

Enabling a Transformative Multi-stakeholder Post-2015 Development Agenda

Proposals for the UN Secretary General and the General Assembly High Level Meeting, from the Task Team on CSO Development Effectiveness & Enabling Environment, August 2013

The multi-stakeholder Task Team¹ welcomes the proposals of the High Level Panel of Eminent Persons (HLP) for a transformative and people-centered Post-2015 Development Agenda. Building on the HLP's call for an "equal partnership of all stakeholders" (HLP: 3)², the Task Team proposes some critical markers for equitable partnerships in the determination and realization of Post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals.

In particular, UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon, and the UN High Level Meeting at the General Assembly in September this year should agree on **a fully inclusive process and an agenda for the Post-2015 Development Goals**, which:

1. **ensures *those most affected by poverty and exclusion* have opportunities to voice their perspectives and influence on how to end poverty and reduce inequality**
2. **ensures a meaningful and sustained space for face-to-face *multi-stakeholder dialogue*;**
3. **proposes concrete steps for multi-stakeholder, consensus-based *decision-making* at all levels; and**
4. **addresses the *efforts and enabling conditions* for all development actors, including civil society organizations (CSOs), to maximize their contributions to realizing this Agenda.**

As the world comes together at the September High Level Meeting of the UN General Assembly to launch a roadmap for the final 18 months, bold steps are required. The time and opportunity to "think differently" and implement a "transformative shift" (HLP: 5) is now. Leaving "only UN member states [to] define the Post-2015 Agenda," as suggested by the HLP, (HLP: 25) will undermine a democratic vision of Sustainable Development Goals. For a people-centered and supported agenda, stakeholder participation is key. The Task Team **recommends that the Secretary General promote a highly inclusive process.**

A fully inclusive process for Post-2015 Goals is possible and important

The breadth of the HLP's outreach that heard from a wide diversity of people, including their organized expression in over 5,000 civil society organizations (CSOs), is welcome. Such **engagement should not stop with the HLP's consultation, nor should efforts at inclusive processes be left solely to individual countries** as they decide on targets and plans to implement them. People most affected by poverty and exclusion and the CSOs that work with them must also see their voices reflected in the global process over the next 18 months as well

¹ The Task Team was established in 2009 to monitor and strengthen commitments in relation to civil society and aid effectiveness in the lead-up to the 2011 Busan High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness. The multi-stakeholder Task Team, composed of self-selected donors, CSOs and partner governments, affirms the need for ongoing effort to advance the Busan principles and commitments to democratic ownership and CSO development effectiveness and the enabling environment. The Task Team is co-chaired by representatives from the Government of Mali, the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness (CPDE).

² All references to HLP are to the HLP's 2013 report *A New Global Partnership: Eradicate Poverty and Transform Economies through Sustainable Development – The Report of the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda*.

as in its outcome. They should be truly present with the international community to together motivate all actors in a renewed determination to overcome poverty and inequality through the Post-2015 Development Goals.

More inclusive global processes are possible. The Task Team draws attention to the highly inclusive preparations and conduct of the 2011 Busan High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (HLF4), which led to the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC). **HLF4 is a practical example in which stakeholders were directly engaged in dialogue and consensus building throughout the process of agreeing on a global agenda.**

While acknowledging different responsibilities in achieving development effectiveness, all actors worked together at Busan to reach agreement on norms, principles and specific commitments in development practice. Civil society contributed proposals in the lead-up to HLF4, and a global civil society platform of hundreds of CSOs organized itself to participate constructively in the final negotiations at Busan for a comprehensive agreement to launch the GPEDC.

While not minimizing the challenges in different country contexts, the GPEDC is an innovative multi-stakeholder partnership to implement and monitor sound development practice. The lessons of Busan are well documented.³ These lessons can inform the roadmap for dialogue and the decision process to determine and implement the Development Goals. In this regard, the GPEDC clearly speaks to the MDG 8 and should be seen as a model for the global partnership.

Enabling conditions for CSOs to maximize their contributions to the Post-2015 Goals is essential

The HLP makes a notable call for an **enabling environment and access to due process as a necessary condition for CSOs and other non-state actors to fulfill their varied roles in sustainable development** (HLP: 4). This is highly significant in light of major challenges civil society faces in many countries where the space in which they can operate is shrinking. Alongside all development actors, there is also the active agenda by CSOs to improve CSO effectiveness, including their transparency and accountability vis-à-vis those they serve or represent.

The Task Team embraces the Panel's recognition of the "intrinsic value" of "the rule of law, freedom of speech and the media, open political choice and active citizen participation, access to justice, non-discriminatory and accountable governments and public institutions", and that these are not simply means to an end but ends in themselves (HLP: 4). Absent however are the fundamental institutions of freedom of association and of peaceful assembly that are central to civil society's existence. Taken together these are all part of the agreed international human rights framework, which is essential to the framing and implementation of the Post-2015 Development Goals. The Task Team suggests that the Post-2015 agenda **recognize the essential character of the international human rights framework to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals.**

Many diverse stakeholders must come together in both the development and implementation of the Post-2015 Development Goals. It is only when all stakeholders' voices are valued that responsibility can be shared for addressing tough problems in a truly transformative approach to development. **Participation and shared responsibilities must be part of the new "global ethic" for today's globalized world** (HLP: 6).

³ See for example the HLF4 proceedings at <http://www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/Final%20file.pdf>; the former OECD-DAC chair's reflections on the creation of the GPEDC at <http://www.oecd.org/dac/atwood%20global%20partnership%20article.pdf>; an overview of opportunities and challenges for the GPEDC from The Brookings Institution at <http://www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/papers/2012/6/06%20global%20partnership%20kharas/06%20global%20partnership%20kharas.pdf>; and comprehensive coverage of CSO engagement in the international aid and development effectiveness dialogue by Brian Tomlinson at http://cso-effectiveness.org/IMG/pdf/csos_on_the_road_from_accra_to_busan_final.pdf.