

Post-2015 policymaking

What is being planned, what might actually happen, and CAFOD's current policy lines

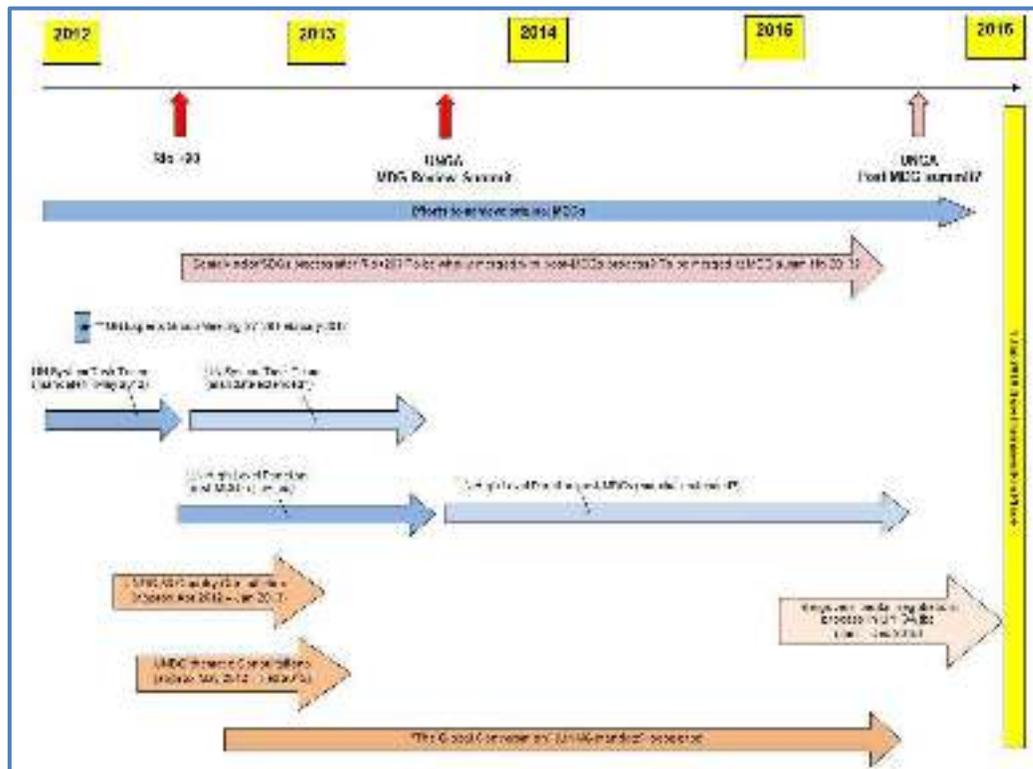
Executive Summary

March 2012

Part 1: What is being planned

Having taken some time to get established, the wheels have begun to turn at the United Nations. The UN are now working to lead an official post-MDG policy process. The specifics are still being finalised, but the broad shape of UN plans is now emerging.

These include a UN System Task Force (set up in January 2012 and currently preparing a 'background thinking' report), preparations for a High Level Panel (to be launched after Rio +20), and a series of major initiatives which collectively form UNDG's efforts on building the post-2015 agenda. These efforts include plans for 50 country consultations, to be led by UN Resident Coordinators and taking place between April 2012 and January 2013. There are also plans for a series of thematic consultations, to take place between May 2012 and February 2013. We understand that just under half of the funds that are being sought for these initiatives have so far been secured, and that fundraising is ongoing.



Based on our latest political intelligence, we provide a map of the whole post-2015 policy process between now and the end of 2016. ([See page 11 for large version](#))

Part 2: What might actually happen

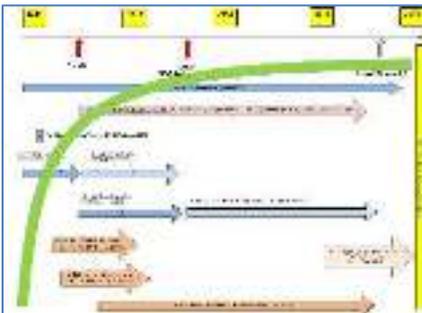
We identify three stylised scenarios for how the post-2015 process will play out in reality.

1. "last minute rush"



Agencies adopt a wait-and-see approach, and are reluctant to put concrete ideas on the table too early. As the MDG deadline starts to loom, there is a rush to publish policy papers and fight for specific advocacy issues. With time short, actors fail to effectively negotiate with opponents or to step back and see the big picture. Negotiations on post-MDGs will drag out to 2016, 2017 or beyond, over which time the impetus behind the agenda fades away.

2. "All things to all people"



The consultations and dialogue processes go well and are recognised as high quality. Concrete proposals are put forward from a range of sources before the Sept 2013 Review Summit. But then the whittling down process becomes difficult. There is not enough political courage to make the tough decisions, and eventual agreement is long and unfocused. Many walk away from the negotiations happy that they have 'got their issues in' – but over the next decade post-MDGs fail to have any real impact on what happens in the real world.

3. "The bell curve"



This is arguably the ideal scenario. There is an open and inclusive process, with a focused outcome in time for the end of 2015. The consultations go well and there is a surge of policy input ahead of the Sept 2013 Review Summit. Global leaders make the issue a priority, and their representatives make tough decisions in a legitimate way. Interest groups see the big picture, and the negotiations produce an outcome which captures the imagination and secures widespread support. Post-MDGs have the clarity and focus to deliver real change and progress in the world.

We identify a number of key factors that would drive an open and inclusive process, with a clear and focused outcome (the bell curve scenario). We then analyse the current policy context to assess, as things stand, how likely it seems that this scenario will come about.

This analysis suggests that there is a lot of work to be done. There is no sense in which any successor to the MDGs can be assumed. There is still less cause to assume that a successor to the MDGs will be strong and legitimate.

Part 3 CAFOD's current policy recommendations

Given how much influence the MDGs had on international policy over the last decade, we know that the potential gains for getting this agenda right are huge. If we win on the post-2015 agenda, we win big. There is too much at stake to give up before the process has even started.

The greatest appeal of the MDGs is their concise, simple structure and clear deadline agreed by the UN which helped the world to focus their attention and efforts on one joint aim, halving extreme poverty. On the other hand, the MDGs were heavily criticised for not addressing environmental sustainability and gender equality in an adequate way and for omitting several other issues, such as human rights. The MDGs are also criticized for being too focused on aid flowing from the developed to the developing world and for not addressing the root causes of poverty adequately.

What needs to happen next

The United Nations should:

- Put full details of the consultation processes in the public domain
- Fix some deadlines
- Ensure that early thinking is done on the 'endgame'
- Ensure that both the positive and negative impacts of businesses on locally defined pro-poor development priorities are understood

Donors and charitable foundations should

- Stop assuming that UN is going to pick up the bill

National Governments should

- Make post-2015 planning a priority, and make this commitment explicit
- Show both leadership and team spirit

Civil society should

- Join the Beyond 2015 campaign

Answers to key questions on content

1) CAFOD believe a post-MDG framework should champion the issues of most significance to people living in poverty, because they have less power than any other social group to defend their interests, and their issues are most vulnerable to the vagaries of political will when ongoing crises during the next fifteen or twenty years cause distractions. They are also most likely to suffer first and hardest from any of the crises that ensue.

2) CAFOD believe another set of goals after 2015 is the best approach.

3) Sustainable development was always supposed to be a genuine integration of poverty and environmental concerns – and because many environmental issues are of such great significance to people living in poverty, we believe they should be a core element to a post-2015 framework.

4) It is imperative, however, that processes to develop Sustainable Development Goals should not proceed in parallel to processes to think about a successor to the Millennium Development Goals. We suggest that Rio+20 should not go all the way to deliver a full set of SDGs but rather focuses on necessary and helpful groundwork. These efforts should be immediately merged, not least so that those assessing appropriate levels of ambition do so with full information as the political reality emerges.

5) A post-2015 framework should not be a 'whole world framework' in the sense that it sets goals that apply in the same way to every country in the world. But it should be a framework within which every country will need to take some kind of action.

6) For post-MDGs, we suggest the focus should be on shared problems (i.e. where the causes and remedies are primarily to be found internationally) rather than common problems (which are found in many countries around the world but where the causes and remedies are primarily found at national level). We suggest that the value-add of an international agreement is greater for shared problems than common ones.

7) Whilst national governments should have ownership and leadership of how the issues are addressed in their own countries there will also be a clear and defined role for other governments and international agencies because the issues require collective international action. These roles should be defined as appropriate for specific goals on a case by case basis. The principle must be to address the issues wherever people are affected by them – focusing on people, not states.



8) There are a huge number of important issues in the world which are worth considering as potential themes for post-2015 goals. We but propose that all the possible issues are carefully assessed against three criteria represented in the Venn diagram (left). Issues with the strongest case for inclusion in a post-2015 framework sit at the overlap of all three spheres.

More information on the criteria and a bigger version of the Venn diagram can be found on page 21.

Post-2015 policymaking

What is being planned, what might actually happen, and CAFOD's current policy lines

March 2012¹

Introduction

CAFOD have engaged extensively in the post-2015 arena, as co-chairs of the Beyond 2015 campaign and as an independent agency.

Drawing on the dozens of meetings, reading and engagement CAFOD have had in recent months, the first part of this paper synthesises our understanding of what is currently being planned on post-2015 policymaking, focusing particularly on the official UN process².

The second part of the paper gives our analysis of what might actually happen – offering three stylised scenarios: “last minute rush”, “all things to all people” and “the bell curve”.

The final section argues what this means in advocacy terms. Given the political economy and policy landscape of post-2015 as we find it in spring 2012, we lay out CAFOD's current policy lines on the question of what should come after the Millennium Development Goals³.

¹ This paper was written by Amy Pollard with Bernadette Fischler, and input from CAFOD's Policy Team. It was enhanced by discussions with a variety of contacts working on post-MDG issues.

² This is our understanding based on intelligence and information available in March 2012. We welcome any updates, corrections and challenges to the views expressed here (please email apollard@cafod.org.uk or bfischler@cafod.org.uk). For ongoing updates on events, documents and news on post-2015 please visit www.beyond2015.org.

³ These policy lines are defined for the current context, which is characterised by rapid fluidity and change. Our lines expire on 1st August 2012 – or if circumstances require them to be reexamined sooner.

Table of Contents (press ctrl+click on the link below to jump to the respective section)

Part 1: What is being planned	7
United Nations	7
UN conference on Sustainable Development: ‘Rio +20’	9
Civil society	9
Private sector.....	9
Part 2: What might actually happen	12
1. “Last minute rush”	12
2. “All things to all people”	13
3. The bell curve	14
What looks most likely to happen in reality?.....	15
Part 3: CAFOD’s current policy recommendations.....	18
The prospects for a post-2015 framework look bleak. Is it really worth putting a lot of effort in?	18
What are the lessons of the MDGs?.....	18
What is the purpose of a post-2015 framework?	19
Are we talking about another set of goals? Or something else entirely?.....	19
What does CAFOD think about the SDGs?.....	20
Should it be a whole world framework?	20
What issues should be included in a post-2015 framework?	21
What needs to happen next	23

Part 1: What is being planned

United Nations

Having taken some time to get established, the wheels have begun to turn at the United Nations. The UN are now working to lead an official post-MDG policy process. The specifics are still being finalised, but the broad shape of UN plans are as follows:

UN System Task Force

Formally set up in January 2012, this is a 'system-wide' task force – including not only all the UN agencies but also the IMF, World Bank and others. It was originally due to be disbanded in May, but there is currently discussion of extending its mandate so that the group becomes a kind of technical secretariat on post-MDG planning, supporting a High Level Panel which will be announced after the Rio +20 conference in June.

The Task Team has six working groups who are preparing a series of reports which will form the UN's 'background thinking' on post-2015 issues. The first drafts are due to be delivered on 20th March, to be published in May. We understand the reports are:

- A. Assessment of MDGs (critically evaluating the MDGs).
- B. Emerging development challenges (how the world has changed since the 2000s etc).
- C. Assessment of proposals and processes (who is currently doing what).
- D. Assessment of ongoing processes; area specific targets. (What deadlines are out there already; how post-MDG planning should relate to Rio+20 etc).
- E. Redefining a global partnership for development (how a new framework can be broadened and who it should include).
- F. Assessment of possible formats for post-MDGs.

UN Development Group (UNDG) "Building the post-2015 agenda"

This system wide effort is the heart of the UN's post-MDG planning. We understand that just under half of the funds that are being sought for these initiatives have so far been secured, and that fundraising is ongoing⁴.

The UNDG work has three components:

1. "The Global Conversation"

The global conversation is being broadly spoken of as a wide-ranging initiative, using new technology and social media to engage the general public. The UN Millennium Campaign (UNMC) has been given the mandate on this, but they don't have yet have funding established or shareable proposals.

2. 50 Country Consultations

These country level consultations are to be led by UN Resident Coordinators, and the suggested timelines are April 2012 to January 2013. 50 countries from different regions (excluding high income countries) will receive funding for the consultations. All other countries are invited to also hold consultations. The list of countries is being circulated for approval and will be publically available "any day now"⁵.

⁴ Intell. 14th March 2012

⁵ Intell. 13th March 2012.

UNDG will make available guidance and support materials to help those in-country as they organise the processes. Of course, different UN Resident Coordinators will approach the task in different ways – with varying levels of priority and facing specific challenges for their context. It seems fair to anticipate that some national consultations will therefore be more effective and better quality than others.

3. Thematic Consultations

In addition to the country-level consultations a number of thematic consultations are being planned. The timeline for these is May 2012 to February 2013. We understand that the provisional list of themes is as follows:

- **Inequalities** (including gender)
- **Health** (issues covered by MDGs 4,5 and 6, and also non-communicable diseases)
- **Education** (primary, secondary, tertiary and vocational)
- **Growth and employment** (including investment in productive capacities, decent employment and social protection)
- **Environmental sustainability** (including access to energy, biodiversity, climate change and food security)
- **Governance** (governance at all levels; global, national and sub-national)
- **Conflict and fragility** (conflict and post-conflict countries, and those prone to natural disasters)
- **Population dynamics** (including ageing, international and internal migration, and urbanisation)
- **Hunger**, Food (and nutrition) security

Crosscutting themes for all consultations: gender, human rights, young people, inequalities and the (global) partnerships necessary to make progress.

Different UN agencies have been mandated to take on these thematic consultations (for example, UNICEF and UN Women co-lead on Inequalities), but at least some of these agencies have not yet had budget lines confirmed. These are expected by May 2012.

4. Regional consultations

In addition to the country level consultations there has been a proposal to have regional consultations – including in Northern countries – to discuss post-MDG planning. They will be organised by the regional commissions. UNECA together with the AU have already started to explore post-2015 in several meetings and reports. Specific details on all regions are yet to be released.

High Level Panel on post-MDGs

There will be a High Level Panel on post-MDGs, which will be announced after Rio +20. The Terms of Reference for the panel have not yet been released, but it is anticipated that this group will be the focal point and political drivers of the process. Beyond 2015 have been informally asked to propose representatives who might sit on the panel and act as spokespersons for global civil society. This High Level Panel will also include the special coordinator that the UN Secretary General mentioned in his speech in January on his priorities for the next five years. We understand that this will be a woman from the 'South'.

UN conference on Sustainable Development: 'Rio +20'

CAFOD's view is that from a conceptual and theoretical point of view, putting sustainable development at the heart of a new framework is undoubtedly the right thing to do – but that the original SDG proposal from Colombia doesn't adequately address the purpose of a post-2015 framework, as we see it. (see page 15)

A huge uncertainty surrounds Rio+20. On the one hand, many commentators are calling for modest expectations and the likelihood that the event will not deliver major concrete outcomes. On the other, there is a reticence to accelerate post-2015 planning until Rio+20 has happened, and many feel that post-2015 planning is on tenterhooks until this conference takes place. Rio is perceived as a testing ground for the feasibility of different proposals, an opportunity to map the levels of political engagement and a chance to assess what level of ambition is realistic.

Rio+20 has three objectives, two themes and seven critical issues. Regardless, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – a proposal originally from Colombia which is being mooted as a potential successor to the MDGs – are being hyped as one likely outcome from Rio+20.

Current SDG proposals do not define the relationship between SDGs and post-MDGs clearly. Some say that these should be one and the same; some suggest that SDGs should complement post-MDGs; some warn that the SDGs and post-MDGs could become two different processes.

CAFOD suggest that it would be counterproductive for the post-2015 process as a whole, if a final or near-final set of goals came out of Rio+20.

The zero draft of the Rio+20 outcome document somewhat alludes to the fact that both SDGs and post-MDGs have to be linked but absolute clarity is required to avoid a messy process going forward after the conference has taken place.

Rio+20 could provide some valuable ground work for post-2015 planning, for example by providing guidance how the three pillars or dimensions of sustainable development could and should be meaningfully interlinked, and by defining clearly what terms like "universality" (goals should apply to all countries guided by common but differentiated responsibilities) and equity (within and between countries) might really mean.

Civil society

Extensive activity is currently underway amongst civil society organisations around the world on the post-2015 agenda. The Beyond 2015 campaign now has over 280 participating organisations from 70 countries, and interest in post-2015 planning is growing month by month. Numerous mapping exercises on civil society action exist already and an overview can be found on www.beyond2015.org.

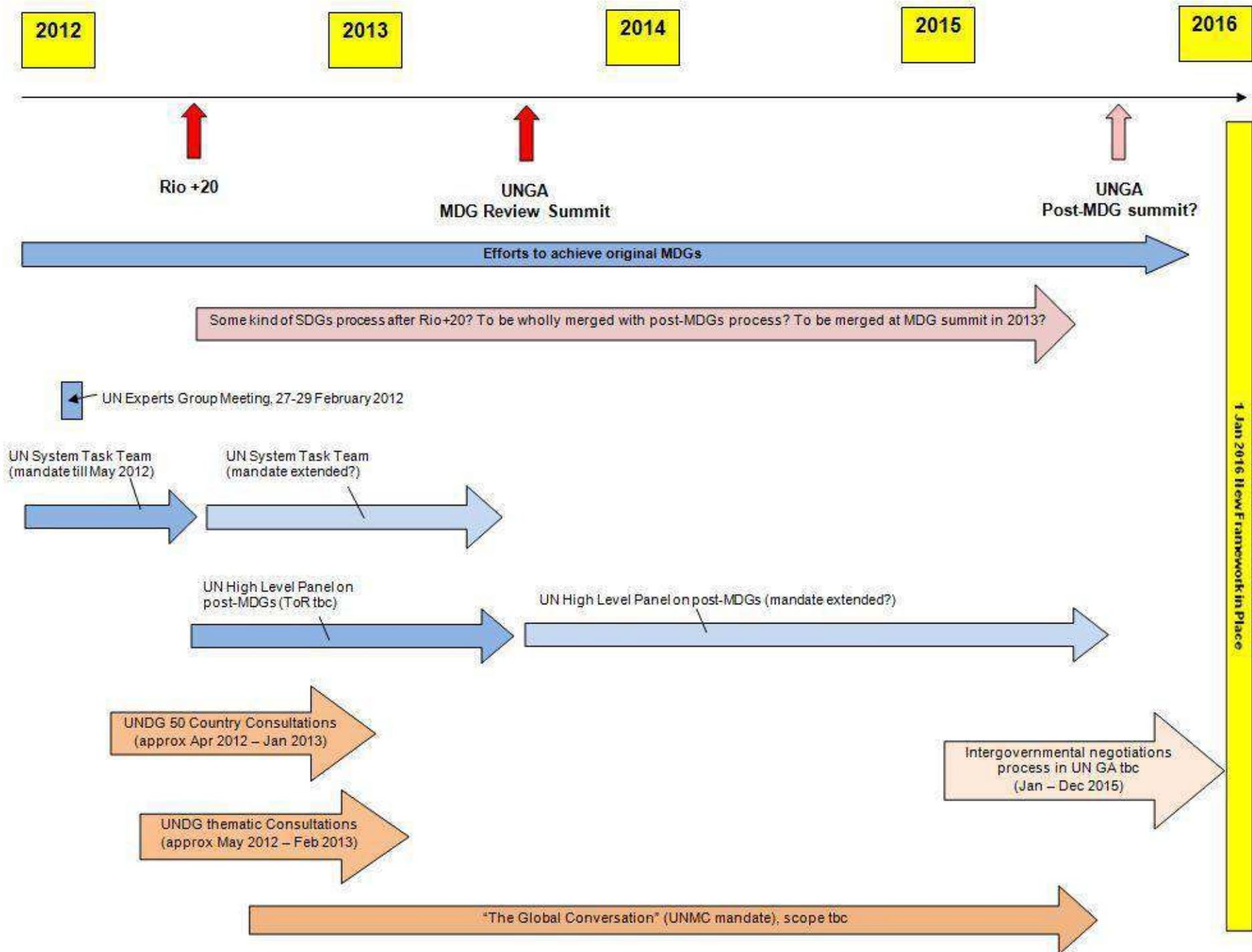
Private sector

The private sector has both positive and negative impacts on development and will want to contribute to the new global development framework. Within the UN system the private sector is represented through the UN Global Compact (UN GC), a UN entity that was established in 2000 to contribute to the achievement of the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) through partnerships (amongst other things). The UN GC has been involved in the post MDG process as a member the 'UN System Task Team to support the preparation of the Post-2015 UN

Development Agenda'. They see the private sector as key partners and that can help drive the post-2015 agenda and that should input into the goal setting to ensure the goals work for businesses (of all sizes). There is a credibility gap for the UN GC, as it has been criticised by local stakeholders and international NGOs for a lack of enforcement.

Currently UN GC is focussed on the UN Conference on Sustainable Development 'Rio+20' and their 'Rio+20 Corporate Sustainability Forum'. They see their concept of corporate sustainability as the business contribution to sustainable development objectives. After Rio they plan to focus more on the post-2015 development agenda. Currently the UN GC has around 8700 corporate participants and other stakeholders from over 130 countries who signed up to UN GC's core values around human rights, environment and anti-corruption.

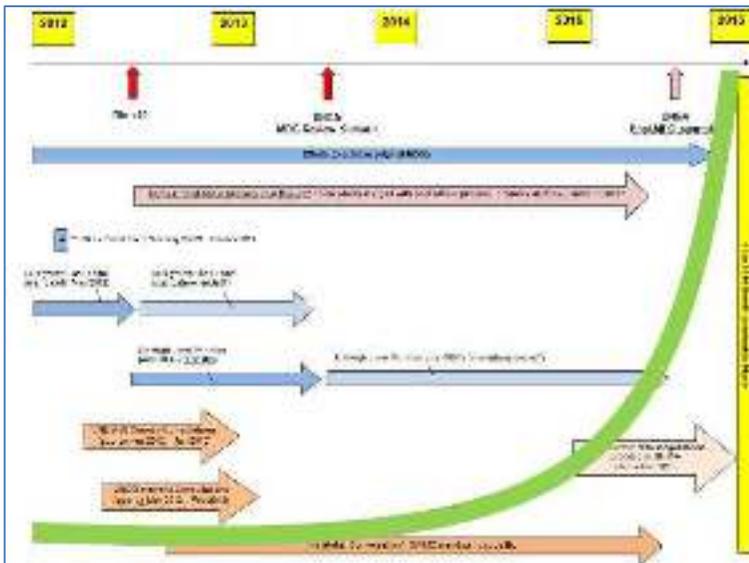
Page 11 shows the post-2015 process as a whole, represented as a diagram.



Part 2: What might actually happen

Nobody can know for sure how the post-2015 policy process will play out in reality, but we can identify a few possible scenarios. These are presented here in stylised form. The green lines on the diagrams represent the number of concrete proposals on post-2015 that are in play.

1. "Last minute rush"



In this scenario there are general discussions in a variety of fora – both the UN consultations and dialogues led by others – over the next two or three years. These consider principles, options, and priority issues on post-2015 at a broad level.

Agencies and individuals have a low-key involvement with these discussions, and largely adopt a wait-and-see approach, looking to see how the politics will play out and whether the post-2015 agenda as a whole gathers momentum. Nobody wants to have their ideas blown out of the water too early, so they engage in consultation

processes through the UN and others, but do not invest significant staff time, intellectual energy and political capital into putting major concrete proposals on the table and championing them.

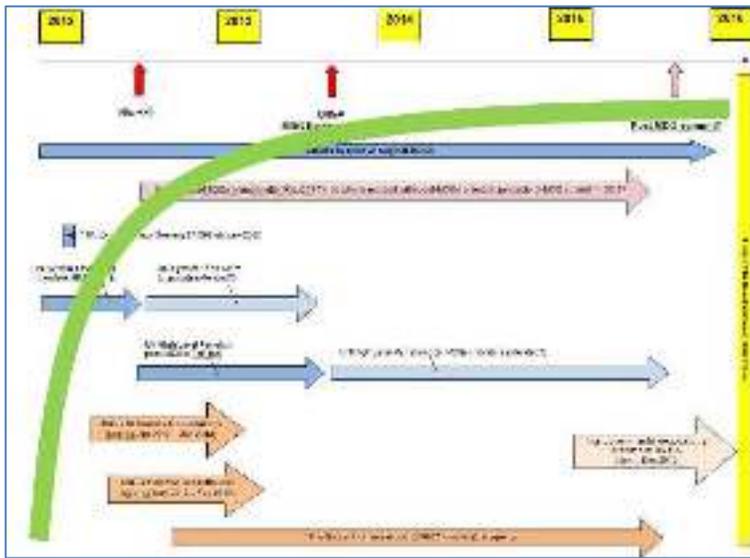
As the MDG deadline starts to loom, in 2014 and 2015, a 'last minute rush' ensues. There is a rush to publish policy papers, to fight for specific advocacy issues and to formalise input to the process. Given how important the MDGs were seen as being, nobody wants to feel like their ideas and issues are being left out and there is a high cachet to having 'impact' on the process.

When 2015 arrives, there is so much to read that nobody has time to read what everyone else is saying. Actors spend most of their time negotiating their own positions internally and with their coalitions. They have little time to listen to the views of others, to negotiate with those whose views are in opposition, or to step back and look at the big picture.

Having spent three years having broad discussions, very little time is left to broker a final agreement. The UN is left with a terrible choice: Either to miss the 2015 deadline and prolong negotiations, leaving the post-MDG agenda in limbo whilst the political urgency around decision-making fades away; or to appoint a small group to take the tough decisions in an exclusive way, attracting the same furore of elite capture that surrounded the original MDGs. The path of least resistance is to extend the deadline – and negotiations of the post-MDG agenda drag out to 2016, 2017 or beyond.

In the "last minute rush" scenario, the chances of agreeing a strong and legitimate successor to the MDGs are minimal. If the negotiations extended and there is no clear, genuine deadline imposed, the chances are that actors will drift away from the table. The impetus will be lost and the energy around the original MDGs fades away.

2. "All things to all people"



In this scenario, consultations and dialogue processes that take place in 2012 and early 2013 are effective and high quality. They are broadly recognised as inclusive and participative processes, which include people living in poverty and all the key stakeholder groups. Any concerns around the legitimacy of these processes are minor.

Because confidence in these consultation processes is high, agencies and individuals commit significant time, resources and intellectual energy to engaging in them fully. Even those who are sceptical recognise that they need to get their ideas

out there independently. Numerous concrete proposals, policy positions and ideas are put forward in advance of the UN MDG review summit in September 2013, and these come from a healthy array of sources.

After the September 2013 summit, efforts begin to whittle down the different concrete ideas and proposals so that a clear and focused successor to the MDGs can be agreed by the end of 2015.

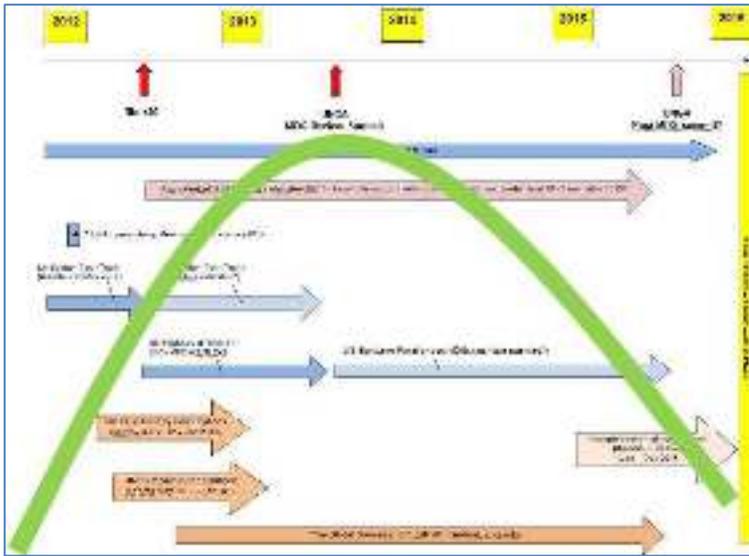
But the 'whittling down' process becomes very difficult. There is no consensus on which issues can be left out of a new framework, and the numerous stakeholders who were engaged in order to generate ideas each focus on championing their own issues. The legitimacy that was associated with the consultation processes becomes a barrier for anyone seeking to exclude issues from a final framework.

Looking for the ultimate legitimate decision-making forum, the UN attempts to broker agreement through an intergovernmental process – bringing in representatives from all 193 countries to finalise a text. But there is not enough strong leadership or political courage to make the tough decisions. The eventual agreement is long and unclear – with an extensive list of issues framed as 'priority'. But many of those advocating on post-MDGs walk away from the negotiations happy, thinking they have "got their issues in".

Over subsequent years, however, the post-MDG agreement fails to provide anything like the shared direction of the original MDGs. Because they encompass a long list of issues (which different groups emphasise in different ways) post-MDGs are not easily communicated or understood. They quickly lose political momentum, and implementation plans do not materialise in practice. Despite being initially applauded, post-MDGs make very little impact on what really happens in the world. In the fifteen or twenty years that follow, the post-MDGs become a lifeless, zombie agreement, which are a major disappointment to all concerned.

In this scenario, a legitimate and inclusive process becomes a victim of its own success – unwittingly reducing the chances of a post-MDG agreement which makes a real difference in the world. Where the post-MDGs become 'all things to all people', there is a likelihood that everyone gets nothing.

3. The bell curve



Arguably **the ideal scenario on post-MDGs is the bell curve**. It represents an open and inclusive process, with a focused and clear outcome in time for the end of 2015.

Here, no conflict is perceived between achieving the MDGs and planning beyond 2015. The consultations and dialogue processes that take place over the next 18 months are effective and high quality, with strong resourcing and capacity in place. They are broadly recognised as legitimate – and because confidence in the processes is high, agencies and individuals commit to engaging in them in a full and meaningful

way. Interest in post-2015 planning is widespread across the international community at large – and consensus builds that there should be some kind of framework to succeed the MDGs, whatever that might be.

The High Level Panel sets out clear deadlines for the process – stipulating that the UN MDG review summit in September 2013 is a key deadline for people to put their ideas on the table; and that a final agreement will be made before the end of 2015. There is a surge of concrete proposals and policy input ahead of the 2013 summit.

With a hive of activity and debate around post-2015 planning taking place amongst officials, activists and other stakeholders, global leaders and politicians at the highest levels want to get in on the action. A few key Heads of State start to see the post-2015 agenda as a major opportunity for them to show global leadership and leave an enduring legacy after their time in office.

These Heads of State bring a decisive focus to discussions, and give their representatives a clear steer and authority to start brokering an agreement. After the September 2013 review summit, a 'whittling down' process begins. Representatives of international governments take the lead in negotiating a successor to the MDGs, and act on the continued input of other key stakeholders, including civil society and people living in poverty. Leaders have the political courage to make tough decisions, but are seen as doing so legitimately. Inevitably the whittling down means that not all issues are included – but interest groups are prepared to step back and see the bigger picture. The negotiations produce a clear and focused outcome which is strong enough to capture the imagination and secure widespread support.

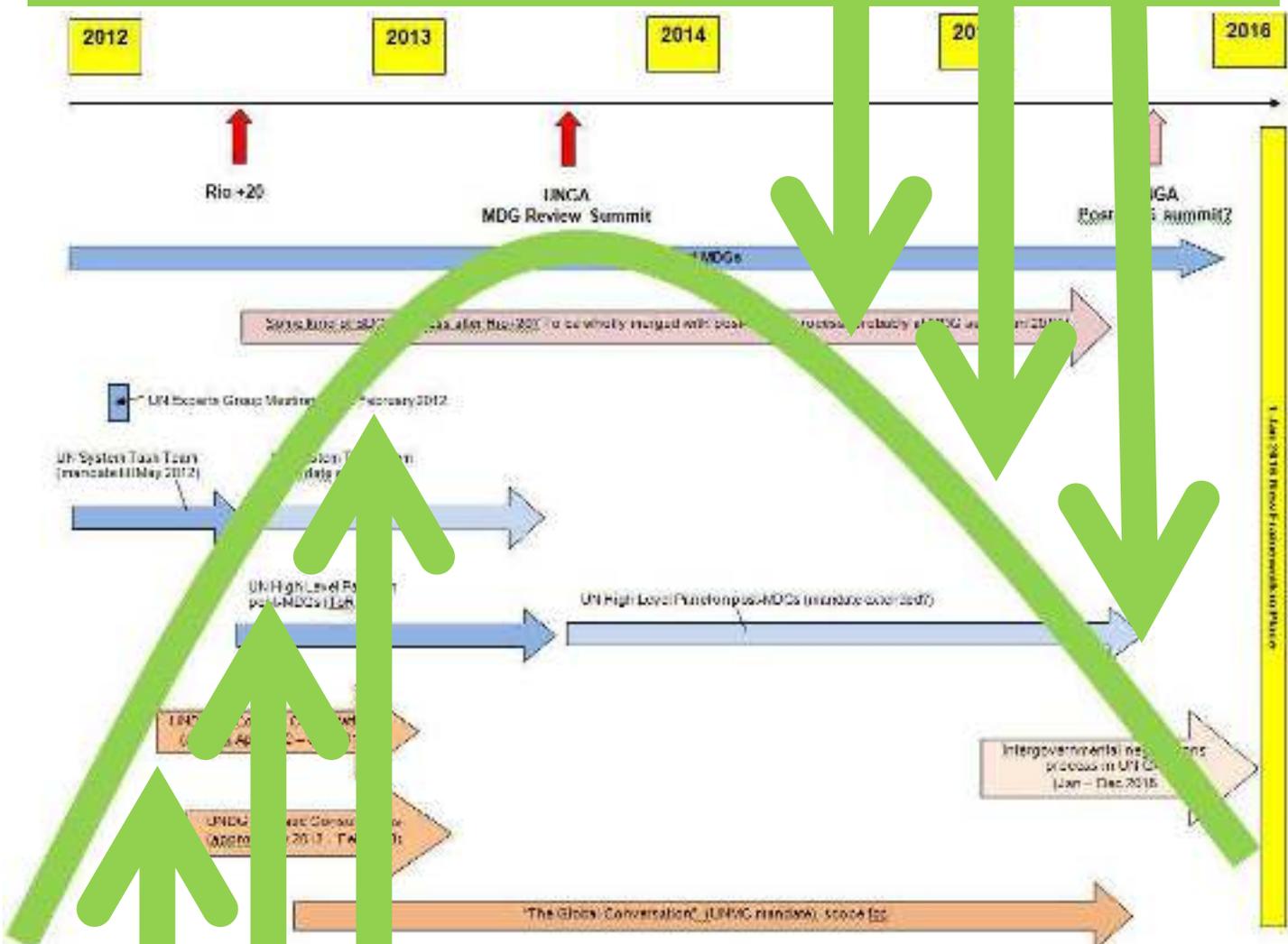
In the years that follow, the post-MDG agreement has enough clarity and focus to deliver real change and progress in the world. It has strong buy-in and legitimacy, and acts as a guiding light for international cooperation and development over the next fifteen or twenty years. When economic crises, natural disasters, shocks or political interests threaten to distract global leaders from their long-term commitment to bring about the world we want, the post-MDG agreement serves to refocus decision-makers and ensure they can be held to account.

What looks most likely to happen in reality?

So looking at the current context, are we likely to see a “last minute rush”, an “all things to all people” framework or a “bell curve”? We can identify a number of key factors for the “bell curve” that will drive an open and inclusive process (increasing the number of proposals on the table and pushing the curve up); and that will lead to a clear and focused outcome (reducing the number of proposals on the table and bringing the curve down again). These are:

A focused outcome will happen if...

- There is a clear, genuine deadline for decision-making.
- Strong leaders have the political courage to make tough choices, and their ‘final word’ is accepted as legitimate.
- There is a good idea on the table, which captures people’s imagination and gathers support.
- Interest groups are prepared to compromise, and put aside their ‘pet issues’ for the sake of the greater good.



An inclusive, participative process will happen if...

- No conflict is perceived between achieving the MDGs and planning beyond 2015.
- The international community at large ‘sees the point’ in proposing a successor to the MDGs, and makes this a priority.
- There is adequate commitment, resourcing and capacity for inclusive and participative processes.
- There are incentives to sharing proposals at an early stage, and disincentives to submitting inputs late.

The tables below describe the current status of these factors:

An open and inclusive, process will happen if...	Is this currently the case? (March 2012)
No conflict is perceived between achieving the MDGs and planning beyond 2015.	In some quarters, but not in others. The case has been made repeatedly that current MDG efforts and post-MDG planning are complementary and supportive, but this is not accepted everywhere. There are still some calls for the 2013 review summit to not have too much emphasis on post-2015.
The international community at large 'sees the point' in proposing a successor to the MDGs, and makes this a priority.	Increasingly, yes. Interest is growing week by week, and it seems that tipping point is being reached whereby events, processes and initiatives on post-2015 are multiplying on an almost daily basis. Some agencies, however, are taking a 'wait and see' approach – and have not prioritised making policy inputs in the immediate future. Many want to wait and see what happens at Rio+20.
There is adequate commitment, resourcing and capacity for inclusive and participative processes.	Not really. Whilst the UN consultations are extremely welcome, there are no concrete details available yet and it is difficult to assess how high quality these processes will be. Whilst there are many proposals and good intentions, there is no concrete resourcing in place to ensure that civil society organisations and people living in poverty are engaged – and many funders are assuming (without evidence) that the UN will take care of all this.
There are incentives to sharing proposals at an early stage, and disincentives to submitting inputs late.	No. With no official deadlines attached to the process, actors are generally keeping proposals close to their chests (if, indeed, they have them at all). Whilst there is some talk of 'first mover advantage', most actors seem to want to see where others position themselves and how the process plays out before committing to concrete policy outputs.

A clear and focused outcome will happen if...	Is this currently the case? (March 2012)
There is a clear, genuine deadline for decision-making.	No. There is no clarity yet on exactly when the end of the MDG timeline is, or when a new framework need to be agreed (Some say 31 st Dec 2015 but it could also be 1 st Jan 2015 or a final review summit in Sept 2015). There is also no deadline for submitting ideas and proposals on what should come next. It has already been mooted to extend the whole process beyond 2015.
Strong leaders have the political courage to make tough choices, and their 'final word' is accepted as legitimate.	No. Whilst there has been some activity from civil servants, officials and policymakers within governments – no global leaders have yet stepped forward as champions of the post-2015 agenda. There is not yet evidence to suggest that tough choices will be made in a legitimate way – nor is there a concrete official plan for the 'end game' negotiations.
There is a good idea on the table, which captures people's imagination and gathers support.	Possibly. There are a handful of concrete ideas in circulation, and the SDGs have gathered unexpected momentum. But there are major differences of opinion and diverse interests in the debate and these have not been satiated in a single proposal.
Interest groups are prepared to compromise, and put aside their 'pet issues' for the sake of the greater good.	Not yet. There are no signs of this (although arguably it's too early in any case). But there is no consensus yet on what 'the greater good' looks like. The question of what the fundamental purpose of post-MDGs remains unresolved.

As things stand then, the likelihood of a bell-curve scenario is currently looking weak. There is growing interest in post-2015 and the explosion of activity on this agenda is cause for optimism; as is the fact that the UN official process is starting to take shape. However, there are multiple causes for concern.

It is dangerous to assume that the UN consultations will adequately engage civil society voices and people living in poverty, when no details have been released on the specifics and no concrete resourcing is in place for engaging these groups. The current lack of clear and genuine deadlines – either for submitting ideas or for the decision-making process itself, is a major barrier. This prevents those who are increasingly interested in post-2015 planning to make an assessment of what timelines they need to be working to, and fails to create an incentive for sharing concrete proposals early. All of this increases the chances of a ‘last minute rush’ scenario.

It is also concerning that, as of yet, no global leaders have publically indicated that they are seeking to champion the post-2015 agenda. Analytic attention on the process has focused (rightly) on how to ensure inclusion of relevant stakeholders in the debate, but much less thinking has been done on what the end-game negotiations could or should look like. UN sources are steering us to anticipate an *intergovernmental process* brokered through national representatives, and suggest that advocacy should be focused at national level. They are keen to dispel the idea that the High Level Panel, or some other small UN grouping – would end up responsible for drawing up a framework (and hence become an advocacy target). But the lack of high level political leadership, combined with well-founded reticence at the UN to take responsibility for drawing up a final framework, suggest that the ‘whittling down’ process will not be straightforward.

Discussions have quickly gravitated to a concern about which priority issues should be addressed in a new framework – without necessarily having either worked out what the overarching purpose of post-2015 agreement needs to be, nor questioning the assumptions that would underpin different proposals. Groups championing single issues are not publically discussing in what circumstances it would be ok for their issue *not* to be included. As the list of potential priorities grows longer and longer, the absence of high level political leaders in the debate makes it difficult to assess which proposals are realistic.

If this continues to be the case, we will head towards an ‘all things to all people’ agreement – which pleases the various stakeholders in the short term but delivers very little in terms of long term concrete chance. Given the current factors suggesting a ‘last minute rush’ scenario, this weak agreement may not even arrive by the 2015 deadline.

To summarise, there is a lot of work to be done.

There is no sense in which any successor to the MDGs can be assumed. There is still less cause to assume that a successor to the MDGs will be strong and legitimate.

Against this context, the final section sets out CAFOD’s current policy lines.

Part 3: CAFOD's current policy recommendations

CAFOD want to see a strong and legitimate successor to the Millennium Development Goals. This should be generated through an open and inclusive process, with a focused and clear outcome in time for the end of 2015. Our advocacy work will focus on bringing about the "bell curve" scenario.

Our current lines on the issues are laid out below. These are contingent on the current policy context, and on our emerging thinking and listening. These lines expire on 1st August 2012 or if circumstances require us to revisit them sooner.

The prospects for a post-2015 framework look bleak. Is it really worth putting a lot of effort in?

Given how much influence the MDGs had on international policy over the last decade, we know that the potential gains for getting this agenda right are huge. If we win on the post-2015 agenda, we win big. There is too much at stake to give up before the process has even started.

Indeed, there is all to play for as things stand. No concrete decisions have been made and things are changing month by month. Advocacy efforts have been making a clear and concrete impact on the post-2015 agenda up to this point⁶, and there is every reason to believe that civil society organisations like CAFOD will be a valuable part in the debate going forward.

The MDGs played a key role in making development a priority internationally. We may find that without such an international framework, we will find all our advocacy issues struggle to hold ground. Whilst there are problems with the original framework that need to be addressed post-2015, the danger is that "you don't know what you've got till it's gone"⁷.

What are the lessons of the MDGs?

The greatest appeal of the MDGs is their concise, simple structure and clear deadline which helped the world to focus their attention and efforts on one joint aim, halving extreme poverty. Having internationally agreed development goals based on a declaration signed by all UN member countries made the MDGs a valuable advocacy tool to rally governments, donors, civil society and other stakeholders around this common aim. The goals meant that countries could demonstrate that they cared about what happened outside their borders.

On one hand, the notion to address poverty somewhat holistically by including goals on health, education, gender and environment was welcome. On the other hand, the MDGs were heavily criticised for not addressing environmental sustainability and gender equality in an adequate way and for omitting several other issues, such as human rights. The MDGs are also criticized for being too focused on aid flowing from the developed to the developing world and for not addressing the root causes of poverty adequately. There is a question around how a new framework might be relevant in a context where the modest role that official development assistance plays is increasingly acknowledged.

⁶ See Beyond 2015's report of advocacy impact in 2010 (www.beyond2015.org)

⁷ Cf. Duncan Green.

What is the purpose of a post-2015 framework?

The purpose of a post-2015 framework is to ensure that the issues of **great significance to people living in poverty**, and which **collective international efforts** have the most potential to deliver change, are goals at the centre of international policy which **drive actual progress** in the real world.

We are entering into a period of history which is likely to be more tumultuous and unstable than any previous point in the last fifty years. Several decades of economic turmoil, climate chaos, political instability and conflict have been predicted. These sudden shocks and crises will grip the attention of global leaders and policymakers – and the long-term issues of great significance to people living in poverty will be most vulnerable to dropping off the agenda, just when they have the most serious impact on people's lives.

Critically important issues are not always international ones. There are many extremely pressing, urgent concerns that collective international efforts have relatively little potential to deliver change on. To say that these issues should not be part of a post-2015 framework in no way diminishes the fact that these should be priorities at the centre of local, national or regional policy and practice.

Not all critically important issues are of issues of most significance to people living in poverty. Some critically important issues have some kind of impact on the whole global population – and many more are critically important for particular groups. But there is no issue of equal concern to everyone in the world. *Everything matters more to one set of people than another.*

CAFOD believe a post-MDG framework should champion the issues of most significance to people living in poverty, because they have less power than any other social group to defend their interests, and their issues are most vulnerable to the vagaries of political will when ongoing crises during the next fifteen or twenty years cause distractions. They are also most likely to suffer first and hardest from any of the crises that ensue.

Are we talking about another set of goals? Or something else entirely?

CAFOD are talking about another set of goals after 2015. Asking whether or not goals are the right mechanism is an intelligent question – but the reality is that so much ground has been won through the MDGs *because they are goals* that changing to a different modality looks unlikely to work. It is unrealistic to think that the political capital that has been built up around the MDGs could be successfully transferred to an entirely different kind of mechanism. The reality is that political capital would have to be built up from scratch.

There are many things that will happen after 2015. The sky will be blue and the birds will sing. There will be an array of different advocacy tools, ideas and proposals for international cooperation that will compete for success – as they do in any period of history. It's sensible to bear in mind that one of these proposals might become so successful that they eclipse a post-2015 framework – but it is not sensible to consider that absolutely any idea that pertains to international development policy after 2015 is a contender to become the official successor to the MDGs.

What does CAFOD think about the SDGs?

We approach this question with a poverty lens. In a post-2015 context we support the integration of environmental sustainability issues in so far as many people living in poverty are dependent on eco-system services, where collective international efforts are key to delivering change and where goals at the centre of international policy will drive actual progress in the real world. The first draft SDG proposal by Colombia did not satisfy these three criteria very well.

From a theoretical and conceptual point of view, however, putting sustainable development at the heart of a new framework is undoubtedly the right thing to do. Sustainable development was always supposed to be a genuine integration of poverty and environmental concerns – and because many environmental issues are of such great significance to people living in poverty, we believe they should be a core element to a post-2015 framework.

The challenge is that bringing together these issues will make for a more ambitious framework than the MDGs. CAFOD are interested in ensuring that a post-2015 agreement sets priorities at the centre of international policy which drive actual progress in the real world – we would not be satisfied with an agreement that makes sense in theoretical and conceptual terms, but then gets ignored in practice.

The political context in which a post-2015 agreement must be made does not exist yet, and with 2015 still three years away it is premature to make definitive judgements on what is 'too ambitious' and what is 'too much of a compromise'. It is imperative, however, that processes to develop Sustainable Development Goals should not proceed in parallel to processes to think about a successor to the Millennium Development Goals. We suggest that Rio+20 should not go all the way to deliver a full set of SDGs but rather focuses on necessary and helpful groundwork. These efforts should be immediately merged, not least so that those assessing appropriate levels of ambition do so with full information as the political reality emerges.

Should it be a whole world framework?

A post-2015 framework should not be a 'whole world framework' in the sense that it sets goals that apply in the same way to every country in the world. But it should be a framework within which every country will need to take some kind of action.

The framework should focus on issues of the greatest significance to people living in poverty. It should not matter where those people live. Whether you measure poverty by income measures or through multidimensional indicators, we know that the demographics of global poverty have shifted and that a majority of people living in extreme poverty now do so in middle-income countries. It is therefore outdated to imagine that a post-2015 framework should only be relevant to 'poor' countries. That does not mean, however, that it should be applied in an equal and uniform way to all countries.

We also know that one country's actions can cause and exacerbate poverty in another country – and that many aspects of poverty alleviation require collective international action. A defining characteristic of issues to be included in post-MDGs should be that these are issues where collective international efforts have the greatest potential to deliver change. For post-MDGs, we suggest the focus should be on shared problems (i.e. where the causes and remedies are primarily to be found internationally) rather than common problems (which are found in many

countries around the world but where the causes and remedies are primarily found at national level). We suggest that the value-add of an international agreement is greater for shared problems than common ones.

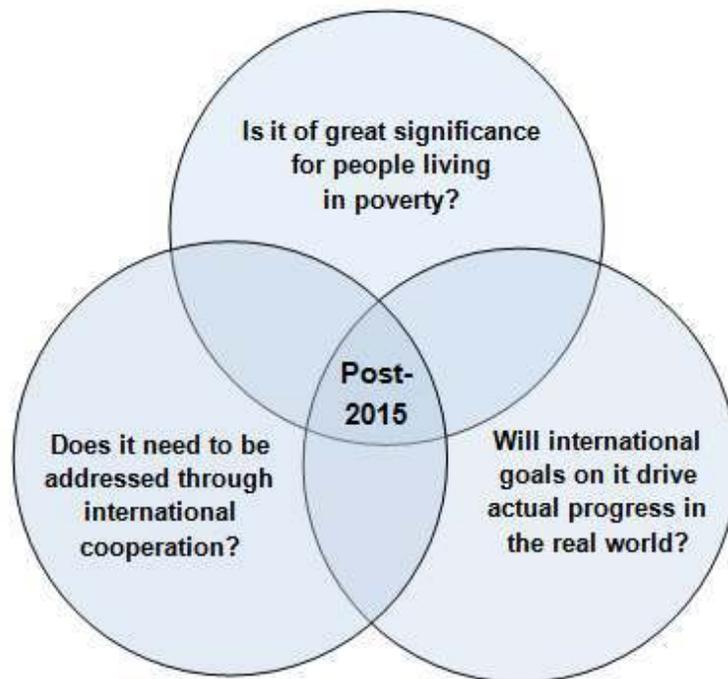
Whilst national governments should have ownership and leadership of how the issues are addressed in their own countries there will also be a clear and defined role for other governments and international agencies because the issues require collective international action. These roles should be defined as appropriate for specific goals on a case by case basis. The principle must be to address the issues wherever people are affected by them – focusing on people, not states.

What issues should be included in a post-2015 framework?

There are a huge number of important issues in the world which are worth considering as potential themes for post-2015 goals. We suggest that it is important not to be too hasty in assuming that we can immediately identify what these are – but propose that all the possible issues are carefully assessed against three criteria:

1. Is it of great significance for people living in poverty?
2. Does it need to be addressed through international cooperation?
3. Will international goals on it drive actual progress in the real world?

These can be represented as a Venn diagram, where issues with the strongest case for inclusion in a post-2015 framework sit at the overlap of all three spheres. Critically important other issues, which occupy different spaces in the diagram, should be vigorously addressed elsewhere.



Like every agency, CAFOD have issues that are particularly close to our hearts and that we would like to see as priorities for international cooperation in the future. For example, our work on inequality (ensuring that poor women and men can effectively contribute and benefit from markets) offers a means to ensure that economies serve the objectives of poverty eradication, sustainable development and wellbeing, rather than just economic growth. Our emerging work on measures of progress beyond GDP (gross domestic product) might offer a potential goal to incentivise green and fair growth which promotes wellbeing.

However, CAFOD's advocacy on post-2015 will step back and look at the big picture, rather than being confined to single issues.

Learning from the tale of Judgement of Solomon (1st Kings 3:16-28), we would not allow a framework which delivers for the greater good, and drives actual progress in the real world on the issues of great significance to people living in poverty, to be torn apart because we didn't get 'our' goal in the final agreement.

What needs to happen next

A strong and legitimate post-2015 framework can only come about if we take urgent action to make it happen. A large number of stakeholders have a part to play, but there are a few agencies and individuals whose action (or inaction) will be particularly critical to whether this agenda succeeds or fails.

Our recommendations are targeted to these groups:

The United Nations

- **Put full details of the consultation processes in the public domain**

There is currently no way of assessing how high quality the consultations will be – and it is impossible for civil society or other stakeholders to figure out how to engage with these processes, plan for their participation or to assess what kinds of complementary dialogue processes they need to put in place to ensure that engagement on post-2015 planning is fully inclusive and effective. The lack of detailed information on these processes risks derailing efforts to organise post-2015 dialogues independently, dangerously raising the stakes around the UN process and making it increasingly unlikely that additional dialogues could be mobilised should problems emerge with any of the UN consultations.

- **Fix some deadlines**

We need clarification on:

- a) when, exactly, the deadline for agreeing a post-2015 framework will be.
- b) when, exactly, stakeholders in the process need to submit their policy input.

As the UN are leading the process, it is for them to delineate what timetable should look like. Without firm deadlines, the 'essay crisis' scenario will become more and more likely. We recommend that the UN explicitly identify the MDG review summit in September 2013 as a deadline for policy inputs on post-2015 planning, so that a good amount of time is allowed for negotiation, reconsidering and whittling down.

- **Ensure that early thinking is done on the 'endgame'**

As part of the consultation processes that take place during the rest of 2012, ensure that there is overt discussion and advice on how exactly the endgame of post-2015 negotiations should take place. It is critical that there is early consensus – or at least a clear sense of the options – on how the final whittling down and negotiation should take place. This is critical to avoiding an 'all things to all people' agreement, which satisfies lobby groups but doesn't actually deliver actual progress in the real world – and to ensure that expectations are realistic.

Make an early announcement on any possible summit in 2015. Will this be in the September, following the pattern of the MDG summits? Ensure that the purpose and format of this meeting is clear as early as possible.

Be clear and explicit about the extent to which the UN is prepared to take on a gatekeeper role and take on the odious task of rejecting issues as part of a 'whittling down' process. If the UN is not expecting to play this part, it is urgent that others are mobilised – and that there is proper buy-in to how this is done.

- **Ensure that both the positive and negative impacts of businesses on locally defined pro-poor development priorities are understood**

UN entities and member states should ensure that the full range of positive and negative impacts of businesses on locally defined development priorities are identified across all stakeholders and in the context of the whole supply chain. Strategies to maximise the benefits, mitigate the costs and to ensure no harm is done can then be agreed, implemented, monitored and learned from.

Donors and charitable foundations

- **Stop assuming that UN is going to pick up the bill**

Several donors and charitable foundations are turning down applications from civil society agencies and coalitions to support initiatives on post-2015, because they are assuming that the United Nations consultation processes have all the issues covered. It seems very unwise to make this assumption when full details on the UN consultation processes are yet to be released – and when the success of these processes will be reliant on the commitment and capacity of Resident Coordinators and delegated UN agencies.

There are dozens of proposals, plans and good intentions to engage widely on post-2015 planning – but there are almost no concrete and fully funded initiatives in place. There is no major initiative, for example, to ensure that people living in poverty are effectively engaged. No serious funding has been provided to ensure that civil society organisations are supported to contribute their perspectives.

If donors and charitable foundations do not stop assuming that the UN is going to take care of all the engagement work, the chances of an effective, inclusive and participative process are very low indeed.

National Governments

- **Make post-2015 planning a priority, and make this commitment explicit**

The UN Millennium Declaration with its universal buy-in was a manifestation of huge political commitment. In order to have similar momentum, the post-2015 development framework needs early and clear interest and support from global leaders. It needs to be clear that governments are taking on the task of coming up with a new and better framework, and that there is enough political courage to make tough decisions necessary. It is welcome that civil servants are working on the details behind the scenes, but a clear endorsement from highest level is urgently needed to build confidence in the process as a whole.

- **Show both leadership and team spirit**

The new post-2015 framework will most likely come out of an intergovernmental process and national governments must have primary ownership of, and accountability for the framework and its delivery. The official negotiations will most likely start early 2015 but until then UN Member Countries need to actively and productively participate in the consultations and preparatory work. It is a good time for governments to show leadership within country groups, to instigate new alliances and prepare the ground for constructive teamwork across the world.

National governments have a key role in ensuring meaningful stakeholder engagement at country-level. Consulting with a set of stakeholders needs thorough planning and preparation – and it ensuring that the perspectives of those living in poverty are included requires particular investment and thought. National governments should help facilitate carefully prepared and timely in-country engagement work. They should ensure that the outcomes of these processes are seriously considered as the policy positions of national governments are developed.

Civil society

- **Join the Beyond 2015 campaign**

Beyond 2015 is a global civil society campaign, pushing for a strong and legitimate successor framework to the Millennium Development Goals.

Whilst participating organisations have a range of views regarding the content of a post-2015 framework, the campaign unites behind one vision:

- That a global overarching cross-thematic framework succeeds the Millennium Development Goals, reflecting Beyond 2015's policy positions.
- That the process of developing this framework is participatory, inclusive and responsive to voices of those directly affected by poverty and injustice.

Join more than 280 organisations from over 70 countries to work together to bring about this vision. There are a large number of opportunities to get involved in the campaign and to help lead advocacy work at national, regional and international levels. To find out more go to www.beyond2015.org or email twww@beyond2015.org.