

**A C R O N Y M**

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# 2015 and Beyond: Perspectives on Global Development



**wfuna**

World Federation of United Nations Associations

**In this issue**

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**ALICIA ELY YAMIN**

**PAUL POLMAN**

**ALICIA CRAWFORD**

## ACRONYMS USED IN THIS ISSUE

<b>CIVICUS</b>	CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation
<b>CESR</b>	Center for Economic and Social Rights
<b>CSOs</b>	Civil Society Organizations
<b>G77</b>	The Group of 77
<b>GCAP</b>	The Global Call to Action Against Poverty
<b>HLP</b>	High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda
<b>ICTs</b>	Information and Communication Technologies
<b>ICPD</b>	International Conference on Population and Development
<b>IDS</b>	Institute for Development Studies
<b>LGBTI</b>	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered and Intersex
<b>P15A</b>	Post-2015 Development Agenda
<b>MDGs</b>	Millennium Development Goals
<b>NGOs</b>	Non-governmental organizations
<b>OWG</b>	Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals
<b>SDGs</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>SRHR</b>	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNA</b>	United Nations Association
<b>UNDESA</b>	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Program
<b>UNFPA</b>	United Nations Population Fund
<b>UNMC</b>	United Nations Millennium Campaign
<b>WFUNA</b>	World Federation of United Nations Associations

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A photograph of two young children in a field of green plants. One child is holding a green pepper, and the other is reaching into a large sack filled with green peppers. The scene is set in a dirt field with rows of plants.

2	Special Message	BAN KI-MOON
3	Foreword	BONIAN GOLMOHAMMADI
4	2015 and Beyond: Perspectives on Global Development	
6	The World We Want: The Development Agenda Beyond 2015	HELEN CLARK
12	Post 2015: A Global Offensive for Prosperity and a Unique Opportunity for Africa	PRESIDENT ELLEN JOHNSON SIRLEAF
16	Power and Participation in Moving Toward 2015 and Beyond: A View From Civil Society	ALICIA ELY YAMIN
24	Ending Poverty in Our Time	PAUL POLMAN
28	Youth Perspectives on the Post-2015 Development Agenda	ALICIA CRAWFORD
39	Resources	
40	Dialogue	

## Special Message from the Secretary-General of the United Nations



**BAN KI-MOON**  
Secretary-General,  
United Nations

**AS WE APPROACH 2015, THE DEADLINE FOR ACHIEVING** the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), we can be proud of steady progress on many fronts, including reducing poverty, expanding access to improved water sources, increasing primary school enrolment of girls, and lowering child and maternal mortality rates.

These results represent a steadfast commitment to improving the human condition, and a validation of the approach embodied in the MDGs. However, achievements vary among and within countries, with some countries lagging far behind due to instability and conflict. Now we must intensify our efforts. The next three years are critical as we aim to reach all of the MDGs.

Even if we achieve all the Goals, much work will remain. Projections indicate that in 2015 almost 1 billion people will still be living in extreme poverty, mothers will continue to

die needlessly in childbirth, and children will suffer and die from preventable diseases.

That is why we are also focusing our collective thinking on a long-term vision for people and the planet beyond 2015, with human rights at the core. Crafting a post-2015 development agenda presents an opportunity to build on the strengths of the MDGs and address challenges that have since emerged or were overlooked. Sustainable development with its three interconnected economic, social and environmental dimensions will provide the conceptual framework.

To achieve results, we need the broad engagement of civil society around the world. The World Federation of United Nations Associations and UN Associations around the world have been critical to raising awareness about the MDGs and mobilizing action. As we look beyond 2015, this leadership and strong voice will be even more essential to realize our vision. I count on their continued advocacy and example in this effort.

Let us work together to create a just world where all people live with dignity and hope.

**BONIAN GOLMOHAMMADI**

Secretary-General,  
World Federation of  
United Nations Associations

**ANOTHER PECULIAR UN ACRONYM HAS MADE ITS WAY INTO OUR VOCABULARY RECENTLY, P15A,** which stands for Post-2015 Agenda. While the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) has remained a priority for the UN system, there has been a remarkable amount of attention, resources, and momentum focused on the conceptualization of a post-2015 global development agenda that will come into effect once the MDG deadline is reached in 2015.

Everyone has a stake in the proceedings: governments; the UN system; and “major groups” such as business and industry, children and youth, NGOs, indigenous peoples, and—not in the least—the poor of the world. Some of the main “players” leading the P15A planning are the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, the UN General Assembly’s Open Working Group on the Sustainable Development Goals, the Sustainable Solutions Network, the UN Development Group, NGO networks such as Beyond 2015, and the Secretary-General himself. All these actors are involved in a myriad of activities and processes, which, with some innovative coordination, eventually aim to feed into each other to create a unified vision of the future of global development.

As these first few months have already signaled, the coming two years will be inundated with a variety of UN reports, government negotiations, civil society activities, and public awareness campaigns devoted to creating an inclusive and comprehensive global future development framework—P15A. However, many of the substantive discussions are limited to UN staff, diplomats, and NGO representatives. It is our goal to help open this conversation up to general audiences.

The articles in this publication represent an ideal round table on post-2015, featuring a sampling of high-level insider perspectives. We aim to invite the reader into an imaginary UN conference room, where we have gathered leading global opinion makers from different sectors to share their views on the P15A and ask you to think critically about the issues with them.

In this issue, UNDP Administrator Helen Clark shares preliminary results of the UN consultations now taking place to gather input on what the new agenda might look like. Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf focuses on the work of the High-Level Panel she co-chairs and highlights the implications of the P15A on opportunities for development in Africa. Beyond 2015 board member Alicia Yamin addresses the implications and opportunities for civil society involvement in P15A. Unilever chief executive officer Paul Polman references his experience from the corporate sector to suggest how the post-2015 process should differ from that of its predecessors, with an emphasis on boosting global partnerships. Finally, youth activist Alicia Crawford presents an inspiring case for why youth must be at the center of the post-2015 discussions and how best to engage them.

There are some common strands between the articles, including, for example, an emphasis on aiming for clear and measurable targets that, while having poverty reduction at their core, also integrate social and environmental consideration. All the contributors highlight the importance of achieving the MDGs while building on lessons learned from them. Ultimately, all our authors are hopeful that the current processes are casting a wide enough net to satisfy needs for inclusivity and can also be coordinated to achieve necessary results—shaking up “business as usual”. They are optimistic that we are moving toward “the future we want for all.”

*ACRONYM* aims to go beyond information sharing to interaction. In this spirit, we plan to follow up this issue with live webinars and online forums where our readers can discuss their reactions. [www.wfuna.org/acronym](http://www.wfuna.org/acronym)

# 2015 and Beyond: Perspectives on Global Development

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**Helen Clark,  
Administrator of the  
United Nations  
Development Programme**

Helen Clark became the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in April 2009, and is the first woman to lead the organization. She is also the Chair of the United Nations Development Group. Prior to her appointment with UNDP, Helen Clark served for nine years as Prime Minister of New Zealand.

**H. E. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf,  
President of Liberia**

Currently serving her second term, President Sirleaf is the first elected female head of state in Africa and has been in office since January 2006. President Sirleaf was jointly awarded the 2011 Nobel Peace Prize with Leymah Gbowee of Liberia and Tawakel Karman of Yemen. She is one of the three Co-Chairs of the UN High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

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**Alicia Ely Yamin,  
Beyond 2015 Executive  
Committee Member**

Alicia Ely Yamin is a Lecturer on Global Health and Director of the Health Rights of Women and Children Program at the

FXB Center for Health and Human Rights at the Harvard School of Public Health (USA). She is Chair of the Center for Economic and Social Rights (CESR) and represents CESR on the Executive Committee of Beyond 2015.



HELEN CLARK



PRESIDENT ELLEN  
JOHNSON SIRLEAF



ALICIA ELY YAMIN



PAUL POLMAN



ALICIA CRAWFORD

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**Paul Polman,  
Chief Executive Officer  
of Unilever**

Paul began his career at Procter & Gamble in 1979, holding many senior executive positions. He moved to Nestle in 2005, where he was the Chief Financial Officer and Executive Vice President for the Americas. Paul

has been the Chief Executive Officer of Unilever since January 2009. He is Vice-Chairman (and the next Chairman) of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development, a member of the International Business Council of the World Economic Forum, "a member of the European Resource Efficiency Platform Working

Group, and serves on the Board of the UN Global Compact. Paul is Chairman of the Perkins School for the Blind International Advisory Board and serves as President of the Kilimanjaro Blind Trust. He is a member of the UN High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

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**Alicia Crawford,  
Youth Advocate**

Alicia is currently working as the national manager for the Youth & Schools Program for the Global Poverty Project and resides in Melbourne, Australia. Her greatest passion centers on getting young people interested in issues affecting them, as well as finding ways to

engage youth to make positive and meaningful change in their world. She has created and facilitated many youth leadership and development programs and has worked and volunteered with a range of youth-led and youth-serving community-based education and environmental organizations both in Australia and overseas including Restless Development,

Australian Volunteers International, the Australian Youth Climate Coalition, the High Resolves Initiative, and the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA).



**HELEN CLARK**  
UNDP ADMINISTRATOR

**BY FOCUSING GLOBAL ATTENTION** on clear and measurable human development outcomes, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have helped improve the lives of many. When their target date of 2015 is reached, the agenda that follows should build on their achievements, but be even more ambitious in seeking to build a better future for all.



“Because we are poor, and because we live in slums, nobody trusts us, nobody believes in us. We don't have money; our jobs are illegal; our communities are illegal; our connections to electricity and water are illegal. We are the city's big headache. That is the perception of people outside the communities.”

RUBY, THE PHILIPPINES



What is now being called the Post-2015 Development Agenda can be seen as the next step in implementing the vision of the Millennium Declaration of 2000. The United Nations (UN) is facilitating three important consultations on what the new agenda might look like. They are:

- National level dialogues on post-2015 — being held in more than 70 countries.
- Eleven consultations around themes ranging from health and education to equality, governance, energy, environment, and conflict and security.
- An online global conversation through social media, reaching very large audiences.

Feedback from the consultations suggests that better governance is seen as essential for driving development forward. In the poll, conducted through the My World Web site, for example, honest and responsive government is receiving the second largest number of votes, after education, as the most important issue people want tackled in the post-2015 agenda.

The provision for education, clean water, and health services is rightly seen as very important. As well, tackling the global jobs crisis, growing inequalities, natural resource scarcity, and climate change are frequently raised as requiring effective responses from governments.



UN PHOTO/KY CHUNG

There is also some interest in finding ways of developing indicators for governance, equality, and peace and security — all referenced in the Millennium Declaration. The jury is out, however, on whether and how such areas could be incorporated in the post-2015 agenda.

The consultations by theme are engaging experts, civil society representatives, and governments. The eleven themes covered are conflict and fragility, education, energy, environmental sustainability, food security, governance, growth and employment, health, inequalities, population dynamics, and water. These consultations are cohosted by governments from north and south and supported by specialized UN agencies.

The objective of the thematic consultations is to build consensus on a way forward. They have focused on two main challenges: the ongoing



MY World is a global survey for citizens led by the UN and its partners. It aims to capture people's voices, priorities and views, so that global leaders can be informed as they begin the process of defining the new development agenda for the world. Through creative online and offline methods, MY World asks individuals which issues they think would make the most difference to their lives. The results will feed into the UN and intergovernmental processes leading up to 2015. [www.myworld2015.org/?partner=wfun](http://www.myworld2015.org/?partner=wfun)

“We start collecting water between 4 a.m. and 5 a.m. every day, including on weekends. It is difficult carrying water while dodging cars and trucks as we try to cross busy streets....When we come back from collecting water, we are always very tired.”

#### ANONYMOUS GIRLS, MOZAMBIQUE

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moral imperative of eradicating poverty in all its forms and the need to ensure that development and poverty eradication take place within the natural limits of our planet.

Although it is too early to begin mapping out new goals, some preliminary results have emerged.

In growth and employment, the quality of economic growth has come to the fore, posing the question: What kind of growth could generate secure and productive employment for all? The discussions have also emphasized the importance of national social protection systems and of coherent international policies in the areas of trade and migration.

In health, discussions focused on the need to broaden the current MDGs approach to include tackling the drivers of preventable illness, including of noncommunicable diseases, and have highlighted the need both to strengthen health systems and focus on the social determinants of health.

Discussions on education have focused on the quality of education. Primary education is clearly a fundamental building block, but more attention needs to be given to the transition to the secondary and tertiary levels.

On governance, a range of stakeholders across all regions is calling for the post-2015 agenda to be aligned with international human rights standards and principles, including civil and political rights, and to build on existing accountability mechanisms.

The issue of gender equality has come up in all consultations. In my view, it should be a goal in

its own right, but gender equality should also pervade all the goals.

Although the consultation on environmental sustainability has begun more recently, there is an appetite for promoting new ways of producing and consuming and better governance of our common resources, nationally and internationally.

Poverty and human suffering remain high. Overall, absolute poverty has dramatically dropped in the last decade, and the MDGs' target of halving poverty has already been met. This represents a tremendous expansion of opportunity and reduction of human suffering, but the job needs to be finished. In spite of huge progress, one in every four individuals globally still lives on less than \$1.25 a day. In some places, the absolute number of poor people is increasing.

The pressures on our planet are increasing. More frequent extreme weather events directly affect the security of people, and increase the price volatility of food. We are using natural resources at an unprecedented rate, polluting our commons, and undermining ecosystems and their biodiversity. Projections tell us that in all these areas, in a business-as-usual scenario, the situation will dramatically deteriorate.

In early 2012, a UN-wide Task Team, drawing on technical input from the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, World Trade Organization and the International Organization for Migration, began working on a first report on post-2015 for the Secretary-General, producing a report titled, “Realizing the Future We Want for All.” It proposes that the future framework first focuses on “finishing the job” of the MDGs: eradicating income

Through the consultations, the UN hopes to help compose a global picture of what the world's governments and people want for their future.

poverty, reaching the levels of developed countries for maternal and child mortality, eradicating hunger, and achieving education for all and gender equality.

It also argues that achieving the MDGs, while crucial, will not be enough to respond to the challenges we now face. The Task Team report proposes an agenda organized along four key principles: inclusive social development, inclusive economic development, environmental sustainability, and peace and security. This approach is consistent with the principles of the Millennium Declaration, which set out a vision of freedom from want and fear for present and future generations, and builds on the three pillars of sustainable development.

The report argues that any future framework should recognize and address broader sustainable development challenges, such as those highlighted in the Rio Declaration: inequalities, access to energy, water, sustainable agriculture, and food security. There seems to be a broad consensus on integrating these challenges, with a view to keeping future development within our planetary boundaries.

The report also proposes that there should be ample room for national adaptation of future goals, in order to facilitate empowerment by countries, and to acknowledge different starting points.

Some question whether it will be possible to bring two seemingly separate processes together: one on post-2015 to build on and succeed the MDGs, and the other on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a follow up to the 2012 Rio Conference.



This artificial distinction needs to be overcome quickly, as the two cannot be separated.

The MDGs are in fact SDGs (albeit not covering the full range of areas required for sustainable development). How can a society — national or global — be sustainable if children cannot go to school and have the prospects of good jobs, if communities are threatened by disease, and if pervasive inequalities tear at their fabric?

## There are reasons for optimism:

First, the Rio Declaration stated that the SDGs should be “coherent with and integrated into the United Nations Development Agenda beyond 2015.” There is strong government support for one framework.



A view of mangrove shoots planted by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and others on Tarawa, an atoll in the Pacific island nation of Kiribati. Mr. Ban made an official visit to the area to discuss local people's concerns about the effects of climate change on this low-lying land.

UNPHOTO/ ESKINDER DEDEBE

Second, the High Level Panel of Eminent Persons on Post-2015 is due to report at the end of May 2013, while the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals is due to report between September 2013 and September 2014. Our hope and expectation is that these groups will report in a sequenced way, building on each other's findings and helping the consensus on the post-2015 development framework consolidate.

Third, there seems to be a growing consensus on the necessity to achieve a common framework, keeping poverty reduction at its core, while also focusing on sustainable development issues and new challenges.

Through the consultations, the UN hopes to help compose a global picture of what the world's governments and people want for their future.

Although we still have a long road to travel to reach a consensus on the post-2015 agenda, I am optimistic about reaching an outcome that unites the global community around clear development goals. ■



UN PHOTO/STUART PRILL

# Post-2015: A Global Offensive for Prosperity and a Unique Opportunity for Africa

**H.E. ELLEN JOHNSON SIRLEAF**  
PRESIDENT OF LIBERIA

**SINCE SEPTEMBER 2012**, I, along with President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono of Indonesia and Prime Minister David Cameron of the United Kingdom, have had the honor of cochairing the High-Level Panel (HLP) set up by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon. Our broad mandate is to carry out consultations and provide recommendations for a new global framework for development to succeed the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which expire in 2015.



Local boys peek inside the new clinic in Kuma Garadayat, which was constructed by the African Union-UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID). This clinic is one of six development projects, known as Quick Impact Projects, in the areas of education, sanitation, health, community development, and the empowerment of women. The projects (the clinic, a women's center, and several schools) have been implemented by UNAMID peacekeepers from Senegal.

UN PHOTO/ ALBERT GONZÁLEZ FARRAN

With only six weeks left in the process, the Panel has identified and concretized its vision. We have identified the most pressing global development challenges, taking stock of the legacy and continued relevance of the MDGs. The Panel recognizes that despite challenges, the MDGs have helped galvanize efforts, accelerate problem solving, mobilize resources, and refine global and national priorities, while initiating action at global, regional, and local levels.

Much more needs to be done, notwithstanding the successes realized under the MDGs. More than one billion people continue to live in

extreme poverty. In many places, access to basic healthcare, decent education, and basic infrastructure are far from being realities. Fragility, personal insecurity, and gender discrimination pose serious challenges. Moreover, youth unemployment coupled with inequality and exclusion create the potential for conflicts and instability. Since the adoption of MDGs in 2000, the world has undergone tremendous changes, with new challenges surfacing, including global financial crisis and climate change, amongst others. New opportunities have also emerged. The future global narrative must address these new dichotomies.



The High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda at its first meeting on 25th September 2013, UN, New York.

UN PHOTO/ ESKINDER DEBEBE

## Emerging thinking from the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons

Since its first meeting, held in the margins of the United Nations General Assembly in New York on September 25, 2012, the HLP has convened three working sessions and many consultations around the world. Our most recent full panel meeting was held in Bali, Indonesia, between March 25 and 28, 2013. Prior to Bali, we met in Monrovia, Liberia, from January 28 to February 1, 2013, and in London from October 30 to November 2, 2012. Over the course of the past nine months, our discussions have remained centered on poverty eradication, social equity, economic transformation, and sustainable development.

Aside from our regular meetings, Panel members have participated in hundreds of outreach programs at national, regional, and international levels, where civil society organizations, the private sector, the academic world, and the parliamentarians have all added their voices to the debate. We have discussed priorities and ambitions and reached a number of crucial agreements that we believe should underpin the process of setting a new global development agenda:

### WHAT IS THE HLP?

The Secretary-General's High Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda (the "HLP") consists of 27 members drawn from the private sector, civil society and government. Through gathering information via thematic and national consultations, the HLP will report in May 2013 to the Secretary-General with its vision and recommendations for a Post-2015 development agenda. This report will feed into the Secretary-General's Report to the Member States at the Special Event on the MDGs in September 2013.

1. We believe that the global community should continue to work toward the MDGs and carry them forward after 2015.
2. We have established a common vision to end extreme poverty in all its forms and to seek to make all poverty eradication gains irreversible. We agree that the new agenda should be global, people-centered, and planet-sensitive if it is to address the universal challenges of the 21st century. These include the need to promote sustainable development, support growth that creates jobs, protect the environment, and ensure peace, security, freedom, and equity at all levels.
3. We believe it is imperative to have a single and cohesive post-2015 development agenda consisting of three recurrent themes of economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental protection. In recommending such an approach, we believe the Panel's report will both complement and support the post-Rio process.

There are enough resources to end extreme poverty in our time.  
It can be done.



Children are pictured in front of their homestead in a derelict building in the Abdul-Aziz district of the Somali capital, Mogadishu.

UN PHOTO/ STUART PRICE

## A strategic opportunity for Africa

The post-2015 process provides an opportunity for every country and continent to set out its priorities, and it is a strategic opportunity for Africa. Africa was not consulted in 2000 when the MDGs were put in motion. But now, with four voices on the Panel and a Common African Position developed by the African Union and the African Development Bank, we have a rare opportunity to shape the new global development agenda. Challenges facing the continent need to be given due attention, just as we must work to harness the great opportunities that lay ahead and are attainable. Economies fueled by primary commodities and dependency on extractive industries will certainly be at the top of any new framework on the continent. For us, economic transformation is a paramount priority. Equity, equality, gender issues and the protection of our natural environment will also be core to our common objectives. We must formulate a new development agenda to reflect not only the unfinished MDG business but also indicate the way forward for our common future.

## An ambitious future

As we prepare to finalize our report, we must not forget that we are still far from the MDG deadline. We must not take our eyes off the goal. Much can be achieved in the next two years with commitment and resources. We must pay particular attention to issues that are lagging behind and those that can be resolved now.

The 2015 framework must provide the foundation for a global mobilization, propose a common basis for an offensive to end extreme poverty, and engage on a collective path toward sustainable development. The new framework must redefine relationships between all actors at local, national, regional, and global levels. Well-being and prosperity for all are in the realm of possibilities. There are enough resources to end extreme poverty in our time. It can be done. ■

### 3 KEY AGREEMENTS THE HLP BELIEVES SHOULD UNDERPIN THE NEW GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

1. Continue to work towards the MDGs;
2. A common vision to end extreme poverty;
3. A single, cohesive Post-2015 development agenda.

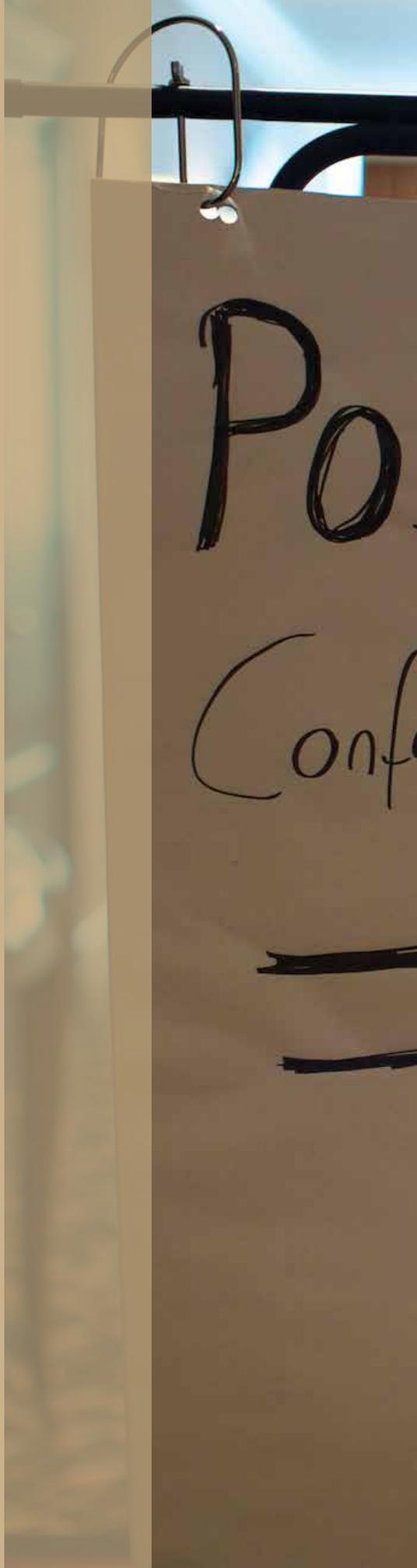
2015



## Power and Participation in Moving Toward 2015 and Beyond: A View From Civil Society

ALICIA ELY YAMIN, JD MPH  
BEYOND 2015 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER

**AN EXTRAORDINARY LEVEL** of effort, as well as funding, is being poured into planning for a successor framework to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the creation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the twenty-year review of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), scheduled for 2014. These three major processes, which have remained distressingly disconnected from one another, will determine the future of development for decades to come.





This essay provides a view from civil society of the process—or processes—currently under way and the conditions that need to be in place to ensure meaningful civil society participation. Citing the example of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), it illustrates both the historical challenges and importance of empowering affected people through coordinated global processes.

I am a member of the Executive Committee of the Beyond 2015 Campaign, which is a global civil society campaign pushing for a strong and legitimate successor framework to the MDGs that builds on lessons learned from the current MDGs and other relevant processes. Beyond 2015 is built on a diverse global base—bringing together groups from developing, emerging, and developed economies. Beyond 2015 was founded in 2010 and is currently made up of 622 participating organizations from 97 countries around the world. Together with The Global Call to Action Against Poverty (GCAP) and CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation (CIVICUS), Beyond 2015 is one of the major channels for civil society views to be expressed on the post-2015 framework.

LEFT: Post 2015 sign

TRISTAN BRAND

BELOW: Michael Strauss (right), Executive Director of Earth Media, and Jeffery Huffines, Representative of CIVICUS to the UN, speak on behalf of civil society organizations to express hopes and concerns ahead of the Rio+20 conference.

UNPHOTO/ESKINDERDEBEBE



## MILLENNIUM DECLARATION

The “UN Millennium Declaration” is the outcome of the 2000 Millennium Summit—the largest ever gathering of world leaders. The Declaration was the main document of the Summit and it contained a statement of values, principles and objectives for the international agenda for the 21st century. It also set deadlines for many collective actions. This process led to the official establishment of the MDGs.

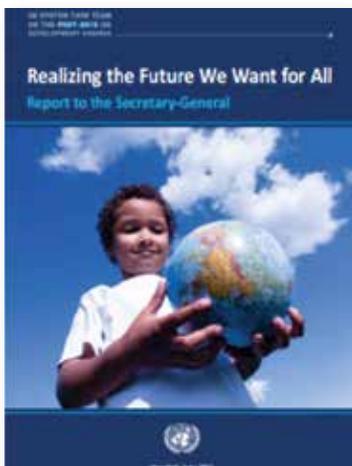
Yet this piece is entitled “A View From Civil Society” because one of the key messages is that there is no single view from civil society, which is precisely why the inclusiveness of the process is so crucial. “Civil society” is hugely diverse in terms of the organizations it includes, which operate at local, national, regional, and international levels, and the issues on which they focus. Civil society organizations (CSOs) necessarily have differing perspectives on the MDGs as well as the UN system and different global actors. There is not only an enormous range of interests among CSOs with respect to the key elements a future agenda must include, but also a variety of political perspectives to accommodate. The political spectrum ranges

from those who are content to see what can be achieved within the current economic model to those who reject the existing neoliberal paradigm onto which the MDGs thinly pasted some human development indicators.

These are personal views and cannot be said to represent the Beyond 2015 Campaign.

The *raison d’être* for the Beyond 2015 Campaign is to ensure that the process of developing a successor development framework to the MDGs is truly participatory, inclusive, and responsive to a diversity of different stakeholders, with a particular focus on the voices of people who are living in poverty and are most affected by climate change. This is, of course, no easy feat. All civil society networks face their own challenges in ensuring that they are representing a broad array of actors and social movements across multiple regions and are adequately supporting and reflecting national-level and grassroots work, on which the legitimacy of their international advocacy depends.

However, it is fair to say that the premise of civil society engagement in general—which was reflected in the Montreal Declaration that emerged from the CIVICUS World Assembly in September 2012—is that, through effective participation, the people who are actually most affected by the “convergent crises of growing inequality, undemocratic governance, a broken



## MONTREAL DECLARATION

The “Montreal Declaration and Plan of Action on Post-2015” was issued by the 641 participants attending the CIVICUS World and Youth Assemblies held in Montreal, Canada in September 2012. The recommendations from the discussions were compiled in the Montreal Declaration that presents 15 civil society commitments for a new social contract; on the sub-topics of changing nations through citizens, building partnerships for social innovation and redefining global governance.

global financial system, and climate change” should be able to have an impact on the future development agenda: “We seize this opportunity to leverage citizen action and build momentum toward a fair, equal, and inclusive agenda for humanity, one that incorporates the voices of women, youth, and people living in poverty, and ensures democratic space for all people to demand and achieve fair and accountable governments.”

Looking back, the Millennium Declaration signaled an unprecedented commitment by governments around the world to address poverty: “We will spare no effort to free our fellow men, women, and children from the abject and dehumanizing conditions of extreme poverty.... We are committed to making the right to development a reality for everyone and to freeing the entire human race from want.... We resolve therefore to create an environment—at the national and global levels alike—which is conducive to development and to the elimination of poverty.” This emancipatory language resonates closely with that in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which, in Article 28, calls for “a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms” in the Universal Declaration can be fully realized.

However, the reductionist agenda of the MDGs ignored, if not obscured, the power relations within and between countries that underlie

processes of immiseration as well as inequalities. Indeed, the MDGs’ process has been justifiably criticized for being top-down and North-led in its design. And, in their implementation, the MDGs, which were conceived of as global goals, ended up being imposed on states in a one-size-fits-all manner as national planning targets. The result in many aid-dependent countries was a displacement of national priority-setting processes and, in some cases, more “accountability” to donors than to the diverse people living in poverty in their own countries.

In line with the aspirations of the Millennium Declaration and the Universal Declaration, the goal of meaningful participation in the current context should be to contribute to subverting the political, economic, and other forms of exclusion—the “pathologies of power,” in Paul Farmer’s terminology—that maintain poverty and inequality at national and global levels. The UN Task Team’s report, “Realizing the Future We Want for All”—which sees the post-2015 development framework as resting on three core values: human rights, equality, and sustainability—was a welcome starting point in this regard.

But there have to be certain preconditions in place in the process for this kind of meaningful participation of civil society to take place. First of all, active participation requires all affected parties to have an equal opportunity to be part of the process. The process needs

to be transparent and to provide truly accessible information to all potential participants, which will include different formats as well as forums.

Here, from the perspective of civil society, as of this writing there is a striking difference between the the process initiated by the UN Secretary-General for a post-2015 framework and that of the Rio+20 follow-up/SDGs, as it stands so far. The UN post-2015 process, which led to the creation of the UN Task Team—60 UN entities, offices, departments, and agencies—and the High-Level Panel (HLP) of 26 persons has now, through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), built in up to one hundred national consultations as well as eleven global thematic consultations. There are e-consultations, web platforms, and smartphone apps to try to enhance the ability of people on the proverbial “ground” to participate in as an informed manner as possible and voice their opinions to the HLP.

Of course, it is far from “equal participation.” The poorest rarely make it to the electronic or in-person consultations and instead are “represented” by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) of various stripes, which often can make little claim to speak on behalf of the most marginalized and vulnerable. Nevertheless, the magnitude of the efforts to provide for civil society input that have been undertaken by UNDP, as well as the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) and other UN agencies organizing the thematic consultations, needs to be fully acknowledged.

The Rio+20 follow-up/SDGs process is just getting under way, with the Open Working Group (OWG) only having been established in early January. A stated reason for the SDGs process was that the G77 felt the other process was Northern driven and therefore unresponsive to democratic processes. There is a series of “Major Groups” that will be involved in the follow-up to Rio, as well as a Stakeholder Forum and a whole array of environmental NGO constituencies. Yet, as of this writing, it seems as though there may be quite a distinct dynamic in the Rio+20 follow-up/SDGs intergovernmental process, with potentially fewer opportunities for both civil society consultation and meaningful participation in shaping the agenda and linking it to the work done throughout the UN process.

With respect to all of the global processes, however, it is critical to understand that information and opportunities to express preferences are not the only requirements for empowering participation. There was tremendous “participation” at the Rio Conference on Sustainable Development in June 2012, yet the resulting document was very weak on key issues.

Participate, a project of Beyond 2015, Institute of Development Studies (IDS), and UK Aid, has produced some sobering analyses of the challenges in incorporating the perspectives of people living in poverty into global policy-making. It notes, for example, the tendency to decontextualize and homogenize when people’s voices are synthesized, which has the effect of

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**OPPOSITE:** Medical anthropologist and physician Paul Farmer is a Professor and Chair of the Department of Global Health and Social Medicine at Harvard Medical School; and a founding director of Partners In Health, an international non-profit organization that provides direct health care services and undertakes research and advocacy activities on behalf of those who are sick and living in poverty. Dr. Farmer’s work focuses on community-based treatment strategies for infectious diseases in resource-poor settings, health and human rights, and the role of social inequalities in determining disease distribution and outcomes.



excluding the possibilities for dissonance. Beyond 2015 has faced this challenge. As early as the first HLP meeting in London, there were calls for civil society to present a more unified, proactive proposal, because not to do so was “missing the boat.” Yet, presenting a unified proposal for the post-2015 framework and “going with who shows up” precludes meaningful participation of precisely those perspectives that are most disempowered. Beyond 2015 has attempted to resist this pressure to come up with simple statements, opting instead for a member-driven incremental process to develop vision, purpose, values, and criteria for a post-2015 framework.

Ultimately, the lesson from the post-2015 processes may be to underscore that the power to decide what gets decided in these processes is more significant than whether or not civil society is able to modify language that is open for public discussion. Therefore, it is important to consider not just the policy debates that are occurring within participatory forums, but how the agenda and the boundaries of participation are set within and across the post-MDGs and SDGs processes. In the current context, the spaces for participation in both processes, called “invite spaces,” are predetermined, which is not conducive to having proposals emerge from the ground up.

Indeed, steep inequalities in power are likely to keep some issues—which many would argue are crucial to the creation of a just international social order, such as global institutional arrangements and financial regulation—from ever arising in the final debates about a post-2015 agenda. For example, after a cacophony of different opinions has been set out on digital display for the HLP to digest, the HLP has three cochairs and a single lead author. Together with various other gatekeepers, they will necessarily wield an enormous amount of power over what the HLP considers and, in turn, what it recommends. Indeed, the very parameters of how concrete or prescriptive the HLP report can be are likely to be set outside of the participatory forums by a UN that is increasingly wary of offending governments.

Moreover, as it is still far from clear whether the post-MDGs and SDGs processes will converge

into one or remain on separate tracks, the efforts of civil society to influence the HLP and, in turn, the report to the UN Secretary-General, may well end up being less meaningful than hoped once the SDGs intergovernmental process is firmly under way. And of course it still remains to be seen whether civil society will be able to have a voice with respect to key issues of financing and implementation of the future development framework, whether around one unified set or separate sets of goals.

**With respect to all of the global processes, however, it is critical to understand that information and opportunities to express preferences are not the only requirements for empowering participation.**

As though all this were not complex enough for civil society to monitor and navigate, a third process is taking place now—a twenty-year review of the the ICPD, led by the UN Population Fund (UNFPA)—that is largely left out of discussions about post-2015. This is shocking, as the ICPD Programme of Action represented a major paradigm shift in thinking about development, which provides valuable lessons for the current context. ICPD embedded approaches to population dynamics in the context of other economic and social issues, including women’s empowerment. Among other things, the Programme of Action called for “sustained economic growth in the context of sustainable development; education, especially for girls; gender equity and equality; infant, child, and maternal mortality reduction; and the provision of universal access to reproductive health services, including family planning and sexual health.”



Poster for a civil society side-event organized at the High Level Panel meeting in Monrovia, Liberia in January 2013. Civil society participants represented key stakeholder groups, including marginalized populations, special interest groups, and organizations from the Global South.

WOMEN DELIVER

There is no issue that more acutely demonstrates the perpetual challenges of empowering affected people through development processes or that better highlights the need to link the three processes under way currently than SRHR. Largely as a result of indefatigable advocacy by women's, LGBTI, and other movements around the world, a transformative understanding of SRHR came out of ICPD in 1994 and was reaffirmed at the Beijing World Conference on Women's Platform for Action a year later.

Yet a conservative backlash quickly ensued. The Millennium Declaration was conspicuously silent on SRHR even though it recognized women's rights as a foundation for progress, including the importance of promoting gender equality and women's empowerment. MDG 5

narrowed SRHR to the relatively depoliticized domain of maternal health, and technocratic interventions have predominated over the broader actions that would inevitably call into question entrenched, gendered power relations. The feeble goal that reduced gender equality to female education further contributed to managerialist, rather than transformative, approaches to empowering women.

SRHR are fundamental to redressing structural forms of gender discrimination and inequality and are crucial across many of the issues central to post-2015 discussions, such as health, poverty, migration, climate change and environmental sustainability, population dynamics, food security, and access to resources. Yet, precisely because taking SRHR seriously challenges power structures that perpetuate patterns of inequality, violence, and suffering—especially among women—they are deeply contested and are often deliberately marginalized in global discussions where voices are combined and dissonance is minimized.

Consequently, the centrality of robust interpretations of SRHR is again at risk of being neglected in the future development framework. For example, after Rio+20 and the Family Planning Summit held in London this summer, family planning has reemerged as a critical development issue, which is welcome after the grudging and belated addition and neglect of MDG 5B. However, despite civil society advocacy—including a strong CSO statement after the HLP meeting in Monrovia,

## LGBTI

LGBT is an initialism that collectively refers to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex community.



# ICPD =



International Conference on  
Population and Development  
Beyond 2014

The 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo was a milestone in the history of population and development, as well as in the history of women's rights. At the conference the world agreed that population is not just about counting people, but about making sure that every person counts. 179 governments committed to the ICPD 20 year Programme of Action to deliver human rights based development – this declaration went on to inform the MDGs.

Liberia—it is not yet clear that family planning will be embedded in a comprehensive SRHR framework rather than be treated as a sustainable development issue.

The twenty-year review of ICPD has been far from ideal itself as a process with respect to both the centrality of SRHR and civil society participation. Nevertheless, it is striking that, as of this writing in February 2013, the lessons learned from ICPD are still not being fully integrated into consultations taking place for post-2015—and, conversely, that the ICPD review is not being considered in light of the lessons from the MDGs and the other processes under way now. On the positive side, the Civil Society Platform to Promote SRHR Beyond 2015 is a promising development in trying to bring together advocacy around all of these processes. Moreover, the upcoming consultation on ICPD and human rights, being organized by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and UNFPA and supported by the Dutch government, presents an important opportunity to issue a strong and relevant outcome document and redress some of this fragmentation.

We are in a very different global political context than we were in the 1990s, when a series of UN human rights and development conferences, together with all of the preparatory meetings that were held and the organized mobilization of different social movements around the world,

allowed for unprecedented levels of civil society engagement that were in part reflected in the declarations that emerged from Vienna, Copenhagen, Cairo, and Beijing. There is a clear desire of governments to control these post-2015 processes, and it is not yet clear how this act of the development saga will play out. It is possible the participation of civil society will amount to little more than the shadows in Kabuki theater, with the real decisions being made behind closed doors around conference tables in London or Washington, D.C., or even Seattle. On the other hand, it is still possible—and there are a great number of actors within the UN who are committed to this—to ensure that civil society participation is in fact meaningful and that the future development agenda contributes to empowering people living in poverty, reducing inequalities and exclusion, and advancing human development and human rights, including sexual and reproductive rights. ■

2015

WORLD  
ECONOMIC  
FORUM

COMMITTED TO  
IMPROVING THE STATE  
OF THE WORLD

## Ending Poverty in Our Time

PAUL POLMAN  
CEO, UNILEVER

**THERE ARE FEW MORE INSPIRING THOUGHTS** than the one set out in the vision of the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel, namely that extreme poverty can be eradicated in our time. It is a vision and a belief that compels us all to take action.

“In business we are used to setting targets, but the issues are often simpler and the measurement often more straightforward. In development there are literally hundreds of important things, which could be measured. However I firmly believe that the power of the MDG’s came from having a small number of (mostly) measurable goals”



UNPHOTO/ESKINDER DEDEBE

There are many technical and academic definitions of poverty. But I take the view that if you are hungry; don't have access to clean drinking water; live in conditions where hygiene and sanitation are nonexistent; are unable to access health care; and live where your children can't go to school, you have no prospect of getting a job, and there is no energy to cook your food or warm your home, then you are poor.

For these reasons I believe that the post-2015 development agenda should be built upon the

big social targets of hunger, water, health, education, and so on that were set out in the original Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). We should of course do everything in our power to ensure that as many of those goals can be met by the original deadline of 2015—we still have some 1,000 days to make a difference—but in the event that we don't quite make it, then in my view, a new framework should commit the nations of the world to deliver in full the goals that were agreed upon by the UN General Assembly in 2000.



ANDREW KELLY



UNPHOTO/LOGAN ABASSI

In four important respects, however, the post-2015 agenda needs to be different from its predecessor. Firstly, it should recognize that the best way of bringing people out of poverty is through economic development, so the new agenda must place a strong incentive on governments to create the right conditions for business to flourish. It must engage the private sector, not just in setting the agenda, but also in delivering it. Experience has taught us how successful this can be when the conditions are right, but increasing pressure on public sector finances makes it unwise to overly rely on overseas development assistance funding to address all the issues that matter within the time we have available.

Secondly, the post-2015 agenda must ensure that the gains made on poverty eradication are irreversible. To do so will require us to tackle some of the big environmental challenges that confront the world. If we don't, we risk many of the past and future gains on poverty being reversed. This is because it is the poor who suffer first and the worst from environmental disasters like droughts, floods, and harvest failures. Tropical Storm Sandy is a case in point: New York City coped with it reasonably well, but the people of Haiti were devastated (and just when they were getting back on their feet after the earthquake of 2010). Unless environmental issues are tackled in parallel with the social and the economic, the progress we make risks being very short lived.

Thirdly, the post-2015 development agenda should build a solid platform for enduring

progress by recognizing that eradicating poverty is difficult to achieve in the absence of functioning institutions. Ultimately it is well-governed and accountable institutions that ensure peace and security, enforce the rule of law, deliver effective public administration and tax collection, guard against corruption, and provide transparent markets. Without these things, governments cannot serve their citizens, businesses will not have the confidence to invest, and conflict-affected and fragile states will have no chance of escaping the poverty trap. I regard issues of this kind as being essential enablers. So whatever goals we ultimately agree upon, it makes sense to give serious consideration to these enablers. There are of course many of them, but, at a minimum, issues of institutional capacity, financing, global trade rules, partnerships, and infrastructure all play very significant roles.

Fourthly, the post-2015 agenda should consciously address the question of inequality. It should do so not as a goal, but instead as a thread that runs throughout all goal areas, such as education, nutrition, and health care. It should also be present in the metrics that are subsequently used to monitor progress. This is a powerful moral agenda, but studies also now show that rising inequality is harmful even to those who are at the richer end of the scale, as declining social cohesion creates additional cost burdens and reduced well-being for people at all income levels.

But the underlying principle of all these points is that a post-2015 development agenda needs to reflect all three dimensions of sustainability—

the social, the economic, and the environmental. Any suggestion that the socioeconomic and the environmental are in some way separable is deeply misplaced. Both questions are urgent. Both have to be tackled now.

## The Nature and Number of Targets

It is almost inevitable that much of the discussion is focusing on the nature of the targets within any future framework. In business we are used to setting targets, but the issues are often simpler and the measurement is often more straightforward. In development there are literally hundreds of important things that could be measured. However, I firmly believe that the power of the MDGs came from having a small number of (mostly) measurable goals.

In my view, the post-2015 agenda should build on this model by proposing a set of goals that are few in number, easy to understand, and measurable. But as consensus is increasingly emerging about the most urgent challenges, our minds must also turn to the issue of how progress will be made. For that reason it is just as important that each goal should be accompanied by a clear recommendation indicating who is responsible for delivering it and how. Any new framework should go beyond a mere set of priorities to become a clear plan of action for the world.

Through participating in the High-Level Panel, I have had the opportunity to consult with a wide range of private sector organizations about their views on the future of the development framework. I have been overwhelmed by the response. All around the world business leaders are coming forward with a real understanding of how this agenda is so important to the future of their businesses, their industry, their growth aspirations. Their growth is of course the same economic development that we know will continue to lift even more people out of extreme poverty as developing markets develop and as emerging markets evolve into fully developed economies. Never has there been so much energy for tackling these challenges from members of all sectors, and never have we had so much clarity about what needs to be done. All this gives me hope that, in spite of the many challenges ahead and the complexity of many of the issues, if we all work together in a new global partnership for development, we really will succeed in our mission to end poverty in our time. ■



According to the World Bank, measured in monetary terms, nearly 1.3 billion people remain below the extreme poverty line with an income of US \$1.25 or less a day, and another 2.6 billion live on less than US \$2 a day.

UNPHOTO/KIBAE PARK





achieving the MDGs, the global community must again come together to discuss, collaborate, and agree on a new set of ambitious goals to help steer human development post 2015.

As a young change agent interested and invested in the areas of international and community development, youth leadership, environmental sustainability, global citizenship education, and social action, the drafting of the post-2015 development agenda fills me with excitement for the possibility it opens up to redefine international commitments and galvanize support for global efforts to create a more social, just, and environmentally sustainable world.

My belief in the need to involve young people and the power and worth of engaging them in creating change is a deep-seated one. Developed over many years, it has taken me to many parts of the world, offered me invaluable experiences and provided me already with a lifetime of inspiration and, most of the time, a sense of optimism that things are going to get better.

I am privileged in my life to work alongside many incredible young people who are committed to a more sustainable and socially just world. For many of my friends, colleagues and fellow change agents, creating that world is not a dream; it is a cause worth dedicating a lifetime to.

This article sets out to establish and explain three compelling reasons I see for the need to include young people in the discussion and development of a post-2015 development agenda. First, I will argue that young people must be involved as they make up roughly 50 percent of the global population and therefore have just as much stake in the negotiations as elder persons do. Young people are also the ones set to inherit not only the impacts of decisions made today but they will also be the generation responsible for much of the implementation of the next global framework. Accordingly, it makes no sense not to have them involved in the design of any future global agreement. Further, as we awaken to the imminent threat of climate change, it is important to recognize that young people hold a greater stake in the development of a post-2015

## WHY SHOULD YOUTH BE INVOLVED IN THE POST-2015 PROCESS:

- young people make up half the world's population;
- young people bring fresh perspectives to decision making;
- young people are redefining what it means to be a citizen of the world.

development agenda that takes into account sustainability as a core tenet.

Secondly, young people should be consulted and brought into the fold of global leadership on this issue, as they provide an important and often under-recognized and underutilized viewpoint. Young people are creative. Young people are optimistic. Young people show passion and commitment and ingenuity. History tells us that throughout all of the major social and political initiatives that have achieved significant change in our world, young people have been at the forefront of change-setting strategy and leading mass movements of people locally and globally.

And finally, young people are the ones redefining what it means to be a citizen in our world. As we grapple with new challenges facing us in the 21st century, we are being forced to question who we are in relation to each other, the systems we create and perpetuate, and the planet we live on. The introduction of the UN Task Team's first report on the post-2015 development agenda states that, "The central challenge of the post-2015 UN development agenda is to ensure that globalization becomes a positive force for all the world's peoples of present and future generations. Globalization offers great opportunities, but its benefits are at present very unevenly shared."



"I am a product of the MDG generation. The MDGs have been a part of my 'coming of age'. I therefore strongly believe that my generation need a seat at the discussion table if the post- MDG agenda is to be sustainable. [www.youthpost2015.org](http://www.youthpost2015.org)"

YOUTH CONVERSATIONS ON POST-2015

Among young people today, there is an emerging generation of global citizens who are more socially aware, internationally connected, and ready to take responsibility and action toward building the type of future they want to see. The global community has an amazing opportunity to seize this emergent understanding of global citizenship and provide avenues for participation and ongoing support for young people to lead the change in developing the next phase of human evolution and setting up an alternative pathway for humanity.

It is not my intention to write an article that highlights the need to involve young people simply because it is "the right thing to do" or as a gesture of good will. What I hope to convey is my deep-seated belief that involving young people's perspectives in the development of a post-2015 agenda is, in fact, one of the most important things we can do.

## Young people's role at the table

For me, the need to include a youth perspective in the development of a post-2015 agenda comes down to a simple math equation: By virtue of the fact that young people have more years to live on this earth, they should, by right, have at least an equal opportunity to have their voice heard and considered in decisions being made about their future.

The current generation of young people will inherit the effects of the decisions the global community makes today. Not only this, they will also make up the next generation of adults leading global institutions, national government, business, and civil society working toward the achievement of goals set out within the proposed global framework. As Amina Mohammed, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General in Post-2015 Development Planning explains,



Amina J. Mohammed of Nigeria was appointed Special Advisor on Post-2015 in July 2012 by the UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon. Ms. Mohammed advises the Secretary-General on Post-2015, serves as an ex-ufficio member of the High Level Panel on Post-2015, and provides a link between the HLP and the General Assembly's Open Working Group on SDGs.

IISD PHOTO

“Youth participation is fundamental for the post-2015 agenda. They are the ones that will have to do the heavy lifting in its implementation.” It is therefore imperative to include young people in the process of drafting a new post-2015 development agenda as their buy-in is essential in achieving long-term success.

However, the notion that young people are the “leaders of the future” can often lead people into the trap of thinking that young people are only valuable for the contribution they will be able to make at a later date. Individually, and as a collective, young people have proven time and again that they are in fact, the leaders of today, not just of the future. When we look to the past, we see that young people have been at the forefront of leading large-scale social and political movements for change throughout some of the greatest moments of history. Young

people played a central role in the movements to abolish slavery, ensure civil rights and end apartheid. It was their ability to dream big and foster a vision where a different world was possible and their willingness and commitment to stand up for what they believed in that helped galvanize support for these causes.

Furthermore, as a percentage of people alive today, young people make up just fewer than 50 percent of the world’s population. At the Rio+20 Summit held in 2012, it was decided that the development of a new post-2015 global framework must include an “inclusive and transparent intergovernmental process open to all stakeholders.” If participatory development is about ensuring those most affected are included in the discussion and development of solutions, young people must be brought to the table and rightfully heard for the rather large stake that they hold.

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Thousands of youth attended the “Conference of Youth for Rio+20 (aka YOUTH BLAST), the official young people’s preparatory event for Rio +20 that aimed to strategize and mobilize young people for during and after Rio+20. <http://uncsdchildrenyouth.org>

UNPHOTO/ LUIZ ROBERTO LIMA



Young people also have the most to lose from getting in wrong. As we become ever more aware of the risks and impacts of climate change, there is even greater need to develop

**Engaging young people takes energy and commitment to meet them where they are at, to create spaces for open dialogue, and to be willing to truly listen to what they have to say.**

a global framework that takes into consideration environmental protection and sustainability as core tenets of any plan attempting to work toward the eradication of global poverty. Young people are acutely aware of the need for global action on this issue and involving them in the discussion and solution is paramount.

I would be hard pressed in this day and age to find a young person who did not know about the threats we are facing in relation to severe climate change and who was not at least a little bit concerned about bringing about a more sustainable future. The rise of the international climate movement (predominantly civil society) has been led in large part by national youth climate movements, which have come together at opportune times to ensure that the voice of young people, those most marginalized, and those most adversely affected is heard on the global stage. In the process, a generation of young climate activists has gained invaluable insights into the process for international negotiations while at the same time honing their



Agenda 21 (with the 21 referring to the 21st Century) is the outcome document of the 1992 Earth Summit (UN Conference on Environment and Development) held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. It is a non-binding, voluntarily implemented action plan of the United Nations with regard to sustainable development.

skills in community organizing and political persuasion. Events such as the Power Shift summits and Conference of Youth summits, held in conjunction with UN climate negotiations, have successfully mobilized thousands of young people around the world, raising awareness, building capacity, and expanding links within the movement globally along the way.

One of the key recommendations coming out of the review of the existing MDGs was that a more consultative approach must be adopted in the development of the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals framework. These consultations, which in some instances are already underway, should make provisions for the meaningful engagement of young people at all levels of discussion and decision making.

Meaningful engagement for young people is about genuine involvement in real-world issues with outcomes that effect real change. Engaging young people takes energy and commitment to meet them where they are at, to create spaces

for open dialogue, and to be willing to truly listen to what they have to say.

It is important that we consider multiple channels to reach out to young people and allow them to enter into an open discussion about the future global agenda from a place where they feel comfortable and supported. Initiatives such as the MY World platform ([www.myworld2015.org](http://www.myworld2015.org)) and The World We Want online consultations ([www.theworldwewant2015.org](http://www.theworldwewant2015.org)) provide great avenues for young people to participate in shaping the post-2015 development agenda by having their voices heard. We must be careful, though, that online initiatives such as these are not crafted in isolation from face-to-face engagement with youth and that mechanisms for involving young people and capturing their opinions do not exclude those most marginalized, who may not have access to the necessary technologies that enable such approaches.

Additionally, increasing opportunities for intergenerational dialogue such as the Elders+Youngers initiative ([www.theelders.org/elders-plus-youngers](http://www.theelders.org/elders-plus-youngers)) will not only ensure that young people's voices are heard, but that the experience and wisdom of elders can be passed on to a new generation of young people and that intergenerational relationships may be built for mutual gain.

## Young people shaking up "business as usual"

Within the development of a post-2015 framework, young people have the potential to play a very important and much needed role by providing a potentially different perspective and fresh eyes with which to look at the challenges the world currently faces. Regarding young people's participation, Agenda 21 recognized that, "In addition to their intellectual contribution and their ability to mobilize support, they bring unique perspectives that need to be taken into account."

While many young people may not have years of experience or highly developed professional skills under their belt, they do have creativity, ingenuity and a willingness to take risks, often







In 2006 previous Secretary-General Kofi Annan joins hands with delegates, organizers, guests, and nearly 400 young leaders from around the world who gathered at United Nations Headquarters in New York for a three-day UN Global Youth Leadership Summit to express their commitment to translating the Millennium Development Goals into reality.

UN PHOTO/EVAN SCHNEIDER

coupled with a predisposition for boldness. The potential for young people to shake up “business as usual” may prove to be a vital ingredient as the global community looks for solutions to one of the greatest challenges the human race has ever faced — how to implement fair and just social and economic development goals that bring an end to extreme poverty, while also ensuring the sustainability of our planet.

As UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon warned in an address to the General Assembly in August 2012, “Our current model of progress is unsustainable,” there is a need for a whole new way of being and doing, a collective rethink of how we live on this planet. Within the “Realizing the Future We Want for All” report, there is a clear call for the post-2015 global framework to set out

aspirational goals and targets for the future. “(The) sense of realism should be retained, but balanced with the need to be more ambitious. Continuing along historical trends will not be good enough as the efforts needed to mitigate and adjust to climate change and to put the world on a sustainable development path make abundantly clear.”

The potential for young people to shake up “business as usual” may prove to be a vital ingredient as the global community looks for solutions to one of the greatest challenges the human race has ever faced — how to implement fair and just social and economic development goals that bring an end to extreme poverty, while also ensuring the sustainability of our planet.

## Global Citizens Rise Up

As a university student studying international studies a decade ago, I remember learning about the emerging concept of globalization and discussing the potential merits and pitfalls of this new global phenomenon the world was just starting to develop an understanding of. Drafted in 2000, the “United Nations Millennium Declaration” recognized that the concept of globalization was important to consider in the development of a more peaceful, prosperous, and just world. “We believe that the central challenge we face today is to ensure that globalization becomes a positive force for all the world’s people. For while globalization offers great opportunities, at present its benefits are very unevenly shared, while its costs are unevenly distributed. We recognize that developing countries and countries with economies in transition face special difficulties in responding to this central challenge.”

Over ten years on, and still with some uncertainty, we do know that a more globalized

world brings with it both negative and positive implications for humans — particularly those who are most disadvantaged and marginalized. There is now a greater understanding of potential pitfalls of a more interdependent globalized world such as was witnessed during the global financial crisis, but at the same time, there is also a growing awareness of the potential for globalization to be a “power for good” and an increased willingness to take advantage of its positive benefits such as the rapid uptake and use of ICTs and the ability to collaborate and coordinate across boundaries as witnessed with the Occupy Movement in 2011.

Never before has it been so easy to communicate, share experiences, and create a shared vision of the future we want. If one cares to take notice, it is visible to see that there is a growing movement of young people who are politically aware and socially active in communities all around the world, regularly meeting up in person and

online to share ideas, strategies, and skills for creating a better world.

Ensuring a youth perspective on the post-2015 development agenda is heard is the right thing to do, integrating young people as central players in the development of a new global framework is the smart thing to do, and allowing them an opportunity to rise up as a generation of global citizens committed to rewriting

human history is the inspirational thing to do. The oft-quoted Margaret Mead once said, “Never doubt that a small group of committed people can change the world, indeed it is the only thing that ever has.” I would like to suggest it could just as easily be said “Never doubt that a small group of committed young people can change the world, indeed it is the only thing that ever has.” ■



### HOW ABOUT ANOTHER TAKE ON THE YOUTH PERSPECTIVE ON THE POST-2015 PROCESS?

Read the article by Sonia I. Preisser, Co-Founder and Director of Momo Effect Ltd. published on the WFUNA website: [www.wfuna.org/post-2015-youth-perspectives](http://www.wfuna.org/post-2015-youth-perspectives).

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**General Post-2015 Resources**

All Africa—  
[www.allafrica.com/stories/201302111970.html](http://www.allafrica.com/stories/201302111970.html)

Beyond2015—  
[www.beyond2015.org/events/civilsociety](http://www.beyond2015.org/events/civilsociety)

Global Call to Action Against Poverty (GCAP)—  
[www.whiteband.org](http://www.whiteband.org)

International Institute for Sustainable Development [IISD]—[www.iisd.org](http://www.iisd.org)

Overseas Development Institute—[www.odi.org.uk](http://www.odi.org.uk)

Post2015.org —What comes after the MDGs?—  
[www.post2015.org](http://www.post2015.org)

WFUNA—[www.wfuna.org/post-2015](http://www.wfuna.org/post-2015)

**Get involved in Post-2015**

MY World—[www.myworld2015.org/?partner=wfuna](http://www.myworld2015.org/?partner=wfuna)

The World We Want 2015—  
[www.worldwewant2015.org/node/281528](http://www.worldwewant2015.org/node/281528)

Youth Conversations on Post-2015—  
[www.youthpost2015.org](http://www.youthpost2015.org)

**UN and Post-2015**

Department of Economic and Social Affairs [DESA]—Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform—<http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?menu=1561>

High Level Panel of Eminent Persons—  
[www.post2015hlp.org](http://www.post2015hlp.org)

Millennium Campaign—  
[www.endpoverty2015.org](http://www.endpoverty2015.org)

Millennium Development Goals—  
[www.un.org/millenniumgoals](http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals)

Rio +20—[www.uncsd2012.org](http://www.uncsd2012.org)

Sustainable Development Solutions Network—  
[www.unsdsn.org](http://www.unsdsn.org)

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA)—  
[www.un.org/en/development/desa/index.html](http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/index.html)

UN-NGLS Civil Society Consultations—  
[www.un-ngls.org/IMG/pdf/NGLS\\_Post\\_2015\\_HLP\\_Consultation\\_Report\\_January\\_2013.pdf](http://www.un-ngls.org/IMG/pdf/NGLS_Post_2015_HLP_Consultation_Report_January_2013.pdf)

**Post-2015 UN Documents**

UNCSD—The Future We Want Outcome Document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development

UNDESA—Rio +20 Working Papers Issue 1: Development Cooperation in the Light of Sustainable Development and the SDGs: Preliminary Exploration of the Issues

UNDP—The Global Conversation Begins: Emerging Views for a New Development Agenda

UNDP—Human Development Report 2013 The Rise of the South: Human Progress in a Diverse World

UN Task Team—Realizing the Future We Want for All

## DIALOGUE

### ACRONYM CAFÉ

What is your perspective on the ideas discussed in the articles? Do you want to ask questions to those directly involved in the post-2015 process? Are you interested in debating these topics with others around the world? WFUNA is planning a series of live webinars on post-2015 that will take place between May and September 2013. More information will be available at [www.wfuna.org/acronym](http://www.wfuna.org/acronym)

An online discussion group will be available for participants to continue the conversation after the webinars. Check out our Facebook page and Twitter feeds as well!

Can't make it? Already missed the dates? No worries! A recording of the webinars will be posted on the above website.

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### THE LAUNCH PAD

One of the goals of *ACRONYM* is to provide thought-provoking content that sparks further conversations about UN topics. UNAs, NGOs, University or youth groups or individuals can organize events around *ACRONYM* topics. Here are some ideas:

- Study circle or youth forum—organize a guided discussion at your school or University
- Mini-seminar—invite a guest speaker who can address the topic and open discussion to participants from the community
- Online discussion—organize online discussion on social networking sites or a forum on your website
- Essay competition—ask contestants to read *ACRONYM* online and write an essay answering a specific question about the contents (see suggestions below)
- Power point debate—form two teams and organize a debate where each side uses power point to present their views on the topic

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### STARTER QUESTIONS

- What are the biggest challenges faced by the different actors within the Post-2015 process? How will these challenges affect the ultimate success of the process?
- How can the involvement of civil society shape the Post-2015 development agenda?
- The global thematic and national consultations are unprecedented in their scale, individual views from throughout the globe are being collected by the UN and fed into various processes. However, is there now too much data? How can all this data be used effectively?
- What do you think an ideal set of Sustainable Development Goals would be? What characteristics should they have? (e.g. measurable, few in number...etc.).

Send us your outcomes, photos and ideas to [ACRONYM@wfuna.org](mailto:ACRONYM@wfuna.org) or find us on Facebook ([Facebook.com/WFUNA](https://www.facebook.com/WFUNA)) or Twitter ([@wfuna](https://twitter.com/wfuna))

**At the heart of our mission is the belief that a strong and effective United Nations can be a powerful force in meeting our common global challenges and opportunities**



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The World Federation of United Nations Associations (WFUNA) is a global nonprofit membership organization working for a stronger and more effective United Nations. Established in 1946, we represent and coordinate a membership of over 100 national United Nations Associations and their thousands of members. WFUNA is the largest international network of people supporting and engaging with the United Nations.

*ACRONYM* features thought provoking articles and dialogues on current United Nations topics, written by experts from various parts of the UN community. The vision of *ACRONYM* is to provide forward-looking and relevant information about key UN issues, offer a diversity of “UN insider” perspectives, and provide a platform for constructive and candid dialogue amongst various UN stakeholders and supporters. Corresponding interactive components are available on our website.

Do you have suggestions for a future topic or a proposal for an article? Email [ACRONYM@WFUNA.org](mailto:ACRONYM@WFUNA.org) with your ideas!