



REGIONAL CONSULTATION ON THE POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

Inclusive and Sustainable Development: Perspectives from Europe and Central Asia on the Post-2015 Development Agenda

Istanbul, Turkey, 7-8 November 2013:

Key messages from the discussions

Voices on the Post-2015 Agenda: Equality, Accountability and Sustainability

Remaining MDG challenges in the region

- In Europe and Central Asia, while relatively higher per-capita income levels have contributed to largely eradicating extreme poverty, it is generally recognized that persistent exclusion and material deprivation have remained a reality for far too many people.
- The MDG agenda is an unfinished business in the region. It is crucial to accelerate efforts within the next two years in order to achieve the MDGs in the areas where progress is lagging behind. The fundamental areas covered by the MDGs – in particular education, health, job creation, gender equality and environmental sustainability – remain critically important. These basic needs and rights should be taken up in the post-2015 agenda with a more ambitious approach as compared to the MDG framework.

Overall considerations for the new agenda

- The process to arrive at a new agenda has been unprecedented in its reach. Broad consultations conducted so far with all stakeholders, in particular those supported by the UNDG, should continue to feed into the further deliberations on the post-2015 agenda and sustainable development goals. The European Commission has also conducted consultations which have informed its official position on the post-2015 development agenda.
- Despite the wide scope, converging messages have emerged from these consultations: they call for a single, integrated, comprehensive and coherent agenda, universal in nature, with a consistent set of goals, which aim to eradicate poverty and integrate sustainability into development. There is a call for delivering on MDGs, but also

deepening ambition for the new framework, particularly when it comes to environmental sustainability, good governance and addressing inequalities.

- Participants called for equality, inclusion, environmental sustainability and the principles of human rights to be the fundamental values and cross-sectoral themes to underpin the overall architecture of the future development framework.
- Gender equality is strongly advocated as both a key driver of development, cutting across all areas, and a decisive way to address the various forms of inequalities existing in the region.
- Vulnerable groups require specific attention and measures. In this respect, the case of people with disabilities was highlighted as their full integration into society requires a sensitization of the public opinion as well as proactive measures by national and local authorities, particularly in terms of access to public transportation and to regular channels of employment and education.

Implementation of the new agenda

- Policy coherence is increasingly crucial to ensure successful implementation of the new development agenda. The voices of people engaged in defining the new agenda make the case for how sustainable development cannot be realized in silos; it requires solutions and engagement by a wide coalition.
- Young people ask to be included in policy design, monitoring (e.g., quality of education) and implementation of global development agendas. They are ready to participate, take action and responsibility. They can provide good ideas and solutions. They ask not only to be seen as, future generations but also our partners of today.
- Accountability for the post-2015 development agenda requires a renewed and new global partnership. The agreements of the Monterrey Conference on Financing for Development are still relevant and commitments on ODA should be followed through.
- Accountability mechanisms need to be put in place for holding all actors to account. Comprehensive accountability extends beyond domestic policy and beyond borders.

Health and Social Protection

- Inequalities in access to health and social protection persist within and between countries and population groups. New demographic, environmental and health challenges, as well as the financial situation of most countries of the region, put pressure on the health and social protection systems.

- Health outcomes and income security are inextricably linked. Social protection floors can guarantee access to health and basic income for all, and also ensure minimum access to nutritious food, water and energy for the most disadvantaged groups of population. Implementing International Labour Conference Recommendation (No. 202) on Social Protection Floors is thus critical.
- Speakers underlined the role of social, economic and environmental determinants of health for human well-being (“every sector is a health sector”).
- The increasing challenge of addressing non communicable diseases (NCDs) and mental health should be part of the new agenda.
- Several speakers and participants underlined also the importance of integrating sexual and reproductive health rights, as well as sexual education, in the future development framework.
- The new agenda should advocate for a whole-of-government, whole-of-society and a life-course approach which is crucial for the well-being of societies.
- Health 2020, the European policy for health and well-being is a framework for setting the ground and implementing the new vision for health in the post-2015 agenda.
- “Health is a human right, do something, do more and do better!”

Education and Decent Jobs

- Youth unemployment in the Europe and Central Asia region is very high. There is a significant mismatch between skills/qualification and the job market, entrepreneurial skills are not sufficiently taught in the classroom. Closer relationships between the business world and schools should be developed for making curriculum and teaching more relevant to the labour market.
- It is important for all countries to ratify and implement international labour conventions; young people entering the job market should be aware of their rights stipulated in these conventions.
- Investing in early childhood development and early childhood education yields developmental, social (inclusion) and demographic dividends as well as economic returns.
- While enrolment rates in primary school are high – over 95% in most countries – national averages hide huge disparities with children from ethnic minorities (especially Roma) and children with disabilities being excluded from mainstream school and quality education. Child labour remains an issue in a number of countries in the region.

- There is a need to reduce inequalities and re-direct resources to quality education. Teachers are key to improving the quality and relevance of education; it is therefore important to invest in teachers' education and professional development, to improve the quality of teaching practices and enhance the motivation of teachers.
- Education should focus on life skills and knowledge development.

Population Dynamics and Migration

- Population dynamics as such would not qualify as a stand-alone post-2015 goal but should be considered as a critical cross-cutting issue.
- Population dynamics and migration tend to be perceived as negative forces and have triggered narrow-focused, reactive policy responses. The panel argued for a more constructive, holistic approach, which recognizes opportunities and integrates human rights.
- Low fertility, ageing, and migration were acknowledged to be of major importance in most EECA/ECE countries. Low fertility by itself is not necessarily a threat to economic and social wellbeing. Classical measures on ageing are misleading and present the situation (in Western European countries) more negative than it is. Healthy life expectancy must be considered and the impact of ageing can be greatly mitigated by quality education.
- Migration should be included into all the relevant areas of the post-2015 agenda and related SDGs. Special attention should be paid to the rights of migrants and migrants in crisis situations.
- Combating women and child trafficking should also be a key issue addressed in the future development framework.
- Any policy aimed at addressing population dynamics and migration must respect human rights and specifically women's rights.

Natural Resources, Sustainable Production and Consumption, and Green Cities

- Sustainable management and use of natural resources and ecosystems have not been sufficiently taken into consideration in the MDG framework and should be a central component of the new agenda. We need to ensure that the valuation of natural capital and ecosystems is integrated into policy and decision making.
- Consumption and production are engines of the economy; however our unsustainable patterns of consumption and production are major causes for the continued deterioration of the global environment and depletion of scarce resources.

Therefore a goal on SCP should be considered to balance human needs and planetary boundaries.

- We need to accelerate the shift from brown to green economy, building on the progress that has been made and the good practices in place. The role of governments in this process is essential, including through setting policy frameworks, investments, procurement and sustainability appraisal (including environmental impact assessment).
- Cities are a significant part and driver of global environmental change. We need to make choices to transform our cities into sustainable cities full of opportunities and services for all. Urban planning, governance, technology and citizen participation will be crucial to move towards smart, resilient and green cities.
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Making the New Agenda Work – Governance, human rights and local level engagement

- People across Europe and Central Asia see good governance and human rights as both enablers of sustainable development and core elements of well-being. For the post-2015 development agenda, the principles of human rights can no longer be additional or aspirational, these need to be integrated into the heart of the agenda.
- There are proven transparency, participatory planning and accountability mechanisms in Europe and Central Asia at the local and national levels. The region has the tools to engage people not only as voters and consumers, but as citizens. Some countries have made consultation with non-state actors a requirement, and others have found that even in poor communities co-financing, social innovation and co-production of development solutions can work in practice.
- People's engagement is not only a normative agenda, it can also create new and better solutions as people themselves are 'public policy experts.' The region has a good body of experience with legal frameworks, participatory mechanisms as well as internet platforms for engagement. On the other hand, as natural resource scarcity increases, people are increasingly taking issues to court in order to receive compensation for environmental, health and social damage.
- Global agendas are useful as a catalyst and a way to assess progress and share experiences across countries, but real action happens at the local level. Dialogue and open engagement with citizens helps create not only more popular but often more efficient decisions. The UNDG consultation World We Want processes are a good start and this kind of engagement should be here to stay.

The Power of Measurement: New Forms of Monitoring Progress in Sustainable Development

The following key messages emerged from the presentations and the ensuing discussion:

- Given the expectations to deliver timely and accurate monitoring data, the statistical community should be involved in the process of formulating the post-2015 agenda from the outset. A limited number of well-defined and measurable indicators need to be developed to track progress under the new agenda.
- To the extent possible, indicators should be based on well-structured and high-quality official statistics. Investment in national statistical systems and countries' capacities cannot be seen as an optional element. Statistics used should be sound, consistent and continuously available over time. Data gaps, reporting delays and deficiencies in data collection need to be addressed in order to ensure the best available data is used in policy making.
- Cooperation between different data producers, governments, businesses and civil society needs to be strengthened in order to have accurate and timely data, and to ensure that data assists decision making.
- Open data and big data are proving useful as they provide policy makers with real-time insight and proxies. Citizen-generated data is increasingly used to understand complex sustainable development issues and assess on the ground impact of development cooperation.
- Measuring sustainable and inclusive development will require new measures, such as the 'Palma' measure of inequality and others, which send clear policy signals to decision makers about the nature of inequality.