statistical offices in March 2015.

The first was far too narrowly conceived, as it was limited exclusively to public sector financial disclosure, rather than encompassing the broad “public access to information” principle explicitly prioritized in the SDG16.10 target. Moreover, it was wholly impractical as a statistical exercise, presupposing some agreed international metrics on quantifying national government budgetary and contractual information (as measured in megabytes? numbers of documents?) and then entrusting those governments to factually self-report on what ‘percentage’ of this fiscal data is available to the public.

The second indicator, proposed as a ‘press freedom proxy,’ would be comprised of reported deaths, kidnappings and other attacks on journalists, but without the analytical context or background on legal consequences provided by UNESCO’s biannual reports.

In June, the Statistical Commission’s newly formed (and somewhat misleading named) “Inter-Agency and Expert Group” on SDGs indicators held its inaugural meeting at the UN in New York. The DESA Statistics Division provided IAEG members with a new list of so-called “priority” indicators, prepared with solicited input from several other UN bodies and deliberately limited to a maximum of one indicator per target. To further reduce the number of indicators, many were designed to measure two or more targets.

For SDG16.10, the DESA “priority” list omitted its originally proposed access-to-information indicator entirely. For its second 16.10 proposal, the new DESA list proposed a wider-ranging indicator on human rights violations devised by the Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights to measure the second, complementary component of 16.10 on “protecting fundamental freedoms” as well as human rights violations relevant to other SDG16 targets as well as SDG5 on women’s rights:

Numbers of violations of fundamental freedoms which impact on public access to information, and percentage of judicial cases resolved (disaggregated by targeted group: journalists, associated media personnel; human rights defenders; trade unionists; human rights advocates).

The member organizations of GFMD as well as other leading civil society champions of SDG16.10, such as Article 19 and the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA), continue to insist on the critical importance of both categories of indicator for this target:

the first monitoring official measures taken to ‘ensure public access to information,’ as the target language plainly stipulates, and the second evaluating the enabling legal and political environment for independent media and freedom of expression which is a prerequisite for the free flow of information envisaged by 16.10.

### **Background briefs on GFMD’s proposed SDG10 indicators**

**GFMD Indicator 1:** Monitoring the adoption and implementation of constitutional, statutory and/or policy guarantees and mechanisms for public access to information

As suggested by the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) and UNESCO in earlier presentations to the UN Technical Support Team (UN TST), this highly pertinent and measurable indicator would assess the existence and implementation of constitutional, statutory and/or policy guarantees for public access to information. A majority of UN member states have already adopted such legal guarantees, and many others are currently considering relevant legislation and implementing actions in the field.

UNESCO, within its UN mandate to protect and promote the right to freedom of expression, which includes the corollary of the right to freedom of information, already monitors progress and issues in this area through its submissions to the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) and regular reports on World Trends on Freedom of Expression and Media Development. UNDP has extensive experience advising, supporting and valuating national access-to-information initiatives through its Democratic Governance programs. Lead UN responsibility for monitoring this target could be assigned to UNESCO and/or UNDP.

To more explicitly link SDG16.10 to the entirety of the 17 SDGs and 169 targets – to which it applies and for which it is needed – as well as to provide an associated numerical indicator, should that be required, this proposed indicator could be reframed accordingly:

Number of member-states that have taken measures ensuring public access to information relevant to each and all of the Sustainable Development Goals, including the implementation of relevant legal guarantees and mechanisms, as verified by national reports submitted to the High-Level Political Forum; or UNESCO and/or UNDP.

**GFMD Indicator 2:** Implementation of the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, as mandated by the UN Chief Executives Board and monitored by UNESCO in compliance with recent General Assembly and Security Council resolutions on the protection of journalists and independent media

This proposed indicator for SDG 16.10 would formally incorporate into the SDGs monitoring framework the regular progress reports by UNESCO on the implementation of the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, which was adopted by the UN Chief Executives Board on 12 April 2012, in accord with UN Security Council Resolutions 2222 of

May 2015 and 1738 of December 2006; UN General Assembly Resolutions 68/163 of December 2013 and 69/185 of December 2014; and UN Human Rights Council Resolutions 21/12 of September 2012 and 27/5 of September 2014, among other relevant United Nations resolutions, declarations, and conventions on the protection of journalists and independent media.

Led by UNESCO, the UN Plan of Action draws on normative and programmatic support from UNDP, UNDPI and the UNHCHR, among other UN agencies and offices. It marks the first effort to systematically bring the UN family of agencies together with other relevant stakeholders to address the worsening situation of the safety of journalists.

The Plan of Action is informed and complemented by UNESCO's continuing global reports on media trends and issues and the national media surveys carried out through the UNESCO-IPDC Media Development Indicators Framework. UNESCO's biannual reports on the Plan's implementation include surveys of national government actions to investigate, prosecute and prevent killings and abductions of working journalists and UN system efforts to strengthen legal and physical protections of independent media.

As emphasized in the Riga Declaration, adopted by consensus at the 2015 UN World Press Freedom Day commemoration in Latvia, the safety of journalists and the issue of impunity “are directly relevant to implementing the proposed Sustainable Development Goal 16,” particularly the SDG 16.10 target ensuring public access to information. The Riga Declaration called on UNESCO to continue “highlighting the importance of freedom of expression, public access to information and the safety of journalists and the issue of impunity within the post-2015 development agenda processes” and “coordinating the implementation of the UN Plan of Action throughout the UN system.”

The alternative second indicator on “violations of fundamental freedoms” as proposed by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and provisionally endorsed by UNESCO would also apply to three other SD16 targets - 16.1 (violence and deaths), 16.3 (rule of law), and 16.6 (accountable institutions) – as well as SDG5.2, aimed at ending violence against women. This OHCHR indicator would also utilize UNESCO's reports on the UN Plan of Action as its data source on attacks against journalists, including assassinations and abductions, as GFMD has supported in its own proposals.

GFMD agrees with the High Commissioner's Office that the inclusion of attacks against human rights activists and trade union organizers as well as journalists – plus an accounting of national judicial action taken in response to all these cases - provides a fuller portrait of the legal, political and social environment relevant to public access to information and the free flow of information and public discourse generally.

GFMD is not opposed in principle to the use of indicators that are applicable to two or more SDGs targets when that is empirically defensible. Nor are GFMD member organizations averse to a

broadening of this proposed second SDG10.16 indicator to encompass other factors relevant to freedom of information and expression.

But GFMD is insistent that this latter proposed SDG16.10 indicator should be considered a complementary measure supporting a strong lead indicator expressly dedicated to monitoring public access to information, in conformity with SDG 16.10's clearly stated intent. An unambiguous commitment to public access to information in the broadest sense – as broad as the scope of the 17 SDGs themselves – is essential for the new global goals to be clearly understood, transparently monitored, and, ultimately, achieved.

### **Useful urls**

<http://www.post2015hlp.org/>

<http://data.myworld2015.org>

<http://www.undatarevolution.org/>

<http://www.article19.org/resources.php/resource/37435/en/post-2015:-access-to-information-and-independent-media-essential-to-development#sthash.7dXYZ7L4.dpuf>

Freedom of Expression & Access to Information Post-2015: Measurable Targets  
[http://gfmd.info/attachment/54/Indicators\\_Goal16\\_statement\\_signatories\\_18\\_June\\_2014.pdf?g\\_download=1](http://gfmd.info/attachment/54/Indicators_Goal16_statement_signatories_18_June_2014.pdf?g_download=1)

Frank La Rue, Rapporteur, OHCHR: <http://daccess-ddsny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N13/464/76/PDF/N1346476.pdf?OpenElement>

<http://www.freedominfo.org/2014/09/reaching-100-foi-laws-movement-looks-future/>

<http://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Pages/intlcoop/mdg/default.aspx>

<http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2006/sc8929.doc.htm>

CPJ <http://cpj.org/>; RSF <http://fr.rsf.org/>; IPI <http://www.freemedia.at/>; WAN <http://www.wan-iffra.org/>; IFJ <http://www.ifj.org/>

<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/freedom-of-expression/press-freedom/>

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/FreedomOpinion/Pages/OpinionIndex.aspx>

<http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/index.aspx#reports>

High-level Panel Discussion on "Ending Impunity: Upholding the Rule of Law" on the occasion of the 1st International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists (2 November 2014;

GA resolution 68/163). Co-organized by UNESCO and the UN Missions of Argentina, Austria, Costa Rica, France, Greece and Tunisia.

<http://www.ipsnews.net/2014/11/journalists-silenced-as-killers-walk-free>

<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/intergovernmental-programmes/ipdc/special-initiatives/media-development-indicators-mdis>

<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/freedom-of-expression/safety-of-journalists/un-plan-of-action/>

## **Chapter 6**

# **Hearing the neediest voices, community and public participation in development: Why civil society and civic space matter**

**Dr Dhananjayan Sriskandarajah and Mandeep Tiwana**

### **Introduction**

Defined as the “arena outside of the family, the state and the market, which is created by individual and collective actions, organisations and institutions to advance shared interests,” civil society is a key driver of sustainable development (1). Indeed, civil society plays a critical role in ensuring representation of diverse voices, particularly those of the neediest in the governance and development discourse. Due to strong links with local communities and their public spirited nature, vibrant and empowered civil society organizations (CSOs) contribute substantially to community and public participation in development.

Notably, the civil society sector helps shape official strategies and assists in finding innovative solutions to complex development problems from the lens of the most vulnerable and marginalized. In many instances, CSOs take responsibility for the actual delivery of services to communities. But vitally, civil society at the local, national and international levels independently monitors the objectives set by decision makers, and shapes public opinion to hold duty bearers to account for failing to deliver. To perform the above roles, civil society needs an “enabling environment” and strong protection of civic freedoms from encroachments by both state and non--state actors.

However, civil society groups are facing increasing challenges as they seek to assume their rightful role as partners in development.

### **Encroachments on civil society and civicSpace**

CIVICUS’ State of Civil Society Report 2014 points out that in the face of contemporary waves of protest, many governments are feeling threatened and have stepped up their efforts to close down civic space, through a combination of dubious legislation, demonization of protest movements and direct harassment of civil society activists and their organizations (2). In many of the parts of the world, in democracies and non--democracies, legal and practical limitations are preventing public spirited individuals and groups from freely expressing themselves, engaging through associations and organizing peaceful demonstrations. While authoritarian governments pose a particular challenge to the existence of civil society groups seeking to democratize the development arena, threats emanating from non--state actors are also imperiling civic space (3).

The near total dominance of free market economic policies has created a tight overlap between the economic and political elite putting at risk civil society groups working to protect the environment and the collective rights of local communities to natural resources including land. Mining, construction and agricultural firms controlled by vested political interests are posing a serious threat to civil society.

Further, violent conflicts and cultural clashes are spurring religious fundamentalism and intolerant attitudes towards women's equality and the rights of sexual minorities, putting progressive civil society groups at serious risk from both physical attacks as well as politically motivated prosecutions (4).

These negative trends on civic space are impeding the service delivery and watchdog functions of the civil society sector in sustainable development.

### **The story so far on the post 2015 agenda**

Many practitioners and observers have argued that 'too little partnership and too little space for civil society' have severely marred progress on the current Millennium Development Goals (5). With debates underway on the next set of internationally agreed sustainable development goals, a key demand from civil society has been to entrench the notion of civic freedoms and "enabling environment" for civil society in the Post 2015 agenda. In a submission made to the UN Secretary General's High Level Panel on the Post 2015 Development Agenda, a group of CSOs comprising the Civic Space Initiative urged inclusion of the following: (i) a target and indicators to promote an enabling environment for civil society, (ii) linking the target and indicators to an analogue to MDG 8 focusing on partnerships for development or to a new goal, such as good governance, human rights, or the enabling environment for development writ large, and /or (iii) make enabling environment for civil society a cross cutting theme across many goals (6).

The above asks are in line with the commitment made by 160 governments at the 4th High Level Forum on Aid and Development Effectiveness in 2011 to "enable CSOs to exercise their roles as independent development actors, with a particular focus on an enabling environment, consistent with agreed international rights, that maximizes the contributions of CSOs to development" (7). Additionally, the outcome of the 2012 Rio + 20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development acknowledges the "role of civil society and the importance of enabling all members of civil society to be actively engaged in sustainable development" through strengthening access to information, building civil society capacity and an enabling environment (8).

Positively, the UN Secretary General's panel of experts on the post 2015 agenda has recommended in its May 2013 report that a separate goal on 'good governance and effective institutions' should be created (9). The panel suggested that this goal should include targets to measure freedoms of speech, association, peaceful protest and access to independent media and information. A key recommendation of the panel was to 'forge a new global partnership' involving people living in poverty, those with disabilities, women, civil society and indigenous and local communities, traditionally marginalized groups, multi-lateral institutions, local and national government, the business community, academia and private philanthropy.

Notably, the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (OWG-SDGs) has also emphasized the importance of ‘partnership with civil society’ in the post 2015 agenda (10). In its July 2014 proposal, the Open Working Group recommended the creation of a goal on accountable and inclusive institutions (proposed Goal 16) and a goal on revitalizing the global partnership (proposed Goal 17). While proposed Goal 17 reinforces the notion of multi-stakeholder partnerships and seeks to “encourage and promote effective, public, public-private, and civil society, partnerships,” proposed Goal 16 promises responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels, along-with a commitment to ensure public access to information and protection of “fundamental freedoms in accordance with national legislation and international agreements.”

## **The way forward**

As argued in the introduction to this brief paper, hearing the neediest voices and engendering community and public participation in development will require deeper commitment from states to protect and enable civil society actors currently facing an onslaught of restrictions on their activities. The new global development framework needs to explicitly recognize the necessity to create an “enabling environment” for civil society with targeted indicators to measure progress on civic freedoms of expression, association and peaceful assembly. The OWG-SDGs proposal with its broad reference to “fundamental freedoms” worryingly lacks *specificity* on these freedoms.

A critical mass of influential civil society groups under the platform of the Post 2015 human rights caucus have urged world leaders to include clear targets to protect civil and political rights, in particular the freedoms of expression, association, assembly, access to information and political participation and guarantees of an enabling environment for civil society, human rights and environmental defenders (11).

With barely months to go before the finalization of the next generation of global development goals, it is vital that the new framework clearly recognizes the value of civil society partnerships and the imperative to protect its space.

## **Notes**

(1) Bridging the Gaps – Citizen’s Organisations and Disassociation, Civil Society Index summary report 2008--2011, CIVICUS, September 2011  
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(3) Global Trends on Civil Society Restrictions, CIVICUS, October 2013,  
<http://civicus.org/images/GlobalTrendsonCivilSocietyRestrictions2013.pdf>

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(5) Civil society: only the clampdown is transparent, Guardian Comment is free, Ingrid Srinath and Mandeep Tiwana, September 2010  
<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/libertycentral/2010/sep/12/civil--society--millennium--development--goals>

- (6) Submission on an Enabling Environment for Civil Society to the UN High Level Panel on the Post 2015 Development Agenda, Civic Space Initiative consortium comprising International Center for Not for Profit Law, Article 19, CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation and World Movement for Democracy, April 2013 [http://www.post2015hlp.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/CSI-Submission-to-HLP\\_Enabling-Environment-for-Civil-Society.pdf](http://www.post2015hlp.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/CSI-Submission-to-HLP_Enabling-Environment-for-Civil-Society.pdf)
- (7) Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, November 2011 <http://www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/49650173.pdf>
- (8) UN General Assembly Resolution 66/288 The future we want, July 2012 <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N11/476/10/PDF/N1147610.pdf?OpenElement>
- (9) A New Global Partnership, Report of High Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post 2015 Development Agenda, United Nations, May 2013 [http://www.un.org/sg/management/pdf/HLP\\_P2015\\_Report.pdf](http://www.un.org/sg/management/pdf/HLP_P2015_Report.pdf)
- (10) Open Working Group proposal for Sustainable Development Goals, July 2014 <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgsproposal.html>
- (11) Letter to the UN Secretary General by the Post 2015 Human Rights Caucus, September 2014 [http://www.civicus.org/images/HRs\\_Caucus\\_Letter\\_to\\_SG\\_-\\_29Sep2014.pdf](http://www.civicus.org/images/HRs_Caucus_Letter_to_SG_-_29Sep2014.pdf)

## **Section 2**

### **Global Governance**

## **Chapter 7**

# **Follow-up to the Sustainable Development Goals: Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development: The role of the High Level Political Forum**

**Nikhil Seth**

### **Introduction**

All the efforts and ideas we are deploying to elaborate the post 2015 agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will be in vain if the agenda is not implemented. Institutions in the area of sustainable development and beyond have an important role to promote and track implementation. This requires significant adjustments. The agenda brings not only new issues but also a new development paradigm. In addition, the SDGs also address issues related to governance and rule of law. The effective functioning of sustainable development institutions itself has thus become an objective in itself.

At the same time, Rio+20 took important steps to reinforce the institutional framework for sustainable development (IFSD) – notably the creation of the high-level political forum (HLPF) and a universal United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA). Just over two years later, it is clear that we do not need a major overhaul of our institutions nor the creation of new bodies. But we must introduce a new way to operate our institutions. We need to recalibrate them and devise a strategy to make the HLPF a strong player in the IFSD.

I would like to focus on how the IFSD can best foster integration, implementation and review. Those are three dimensions identified by Member States as critical responses to the post 2015 development agenda (it is also the theme for HLPF in 2015).

### **Integration**

The SDGs are closely interrelated – including through their respective targets. This reflects the dynamic linkages between economic, social and environmental dimensions as well as the interaction between various sectors and issues. We should build on these synergies throughout the IFSD.

This implies that the General Assembly (GA), Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and UN system and other bodies need to work differently. When addressing a given issue, we should always be aware of how it relates to other dimensions and sectors. This way, we can avoid unintended negative effects and build synergies.

Rio+20 asked the GA and ECOSOC to adopt sustainable development as an organizing principle for their work. We are not yet quite there.

The elaboration of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) and post 2015 development agenda have led the GA to focus on sustainable development much more than in the past. This included GA President's special events. The whole process of informal consultations to elaborate the new agenda is now following on the heel of the Open Working Group (OWG) on SDGs. Still, we need to ask ourselves whether addressing economic and social issues in two separate GA committees is consistent with a sustainable development approach. We should also rethink how GA committees approach sustainable development. This goes beyond the fairly limited reflection we have conducted thus far on the working methods of the Second Committee.

ECOSOC is also making a tremendous effort to place its work – in particular its integration segment - under the sign of sustainable development. This effort should be sustained. ECOSOC is also a function-based body. It has a critical task to ensure overall coherence and coordination of its subsidiary machinery and the whole UN system. It must steer their debates and actions so that, together, they support the implementation of the full post-2015 development agenda. It must also bring in economic dimension through its relationship with the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). These are important roles which no other body can deliver.

We must indeed look beyond our headquarters-based mechanisms. The SDGs will be the guidepost for the entire UN system. Firstly, we should reflect on whether each SDG has – or should have a home- in the UN system. There is no clear UN intergovernmental platform to discuss issues such as oceans or energy or transport for example - should there be one? Secondly, the range of UN system bodies should be mobilized to promote and review implementation of the SDGs. The High Level Political Forum (HLPF) could be the platform to review overall progress based on their findings and additional elements.

Needless to say that the HLPF should epitomize the way an intergovernmental body should address sustainable development. Innovative methods of work need to be put in place if it is to become a strong player in the IFSD. A robust preparatory process would be essential for example.

Let me add that the post 2015 development agenda will englobe peace and security issues. Is it then logical that the UN machinery in the area of peace and security operates pretty much in isolation from UN platforms dedicated to sustainable development? I am not sure there is the political appetite to deal with those issues at some point. But the moment will come.

## **Implementation**

A major challenge for the UN system is how its intergovernmental bodies can have a real impact on efforts to translate the SDGs into actions and, ultimately, on people's lives. The breadth of the SDGs makes this task all the more daunting.

Rio+20 and the GA in its resolution on the HLPF gave some indications on how this can be facilitated. Intergovernmental bodies need to serve as platforms for Member States to exchange good policy practices and lessons learned and reflect on how to address challenges. Their work must be anchored in evidence from the country level, evaluation, data, analysis and findings from scientists. There should be feedback loops to grasp follow-up to intergovernmental outcomes. All of this should equip our intergovernmental bodies to not only track progress but also recommend any necessary adjustment to the global agenda and policy approaches.

Importantly, the IFSD should keep reviewing means of implementation. It needs to look at whether those are adequate and used in a most effective manner to advance sustainable development. There must be synergy between HLPF, ECOSOC Development Cooperation Forum as well as the WB and IMF, and other regional and international organizations such as World Trade Organization (WTO) and Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

The IFSD should also engage those who are actually driving the implementation of the SDGs. We must continue to include civil society and the private sector. Arrangements such as the major groups have proved very useful and other stakeholders are increasingly brought on board.

The IFSD should also increasingly become a place for launching partnerships around each SDGs. There should also be a degree of accountability of such arrangements and of non-state actors.

### **Review – the role of the High-level political forum on sustainable development**

Reviews of progress will be important tool to accelerate implementation. The HLPF has a central role in reviewing SDGs in the framework of the post-2015 development agenda. It is mandated to conduct reviews of implementation by both developed and developing countries and the UN system as of 2016. We are beginning to reflect on how it can best do this.

Since one of its central roles is integration, the HLPF should review SDGs in a way that reflects their interlinkages. We could consider whether it should review interlinked clusters of SDGs. This would probably make sense as the prototype Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR) showed, by focusing on the nexus of climate, land, energy and water.

At the same time the main locus of review and indeed accountability is at national level. The HLPF reviews must be rooted in national consultative processes. Ideally, they should be in sync with Governments elaboration or review of national policies. The reviews will of course be voluntary. But their timing could also be guided by the country's own calendar. They will be a unique source of lessons learned and experiences, and thus enhance the relevance of the HLPF guidance.

Consultations confirmed the importance Member States attach to reviewing progress and policies and exchanging experiences at regional level. The regional commissions will have an important role.

There must be strong linkages between national, regional and global levels. The synthesis report of the Secretary-General underlines this. It also suggests that the UN system conducts thematic reviews of progress. ECOSOC can have an important role in doing this, drawing from the work system-wide.

We should recognize that we face a huge challenge. The HLPF meets only two days under the auspices of the GA and eight days under the auspices of ECOSOC. Is this enough for it to deliver the many functions entrusted to it? Regardless of what we conclude, we must recognize that it is the entire UN system – starting with our charter bodies – which needs to join forces to advance implementation of the new agenda.

This is the key message I would like to leave with you. We actually have a range of very strong intergovernmental bodies in the area of sustainable development. We need to build a sense of

architecture, make sure they enrich each other's work and that, together, they advance the SDGs. Let us think about what needs to be done now and what would require legislation or impetus from the 2015 summit.

## Chapter 8

# Good, Effective and Equitable Governance and the SDGs

Steven Bernstein

### Introduction

There are two aspects of governance and the SDGs:

- 1) Governance and institutional arrangements that support action, implementation and review of the SDGs; and
- 2) Governance as a goal that the SDGs can promote and pursue – most directly articulated in draft goal 16.

The two are related, although I'll focus my remarks mainly on the second in line with the themes today. Many of my comments are drawn from a policy brief I distributed in advance, co-written with a number of my colleagues and based on a wider research effort within the Earth System Governance Project (Biermann et al., 2014).

### The Goal of Governance

A major message is that three aspects of governance need to be considered in integrating governance into the SDGs.

First is *good governance*, which focuses on processes of decision making and their institutional foundations. Good governance has long been identified as an important priority, including in the Millennium Declaration and in the policies and programs of a wide range of international processes and institutions. Values such as enhanced participation and inclusion, transparency, accountability and access to information are encompassed by this concept. Good governance has also focused on combatting corruption, securing basic human rights and the rule of law. Most of the governance related targets under draft goal 16 focus on good governance, even though it is not explicitly named in the draft goal or targets. At the same time, the risk of focusing exclusively on good governance is that it has also been associated with conditionality in development assistance, top-down approaches, and an over-emphasis on protection of investment and property rights while giving less attention to social goals, even though the concept in principle is very relevant to both. It would be important to ensure this broader meaning is considered in developing indicators that are relevant for different contexts and country conditions, but based on common principles.

The second aspect is *effective governance*, or the problem-solving capacity of governments, or countries more broadly, to pursue sustainable development. Effective governance is linked to institutional capacity, technology, expertise and financial resources and the ability to engage in long-term planning to deal with interconnected problems, not just procedural elements such as the rule of law. Capacity building is obviously the most directly relevant existing target – included as target 17.9 under the broader goal to revitalize a partnership for sustainable development – but it is only one piece of effective institutions and governing capacity. Developing indicators is very challenging for effective governance. It may be more useful to think in terms of monitoring, review and accountability mechanisms for governing institutions such as stress tests but applied beyond

financial institutions or ‘road marker’ indicators to measure progress that require countries to initiate monitoring, improved transparency or other processes rather than to achieve some quantitative improvement.

*Equitable governance*, which focuses attention on distributional outcomes and equitable treatment, including of the very poor and marginalized, is a third element of governance as goal. A notion of equitable governance applies both to decision-making, including ongoing demands for greater equity in global decision-making, especially in economic governance, but also to the distribution of wealth, resources, and opportunities within societies. While there are long-standing controversies on how best to frame and respond to equity concerns, there is no disagreement on the need to reduce extreme forms of economic inequality.

While these three different aspects of governance have a number of connections between them, they may require separate political efforts. To most fully integrate governance into the SDGs, it is important to take account of all three aspects.

### **Governance as both a Standalone and Cross-Cutting Goal**

Making important components of governance part of Goal 16, in addition to recognizing the cross-cutting importance of good governance, equity and human rights for achieving all goals in the current draft preamble, are positive developments. They also reflect arguments made by the UN High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons (2013). Including these elements of governance in a goal with targets offers the best opportunity to incorporate all three aspects of governance in comprehensive way into the post-2015 sustainable development agenda. However, as currently formulated, the targets in goal 16 tend to privilege the traditional category of “good” governance over effective or equitable governance.

Some elements of the other two aspects of governance are nonetheless covered in other goals. For example, gender rights and equality appear in various goals, especially in goal 5, with a number of targets that suggest that equal opportunities for women and girls to access educational, economic and technological resources will enable achieving sustainable development. Similarly, SDG 10 focuses on reducing inequalities in the distribution of wealth and income within and among countries. Less clear is how to translate these other aspects of governance into specific institutional settings that facilitate or require policies at multiple levels that can reduce high levels of inequality and further the eradication of poverty. Thus, while identifying these various elements in different SDGs can be seen as positive, their separation can draw attention away from the interconnectedness of these difference aspects of governance as important means relevant to making progress on all goals. In that regard, achieving effective and equitable governance is closely linked to means of implementation and the institutional arrangements to facilitate and promote those means, at all levels.

### **Appropriate Institutional Arrangements**

What are the appropriate institutional arrangements to promote coherence, effective action and implementation that link directly to the three elements of governance above? I want to focus on just one illustrative example of how governance concerns link to institutional arrangements for achieving the SDGs: the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development and its role in promoting wide-ranging action on the SDGs.

First, I encourage governments and stakeholders to think of the HLPF on Sustainable Development as potentially playing an ‘orchestrating’ role in the governance of the SDGs (Abbott and Bernstein 2015). To be clear, I do not mean orchestration in the grand musical sense, but in the everyday sense of managing, coordinating and combining policies since the actual implementation and action on the SDGs will be primarily through other parts of the UN system, partnerships, regional commissions and other regional organizations, action networks, a myriad of private sector and societal actors, communities and, of course, national governments. IN Chapter 6 Dhananjayan Sriskandarajah and Mandeep Tiwana arguments (this e-book) on the need for civil society and civic space couldn’t be clearer; constraints on stakeholder participation and engagement could jeopardize successful orchestration by the HLPF both in terms of it gaining the necessary support and legitimacy and for it to facilitate the necessary action. In sum, elements of inclusive, participatory governance and engagement are vitally important for mobilizing action through partnerships and voluntary commitments which are widely recognized as a primary means of implementation.

Research on partnerships has shown that criteria for success include not only clear quantifiable goals and institutionalized review (elements of needed for effective governance); but also a true multi-stakeholder character (elements of equitable and good governance). The same studies (e.g., Bäckstrand and Kylsäter, 2014) note significant underrepresentation of women, indigenous peoples, youth and children, and farmers. Indicators of good, equitable and effective governance could also be applied to action networks and partnerships in their internal governance, and the HLPF could recognize those partnerships and networks that embody these characteristics – for example by showcasing them or inviting them to side events or roundtables.

Of course, there are many other ways in which good, effective, and equitable governance can combine in practice, and the literature on international development has long recognized the importance of governance capacities, architecture, and reforms for achieving many development goals. The illustration above is meant mostly, simply, to suggest that governance, in all its aspects, as opposed to being an afterthought, is integral to achieving the SDGs. Many of the challenges the SDGs aim to address are fundamentally problems of governance, or at least require better governance to address them. But there is also a broader reason to pay attention to all three aspects of governance: so the focus on specific challenges also includes attention to the broader normative agenda that the UN has long promoted, which includes good governance, human rights, and equity (Browne 2014). The SDGs should be seen to be a part of, as opposed to, that broader agenda.

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## Chapter 9

# Selected High-Level and UNGA Resolutions on Sustainable Development Governance

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## **I. OVERVIEW**

In the past 25 years, the UN General Assembly and high-level gatherings of national leaders have approved numerous high level declarations on development, especially relating to the MDG and Rio processes.

This document provides relevant excerpts from these previous agreements that address the issues agreed to by the Open Working Group in Goal 16 of the Sustainable Development Goals. This includes human rights, transparency, public participation, fighting corruption, access to information, safe societies, and ensuring the rule of law. It is intended to provide assistance to delegations by making easily available already agreed language on governance issues, which can be used in the drafting the Declaration for the Post 2015 Agenda.

## **II. MILLENNIUM GOALS – RELATED DECLARATIONS**

### **1. Resolution 55/2. Millennium Declaration (2000) (1)**

We are determined to establish a just and lasting peace all over the world in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter. We rededicate ourselves to support all efforts to uphold the sovereign equality of all States, respect for their territorial integrity and political independence, resolution of disputes by peaceful means and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, the right to self-determination of peoples which remain under colonial domination and foreign occupation, non-interference in the internal affairs of States, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, respect for the equal rights of all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion and international cooperation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character.

6. We consider certain fundamental values to be essential to international relations in the twenty-first century. These include:

- Freedom. Men and women have the right to live their lives and raise their children in dignity, free from hunger and from the fear of violence, oppression or injustice. Democratic and participatory governance based on the will of the people best assures these rights.
- Tolerance. Human beings must respect one other, in all their diversity of belief, culture and language. Differences within and between societies should be neither feared nor repressed, but cherished as a precious asset of humanity. A culture of peace and dialogue among all civilizations should be actively promoted.

9. We resolve therefore:

- To strengthen respect for the rule of law in international as in national affairs and, in particular, to ensure compliance by Member States with the decisions of the International Court of Justice, in compliance with the Charter of the United Nations, in cases to which they are parties.
- To ensure the implementation, by States Parties, of treaties in areas such as arms control and disarmament and of international humanitarian law and human rights law, and call upon all States to consider signing and ratifying the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.
- To intensify our efforts to fight transnational crime in all its dimensions, including trafficking as well as smuggling in human beings and money laundering.

13. Success in meeting these objectives depends, *inter alia*, on good governance within each country. It also depends on good governance at the international level and on transparency in the financial, monetary and trading systems. We are committed to an open, equitable, rule-based, predictable and non-discriminatory multilateral trading and financial system.

**20. We also resolve:**

- To develop strong partnerships with the private sector and with civil society organizations in pursuit of development and poverty eradication.
- To ensure that the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communication technologies, in conformity with recommendations contained in the ECOSOC 2000 Ministerial Declaration, are available to all.

## **V. Human rights, democracy and good governance**

24. We will spare no effort to promote democracy and strengthen the rule of law, as well as respect for all internationally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development.

25. We resolve therefore:

- To respect fully and uphold the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- To strive for the full protection and promotion in all our countries of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights for all.
- To strengthen the capacity of all our countries to implement the principles and practices of democracy and respect for human rights, including minority rights.

- To combat all forms of violence against women and to implement the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
- To take measures to ensure respect for and protection of the human rights of migrants, migrant workers and their families, to eliminate the increasing acts of racism and xenophobia in many societies and to promote greater harmony and tolerance in all societies.
- To work collectively for more inclusive political processes, allowing genuine participation by all citizens in all our countries.
- To ensure the freedom of the media to perform their essential role and the right of the public to have access to information.

### **Resolution 60/1. 2005 World Summit Outcome. (2005) (2)**

4. We reaffirm that our common fundamental values, including freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, respect for all human rights, respect for nature and shared responsibility, are essential to international relations.

6. We reaffirm the vital importance of an effective multilateral system, in accordance with international law, in order to better address the multifaceted and interconnected challenges and threats confronting our world and to achieve progress in the areas of peace and security, development and human rights, underlining the central role of the United Nations, and commit ourselves to promoting and strengthening the effectiveness of the Organization through the implementation of its decisions and resolutions.

9. We acknowledge that peace and security, development and human rights are the pillars of the United Nations system and the foundations for collective security and well-being. We recognize that development, peace and security and human rights are interlinked and mutually reinforcing.

11. We acknowledge that good governance and the rule of law at the national and international levels are essential for sustained economic growth, sustainable development and the eradication of poverty and hunger.

12. We reaffirm that gender equality and the promotion and protection of the full enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all are essential to advance development and peace and security. We are committed to creating a world fit for future generations, which takes into account the best interests of the child.

13. We reaffirm the universality, indivisibility, interdependence and interrelatedness of all human rights.

21. We further reaffirm our commitment to sound policies, good governance at all levels and the rule of law, and to mobilize domestic resources, attract international

24. In our common pursuit of growth, poverty eradication and sustainable development, a critical challenge is to ensure the necessary internal conditions for mobilizing domestic savings, both public and private, sustaining adequate levels of productive investment, increasing human

capacity, reducing capital flight, curbing the illicit transfer of funds and enhancing international cooperation for creating an enabling domestic environment. We undertake to support the efforts of developing countries to create a domestic enabling environment for mobilizing domestic resources. To this end, we therefore resolve:

(a) To pursue good governance and sound macroeconomic policies at all levels and support developing countries in their efforts to put in place the policies and investments to drive sustained economic growth, promote small and medium- sized enterprises, promote employment generation and stimulate the private sector;

(b) To reaffirm that good governance is essential for sustainable development; that sound economic policies, solid democratic institutions responsive to the needs of the people and improved infrastructure are the basis for sustained economic growth, poverty eradication and employment creation; and that freedom, peace and security, domestic stability, respect for human rights, including the right to development, the rule of law, gender equality and market-oriented policies and an overall commitment to just and democratic societies are also essential and mutually reinforcing;

(c) To make the fight against corruption a priority at all levels and we welcome all actions taken in this regard at the national and international levels, including the adoption of policies that emphasize accountability, transparent public sector management and corporate responsibility and accountability, including efforts to return assets transferred through corruption, consistent with the United Nations Convention against Corruption.<sup>5</sup> We urge all States that have not done so to consider signing, ratifying and implementing the Convention;

39. Good governance at the international level is fundamental for achieving sustainable development. In order to ensure a dynamic and enabling international economic environment, it is important to promote global economic governance through addressing the international finance, trade, technology and investment patterns that have an impact on the development prospects of developing countries. To this effect, the international community should take all-necessary and appropriate measures, including ensuring support for structural and macroeconomic reform, a comprehensive solution to the external debt problem and increasing the market access of developing countries.

#### **IV. Human rights and the rule of law**

119. We recommit ourselves to actively protecting and promoting all human rights, the rule of law and democracy and recognize that they are interlinked and mutually reinforcing and that they belong to the universal and indivisible core values and principles of the United Nations, and call upon all parts of the United Nations to promote human rights and fundamental freedoms in accordance with their mandates.

120. We reaffirm the solemn commitment of our States to fulfill their obligations to promote universal respect for and the observance and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all in accordance with the Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and

other instruments relating to human rights and international law. The universal nature of these rights and freedoms is beyond question.

## **Human rights**

121. We reaffirm that all human rights are universal, indivisible, interrelated, interdependent and mutually reinforcing and that all human rights must be treated in a fair and equal manner, on the same footing and with the same emphasis. While the significance of national and regional particularities and various historical, cultural and religious backgrounds must be borne in mind, all States, regardless of their political, economic and cultural systems, have the duty to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

122. We emphasize the responsibilities of all States, in conformity with the Charter, to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction of any kind as to race, color, sex, language or religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

126. We resolve to integrate the promotion and protection of human rights into national policies and to support the further mainstreaming of human rights throughout the United Nations system, as well as closer cooperation between the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and all relevant United Nations bodies.

## **Rule of law**

134. Recognizing the need for universal adherence to and implementation of the rule of law at both the national and international levels, we:

- (a) Reaffirm our commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter and international law and to an international order based on the rule of law and international law, which is essential for peaceful coexistence and cooperation among States;
- (b) Support the annual treaty event;
- (c) Encourage States that have not yet done so to consider becoming parties to all treaties that relate to the protection of civilians;
- (d) Call upon States to continue their efforts to eradicate policies and practices that discriminate against women and to adopt laws and promote practices that protect the rights of women and promote gender equality;
- (e) Support the idea of establishing a rule of law assistance unit within the Secretariat, in accordance with existing relevant procedures, subject to a report by the Secretary-General to the General Assembly, so as to strengthen United Nations activities to promote the rule of law, including through technical assistance and capacity-building;

(f) Recognize the important role of the International Court of Justice, the principal judicial organ of the United Nations, in adjudicating disputes among States and the value of its work, call upon States that have not yet done so to consider accepting the jurisdiction of the Court in accordance with its Statute and consider means of strengthening the Court's work, including by supporting the Secretary-General's Trust Fund to Assist States in the Settlement of Disputes through the International Court of Justice on a voluntary basis.

## **Democracy**

135. We reaffirm that democracy is a universal value based on the freely expressed will of people to determine their own political, economic, social and cultural systems and their full participation in all aspects of their lives. We also reaffirm that while democracies share common features, there is no single model of democracy, that it does not belong to any country or region, and reaffirm the necessity of due respect for sovereignty and the right of self-determination. We stress that democracy, development and respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms are interdependent and mutually reinforcing.

136. We renew our commitment to support democracy by strengthening countries' capacity to implement the principles and practices of democracy and resolve to strengthen the capacity of the United Nations to assist Member States upon their request. We welcome the establishment of a Democracy Fund at the United Nations. We note that the advisory board to be established should reflect diverse geographical representation. We invite the Secretary-General to help to ensure that practical arrangements for the Democracy Fund take proper account of existing United Nations activity in this field.

137. We invite interested Member States to give serious consideration to contributing to the Fund.

## **Resolution 65/1. MDG + 10 Keeping the promise: united to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (2010) (3)**

3. We also reaffirm the importance of freedom, peace and security, respect for all human rights, including the right to development, the rule of law, gender equality and an overall commitment to just and democratic societies for development.

11. We acknowledge that good governance and the rule of law at the national and international levels are essential for sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth, sustainable development and the eradication of poverty and hunger.

13. We acknowledge that peace and security, development and human rights are the pillars of the United Nations system and the foundations for collective security and well being. We recognize that development, peace and security and human rights are interlinked and mutually reinforcing. We reaffirm that our common fundamental values, including freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, respect for all human rights, respect for nature and shared responsibility, are essential for achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

17. We call on civil society, including non-governmental organizations, voluntary associations and foundations, the private sector and other relevant stakeholders at the local, national, regional and global levels, to enhance their role in national development efforts as well as their contribution to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, and we commit ourselves as national Governments to the inclusion of these stakeholders.

23. We take note of the lessons learned and the successful policies and approaches in the implementation and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and recognize that with increased political commitment these could be replicated and scaled up for accelerating progress, including by:

(e) Supporting participatory, community-led strategies aligned with national development priorities and strategies;

(i) Ensuring the full participation of all segments of society, including the poor and disadvantaged, in decision-making processes;

(j) Respecting, promoting and protecting all human rights, including the right to development;

(n) Working towards transparent and accountable systems of governance at the national and international levels;

(o) Working towards greater transparency and accountability in international development cooperation, in both donor and developing countries, focusing on adequate and predictable financial resources as well as their improved quality and targeting;

(s) Strengthening statistical capacity to produce reliable disaggregated data for better programmes and policy evaluation and formulation.

36. We resolve to promote and strengthen national ownership and leadership of development as a key determinant of progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals, with each country taking the primary responsibility for its own development. We encourage all countries to continue to design, implement and monitor development strategies tailored to their specific situations, including through broad consultations and participation of all relevant stakeholders, as appropriate for each national context. We call on the United Nations system and other development actors to support the design and implementation of these strategies, at the request of Member States.

52. We stress that fighting corruption at both the national and international levels is a priority and that corruption is a serious barrier to effective resource mobilization and allocation and diverts resources away from activities that are vital for poverty eradication, the fight against hunger and sustainable development. We are determined to take urgent and decisive steps to continue to combat corruption in all of its manifestations, which requires strong institutions at all levels, and urge all States that have not yet done so to consider ratifying or acceding to the United Nations Convention against Corruption<sup>13</sup> and to begin its implementation.

53. We recognize that the respect for and promotion and protection of human rights are an integral part of effective work towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

55. We reaffirm that States should, in accordance with international law, take concerted, positive steps to ensure respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people, on the basis of equality and non-discrimination and recognizing the value and diversity of their distinctive identities, cultures and social organization.

59. We stress the need for adequate quantity and quality of funding for the operational activities of the United Nations development system as well as the need to make funding more predictable, effective and efficient. We also reaffirm, in this context, the importance of accountability, transparency and improved results-based management and further harmonized results-based reporting on the work of the United Nations funds and programs and the specialized agencies.

68. We recognize that all countries require adequate, timely, reliable and disaggregated data, including demographic data, in order to design better programs and policies for sustainable development. We commit ourselves to strengthening our national statistical systems, including for effectively monitoring progress towards the Millennium Development Goals. We also reiterate the need to increase efforts in support of statistical capacity building in developing countries.

73 (h) Improving national health governance, including through the participation of civil society, the private sector and other relevant stakeholders, as well as strengthening international support, as appropriate, in order to ensure that national health systems are sustainable, well prepared and capable of responding to challenges, including crises and pandemics;

78. We commit ourselves to accelerating progress in order to achieve Millennium Development Goal 8, including by:

(j) Implementing measures to curtail illicit financial flows at all levels, enhancing disclosure practices and promoting transparency in financial information. In this regard, strengthening national and multinational efforts to address this issue is crucial, including support to developing countries and technical assistance to enhance their capacities. Additional measures should be implemented to prevent the transfer abroad of stolen assets and to assist in the recovery and return of such assets, in particular to their countries of origin, consistent with the United Nations Convention against Corruption; 13

(v) Strengthening public-private partnerships in order to close the large gaps that remain in access to and affordability of information and communications technology across countries and income groups, including by upgrading the quality and quantity of existing telecommunication infrastructure, particularly in the least developed countries, to support more modern information and communications technology applications and greatly increase connectivity, access and investment in innovation and development and the effective use of innovative information and communications technology applications and e-governance tools; and in this regard encouraging further operationalizing of the voluntary Digital Solidarity Fund;

### **III. RIO-RELATED DECLARATIONS**

#### **Rio Declaration on Environment and Development (1992) (4)**

##### **Principle 10**

Environmental issues are best handled with participation of all concerned citizens, at the relevant level. At the national level, each individual shall have appropriate access to information concerning the environment that is held by public authorities, including information on hazardous materials and activities in their communities, and the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes. States shall facilitate and encourage public awareness and participation by making information widely available. Effective access to judicial and administrative proceedings, including redress and remedy, shall be provided.

#### **Earth Summit + 5 S/19-2. Program for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 (1997) (5)**

23. Economic development, social development and environmental protection are interdependent and mutually reinforcing components of sustainable development. Sustained economic growth is essential to the economic and social development of all countries, in particular developing countries. Through such growth, which should be broadly based so as to benefit all people, countries will be able to improve the standards of living of their people through the eradication of poverty, hunger, disease and illiteracy and the provision of adequate shelter and secure employment for all, and the preservation of the integrity of the environment. Growth can foster development only if its benefits are fully shared. It must therefore also be guided by equity, justice and social and environmental considerations. Development, in turn, must involve measures that improve the human condition and the quality of life itself. Democracy, respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development, transparent and accountable governance in all sectors of society, as well as effective participation by civil society, are also an essential part of the necessary foundations for the realization of social and people-centered sustainable development.

24. Sustainable development strategies are important mechanisms for enhancing and linking national capacity so as to bring together priorities in social, economic and environmental policies. Hence, special attention must be given to the fulfillment of commitments in the areas set out below, in the framework of an integrated approach towards development, consisting of mutually reinforcing measures to sustain economic growth, as well as to promote social development and environmental protection. Achieving sustainable development cannot be carried out without greater integration at all policy-making levels and at operational levels, including the lowest administrative levels possible. Economic sectors, such as industry, agriculture, energy, transport and tourism, must take responsibility for the impact of their activities on human well-being and the physical environment. In the context of good governance, properly constructed strategies can enhance prospects for economic growth and employment and at the same time protect the environment. All sectors of society should be involved in their development and implementation, as follows:

108. Access to information and broad public participation in decision-making are fundamental to sustainable development. Further efforts are required to promote, in the light of country-specific conditions, the integration of environment and development policies, through appropriate legal and regulatory policies, instruments and enforcement mechanisms at the national, state, provincial and local levels. At the national level, each individual should have appropriate access to information concerning the environment that is held by public authorities, including information on hazardous materials and activities in the communities, and the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes. Governments and legislators, with the support, where appropriate, of competent international organizations, should establish judicial and administrative procedures for legal redress and remedy of actions affecting environment and development that may be unlawful or infringe on rights under the law, and should provide access to individuals, groups and organizations with a recognized legal interest. Access should be provided to effective judicial and administrative channels for affected individuals and groups to ensure that all authorities, both national and local, and other civil organizations remain accountable for their actions in accordance with their obligations, at the appropriate levels for the country concerned, taking into account the judicial and administrative systems of the country concerned.

#### **Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development (2002) (6)**

26. We recognize that sustainable development requires a long-term perspective and broad-based participation in policy formulation, decision-making and implementation at all levels. As social partners, we will continue to work for stable partnerships with all major groups, respecting the independent, important roles of each of them.

30. We undertake to strengthen and improve governance at all levels for the effective implementation of Agenda 21, the Millennium development goals and the Plan of Implementation of the Summit.

#### **Johannesburg Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (2002) (7)**

25. (b) Facilitate access to public information and participation, including by women, at all levels in support of policy and decision-making related to water resources management and project implementation;

163. Each country has the primary responsibility for its own sustainable development, and the role of national policies and development strategies cannot be overemphasized. All countries should promote sustainable development at the national level by, inter alia, enacting and enforcing clear and effective laws that support sustainable development. All countries should strengthen governmental institutions, including by providing necessary infrastructure and by promoting transparency, accountability and fair administrative and judicial institutions.

164. All countries should also promote public participation, including through measures that provide access to information regarding legislation, regulations, activities, policies and programs. They should also foster full public participation in sustainable development policy formulation

and implementation. Women should be able to participate fully and equally in policy formulation and decision-making.

### **Rio + 20 The Future We Want (2012) (8)**

10. We acknowledge that democracy, good governance and the rule of law, at the national and international levels, as well as an enabling environment, are essential for sustainable development, including sustained and inclusive economic growth, social development, environmental protection and the eradication of poverty and hunger. We reaffirm that to achieve our sustainable development goals we need institutions at all levels that are effective, transparent, accountable and democratic.

43. We underscore that broad public participation and access to information and judicial and administrative proceedings are essential to the promotion of sustainable development. Sustainable development requires the meaningful involvement and active participation of regional, national and subnational legislatures and judiciaries, and all major groups: women, children and youth, indigenous peoples, non-governmental organizations, local authorities, workers and trade unions, business and industry, the scientific and technological community, and farmers, as well as other stakeholders, including local communities, volunteer groups and foundations, migrants and families as well as older persons and persons with disabilities. In this regard, we agree to work more closely with the major groups and other stakeholders and encourage their active participation, as appropriate, in processes that contribute to decision-making, planning and implementation of policies and programs for sustainable development at all levels.

44. We acknowledge the role of civil society and the importance of enabling all members of civil society to be actively engaged in sustainable development. We recognize that improved participation of civil society depends upon, inter alia, strengthening access to information and building civil society capacity and an enabling environment. We recognize that information and communications technology is facilitating the flow of information between governments and the public. In this regard, it is essential to work towards improved access to information and communications technology, especially broadband networks and services, and bridge the digital divide, recognizing the contribution of international cooperation in this regard.

75. We underscore the importance of a strengthened institutional framework for sustainable development, which responds coherently and effectively to current and future challenges and efficiently bridges gaps in the implementation of the sustainable development agenda. The institutional framework for sustainable development should integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development in a balanced manner and enhance implementation by, inter alia, strengthening coherence, coordination, avoiding duplication of efforts and reviewing progress in implementing sustainable development. We also reaffirm that the framework should be inclusive, transparent and effective and that it should find common solutions related to global challenges to sustainable development.

76. We recognize that effective governance at the local, subnational, national, regional and global levels representing the voices and interests of all are critical for advancing sustainable development. The strengthening and reform of the institutional framework should not be an end in

itself, but a means to achieve sustainable development. We recognize that an improved and more effective institutional framework for sustainable development at the international level should be consistent with the Rio Principles, build on Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and its objectives on the institutional framework for sustainable development, contribute to the implementation of our commitments in the outcomes of United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social, environmental and related fields and take into account national priorities and the development strategies and priorities of developing countries. We therefore resolve to strengthen the institutional framework for sustainable development, which will, inter alia:

(d) Enhance coherence, reduce fragmentation and overlap and increase effectiveness, efficiency and transparency, while reinforcing coordination and cooperation;

(g) Promote the science-policy interface through inclusive, evidence-based and transparent scientific assessments, as well as access to reliable, relevant and timely data in areas related to the three dimensions of sustainable development, building on existing mechanisms, as appropriate; in this regard, strengthen participation of all countries in international sustainable development processes and capacity-building especially for developing countries, including in conducting their own monitoring and assessments;

(h) Enhance the participation and effective engagement of civil society and other relevant stakeholders in the relevant international forums and in this regard promote transparency and broad public participation and partnerships to implement sustainable development;

#### **IV. OTHER RELATED UNGA RESOLUTIONS**

##### **2. Resolution 41/128. Declaration on the Right to Development (1986) (9)**

Concerned at the existence of serious obstacles to development, as well as to the complete fulfillment of human beings and of peoples, constituted, inter alia, by the denial of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, and considering that all human rights and fundamental freedoms are indivisible and interdependent and that, in order to promote development, equal attention and urgent consideration should be given to the implementation, promotion and protection of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights and that, accordingly, the promotion of, respect for and enjoyment of certain human rights and fundamental freedoms cannot justify the denial of other human rights and fundamental freedoms,

##### **Article 2**

1. The human person is the central subject of development and should be the active participant and beneficiary of the right to development.

2. All human beings have a responsibility for development, individually and collectively, taking into account the need for full respect for their human rights and fundamental freedoms as well as their duties to the community, which alone can ensure the free and complete fulfillment of

the human being, and they should therefore promote and protect an appropriate political, social and economic order for development.

3. States have the right and the duty to formulate appropriate national development policies that aim at the constant improvement of the well-being of the entire population and of all individuals, on the basis of their active, free and meaningful participation in development and in the fair distribution of the benefits resulting therefrom.

## **Article 6**

1. All States should co-operate with a view to promoting, encouraging and strengthening universal respect for and observance of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without any distinction as to race, sex, language or religion.

2. All human rights and fundamental freedoms are indivisible and interdependent; equal attention and urgent consideration should be given to the implementation, promotion and protection of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights.

3. States should take steps to eliminate obstacles to development resulting from failure to observe civil and political rights, as well as economic, social and cultural rights.

## **Article 8**

2. States should encourage popular participation in all spheres as an important factor in development and in the full realization of all human rights.

### **3. Resolution 50/225. Public administration and development (1996) (10)**

Recognizing that effectiveness of government requires an efficient and effective public administration in all countries that is responsive to the needs of the people, promotes social justice, ensures universal access to quality services and productive assets and creates an enabling environment for sustainable people-centered development,

Reaffirming the importance of enhancing the quality of public administration based, inter alia, on the participatory approach to development,

5. Reaffirms that democracy and transparent and accountable governance and administration in all sectors of society are indispensable foundations for the realization of social and people-centered sustainable development;

6. Underlines the importance of transparent and accountable governance and administration in all public and private national and international institutions;

8. Reaffirms that Governments in all countries should promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development, bearing in mind the interdependent and

mutually reinforcing relationship between democracy, development and respect for human rights, and should make public institutions more responsive to people's needs;

#### **4. Resolution 59/185. The right to development (2004) (11)**

4. Stresses the importance of the core principles contained in the conclusions of the Working Group at its third session, congruent with the purpose of international human rights instruments, such as equality, non-discrimination, accountability, participation and international cooperation, as critical to mainstreaming the right to development at the national and international levels, and underlines the importance of the principles of equity and transparency;

8. Also reaffirms that the realization of the right to development is essential to the implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, 1 which regards all human rights as universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated, places the human person at the center of development and recognizes that, while development facilitates the enjoyment of all human rights, the lack of development may not be invoked to justify the abridgement of internationally recognized human rights;

21. Also recognizes that good governance and the rule of law at the national level assist all States in the promotion and protection of human rights, including the right to development, and agrees on the value of the ongoing efforts being made by States to identify and strengthen good governance practices, including transparent, responsible, accountable and participatory government, that are responsive and appropriate to their needs and aspirations, including in the context of agreed partnership approaches to development, capacity-building and technical assistance;

26. Emphasizes the urgent need for taking concrete measures to fight against all forms of corruption at the national and international levels, to prevent, detect and deter in a more effective manner international transfers of illicitly acquired assets and to strengthen international cooperation in asset recovery, stresses the importance of a genuine political commitment on the part of all Governments through a firm legal framework, and in this context urges States to sign and ratify as soon as possible, and States parties to implement effectively, the United Nations Convention against Corruption;<sup>10</sup>

#### **5. Resolution 64/172. The right to development (2010) (12)**

28. Also recognizes that good governance and the rule of law at the national level assist all States in the promotion and protection of human rights, including the right to development, and agrees on the value of the ongoing efforts being made by States to identify and strengthen good governance practices, including transparent, responsible, accountable and participatory government, that are responsive and appropriate to their needs and aspirations, including in the context of agreed partnership approaches to development, capacity-building and technical assistance;

35. Emphasizes the urgent need for taking concrete and effective measures to prevent, combat and criminalize all forms of corruption at all levels, to prevent, detect and deter in a more effective

manner international transfers of illicitly acquired assets and to strengthen international cooperation in asset recovery, consistent with the principles of the United Nations Convention against Corruption, 18 particularly chapter V thereof, stresses the importance of a genuine political commitment on the part of all Governments through a firm legal framework, and in this context urges States to sign and ratify the Convention as soon as possible and States parties to implement it effectively;

**Resolution 66/209. Promoting the efficiency, accountability, effectiveness and transparency of public administration by strengthening supreme audit institutions (2011) (13)**

Emphasizing also that efficient, accountable, effective and transparent public administration has a key role to play in the implementation of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals,

**Resolution 67/1. Declaration of the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on the Rule of Law at the National and International Levels (2012) (14)**

7. We are convinced that the rule of law and development are strongly interrelated and mutually reinforcing, that the advancement of the rule of law at the national and international levels is essential for sustained and inclusive economic growth, sustainable development, the eradication of poverty and hunger and the full realization of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development, all of which in turn reinforce the rule of law, and for this reason we are convinced that this interrelationship should be considered in the post-2015 international development agenda.

11. We recognize the importance of national ownership in rule of law activities, strengthening justice and security institutions that are accessible and responsive to the needs and rights of all individuals and which build trust and promote social cohesion and economic prosperity.

12. We reaffirm the principle of good governance and commit to an effective, just, non-discriminatory and equitable delivery of public services pertaining to the rule of law, including criminal, civil and administrative justice, commercial dispute settlement and legal aid.

**Resolution 68/116. The rule of law at the national and international levels (2013) (15)**

*Convinced* that the advancement of the rule of law at the national and international levels is essential for the realization of sustained economic growth, sustainable development, the eradication of poverty and hunger and the protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, and acknowledging that collective security depends on effective cooperation, in accordance with the Charter and international law, against transnational threats,

6. *Stresses* the importance of adherence to the rule of law at the national level and the need to strengthen support to Member States, upon their request, in the domestic implementation of their respective international obligations through enhanced technical assistance and capacity-building;

### **Resolution 68/158. The right to development (2013)**

28. Also recognizes that good governance and the rule of law at the national level assist all States in the promotion and protection of human rights, including the right to development, and agrees on the value of the ongoing efforts being made by States to identify and strengthen good governance practices, including transparent, responsible, accountable and participatory government, that are responsive and appropriate to their needs and aspirations, including in the context of agreed partnership approaches to development, capacity-building and technical assistance;

37. Emphasizes the urgent need for taking concrete and effective measures to prevent, combat and criminalize all forms of corruption at all levels, to prevent, detect and deter in a more effective manner international transfers of illicitly acquired assets and to strengthen international cooperation in asset recovery, consistent with the principles of the United Nations Convention against Corruption, particularly chapter V thereof, stresses the importance of a genuine political commitment on the part of all Governments through a firm legal framework, and in this context urges States to sign and ratify the Convention as soon as possible and States parties to implement it effectively;

### **Resolution 68/175. Promotion of a democratic and equitable international order (2013) (16)**

Recognizing that democracy, respect for all human rights, including the right to development, transparent and accountable governance and administration in all sectors of society and effective participation by civil society are an essential part of the necessary foundations for the realization of social and people-centered sustainable development,

### **Resolution 68/188. The rule of law, crime prevention and criminal justice in the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015 (2013) (17)**

Reiterating that the advancement of the rule of law at the national and international levels is essential for sustained and inclusive economic growth, sustainable development, the eradication of poverty and hunger and the full realization of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development, all of which in turn reinforce the rule of law,

Bearing in mind that the rule of law includes fostering respect for a rule of law culture and the legislative, executive and judicial institutions needed to make and administer effective laws, and fostering trust and confidence that law-making will be responsive to the concerns and needs of the population and that the administration of law will be just, efficient and transparent,

Concerned by urban crime, acknowledging the need for stronger coordination between security and social policies, with a view to addressing the root causes of urban crime, and recognizing the direct relevance of urban safety as a prerequisite to sustainable urban development and the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals,

Convinced that the rule of law and development are strongly interrelated and mutually reinforcing and that crime prevention and criminal justice elements that support the rule of law should therefore be considered in implementing the post-2015 international development agenda,

3. Underscores that the post-2015 development agenda should be guided by respect for and promotion of the rule of law, and that crime prevention and criminal justice have an important role in that regard;

9. Urges Member States providing development assistance, in particular to countries emerging from conflict, to increase their assistance in the areas of crime prevention and criminal justice, and recommends that such assistance could, upon request, include elements relating to strengthening the rule of law;

11. Also stresses that institutions of governance and the judicial system should be gender-sensitive and that the full participation of women needs to be promoted;

**Resolution 68/204. Follow-up to the International Conference on Financing for Development (2013) (18)**

7. Reaffirms that good governance and advancement of the rule of law at all levels are essential for the realization of sustained economic growth, sustainable development and the eradication of poverty and hunger, and hence reaffirms the importance of the implementation of the commitment to sound policies;

15. Recalls that the ongoing fight against corruption at all levels is a priority, reaffirms the need to take urgent and decisive steps to continue to combat corruption in all its manifestations in order to reduce obstacles to effective resource mobilization and allocation and to prevent the diversion of resources away from activities that are vital for development, recalls that this requires strong institutions at all levels, including, in particular, effective legal and judicial systems and enhanced transparency, recognizes the efforts and achievements of developing countries in this regard, notes the increased commitment of States that have already ratified or acceded to the United Nations Convention against Corruption,<sup>14</sup> and in this regard urges all States that have not yet done so to consider ratifying or acceding to the Convention;

17. Reaffirms the importance of implementing measures to curtail illicit financial flows at all levels, enhance disclosure practices and promote transparency in financial information, and in this regard notes that strengthening national and multinational efforts to address this issue is crucial, including through support and technical assistance to developing countries to enhance their capacities;

**Resolution 69/123. The rule of law at the national and international levels (2014) (19)**

*Convinced* that the advancement of the rule of law at the national and international levels is essential for the realization of sustained economic growth, sustainable development, the eradication of poverty and hunger and the protection of all human rights and fundamental

freedoms, and acknowledging that collective security depends on effective cooperation, in accordance with the Charter and international law, against transnational threats,

*Convinced* that the promotion of and respect for the rule of law at the national and international levels, as well as justice and good governance, should guide the activities of the United Nations and its Member States,

*Recalling* paragraph 134 (e) of the 2005 World Summit Outcome, 1

**Resolution 69/195. Rule of law, crime prevention and criminal justice in the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015 (2014)**

Strongly determined to reinvigorate political will and to raise the level of the international community's commitment to moving the sustainable development agenda forward, through the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals,

Reiterating that the rule of law and development are interrelated and mutually reinforcing and that the advancement of the rule of law at the national and international levels is essential for sustained and inclusive economic growth, sustainable development, the eradication of poverty and hunger and the full realization of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development, all of which in turn reinforce the rule of law,

Concerned about the serious threat that violence related to transnational organized crime poses to development and the rule of law, security and well-being of communities, hindering the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals by reducing national income and productivity, diverting investment and rolling back hard-won development gains, and recognizing that comprehensive crime prevention strategies can contribute to addressing those challenges effectively,

1. Recognizes the crosscutting nature of the rule of law, crime prevention and criminal justice and development, and recommends that such linkages and interrelationships be properly addressed and further elaborated;
2. Underscores that the discussions on the post-2015 development agenda should take into account respect for and promotion of the rule of law and that crime prevention and criminal justice have an important role in that regard, giving due consideration to the work of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in order to channel, as appropriate, its contribution to the discussions on the post-2015 development agenda, in close consultation with all relevant stakeholders;
3. Encourages Member States, in their deliberations on the post-2015 development agenda, to give due consideration to the rule of law, crime prevention and criminal justice, while promoting universal respect for human rights and strengthening relevant national institutions;

9. Welcomes the efforts of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to assist Member States in improving systems for collecting and analyzing data on crime prevention and criminal justice at all levels, where necessary, including gender-specific data, in order to contribute, where appropriate, to the post-2015 development agenda;

**Resolution 69/204. Information and communications technologies for development (2014)  
(20)**

Reaffirming the need to more effectively harness the potential of information and communications technologies to promote the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, through sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth and sustainable development,

Noting the references to information and communications technologies contained in the proposals of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals,

Recognizing further the fact that information and communications technologies are critical enablers of economic development and investment, with consequential benefits for employment and social welfare, and that the increasing pervasiveness of information and communications technologies within society has had profound impacts on the ways in which Governments deliver services, businesses relate to consumers and citizens participate in public and private life,

Reaffirming paragraphs 4, 5 and 55 of the Declaration of Principles adopted in Geneva in 2003, and recognizing that freedom of expression and the free flow of information, ideas and knowledge are essential for the information society and are beneficial to development,

1. Recognizes that information and communications technologies have the potential to provide new solutions to development challenges, particularly in the context of globalization, and can foster sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth and sustainable development, competitiveness, access to information and knowledge, poverty eradication and social inclusion that will help to expedite the integration of all countries, especially developing countries, in particular the least developed countries, into the global economy;

18. Recognizes the urgent need to harness the potential of knowledge and technology, and in this regard encourages the United Nations development system to continue its efforts to promote the use of information and communications technologies as a critical enabler of development and a catalyst for the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals;

**Notes**

- (1) <http://www.un.org/millennium/declaration/ares552e.htm>
- (2) <http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/UN/UNPAN021752.pdf>
- (3) [http://www.un.org/en/mdg/summit2010/pdf/outcome\\_documentN1051260.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/mdg/summit2010/pdf/outcome_documentN1051260.pdf)
- (4) <http://www.unep.org/Documents.multilingual/Default.asp?DocumentID=78&ArticleID=1163>
- (5) <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/spec/ares19-2.htm>

- (6) <http://www.un-documents.net/jburgdec.htm>
- (7) <http://www.un-documents.net/jburgpln.htm>
- (8) <http://www.uncsd2012.org/content/documents/727The%20Future%20We%20Want%2019%20June%201230pm.pdf>
- (9) <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/41/a41r128.htm>
- (10) <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/50/a50r225.htm>
- (11) <http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/43f312240.pdf>
- (12) [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/64/172](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/64/172)
- (13) [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=%20A/RES/66/209](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=%20A/RES/66/209)
- (14) [http://unrol.org/files/Declaration%20HLM\\_A%20RES%2067%201.pdf](http://unrol.org/files/Declaration%20HLM_A%20RES%2067%201.pdf)
- (15) [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/68/116](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/68/116)
- (16) [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/68/175](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/68/175)
- (17) [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/68/188](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/68/188)
- (18) [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/68/204&Lang=E](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/68/204&Lang=E)
- (19) [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/69/123](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/69/123)
- (20) [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/69/204](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/69/204)

## **Chapter 10**

# **Gauging our Progress: Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting**

**Neil Pierre**

(Prepared on the basis of the Synthesis Report of the Secretary General)

If we are to succeed, the new agenda must become part of the contract between people, including civil society and responsible business and their Governments — national and local. Parliaments must be strengthened to deepen democracy and carry out their constitutional mandates of oversight. All companies must pay their taxes, respect labour standards, human rights and the environment. Empowered civil society actors, through action and advocacy, must rally to the cause and contribute to a sustainable, equitable and prosperous future.

We must now embrace a culture of shared responsibility, one based on agreed universal norms, global commitments, shared rules and evidence, collective action and benchmarking for progress. The new paradigm of accountability that we seek is not one of conditionality, neither North to South, nor South to North, but rather one of all actors — Governments, international institutions, private sector actors and organizations of civil society — and in all countries, the people themselves. This is the real test of people-centred, planet-sensitive development.

Such a model can only be built on national ownership, broad participation and full transparency. To be effective, it must be aligned with the post-2015 sustainable development agenda and its new goals. To be efficient, it must be streamlined and employ existing mechanisms and processes. To be evidence-based, it must be grounded in the data revolution, and on the indicators and data that emerge therefrom. To be truly universal, it must apply to all actors — in both the public and the private sectors, at both the national and international levels. It must include opportunities for mutual review, and for mutual support at the regional and global levels.

In recent months, participants in United Nations consultations have emphasized the need for a voluntary, State-led, participatory, evidence-based and multitiered process to monitor progress.

Thus, a universal review process constructed on these principles could be initiated at the national level, which would inform the national, regional and global level reviews. At all levels, review discussions should be public, participatory, broadly accessible and based on facts, data, scientific findings and evidence-based evaluations. The principal components might include: A country-led, national component for accountability, a regional component for peer reviewing, a global component for knowledge-sharing, a thematic component to chart global progress as well as a component to review the global partnership for sustainable development.

### **A country-led, national component for accountability**

In the overall review process, this national segment, as that closest to the people, should be the most significant. It would be built on existing national and local mechanisms and processes, with broad, multi-stakeholder participation, including the presentation of national and local governments, parliaments, civil society, science, academia and business. It would establish benchmarks, review the national policy framework, chart progress, learn lessons, consider solutions, follow up and report thereon. To that end, a Government report, a national stakeholder report, with contributions from national non-governmental actors, and a report compiling existing information and data from United Nations agencies and international financial institutions, all based upon globally harmonized formats, would constitute the main written inputs on individual country progress.

### **A regional component for peer reviewing**

A regional component for peer reviewing, tailored to regional and subregional needs, undertaken by existing mechanisms in a participatory, multistakeholder process, would consider national reports, identify regional trends, obstacles, commonalities, best practices and lessons learned and to generate solutions and mutual support and solutions. Regional reviews would incorporate and build on the experiences and successes of mechanisms such as the regional economic commissions, the Africa Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) process, the Asia-Pacific Forum (APF) on Sustainable Development, the UN Economic Commission for Europe environmental performance reviews and the Organization for Economic Cooperation as well as the Development/Development Assistance Committee peer reviews.

### **A global component for knowledge sharing**

A global component for knowledge sharing, as a forum for participatory, multi-stakeholder and, importantly, universal review, would start at the launch of the new agenda. This would be convened annually under the auspices of the high-level political forum on sustainable development. It would provide a periodic occasion for individual countries to voluntarily present national reviews of progress, to discuss lessons learned in each country's implementation of the agenda and the opportunity to review both short-term outputs and long-term outcomes related to attaining the goals. Member States should consider multi-annual reviews under the political forum in a five-year cycle.

### **A thematic component to chart global progress**

A thematic component to chart global progress at regular intervals on the sustainable development framework would help to identify challenges and bottlenecks and to mobilize action to address them. While such thematic reviews could be carried out under the auspices of the High Level Political Forum (HLPF), they would rely on relevant coordination and review "platforms". These could include existing specialized or functional commissions, councils or committees that convene United Nations and other multilateral entities, relevant treaty body reviews and outcomes, as well as Member States, partners from civil society, science, academia and the private sector that could monitor and advance each respective thematic area. Existing partnerships could also be linked to such platforms in order to ensure efficient and effective action and accountability. To support and complement the process, and to ensure continuous gauging of progress, the United Nations would

provide annual global thematic reports, aggregating available data, together with the global sustainable development report mandated by Rio+20.

### **A component to review the global partnership for sustainable development**

The essential element of partnership and its mobilization of the means necessary for implementation must also be kept under active review. At the third Conference on Financing for Development (FfD) in Addis Ababa, Member States should seize the opportunity to consider how existing structures and processes can help review and strengthen the global partnership for sustainable development, including the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation. An important additional role for the review process under this component will be to address the respective conference tracks targeting the special conditions and needs of the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States.

The current structure of our intergovernmental bodies can accommodate the universal review process described above. The establishment of the high-level political forum, which meets under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly, as well as the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA), were important institutional innovations emerging from Rio+20. The reform of the Council has been another important step forward.

# Chapter 11

## SDGs and sustainable development governance as we are today

Nikhil Seth

### Governance and the new development agenda

This chapter is meant as a basis of discussion and does not represent views of any organization or entity.

In Rio+20 outcome document the international community has decided to define a set of sustainable development goals (SDGs) that will be coherent with and integrated into the post-2015 development agenda contributing to the achievement of sustainable development and serving as a driver for implementation and mainstreaming of sustainable development in all its three dimensions in the United Nations system. The outcome document gave guidance about the general characteristics of the SDGs and outlined the intergovernmental process to define them.

After 16 months of very open and inclusive deliberations under the General Assembly, the report of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (OWG-SDGs) was welcomed by the General Assembly on 10 September 2014. It was decided that its proposal contained in the report will provide the main basis for integrating sustainable development goals into the post-2015 development agenda (UNGA, 2014).

The SDGs are to be “(...) based on Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, which fully respect all the Rio Principles, taking into account different national circumstances, capacities and priorities, are consistent with international law, build upon commitments already made and contribute to the full implementation of the outcomes of all major summits in the economic, social and environmental fields (...)” (UNGA, 2012). They also need to be “(...)action oriented, concise and easy to communicate, limited in number, aspirational, global in nature and universally applicable to all countries (...)”, and accompanied by targets and indicators, taking into account different national circumstances, capacities and levels of development and focused on priority areas for the achievement of sustainable development, guided by the outcome document and involving all relevant stakeholders in their implementation.

The report of the Open Working Group contains 17 goals and 169 targets. They aspire to make post-2015 development agenda transformational and universal. They provide new level of ambition and renewed commitment to poverty eradication and sustainable development, while at the same time they incorporate unfinished business of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

## **Sustainable Development Goals Open Working Group Recommendations**

**GOAL 1:** End poverty in all its forms everywhere

**GOAL 2:** End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

**GOAL 3:** Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

**GOAL 4:** Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

**GOAL 5:** Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

**GOAL 6:** Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

**GOAL 7:** Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

**GOAL 8:** Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

**GOAL 9:** Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

**GOAL 10:** Reduce inequality within and among countries

**GOAL 11:** Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

**GOAL 12:** Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

**GOAL 13:** Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts\*

**GOAL 14:** Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

**GOAL 15:** Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

**GOAL 16:** Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

**GOAL 17:** Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

Compared to MDGs, SDGs, apart from being much broader, they present several challenges. SDGs need to be universal, yet applicable to all countries, both developed and developing;

aspirational, yet action oriented and accompanied by targets and indicators; concise and easy to communicate, focused on all priority areas for achievement of sustainable development; simple, yet integrating all three dimensions of sustainable development.

Given the breadth and ambition of the proposal, it is evident that the governance structure at all levels needs to be adequate to the challenge posed by the implementation of SDGs as well as the post-2015 development agenda.

Global governance refers to the complex of institutions, mechanisms, norms, and policies that shape global processes, mediate relations between actors, and provide a framework for cooperation in addressing global challenges. “Currently, it includes the United Nations system, the World Trade Organization (WTO), international financial institutions, and hundreds of international treaties and soft law instruments on trade, the environment, and development” (IBON, 2012). Informal member states grouping such as G-20 also play a role.

In the context of a new post-2015 development agenda that will have SDGs at its core, global governance needs to enable integration in decision-making and look at interlinkages and trade-offs. Implementing SDGs will not be easy. Even more, so that areas such as peace or governance, have been woven into the goals, making them all the more transformative. Global governance needs to steer progress to eradicate poverty, achieve social empowerment and preserve the environment.

Governments are primarily responsible to achieve sustainable development and implement SDGs, but no nation can achieve this on its own, as challenges are global and intertwined. Therefore, governance at the international level needs to not only engage states but also to support state and non-state actors, mobilize resources, monitor implementation of commitments, while giving countries the space and capacities to chart their own pathways to sustainable development.

### **The institutional framework for sustainable development**

The fact that sustainable development has not been achieved despite a large number of laws, norms and institutions, was recognized during preparations for the Rio+20 Conference. It was thus decided that one of the themes of the Conference would be the institutional framework for sustainable development (UNGA, 2010).

The outcome document of the Conference underscores that the institutional framework for sustainable development should integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development in a balanced manner and enhance implementation by (i) strengthening coherence and coordination, (ii) avoiding duplication of efforts and (iii) reviewing progress in implementing sustainable development, while (iv) being at the same time inclusive, transparent and effective in finding common solutions related to global challenges.

The outcome document also underscores that the institutional structure for sustainable development needs to be consistent with the Rio Principles, build on Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, and its objectives, contribute to the implementation of commitments in the outcomes of UN conferences and summits in the economic, social,

environmental and related fields and take into account national priorities and the development strategies and priorities of developing countries (UNGA,2012).

The following characteristics of this framework are defined in this outcome document:

- promote balanced integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development
- be action-- and result--oriented giving due regard to all relevant cross--cutting issues and interlinkages to ensure a systemic approach to issues
- enhance coherence, reduce fragmentation and overlap and increase effectiveness, efficiency and transparency
- promote full and effective participation of all countries in decision--making processes
- engage high--level political leaders, provide policy guidance and identify specific actions to promote effective implementation of sustainable development
- promote the science--policy interface
- strengthen participation of all countries in international sustainable development processes and capacity--building
- enhance engagement of civil society and other relevant stakeholders and promote transparency and broad public participation and partnerships to implement sustainable development
- promote the review and stocktaking of progress in the implementation of all sustainable development commitments, including commitments related to means of implementation

### **A wealth of UN and other institutions and a new high--level political forum on sustainable development (High Level Political Forum [HLPF] on Sustainable Development)**

In order to achieve all this, the Rio+20 has decided to establish the HLPF on SD as a dedicated platform at the United Nations for sustainable development. This new platform aims to be sufficiently high--level to provide political guidance for sustainable development including new and emerging issues, yet practical and flexible enough to ensure follow--up, reviewing and monitoring of implementation of sustainable development including SDGs and their respective means of implementation in the context of the post--2015 development agenda.

Rio+20 also reinforced the environmental pillar of the institutional framework by making the governing body of United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) universal and strengthening UNEP. It called for enhanced integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development in the work of the General Assembly (GA) and Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and reaffirmed their core mandate – notably ECOSOC’s role in coordinating the UN system and conferences’ follow--up. The institutional framework in terms of Rio+20 also includes international financial institutions and UN operational activities as well as regional, national, subnational and local authorities – all of whom were asked to adopt sustainable development strategies.

The GA subsequently defined the organizational modalities of the HLPF. It was positioned as a hybrid platform with some light subsidiarity to both GA and ECOSOC. It can, thus, provide political guidance at the highest possible level every four years under the auspices of the GA, and advance sustainable development through the reviews and regular political guidance developed under the auspices of the ECOSOC.

## **The need for coherence and coordination**

An important characteristic of the institutional framework for sustainable development defined at the Rio+20 was enhancing coherence, reducing fragmentation and overlap and increasing effectiveness, efficiency and transparency. The framework was also to promote full and effective participation of all countries in decision-making processes. However, some more work still needs to be done.

The High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda underscored the need for a single agenda, “as soon as one starts thinking practically about what needs to be done. Right now, development, sustainable development and climate change are still often seen as separate. They have separate mandates and separate financing streams. Progress is tracked and accountability ensured through separate processes. This creates overlap and confusion when it comes to developing specific programs and projects on the ground. It is time to streamline the agenda” (UN, 2013).

## **Shaping the HLPF to fulfil its mandate**

The SDGs should influence all the development agenda and finally bring together these parallel strands. The HLPF is centrally positioned in the governance framework in order to ensure coherence and provide direction. As part of the global governance structure for sustainable development, HLPF has a broad mandate to: (i) review progress in the implementation of all the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and environmental fields, as well as their respective means of implementation, (ii) provide an integrative platform for all three dimensions of sustainable development in a holistic and cross-sectoral manner, (iii) promote integrated decision making and review implementation of SDGs in order to (iv) provide recommendations on advancing sustainable development.

### **The mandate of the forum is the following**

- Provide political leadership, guidance and recommendations for sustainable development
- Conduct regular voluntary reviews of both developed and developing countries as well as the United Nations System, starting in 2016, on the follow-up and implementation of sustainable development commitments and objectives, including those related to the means of implementation, within the context of the post-2015 development agenda and will be state-led and provide a platform for partnerships
- Enhance the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development in a holistic and cross-sectoral manner at all levels
- Have a focused, dynamic and action-oriented agenda
- Provide a dynamic platform for regular dialogue and for stocktaking to advance sustainable development

- Ensure the appropriate consideration of new and emerging sustainable development challenges
- Devote adequate time to the discussion of the sustainable development challenges facing developing countries, including the most vulnerable countries, in particular the least developed countries, small island developing States, landlocked developing countries and African countries and recognize the particular challenges facing the middle-income countries in achieving sustainable development
- Have a thematic focus reflecting the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development, in line with the thematic focus of the activities of the Council and consistent with the post-2015 development agenda
- Follow up and review progress in the implementation of all the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and environmental fields, as well as their respective means of implementation
- Improve cooperation and coordination within the United Nations system on sustainable development programmes and policies and promote system-wide coherence and coordination of sustainable development policies
- Provide recommendations to the board of the 10-year framework of programmes for sustainable consumption and production
- Strengthen the science-policy interface by examining documentation, bringing together dispersed information and assessments, including in the form of a global sustainable development report
- Promote the sharing of best practices and experiences relating to the implementation of sustainable development
- Facilitate voluntary sharing of experiences, including successes, challenges and lessons learned
- Enhance regional dimension of sustainable development through regional meetings organized by UN regional commissions
- Enhance the consultative role and participation of the major groups and other relevant stakeholders at the international level (UN,2013)

This is a very challenging proposition. The HLPF is a new part of the institutional framework for sustainable development. It still has to show clearly its value added. This challenge is compounded by its hybrid nature. As noted by Steven Bernstein, “a universal model of high-level decision making has the advantage of widespread legitimacy, but has a limited capacity for deliberation and diffuses peer pressure. (...) The limited frequency of high-level meetings raises a challenge of addressing emerging and ongoing issues and having a dynamic agenda, although the provision for special sessions can mitigate this concern. Thus, the HLPF might consider meeting in such special sessions when sustainable development emergencies or urgent issues arise” (Bernstein, 2013).

Indeed, on one hand, the HLPF needs to set the agenda and give recommendations to advance sustainable development, which requires having a strong link to what is happening in sustainable development both on the science--policy side and on new and emerging issues. At the same time, it needs to help countries advance their own path to sustainable development by serving as an integrative platform for reviewing SDGs in the context of post--2015 development agenda, sharing experiences and lessons learned and encouraging wide participation of both state and non--state actors.

This requires a very clear agenda as well as rigorous methods of work. The mandate of HLPF says that its meetings need to be “focused, while allowing flexibility to address new and emerging issues” (United Nations, 2012). What needs to be defined at this stage, is how exactly the HLPF will deliver on its ambitious mandate within the framework of eight days that the forum has for its meetings.

There is thus a need for: (i) a robust preparatory process to lay the ground for focused discussions resulting in concise and action--oriented recommendations to advance sustainable development; (ii) a clear substantive focus and effective agenda setting that will ensure integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development; and (iii) a long--term perspective, as not all issues of sustainable development can be discussed each time HLPF meets. SDGs can provide an organizing framework for the work of HLPF. At the same time, while SDGs are a critical element for achieving sustainable development, sustainable development is broader than SDGs and many important issues need to be discussed, including new and emerging issues. It would be also important for HLPF to follow--up on its recommendations in order to provide further guidance when and where needed.

### **Ground the HLPF work in science**

Strengthening science--policy interface can also be helpful and the Global Sustainable Development Report will play an important role in this regard. It could adopt an assessment--of--assessments approach, documenting and describing the landscape of information and knowledge on specific sustainable development issues that are policy--relevant. The report should be global in coverage while taking into account regional perspectives. It should draw from the UN system, scientists, government officials and stakeholders at all levels and should be guided by themes of the HLPF.

### **HLPF as integrative and review platform**

The HLPF is mandated to conduct regular reviews on “the follow--up and implementation of sustainable development commitments and objectives, including those related to the means of implementation, within the context of the post--2015 development agenda” (United Nations, 2013). These reviews will start in 2016 and will “(i) be voluntary, while encouraging reporting and will include developed and developing countries, as well as relevant United Nations entities; (ii) be State--led, involving ministerial and other relevant high-- level participants; and (iii) provide a platform for partnerships, including through the participation of major groups and other relevant stakeholders (United Nations, 2013). Thus, a review mechanism would be an incentive based voluntary structure relevant and attractive for all countries to participate with a collaborative and collegial spirit. Its added value would be that it could foster an integrated

nexus approach and integrated decision-making on sustainable development rather than operating in traditional silos.

The HLPF could debate the lessons and findings of all the reviews. The purpose would be to assess overall progress, identify difficulties, share good practices, provide collective advice, and assess the adequacy of means of implementation including global partnership for development and bolster capacity development.

As an integrative platform, HLPF would not review every single sustainable development goal individually, as each goal should have “a home” within the UN system, such as ECOSOC’s functional commissions or UN specialized agencies. The main role of the HLPF should be to review and promote overall progress on all SDGs or on clusters of SDGs. Its added value is to view the SDGs and post-2015 development agenda in terms of an interlinked system. It should thus provide high-level guidance for advancing integrated action across the spectrum of SDGs.

### **Giving a sense of direction**

It would be important to aim for coherence with the rest of the institutional framework for sustainable development, as “what should be clear from the broad Rio+20 outcome and agreed mandate for the HLPF is that no single organization will emerge to define the rules and carry out the mandate of sustainable development. The leadership challenge for the HLPF will be to work with that complexity while building the necessary vision and legitimacy that will link sustainable development goals more clearly and directly to the organizational, financial and other levers that can deliver or facilitate it at different levels and in different settings” (Bernstein, 2013).

This is in part outlined in the mandate of HLPF which requires the HLPF themes to be “in line with the thematic focus of the activities of the [Economic and Social] Council and consistent with the post-2015 development agenda” (United Nations, 2013). The HLPF needs to “take into account the work of the Development Cooperation Forum, as well as other activities of the Council, will need to take into consideration issues relating to the integration and implementation of sustainable development” (Bernstein, 2013).

Economic and Social Council’s role in the institutional framework for sustainable development has been reinforced both in the outcome of the Rio+20 and in the resolution of strengthening the ECOSOC as “a central mechanism for the coordination of the United Nations system and supervision of the subsidiary bodies of the Council, (...) as well as in the coordination of funds, programmes and specialized agencies, ensuring coherence among them and avoiding duplication of mandates and activities” (United Nations, 2012).

HLPF also needs to build linkages and engage with other institutions. Those include primarily the GA, the United Nations Environment Assembly, UN specialized agencies, World Bank and IMF, regional development banks as well as other relevant international and regional organizations, especially UN regional commissions and multilateral environmental agreements in order to develop adequate finance mechanisms, technology facilitation and capacity building.

GA, ECOSOC and HLPF all have a role to help mainstream sustainable development in the United Nations system. Mainstreaming is about ensuring that economic, social and environmental perspectives are reflected in different organizations' strategic planning processes and that it is a main guiding principle in their operational and budget choices. But, "while ECOSOC will retain its mandate as a lead organization for coherence across the system, the HLPF is best placed to undertake a strategic discussion of implementation of the SDGs" (Bernstein, 2013).

## **Conclusion**

HLPF is of great systemic importance within the global institutional framework for sustainable development. There is a dire need for a dedicated platform for sustainable development in the United Nations. The forum's high-level political status, strong mandate, ability to address emerging challenges, and inclusiveness make it uniquely placed to integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development, while at the same time enhancing coordination and coherence working with all other parts of the institutional framework for sustainable and all relevant stakeholders in implementing the post-2015 development agenda and reviewing SDGs.

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## Chapter 12

# Ensuring a coherent place for the HLPF within the UN development system

**Sara Luna**

Rio+20 Conference set the stage to rethink the global discussion on sustainable development. The outcome of the Open Working Group (OWG) on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is a major step towards the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development. The post 2015 development agenda should now consolidate and foster the integrated, universal and inclusive vision achieved in the OWG.

The follow-up of the new agenda and its SDG will require a solid, attractive and coherent institutional framework. We have a unique opportunity to build a coherent and integrated follow up mechanism within the new institutional arrangements agreed since Rio+20 through the strengthened Economic and Social Council and the High-level Political Forum (HLPF) on sustainable development.

The institutional framework for the follow-up and review of the new agenda should be built on the existing system: the structure of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), its institutional machinery and resources (UN funds, programs, commissions and experts committees), and the General Assembly with a renewed Second Committee whose program of work is adapted to the structure of the development agenda beyond 2015.

The HLPF cycle should be the vehicle to create synergies between the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. It can ensure the continuous, dynamic and coherent follow up of the post 2015 development agenda and its goals, through its meetings under the Council every year at the Ministerial level, and under the General Assembly, every four years, at a heads of state and government level, both with specific outcomes in the form of high level declarations.

It also should:

- Be the entryway for all relevant actors to the institutional follow-up of the post 2015 development agenda, its goals and targets.
- Promote the integrated discussion on development in all its dimensions. This will require that in the focus of its program, all perspectives and all voices within and outside the Organization are included.
- Be the place in which leaders provide a clear political guidance, which will be disseminated throughout the UN system through the Economic and Social Council and the Second Committee of the General Assembly.

Taking those characteristics into account, the HLPF under the auspices of ECOSOC, should become the space in which annual reviews on national and regional progress and on the international cooperation in the implementation of the ODS are conducted.

The system of ECOSOC specially the outcomes of its segments and the functional Commissions, should bring relevant inputs the reviews, in order to ensure its continued support to the national efforts.

In order to achieve a truly coherent, integrated and attractive follow-up, the President of ECOSOC as convener of the HLPF at the Ministerial level during the High Level Segment of the Council, should be provided with a permanent support office alongside with a single integrated secretariat for the support of the ECOSOC and the HLPF work, in order to ensure coherent planning of all the activities of the Council and during the HLPF, including the review of the SDGs.

The intergovernmental process for the definition of the post-2015 development agenda offers the best opportunity to put in place an effective United Nations system that will help us to move from commitments to actions by implementing a universal agenda that addresses the social, economic and environmental dimensions on a comprehensive and balanced manner.

Through the General Assembly, the ECOSOC and especially through the HLPF, the UN system should foster global actions and national policies that are aimed to address the structural causes of poverty, inequality, exclusion and discrimination as the main in order to eradicate them in the twenty-first century.

## **Chapter 13**

# **The Role and Place of the High-Level Political Forum in Strengthening the Global Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development – An effort to analyse the challenges to the High Level Political Forum and offer a few options**

**Jan Gustav Strandenaes**

### **The UNGA decision and resolution behind the HLPF**

On July 9, 2013, during the morning session of its 91<sup>st</sup> Plenary Meeting, the United Nations General Assembly, UNGA, in resolution 67/290 formally adopted by consensus the format and the organizational aspects of the high level political forum (HLPF). The resolution also recommended to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), to abolish the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), effective from the conclusion of its 20th and last session, to be held prior to the first meeting of the forum later that same year. With ten introductory and thirty operative paragraphs, the resolution on HLPF stakes out the direction of global sustainable development policies including a governance structure for the next twenty years. Unless it would be subjected to serious revisions, this construct will heavily influence policies on sustainable development at all levels, global, regional, national and local - at least until 2032 – when the UN will organize Rio plus 40 (or Stockholm plus 60). The HLPF will be the key unit in the international framework for sustainable development for this period

HLPF is thought to be the most important intergovernmental mechanism in the follow-up to outcomes on sustainable development agreed at the Rio Summit that took place in 2012. The structure of HLPF is new – as is explained below – but its real position within the international framework for sustainable development will only be seen and understood when its total working agenda is complete. And the totality of that agenda will not be complete until after the September Summit on the Post 2015 Development Agenda this year.

The HLPF resolution reflects in many ways a compilation of experience, knowledge and process understanding of more than twenty years of sustainable development deliberations at the global level. Accordingly, virtually everything one needs to be concerned about in relationship to the Post 2015 Development Agenda is – at least potentially – in place.

### **A heavy mandate**

To understand the significance of HLPF in the global sustainable development structure, it is necessary to have a basic understanding of the mandate of HLPF including its many tasks. The resolution that established the HLPF has given the forum a wide-ranging agenda: It states that the HLPF shall convene annually for five days, under the auspices of the Economic and Social

Council, ECOSOC, immediately followed by three days at ministerial level and result in a political declaration, have a thematic focus reflecting the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development, and be in line with the thematic focus of the activities of ECOSOC and consistent with the post-2015 development agenda. The HLPF is further tasked with providing leadership, guidance and recommendations for sustainable development, and with identifying emerging issues, reviewing progress in the implementation of related commitments, coordinate partnerships, identify the agenda and continually enhancing the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental. And finally, every four years the HLPF will be held under the auspices of the UNGA at the level of Heads of State and Governments for two days, “resulting in a concise negotiated political declaration to be submitted to the Assembly for its consideration” as the UNGA resolution states.

Of the 30 paragraphs in the HLPF, 12 of the paragraphs contain specific tasks for the HLPF to act on. In total there are approximately 30 agenda points to be implemented by HLPF. In addition, the HLPF will also be tasked with the 17 SDGs including its 169 targets. Also, the Rio+20 Outcome Document identified and agreed to 14 processes, which have been started and which all deal with sustainable development issues. The SDGs and HLPF are but two of these processes. The HLPF is indeed a key unit in the future world of sustainable development.

### **A key institution with a complex structure**

Studying the HLPF document closely may reveal several political realities – depending on the point of departure of the reader. The HLPF is a brand new organizational structure within the UN family and as such there are a number of creative elements in the resolution that deal with process and procedure. HLPF has a strong, but not easily understood relationship with two central UN Charter Bodies, ECOSOC and the UNGA. Because of its novelty, member states have given it different names at different times; some have called it a ‘hybrid’, some have labelled it a platform, some have referred to it as a body. Whatever we may think of it, the HLPF is absolutely a novelty with an implicit power to modernise the UN - if its potential is used wisely

A close reading of 67/290 reveals that the resolution has authorised HLPF to carry out and execute a number of issues, and by that a visible structure of a governance mechanism appears. In fact, several of the paragraphs in 67/290 deal with governance, authority and structure of the HLPF.

As the HLPF is established by a UN GA resolution it is a body within the UN system with an authority to make decisions. But there is more to this interpretation. Paragraph 3 gives HLPF its ultimate framework: “Also decides that the meetings of the forum shall be convened under the auspices of the General Assembly and of the Economic and Social Council.” HLPF has accordingly two masters, the UNGA and ECOSOC and is authorised to make decisions.

This actually accords HLPF with a high degree of political status and significance. HLPF will, beginning in 2016, replace the annual ministerial review (paragraph 7a), which was earlier run purely by ECOSOC. The HLPF will also work closely with the Development Cooperation Forum (DCF) (paragraph 7e). HLPF functions between ECOSOC and the UNGA somewhat like the Peacebuilding Commission, which reports to ECOSOC, the UNGA as well as the Security Council. There are other such constructs in the UN – UNICEF, UNDP and UNEP to mention but a few. They are called ‘semi-autonomous’ bodies, and there are a few of these in the international compound of the UN. As the concept of light subsidiarity is being debated, HLPF is still not

‘placed’ formally speaking within the UN hierarchy, but it certainly does have the potential to be designated as the key UN institution on sustainable development.

### **The first HLPF meeting – centrally positioned in global processes?**

The first ‘real’ HLPF took place during the summer of 2014. Several observers expressed serious disappointment with the entire process, but attributed this to the interim period which the present HLPF serves and which exists now between the end of the Rio+20 Summit in July 2012 and the 2015 September Summit where state leaders from all over the world are expected to agree on the Post 2015 Development Agenda. HLPF in 2014 was to some seen as an extended side event, not unimportant, but not awe-inspiring in any way and falling way below expectations of several member states and civil society. But as one of HLPF’s key assignments will be the SDGs, the first HLPF with a politically significant agenda will take place in 2016.

As pointed to above, HLPF is an entirely new construct and its proper function will only begin when the Post 2015 agenda is decided. The question to be asked of HLPF, is whether the new construct has been given proper and adequate mechanisms to promote the complex sustainable development agenda with a global responsibility over the next twenty or so years. Is it also built to strengthen the international framework on sustainable development? A close reading of the HLPF resolution (67/290) may reveal a number of areas that need to be studied and understood and even strengthened over the coming year. The following attempts to draw attention to some of these issues.

### **HLPF is innovative**

HLPF is innovative and at first sight it seems well calibrated to tackle its many tasks and be the global sustainable development institution that the Rio outcome document ‘The Future We Want’ meant it to be. However, to understand its full potential, its strengths and possible shortcomings, we need to ask a few questions: What does it really mean when we say the HLPF will be the home of the SDGs/post 2015 development agenda? What does its governance structure allow? Is there a conflict of interest with its modus operandi between the HLPF, ECOSOC and the UNGA bodies? What will its relationship with the specialised agencies of the UN be? Many of the UN specialised agencies will be key in implementing the SDGs. Will the HLPF be significant enough for these agencies to work with it on a senior level? What does agenda setting mean? What does identifying “emerging issues” mean? What does universality imply? To what body in the UN does it report? It is supposedly agenda setting, but what decision-making authority does it have – if any?

The HLPF has been given a number of strong features that clearly speak of its central role in future global politics; It is politically high level (paragraphs 3, 6 and 7); it is universal and inclusive, (paragraphs 2, 4, 13 and 14) ; it has the mandate to conduct and integrate reviews and build accountability (paragraphs 6, 7, 8 and 18); it must focus on science and evidence based decisions and be responsible for “the Global Sustainable Development Report” (paragraph 20); it shall identify emerging issues and set agendas (paragraphs 18); and lastly HLPF integrates all stakeholders in a way never done before at the UN (paragraphs 14, 15 and 16).

In total, HLPF does indeed set new governance standards in the international architecture on sustainable development and definitely does point in the right direction. As often is the case with UN resolutions, the statement “unless otherwise decided in this resolution” is also found in 67/290.

Many of the new governance directives in the resolutions override inherent procedural rules pertaining to ECOSOC and the UNGA Bureau, and a stringent question on formalities must be formulated in this context: how does UNGA resolution 67/290 challenge existing procedures? And does it accordingly make the HLPF the preeminent institution within the international framework on sustainable development?

### **Paragraph 84 of the Rio Outcome Document – is the CSD experience at all helpful?**

Judging the content of ‘The Future We Want’, the global community of nations, the 193 UN member states, are more serious today about sustainable development than they were twenty years ago. Judging by the content of paragraph 84 of the Rio outcome document, building the new entity at the UN to coordinate sustainable development should be based on experiences from CSD. CSD was no talk shop, as has often been claimed. During its first ten years, CSD made more than thirty decisions that had serious effects on sustainable development policies and projects, nationally and globally. Several features pertaining to CSD contributed to the successes of CSD: it had a strong mandate; the resolution establishing CSD had a chapter on a Bureau that with its elected Chair would function as the political leadership of CSD; the resolution establishing CSD also had a chapter on its own secretariat; the structure of CSD was such that it harmonised and coordinated several large UN bodies to work on sustainable development through what was called a task manager system. The undoing of CSD was by many accounts the fact that it was decoupled from the reality it was set to develop, and weakened because governments did not prioritise sustainable development the way they did in the years immediately following the first Rio conference in 1992, and the way they have expressed their commitment today. Another criticism levelled at CSD, was that it was primarily about the environment. This statement does not harmonise with its mandate or its many agendas, but is in fact in sync with how governments at the time understood sustainable development and CSD. Most governments interpreted sustainable development and CSD to be about the environment and hence gave national responsibility for sustainable development to their environment ministries. They in turn, respecting the importance of the committee, sent their environment ministers to CSD. The impression given was that CSD was actually all about the environment. Still CSD was the main global institution on sustainable development in the 1990s and during nearly the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and did accomplish a lot on the global arena of sustainable development, despite jargonised criticism of its activities. Therefore, lessons learned from CSD could be used to guide and help HLPF to become the key global institution on sustainable development? Because that is the original ambition expressed in the Rio+20 ‘The Future We Want’ document.

The biggest difference between CSD and HLPF relates to their agendas and the capabilities to handle the agendas. CSD was developed after the UN member states had agreed on Agenda 21. When the member states developed CSD, they made serious efforts to calibrate the institution to fit the challenging agenda. With HLPF, the situation is the opposite. The organization, HLPF was developed and agreed on in 2013, and then the governments began developing the agenda. And because the Post 2015 development agenda grew in size and complexity, without influencing the structure or resource base of HLPF, it has come to appear increasingly inadequate.

### **HLPF is faced with a number of challenges**

In summing up some of the main challenges the HLPF faces, we also detect the contours of some of its weaknesses: It does have a broad and undefined mandate; it has a relatively weak and fairly

untried structure in the form of its present structure. It lacks a political steering mechanism. It has so far neither a bureau nor a steering committee. And finally it does not own a secretariat. The resolution merely states that UNDESA and other UN entities should help the HLPF, when it is relevant.

The position of HLPF in the global governance architecture and implementation will also be decided by the work-programme given HLPF. We know that the post 2015 Development Agenda will heavily influence the UN system in general, and HLPF, the alleged home of the SDGs, in particular. By referencing one sub-paragraph in the HLPF resolution, the weight of this workload is clearly spelled out: According to paragraph 7d HLPF must perform the following tasks:

- Review Implementation of progress of all major UN conferences on sustainable development;
- Improve cooperation and coordination within the United Nations;
- Improve the system on sustainable development programmes and policies;
- Promote best practices and experiences on implementation;
- Promote system-wide coherence;
- Coordinate sustainable development policies within the entire UN system;

### **HLPF and ECOSOC – competing bodies?**

The political relationship that connects HLPF with ECOSOC and the UN General Assembly is one of the strengths of this new unit. There are other bodies in the UN system that have a relationship with UNGA and ECOSOC, so-called semi-autonomous bodies (UNICEF, UNCTAD, UNDP, UNEP etc.) Their relationships with the Charter bodies have been calibrated so that they have decision-making authority, have political status, and fit well within the system and they were all novelties when they were created. None of them were thought to threaten the authority of ECOSOC.

A number of general questions have been raised concerning the relationship between HLPF and ECOSOC, and some have even insisted that if HLPF is given the authority to deal with the SDGs and sustainable development within the UN, there is nothing left to be dealt with by ECOSOC.

ECOSOC is a body with a heavy workload. With its broad mandate, ECOSOC's purview extends to over 70 per cent of the human and financial resources of the entire UN system. To many observers and delegates, the ECOSOC system in the UN is already overburdened and impaired by its momentous agenda. Will adding the large agenda of HLPF to ECOSOC's purview strengthen or weaken ECOSOC? HLPF cannot be separate from ECOSOC. But in discussing ECOSOC, it is well to remember that an institution is only as strong as its weakest link. Strong bodies working within the ECOSOC system will undoubtedly strengthen ECOSOC and conversely, weak bodies will weaken ECOSOC. A tempting conclusion will be to state that a strong and reasonably autonomous HLPF will strengthen ECOSOC. It will also emphasise the organizational integrity of HLPF and the importance of implementing the SDGs.

Will it be feasible to strengthen institutionally HLPF without making it into an institution, which will operate in conflict with ECOSOC? Several have asserted that if the UN were to create a strong institution dealing with sustainable development, such as HLPF might become, that would reduce the work-agenda of ECOSOC to almost nothing. But this ignores the fact that ECOSOC deals with a host of issues, where a large majority of issues has very little to do with sustainable development, drugs, interagency coordination, Specialised Agencies coordination etc.

And, finally, is there a conflict between the principle of universality, meaning that 193 UN member states shall be involved in the HLPF, and the fact that ECOSOC has a rotating membership of 54 nations? How can the principle of universality of HLPF be harmonized with the political status and importance given to ECOSOC as a Charter Body? It seems that this Gordian knot must be untangled and the relationship between HLPF and ECOSOC must be seriously reviewed.

### **The Role and Place of the High-Level Political Forum**

Reading the Rio outcome document, it seems clear that HLPF is meant to be the preeminent UN body on sustainable development. But for that goal to be reached, clarification of its structure and authority pointed to in this paper must be sought, and solutions found to strengthen HLPF. There are also other slightly contentious areas that need to be discussed and answers found:

- With its formidable agenda, is enough time allocated to carry out all assignments identified in the HLPF resolution, or is more time needed?
- Is there a need for a preparatory process as well? If needs be, member states can allocate extra time for preparatory work. UNEP did this to prepare for the UN Environment Assembly by establishing the – the Open Ended Committee of Permanent Representatives (OECPR). A similar decision can easily be made by member states for the HLPF, if they so decide
- Is a revisit to the CSD task manager system warranted? Establishing such a unit in HLPF might be a way to involve, engage and coordinate the entire UN system in sustainable development the next decades.
- Should a Bureau be established for HLPF? Using language, experience and precedence from DCF which has an Advisory Committee to deal with political issues there, could be used to establish a Bureau or an AC at HLPF
- With its present organizational structure, HLPF may not be able to deal with the task given it by paragraph 19: “Reaffirms that the forum shall contribute to the enhanced integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development in a holistic and cross-sectoral manner at all levels...” HLPF shall supervise the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development throughout the UN system to reach simply ‘system wide coherence’. This is also a formidable task, and it may need to lean on a support unit within the UN system. The Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) established the Interagency Committee on Sustainable Development IACSD in 1992 to identify major policy issues and follow-up to the Earth Summit to ensure effective co-operation and coordination of the UN system in the implementation of Agenda 21. Perhaps this experience could be revisited and a similar body could be established for the same purpose to enable HLPF to carry out its many assignments outlined in 67/290.

It seems fair to assume that the state leaders attending the Rio+20 conference intended to establish a key global organization to deal with the follow up of the many outcomes from this summit. Delegates acted on this decision by establishing HLPF. HLPF is a novelty, and certainly has most of what it needs to become the key unit on sustainable development in the world. But this chapter has also outlined a few weaknesses that must be addressed. In the final instance we must be allowed to ask a number of questions regarding the future of sustainable development and to what extent are we allowed to:

- Improve what we see needs improving
- Strengthen what we see needs strengthening
- Interpret what we think is unclear

If an agreement is reached to strengthen the institutional framework of HLPF to ensure its unrivalled global position as the future coordinator of sustainable development, can that be done with respect to formalities? The answer is yes. Paragraph 29 of the HLPF resolution states:

*“Further decides to review at its seventy-third session the format and the organizational aspects of the forum, unless otherwise decided;”*

This allows decisions to take place affecting the HLPF in a positive way before the seventy third session.

Only by seriously discussing all these elements will we be able to ascertain the rightful interpretation of the four letters HLPF: will it mean the High Level Political Failure – or will it continue to mean – successfully – the High Level Political Forum?

## Chapter 14

# Key questions for an interlinked and coherent governance for the review and follow-up of the post 2015 agenda and its SDG and the Addis Ababa commitments

Felix Dodds

### Introduction

Finance has always been a vital issue in the Rio process. In 1992 at the original Rio Conference the Secretary General of the Conference Maurice Strong was asked how much would it cost to implement Agenda 21. He and the UN worked out that it would be \$625 billion a year with \$125 billion from developed to developing countries. The head of the US delegation to Rio, Buff Bohlan (under President Bush), made the commitment:

*“There is no question that developing countries and countries in transition must have new resources. I would like to make it absolutely clear the US is committed to working with other industrial countries to mobilize new and additional resources for a new partnership.”*

It’s a shame the US did not fully that commitment but neither did any of the developed countries. Aid in 1992 was around \$54 billion at that time and actually fell in the 1990s only returning to 1992 levels in 2002.

The 1990s were a decade of lost opportunities and broken promises.

Underpinning Agenda 21 was the concept of ‘Common But Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR)’. There has been some discussion on if CBDR is relevant to the SDGs I would just refer governments to Agenda 21, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, Rio+20 and most CSD meeting for them to see that there is nothing in the SDGs that wasn’t covered by these documents. CBDR is a critical part of the SDG agenda and its implementation this will require not only developed countries but also developing countries to look at this through a 2015-2030 lens.

In 1997 at the Five Year Review of Agenda 21 there was an attempt led by Norway and the US to set up an Intergovernmental Panel on Financing Sustainable Development (IPFSD). Its main areas of work would have been in:

1. Review the quantity and quality of aid
2. Mobilization of domestic resources
3. The role of FDI
4. New Financial Mechanisms

The mood of developing countries was not pleasant at Rio+5 from their perspective there had been five years of broken promises. The idea of the IPFSD was rejected though it did survive in a different form. Norway and the US took it to the UNGA where it became a set of GA discussions on the same themes. This ultimately became the Monterey process. It had been put on a trajectory to originally finance the outcome from the Millennium Summit and the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD). It was only in September 2011 ten days after 9/11 that the EU gave up that hope of a 'new deal on sustainable development finance'. The 2000s saw aid flows increase to over \$130 billion and much of those funds did focus on the MDGs implementation.

That brings us nearly up to date. We have in 2015 three processes that focus on finance. These are:

- The Financing for Development (FfD) Conference.
- The United Nations Summit to Adopt the Post 2015 Development Goals.
- The UNFCCC Conference and climate financing.

### **Linking Sustainable Development Goals Means of Implementation to Financing for Development**

The question that has been prominent in both the Post 2015 process and the FfD is what is needed to ensure a better complementarity between the two negotiating processes.

The zero draft of the FfD did contain some of the ideas that are in SDG17 but not by any means all of them and as far as the MOIs under the different SDGs there were no corresponding paragraph in the FfD Addis Ababa Action Agenda text (1). This continued up to and including Addis Financing for Development Conference.

What would have helped enormously, and made it much clearer, is if ALL the SDG MOI text had been included in the FfD zero and subsequent text. My suggestion had been that then they would be bracketed. They would be what I would call 'reference text' and would be taken out at the final stage. Such a structure would do two very important things.

The first is it would ensure that member states negotiating in the FfD process had always as guidance the SDG OWG text and should they decide to deviate they would do so clearly knowing that. The second is that the text would HAVE to address all the SDG MOIs which it did not.

There may be some argument that this could have been done through some generic text. But unless the reference text is there to guide negotiators then it turned out that they will miss out some of the MOIs from the SDG-OWG or not address them fully which was the case.

The FfD process draft text for Addis had this commitment for Follow Up:

*131. We appreciate the role played by the United Nations Financing for Development follow-up process. We recognize the inter-linkages between the Financing for Development process and the means of implementation of the post-2015 development agenda, and emphasize the need of a dedicated follow-up and review for the Financing for Development outcomes as well as all the*

*means of implementation of the post-2015 development agenda, which is integrated with the post-2015 follow-up and review process to be decided at the United Nations summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda. The follow-up process should assess progress, identify obstacles and challenges to the implementation of the Financing for Development outcomes, and the delivery of the means of implementation, promote the sharing of lessons learned from experiences at the national and regional levels, address new and emerging topics of relevance to the implementation of this agenda as the need arises, and provide policy recommendations for action by the international community. We will also enhance coordination, promote the efficiency of UN processes and avoid duplication and overlapping of discussions.*

132. *We commit to staying engaged to this important agenda through a dedicated and strengthened follow-up process that will use existing institutional arrangements and will include an annual ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development follow-up with universal, intergovernmental participation, to be launched during the council's current cycle. The Forum's modalities of participation will be those utilized at the international conferences on Financing for Development. The Forum consisting of up to 5 days will include a one day special high-level meeting with the Bretton Woods institutions (BWIs), WTO and UNCTAD, as well as additional institutional and other stakeholders depending on the priorities and scope of the meeting, and a meeting dedicated to discuss the follow-up and review of the Financing for Development outcomes and the means of implementation of the post-2015 development agenda. Its intergovernmentally agreed conclusions and recommendations will be fed into the overall follow-up and review of the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda in the high-level political forum (HLPF) on sustainable development. In addition the deliberations of the Development Cooperation Forum, according to its mandate, will also be taken into account. The High-level Dialogue of the General Assembly on Financing for Development will be held back with the HLPF under the auspices of the GA when the HLPF is convened every four years.*

## **HLPF**

I had hoped for a closer link between the HLPF and a standalone finance discussion for implementing the SDGs. The above txt (not agreed as this paper is written) could enable this to happen. One very good example of how would be to adopt the approach of the first two cycles of the Commission on Sustainable development (CSD). In 1993 governments adopted the following:

61. *The Commission, recognizing its mandate to review the adequacy of the financial resources available for the implementation of Agenda 21, decides to establish an inter-sessional ad hoc, open-ended working group composed of Governments, which will nominate experts in order to assist the Commission in the following tasks:*

*(a) To monitor and review the requirements, availability and adequacy of financial resources for the implementation of different clusters of Agenda 21, taking into account the multi-year thematic program of work, as well as projects, programs, activities and sustainable development strategies prepared by Governments, in order to provide a suitable and common basis for action on the part of all Governments, bilateral funding agencies and States members of the governing bodies of the agencies and programs of the United Nations system, as well as multilateral regional and sub-regional development banks and funds dealing with the issues of environment and development;*

*(b) To monitor and analyze various factors that influence the flow of financial and economic resources, such as debt relief, terms of trade, commodity prices, market access and private foreign investment, as well as to review mechanisms for innovative financing in the context of paragraph 33.16 of Agenda 21, taking into account activities at the national level;*

*(c) To develop, on the basis of the above, a policy framework for the mobilization of financial resources towards a balanced implementation of all aspects of Agenda 21 that would, inter alia, assist Governments, where appropriate, to implement their sustainable development strategies.*

The CSD recognized that it had a role in monitoring the financing commitments for Agenda 21. To enable it to do this it added an additional week of preparation for the CSD focused on that agenda. This could be developed as the implementation of Addis is undertaken. For the SDGs to be taken seriously there needs to be a clear space in the UN architecture where finance and development Ministries discuss that. Perhaps the September Summit will give clearer instructions. The present suggestion is a week but to cover both the FfD process and the MOI for the SDGs. Surely this is not enough time.

I have since 2002 advocated an approach to intergovernmental text which would automatically ensure the right conversations are had. It is based on the South African Non-Paper from 2002 it

A version of this could have offered a coherent and agreed structure and delivered a coherent and complementary set of outcomes from the FfD process and the SDG process.

1. proposed targets and time-frames (SDG MOIs)
2. proposed actions
3. resources
4. institutional mechanisms
5. co-ordination
6. monitoring
7. stakeholder involvement
8. implementation plan sustainability

## **ECOSOC**

Not everything can be covered by the HLPF and for this reason the ECOSOC High-level meeting with the Bretton Woods Institutions, WTO and UNCTAD as is suggested should be expanded. It is interesting that it is suggesting it should be a universal meeting similar to the HLPF.

## **Interagency Coordination**

The UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) comprises 29 Executive Heads of the United Nations and its Funds and Programmes, the Specialized Agencies, including the Bretton Woods Institutions (The World Bank and IMF), and Related Organizations - the WTO and the IAEA. Under the UN Development Group it could be tasked with producing an annual report

on the implementation of FfD and fed into both the HLPF ad hoc open-ended working group and the ECOSOC High Level Event. The final text going to Addis suggested something similar

*133. To ensure a strengthened follow-up process at the global level, we encourage the Secretary-General to convene an inter-agency Task Force, including the major institutional stakeholders and the UN-system, including funds and programmes and specialized agencies whose mandates are related to the follow-up, building on the experience of the MDG Gap Task Force. The inter-agency Task Force will report annually on progress in implementing the Financing for Development outcomes and the means of implementation of the post-2015 development agenda and to advise the intergovernmental follow-up thereto on progress, implementation gaps and recommendation for corrective action, while taking into consideration the national and regional dimensions.*

### **Climate Change Finance**

Addis has not added anything significant to the climate finance discussion prior to Paris. This was a huge missed opportunity. The main text on climate finance is:

*61. We welcome the successful and timely initial resource mobilization process of the Green Climate Fund, making it the largest dedicated climate fund and enabling it to start its activities in supporting developing country parties to the UNFCCC. We welcome the decision of the Board of the Green Climate Fund to aim to start taking decisions on the approval of projects and programmes no later than its third meeting in 2015 as well as its decision regarding the formal replenishment process for the Fund. We also welcome the Board's decision to aim for a 50:50 balance between mitigation and adaptation over time on a grant equivalent basis and to aim for a floor of 50 percent of the adaptation allocation for particularly vulnerable countries, including LDCs, SIDS, and African countries. We note the importance of continued support to address remaining gaps in the capacity to gain access to and manage climate*

What could have been a very useful for informal 'non-binding' discussion outside the UNFCCC and then inputting to it at the relevant time was not undertaken.

### **National level addressing the investment chain**

Governments should commit to develop and apply integrated reporting frameworks for all capital market intermediaries that is appropriate to the nature of their business, including but not limited to large investment banks, stock exchanges, asset managers, investment consultants and asset owners such as pensions and insurance companies.

Governance needs to be strengthened in the investment chain which was not fully reflected in detail in either the FfD or the SDG documents. In addition, regarding the other "strong regulatory frameworks on Environment Social Governance (ESG) practices" that may be created. This was a real opportunity lost to set a date when all Stock Exchanges should have made it a requirement for listing to explain or report on their ESG. The final text at Addis suggested:

*35. We will promote sustainable corporate practices, including integrating environmental, social, and governance factors into company reporting as appropriate, with countries deciding on the appropriate balance of voluntary and mandatory rules. We encourage businesses to adopt principles for responsible business and investing, and we support the work of the United*

*Nations Global Compact in this regard. We will work towards harmonizing the various initiatives on sustainable business and financing, identifying gaps, including in relation to gender equality, and strengthening the mechanisms and incentives for compliance.*

This is the first time that elements of the investment chain are highlighted within the Financing for Development document. While it is welcome to see it here, to be actionable, the investment chain needs to be much more clearly defined with systemic recommendations as to how each stage of the chain can better embed sustainability thinking and ESG issues within its business practices, investment decisions and corporate culture. What we ended up on investment and capital with:

*43. We also recognize the potential of new investment vehicles, such as development-oriented venture capital funds, potentially with public partners, blended finance, risk mitigation instruments, and innovative debt funding structures with appropriate risk management and regulatory frameworks. We will also enhance capacity building in these areas.*

*47. We encourage long-term institutional investors, such as pensions funds and sovereign wealth funds, which manage large pools of capital, to allocate a greater percentage to infrastructure, particularly in developing countries. In this regard, we encourage investors to take measures to incentivize greater long-term investment such as reviews of compensation structures and performance criteria.*

*48. We recognize that both public and private investment have key roles to play in infrastructure financing, including through development banks, development finance institutions and tools and mechanisms such as public private partnerships, blended finance, which combines concessional public finance with non-concessional private finance and expertise from the public and private sector, special purpose vehicles, nonrecourse project financing, risk mitigation instruments and pooled funding structures. Blended finance instruments including PPPs serve to lower investment specific risks and incentivize additional private sector finance across key development sectors led by regional, national and sub-national government policies and priorities for sustainable development. For harnessing the potential of blended finance instruments for sustainable development, careful consideration should be given to the appropriate structure and use of blended finance instruments. Projects involving blended finance, including PPPs, should share risks and reward fairly, include clear accountability mechanisms and meet social and environmental standards. We will therefore build capacity to enter into PPPs, including as regards planning, contract negotiation, management, accounting and budgeting for contingent liabilities. We also commit to hold inclusive, open and transparent discussion when developing and adopting guidelines and documentation for the use of PPPs, and to build a knowledge base and share lessons learned through regional and global fora.*

What we could have had as well was proposed by AVIVA in their submission to the FfD process on the investment chain they suggested the following:

- a. **Investment banks** should be required to include a view on a company's performance on corporate governance, corporate sustainability, culture and ethics when they make recommendations to investors regarding their Buy, Sell and Hold recommendations.
- b. **Fund managers** should publish a report to their clients showing how they have considered sustainability when voting. Fund Managers should - on a comply or explain basis - publish a report to their clients explaining how they have behaved as good stewards of their clients'

money and how they have considered sustainability in their voting decisions at Annual Stewardship Meetings with their clients.

- c. **Investment consultants** should be required to include an analysis of how well corporate governance, corporate sustainability, cultural and ethics issues are integrated into investment decisions by fund managers in their recommendations of which fund manager to select. Investment consultants should also be required to report to their clients annually on how well they think fund managers are performing in this area, or again, explain why they have not done so.
- d. **UNCTAD** should provide guidance to encourage Member states to make sure financial literacy on the of the capital market and the role of the individual in promoting shareholder democracy is a key component of each Member State's secondary and tertiary educational syllabus.
- e. **UNCTAD** should help Governments develop national Stewardship Codes that promote voting and engagement.
- f. **An ISO stewardship standard** should be developed It for asset managers that can be used by institutional asset owners as well as individual investors and their advisors to ascertain whether certain minimum standards and procedures in stewardship are being adhered to by an asset manager.
- g. **Governments** could integrate long term sustainability factors in the mandates of the financial stability board and other supervision agencies.
- h. **Fiduciary duty** (legal requirements) should be clarified so that all intermediaries are aware of their Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) duties to clients and the end beneficiaries..

AVIVA suggested a fitness test for the final outcome from Addis as far as the finance sector is concerned:

While it includes elements of some of the tests, none are met in full on some are overlooked entirely.

**Test 1: Getting Prices Right:** Does the debate recognize the central importance of ensuring that the price mechanism promotes sustainable development in order to ensure that unsustainable business finds it hard to attract capital?

**Test 2: Getting Incentives Right:** are there measures that will change the business models and personal incentives of the institutional participants in the capital supply chain in particular, sell-side brokers, stock exchanges, fund managers, investment consultants and asset owners?

**Test 3: Securing Capital:** are there investment instruments that will be sufficiently attractive to markets and/or does it look likely to generate a plausible capital raising plan?

**Test 4: Systemic Transparency:** does the means of implementation include measures that will promote the transparency of companies on their sustainability performance as well as all the

transparency of all the investment intermediaries that connect the end investor to the companies that they own?

**Test 5: Sustainable Finance Standards:** will the means of implementation create the right kind of hard and soft standards that facilitate sustainable capital markets? For example, will they ensure Foreign Direct Investment by multinational compiles with generally accepted standards and norms such as the Global Compact, the ILO tripartite labour declaration, the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises? Will they confer onto the owners of these businesses - investors - a responsibility for ensuring that they behave as responsible long term owners and promote such standards within the companies that they invest? Will they develop a responsible investment International Standard (ISO) in order to ensure that their clients can see quickly and easily whether their investment firms are good long term owners.

**Test 6: Sustainable Demand for Sustainable Finance:** does the debate ensure that there is sufficient demand for sustainable finance and sufficient accountability of financial intermediaries by promoting financial literacy measures among the investing public?

The problem was that governments had not really engaged with the financial sector. Small changes could have had huge impacts. The problems why this wasn't undertaken go back to the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Finance and it being closed to stakeholders. The difference in the outcome from the open working group on SDGs and the outcome from the Finance for Development are clear to see. The lessons maybe hard for some governments but the reality is that governments make better informed decisions when they engage with the stakeholders and the stakeholders feel a commitment to engage in the implementation of those decisions.

The final landscape of how FfD and the SDGs will be linked in the Follow-Up will be the litmus test to the success of these processes.

## Notes

- (1) This paper has been written before the final txt for FfD has approved
- (2) Suggestions from the AVIVA paper The Post 2015 Financial Fitness Test: is the Financing for Development Zero Draft fit for Purpose? [Wwww.aviva.com/roadmap](http://www.aviva.com/roadmap)

## **Section 3**

### **Regional approaches to Implementation**

## Chapter 15

# Toward an Instrument on Environmental Democracy in Latin America and the Caribbean

Marcos Orellana

At the Rio+20 Conference, thanks to the leadership of the Government of Chile, and working alongside civil society organizations cooperating in *The Access Initiative* (TAI) (1), ten States of Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) signed the *Declaration on the Implementation of Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development* (Declaration). By the end of 2014, nine more countries had signed the *Declaration*, representing more than 500 million people and at the same time including more than half of all Latin American and Caribbean countries: Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Dominican Republic, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago and Uruguay.

The signatory countries to the *Declaration* expressed their commitment to a process that explores the viability of a regional instrument that will assure the comprehensive implementation of the rights to access information, participation and justice enshrined in Principle 10 of the *Rio Declaration on Environment and Development* of 1992. This process progressed in accordance with a 2012-2014 *Plan of Action* agreed to by the signatory countries in Guadalajara, Mexico. Then, in November 2014, the participating governments adopted the *Santiago Decision* to commence negotiations on the regional instrument on rights of access to information, participation and justice regarding environmental matters, with a view to concluding them by December 2016.

Among the most notable points of the *Plan of Action* are the definition of modalities of participation of the concerned public and the identification of tasks for States, including actions to promote the active participation of the public at the national level and the creation of working groups to work towards the achievement of a regional instrument. The modalities of public participation are significant for various reasons:

- They constitute a good international practice not only because they permit the public to participate in the meetings, but also because they establish, “the right to request the floor. The Chair will give the floor in the order in which it is requested, regardless of whether the respective speakers are government representatives, representatives of international agencies or a member of the public, [...] aiming to ensure that everyone is heard and the meeting is effective.”
- They point out that the goal is an open process in all instances. While it is possible for signatory countries to hold certain closed sessions in exceptional circumstances, in that case the countries will explain the reasons that motivate a closed session within a meeting. The process has so far exhibited an exceptionally high degree of transparency and participation, establishing a model of best practices in international negotiations.

- They confer to the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) the role of administrator of the ‘regional public mechanism.’ The objectives of this mechanism are to keep all interested parties informed about the process, to coordinate the participation of the public in international meetings and to contribute to the transparency of the process. ECLAC also publishes the calendar of meetings and the official documents of the meetings on its web page.

The *Plan of Action* also defines various tasks for States, identifying the goal in each, actions to be performed, resources, expected results, the entities responsible for these tasks and the maximum period of completion. This identification allows, among other things, accountability of the focal points at the meetings. Among these tasks are national-level actions, such as the dissemination of information, strengthening of capacity, consultation and support for the activities organized by the public. These activities highlight an important aspect of the process: one of its key goals is a process of learning and capacity strengthening. To this end, the process towards the LAC regional instrument already comprises a series of other sub-instruments, such as the national workshops, the dissemination of information about access rights and the development of diagnostics in the national plan. The progress towards the LAC regional instrument has witnessed successful meetings of the participating governments. For example, the third meeting of the focal points, held in Lima in November 2013, agreed on the *Lima Vision* for the instrument, which recognizes:

- That everyone has the right to a healthy environment, which is essential for the full development of human beings and for the achievement of sustainable development, poverty eradication, equality and the preservation and stewardship of the environment for the benefit of present and future generations.
- That exercising rights of access to information, participation and justice in environmental matters deepens and strengthens democracy and contributes to better protection of the environment, and thus of human rights.

Similarly, in October 2014, participating governments adopted the *San José Content*, which identifies the key issues to be considered in the negotiations of the regional instrument and which includes the right to a healthy environment in the general principles of the operative part of the regional instrument. Thus, the direct link between access rights, the right to a healthy environment and sustainable development affirmed in this process, particularly the *Lima Vision* and the *San José Content*, provides a strong basis for further progress in the road ahead.

To conclude, in the 21st century new legal tools are needed in order to combat the spread of socio-environmental conflicts and reverse ecological degradation, and in this way ensure peace, coexistence and social dialogue. A regional instrument regarding access rights presents a real opportunity for empowering local communities and strengthening the organs of the State so that the debates about sustainability are conducted within the framework of institutional channels that give consideration and expression to the plurality of voices within society and the public interest. Therefore, an instrument about access rights creates the possibility for new spaces of legitimacy for the social contract and the construction of a culture of respect and inclusion.

In this way, the LAC regional instrument will make access rights operative as foundational elements of sustainable development, thereby enabling the implementation of a rights-based approach to sustainable development governance. The instrument will redefine State-society

relations at all levels of government so that they come to respond to a democratic model; a model in which the structures of governance of natural resources and ecosystems, on which the whole economy is based, respond to the needs and concerns of the present and future generations; and which is judged by the effective observance of rights, social inclusion, pluralism and equality.

### **Notes**

(1) TAI is the largest global network of civil society organizations that work to ensure that citizens have the right and the ability to influence decisions about natural resources on which their communities depend.

## **Chapter 16**

# **The Challenge of Measuring SDG 16: What Role for African Regional Frameworks?**

**Adedayo Bolaji-Adio**

### **Executive Summary**

The inclusion of Goal 16 in the proposed Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) reflects the growing international consensus that governance and peace and security are important for development. There is indeed much evidence to support this claim. Government policies in countries as diverse as China, Brazil and Indonesia have helped bring millions of people out of poverty. At the same time, conflicts in places like Mali, Syria, Libya and the Central African Republic have significantly reversed development gains and threaten to undermine long-term development planning and policy implementation. Goal 16 is therefore considered an important enabling factor for achieving the post-2015 development agenda.

There is, however, no universal agreement on the precise dimensions of governance and the best approaches to peace and security that are important for development. Goal 16 as presently articulated is largely inclined towards a normative conception of “good governance”, which it posits as essential for development. Yet, this position is neither universally accepted nor substantiated in practice. In Africa, seemingly participatory and representative systems of governance have in a number of cases heightened group polarization and failed to prevent or contain communal violence. By contrast, the recent history of development in a number of Asian and African countries demonstrates that poverty alleviation is possible despite institutions that are not very inclusive or participatory. Moreover, even countries that have successfully embraced democratic forms of government continue to face challenges in achieving equitable and inclusive development.

Since Goal 16 is considered a universal factor for development, how do we measure its targets in a way that is meaningful for development at the regional and country levels? As African countries rightly maintain, “[g]overnance, peace and security are important to measure – and... they are measurable” (AU, UNDP and Saferworld 2014:1). The principle of “common but differentiated responsibility” as described in the 1992 Rio Declaration can provide a good framework for developing indicators to measure governance at the global and national levels. A two-tiered system of measurement, with standardized indicators at the global level and country-specific indicators at the national level, could be an effective way to accommodate the differences in governance approaches between countries. For such a system to be effective there is a need to reassess the conceptual framework that underpins Goal 16 so as to create indicators that are flexible enough to capture local priorities and experiences.

Indicators, however, can provide only limited information on governance and peace and security, which alone is insufficient for supporting progress in these areas. The targets under Goal 16 are

complex, inherently political and country-specific. The nature of participation, understandings of the rule of law and the efficiency of institutions are the results of the political compromises and normative standards that societies agree upon, as well as their capacity constraints. This is why qualitative assessment tools are essential. Regional initiatives like the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) provide the type of in-depth political analysis that is necessary for conducting a rigorous assessment of countries' progress on Goal 16. To date, the APRM has served as a useful early warning tool for conflict resolution, and it has highlighted a number of crucial governance issues, which African countries have then sought to address in national development plans. Although APRM assessments might not allow easy comparisons between countries, they do offer another noteworthy advantage: they provide a rich source of information on what particular aspects of governance and approaches to peace and security are effective for development across a diverse set of countries. Having this information is important for the success of Goal 16. The international community cannot marshal convincing arguments about governance and peace and security if they rely primarily on statistical indicators.

## **Introduction**

The 17 proposed Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) represent a significant evolution and conceptual shift in our understanding of development. Whereas the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) focused largely on poverty alleviation and improved social policies for the most marginalized populations, the SDGs propose a much broader multi-sectorial approach to development that applies to low-income, middle-income and high-income countries alike. This new development agenda reflects systematic changes in global dynamics, including the rise of emerging powers ready to assert their influence, the recurrence of transnational-armed conflicts and the complex linkages between countries as evidenced most recently by the global financial crisis. The SDGs are therefore posited as a truly global agenda, which recognizes that there are no countries that are fully “developed” while others are simply “developing”. Critically, the SDGs emphasize that in our increasingly globalized and interlinked world, national development does not occur in a vacuum. It is influenced to varying degrees by international phenomena and events such as climate change, volatile financial markets, health epidemics, and conflict.

A core standard that underlies the notion of the SDGs as a truly global development agenda is the concept of universality. Here, universality conveys the idea of factors that are crucial for sustainable development in all possible contexts and across all countries. According to reports by the Open Working Group (OWG) on the SDGs and the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, one important universal factor for development is Goal 16: to “promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels” (OWG 2014:10).

There is ample evidence to substantiate the universal importance of governance and peace and security for development and vice versa. Assessments of the impact of the MDGs have shown that conflict-affected countries invariably experience declining growth rates and difficulty in implementing poverty alleviation and social development policies. Conflicts in South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo, for example, have destroyed or made it impossible to put in place transportation infrastructure that could facilitate regional and national trade (UNEP n.d.; Denny 2012). Non-conflict related violence also poses a significant challenge for growth. A study by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime and the World Bank (2007) suggests that reducing crime by a third in the Caribbean could double per capita economic growth. Furthermore, crime and

violence have intangible effects, such as psychological trauma and destruction of social cohesion, which also undermine human development and governance. Peace and security are therefore important for development because they create an enabling environment for long-term development planning and implementation. Moreover, peaceful and secure societies can direct human and capital resources towards productive endeavours that support growth. At the same time, inclusive and sustainable development can mitigate some of the underlying causes of conflict, such as, but not limited to, competition over limited resources and economic exclusion (IEP 2013).

Like peace and security, there is broad international acknowledgement of the importance of governance for socio-economic development. Effective governance systems ensure that country institutions are able, on a day-to-day basis, to make decisions and implement policies that support their national development goals and protect their citizens. As Merilee Grindle (2007) rightly explains, governance involves the mechanisms and institutions of power that structure a country's political, social and economic interactions; it is governance that determines and regulates how resources are distributed and used. Reports on the SDGs and results of the UN My World surveys further suggest that certain characteristics of governance are important for sustainable development. The My World surveys, for example, highlight that effective governments, capable of tackling poverty and resolving socio-political issues, are participatory, responsive and accountable to their populations. Access to justice, freedom from discrimination and persecution, and popular participation are also cited as critical for development.

Although governance and peace and security are undoubtedly important for sustainable development, in considering a global agenda like Goal 16 it is important to note that there is limited universal consensus on the precise dimensions of governance and the best approach to peace and security for effective development. Member states of the UN, for example, maintain that “democracy, good governance and the rule of law at the national and international levels [are] essential for sustainable development” (UN 2012). Similarly, International IDEA asserts, “democracy is the system of governance which offers the best tools to fight against corruption, poverty and inequality” (Lekvall 2014: 7). Studies by David Booth on Africa, however, present a rather more complex picture. Under certain conditions, Booth (2012) argues, government systems that are not necessarily inclusive or participatory have been able to spur socio-economic growth much better than democratic systems, which have sometimes amplified social divisions and prevented collective action for development. In a recent study, the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) notes that on further analysis of the My World surveys, “what people really prioritize [is] often the ability of governments to actually deliver things to them” (Bergh et al. 2013, cited in Wild et al. 2015: 24) rather than levels of inclusion or participation. Furthermore, studies of development in Asia, particularly China and Malaysia, show that countries have achieved increased growth and socio-economic improvements under relatively non-inclusive or non-participatory governance systems (ibid.). These different perspectives raise questions for our thinking about Goal 16. They highlight the need to look at what is effective in practice and to think of ways to measure governance and peace and security beyond simple normative understandings of what appears to be best for development.

How then do we reconcile the different perspectives described above and measure Goal 16 in a way that is both internationally comparable and locally relevant, particularly in Africa? As a starting point, it is important to note that Goal 16 can and should be measured. The post-2015 agenda offers the international community a unique opportunity to develop a rich understanding

of the constraints to and progress on peace and security and to identify governance innovations and practices that can be effective for development. An emerging approach to measuring the SDGs lies in the principle of “common but differentiated responsibility” described in the 1992 Rio Declaration. The principle as applied to the SDGs calls for common goals but a differentiation of responsibilities for achieving them at the global and national levels (FES 2013). Building on this, g7+ members, many in Africa, and a number of international actors, have advanced the notion of creating a two-tiered system for monitoring targets under Goal 16. This system would include global indicators for comparability between countries alongside differentiated targets and indicators at the national level that reflect country-specific capacities and ambitions. A two-tiered system of indicators, however, is not enough. As mentioned, governance and peace and security are complex issues. Therefore, to effectively monitor and encourage improvements in governance, measurements will need (i) to utilize indicators that are adaptable and not inclined towards stylized concepts of “good” governance and (ii) to look beyond neatly packaged indicators towards more in-depth qualitative assessments, including enhanced regional peer review initiatives such as the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM).

### **Goal 16: Universality and a Global Agenda for Governance and Peace and Security**

Goal 16 offers a universal agenda insofar as all states agree that effective governance and peace and security are important for development. Indeed, there is much evidence, as set out above, that governance and peace and security do matter for development. Less clear, and not adequately specified by the SDGs, are what aspects of governance and what approaches to peace and security matter most and are effective for development. Aspirations for governance and peace and security are good, but for a time-bound agenda like the SDGs there needs to be a common understanding of how to operationalize aspirations and how to differentiate responsibilities for targets at the national, regional and local levels. Perhaps the one target that is not conceptually ambiguous is Goal 16.9: “By 2030 [countries should] provide legal identity for all, including birth registration”. For most other targets, there is no agreement on a common conceptual and practical approach or on the differentiation of responsibilities between countries.

With regard to the rule of law, for example, country perspectives differ on what this means in practice. Statements by g7+ countries suggest that the rule of law should be inherently consistent with international human rights standards. Yet, if human rights standards are to be applied, then how do we assess the rule of law in countries like the United States, which are not party to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and can thus justifiably claim exemption from being evaluated against such a framework? These questions remain a subject of debate. On the African side, the Common African Position (CAP) on the post-2015 development agenda describes rule of law in broad terms as equality of access to justice. The standard for justice, however, is not clearly defined. Meanwhile, countries like Brazil and Nicaragua maintain that there is no basis on which to assess the rule of law, first, because it is country-specific and, second, because it cannot be used as a standard for evaluating the effectiveness of governments in implementing development policies (OWG 2014).

On peace and security there is a similar lack of agreement about how responsibilities should be differentiated at the national, regional and local levels. The CAP commits the African continent to strengthen regional cooperation in dispute resolution, post-conflict reconstruction and curbing of illicit cross-border flows of arms. However, it makes no mention of the international dimensions that contribute to conflict in Africa, including foreign financing of radical sectarian groups and

flows of illegal arms (AU 2014). The G77 countries have stated that while conflict might necessitate international intervention, violence should be dealt with solely at the national level. This fails to acknowledge the regional and international dimensions of violence, particularly as it relates to human and arms trafficking and the drugs trade. There are also questions as to what types of violence should be considered legitimate in the global arena. When is international or regional intervention in a country justifiable, and how should violence be assessed in such a case. Given the asymmetries of power among countries, a clear global understanding is needed of how responsibilities for effective governance and peace and security are to be differentiated.

Table 1: Proposed Targets for Goal 16 of the Sustainable Development Goals

<b>Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels</b>	
<b>16.1</b>	Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere
<b>16.2</b>	End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children
<b>16.3</b>	Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all
<b>16.4</b>	By 2030 significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets
<b>16.5</b>	Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms
<b>16.6</b>	Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels
<b>16.7</b>	Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels
<b>16.8</b>	Broaden and strengthen the participation of developing countries in the institutions of global governance
<b>16.9</b>	By 2030 provide legal identity for all, including birth registration
<b>16.10</b>	Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements
<b>16.a</b>	Strengthen relevant national institutions, including through international cooperation, for building capacity at all levels, in particular in developing countries, to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime
<b>16.b</b>	Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development

Source: OWG (2014).

The difficulty is that many targets under Goal 16 are not universal enough in the sense that they are largely inclined towards a normative conception of “good governance” that is well-meaning

but problematic (Table 1). Broadly speaking, governance as expressed in the SDGs echoes liberal democratic values, such as inclusiveness, participation and the rule of law, positing them as essential for sustainable growth and social development. Evidence, however, does not bear out this claim. There is also no universal consensus on the correlation between forms of government (e.g., levels of participation, inclusion and rule of law) and attainment of economic and human development goals. Victor Adetula (2011), for example, finds that the increased participation of African citizens in elections has not necessarily resulted in actual improvements in governance. In contrast, Grindle (2007) notes that China has brought millions out of poverty, improved quality of life and experienced high growth rates despite governance systems that have been exclusive and opaque. She also points to the evolution of governance in the West linked to changing relationships between citizens and elites. In an analysis of economic development in the United States, Sven Beckert reminds us that “[w]hen we marshal big arguments about the West’s superior economic performance, and build these arguments upon an account of the West’s allegedly superior institutions like private-property rights, lean government, and the rule of law, we need to remember that the world Westerners forged was equally characterized by exactly the opposite” (Beckert 2014). According to Booth (2012), seemingly sub-optimal standards of transparency and accountability are often considered acceptable in Africa as long as citizens feel that development is visible and public resources are fairly distributed.

Goal 16, however, prescribes a “one size fits all” approach and “what sorts of institutions countries should have” (Wild et al.: 23). The danger, especially for Africa, is that this view will advance calls for stylized conceptions of good governance, dislocated from any historical or cultural context. Over the past decade, a number of regional bodies and initiatives, including the African Union, the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NPEAD) and the APRM have embraced the idea that democracy and good governance are the key to Africa’s development. Although the underlying concepts themselves are good, internalising these good governance approaches overly simplifies problems of governance and their relationship to development. More importantly, insisting on a “model” form of governance for Africa may overlook underlying problems of politics and power as well as local systems of political thought, conflict resolution and problem solving. As Booth argues, the continued insurances in development discourse on a stylized conception of governance risks promoting isomorphism and neglects to address the real problems of power, interests and collective action. In Kenya and Nigeria, for example, electoral democracy has revealed severe group polarization and heightened zero-sum competitions for power. In such a context, corruption, for example, is not necessarily the chief problem but rather a symptom of a much deeper issue of social cohesion and collective action at the political elite and citizen level. Inclusion and participation are important, but as C. S. Momoh cautions, “the verdict of the majority might not be the solution to societal problems”, especially in societies where there is a high level of mistrust and no agreement on what constitutes the nation (cited in Oyekan 2009: 218). It is counterproductive to simply assume that the nature of states in Africa is uncontested and to reduce the problem of governance and peace and security to simply a failure of state-society relations. Citizens have complicated relationships with each other, and the practical norms of society also shape how state actors behave (De Sardan 2008).

Governance, peace, and security are inherently political, historical and country-specific. Goal 16’s present orientation fails to acknowledge the range of regimes and institutions that have been effective in development, and how the distribution of power evolves over time in countries. Furthermore, there is a tendency with the good governance framework that underlies Goal 16 to

project what it is that people need for development, though this may not correspond with what they want or what works best in practice.

Overall, a global agenda on governance is possible and should be encouraged; ineffective states pose challenges for development, not only at the local level but also regionally and internationally. Goal 16 is aspirational in a good way. However, if it seeks to guide actions on governance and on peace and security in a direction that is meaningful for development and within a set timeframe, some of its targets should be further unpacked, which is beyond the scope of the current paper. Before the international community launches into a determination of measurement approaches, there is still a need to take a step back from the SDGs and clarify (i) what universal qualities are effective for development and (ii) how is responsibility, particularly at the global level, defined. This will be key for measurement, as it is not useful to create indicators for targets that are ideal but not necessarily effective in practice in the short to medium term.

### **Measuring Goal 16 at the Global Level**

Past international agreements, such as the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation and the Accra Agenda for Action, all acknowledge that local ownership is important and that global agendas should be aligned to country development strategies. The UN Secretary General's synthesis report on the SDGs similarly recognizes the need for national ownership and differentiation at the level of measurement between national and international actors. Recent discussions within the UN Statistics Division suggest that a comprehensive monitoring framework for the SDGs would "include regional, national and thematic/sectorial monitoring levels" (UN 2015: 3). These are welcome approaches, especially for a target like Goal 16, which, as detailed above, is fundamentally political and influenced by national histories, cultures and social compromises. In view of the large number of targets under Goal 16 and in light of our recognition of the dangers of decontextualizing governance and peace and security, how can indicators be developed at the global level to monitor these targets?

A first step would be for the international community to acknowledge that global indicators under Goal 16 will have to be limited. This is not only because of the number of targets but more importantly because governance and peace and security cannot be meaningfully assessed through condensed statistical tools. Indicators can provide us with valuable information to inform policy. For example, homicide rates in a country disaggregated by region and gender can inform law enforcement programmes, but they cannot tell us what the root causes of conflict are or how communities interact to influence political outcomes. In short, indicators are proxies and, as Melissa Thomas (2009) reminds us, when creating indicators, particularly for governance, we must be certain that they are conceptually as well as technically sound. This goes beyond the current discourse on differentiating targets by country or timeframes, bringing us back to the need to unpack what constitutes universality in governance and to clarify the level of responsibility for peace and security at all levels. If governance is country-specific then we must be sure that the indicators used for international comparison and to advocate governance improvements are the most important for development across all local contexts. This is a no small challenge. The outcomes are likely to be far from perfect, but they must be practical and adaptable.

One suggestion is for countries to take a very minimalist view of these concepts. This means that global indicators would measure how well countries implement their own national policies and

international agreements on, for example, accountability, inclusiveness, the rule of law and participation. Gaps between performance on national and international policies and agreements would then be highlighted. The APRM, discussed in greater detail in the section below, currently employs such a strategy. It assesses each country's compliance against a list of standards. Goal 16 can also be analysed in light of indicators from other thematic areas that focus on the outputs of governance, such as health, education and economic policy. Although causal links might prove difficult to verify, comparing public service delivery to government forms might provide us with some kind of picture of what aspects of governance are important for development in a range of countries. Together, these measurements could offer a dynamic approach that considers the ways in which country policies change over time and adapt to socio-economic and political shifts. Although systems to create indicators of this sort might not fully exist at present, particularly in Africa, the post-2015 development agenda offers a unique opportunity to start building capacity in this area. Moreover, a number of think tanks and academic institutions in Africa and around the world presently do ongoing analysis of this sort. The focus of such measurement, therefore, becomes less about *looking for* good governance and more about building shared values at all levels and assessing how different systems of governance and security policies play out on the ground.

Since Goal 16 is comprised of global targets, levels of responsibility need to be differentiated between countries and at the national and international levels, with indicators determined accordingly. Unequal power dynamics, however, make differentiation on complex issues difficult. A politically viable solution might be to fashion indicators that assess country actions in line with their own legal and formal international cooperation agreements. This would be especially significant for goals like 16.1 on conflict and security. Although conflict, violence and trafficking are country-specific, they are facilitated by complex regional and international dynamics. The conflicts in the Democratic Republic of Congo, for example, might be the result of internal socio-economic issues, but they have been facilitated by the actions of other countries, including neighbouring states. At the same time, regional and international actors in Africa have committed themselves to resolving conflicts through specific diplomatic agreements. It is therefore important that we assess whether countries are fulfilling their own expressed and stated obligations. Global action, too, can be measured through proxies, such as weapons flows and sales, types of international support provided and the existence of bank transparency laws in countries known as destinations for illicit financial flows.

The international community must also evaluate its data sources. In order to build strong arguments about what countries require for development by way of governance and peace and security, we need internationally comparable and valid data. This means two things: (i) that we do not simply rely on existing indicators because they are "feasible" and (ii) that we strive for consistency and harmonization at the global level. The World Governance Indicators, for example, provide composite scores of governance drawing on a range of assessment tools, each with different methodologies. Yet, as Thomas explains, these indicators might not all be conceptually valid, and the use of composite scores might not produce an accurate picture of the extent that targets have been achieved. The UN Statistics Division has proposed that indicators should come from national statistical systems insofar as possible. This is a good start in terms of building national statistical capacity, particularly in Africa, but a process is needed for developing the capacity of independent local institutions to gather data that is consistent and technically sound. There are increasingly vocal calls for a "data revolution" to underpin the monitoring of the SDGs, particularly Goal 16,

at the global level. While this is a welcome development, caution is warranted. Using data to measure peace and security and governance at the global level will not ensure that the findings will be unbiased and relevant.

In sum, the international community needs to take a step back and determine a clear and shared idea of what approaches to governance and peace and security matter for development. Global indicators alone cannot produce an adequate picture of progress and problems in governance and in peace and security at the national and regional levels. Differentiation should not be solely about setting different targets at the local and international levels. Rather, it should also allow fair evaluation of different systems and approaches to governance. That necessarily means that many indicators will be incomparable across countries. This limitation should be fully acknowledged.

### **Measuring Goal 16 in Africa**

There seems to be a general consensus, as detailed above, that the SDGs cannot be measured like the MDGs, using only a standard set of global indicators. In response, the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States and the 1992 Rio Declaration's concept of "common but differentiated responsibility" have been proposed as models for creating a two-tiered system of global and national indicators. Such a system could be developed in several ways:

- Requiring countries to select a number of targets to prioritize along with corresponding indicators
- Allowing countries to select indicators that better reflect the process through which they seek meet targets; and/or
- Allowing countries to choose a level of ambition in each target to match their starting conditions.

The idea is that national indicators would be specific but complementary to global indicators, and there would be a comprehensive "basket" of indicators for each country. African countries, working with the African Union, have proposed adapting Goal 16 to on-going regional initiatives. Although this is a commendable means to ensure local ownership, African countries in their selected indicators have continued to simplify the complexities of governance and peace and security at the regional and national levels. To measure governance in a way that is meaningful for development in Africa, the focus should be more on in-depth qualitative assessments that can help to unpack the complexities of governance in many countries. Qualitative assessments are challenging, but so too are governance and peace and security. A sensitive and nuanced measurement approach is thus called for.

### ***The African Union Proposed Regional Approach to Measuring Goal 16 and the Limits of Indicators***

African states have shown strong interest in thinking about the post-2015 development agenda and proposing approaches to the measurement of Goal 16. The Common African Position (CAP) on the post-2015 development agenda recognizes the importance of both governance and peace and security for development, and it commits African countries to seek improvements in both areas (Table 2). At the same time, the CAP argues that assessments of performance in meeting targets in these areas should take into account the initial conditions of each country and recognize their

progress rather than simply highlighting how far they fall short of global goals. African states therefore support differentiation in levels of ambition with regard to the targets.

Table 2: Common African Position (CAP) on the Post-2015 Development Agenda

Pillars and Governance Enablers	
Pillar I	Structural economic transformation and inclusive growth
Pillar II	Science, technology and innovation
Pillar III	People-centred development
Pillar IV	Environmental sustainability, natural resources management and disaster risk management
Pillar V	Peace and security <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Addressing the root causes of conflict</li> <li>• Preventing the outbreak of armed conflict</li> </ul>
Pillar VI	Finance and partnerships
Enabler	Strengthen good governance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further democratization</li> <li>• Fight corruption</li> <li>• Promote good political and socio-economic governance, transparency and accountability, especially in the field of natural resources management</li> <li>• Improve the enabling environment for involvement of civil society</li> <li>• Accelerate decentralization of the governance system</li> <li>• Reinforce rule of law frameworks and strengthen institutional capacities to protect human rights</li> <li>• Promote integrity and leadership that is committed to the interests of the people</li> <li>• Protect human rights of all citizens</li> <li>• Fight against all forms of discrimination</li> <li>• Promote the constructive management of diversity through democratic practices and mechanisms at the local, national and continental levels</li> </ul>

Source: AU (2014).

Concerning measurement of Goal 16, countries attending a June 2014 meeting of the African Union Commission argued that “[g]overnance, peace and security are important to measure – and... they are measurable” (AU, UNDP and Saferworld 2014: 1). Accordingly, a list of indicators has been selected building largely on the ongoing work of the African Union’s Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa (SHaSA) (see Appendix A). SHaSA’s Governance, Peace and Security Working Group is assisting national statistics offices in 20 countries to standardize their approaches to data collection. Some indicators for Goal 16 have been drawn from the African Union Continental Early Warning System and from the work of the APRM (ibid.).

The proposed indicators suggest that Africa largely shares the liberal democratic framework that underpins Goal 16. The CAP defines six priority pillars for Africa (Table 2), one of which is peace and security, which it considers critical for the continent’s development. It thus commits countries to address the root causes of conflict and work to prevent the outbreak of violence. In addition, “good and inclusive governance” is cited as an important criterion for creating an enabling environment for all of the other pillars. The CAP, moreover, calls on countries to further the process of democratization at the national level, to fight corruption, to increase transparency and accountability, to reinforce the rule of law and to strengthen institutional capacity (AU 2014). However, as mentioned above, the strong emphasis on the importance of liberal democratic processes and institutions for development in Africa might overlook the real issues of collective action at the political elite and citizen levels that make developmental governance possible.

The proposed African approach to measuring Goal 16 also fails to recognize differences in national priorities. There are between 5 and 15 indicators under each of the 12 governance targets. The African Union suggests that the proposed “basket of indicators which captures a range of issues... must be used for each target if progress in meeting them is to be accurately measured” (AU, UNDP and Saferworld 2014: 5). However, not all targets or indicators are applicable to all countries in the same way. It would be unreasonable to have Botswana track targets on conflict-related violence when homicide might be the more urgent concern. In Kenya, however, terrorism and communal violence might be as much of a concern as homicide. As such, each country will require a different set of indicators. Given capacity constraints, countries might want to start with a limited number of indicators that captures their most pressing challenges. Governance, after all, is a long-term process, and it is important to acknowledge this both in the targets set and in the way they are measured.

The proposed indicators under SHaSA might not be enough to make the measurement of Goal 16 meaningful at the national level in Africa. The African Union’s extensive basket of indicators for Goal 16 points to governments’ interest in gathering as much information as possible on governance and on peace and security. Indicators, however, convey little information, and they cannot adequately capture the complexities of these issues on the African continent. Aside from this, there is a need to better rationalize the indicators proposed and to allow countries to select those that are most meaningful for tracking their own progress. It is also important that in trying to capture the complexities of Goal 16, African countries do not overwhelm their present capacities by tracking all indicators. Instead, targets and indicators should evolve over time as both socio-political priorities change and national statistical capacities improve.

### **A Qualitative Approach to Measuring Goal 16: The African Peer Review Mechanism**

In light of the complexities of governance and peace and security highlighted above, qualitative assessments might offer a more useful approach to measuring Goal 16. The APRM is an interesting regional initiative that could help African countries effectively set targets and monitor and assess issues related to governance and peace and security. The APRM is a voluntary assessment mechanism developed in line with the New Partnership for Africa’s Development and launched in 2003. It was designed to improve governance in Africa through inclusive public assessments of national issues and peer learning among states. There are five stages in conducting an APRM review, including a participatory national self-assessment, a peer review conducted by heads of state and preparation of a national plan of action. To date, 34 countries have acceded to the APRM, and 17 have undergone peer reviews. In 2014, the African Union General Assembly decided to make the APRM an autonomous institution within the African Union and have it take a leading role in measuring governance in Africa.

Table 3: Complementarities between APRM Questions and Selected Targets under SDG 16

SDG 16 Targets	APRM Indicators and Questions
<p><b>16.1</b> Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere</p>	<p>What conditions generate conflict in your country?</p> <p>What mechanisms exist for preventing, reducing and managing conflicts in your country? How effective are these?</p> <p>How involved are sub-regional and regional institutions in resolving intra- and inter-state conflict in your country?</p>
<p><b>16.2</b> End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children</p>	<p>What concrete measures have been taken to protect the rights of children?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Measures against all types of child abuse including but not limited to child trafficking, labour, prostitution and pornography, as well as the compulsory and voluntary recruitment of minors into military services</li> <li>– Assess the effectiveness of these measures in terms of trends in the overall improvement of the status of young persons in the country over the past five years. Provide evidence of measures taken to sustain progress (training, monitoring, follow-up actions, adjustment, reports available)</li> </ul> <p>What concrete measures have been taken to promote and protect the rights of the youth?</p>

<p><b>16.3</b> Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all</p>	<p>What measures have been put in place to promote and enforce civil rights?</p> <p>What steps have been taken to facilitate due process and equal access to justice for all?</p> <p>What weight do provisions establishing the rule of law and the supremacy of the constitution carry in practice?</p> <p>To what extent is the judiciary independent?</p> <p>What measures have been taken to promote and protect the rights of women in the country?</p>
<p><b>16.5</b> Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms</p>	<p>What is the state of corruption in the public sector?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Assess whether public anti-corruption tools (such as asset declaration regimes) and anti-corruption institutions are fully in place and effective.</li> <li>- Give details of major cases of alleged corruption prosecuted and disciplinary sanctions taken over the past five years.</li> </ul>
<p><b>16.6</b> Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels</p>	<p>What measures have been taken in the country to strengthen institutions for efficient and effective public service delivery?</p> <p>How would you rate the independence and effectiveness of the state legislative body?</p>
<p><b>16.7</b> Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels</p>	<p>Does the political system as practiced in your country allow for free and fair competition for power and the promotion of democratic governance?*</p> <p>What efforts, if any, have been made to empower local and rural communities through the devolution of political power, judicial authority or financial resources?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the effectiveness of the current system of devolution of power to local authorities, describe whether it enhances or hinders service delivery and whether or not it promotes greater accountability between government and citizens.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Whether traditional authorities consulted or in any way incorporated into the system of government at the local levels and does the incorporation of traditional authorities enhance or hinder accountability or service delivery at the local government level.</li> </ul> <p>What measures have been put in place to enhance the role of women in the democratic process and in the governance of your country? Describe the challenges faced and the measures taken to sustain progress.</p> <p>How vibrant and influential are civil society organizations in your country?</p>
<p><b>16.10</b> Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements</p>	<p>To what extent does the state respect and protect the Access to Information rights of citizens?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Assess whether public officer anti corruption tools and anti-corruption institutions are fully in place and effective</li> </ul>
<p><b>16.a</b> Strengthen relevant national institutions, including through international cooperation, for building capacity at all levels, in particular in developing countries, to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime</p>	<p>How involved are international organizations such as the UN in intra-and inter-state conflict resolution in your country?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Assess the effectiveness of these institutions in terms of the resources (human, financial and logistics) that have been deployed in your country. To what extent are the interventions of these bodies accepted and deemed legitimate.</li> </ul>
<p><b>16.b</b> Promote and enforce non-discriminatory</p>	<p>Identify vulnerable groups in your country and outline measures your country has taken to promote and protect the rights of permanently disadvantaged</p>

laws and policies for sustainable development	or vulnerable groups, including but not limited to, internally displaced persons, refugees and persons with disabilities? Assess the effectiveness of the measures and give details of any violation and reports available.
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\*One of the APRM’s goals is democracy promotion. Source: OWG (2014); Revised country self-assessment questionnaire for the African Peer Review Mechanism (2003).

The APRM could become a truly important qualitative assessment tool for measuring and monitoring governance in Africa. APRM assessments provide an in-depth analysis of country-specific governance and security challenges, as well as of local approaches to problem solving. This is accomplished by adapting its extensive questionnaire in alignment with country priorities. (Table 3 presents examples of complementarities between APRM questions and selected targets under SDG 16.) The APRM, therefore, offers countries an opportunity to discuss and determine some of the governance and peace and security issues that go “unseen” by other indicators and expert assessments. This has in turn made the APRM an important predictive tool. In Kenya, for example, Bronwen Manby (2008: 1) finds that APRM reports made “a remarkably frank assessment” of the country’s problems and did not shy away from delicate issues. In fact, the APRM assessment foresaw the ethnic tensions that led to electoral violence in 2007 (ibid.). Similarly, five years before the 2008 attacks on African immigrants in South Africa, an APRM assessment warned of the need for South African authorities to address rising levels of xenophobia (Crush and Pendleton 2004). As Stefan Meyer explains, “In terms of foresight and scenario development, APRM reports are far more useful than standard indicator sets” (Meyer 2009: 9).

The APRM assessment process has created a space for non-state actors to engage with governments to identify pressing challenges and develop solutions. Non-state actors have used the process to draw government attention to key areas of policy concern. In Uganda, for instance, the Minority Rights Group International used the APRM process to draw attention to the status of ethnic minority groups in the country. This led to interesting insights about the link between land deprivation, political exclusion and conflict. Likewise, in Benin an AfriMap assessment found that “no study in living memory had ever been conducted so exhaustively, or had ever given Beninese society the chance to speak out to the same extent” (Badet 2008: 22). Aside from elections, there tend to be few opportunities for citizens and officials to converse in-depth about the state of governance and peace and security throughout a country. The APRM has been useful in encouraging national dialogue and empowering national actors to identify problems and proffer workable solutions. This has encouraged national ownership and thinking about governance, which itself is imperative for sustained development. The APRM process has also encouraged governments to learn from each other. Nigeria and Kenya, for example, exchanged experts during their country self-assessment processes in order to benefit from each other’s insights. This has rendered the APRM much more than an assessment process. It is becoming a mechanism for national and inter-state discussions on governance and peace and security (Gruzd 2014).

Perhaps most importantly, the APRM has developed a built-in process for ensuring that its findings are incorporated into national policies and development plans. APRM National Plans of Action (NPOAs) incorporate key findings of country assessments into recommendations harmonized with country plans and policies for government action. The integration of NPOAs into the APRM

process could also prove useful for operationalizing Goal 16 at the national and regional levels. By creating action plans to address the issues highlighted in APRM assessments, the process creates a clear understanding of which government and nongovernmental agencies are responsible for specific reforms. In a similar way, the APRM could ensure that measurements for Goal 16 actually feed into national policies and development plans. This is a major advantage over the use of indicators. In Kenya, APRM recommendations helped to inform the new constitution, and also led to establishment of agencies to combat drug trafficking and creation of 148 peace committees for conflict resolution. Likewise in Ghana, APRM recommendations contributed to the passing of laws on human trafficking, persons with disabilities and domestic violence, and also fed into the development of a number of improved public administration agencies to combat corruption (ibid.). Box 1 presents a case study of the APRM process and policy outcomes in Uganda.

Box 1: The Ugandan Experience with the APRM Uganda was among the first countries to embrace to the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). It acceded in 2003 and was the seventh country to undergo a peer review under the process. From 2006 to 2008, the country carried out a country self-assessment (CSA) and an independent country review (CR). First, an inclusive national APRM commission composed of 21 members worked with independent research organizations to conduct field research and prepare the CSA report. Subsequently, an APRM panel of experts conducted the independent CR to verify the findings of the CSA. In June 2008, APRM participating countries conducted a peer review of the Ugandan assessment and National Plan of Action (NPOA). Overall, the Ugandan APRM experience proved fairly representative, offering diverse groups in the country an opportunity to identify and debate pressing governance challenges (Tindifa and Luutu 2011).

### **Findings and Policy Recommendations**

The CSA and CR reports provide a relatively balanced view of governance in Uganda, highlighting successful reforms as well as a number of systematic and structural issues. The APRM NPOA recommended that the country seek to build a democratic culture more widely. Intra-party relations, it noted, were not necessarily based on ideological differences but on regional identities, which served to exclude a number of constituents (ibid.). The CR raised questions about the process of decentralization under way in Uganda, noting that decentralization “is not [a] social engineering tool with a universally applicable blue print”. According to the report, “decentralization has the potential of being used to manage diversity”, however, “[d]ecentralization has its downside – it can foster regional identity and encourage secessionism, and there is a potential for the system to revive conflict within multi-ethnic societies” (APRM 2009: 92). Both the CSA and the CR reports warned that the current trend of decentralization in Uganda had exacerbated capacity constraints, stretching public services thin. As such, the NPOA recommended that Uganda rationalize its process of decentralization so as to be better able to effectively manage diversity and improve public service delivery (SAIIA 2010).

Both reports also highlighted the complicated relationship between civil society and government in promoting democracy, an issue often inadequately assessed in discussions of good governance. According to the CR report, “some non-state actors have not demonstrated a participatory culture that is open to a diversity of voices” (APRM 2009: 77), and there is sometimes a lack of accountability. The NPOA therefore recommended that nongovernmental organizations commit to improve their institutional governance and public legitimacy.

Similarly, the reports note that corruption is endemic in all strata of Ugandan society. Another of the NPoA's recommendations was therefore that Uganda harmonizes all laws, policies and institutions established to fight corruption within and outside of government.

Finally, a significant finding of the CSA was that land deprivation has been an underlying cause of conflict and also an important factor in the perceived exclusion of ethnic minorities. Land deprivation directly threatens the economic livelihood of many groups in Uganda, particularly minorities (ibid.). Accordingly, the Ugandan NPoA contained a number of recommendations related to conflict management and land reform. These included suggestions to review land laws and to support local initiatives towards alternative justice at the local level.

### **Outcomes and Policy Reforms**

Although the reports highlighted a number of important areas for government attention, the NPoA did not reflect all of these. Nevertheless, the NPoA did include a number of key recommendations that the government of Uganda has implemented, despite its initial criticism of the APRM (SAIIA 2010). In part, this is due to the largely inclusive nature of the APRM, which gave civil society and academic groups an opportunity to own the process and lobby the government for reforms. Nevertheless, the Ugandan government still has a lot of work to do in prioritising and systematically implementing reforms. The APRM could also be useful in monitoring the development and implementation of reforms and in highlighting emerging issues. The table below presents some of the reforms that the Ugandan government has achieved to date.

<b>Issues Highlighted in NPoA</b>	<b>Government Response and Reforms</b>
Address land deprivation and conflict	Land Amendment Act passed Land Division created within the High Court to manage conflicts
Tackle corruption within and outside of government	Anti-corruption law passed in 2009 Anti-corruption courts operationalized Inter-agency forum established to address corruption
Strengthen credibility of electoral process	Electoral commission funding increased Training for electoral officials improved
Enhance local initiatives for alternative justice and expand post-conflict reconstruction and development projects	Government increased recognition of traditional conflict resolution systems and increased the use of traditional justice systems to resolve cases National Reconciliation Bill passed, calling for establishment of a national reconciliation forum Draft National Transitional Justice Bill developed

Source: SAIIA (2010) & APRM Uganda Country Report (2009).

## **Strengthening the APRM Review Process for Measuring Goal 16**

Despite its strengths, the APRM has a number of significant shortcomings that will have to be addressed if it is to become an effective tool for monitoring Goal 16. First, the APRM's normative framework needs to be re-evaluated. APRM recommendations are often heavily slanted towards a "democratic and good governance" orientation, which often downplays the more nuanced insights of the country reports. Furthermore, APRM recommendations are at times superficial, seeking to fit problems squarely into issues that democracy and good governance can solve, instead of suggesting appropriate local and regional solutions that might more effectively address a problem's complexities. A shift in the APRM's profile from a democracy promotion tool to an ideologically neutral assessment of country-owned governance approaches could help address this weakness, while also convincing more African countries to undergo APRM assessments.

Similarly, the APRM will need to strengthen its business case, by prioritizing activities and ensuring sufficiently in-depth assessments of governance and security issues. The post-2015 agenda provides the APRM an opportunity to better articulate its business case and its value added for African states. As described above, the APRM offers an important and customizable tool for defining and assessing governance priorities at the country level. It therefore opens policy space for African countries to define in an inclusive manner the nature of governance and the reforms required for national sustainable development plans. This is a clear added value of the APRM process. To better demonstrate this value, and in light of its capacity and financial constraints, the APRM might seek to use its strengths in a more strategic way that enables it to provide more in-depth analyses and better recommendations. With respect to monitoring Goal 16, for instance, the APRM could align some of its review focus areas to the SDG priorities identified by the country concerned. One way to accomplish this would be for the APRM Secretariat to work with the national governing council to determine specific priority areas for the country self-assessment.

Another advantage of the APRM is its potential to bring together a variety of actors in support of measures to achieve the SDGs. The APRM aspires to be participatory. By further strengthening participation and ownership of the process, the APRM could garner greater support from multiple actors (both state and non-state), which would help to ensure the implementation of measures to remedy a given challenge. National ownership is crucial to governance reform and conflict resolution. It will therefore be key to realizing the targets under Goal 16. A more participatory APRM could help advance this process.

Another way that the APRM could demonstrate its added value and better support the governance targets under Goal 16 is by strengthening its peer learning process. Peer learning is a key dimension of the APRM. It offers states an opportunity to identify specific policy approaches, rather than whole systems of governance, that are suited to addressing their particular challenges. The APRM could further the impact of its peer learning activities by encouraging specific ministries and agencies from one country to work with counterparts elsewhere in order to develop national programs of action. As a hypothetical example, the APRM assessment of, say, Ghana might identify alternative justice as an issue that needs to be addressed. The APRM Secretariat might then suggest that the Ministry of Justice of Kenya, which has an innovative alternative justice program, might support Ghana's Ministry of Justice in developing a plan of action in this area. Such an approach could help improve the nature of recommendations included in the NPoAs, while also supporting a more action-oriented system of peer learning.

The post-2015 development agenda offers African states an opportunity to critically address governance and peace and security issues. In order to achieve real progress on development, however, governments will need to ensure that they are measuring and addressing the critical challenges of governance and peace and security in their country. Global and regional indicators and deadlines can inform countries about their progress. However, qualitative assessment tools like the APRM are also indispensable. They can help countries make sense of the data and pinpoint important issues that the data might overlook. The APRM could generate rich information related to Goal 16 that is meaningful for development at the national and regional levels.

## **Conclusion**

The issue is not whether Goal 16 can be measured but how to measure it in a way that encourages improvements in governance and achievement of peace and security for development. There is ample evidence that governance and peace and security are important factors for development in all countries. What remains less clear is what mechanisms for peace and security and what components of governance are important for sustainable development. Goal 16 offers no guidance on this. Instead, it contains language inclined towards a certain ideological model of good governance. Before launching efforts to create indicators, the international community needs to take a step back and develop a better common understanding of the targets under Goal 16 and how responsibilities for these targets are to be differentiated by country and at the global and national levels.

A two-tiered system of measurement, with standardized indicators at the global level and country-specific indicators at the national level, could be an effective means to address the differences in governance approaches between countries. As Sally Engle Merry (2012: S85) rightly states, “indicators are a technology of governance”. They assist governments with decision-making by translating complex events into clear and standardized information. This is precisely why the right kinds of indicators are important for measuring Goal 16. A two-tiered system of indicators allows for peer learning while giving countries room to approach governance and peace and security in their own way.

Good indicators and data can inform our approaches to the targets under Goal 16, but they cannot fully explain the nature of governance or how to secure peace and security in all cases. Assessing national and global progress on Goal 16 requires a more detailed measurement tool: qualitative assessments. Africa’s proposed indicators for measuring Goal 16 at the national level draws in part from the work of the APRM. The APRM takes a qualitative approach to assessing governance, involving officials and civil society groups to analyze changes in government performance within the context of a particular country. The APRM is important as a complementary tool for measuring governance and peace and security in the SDGs because it can help contextualize indicators and offer insight into complex governance dynamics that cannot be captured by data alone. Qualitative assessments like the APRM also offer an excellent means to track local thinking and innovations in governance and peace and security. Moreover, the APRM process offers a unique knowledge bank that can be drawn on to examine changes in governance and peace and security dynamics over time and across diverse cultural and social systems. This is invaluable information that would be easily missed if measuring Goal 16 were left to the realm of numbers and statistics.

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## **Section 4**

# **National Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals**

## **Chapter 17**

# **National Councils for Sustainable Development: Lessons from the past and present**

**Derek Osborn, Jack Cornforth and Farooq Ullah**

### **Introduction**

During the past 25 years many countries have set up National Councils for Sustainable Development or other bodies serving a similar purpose (NCSDs) – to further sustainable development at the national level.

The form and function of NCSDs differs considerably from one country to the next. Typically, NCSDs have been established by governments in order to engage a wide range of stakeholders in the process of creating national sustainable development strategies (NSDSs), and have often then been involved in the implementation and review of these strategies, and advising on new and emerging sustainability challenges. NCSDs can for example be subsidiaries of a government department, semi-public bodies (independent from government but fully state-funded), non-governmental bodies (civil society organizations/networks), or have combination of these governance characteristics. Some NCSDs have been totally new creations. At other times they have emerged through the reconfiguration of previously existing bodies, such as Economic and Social Committee or Councils (ESCs) that have been given a new mandate for sustainable development.

A first wave of NCSDs was created around the time of the first Rio Earth Summit in Rio in 1992 (UN Conference on Environment and Development) in the worldwide surge of enthusiasm for sustainable development that was associated with that Summit. The Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in 2002 reinvigorated this global movement and was associated with the creation of a further wave of national strategies and national sustainable development councils.

Around the beginning of the 21st century, sustainable development appeared to lose momentum at both international and national levels, seeing many NCSDs shelved by their respective governments.

Nevertheless, in the face of worsening environmental, social and economic circumstances, the 2012 UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) has seemingly started to put sustainable development back on the agenda. In particular, Rio+20 launched a process to establish a new set of universal Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are expected to be, adopted a global summit in September 2015 as a part of broader efforts to agree a successor framework to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), commonly known as the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

As this new Agenda begins to emerge from the international discussions at the UN, it will become increasingly important to also discuss the means for its implementation and

monitoring, as well as to increase political momentum for the sustainable development transition at the country level. National Sustainable Development Strategies (NSDSs) -- in one form or another -- will need to be revised or recreated to include new national targets and indicators as part of a new global goals framework. And bodies such as NCSDs are again likely to be needed to assist in the development and review of such strategies, often providing an important channel for communication and partnership building between stakeholders and national-level decision-makers.

In order to assist this process, Stakeholder Forum (SF), as facilitators of the Global Network of National Councils for Sustainable Development and Similar Bodies (GN-NCSDs), has undertaken a short review of NCSDs' work over the last 25 years, drawing also on a survey recently undertaken by SF to ascertain NCSD expectations for and recommendations on the SDGs. The review has focused particularly on countries and situations where NCSDs have been seen to function well in order to try to identify any common elements of good practice or success factors that might be of use to other countries that are establishing or reshaping these bodies in the context of delivering the Post-2015 Development Agenda the new SDGs.

As the form and function of NCSDs varies greatly from one country to the next, there can clearly be no universal blueprint or model for their creation and operation. Nevertheless the review has revealed a number of common factors or elements that appear to have contributed to the success of the most effective NCSDs -- and also a few factors that have from time to time led to difficulties or less satisfactory outcomes. Through discussing best practices and common trends regarding the purpose, composition and functions of NCSDs, this paper hopes to provide existing NCSDs with a resource to help them learn from other circumstances, both past and current, to ultimately become more effective facilitating the delivery of sustainable development at the national level. It may also be useful for countries that are considering the creation or modification of NCSDs during the next few years.

The report is arranged around three main topics:

- Purpose and mandate
- Composition and membership
- Functions and activities

## **Purpose and Mandate**

NCSDs have often been created at the same time as countries have decided to adopt NSDSs and their mandates have frequently related to ways of engaging stakeholders with the creation, implementation and monitoring of such strategies (as shown in Table 1). This linkage can provide a broad basis for determining the overall mandate of a NCSD.

More detailed agendas then usually arise from the priorities of the time. Sometimes governments find it useful to be able to refer particular issues to their NCSD for examination. In other cases an NCSD may itself identify a particular sustainable development related issue that needs attention. For instance, the [German Council for Sustainable Development \(RNE\)](#) has recently undertaken an initiative to develop a German Sustainability Code for business, a sustainability reporting instrument for any company to use. Other NCSDs set their national

objectives based on geographical and/or natural resource--related specificities. One main objectives of the Mauritian NCSD is the protection of oceans and advancing a “blue economy”. Similarly, the Tunisian NCSD elaborated a national action program to fight against desertification.

Table 1: Examples of National Councils for Sustainable Development (NCSDs) supported by National Sustainable Development Strategies (NSDSs)

NCSD	NSDS	NCSDs role in relation to NSDS
Bangladesh Sustainable Development Monitoring Council	National Sustainable Development Strategy 2010--21 (NSDS)	NCSD ensures effective implementation and monitors NSDS progress
Estonian National Commission on Sustainable Development	Estonian Sustainable Development Act and the Sustainable Development Strategy (SE21)	NCSD monitors progress towards SE21
Hungarian National Council for Sustainable Development (NFFT)	National Framework Strategy on Sustainable Development of Hungary	NFFT mandated by parliament to analyse NSDS implementation
Mauritian Maurice II Durable Commission (MID)	Maurice Ile Durable Policy, Strategy and Action Plan (MID SAP)	MID created by government to ensure compliance, monitoring and follow--up of the MID SAP
Tunisian National Commission for Sustainable Development (CNDD)	National Sustainable Development Strategy (SNDD)	CNDD developed the SNDD, analyses and monitors its implementation, along with other national SD policies <sup>2</sup>
Philippine Council for Sustainable Development (PCSD)	Philippine Agenda 21 (PA21) and Philippine Development Plan (PDP)	PCSD advises government on NSDS, scrutinises governments implementation and facilitates stakeholder engagement

A core function of most NCSDs is to **operate as an advisory body** to Government, examining sustainable development issues and advising in public and private reports on the evolution and success of sustainable development strategy and policy. This has clearly been one of the most productive areas of NCSD activity, particularly when they have been able to help move policy and action forward decisively in a priority area.

At other times NCSDs have had more **difficulty in getting their recommendations accepted or considered** seriously enough. In some countries efforts have been made to give NCSDs a stronger influence by requiring that their recommendations receive a response from

government within a stated period, by requiring that they be consulted on certain issues, or by having their reports reviewed by parliamentary committees or similar structures within the legislature. Lessons could also be learnt from the regional level, as the European Union, by long-standing agreement reports or opinions adopted by the Economic and Social Committee and its Sustainable Development Observatory always receive a response from the European Commission.

A number of NCSDs have also found a variety of ways for **promoting their messages** going beyond the classic function of publishing a report and recommendations. They have utilized many modern media channels to spread their messages, and have operated informally and privately with Governments and other actors as well as advocating their solutions publicly. The now former UK Sustainable Development Commission (SDC) for example developed an online network for consulting a wide range of individuals on sustainable development issues. In Mauritius, the NCSD's comprehensive MID website enables stakeholders to keep track of ongoing programs, legislation development, and even request funding for sustainable development projects.

Some NCSDs seem to focus primarily on their analytical and advisory roles, such as those in Benin, Belgium, Estonia and Mozambique. But some NCSDs have also played other roles in **promoting sustainable development understanding and actions among other sectors of society**. Many sustainable development strategies cover a very wide range of topics, and their implementation requires action from many different government departments and actors in other sectors of society. For instance, national sustainable development strategy evaluation in Germany is a regular, international and integrative process. In 2009 and 2013, Peers Reviews were ordered by the federal government to evaluate Germany's sustainable development policies. Both Peer Reviews involved national and international actors from various sectors, and were supported by the German NCSD. The French NCSD also invited a range of stakeholders representing groups including civil society and the private sector to participate in a peer review process during the establishment of its NSDS.

Communicating effectively with the business sector is one key role. Another is finding ways of developing two-way communication with regional and local levels of government, which frequently have crucial roles in advancing sustainable development. In this regard, the Filipino NCSD's website serves as a hub for subnational sustainable development bodies. NCSDs that are able to play a wider role of this kind can be very valuable in helping to build a wider societal understanding and support for the sustainability transition that is needed. Wider outreach efforts of this kind need of course to be adequately resourced, and appropriate communication capabilities brought into play.

### **Composition and membership**

Broadly speaking, the composition and membership of NCSDs and similar bodies can be categorized into three groups:

- Government representative memberships
- Mixed memberships (consisting of government and non-governmental members that represent other sectors and interests)

- Memberships drawn entirely from outside government.

Each model can work well and will usually be a direct reflection of the political system and/or culture of the country in which they exist, but each has characteristic problems that need to be addressed carefully.

### **Government representative memberships**

NCSDs with only government/ministerial members (such as those in Chile and Sri Lanka) clearly have a great deal of authority and legitimacy to back up their work, and can be a very useful way of securing an integrated government approach to sustainable development, particularly if they are led by the Head of State or given strong support from that level, and include Ministers or senior representatives from departments across the sustainable development spectrum. On the other hand a group composed only of ministers may find it harder to develop a longer-term vision and the kind of challenge to present policies and practices that the sustainability transition requires. It is important for such ministerial NCSDs to ensure that they have access to objective, evidenced based information and analysis about current sustainable development issues and trends, along with the impacts of continuing or altering current policies.

Table 2: Strengths and challenges associated with government representative membership NCSDs

Strengths	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Greater influence over policy, even potentially having legislative powers</li> <li>○ Stronger leadership</li> <li>○ Greater resources to implement strategies</li> <li>○ Higher public profile</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Potentially less independent and objective</li> <li>○ Higher risk of being influenced by political interests</li> <li>○ Not necessarily conducive to long--term thinking</li> <li>○ Can result in lower levels of ambition</li> </ul>

### **Mixed memberships**

The vast majority of NCSDs have mixed memberships, usually consisting of members of government along with stakeholders from a range of other sectors such as business, academia and organized labor. The primary advantage of mixed memberships is that a wide range of perspectives and expertise can be drawn upon, leading to better-informed analysis and recommendations. The more stakeholder members a NCSD has, the greater the possibilities for engaging and consulting broad networks of stakeholders.

In cases such as these it is important to ensure that the outside representatives do not feel inhibited by this and are able to speak and participate freely, including scrutinizing the whole range of relevant government policies and challenging these where appropriate. In some cases, government voices have been known to dominate those of other non--government members and other stakeholders. Conversely an outside body needs to be given easy access to individuals in government and to information so that they can make an informed and significant contribution.

Mixed memberships can, however, make it harder for NCSDs to reach consensus, especially as the positions of government members are often less ambitious than their non-government counterparts. This of course is not to say that consensus is essential for an NCSD to operate effectively (quite the opposite in fact), nevertheless it can make the production of clear and coherent recommendations a potentially tricky and slow process. There is also sometimes a tendency of individual members to push their own agendas over the common good – something which can also potentially lead to siloed thinking and a focus on individual issues at the expense of the larger strategic picture.

Table 3: Strengths and challenges associated with mixed membership NCSDs

Strengths	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Likely to be more representative</li> <li>○ Can facilitate greater participation</li> <li>○ Greater ability to draw on a wide range of opinions and expertise</li> <li>○ Likely to lead in more progressive recommendations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Avoiding dominance of government voices over those of stakeholders</li> <li>○ Avoiding deadlock and producing coherent messages in a timely manner</li> <li>○ Avoiding siloed thinking and keeping tracker of the larger picture</li> </ul>

### **Nongovernmental/stakeholder representative memberships**

NCSDs which primarily consist of members from outside government that represent a range of different sectors and interests generally have little problem scrutinizing government policy and speaking out about perceived unsustainable policies and practices. Conversely they may struggle to be as influential as NCSDs that have government members. As NCSDs with this composition have historically consisted of primarily environmental actors, it is important that their interests, experience and expertise go beyond the dimension of sustainable development and includes authoritative voices on economic and social issues.

They also need to be of a status and standing to be able to engage effectively with ministers and senior officials in a range of departments, whether related to economics and finance, industry and social affairs, planning, as well as the more conventional environment institutions. This will likely also include, on occasion, liaising with Heads of State and their offices to ensure their input into overall strategic issues.

Table 4: Strengths and challenges associated with outside government membership NCSDs

Strengths	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Their independence enables thorough scrutiny of government policy and speaking out about perceived unsustainable policies and practices</li> <li>○ Likely to be very representative and have strong connections to substantial stakeholder networks at sub-national level</li> <li>○ Can potentially call upon large public support base to provide legitimacy and help advocate for recommendations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Influence decision makers and policy</li> <li>○ Having representatives of a high enough status and standing</li> <li>○ Ensuring interests and expertise that go beyond environmental issues</li> <li>○ Securing long-term funding</li> </ul>

### Common trends

For the latter two types of NCSOs, it appears to have proved particularly important to secure good representatives of business interest on NCSOs so as to ensure that the views and capabilities of that sector are fully engaged. Adequate representation of other key stakeholders such as trade unions, local government, NGOs and other major groups is also very important, to ensure that a broad range of perspectives are considered and expertise brought to the table. This is also integral to increasing stakeholder ownership of NCSOs, something consistently identified as being key for successful implementation.

Similarly, understanding the need for the sustainability transition depends on a deep scientific understanding of global processes and the threats that are facing the planet, and also on a deep economic understanding of the kind of sustainability transition that needs to take place in the global and national economies over the next generation. NCSOs need strong capabilities amongst their members and staff in the fields of science, environment and economics.

The **chairmanship** of the Council is particularly important. Some NCSOs have been chaired or co-chaired by the Prime Minister or another senior Minister. Experience suggests that although this obviously confers high status and legitimacy to the deliberations of the Council it may also inhibit the essential function of a Council in challenging the status quo so as to work towards a more sustainable long term vision for society in the future. An independent Chairman or co-Chairman from outside Government often therefore seems to deliver the best results. Such a Chair or co-Chair needs to be someone with a public profile of high standing and reputation who can be trusted both by Government and by other interests. The involvement of senior business leaders with sustainability interests and concerns has worked well in a number of cases such as Croatia, Estonia, Germany and Mauritius. Senior scientists, economists or other intellectuals with good practical experience and networks have also managed the role well in the likes of the UK and France.

Establishing the right balance between easy access to Government information and to individuals while retaining sufficient independence is a critical success factor for NCSOs. In order to be relevant and useful, a Council needs to have good and open relationships at many levels with

Government Departments and to be able to join creatively and in a trusted way with the evolution of policies to advance sustainability. On the other hand Councils must retain sufficient independence to be able to challenge policies or programs that seem to be tending in unsustainable directions, both privately and where necessary in public.

Building mutual trust and understanding around this role of being a “critical friend” is a crucial success factor. It is not an easy balance to maintain and there are examples of problems arising in both directions – Councils that have become too close to Government, and have therefore lost public credibility and usefulness as an agent of change; and on the other hand Councils that have become too oppositional and have therefore lost access to and influence with Government, sometimes even to such an extent that they have been disbanded or had their funding ended. Getting and keeping this balance right needs constant attention.

### **Functions and Activities**

The role of NCSDs and the specific activities that they undertake varies from one case to the next, however a number of broad functions can be identified:

- Strategy creation and advice
- Policy and implementation
- Monitoring and scrutiny
- Stakeholder engagement and capacity building
- International Outreach

### **Strategy creation and advice**

For the vast majority of NCSDs, the primary function is to provide government with advice on sustainable development issues. More often than not, this includes providing recommendations and/or reviewing NSDSs. In some cases this includes a role in setting national sustainable development targets. NCSDs in Armenia, Croatia, Hungary, Mauritius, Panama and the Philippines, for example, are actually responsible for the drafting of NSDSs and designing specific policies for their implementation.

Whether simply advising or being actively involved in the drafting process, the inclusion of NCSDs in strategy creation can facilitate greater levels of objectivity and help to off-set the individual priorities of the government departments that are involved. The extent to which NCSDs are able to fulfill this role obviously varies depending on their composition and membership, as discussed above in section 2.

More importantly, perhaps, is the extra level of insight and expertise that NCSDs can bring to strategy development and review processes. Being able to draw on a wide pool of stakeholder knowledge and expertise is can see NCSDs well equipped to provide recommendations for strategies which address the three dimensions of sustainable development in a more coherent way and maximizes mutual benefits whilst minimizing trade--offs between sectors.

In addition, greater independence and the participatory approach tend to see that the NSDS and the subsequent policies that follow enjoy a greater level of public support.

## **Policy and implementation**

A number of NCSDs are also involved in the creation of sustainable development policies and programs, often specifically designed to implement NSDSs. In general, this occurs in an advisory capacity, providing comments and feedback on government legislation, however some NCSDs have a role in the actual drafting of policy. The advantages of this involvement are very much the same as those listed in the strategy section above.

In practical terms, this can involve working with a particular sector such as business, agriculture, education or health, to explore the implications of social, environmental and economic issues for these groups and develop sector specific models for advancing sustainable development. Furthermore, the fact that many NCSDs engage stakeholders from the private sector in efforts around strategy and policy development means that they can be made more “business friendly”. Providing this does not compromise the sustainability credentials of its recommendations in this regard, NCSDs can therefore help with gaining the support of this sector and even leverage greater resources for implementation.

Although somewhat unusual, a small number of NCSDs (Mauritius, Panama, etc.) have been known to play a role in the implementation of sustainable development policies, however this only appears to be the case in smaller countries and where NCSD is very closely linked to government.

## **Monitoring and scrutiny**

Sustainable development covers a very broad range of issues, and it is sometimes difficult to determine when progress is being made, as developments in one area do not necessarily correspond with those in others. Many countries have now pulled together sets of sustainable development indicators to keep track of progress and to help set targets for the future. Some NCSDs (such as Mauritius, Philippines, and the former UK body) have played an important part in assisting the further development of sustainable development indicator sets and in highlighting the messages that emerge from monitoring progress.

Such assessments can then feed into the regular NSDS review processes, and in particular into debates about what should be done to deal with situations where targets are being missed.

While not all countries are able to monitor progress towards sustainable development, in general it would seem that NCSDs which operate in those that do have agreed indicators are more able to question government policies or inaction without accusations of political bias.

## **Stakeholder engagement and capacity building**

Successful NSDSs need to involve all parts of society. They cannot be created and driven forward by governments alone. NCSDs have often been able to play a vital role in engaging with stakeholders of all kinds to help draw in the suggestions and ideas, and in building society--wide partnerships for the implementation of strategies.

NCSDs stakeholder engagement can be broadly split into types:

- a. Activities which seek inputs from stakeholders to inform NCSO thinking, research and recommendations;
- b. Activities convened by NCSOs which aim to increase stakeholder understanding of sustainable development issues, strategies and policies. Both these roles require adequate resources and expertise to be effective.

Regarding their role in the development and scrutiny of NSDSs in particular, NCSOs that have taken a participatory approach have been more likely to foster a strong sense of national ownership of the Strategy, something which has been identified as being key to successful implementation.

Some NCSOs have also been able to play a leading role in promoting the kind of changes that are needed in education and training programs to advance sustainable development. Examples have typically included specific capacity building activities for representatives of government and stakeholders, however campaigns to improve the general public's understanding of and action on sustainable development have also been known to be undertaken by some NCSOs.

### **International outreach**

Most NCSOs have a mandate that is primarily directed to the advancement of sustainable development in their own country. But several NCSOs (Belgium, Chile, Germany, Hungary, Philippines etc.) have found that they can learn from the work of their peers in other countries in mutually helpful exchanges, and may also be able to work together usefully on some regional or global issues. Many NCSOs have therefore been active players in regional groupings such as the European network of Environmental and Sustainable Development Advisory Councils (EEAC) and SDplanNet in the Asia-Pacific region.

Others have been part of global networks such as the Earth Council, formed after Rio 1992 and helped establish and facilitate the exchange of information between a more than 80 NCSOs in developing countries working to further the goals of the first Earth Summit. Whereas the majority of these early NCSOs are no longer operational and the Earth Council (Alliance) has a slightly different role, Rio+20 saw the emergence of the Global Network of NCSOs, which now works with over 40 active bodies across all regions.

### **Conclusion: Prospects for NCSOs**

As the world continues its efforts to create a new set of global SDGs to be launched as the centerpiece of the Post-2015 Development Agenda, there will clearly be a need to revise and reinvigorate NSDSs throughout the world, and the machinery that NCSOs have provided for supporting and engaging stakeholders in the creation and implementation of these strategies.

The present global pattern is not optimal. A few NCSOs have existed for many years and appear to have become an accepted element of national governance for sustainable development. But in many other countries governance for sustainable development has not taken deep root, or has been allowed to dwindle.

It is worth considering why some NCSDs have had shorter lives and been discontinued or have their functions taken over by other bodies. Sometimes this has happened because a NCSD is perceived as having completed its main task, such as the creation of a strategy, and is not so much needed in the follow-up. Sometimes NCSDs have been abolished for political reasons, usually following a change of government, because they have been seen to be too closely associated with the previous government. In some countries there may have been fading interest or attention to sustainable development issues by the government or by society at larger. Sometimes NCSDs have become victims of economic circumstances. All of these are essentially short-term reasons.

The continued existence of a particular NCSD should not of course be regarded as an end in itself. But the global imperative for the world to make the sustainability transition does not go away; and nor does the need to ensure that there are strong mechanisms that enable dialogue between government and stakeholders of all kinds to assist and guide the process. NCSDs have proved to be one effective means of building these partnerships over the past 25 years. They can and should be part of the solutions needed over the next 25. Where NCSDs exist they should be nourished. Where they do not yet exist careful consideration should be given to establishing them. Where they have been discontinued for essentially short-term reasons, consideration should be given to re-establishing them, possibly in a new format.

### **Further Reading**

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## Chapter 18

# What are the key issues that governments should address for the global follow-up of major agreements reached in 2015?

Steven Bernstein

### Introduction

The key themes to address in follow up to the major agreements reached in 2015 are coordination at the global and national levels, mainstreaming of sustainable development (in particular, Sustainable Development Goals) at global and national levels and coherence. Translating these broad ideas into follow up processes means putting in place specific mechanisms to mobilize finance, technical and governance capacity and other implementing resources; coordination and coherence at the global and country levels; and monitoring, review and learning mechanisms, especially at the country level. In the background, these mechanisms and processes should recognize and take into account that the post-2015 agenda, and SDGs in particular, are universal, but priorities and obligations will be differentiated. What follows are brief suggestions for these mechanisms and processes in six areas (1).

### Partnership for Development and Finance for Development

At the time of writing, negotiations for the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD) are ongoing with divisions remaining among countries on a number of important issues that are central to a new partnership on (sustainable) development. However, it is around many of the issues under negotiation that, arguably, coherence hits the ground globally. Without prejudice to negotiation outcomes, the following are some questions governments might consider in ensuring a robust new partnership on sustainable development:

- What militates against implementation of the SDGs outside of the SDGs, such as elements of the global trading system, or dependence on a few export commodities in case of some LDCs? (2)
- What are the fiscal requirements for countries to have capacity for implementation?
- How much of that capacity is dependent on international or transnational policies, technical capacity or resources, or revenue as opposed to domestic policies or sources of revenue?

The ability to address these questions in follow up processes is an argument to explicitly link FfD to the SDGs, whether wholly or in part.

Taking trade as an example, draft SDGs 8 and 17 recognize the importance of trade rules and an open trading system for sustainable development, but without adequate trade facilitation, existing targets in the SDGs will be inadequate. Moreover, capacity building should include helping countries best leverage trade rules and develop trade policy strategies to help achieve SDGs.

Governments should also acknowledge, and confront, contradictions of a global trading system that is increasingly not universal, but increasingly characterized by bilateral, regional and plurilateral preferential agreements, which may be inconsistent with achieving the SDGs. Similarly, indicators might be developed on market access for environmental goods and services, subsidies including for fossil fuels, and inadequate funding for aid for trade.

Governments might also ask what is the proper time frame for Official Development Assistance (ODA) and other forms of development financing. The SDGs highlight that many of the challenges are very long term, but earmarked financing and particular programs are often short term. The SDGs offer an opportunity to create longer time horizons and encourage less narrow earmarking of funds from donors, as well as a greater focus on capacity building and governance. Long-term investment is needed to address many aspects of the SDGs (green growth, infrastructure development, etc.).

The bottom line: monitoring progress on a renewed partnership for sustainable development (SDG 17) should be part of follow up and review in the context of the broader post-2015 agenda that includes FfD.

### **Interagency Coherence and Coordination**

At the interagency level, consider creating additional sub-groupings for different SDGs in addition to UN Water and UN Energy, although not every SDG requires one. These groups could be organized around a “nexus” approach (see, for example, UNDESA, 2015, chapter 3; Weitz, Nilsson and Davis, 2014), with parallel coordinating mechanisms within countries encouraged and supported. There are already some promising examples in place of more explicitly integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development in the work of the UN, such as UN-Water’s initiative to look at the “whole water cycle” and provide technical assistance to states to do so, as well as a monitoring initiative aimed so help states review progress on water targets.

Mainstreaming the SDGs in the operations of agencies throughout the system should also be a priority. In that regard, the Framework for Advancing the Environmental and Social Sustainability in the United Nations would benefit from a political champion, rather than remaining as simply an inter-agency initiative under the Environmental Management Group (EMG), without which it has arguably languished. Perhaps the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) could make it an agenda item and endorse it, or, at a minimum, make it part of the review of UN system commitments, regardless of what interagency process or grouping ultimately oversees it (3).

The HLPF/ECOSOC can also be used to develop more workmanlike sessions with financial institutions and the WTO, and also reach out more to organizations like OECD to draw on its expertise. For example, sessions within the HLPF could be devoted to means to operationalize the SDGs so they are relevant for the work of the World Bank, which has created cross-cutting solution areas. Such sessions could provide mutual benefits for learning and analysis of how to incorporate targets. Similarly, sessions or working groups on evaluating or learning from the MDG Acceleration Framework experience, which is a positive example of cooperation between UNDP and the World Bank, could provide some lessons going forward for the SDGs.

More broadly, future meetings between ECOSOC and the Bretton Woods Institutions/WTO can be more focused and action-oriented, which, arguably, is more likely if FfD and SDGs follow up are closely linked.

### **Science-Policy Interface, Especially Monitoring and Reporting**

Monitoring should be more than data collection and aggregation of existing reports. It should also create systems to evaluate indicators more systematically, with sensitivity to signals of systemic transition and linkages among multiple parts or processes of a system (e.g., food, water, jobs and energy when monitoring intensification of agriculture); linkages across distances; and linkages among stakeholders to understand their different interests and perspectives. Such monitoring will be too expensive for single organizations, so mechanisms must be put in place to collect and synthesize information from multiple sources and then organized in the spirit of learning and openness to mutual adjustment.

There are serious concerns about capacity both at the country and global levels. These are matched by the high expectations for the Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR). The latest draft report (UNDESA, 2015) is a promising attempt to move in the general direction of analysis and synthesis (e.g., with sections on scenarios, integrative tools and analysis, an emphasis on identifying data and capacity gaps, attention to vulnerable countries etc.). However, the capacity within the Secretariat to do this work is very limited, which suggests a need to think creatively about how to increase that capacity either within the Secretariat or through partnerships, working groups of scientific stakeholders or task forces following a model like that of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), but drawing from a broader range of stakeholders and expertise to cover the three dimensions of sustainable development. Taking the science-policy interface seriously likely will require some combination of all of these efforts.

In practice, most of the required data gathering, for monitoring of progress *and* the more ambitious analysis and synthesis envisioned above, will be through other processes, agencies, national governments, and perhaps new modes of data collection including participatory models. Making such data usable and systematic requires analytic capacity that even some developed countries lack. The United Nations can provide frameworks, reporting modalities and standards, and learning opportunities. Two ideas to consider are as follows:

1. The creation of a global partnership for sustainable development data. While I am not the first to propose such an idea, questions to consider in establishing such a partnership include where it might best sit and how it might build on existing partnerships such as Paris21. It should be designed as a mechanism to share expertise, best practices on gathering and use of data and a learning platform. Building a robust data partnership will require additional resources and political commitment, as well as a greater focus on learning than existing arrangements.
2. “Stress tests” on institutions, regions or countries, as we do now for financial institutions, but related to sustainable development indicators. Such tests require linking monitoring systems to indicators and analytic work on tipping points or stress points in the system, and evaluations of tolerable and intolerable risks.

## **Review Architecture**

The following are key principles and questions to consider on a review mechanism and broader review architecture as negotiations progress on this central plank of post-2015 follow up.

1. How can a review mechanism be designed not only to track progress, but also provide opportunities for learning among states and stakeholders about what is working, obstacles to progress and about the means of implementation that need to be mobilized. Reviews should therefore also involve different parts/ministries of government. Learning is also important on cause-effect relationships between goals and outcomes.
2. Reviews should be designed to promote innovation, thus not be too rigidly thought of as strictly accountability mechanisms. Along these lines, a review mechanism should avoid overburdening countries with reporting requirements or create duplication with other processes.
3. The corollary is that cooperation with, and utilization of, existing assessments and data is required and capacity building and technical assistance will be required to fill data gaps and find ways to utilize existing assessments into usable knowledge for progress on the SDGs. Such benefits should accrue directly from review through serious assessment of what MOI means in national contexts.
4. It will be important to consider the best division of labour between HLPF, regional and national reviews. The Group of 7 sponsored workshop on 30 April 2015 made some progress on this issue (IISD 2015). While a full summary is not possible here, key points include the importance of national reviews with some iterations for engagement with stakeholders, to promote learning; regional reviews that focus on best practices and possibly peer review (the African Peer Review Mechanism is a possible model, though OECD countries may opt for the OECD peer review model), and HLPF review at the global level, focusing on particular themes each year, e.g., common challenges to maximize learning (e.g., countries with large coastlines, resource dependency, coping with megacities or running out of water). Even with the HLPF review only being one node in the larger review process, a robust review process with high participation rates combined with reviews of the UN system as mandated in UNGA resolutions suggests consideration of extending meeting times for the HLPF.
5. Reviews of the UN system, which could also feed into the QCPR, should not reproduce specific operational reviews, but focus on how well agencies work across sectors and linkages, i.e., their collaborative work and how well they assist and build capacities in countries, promote rights and relevant norms and mainstream the SDGs.

## **MOI and Partnerships, Networks, Business and Civil Society**

Engagement with business and civil society and other stakeholders, and their buy-in to the SDGs is essential, as it is for FfD. If ECOSOC/HLPF is to serve the purpose of steering partnerships and other transnational initiatives towards SDGs and the goals of FfD, increased efforts are needed to create incentives for the private sector, foundations, partnerships, and transnational initiatives to

work with the United Nations. Endorsement can be a powerful tool, that is, inviting partnerships and initiatives that have best practices in terms of multi-stakeholder participation, accountability and performance to side events, workshops, and other learning opportunities (Abbott and Bernstein 2015). The sustainable development knowledge platform should be a one-stop clearinghouse to let parts of the decentralized approach know what others are doing. It could facilitate identifying gaps in the world of activities, catalyze identification of synergies, helpful redundancies and inefficient redundancies, and encourage experimentation.

### **National Capacity for Follow Up**

Perhaps most important for follow up are ways to facilitate national capacity. Here, we can learn from the mixed success of the MDG experience on what is needed to facilitate a more integrated and coordinated follow up. Drawing on Levy (2015), a number of observations and lessons from the MDG experience are relevant. First, we can observe that many countries have created mechanisms for coordination across sectors, and consultative and coordinating mechanisms with stakeholders. In addition, some countries formulated coordinating efforts around project planning, and developing high-level policy priorities so they could organize research mobilization around projects consistent with priorities.

At least three lessons can be gleaned from these efforts. First, vision and consultation is best organized in central agencies, including finance and economic agencies, not ministries of environment or natural resources. Framing sustainable development as inclusive across the three dimensions is crucial.

Second, assessment capacity is crucial for an integrated and coherent approach in order to move away from silo thinking. Support for adequate, and disaggregated, data is key.

Third, there is a need to tailor mechanisms for lessons learned in ways better suited to developing countries circumstances. In part, such learning requires recognizing that improving integration, coherence and coordination means paying attention to how to link sustainable development to broader political processes like coalition building around policy innovations, or governance reforms that may be very country specific, such as appropriate forms of decentralization or constitutional reform. At the same time, it should be recognized that such change can be politically difficult and can lead to unintended consequences. Obviously country ownership and high levels of engagement are essential in such circumstances.

### **Notes**

1. This chapter reflects a synthesis of relevant ideas and suggestions both of my own and based on what I have learned from others through participation in a number of workshops and meetings related to the various post-2015 processes. In particular, I would like to thank Marc Levy, Michele Scobie, and Frank Biermann, who influenced my suggestions here, and apologies to any others' whose influence I may have omitted. Of course, any errors are my own.

2. The idea of phrasing this question in this way comes from Michelle Scobie, from a presentation at the Arizona Workshop on Implementing the Sustainable Development Goals. Center for Law and Global Affairs, Arizona State University, Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law, April 24-25, 2015.

3. See UNEMG, 2013 for options being considered for this initiative.

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## Chapter 19

# Parliaments' role in monitoring the implementation of the SDGs

**Alessandro Motter**

With the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) now well within view, this is the time for the world community to turn its attention to the key question of implementation. An effective infrastructure of processes, institutions, and legal frameworks will need to be created or fine-tuned at the national and global level to support the implementation of the SDGs consistently and over a long period of time.

Implementation rests critically on accountability: simply having an infrastructure in place does not guarantee results. As the primary institution of accountability at the national level, where the SDGs will apply most immediately, parliaments must play a critical role in carrying forward the new agenda. The SDGs will need to be translated into national legislation, including the pivotal budget bill, which is for parliaments to enact.

Like the MDGs, the SDGs will constitute a *voluntary* regime that no international organization can legally enforce. The goals and prioritization of the targets will need to be adaptable to each country's circumstances and allow countries sufficient policy space to determine how best to move forward. Not every SDG may apply to each country, but for those goals that do apply there has to be a firm commitment toward implementation by all national actors, including the parliament. Countries will need to develop national sustainable development strategies to translate the global goals into national ones, and with corresponding country-specific targets.

The mitigated success of the MDGs can be attributed to a large extent to poor implementation, as opposed to problems intrinsic to the goals themselves. As a *universal* agenda that will apply to both developed and developing countries, the SDGs will demand an even higher standard and a stronger commitment than the MDGs. What is needed to achieve the SDGs, then, is nothing short of their full *institutionalization* at all levels of decision-making, including parliaments.

This chapter discusses some of the key conditions that must come together for parliaments to do their part in the implementation of the SDGs. An underlying assumption is that the SDGs will be crafted to target the real causes of poverty and unsustainable development rather than the consequences. This will be a key condition to ensure parliamentary engagement in the process.

## What Parliaments Can Do

**Reform politics:** it is self-evident yet often overlooked that the SDGs will not succeed without strong political will. Even the most sophisticated implementation infrastructure will fail if the political environment is not conducive to progressive reforms that will result in stronger democratic governance at all levels and in all countries.

One of the main obstacles to sustainable development everywhere is that too much of the political process is dominated by particular interests that overlook the common good and ultimately thwart the legislative and regulatory process. A second problem is the inherent tendency of politicians to sacrifice the long-term perspective that sustainable development requires to the short-term pressure of the electoral cycle. Third, in many countries the dividing line between executive and legislative powers remains too permeable, with the executive often ignoring or steamrolling the legislative branch to avoid engaging in open debate.

To successfully implement the SDGs parliaments will need to be better equipped politically to move the agenda forward, engage people from all constituencies, and create the conditions for a new era of *consensus* politics. As the branch of government most representative of the people, parliaments will need to ensure that the SDGs are truly *owned* by the people, raising awareness and hearing their views, and that the public in turn applies pressure on decision-makers to work hard toward implementation. In many places, this will require a new relationship with civil society and other stakeholders as well as stronger engagement with marginalized or vulnerable groups.

There is no easy solution to the influence that special interests tend to apply on decision-makers in all countries, developed and developing, or to the short-term horizon of the next election. At a very deep level, reforms will be needed to limit the influence of money in the electoral process so that elected representatives will be free to act in the best interest of all their constituents.

More generally, parliaments themselves will need to be more open and accountable to the people. A special focus should be on ensuring that all groups and sectors of society are represented in parliament, particularly women (worldwide, only 21% of parliamentary seats are occupied by women), and other groups such as indigenous peoples and linguistic and cultural minorities. Information technologies (eParliament) should be utilized more consistently and widely to make parliaments more transparent and to that allow for closer and timelier consultations with constituents.

Ideally, each parliament needs perform a self-evaluation of its own working methods, rules and procedures, to make sure that they are as representative, transparent, accessible, accountable and effective as possible. In some countries, deep reforms may be needed directly within the party system as a pillar of parliamentary life.

**Review committee structures:** an overarching problem in policy-making is that governments and parliaments tend to operate in silos. There is a ministry or parliamentary committee for the economy, one for the environment, one for trade etc., with too little coordination to effectively integrate all three pillars of sustainable development into a single policy approach.

This long-standing problem will be compounded by the SDGs, which will consist of a complex set of goals and targets. Very clearly it will not be sufficient to parcel out each goal to a specific ministry or parliamentary committee given that the goals will all be interlinked in one way or another. Similarly, there is a continuing need to promote greater policy coherence between ostensibly unrelated policy areas (trade, finance, development cooperation, monetary policy etc.).

Parliaments are generally not equipped to promote this higher level of integration and coherence. Each parliament will need to perform an internal evaluation of how equipped it is institutionally to carry forward the SDGs and from there determine the best way to proceed. What is needed in the first instance is a review of the committee structure and all related processes to more effectively mainstream the new goals.

Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) studies show that, while not every parliament may need an SDG-specific committee or caucus (depending on the existing committee architecture), it may be a good idea to establish such a body provided that it is endowed with a strong coordinating and oversight mandate as well as sufficient resources.

A well-functioning and inclusive (of all parties) SDG committee can help vet all legislation emanating from the portfolio committees against the SDGs or equivalent set of goals adjusted to the country's own priorities. This should include a participatory process allowing for hearings with civil society, the private sector and other groups, direct interaction with all government departments, as well as the authority to demand reports or convene expert witnesses. To be most effective, such a committee should consist of the Chairs of the portfolio committees or other senior members. It may also need authority to block draft legislation until further review.

With respect to the key budget process, any SDG committee that may be constituted would ideally require a three-part mandate: first, to help determine a full costing of the SDGs at the country level, identifying the financing requirements and corresponding funding sources; second, to take the lead in ensuring that adequate provisions for the SDGs will be made in the national budget; third, to monitor budget expenditures for the SDGs and evaluate their impact. Where a specialized SDGs committee cannot be established due to limited capacities, procedural constraints or other factors, then a caucus or "task force" may be constituted to fulfill some of these functions.

A committee structure review within each parliament should pay particular attention to other cross-cutting issues such as gender and human rights. These issues feature prominently in the SDGs and in any case should constitute the litmus test of all legislation and of parliamentary oversight. Specialized committees (or caucuses) for gender and human rights exist in many parliaments and have long shown their effectiveness. These structures should provide input to the SDG committee (where one is established) or directly to the portfolio committees in ways that may effectively ensure that all issues are dealt with from gender and human rights perspectives.

**Engage in design and oversight of national plans:** a mainstay of SDGs implementation will undoubtedly be the design and effective oversight of national sustainable development plans (or their equivalents). The number of countries that have developed such plans over the years has

risen steadily, yet there is little qualitative control for these plans as well as insufficient information on parliamentary oversight.

Going forward, parliaments will need to more pro-actively demand from their governments that a plan aligned with the SDGs is prepared and then sent to parliament for review through an open, consultative process involving all sectors of society. Once the plan is adopted, the parliament should demand a yearly report on implementation and hold regular public hearings. This process in turn should lead to recommendations for future reforms. In many countries, parliamentary engagement in the national planning process should be actively supported by the UN field operation.

An important entry point for parliaments to exercise oversight of the national plan may come from the international arena, through the peer review process that will be set up within the new High Level Political Forum (HLPF). Governments will be invited to present a progress report to the HLPF at regular intervals. Parliaments should demand to be involved in the drafting of the report or at least allowed to review it before it is submitted. A similar process is being utilized, with assistance from the IPU, in the reporting exercise of the CEDAW, as well as that of the Universal Periodic Review. While this practice has yet to mature, it has a great potential to effectively support the implementation of the SDGs in each country.

**Support national councils and other consultative/regulatory bodies:** As a general practice, strengthening independent regulatory and monitoring bodies can help establish progressive norms and practices in ways that are less susceptible to political in-fight and the short-term pressure of the electoral cycle. Primary among these bodies are the National Councils for sustainable development, which can contribute greatly to the SDGs debate in every country if they are appropriately empowered as independent watchdogs outside of all political interference.

Parliaments should provide the legislative mandate and resources (through the budget process) to allow National Councils to function as incubators of new ideas and approaches, stir debate and promote research (through academic and scientific bodies), including through a grant-making facility, and garner the views of all concerned groups. The report of the National Council to the government should be sent to parliament for a comprehensive review.

A similar dynamic applies to other independent agencies and consultative bodies that can play a key role in advancing the sustainability agenda provided they are properly equipped with resources and with a sufficiently strong mandate. Regulatory agencies should be given broad powers under the law to impose rules (consistent with the national sustainable development plan) at an industry or sector level.

Supreme Audit Institutions will need the full protection of the law and adequate resources for data collection and analysis to provide an independent review of all budget expenditures, with reports submitted directly to the parliament.

**Strengthen capacities:** parliamentary capacities to support the legislative and oversight process remain generally lacking, and not only in developing countries. There is an obvious tension between governments and parliaments when it comes to the allocation of resources between the two branches: governments want to be in control of the policy process and so

tend to allocate more of their (often limited) resources to strengthen their own structures and processes. Few governments recognize the long-term benefit of strengthening the legislative and oversight functions of their parliament.

For their part, donor agencies remain reluctant to invest in the capacities of parliaments for at least two reasons: the high risk and long-term commitment required in parliamentary strengthening does not fit snugly within the short-term, results-based outlook of their technical assistance programmes; and, donors fear being seen as meddling in internal national politics. Recent surveys of the UN Development Cooperation Forum show that, on the whole, parliaments are less likely to receive support from international donors than other development partners and tend to be left out of national aid coordination structures. Yet, investing in parliamentary capacities is perhaps the best catalytic use of official assistance that governments can make.

With respect to the capacities of parliaments to perform their legislative and oversight functions effectively, the picture varies dramatically from country to country but the common denominator is that almost everywhere more should be done. For example, although more and more parliamentary budget offices are being established around the world, most of them have only limited capacities to provide long-term revenue projections, cost-benefit evaluations of public expenditures, and other such analysis to support parliamentary scrutiny of government policy.

Parliaments also suffer from the same lack of disaggregated data (by gender, social groups, region etc.) that pervades other spheres of government. This makes it difficult for many parliaments to track progress on agreed policy objectives and to target policy at specific needs or vulnerable groups in society, a specific requirement of the SDGs.

Capacities are not limited to human resources, technical processes or physical assets. Another aspect of parliamentary strengthening relates to the legal authority that parliaments have to perform their functions. As the IPU has found, many parliaments, including several in developed countries, lack sufficient authority to engage in the negotiation of international loan agreements, which indirectly may impact the overall direction of development policy. This legal capacity will need to be reviewed in many parliaments with a view to expanding their authority to ask questions of the government or to participate in key government-led development processes.

## **Conclusion**

Every parliament has a key role to play in ensuring that the relevant SDGs are implemented according to its country's circumstances and policy priorities. There is no single intervention to make this possible but rather a constellation of processes and capacities that must come together to varying degrees in all countries.

Member States need to take stock of the role of parliaments as a key determinant of the success of the SDGs. To this effect, it will be critical that parliaments are highlighted in the SDGs themselves as part of a stand-alone governance goal. A commitment to strengthening parliaments under this goal will support all of the SDGs for years to come.

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## Chapter 20

# Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC)

Yuko Suzuki

### How can the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation contribute to the implementation of the Post-2015?

As recognized in the Monterrey Consensus, increases in volumes of financing for development must be coupled with more effective actions. International efforts to improve the quality and effectiveness of development cooperation have helped to strengthen standards of partnerships and have supported the demand from developing countries that commitments and good practice be observed by development partners (Wood et al, 2011). For the post-2015 agenda, such collective efforts to maximize the impact of development cooperation will constitute a vital component of the means of implementation.

While Official Development Assistance (ODA) remains an essential catalyst and enabler for developing countries, cooperation efforts beyond ODA have grown in magnitude and relevance in international development architecture. Furthermore the shift that has been made from aid to development co-operation, and from the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) agenda that mainly focused on social services towards a universal agenda that encompasses inclusive growth, will have implications on the post-2015 means of implementation and accountability framework. It will be important that the full range of development cooperation actions and partnerships are conducted as effectively as possible to enhance their impact. Principles of effective development cooperation - including country ownership, results focus, inclusive partnerships, and transparency and accountability – can help guide our efforts in this regard (UNGA A/69/416, 2014).

The GPEDC brings unique value to support the post-2015 agenda and the means of its implementation. This was the crosscutting topic of the GPEDC's First High-Level Meeting (Mexico City, April 2014). Particularly, the GPEDC

- Offers a unique, voluntary and dynamic platform for dialogue on coherence of policy and practice. The post-2015 development agenda will recognize the importance of traditional and non-traditional partnerships in development co-operation, and a degree of universalization of development co-operation through flows that are characterized as South-South, or private sector engagement in development and inclusive civil society participation. While the multiplicities of co-operation modalities are a welcome development, they call for a degree of coherence and collaboration among all development stakeholders to achieve 'best-impact' results and minimise fragmentation.
- Provides a platform for mutual accountability and learning. The Global Partnership monitoring framework aims at promoting behavior change. Regular monitoring efforts convene the full range of development co-operation stakeholders to track progress and hold

each other to account for commitments made. Monitoring the quality of development partnerships provides valuable evidence on how partnerships can be rooted in developing country priorities and leadership, geared towards impact, and transformed into transparent and inclusive approaches that help countries and citizens reach the results they need. Monitoring is also vital for learning lessons on what works, what doesn't, and how development stakeholders can improve the way they work together at the country level to deliver sustainable results.

- In the context of monitoring, the Global Partnership can offer the UN process a concrete example and lessons learned of a methodology and a multi-stakeholder consultation process that can help implement the future Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with particular focus on the “quality and effectiveness” of development co-operation. Such inputs can inform UNDESA’s work on preparation of the Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR), the development co-operation accountability framework within the UN Development Cooperation Forum (DCF), as well as the monitoring and accountability work of the High-Level Political Forum. With a view to provide concrete proposals to support global implementation efforts towards the SDGs, the Partnership is currently undertaking an in-depth review of the methodologies and relevance of its indicators. Some of these indicators also go beyond the traditional donor-recipient co-operation framework to assessing the effectiveness of inclusive partnerships with private sector and civil society, for example by focusing on the Busan commitment to promote an enabling environment for Civil Society Organizations (CSOs).
- The Partnership spurs action on the ground by building its monitoring efforts on developing countries’ own data and processes to support country led efforts for more effective cooperation on the ground. This country-led monitoring approach helps to strengthen countries’ own monitoring and accountability processes, which is vital to help build effective and accountable institutions – the foundation for global accountability in the context of Post-2015 framework.
- The Partnership encourages developing countries to make concrete efforts towards strengthening their ownership of development priorities. It does so by advancing the transparency, accountability and alignment of development co-operation policies with national development strategies and by acknowledging developing countries’ leadership in setting their own priorities in pursuit of the future SDGs, through a vision that is strongly anchored in national development and accountability processes.
- The Partnership provides an umbrella to broker and cultivate multi-actor initiatives and partnerships where champions join forces and translate shared commitments into action that leaves no-one behind in developing countries. In the context of post-2015 means of implementation, there will be strong demand for coherence between various development co-operation flows, policies and actors. Concrete impacts from these multi-stakeholder initiatives and inclusive partnerships can inform the post-2015 means of implementation. Further efforts will be needed to broaden the scope and participation of all development actors in post-2015 implementation.
- As an existing platform that engages the full range of development constituencies through its ministerial Co-Chairs and Steering Committee, and with the support of UNDP and

OECD, the GPEDC can help sustain political focus on high-quality development partnerships, consistent with agreed international rights, which offer a global mechanism to monitor that co-operation is based on developing countries' ownership, transparency and accountability to deliver tangible results on the post-2015 objectives.

The contribution of the GPEDC can complement the UN processes which will anchor a renewed global partnership for development and the post-2015 accountability framework. As a voluntary forum, the Partnership can offer lessons learned from the dialogue between equal partners, and testing of approaches, that can spur innovation and effective development practices beyond traditional “donor-recipient” approaches to ones built on south-south, triangular and beyond-government co-operation. The GPEDC lessons and messages can meaningfully inform the global implementation efforts and discussions that take place at the UN.

### ***Accountability and Monitoring within the GPEDC***

The Global Partnership monitoring framework is both innovative and inclusive. It provides an evidence-based approach to accountability, geared towards multi-stakeholder learning and sharing of lessons. This framework is well placed to support the implementation of the new SDGs, in particular with regard to *strengthening the means of implementation and a global partnership for sustainable development (e.g. Open Working Group Goal 17)*, and *monitoring the quality of partnerships and their impact on attaining the SDGs*.

Global monitoring of commitments on aid effectiveness began in 2005, building on references to quality of aid in the Monterrey Consensus. At the Busan High Level Forum in 2011, developing countries called for the continuation of a global monitoring framework to uphold accountability and support implementation efforts for effective development co-operation in individual countries. The ten global indicators of the monitoring framework (Table 1) are grounded in the four principles of country ownership, results focus, inclusive partnerships; and transparency and accountability. Each indicator currently includes a target for 2015, providing a foundation to measure progress in making development co-operation practices more effective. Periodic monitoring of progress on the indicators – complemented by other qualitative evidence – serves as the basis for discussions at the ministerial level. The first progress report, released in 2014 ahead of the Mexico High-Level Meeting, demonstrated the relevance of operational evidence to inform political discussions on the effectiveness of collective efforts, and to spur concrete action to accelerate progress. 46 countries participated in the first round of the monitoring, with over 70 cooperation providers' data reported (representing 46% of total country programmable aid).

Table 1. Ten Indicator and Targets of the Global Partnership Monitoring Framework

INDICATORS	TARGETS FOR 2015
<p><b>1. Development co-operation is focused on results that meet developing countries' priorities</b> Extent of use of country results frameworks by co-operation providers</p>	<p><i>All providers</i> of development co-operation use country results frameworks</p>
<p><b>2. Civil society operates within an environment which maximises its engagement in and contribution to development</b> A preliminary assessment of CSO Enabling Environment building on qualitative, multi-stakeholder information</p>	<p><i>Continued progress over time</i></p>
<p><b>3. Engagement and contribution of the private sector to development</b> A three-dimension index providing a measure of the quality of public-private dialogue</p>	<p><i>Continued progress over time</i></p>
<p><b>4. Transparency: information on development co-operation is publicly available</b> Measure of state of implementation of the common standard by co-operation providers</p>	<p><i>Implement the common standard</i> – All development co-operation providers are on track to implement a common, open standard for electronic publication of timely, comprehensive and forward-looking information on development co-operation</p>
<p><b>5. Development co-operation is more predictable</b> (a) annual: proportion of development cooperation funding disbursed within the fiscal year within which it was scheduled by co-operation providers; (b) medium-term: proportion of development cooperation funding covered by indicative forward spending plans provided at country level</p>	<p><i>Halve the gap</i> – halve the proportion of aid not disbursed within the fiscal year for which it was scheduled (Baseline year 2010) <i>Halve the gap</i> – halve the proportion of development cooperation funding not covered by indicative forward spending plans provided at country level.</p>
<p><b>6. Aid is on budgets which are subject to parliamentary scrutiny</b> % of development cooperation funding scheduled for disbursement that is recorded in the annual budgets approved by the legislatures of developing countries</p>	<p><i>Halve the gap</i> – halve the proportion of development cooperation flows to the government sector not reported on government's budget(s) (with at least 85% reported on budget) (Baseline year 2010)</p>
<p><b>7. Mutual accountability among development co-operation actors is strengthened through inclusive reviews</b> % of countries that undertake inclusive mutual assessments of progress in implementing agreed commitments</p>	<p><i>All developing countries</i> have inclusive mutual assessment reviews in place (Baseline year 2010)</p>
<p><b>8. Gender equality and women's empowerment</b> % of countries with systems that track and make public allocations for gender equality and women's empowerment</p>	<p><i>All developing countries</i> have systems that track and make public resource allocations for gender equality and women's empowerment</p>
<p><b>9. Effective institutions: developing countries' systems are strengthened and used</b> (a) Quality of developing country PFM systems;</p>	<p><i>Half of developing countries move up at least one measure</i> (i.e. 0.5 points) on the PFM/CPIA scale of performance (Baseline year 2010)</p>

(b) Use of country PFM and procurement systems **Reduce the gap.** [use the same logic as in Paris – close the gap by two-thirds where CPIA score is  $\geq 5$ ; or by one-third where between 3.5 and 4.5]  
(Baseline year 2010)

#### 10. Aid is untied

% of aid that is fully untied **Continued progress over time**  
(Baseline year 2010)

The purpose of the framework is to encourage all stakeholders to improve the effectiveness of their development co-operation in order to maximize their impact. Alongside a mechanism to advance high-quality development co-operation, the framework provides a model for:

- Country-led accountability: monitoring efforts are founded on developing country leadership and ownership of development priorities, building on countries' own accountability mechanisms and information systems;
- An international framework platform to reinforce mutual learning and knowledge sharing, linking national, regional and global levels;
- Global multi-stakeholder dialogue to learn how to deliver better results; an inclusive space for dialogue and shared lessons between governments, multilateral and regional organizations, private sector, foundations, GSOs and others; and
- Supporting accountability for post-2015 implementation: participation in the GPEDC monitoring process is voluntary and determined through self-selection. This demonstrates political will to be held to account by each other, which provides the starting point for genuine partnership.

Drawing on its existing monitoring framework and process, the Partnership is embarking on a consultative process to strengthen the methodology and relevance of its indicators with a view to providing concrete proposals to support global implementation efforts towards the SDGs.

Quality and results of development financing (ODA, South-South Cooperation, Foreign Direct Investment, etc.) represent important elements of the Financing for Development process and the post-2015 means of implementation. Development finance becomes effective when complemented by impact-oriented cooperation; effective partnerships that yield concrete results will help the international community to deliver on its goals. The Global Partnership can support the accountability framework by providing an existing, inclusive platform for dialogue and learning to ensure continued improvements in the quality of development co-operation.

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## Chapter 21

# Partnerships lessons from the first ten years of Type 2 Partnerships

Felix Dodds

### Introduction

As we approach the agreement on a new set of goals and targets it is the right time to revisit the issue of partnerships and what role they might take to help deliver those goals and targets.

As the ten-year review of Rio approached, the discussion on what role partnerships might play in implementing the agreements from the WSSD played a central role. WSSD was structured so that Type 1 was the policy agreements and commitments made by governments in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) these were "time--bound and action--oriented outcomes" and Type 2 was defined to:

- achieve further implementation of Agenda 21 and Millennium Declaration Goals (MDG);
- complement globally agreed Type 1 outcomes and not substitute government commitment;
- be voluntary in nature and not be subject to negotiation within the PrepCom;
- be participatory, with ownership shared between partners;
- be new initiatives, or, in the case of ongoing initiatives, demonstrate added value in the context of the Summit;
- integrate economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development;
- be international (global, regional or sub regional) in scope and reach;
- have clear objectives, and set specific targets and timeframes for their achievement; and
- have a system of accountability, including arrangements for monitoring progress. (UN, 2002)

These were elements from the Bali Guidelines (see Annex 1) The UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) in 2003 agreed a more robust set of guidelines for partnerships but not a proper accountability system (see Annex 2).

In 2003, these partnership guidelines were updated during 11th Session of the CSD to, inter alia, emphasize that they should bear in mind the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development in their design and implementation; should be based on predictable and

sustained resources for their implementation and should result in the transfer of technology to, and capacity-building in, developing countries. They also emphasized that the involvement of international institutions and United Nations funds, programmes and agencies in partnerships should conform to inter-governmentally agreed mandates and should not lead to the diversion to partnerships of resources otherwise allocated for their mandated programmes

Since 2002 there have been a number of initiatives that have been launched around other UN Conferences and Summit that have tried to promote voluntary commitments. These include Rio+20s Voluntary Initiatives, which in many cases, were organizations individual commitments. By the end of the Conference, over 700 voluntary commitments were announced and compiled into an online registry managed by the Rio+20 Secretariat

The notion of global partnerships and multi-stakeholder approaches are now very much accepted to be an integral part of the multilateral cooperation such that the theme of the **Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States** was "*The sustainable development of small island developing States through genuine and durable partnerships*". Nearly 300 partnerships were registered in the lead-up to the Conference, addressing a range of priority areas, including Sustainable Economic Development, Climate change & Disaster Risk management, Social development in Small Island Developing States (SIDS), Health and NCDs, youth and women, Sustainable Energy, Oceans, Seas and Biodiversity, Water and Sanitation, and Food Security and Waste Management.

A number of reviews of partnerships have been undertaken by researchers and scholars since 2002 in an attempt to answer a number of questions:

- What has happened since then?
- Are they on track to deliver as they set out to do?
- What are the lessons learned from existing review mechanisms?
- How can progress be measured?
- And who has the authority to do so?

### **Reviewing global partnerships**

From the beginning, there were questions about the scope and impact of these partnerships. Hale (2003) observed that many existing partnership initiatives from WSSD were simply re-categorized, with just a few select countries participating covering a narrow list of issue areas. The Stakeholder Forum (2006) also observed that more analysis done to understand which partnerships are actually delivering results, and how issues of reporting, transparency and accountability are being addressed. Such a detailed review was undertaken by the International Civil Society Centre (ICSC) in 2014 of 330 of WSSD partnerships. The study found that:

“Thirty-eight per cent of all partnerships sampled are simply not active or do not have measurable output. Twenty-six per cent of all partnerships show activities but those are not directly related to their publicly stated goals and ambitions. An underlying problem was that many multi-stakeholder partnerships have vague and diffuse goals and lack appropriate monitoring and reporting

mechanisms, making the causality between the output of the partnership and impact on the ground difficult to establish. A key finding of the ICSC study was a lack of monitoring and reporting mechanisms have generally limited the effectiveness of MSPs. Improved monitoring, evaluation and reporting are tools that will help to assess progress vis-à-vis targets and goals and will no doubt enhance the credibility of the MSPs.

Beisheim (2014) in eight years of research on multi-stakeholder partnerships have found governance structures of MSPs are ‘terra incognita’. It is often difficult to find how MSPs are monitored. Some of the monitoring systems are external, but they are not public, and also not always independent. They suggest that a transparent, accountable, efficient, participatory and qualitative governance structure is a must in order to increase the effectiveness of MSPs. Two other recent key studies have served to provide more in-depth analysis of these issues and their importance for partnerships: World Vision’s “Getting intentional: Cross-sector partnerships, business and the Post-2015 Development Agenda” and BCG/MIT’s “Joining Forces: Collaboration and Leadership for Sustainability”.

While bringing many benefits, the challenges that pose this new approach, including in terms of accountability, coherence, and efficiency, should not be underestimated and should clearly require a mechanism designed to respond to these challenges and for ensuring the Organization’s capacity to undertake partnerships at scale. Such a mechanism would help promote integrity and transparency and help ensure the UN’s mandates are preserved, provide common partnership support services across the full range of UN activities, improve UN coordination and support and backstop multi-stakeholder initiatives.

### **A few examples of successful Type 2 Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships**

	<b>BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>LEAD FACILITATORS, FUNDERS</b>	<b>GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE</b>	<b>OUTCOMES AND CHALLENGES</b>	<b>MONITORING</b>
<b>The Global Alliance For Vaccines And Immunization (Gavi)</b>	<p>Established January 2000 and has raised over \$.5 billion.</p> <p>Vaccine provision and development, country level immunization programmes and health systems strengthening (HSS); special focus on low-income countries.</p>	<p>WHO, UNICEF, World Bank, Gates Foundation, International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturer's Association, US AID (funders 1/3<sup>rd</sup> from bilateral donors, private donations and Gates Foundation.</p>	<p>GAVI has a secretariat and Board – one third of Board elected on an independent basis with expertise in health;</p> <p>At country level GAVI works through Interagency Coordinating Committees and Health Sector Coordinating Committees.</p>	<p>Built on the experience of the Vaccine Initiative launched by UNICEF in 1990. Generally seen as successful in increasing the numbers vaccinated but less successful influencing vaccine pricing.</p>	<p>A Monitoring and Evaluation Framework and Strategy; ensures valid, reliable, useful measures are available and used to support organizational and stakeholder learning, management of strategy, improvement of programmes, mitigation of risk and reporting of performance.</p>
<b>The Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI)</b>	<p>Launched by WHO in 1998 at the World Health Assembly – Objective to eradicate Polio by 2000; today polio reduced by 99% globally.</p>	<p>WHO, UNICEF, the US Centre for Disease control, Rotary International – bilateral donors also included Russian Federation, Kuwait, UAE, Saudi Arabia and Malaysia, World Bank and African and Inter-American Development Banks</p>	<p>The Advisory Committee on Polio Eradication and the Global Commission for the Certification of the eradication of Poliomyelitis and the UN Interagency Committee play vital roles with WHO regional offices, large networks of health workers, public health managers &amp; professionals</p>	<p>Polio incidents have reduced by 99% but the commitment to global polio eradication by the World Health Assembly (WHA), is not legally binding on states, and therefore the enforcement mechanisms of GPEI are not strong.</p>	<p>GPEI operates within a broad framework of inter-governmental and interagency cooperation and participation. The Independent Monitoring Board assesses progress towards a polio-free world, convenes on a quarterly basis to independently evaluate progress towards each of the major milestones of the GPEI Strategic Plan; the IMB provides assessments of the risks posed</p>

					by existing funding gaps.
<b>Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership (REEEP)</b>	<p>Initiated by the UK government in 2002 as a WSSD Type 2 partnership – response to WSSD failure to agree targets for renewable energy and energy efficiency – It aimed to promote collaboration to achieve a significant increase in the use of renewable energy and energy efficiency to improve energy security and provide for reliable delivery, and deal with climate change/energy issues. Project implementation and policy advice at national level, and advocacy at global level is its main thrust.</p>	<p>Traditional bilateral donors (90 projects in over 40 countries);</p> <p>60% of REEEP’s activities deal with policy and regulation, the remaining with project financing.</p>	<p>REEEP has a governing board that is responsible to a ‘Meeting of Partners’ which is the ultimate authority of REEEP. Projects are developed and proposed by the programme committee and final selection by the International Selection Committee. A governing board is responsible to an assembly, ‘a Meeting of Partners’, which is the ultimate authority of REEEP.</p>	<p>REEEP contributed to change in renewable energy. REEEP has used a multiple approach to establish national partnerships involving small-scale private sector partners, NGOs and public partners. REEEP has also financed local projects that may not have been from the outset financially viable from a market point of view. South Africa proposed targets for of 5% of total primary energy use to come from renewable energy resources by 2010. By 2009 IAEA estimate this had reached 13.1%, now increased to 19%.</p>	<p>Has a Governing Board responsible for the conduct of the business of the organization in accordance with the Statutes, and holds office for a period of four years. It is comprised of not less than six members and meets at least once a year. Its functions are to: develop and oversee the key strategic direction of the REEEP, including targets, timeframes and funding priorities; prepare the financial rules and accounting system of the organization, consider and decide upon applications to become Partners, provide instructions to the International Secretariat.</p>

<p><b>The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)</b></p>	<p>FSC Founding Assembly in 1993, the secretariat relocated in 2003 to Bonn, Germany. Main thrust from UNCED in 1992 to establish an independent and international forest certification system. Vision: the world's forests meet the social, ecological, and economic rights and needs of the present generation without compromising those of future generations through promoting environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial, and economically viable management of the world's forests.</p>	<p>Not for profit NGO with membership in over 60 countries. It is financed through a multitude of sources – individual and corporate grants, donations and projects. It has a strong collaborative relationship with various UN bodies and has worked with UNEP and had projects financed through the GEF. Governments cannot be members.</p>	<p>Board of Directors and an international secretariat with the General Assembly of members as the highest decision making body. It has three chambers for stakeholders from environment, social and economic organizations.</p> <p>There is also a quota to ensure a more balanced north/south representation.</p>	<p>Formally organised as an independent non-governmental organisation, works outside of national regulations with its outreach. With expertise competence and project portfolio, the FSC can function as an incubator for multi-stakeholder partnerships. The FSC administers a self-elaborated third party certification system on wood and timber products that serves to verify whether products – 8% of global forest is certified and 25% of all industrial round-wood production.</p>	<p>FSC has developed 12 system indicators under four main categories – economic, social, environmental and general. The FSC Monitoring and Evaluation Program has also developed a Code of Good Practice for Assessing the Impacts of Social and Environmental Standards, works with ten credibility principles integrated in the FSC monitoring work. sustainability, improvement, relevance, rigour, engagement impartiality, transparency accessibility, truthfulness, efficiency</p>
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<p><b>UN Global Compact CEO Water Mandate</b></p>	<p>Launched in 2007 and developed under the UN Global Compact's three environment principles derived from the Rio Declaration for business to support a precautionary approach, promote greater environmental responsibility and encourage diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies has a broad-based analysis of the acute global water stress with action taken, but the CEO Water Mandate is voluntary and aspirational and works on six areas: Direct Operations; Supply Chain and Watershed Management; Collective Action; Public Policy; Community Engagement; and Transparency</p>	<p>Participation in the CEO Water Mandate is open to all UNGC business signatories, and is funded and supported by companies, governments, and UN agencies and other stakeholders.</p>	<p>Run by a secretariat in the UN GC and the Pacific Institute and overseen by the CEO Water Mandate Steering Committee, which includes business, civil society and other representatives.</p>	<p>The CEO Water Mandate has set rigorous standards for reporting on companies' activities in water and sanitation related areas, and the reporting policy follows those of the GRI. Member companies have changed their approach to water due to the work done under the CEO Water Mandate.</p> <p>Participating companies must also publish and share their water strategies, including targets and results, areas for improvement, in relevant corporate reports, using – where appropriate – the water indicators found in the GRI Guidelines. Companies must be transparent in dealings and conversations with governments and other public authorities on water issues.</p>	<p>While a voluntary initiative, the CEO Water Mandate incorporates a mandatory disclosure mechanism. It reports through a system called Corporate Water Disclosure which reports information to stakeholders (investors, NGOs, consumers, communities, suppliers, and employees) related to the current state of a company's water management, the implications for the business and others, and the company's strategic responses. Disclosure is a critical component of a company's water management efforts and of water-related sustainability more generally. Disclosure reports are posted on the CEO Water Mandate's public website; further, companies which fail to report are expelled.</p>
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Table 1: Taken From the UNDESA Multi-stakeholder partnerships: Making them work for the Post-2015 Development Agenda

## Some lessons learned

Reviewing these five partnerships and the 340 other partnerships from WSSD there are a number of common lessons learnt that could help ensure that partnerships around the SDGs are more successful. In the recent seven-year studies by the University of Potsdam these are:

- The mandate of a partnership must be precise and not too broad
- The governance structures of MSPs are ‘terra incognita’ but a transparent, accountable, efficient, participatory and qualitative governance structure is a must, and this structure must be functional
- There needs to be good transparent reporting process
- The time of the project must not be defined too narrowly. A too short time span on a project seems in most cases to be counterproductive; the following three points illustrates this:
  - It is often difficult to find how MSPs are monitored. Some of the monitoring systems are external, but they are not public, and also not always independent. “Monitoring rises to its full potential when it is combined with strong leadership and the option to sanction projects that do not meet the agreed milestones and targets (Beisheim/Liese p. 176)
  - Recognizing possible conflicts before a project is begun is imperative, and adjusting the project and partnership design to accommodate such conflicts is imperative for its success
  - “Within the multilevel context of transnational partnerships, institutionalized organizational learning is a crucial feature for achieving desired impact and sustained project success.” (Beisheim/Liese p 180)
  - The challenge of communication seems often to be underestimated – and this is communication within the MSPs and to the people affected by the MSPs

## Options for monitoring and review framework

The process around the development of the Sustainable Development Goals enables a new look at partnerships. One of the additional elements of the SDG process is that of universality, this will enable partnerships from developed countries to be registered and reviewed. Unlike WSSD the SDGs will offer Type 1 agreements that are ‘time bound and action orientated’.

Much of the early concerns in 2002 and afterwards about the potential lack of transparency, proper monitoring and reporting and clear results have turned out to be correct. It is clear that in many cases the lack of funding has played a significant role in undermining good partnerships and that they were not focused in many cases towards clear intergovernmental targets. Not all the news is bad this paper has looked at a number of partnerships that have worked and believe that they suggest what might be the elements for a more effect approach to partnership around the implementation of the SDGs.

The system set up for overseeing the partnerships for the SDGs will enable future UN Conferences and Summit coming up such as the UNGASS on Drugs (2016), Habitat III (2016) and others to utilize the same system for any partnerships that they develop.

The approach at WSSD towards partnerships was one of a ‘thousand flowers bloom’. The result of this is many did not survive. It is an inclusive approach but one that is difficult to register the impacts and creates considerable administrative requirements.

Another approach might be to utilize a process that was part of the follow up to Agenda 21 but this time to apply it to partnerships.

After Rio 1992 UN Agencies and Programmes were assigned responsibility for the different chapters of Agenda 21 this ensured that the whole of the UN system was engaged and responsible for the implementation. For the SDGs a similar approach could be taken in the area of partnerships. For example WHO could take responsibility for the Meta partnership for health which would include a partnership to deliver each target (see Annex 3). These target partnerships could have a global facilitator, which might be a UN body or a government or two or a stakeholder group, or as has been suggested in a number of the reviews a new body set up for that purpose. Those partnerships that are then developed to deliver a certain target would be grouped and administrated to help ensure transparency and accountability.

Such an approach would enable a one stop shop for information on implementation, capacity building and would ensure transparency and a knowledge base based with a UN Agency or Programme.

This would mean NO MORE than 169 partnerships.

### **The Partnership Forum in ECOSOC**

The Partnership Forum in ECOSOC has become the central place in the UN system to look at partnerships. Building on five years of experience, it should continue to play that role for overseeing the SDG partnerships. With 12 SSGs of which 16 have sectorial focuses it would make it relatively easy for information on implementation of partnerships to be either brought through a sectorial focus or through a cross sectorial focus.

The Partnership Forum could then focus on lessons learnt and enable those to be fed into the HLPF. The development of a ‘Task Manager’ approach to partnerships would also enable the material that was coming from ECOSOC Partnership Forum to be of level where the analysis of the contribution of those partnerships could have already occurred. It would enable the Partnership Forum to focus on lessons learnt and enable governments to dig deeper into those partnerships being presented to draw recommendations to the HLPF.

### **High Level Political Forum, under the auspices of ECOSOC**

The HLPF has been designed as the “Home of the Post SDGs and the Post 2015 Development Agenda. Partnerships will play a major role in the implementation of this agenda and the HLPF will be the coordinating body for partnerships.

Paragraphs 7 and 8 of the UNGA resolution 67/290 which established the HLPF outlines some of the key responsibilities designated the HLPF to include partnerships. In particular

As the HLPF is restricted in the number of days it is held to five days plus three then it needs to utilize the organs of ECOSOC to do some of its work. If the Partnership Forum in ECOSOC is expanded in its number of days it can then do a review of partnerships and produce a report from the Partnership Forum to the HLPF this would enable the HLPF to discuss any potential policy implications that have come from the review of partnerships.

### **Conclusion**

This paper has provided some historical context of multi-stakeholder partnerships; critical issues and potential approaches which are meant to guide a discussion on post-2015 partnerships, including proposals and ideas for consideration.

## Notes

1. “Type II’ partnerships/initiatives are complementary to the globally agreed ‘Type I’ outcomes: they are not intended to substitute commitments by governments in the ‘Type I’ documents, rather they should contribute to translating those political commitments into action. Given the broad range of issues currently being negotiated, it should not prove difficult to link a ‘Type II’ initiative to the negotiated outcome.” (UN, 2002)

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## **Annex 1: Bali Guidelines on Partnerships**

### *Objective of Partnerships*

Partnerships for sustainable development are specific commitments by various partners intended to contribute to and reinforce the implementation of the outcomes of the intergovernmental negotiations of the WSSD (Programme of Action and Political Declaration) and to help achieve the further implementation of Agenda 21 and the Millennium Development Goals.

### *Voluntary Nature/Respect for Fundamental Principles and Values*

Partnerships are of a voluntary, 'self-organizing' nature; they are based on mutual respect and shared responsibility of the partners involved, taking into account the Rio Declaration Principles and the values expressed in the Millennium Declaration.

### *Link With Globally Agreed Outcomes*

Partnerships are to complement the intergovernmentally agreed outcomes of WSSD: they are not intended to substitute commitments made by governments. Rather they should serve as mechanisms for the delivery of the globally agreed commitments by mobilizing the capacity for producing action on the ground. Partnerships should be anchored in the intergovernmentally agreed outcomes of WSSD (Programme of Action and Political Declaration) and help achieve the further implementation of Agenda 21 and the Millennium Development Goals.

### *Integrated Approach To Sustainable Development*

Partnerships should integrate the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development in their design and implementation. They should be consistent, where applicable, with sustainable development strategies and poverty reduction strategies of the countries, regions and communities where their implementation takes place.

### *Multi-stakeholder Approach*

Partnerships should have a multi-stakeholder approach and preferably involve a range of significant actors in a given area of work. They can be arranged among any combination of partners, including governments, regional groups, local authorities, non-governmental actors, international institutions and private sector partners. All partners should be involved in the development of a partnership from an early stage, so that it is genuinely participatory in approach. Yet as partnerships evolve, there should be an opportunity for additional partners to join on an equal basis.

### *Transparency and Accountability*

Partnerships should be developed and implemented in an open and transparent manner and in good faith, so that ownership of the partnership process and its outcomes is shared among all partners, and all partners are equally accountable. They should specify arrangements to monitor and review

their performance against the objectives and targets they set and report in regular intervals ('self-reporting'). These reports should be made accessible to the public.

#### *Tangible Results*

Each partnership should define its intended outcome and benefits. Partnerships should have clear objectives and set specific measurable targets and timeframes for their achievement. All partners should explicitly commit to their role in achieving the aims and objectives of the partnerships.

#### *Funding Arrangements*

Available and /or expected sources of funding should be identified. At least the initial funding should be assured at the time of the Summit, if the partnership is to be recognized there.

#### *New/Value Added Partnerships*

Ideally, partnerships for sustainable development should be 'new', i.e. developed within the framework of the WSSD process. In case of on-going partnerships, there has to be a significant added value to these partnerships in the context of the WSSD (e.g. more partners taken on board, replicating an initiative or extending it to another geographical region, increasing financial resources, etc.)

#### *Local Involvement & International Impact*

While the active involvement of local communities in the design and implementation of partnerships is strongly encouraged (bottom-up approach), partnerships should be international in their impact, which means their impact should extend beyond the national level (global, regional and/or sub-regional).

#### *Follow-up Process*

Partnerships should keep the Commission on Sustainable Development informed about their activities and progress in achieving their targets. The CSD should serve as a focal point for discussion of partnerships that promote sustainable development, including sharing lessons learnt, progress made and best practices.

Opportunities to develop partnerships for sustainable development will continue after the WSSD. Submissions of partnerships after the Summit will be considered in the follow-up process.

## **Annex 2: Commission on Sustainable Development 11 (2003)**

At CSD11 a framework for WSSD partners was agreed to. Their follow up should be developed and implemented in accordance with the following criteria and guidelines, taking note in that regard of the preliminary work undertaken on partnerships during the preparatory process for the Summit, including the Bali guiding principles, and General Assembly resolution 56/76 of 11 December 2001.

- a. Partnerships are voluntary initiatives undertaken by Governments and relevant stakeholders, such as major groups and institutional stakeholders;
- b. Partnerships should contribute to the implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, and should not divert resources from the commitments contained in those agreements;
- c. Partnerships are not intended to substitute commitments made by Governments, but to supplement the implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation;
- d. Partnerships should add concrete value to the implementation process and should be new. That is, they should not merely reflect existing arrangements;
- e. Partnerships should bear in mind the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development in their design and implementation;
- f. Partnerships should be based on predictable and sustained resources for their implementation, should include the mobilization of new resources, and where relevant, should result in the transfer of technology to, and capacity-building in, developing countries;
- g. It is desirable that partnerships have a sectoral and geographical balance;
- h. Partnerships should be designed and implemented in a transparent and accountable manner. In that regard, they should exchange relevant information with Governments and other relevant stakeholders;
- i. Partnerships should be publicly announced with the intention of sharing the specific contribution that they make to the implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation;
- j. Partnerships should be consistent with national laws and national strategies for the implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, as well as the priorities of countries where their implementation takes place
- k. The leading partner of a partnership initiative should inform the national focal point for sustainable development of the involved country/countries about the initiation and progress of the partnership, and all partners should bear in mind the guidance provided by Governments;
- l. The involvement of international institutions and United Nations funds, programmes and agencies in partnerships should conform to intergovernmentally agreed mandates and

should not lead to the diversion to partnerships of resources otherwise allocated for their mandated programmes;

23. Decides that providing information and reporting by partnerships registered with the Commission should be transparent, participatory and credible, taking into account the following elements:

6 The registration of partnerships should be voluntary and should be based on written reporting to the Commission, taking into account the provisions specified above. Reporting by partnerships should focus on their contribution to the implementation of the goals, objectives and targets of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation;

7 Partnerships should submit a regular report, preferably at least on a biennial basis;

8 The Secretariat is requested to make information available on partnerships, including their reports, through a database accessible to all interested parties, including through the Commission web site and other means;

9 The Secretariat is requested to produce a summary report containing synthesized information on partnerships for consideration by the Commission, in accordance with its programme and organization of work, noting the particular relevance of such reports in review years;

10 The Commission, during review years, should discuss the contribution of partnerships towards supporting the implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation with a view to sharing lessons learned and best practices, identifying and addressing problems, gaps and constraints, and providing further guidance, including on reporting, during policy years, as necessary;

24. Calls for activities aimed at strengthening partnerships in the context of the Summit process and its follow-up, and facilitating new ones, including through such initiatives as partnerships fairs and learning centres, mindful of the importance of sharing

## Annex 3



## Acronyms and abbreviations

ACC	<a href="#"><u>Administrative Committee on Coordination</u></a>
APF	<a href="#"><u>Asia Pacific Forum</u></a>
APRM	<a href="#"><u>African Peer Review Mechanism</u></a>
APIA	Agriculture Payments Intervention Agency
AU	<a href="#"><u>African Union</u></a>
CAP	Common African Position
CBDR	Common But Differentiated Responsibilities
CEB	<a href="#"><u>Chief Executives Board</u></a>
CEDAW	<a href="#"><u>Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women</u></a>
CIVICUS	<a href="#"><u>World Alliance for Citizen Participation</u></a>
CNDD	<a href="#"><u>Tunisian National Commission for Sustainable Development</u></a>
CR	Country review
CSA	Country self-assessment
CSD	<a href="#"><u>Commission on Sustainable Development</u></a>
CSO	Civil society organizations
DA2I	Development and Access to Information
DCF	Development Cooperation Forum
DESA	<a href="#"><u>Department of Economic and Social Affairs</u></a>
DPI	<a href="#"><u>Department of Public Information</u></a>
ECDPM	<a href="#"><u>European Centre for Development Policy Management</u></a>
ECLAC	<a href="#"><u>UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean</u></a>
ECOSOC	<a href="#"><u>Economic and Social Council</u></a>
EEAC	<a href="#"><u>Environmental and Sustainable Development Advisory Councils</u></a>
EMG	<a href="#"><u>Environmental Management Group</u></a>
ESG	Environment Social Governance

FES	Friedrich Ebert Stiftung
FfD	<a href="#">Financing for Development</a>
FSC	<a href="#">Forest Stewardship Council</a>
GA	General Assembly
GFMD	<a href="#">Global Forum for Media Development</a>
GN-NCSD	<a href="#">Global Network of National Councils for Sustainable Development and Similar Bodies</a>
GPEDC	<a href="#">Global Partnership for Effective Cooperation</a>
GRI	<a href="#">Global Reporting Initiative</a>
GSDR	<a href="#">Global Sustainable Development Report</a>
HLP	High Level Panel
HLPF	<a href="#">High Level Political Forum</a>
IACSD	<a href="#">Interagency Committee on Sustainable Development</a>
IAEA	<a href="#">International Atomic for Energy Agency</a>
ICSC	<a href="#">International Civil Society Centre</a>
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
IDEA	<a href="#">Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance</a>
IEAG	Independent Expert Advisory Group
IEP	<a href="#">Institute of Economics and Peace</a>
IFI	International financial institutions
IFLA	<a href="#">International Federation of Library Associations</a>
IFSD	International Financial Services District
IFSD	Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development
IMF	<a href="#">International Money Fund</a>
IPDC	<a href="#">International Programme for the Development of Communication</a>
IPFSD	<a href="#">Intergovernmental Panel on Financing Sustainable Development</a>
IPU	<a href="#">Inter-Parliamentary Union</a>
ITU	<a href="#">International Telecommunications Union</a>
IUCN	<a href="#">International Union for Conservation of Nature</a>

JPol	<a href="#">Johannesburg Plan of Implementation</a>
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
LDC	Least Developed Country
MDG	<a href="#">Millennium Development Goals</a>
MDG-EIAG	<a href="#">Millennium Development Goals Expert Inter-Agency Group</a>
MID	Maurice Ile Durable Policy
MOI	Means of Implementation
NCSD	<a href="#">National Councils for Sustainable Development</a>
NFFT	Hungarian National Council for Sustainable Development
NPEAD	<a href="#">New Partnership for Africa's Development</a>
NPoAs	National Plans of Action
NSDS	National Sustainable Development Strategies
NSDS	National Strategies for Development of Statistics
NSO	National Statistical Offices
NTD	Neglected tropical diseases
ODA	Official Development Assistance
ODI	<a href="#">Overseas Development Institute</a>
OECD	<a href="#">Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development</a>
OECPR	Open Ended Committee of Permanent Representatives
OHCHR	<a href="#">Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights</a>
OWG	Open Working Group
PA21	Philippine Agenda 21
PAC	Public Access Computers
PCSD	<a href="#">Philippine Council for Sustainable Development</a>
PDP	Philippine Development Plan
PrepCom	Preparatory Committee
QCPR	Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review
REEEP	<a href="#">Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership</a>
RNE	<a href="#">German Council for Sustainable Development</a>

RTI	Right to Information
SAIIA	<a href="#">South African Institute of International Affairs</a>
SAP	Strategy and Action Plan
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SDplanNet	Sustainable Development Planning Network
SDSN	<a href="#">Sustainable Development Solutions Network</a>
SF	<a href="#">Stakeholder Forum</a>
SHaSA	Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
TAI	<a href="#">The Access Initiative</a>
TASCHA	<a href="#">Technology &amp; Social Change Group</a>
UN	<a href="#">United Nations</a>
UNCAS	<a href="#">United Nations Convention Against Corruption</a>
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
UNCTAD	<a href="#">United Nations Conference on Trade and Development</a>
UNDESA	<a href="#">United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs</a>
UNDPI	<a href="#">United Nations Department of Public Information</a>
UNDP	<a href="#">United Nations Development Programme</a>
UNEA	<a href="#">United Nations Environment Assembly</a>
UNECE	<a href="#">United Nations Economic Commission for Europe</a>
UNEP	<a href="#">United Nations Environment Programme</a>
UNESCO	<a href="#">United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization</a>
UNESCO-IPDC	<a href="#">UNESCO International Programme for Development Communication</a>
UNGA	<a href="#">General Assembly of the United Nations</a>
UNHCHR	<a href="#">United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights</a>
UNICEF	<a href="#">United Nations Children's Fund</a>
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
USF	Universal Service Funds
UNTST	<a href="#">UN Technical Support Team</a>

WB [World Bank](#)  
WHO [World Health Organization](#)  
WSSD [World Summit on Sustainable Development](#)  
WTO [World Trade Organization](#)



The main objective of the Friends group is to create that informal space for governments to have discussions among themselves, backed up by expert papers when requested, issues relating to good governance and Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development (IFSD) in relation to the development and implementation of the post 2015 development agenda.

It is chaired by the governments of the Republic of Korea, Mexico and Romania. Over the last nine months it has hosted three workshops while supported by Article 19 as the secretariat for the Friends group.

This book has been edited by Hoonmin Lim, Sara Luna and Oana Rebedea, David Banisar Felix Dodds and Quinn McKew.



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