

## CIDSE submission to EC Post-2015 framework consultation

September 2012

### Introduction

CIDSE is an alliance of 16 Catholic development agencies in Europe and North America partnering with civil society organisations and social movements across the world. CIDSE advocates a societal model that strives to ensure equity, sustainability and responsibility, shifting away from the currently predominant material conception of being, illustrated by resource and carbon-intensive consumption along with extreme profits and inequality.

CIDSE was cautious in its welcome of the MDGs<sup>1</sup> stressing that the goals could only be achieved if all governments, rich and poor alike, international institutions and civil society share responsibility for meeting them. Yet our monitoring of their implementation over the years and feedback that we have received from partners<sup>2</sup> reveal that a sense of responsibility -and recognition of the role of civil society- was largely absent.

Lack of responsibility, with a corresponding lack of accountability mechanisms to enforce it stands alongside many other issues that have prevented the framework from reaching its limited potential.

In the period immediately preceding the MDGs' 2015 deadline and in preparation of a new framework the EU must take account of the lessons implementation has taught us so far. It should leave no stone unturned to secure a new universal post-2015 framework that will promote human well-being, living simply, in community, giving priority to equity, sustainability and responsibility. It is in this spirit that CIDSE submits an evaluation of the MDGs and our views on the post-2015 framework.

### Framework of CIDSE's submission

This submission takes into account the questions in the EU Public Consultation "Towards a post-2015 development framework" and specifically focuses on:

- i. The positive aspects of the MDGs that should be retained in a post-2015 framework
- ii. The negative aspects of the MDGs that should be learnt from, overcome or avoided in a post-2015 framework
- iii. The key principles that the post-2015 framework should be built upon
- iv. The linkages between the formulation of sustainable development goals and the post-2015 framework

---

<sup>1</sup> CIDSE-Caritas Internationalis, International Campaign on the Millennium Development Goals, October 2003.

<sup>2</sup> While some of references to partner reporting come from first-hand testimony in meetings and other fora where partners were present, many references of partner's views coming from the publication Pollard A, Sumner A et al. 100 Voices: Southern perspectives on what should come after the Millennium Development Goals. CAFOD UK, March 2011.

## **I. The positive aspects of the MDGs that should be retained in a post-2015 framework**

### **High level articulation of political intent to take action to reduce poverty**

In the Millennium Declaration Member States committed themselves to meeting certain development targets (a select set of existing commitments from international conferences and economic and social rights). Some of their commitments were turned into the Millennium Development Goals, thereby demonstrating political will to reach concrete outcomes. An international declaration coming out of a Summit of World Leaders accorded the framework, the visibility and high-level support essential to ensure that they would be adequately resourced and their implementation monitored. A new development framework would require a similarly high-level of visibility and political support.

### **Boosting policy attention and resources for framework priorities**

In a number of countries, some of the goals were made explicit in national development policies - even if only on paper in some countries as our partners have reported. Official Development Assistance (ODA) for all sectors combined increased dramatically immediately following the introduction of the MDGs, and the health sector's share of these resources more than doubled.<sup>3</sup>

Furthermore, the framework's emphasis on social sectors helped shift political attention away from an overt prioritisation of macro-economic growth in international political discourse, at least in the early phase of the framework's implementation.

While limiting the framework to focus on a few social sectors only has been one of the great pitfalls of the MDG framework, a post-2015 framework could well prioritise principles such as the dignity of every human being, the progressive and full realisation of all human rights, policy coherence, accountability and subsidiarity with special attention to the need for meaningful consultation of marginalised groups who should be the primary beneficiaries of any development framework. The framework would require duty-bearers to abide by these principles in all their functions. This is addressed in more detail in Section III.

### **Time-bound commitments**

The fact that the MDGs were time-bound commitments made them a valuable instrument for civil society to monitor national and international progress in reaching them and raise public awareness of government commitments. In a framework with no linkages to formal accountability mechanisms, the goals along with their targets and indicators -imperfect as they were- and the 2015 deadline were used to hold governments to account for their MDG commitments.

## **II. The negative aspects of the MDGs that should be learnt from, overcome and avoided in a post-2015 framework**

### **The MDGs lack an approach centred on the dignity of every human being and human rights**

An approach centred on human dignity and human rights would require the framework to integrate fundamental principles of human rights and a structural response to inequality and power distribution. It is widely accepted that basic needs extend beyond material goods to include other intangibles such as the need to be valued or treated with dignity, or to be free to participate politically, culturally, and economically in one's society. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights stated in 2001

---

<sup>3</sup> OECD 2011; United Nations Statistics Division 2012; Post-2015 Health MDGs, Lu et al, 2010.

that poverty is a “human condition characterised by the sustained or chronic deprivation of the resources, capabilities, choices, security and power necessary for the enjoyment of an adequate standard of living and other civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights.”<sup>4</sup> Failing to do so, the MDG framework does not address poverty in all its complexity.

This fundamental failing of the framework led to its many deficiencies. For example while goal 1 limited itself to eradicating extreme poverty, an approach centred on human dignity and human rights would require a commitment to improve people’s overall security and build their resilience to shocks, with particular attention to marginalised groups in society whose vulnerability is intensified due to their marginalisation. This in turn would require national governments and international partners alike to invest a considerably larger amount of resources and ensure policy coherence in all spheres that touch upon a vulnerable individuals’ exposure to such shocks. Similarly, on goal 3 on gender equality, such an approach would require prioritised attention for issues such as access to and control of land and other resources, equality before the law, incidence of domestic violence and rape, and access to health services.

Overall, the lack of an approach centred on human dignity and the progressive and full realisation of all human rights led to the framework’s failure to address the structural causes of poverty. Partners report the following as the main structural issues that were neglected<sup>5</sup>:

- Governance issues: corruption and political instability.
- Implementation and infrastructural problems: lack of money for programme implementation; no roads to facilitate transportation to schools and hospitals.
- Unfair taxation, rules of trade and finance and unfair sovereign debt relief arrangements.
- Peace-building and conflict resolution were excluded from the framework, despite the fact that these problems directly influence development efforts and government planning. Moreover conflict creates unstable environments, as well as leading to other problems such as migration, ecosystem destruction and violence against women. It increases poverty and hunger, as crops may be destroyed either by deliberate actions or by lack of people to farm the land.
- Inequality caused by power imbalance, land and resource concentration.
- Failure to account for different interpretations of development needs in diverse cultural, regional and national contexts.

To this list could be added the lack of attention to those productive sectors in which marginalised groups are most engaged, particularly small-scale agriculture and small enterprises.

### **Lack of accountability for reaching the goals**

Broadly speaking accountability refers to policy-makers and power-holders being held to transparent performance standards against which they are answerable, through democratic institutions and processes, most particularly at national level (e.g. through a democratically elected parliament, or an independent judiciary) and where necessary at higher levels (regional or international). It is through the human rights framework that the duty-bearers can be held accountable since the principles of transparency and accountability are at the core of the human rights framework. The failure of the MDG framework to be centred on human rights meant that it did not integrate valuable links with accountability mechanisms that are built in the human rights framework.

It could be argued that a regular reporting regime was established within the framework to facilitate international comparison and periodic review of progress. The limitation of this regime lies in its voluntary nature. Only a small proportion of countries have volunteered to present their progress to the Economic and Social Council’s Annual Ministerial Review. Beyond identifying good practices, this

---

<sup>4</sup> Poverty and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, E/C.12/2001/10, 10/05/2001.

<sup>5</sup> As reported in Pollard A and Sumner A et al. Hundred Voices, March 2011.

mechanism scarcely allows independent monitoring or evaluation of the reports, nor an opportunity to challenge their findings. Domestically, many national reports lack an in-depth assessment of progress and are not regularly updated.<sup>6</sup> The lack of effectiveness of such a voluntary reporting regime is compounded by the framework's emphasis on quantitative targets and indicators as a means to monitor progress -or the lack of it- in achieving the goals. This issue is explored in more detail below.

### **The MDGs were neither formulated nor implemented in a participatory way**

The process through which the MDG framework developed did not involve civil society or, largely southern governments. It was driven by donor governments, building on the OECD's *Shaping the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: the contribution of development cooperation*. This report stated that it was necessary to 'select, taking into account the many targets discussed and agreed at international forums, a limited number of indicators of success by which our efforts can be judged.'<sup>7</sup>

Not surprisingly the MDGs were regarded with some degree of suspicion by southern governments. In a survey of views of a variety of stakeholders -civil society, government and donor- on the MDGs in Kenya and Zambia, in the early years of the implementation of the framework, there was a general consensus that the Kenyan and Zambian government viewed the MDGs as something 'cooked up' by the outside world to which they must respond - or at least give the appearance of doing so.<sup>8</sup>

With little participation in formulating the framework of southern governments, let alone their local counterparts and civil society, the ability and -sometimes- willingness of actors at the appropriate levels of implementation have been clearly mixed. Partners report a range of problems, the roots of which lie primarily in the top-down nature of the conceptualisation and formulation of the MDGs:

- It was mostly international agencies that pushed the MDGs strongly, and made them a central focus of their policies, almost to the exclusion of other issues considered to be of higher priority by partners. Consequently, the MDGs became 'hoops' to be jumped through in order to gain access to finance, rather than incentives to put in place policy that would have genuinely positive impacts on purported beneficiaries of the MDGs.
- As mentioned above, the advent of the MDG framework has led to a greater emphasis on -and resource flow to- particular social sectors rather than addressing the structural causes of poverty, social conflict and regional differences.
- While they were incorporated into national development plans and were articulated by civil society organisations, concrete action is taken by regional and local governments which were kept outside this process.

Zegeye Asfaw from Hundee-Oromo Grassroots Development Initiative in Ethiopia sums up the problem very effectively: "The planning including the budget allocation is characterised by a top-down approach. Even though Ethiopia has adopted a planning framework that really brought elements of the MDGs to the picture, there was a lukewarm participation of other development partners and loss of focus as in the lower levels of administrative structure. This has put the effectiveness of the framework under question."<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Centre for Economic and Social Rights, The Millennium Development Goals: Who's Accountable?, November 2011.

<sup>7</sup> DAC/OECD (1996) Shaping the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: The Contribution of Development Co-operation, [www.oecd.org](http://www.oecd.org).

<sup>8</sup> CIDSE-Caritas Internationalis, More than a Numbers Game? Ensuring that the Millennium Development Goals Address Structural Injustice, September 2005, [www.cidse.org](http://www.cidse.org).

<sup>9</sup> As reported in Pollard A and Sumner A et al. Hundred Voices, March 2011.

## **Skewed lines of responsibility**

Many of the development challenges that the MDGs were designed to tackle -from poverty and hunger to environmental degradation- require global responses, touching upon essential issues of global governance: who makes decisions; who controls resources etc. Such global responses could not be achieved in a framework focussing only on certain categories of countries.

Developing countries were considered to be the key duty-bearers to deliver development outcomes in the MDG framework. Consequently MDG8 -a global partnership for development which potentially could have had an impact on global governance- was instead limited to assisting developing countries in achieving the seven other goals through the classic channels of aid, trade and financial liberalisation, and assisting poor countries to achieve debt sustainability.

The limitations of this approach were well illustrated when the global financial crisis struck in 2008. The impacts of the continuing crisis are hard to quantify but it is clear that achieving the MDGs have received a considerable setback because of it. The MDG framework did not factor in the crucial importance of financial regulation and the particular responsibilities of economically advanced countries herein for reaching its goals. The framework therefore remains powerless in the face of the havoc the crisis has wreaked on poor countries' capacity to fulfil their MDG commitments.

## **Setting quantified targets and indicators the international level ignored differences and over-simplified poverty's complex causes**

The simple and straight-forward targets and indicators of the MDG framework are often attributed to be one of its key strengths in their ability to be easily explained and understood by the general public and to monitor progress - or the lack of it. Indeed at the international level this might have been the case thanks to unified global civil society action, such as the 'Global Call to Action against Poverty' and the concerted UN-run Millennium Campaign. Yet partners report that at the national and local level there was no awareness about the goals beyond a group of specialists. This then raises the question whether the simplicity of the framework was worth the cost of over-simplifying the multi-dimensional issues that perpetuate poverty and discrimination.

Through setting targets on the basis of quantifiable indicators, rather than also using qualitative means of measurement, the framework promoted a narrow approach to poverty reduction. As pointed out above, the definition of poverty cannot be reduced to a single matter of monetary thresholds.

The emphasis on aggregate measurements has meant that a country might be 'on track' to meet a particular goal but that huge disparities may exist within a country which are totally masked, for example between gender, caste, ethnic or other community divisions, age groups, geographic location or income quintiles. Furthermore, countries may have made enormous progress, such as a number of African countries, but may still be missing the targets and as a result be criticised. Additionally, there was a lot of ambiguity about the level (global, national, regional or local) at which results had to be measured. Some have even questioned the accuracy of measurements given the desire of countries to prove progress has been made. Certainly, one could argue that the emphasis on quantification was exaggerated, to the near-exclusion of all other forms of measurement.

Experts and practitioners have also criticised the framework for setting goals at the international level. In an article in the Journal of Human Development in 2004, Richard Jolly argued that such goals tended to cement top-down planning and implementation processes at the cost of bottom-up participation, in which the community or other local groups set their own priorities for developments. Global goal setting he pointed out, could also lead to a bias in the selection of development goals in

favour of those that are internationally favoured by experts or donors as opposed to those that make the most sense in the national context of individual countries.<sup>10</sup>

### **III. The key principles that the post-2015 framework should prioritise**

#### **The post-2015 framework must be centred on the fundamental recognition of the dignity of every human being and human rights, with particular attention to the poorest and most vulnerable**

Inspired by our vision informed by Catholic Social Teaching, CIDSE is convinced that the dignity of every human being should be the starting point for sound policy making in areas ranging from participation, policy design and analysis, monitoring and accountability. The principle of human dignity is already recognised by the international community in the UN Charter which declares: “We, the peoples of the United Nations, determined...to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person... have resolved to combine our efforts to accomplish these aims.”

An approach centred on human dignity and human rights brings norms of non-discrimination and equality to ensure that aggregated approaches do not neglect individuals. Likewise, it gives teeth to vague terms such as ‘participation’ and ‘empowerment,’ and brings greater specificity in relation to particular civil and political rights.

Illustrated in the table<sup>11</sup> below are concrete examples of human rights obligations correlating to principles that the post-2015 framework must be built upon.

<i>Universality and inalienability</i>	All people everywhere in the world are entitled to human rights. They cannot be given up or taken away.
<i>Indivisibility</i>	Human rights are indivisible. Whether of a civil, cultural, economic, political or social nature, they are all inherent to the dignity of every human person. Consequently, they all have equal status as rights, and cannot be ranked, a priori, in a hierarchical order.
<i>Inter-dependence and Inter-relatedness</i>	The realisation of one right often depends, wholly or in part, upon the realisation of others. For instance, realisation of the right to health may depend, in certain circumstances, on realisation of the right to education or of the right to information.
<i>Equality and Non-discrimination</i>	All human beings are entitled to their human rights without discrimination of any kind, on the grounds of race, colour, sex, ethnicity, age, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, disability, property, birth or other status as explained by the human rights treaty bodies.
<i>Participation and Inclusion</i>	Every person and all peoples are entitled to active, free and meaningful participation in, contribution to, and enjoyment of civil, economic, social, cultural and political development in which human rights and fundamental freedoms can be realised.
<i>Accountability and Rule of Law</i>	States and other duty-bearers are answerable for the observance of human rights. In this regard, they have to comply with the legal norms and standards enshrined in human rights instruments. Where they fail to do so, aggrieved rights-holders are entitled to institute proceedings for appropriate redress before a competent court or other adjudicator in accordance with the rules and procedures provided by law.

Source: UN<sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Jolly, R. (2004) Global Development Goals: the United Nations experience, *Journal of Human Development*, 5/1.

<sup>11</sup> CIDSE-Caritas Internationalis, More than a Numbers Game, 2005.

## **Policy coherence**

Corresponding to the fundamental recognition of the dignity of every human being, is the responsibility of every individual, in turn, to contribute to the common good, honouring and protecting the rights of all people and to contribute to building the kind of society that protects and nourishes the rights of all. Beyond the individual, the State has the foremost responsibility since the common good is the reason that political authority exists. The State must carry out this responsibility by putting in place institutional while allowing and stimulating informal mechanisms to ensure policy coherence to human rights at all stages of policy design and implementation.

Enforcement of the principle of policy coherence is not just a matter of reviewing policy but also a matter of up-stream shaping of policy and its implementation at the conceptual and design stage. Institutions -local, national, regional or international- responsible for policy conceptualisation, design and implementation in all sectors must be legally required to adhere to their respective human rights obligations. Final responsibility for ensuring greater coherence among policies lies with governments and parliaments, overseen by civil society. National ownership of the entire process is therefore indispensable.

At the international level, international law requires international organisations to interpret their mandates, as far as possible, in harmony with the mandates of other international organisations, and in line with the ultimate goal they have in common.<sup>13</sup> They must, irrespective of differences in economic power and influence, apply their mandates in practice in ways that do not place their members in contradiction with obligations which they have also undertaken in other international instruments and treaties.

Yet abiding by these obligations remains a challenge. As recognised by the report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalisation on Policy Coherence: “In practice, the multilateral system is underperforming in terms of ensuring coherence among economic, financial, trade, environmental and social policies to promote human development and social progress (...) international rules and policies have favoured measures for market expansion over economic and social policies to achieve a pattern of globalisation that benefits all countries and all people.”

Being legally required to ensure policy coherence to development, the European Union is in a unique -and in some ways duty-bound position- to promote the principle of policy coherence in the post-2015 framework.

## **Universal application based on common but differentiated responsibilities and solidarity principles**

Learning lessons from the MDG framework, the post-2015 framework must be universally applicable. Two important principles need to be stressed in this regard:

1. **The principle of common but differentiated responsibilities:** Acknowledging countries' differential present and historical contribution to environmental degradation, and therefore-differentiated obligations to act was one of the key elements of the Rio Declaration from 1992. This principle is mainstreamed in climate negotiations and is a key element of the Kyoto Protocol. There is no reason why the principle cannot be extended to social and economic development. These were recognised to be two of the three pillars of sustainable development in the Rio Declaration in 1992 and this recognition was reiterated by the outcome document of Rio+20.

---

<sup>12</sup> The Human Rights Based Approach: Towards a Common Understanding Among the UN Agencies, 7 May 2003.

<sup>13</sup> Report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalisation on policy coherence, 2007, Para 603.

Building the post-2015 framework on this principle would go beyond applying this principle at the international level. It would apply to other levels as well. For instance in line with this principle, taxation whether at national or global level would be based on the ability to pay: transnational companies, rich individuals or holders of large concentrations of resources -land or other- would be taxed accordingly.

2. **Solidarity principle:** In the Millennium Declaration, governments listed solidarity as one of certain fundamental values essential to international relations in the twenty-first century: “Global challenges must be managed in a way that distributes the costs and burdens fairly in accordance with basic principles of equity and social justice. Those who suffer or who benefited least deserve help from those who benefit most.”

In line with this principle, the somewhat paternalistic and charitable notion of development assistance that prevails will have to be replaced by the notion of burden sharing between rich and poor countries. Such a model would be consistent with state obligations within the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights to ‘take steps, individually and through international assistance and co-operation, especially economic and technical, to the maximum of its available resources.’ (Art. 2)

### **Participation, with special attention for vulnerable and excluded groups**

As mentioned above, the responsibility to contribute to the common good is a corresponding principle to that of human dignity. On the basis of these two principles, the State must encourage initiative, respect the freedom and inculcate responsibility in each level of society -starting with the individual and intermediate social grouping. Subsidiarity is a core principle that needs to be respected in this regard. According to this principle political decisions must always be taken at the lowest possible level-administrative and political, and as close as possible to the actors who will be impacted by them. In the development context, subsidiarity asserts that policies are more successful when they are designed and owned at the level at which they are implemented.

Special efforts are required to ensure that consultation processes are designed to cater to the specific needs of groups traditionally excluded from decision-making to enable them to participate. While suffering marginalisation at multiple levels as a part of these groups, women play a key role in designing the survival strategies of these groups. Women are therefore essential actors to be consulted in designing policy for the benefit of impoverished and marginalised sections of a society. Beyond participation in decision-making on social policies, decision-making processes for economic policies also need to become transparent and inclusive. As mentioned above economic policy and financial regulation are important factors that have an impact on the capacity of countries to deliver on their development commitments. Policies in these areas are often subject to capture by the financial sector and therefore particular attention should be paid to ensure that processes for their design are transparent and participatory.

The principle of subsidiarity needs to be reflected at the international level as well. Enabling participation of communities and peoples in local and national policy-making processes would be rendered meaningless if the policy space enjoyed by their governments at the international level is so limited as to prevent any effective policy debate among different options. Correcting imbalances in representation and participation in the spheres of finance, trade and macro-economic policy decision-making at the global level will therefore be as important as opening up spaces for participation at lower levels.

### **Accountability**

As already pointed out above, accountability is central to democratic governance and respect for human rights as it defines the relationship between the State and citizen, and between the “rights-holder” and “duty-bearer” under human rights law.

To fulfil this function, the post-2015 framework must put an emphasis on building effective mechanisms to ensure accountability at the local level in the first instance. Locally-led monitoring involving all population groups and sectors is indispensable. For this transparency, policy space for authorities to alter policy when so required, independent scrutiny, a vibrant and informed civil society and a gender-sensitive approach, underpinned by the recognition of the dignity of every human being are essential conditions. Similarly, at the national level, these conditions need to be respected and upheld across government and administration and enforced through binding legislation where appropriate.

At the international level for human rights obligations which can be enforced through existing accountability mechanisms (such as Human Rights Monitoring and Reporting, Peer Review Mechanisms, reports on implementation of Multilateral Environmental Agreements) or by following best-practice examples (e.g. human rights commissions or courts), the emphasis within the post-2015 framework should be on strengthening such mechanisms, for instance by making their rulings binding where appropriate. For obligations where there is a gap in effective mandatory accountability mechanisms, such as in the area of Private Sector and Human Rights, the post-2015 framework must require new mandatory mechanisms to be put in place.

#### **IV. The linkages between the formulation of sustainable development goals and the post-2015 framework**

Responding to proposals to formulate ‘Sustainable Development Goals’ in the run-up to Rio+20, CIDSE warned that repeating a tried and failed formula of a framework of limited goals designed largely technocratically would not lay the pathway to secure full and equal enjoyment of human rights. Instead, the international community should strive to formulate a new global, legally-binding, time-bound, over-arching, cross-thematic framework that addresses the interlinked challenges of poverty eradication, environmental sustainability, economic equity, gender equality, climate change, resilience and equitable distribution of limited national resources in ways that uphold human rights obligations.<sup>14</sup>

CIDSE is convinced that the challenges of implementing the sustainable development agenda go hand-in-hand with the imperative to accelerate progress towards development pathways to secure the full and equal enjoyment of human rights within the post-2015 framework. This is a challenge that the Rio+20 outcome document itself acknowledges: “The SDGs must address and incorporate in a balanced way all three dimensions of sustainable development and their interlinkages. They should be coherent with and integrated in the UN Development Agenda beyond 2015, thus contributing to the achievement of sustainable development and serving as a driver for the implementation and mainstreaming of sustainable development in the United Nations systems as a whole.” (Para 246)

This approach is a welcome starting point. Yet important questions remain about the relationship between the SDG and post-2015 frameworks that will need to be resolved if we are to address urgent issues of sustainable development and climate change while upholding human rights obligations.

For CIDSE, some crucial questions that need to be immediately addressed are:

1. **Process:** the SDG framework and post-2015 discussions cover similar or arguably the same set of issues. For instance, the formulation of indicators to supplement GDP touches on all three pillars of sustainable development: environmental protection and economic and social development.

While the Rio+20 outcome document recognises the need for coherence and coordination between the SDG and post-2015 processes, it does not clearly indicate how this will be done,

---

<sup>14</sup> CIDSE Comments and Recommendations on the Zero draft of the outcome document of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development, March 2012.

except for recognising the role of the UN Secretary General at the beginning of the work of the ad-hoc working group.

This lack of clarity runs many risks. One example is the inclusion of the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. The Rio+20 outcome document explicitly links this principle to the SDGs which should be: “universally applicable to all countries while taking in account differential national realities, capacities and levels of development.” (Para 247). Inclusion of this language was the result of long and rigorous negotiation and the question remains whether similar language would survive another long and protracted negotiation in the post-2015 process. Similarly, parallel processes would risk duplicating discussions, overstretaching limited resources of poorer countries and civil society and other problems.

It is therefore of crucial importance and of utmost urgency to prevent such duplication and set a clear road-map that defines how both processes will link-up or join together.

2. **Role of civil society:** the lack of an explicit recognition of the role of civil society and engagement with marginalised groups, create a sense of foreboding of how both processes will unfold.

It is heartening to note that post-Rio+20, in the European Parliament on 5 July 2012 Commissioner Potočnik expressed the desire to deepen the dialogue with civil society. This is a clear signal which will need to be sent to peers strongly and unequivocally to ensure that civil society -and specifically those traditionally excluded from consultation processes- are able to participate meaningfully and effectively .

A related issue cited above is the challenges that two parallel processes pose to civil society. Aside from requiring a stretch of limited resources, parallel processes would further cement divides between civil society that classically advocates on environmental themes and those that advocate on economic and social development themes. Considering the cross-cutting nature of both processes, the emphasis should be on designing different, more cross-cutting types of consultation. *The People's Summit for Social and Environmental Justice in defence of the commons* that ran parallel to the official Rio+20 Conference was a pioneering endeavour in such a cross-cutting dialogue. Such processes should be strengthened and given the official recognition, support and cooperation they need to weigh-in effectively on official discussions.

3. **Financial resources to support two parallel frameworks:** the commitment to mobilise financial resources, particularly for developing countries to achieve the SDGs is crucially important. Closer to reality, the stated intention to explore mechanisms to finance sustainable development is a sign of current times wherein traditional donors are increasingly hard-put to fulfil existing and new financial commitments. In this context, questions remain whether such an exercise can be realistically duplicated for the post-2015 framework -especially in a situation of progressively lower levels of official development assistance.

## Conclusion

By launching a consultation on the post-2015 framework, the European Commission has sent out a welcome signal that it is committed to a thorough discussion on the formulation and content of the framework.

In the first instance, it must honestly and carefully take account of all the lessons of the MDG framework’s design and implementation.

Finally, in its discussions on post-2015, it would be well worth the while of the European Union to take account of calls for the post-2015 approach to mark a clear departure from previous approaches to development. In doing so it must take account of the immediate threat to our future posed by climate

change, environmental pollution and the risk of resource scarcity alongside growing inequality and the persistence of unsustainable patterns of consumption of established and newly industrialised countries supported by an outdated GDP growth paradigm. The new approach will also have to address a world where the donor-map is shifting away from traditional donors. Most importantly, it will have to take account of a growing and vocal civil society as well as the significant people's movements that have proven capable of overthrowing undemocratic regimes such as in the Arab world and challenging established powers such as the Occupy Movement has.

Summing up, the recommendations of this submission regarding a post-2015 framework are:

**1. Positive elements of the MDG framework should be taken over in a post-2015 framework:**

- A new development framework would require a similarly high-level of visibility and political support as the MDGs enjoyed.
- Just as prioritisation was a hall-mark of the MDG framework, a post-2015 framework could well prioritise certain principles, requiring duty-bearers to abide by them in all their functions.
- Time-bound framework.

**2. The negative aspects of the MDGs should be learnt from, overcome or avoided in a post-2015 framework:**

- Lack of an approach centred on human dignity.
- Lack of accountability.
- Top-down approach to design and implementation.
- Skewed lines of responsibility.
- Quantified targets and indicators set at the international level ignored differences and oversimplified poverty's complex causes.

**3. The Post-2015 framework should prioritise some fundamental principles:**

- The fundamental recognition of the dignity of every human being, with particular attention to the poorest and most vulnerable.
- Policy coherence to human rights.
- Universal application based on common but differentiated responsibilities and solidarity principles.
- Subsidiarity with a particular emphasis on participatory processes that specifically involve vulnerable and excluded groups.
- Accountability.

**4. Considering the many interlinkages between the processes to formulate the SDGs and the post-2015 framework:**

- A clear road-map is needed to define how both processes will link-up (or join together).
- The EU needs to send a clear signal to peers strongly and unequivocally to ensure that civil society -and specifically those traditionally excluded from consultation processes- are able to participate in both processes meaningfully and effectively. Considering the cross-cutting nature of both processes, the emphasis should be on designing different, more cross-cutting types of consultation.
- Clarity is needed on financial commitments to support the design and implementation of both processes.



### CIDSE Members



Austria



Belgium



Belgium



Canada



England and Wales



France



Germany



Ireland



Italy



Luxembourg



the Netherlands



Portugal



Scotland



Spain



Switzerland



USA

---

**CIDSE** is an international alliance of Catholic development agencies. Its members share a common strategy in their efforts to eradicate poverty and establish global justice. CIDSE's advocacy work covers global governance; resources for development; climate justice; food, agriculture & sustainable trade; and business & human rights - [www.cidse.org](http://www.cidse.org)

**Contact:** Jean Saldanha, [saldanha@cidse.org](mailto:saldanha@cidse.org), +32 (0)2 233 37 53, Rue Stévin 16, B-1000 Brussels

September 2012