

# THE WORLD WE WANT TO SEE: PERSPECTIVES ON POST-2015

A Christian Aid report  
September 2013



Poverty is an outrage against humanity.  
It robs people of dignity, freedom and hope,  
of power over their own lives.

Christian Aid has a vision – an end to  
poverty – and we believe that vision can  
become a reality. We urge you to join us.

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Christian Aid would like to thank our partners and all the authors who contributed to this report. Without them, this would not have been possible.

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The views expressed by Christian Aid partners in this report do not necessarily reflect Christian Aid policy and should not be so attributed; however, we draw heavily upon the thinking of our partners in our policy and advocacy work.

Front cover: India's landless communities united to campaign for land rights during the Jan Satyagraha March for Justice in 2012. The movement was rooted in the experiences of poor Indian communities and organised by Christian Aid partner Ekta Parishad, who stressed the supreme importance of global solidarity to this campaign.

Credit: Christian Aid/Simon Williams

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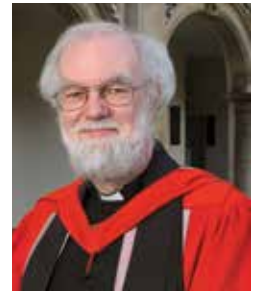
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# FOREWORD

Dr Rowan Williams, Chair of Christian Aid and former Archbishop of Canterbury



The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have been, for some years, not only a benchmark for thinking about what is essential for a more just and secure world; they have also been a reminder to us all that it is possible for the world's governments to recognise a shared moral imperative and to identify the need for common action. As we look towards 2015, the date by which it was originally hoped that the MDGs would be met, we are bound to have mixed feelings. Yet, however challenging it is that we have fallen short across a number of goals, it is crucial to hold on to the importance of the fact that they exist in the first place.

The job faced by civil society and advocacy groups is not to create aspirations out of nothing, but to hold governments, agencies and the public at large accountable to the best and most generous vision they have recognised – and to go on working at defining further where the most acute needs are, as we listen to the grassroots experience of those facing poverty, disease, hunger and injustice. That is the significance of a report like this.

As we acknowledge the real progress in some areas, we need the greatest possible clarity in identifying where the goals have yet to make real impact. In the last decade or so, most people involved with the search for just and sustainable development have underlined the key importance of women in the process and the consequent imperative of addressing all kinds of discrimination and disadvantage suffered by girls and women worldwide. But we are reminded in these pages of the distance there still is to travel. Maternal and perinatal health is still a major challenge; and issues of gender equality – not least in education – still fail to make it to the top of the list in many national strategies. Worst of all, the incidence of gender-based violence and abuse still stands at shocking and unacceptable levels in many countries. Our hope at Christian Aid is that these issues will be taken up with a new degree of urgency.

And of course there are other questions that now seem more urgent than a decade ago. We are more conscious than ever, for example, of how issues around global justice are interwoven with the effects of climate change, whether these are manifest in rising water levels in the Pacific or desertification in sub-Saharan Africa. On top of this, what could not have been foreseen at the beginning of the millennium was an economic crisis that both precipitated new kinds of hardship in unexpected places and also encouraged high levels of anxiety about public expenditure. In this context, it is commendable that the UK has decided to protect its aid budget, but we now need to see more countries stepping up their commitment to the MDGs and

to post-2015 goals. Not only are we looking at a real and profound moral question – namely, 'can we stand by and let the most vulnerable carry the greatest costs, nationally and internationally?' – but we are also looking at the challenge of what kind of world we can envisage in 10 or 20 years' time. Do we actively want widening gaps between rich and poor, with all the instability that entails, all the global insecurity, displacement, violence and misery it means – ultimately, for everyone on the planet?

In all this, it is essential that we hear not just the voices of experts, but also the words of those on the front line. It is a central part of Christian Aid's philosophy that we help to make such words audible as widely as possible and that we ourselves listen hard to the experience of those facing challenge and crisis, because of our foundational commitment to the God-given dignity of every person. This report is meant to be not just a document in which agencies and activists speak to each other, but a platform for the voices that matter most, whose interests and wellbeing we all need to serve and secure in whatever way we can.

I hope all readers of this report will find a fresh energy in it, and renew their eagerness to make the next phase of our work for the Millennium Development Goals, and the conversation towards post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals, a worthy and inspiring exercise towards the healing of our damaged world and the damaged and unjust relations that still characterise it.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rowan Williams". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Rowan Williams

# INTRODUCTION

At Christian Aid we believe that poverty is not inevitable and that it can be eradicated. This is what drives our work and it is why the post-2015 development agenda is such a significant discussion. However, the eradication of poverty and reduction of inequality will not happen without political will, and neither will it happen if our sights are set too low or our analysis is flawed.

Eradicating poverty will not be something that some 'do unto others'; rather, we believe that it will only happen through partnership and through the empowerment of communities, including women and those who are currently disenfranchised. As a consequence, our approach in this report has been to draw on the experience and expertise of Christian Aid partners around the world, to hear and reflect on their priorities for post-2015 goals before making

recommendations to those who are now moving forward with negotiations.

This sits alongside many other constructive contributions from civil society and faith-based organisations; it also sits alongside the outcomes of the thematic consultations, participatory research and the My World survey, which has, at this time of writing, seen the United Nations (UN) polling over 800,000 people in 194 countries about their key priorities for a better world.

We believe that a new framework must fully address the themes of inequality and environmental resilience, if poverty eradication is to be both achieved and sustained. The contributions that follow support this view and offer an insight into how a global agenda might have an impact at both a national and local level.

## The world in 2013

### Of every 100 people:

- 12 live in a slum
- 15 are malnourished
- 17 live in extreme income poverty on less than US\$1.25 a day
- 35 have no access to a decent toilet
- 37 live on less than US\$2 a day.

### Beyond this, the situation for women and children continues to be intolerable:

- 1 in 4 children globally are stunted<sup>1</sup>
- in sub-Saharan Africa, 1 in 9 children die before the age of five
- 57 million children of primary school age do not attend school
- globally, up to 70 per cent of women are likely to experience violence within their lifetime
- 140 million women who would like access to contraception do not currently have it
- just 20 per cent of parliamentarians around the world are women.

### This is particularly unjust given the concentration of wealth and income in the world. Although global wealth is increasing, this is controlled by a small number, aided by aspects of the current global financial system:

- the richest 20 per cent control and consume 80 per cent of the world's resources<sup>2</sup>
- the richest 1 per cent control 39 per cent of the world's wealth: US\$52.8tn<sup>3</sup>
- individuals worth US\$5m or more control nearly a quarter of the world's wealth
- despite the economic crisis, 2012 saw a 10 per cent increase in the number of millionaires
- it is estimated that around US\$21tn is currently hidden in tax havens<sup>4</sup>
- every year, developing countries lose US\$1tn from illicit financial flows.<sup>5</sup>

### We are also facing an environmental and climate crisis that will increase the frequency and severity of natural disasters and have an impact on us all, especially the poorest and most vulnerable. If we continue with business as usual on a four-degree trajectory, we are likely to see:

- an increase in drought-affected cropland from 15.5 per cent to 44 per cent<sup>6</sup>
- declines in water availability of up to 50 per cent for some regions<sup>7</sup>
- 3 billion people being pushed into poverty.<sup>8</sup>

## The world we're in

The world in 2013 is an increasingly unequal and unsustainable place. While there have been some significant gains since 2000 in terms of poverty reduction, it is worth reflecting on some of the most pressing challenges before us and how shocking the current situation continues to be.

The table on the previous page highlights some of these challenges facing our world today. These include extreme poverty; under-five mortality rates; child malnutrition levels; lack of access to education; lack of access to water and sanitation; violence against women; the unequal participation of women in society; the scale of tax dodging; the rich-poor divide; the fight for environmental sustainability; and last, but not least, climate change and all its impacts.

Not only are the poorest most at risk, but they are also those least to blame. There is a direct link between inequality and climate change, as higher incomes tend to correlate with a higher carbon footprint, while the poorest are most exposed to the resulting hazards. Malawi produces 0.1 metric tonnes of carbon dioxide per capita compared with the United States, which produces 17.3 metric tonnes per capita, and Qatar, which produces 44 metric tonnes per capita.<sup>9</sup>

## Why global goals?

These statistics should shock us, anger us and spur us to action. They require a renewed focus on global poverty, but also a fundamental rethink of some global financial structures and an immediate shift towards low-carbon, sustainable patterns of production and consumption, and more inclusive growth.

Christian Aid believes that a new global development framework could be an important tool in this fight for a fairer world. It will need to be supported by other multilateral processes such as progress towards tax justice and financial transparency, action to reduce the threat that communities face from disasters and a legally-binding climate deal.

We believe that fair and ambitious new goals could help drive poverty eradication, reduce inequality and promote sustainable development – but it is important to test assumptions about the value and purpose of a new set of goals<sup>10</sup> and reflect on the success of the current Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Recent years have seen significant achievements in poverty reduction. For instance:

- since 1990, over 2.1 billion people have gained access to improved sources of drinking water<sup>11</sup>

- the MDG target of universal access to anti-retroviral treatment for those affected by HIV is now within reach
- between 2000 and 2011, the number of children out of school fell from 102 million to 57 million
- between 1990 and 2011, the mortality rate for children under five dropped by 41 per cent.

These are positive achievements but are not easily attributable solely to the MDGs. The goals have certainly made their way into our vocabulary and into strategic frameworks,<sup>12</sup> but their direct impact on poverty reduction is harder to ascertain. There does seem to be evidence that international funding increased to social sectors after agreement of the MDGs,<sup>13</sup> but there is less clarity over their impact on domestic resource mobilisation.

The recent Government Spending Watch report has shown that despite a number of important commitments by governments to increase spending in areas such as health, education and agriculture, implementation is waning and important areas such as gender equality, environmental protection and social protection are being neglected.<sup>14</sup>

The MDGs are being digested, MDG priorities are making their way into Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers,<sup>15</sup> albeit selectively and occasionally with some amendments,<sup>16</sup> and spending targets are being set. However, other factors such as donor funding, restricted revenues and a lack of accountability are hampering progress on the ground and limiting the impact the goals could have.

These factors should not lead us to give up on global goals; instead, they should encourage all involved in the process to think very carefully about the translation of global goals into national contexts, how they envisage the goals being used and who by, and the accountability mechanisms that will need to underpin delivery against the new framework. Our hope is that a post-2015 development agenda, designed carefully and with the participation of civil society and poor communities around the world, will be able to fulfil the following functions:

- 1 Generate a sense of solidarity and global responsibility for poverty eradication, tackling inequality and the achievement of sustainable development.
- 2 Encourage a coordinated response in key areas where this is needed such as HIV or, to take some different examples, climate change mitigation or reform of the international tax system.

‘Is development primarily about economic growth or do we have a fuller vision of wellbeing and human flourishing?’



Photo: Christian Aid/Kevin Leighton

- 3 Establish global norms, push up standards and drive investment at a national level into areas such as gender equality.
- 4 Keep global poverty, inequality and sustainable development on the political agenda at the highest level.

### A post-2015 vision

What is the world we want to see? This is, of course, a vital question – and the answer will determine the kinds of goals, targets and indicators that form a new post-2015 framework. Is it simply a world without poverty marked by people living on US\$1.25 a day, or can we be a bit more ambitious? Is development primarily about economic growth or do we have a fuller vision of wellbeing and human flourishing? Are we talking principally about meeting material needs or are there other dimensions that must also be taken into account?

The High-Level Panel on the Post-2015 Agenda has already set out its vision, as well as a number of illustrative goals and targets aimed at ‘eradicating poverty and transforming economies through sustainable development’.<sup>17</sup>

Members of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, set up in 2012 by the Rio+20 conference, are also considering their priorities.

Christian Aid’s hope is that these processes will soon start to come together to define one clear set of ambitious goals.

**In the pages that follow, 17 Christian Aid partners from around the world give their account of the world they want to see.**

Photo: Women in Keleguem village, north-eastern Burkina Faso, carry rocks with which to build rock belts – low walls that help to protect the soil from rain and wind erosion. Built with support from Christian Aid partner Réseau MARP, the walls help crops to grow and yield more food.

# PARTNER VOICES: AFRICA



Aminata Sawadogo and her 11-year-old grandson Souley (centre) with her animals in Keleguem village, north-eastern Burkina Faso. Aminata was part of a livestock project run by Christian Aid partner Réseau MARP, in which the village's most vulnerable people were each given a pair of animals in the aftermath of a food crisis caused by drought. The recipients were asked to pass on one animal to another vulnerable person in the village once the initial pair had produced offspring.



## ADAPTATION AND ENHANCING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE ARE KEY

Herbert Mwalukomo, programme director, Centre for Environmental Policy and Advocacy, Malawi



Like people in most African countries, Malawians are on the frontline of the impacts of climate change due to the heavy dependence on rain-fed agriculture. Research done by the Centre for Environmental Policy and Advocacy (CEPA) has shown that unreliable rainfall pattern is increasingly putting the viability of upland field cultivation at risk, with most agricultural activities being undertaken within fragile ecosystems.

The words of Mr Nkhuleme Ntambalika of Balaka District capture the cry of most Malawian farmers:

***'We used to have very stable rainfall that was adequate and non-erosive. These days no one knows when to plant crops. When rains come, they are either too little for planting or too heavy, such that fields get waterlogged or eroded. A prolonged dry spell follows and scorches the germinated crops. The seed is lost in the process and we are forced to replant. If we are fortunate, we can harvest good yield. However, in most cases these days, rains disappear when crops like maize are at critical stages of cob formation and tasselling.'* (2010)**

The effects of climate change have been associated with most of the recent disasters in Malawi that have resulted in loss of life, crops and infrastructure. The Department of Disaster Management Affairs profiled over 12,500 households affected in various ways by floods, stormy rains and strong winds during the 2012-13 rainy season. During times of such extreme events, education is often disrupted: floods wash away education facilities or make it necessary for them to become refuge centres for affected communities. Women are disproportionately affected by climate change as they bear the burden of activities where adverse climates have the greatest impact, including collecting water and firewood, and ensuring daily access to food.

Besides over-dependence on rain-fed agriculture, Malawi's vulnerability to climate change is exacerbated by its low adaptive capacity (resulting from its slim economic base), limited agro-processing capacity and high dependence on biomass energy. With fuel wood accounting for 88.5 per cent of the total energy demand, the national demand for firewood and charcoal – estimated at 7.5 million tonnes per annum – is way in excess of the sustainable supply of only 3.7 million tonnes per annum. The resulting deforestation leads to catchment degradation and siltation, rendering cultivation fields more prone to flooding and constraining the energy supply of the hydro-based national electricity grid.

Against this backdrop, the necessity of adaptation and enhancing community resilience cannot be overemphasised. For this to happen, a stronger global partnership and framework for action is required beyond the status quo. The new framework should define separate goals for climate change and environmental sustainability. These include financing, capacity building and technology transfer to vulnerable segments of society (including socially excluded groups such as women, children, the elderly and people living with disabilities).

The goals should have time-bound deliverables to increase communities' capacity to cope with and adapt to the impacts of climate change. In addition, clear accountability mechanisms must be defined to ensure attainment of global poverty reduction goals, in tandem with environmental sustainability post-2015.

Accordingly, recognition of the climate challenge and environmental sustainability in the post-2015 development framework will not be enough, no matter how well it can be articulated, if clear mechanisms for action are not defined. The new framework should reinforce and build on all principles of sustainable development, including inter-generational and intra-generational equity, as well as the participatory principle.

The global mechanism should also be built around the principle of 'Common but Differentiated Responsibilities with Respective Capabilities' as reaffirmed at the recent UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20). These principles should form the basis for a clear financing mechanism to enable implementation of common goals towards a sustainable and prosperous future for all.

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Created in 2002, CEPA has a vision of a just and equitable society that promotes sustainable development. Its goal is to conduct policy analysis and advocacy for sustainable environment and natural resources management. CEPA aims to build bridges between policy and practice, between policy makers and local communities affected by policy implementation, and between local actions and national or global policy debates. Among other things, CEPA facilitates access to environmental information and justice; contributes to biodiversity and biotechnology policy making; undertakes policy research in land and agrarian reform; conducts capacity-building activities and environmental advocacy; coordinates civil society voices on climate change policy issues; and participates in international policy debates on climate change and biodiversity.

# SUSTAINABILITY AND GOOD GOVERNANCE

M Mathieu Ouedraogo, president, Réseau MARP, Burkina Faso



When the government of Burkina Faso measured progress on the MDGs early in 2013, it was clear that much remains to be done, especially when you consider that poverty is still deeply entrenched.

Efforts to fulfil the MDGs have been undermined by the emergence of new or growing challenges such as the effects of climate change, and energy and food crises, which have deepened inequality.

Réseau MARP's experience on the ground confirms that although progress has been made in certain areas, such as education and access to drinking water, poverty remains pervasive; women are still particularly badly affected and rates of infant mortality remain high. And it is clear that communities – particularly rural communities – are extremely vulnerable to the many disasters and crises that have reoccurred in the last few years.

The aim of our work on disaster risk reduction (inspired by partners such as Christian Aid and the Global Network for Disaster Reduction) is to deliver resilience programmes that focus on communities themselves. This involves developing tools to identify the pressures on communities at grassroots level.

For example, our PVCA approach (Participatory Vulnerability and Capacity Assessments) enables all community members – including women and marginalised groups – to come together to understand the risks they face. Having identified and analysed these risks together, the local population can create an action plan outlining how best to respond. Lobbying at national level is also key to influencing decisions in favour of sustainable and inclusive development.

We believe that efforts to create a new development framework must be underpinned by a will to reduce this vulnerability, by improving the resilience of communities to disasters and by building the economic resilience of the most vulnerable people in society, such as women. It is crucial to protect poor people's means of existence and improve their food and nutritional security.

One of the key benefits of the MDGs is that they provide a tool and frame of reference that the authorities of Burkina Faso have committed to implement. A national plan of action is in place to assess progress on the MDGs, and funding (albeit insufficient funding) has been allocated by the state for the achievement of the different MDGs. The MDGs offer a way of channelling development actions (by state and NGOs) towards precise targets according to agreed priorities. The implementation of the MDGs can help

to resolve problems linked to education, access to drinking water and sanitation, food and nutritional security, and the reduction of extreme poverty.

## Two main principles

In our opinion, the future programme of development must be based on two main principles: sustainability and good governance. All aspects of the new framework must be underscored by a commitment to sustainability. This would include the implementation of a sustainable, fair and inclusive economic system, the reduction of social inequality and imbalances, and the sustainable management of natural resources. As for good governance, this can be achieved by ensuring development activities are managed transparently and in accordance with social justice.

More specifically, a new development framework should be based on the following four priorities:

- 1 Reinforcing community resilience to disasters.
- 2 Empowering women by building their economic resilience and helping them gain a strong political voice.
- 3 Reducing infant mortality by reducing malnutrition and improving access to health and sanitation services.
- 4 Supporting the sustainable management of natural resources and ecosystems by sharing good practices.

Beyond these, we would propose the following targets and indicators:

### Objective 1: Support the economic empowerment of women – especially in rural areas.

- Access for women to means of production.
- Access for women to sources of finance to support income-generating activities.
- Involvement of women in decision making.

### Objective 2: Reinforce communities' resilience to disaster.

- Existence of a well-functioning early warning system.
- Local capacity for prevention and management of disasters.
- Existence of infrastructure for the reduction and mitigation of disaster risks.

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‘The future programme of development must be based on sustainability and good governance.’

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**Objective 3: Reinforce communities’ capacity to adapt to climate change.**

- Implementation of effective climate change adaptation activities.

**Objective 4: Reduce infant mortality.**

- Reduce the rate of malnutrition.
- Increase the rate of access to healthcare.
- Improve the level of sanitation.

**Objective 5: Ensure the sustainable management of natural resources.**

- Existence of local mechanisms for the management of natural resources.
- Growth in the rate of the adoption of practices for the sustainable management of natural resources.
- Fair access to natural resources.
- Legislation favourable to the wise use of natural resources.

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Réseau MARP was created in 1992. In 2007, in recognition of its successes in the field of development, it was officially recognised by the Burkinabé state as an NGO of service to the public. The guiding principle of all Réseau MARP’s work is that a community builds its wellbeing through the active participation of its members. Some key areas on which it works include: food security; natural resource management; savings and microcredit; emergency response; disaster risk reduction; and advocacy in favour of communities at risk of disaster.

[reseaumarpb.org](http://reseaumarpb.org)

## ‘BETTER FEWER, BUT BETTER’

Isobel Frye, director, Studies in Poverty and Inequality Institute, South Africa



Civil society in South Africa has historically been closely linked to issues of civil and political rights. This of course had its roots in the anti-Apartheid liberation movement and related international solidarity support.

With the introduction of the democratic rule in 1994, the vision of a transformed and egalitarian South Africa was foremost in transitional discourses. This is evidenced by the principles and rights contained in the Constitution of South Africa, including the socio-economic rights included in the Bill of Rights. On its adoption, our final Constitution was heralded as one of the most progressive constitutions internationally.

Since the 1996 adoption of the Constitution, however, South Africa has struggled to make significant inroads into the very high and inter-connected challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality. Various structural causes have been explored in this regard – both those rooted in the exclusionary policies of Apartheid, and in subsequent drivers and macro-economic policy choices that have been made.

### A developmental state

What we currently face is an uneasy intersection between the traditional rights-based framework and a newer, more orthodox ‘development’ framework. The former, as indicated, is advanced through the Constitution, while the latter is predicated in the policy emphasis on reorienting South Africa into a ‘developmental state’. Many commentators have interrogated the meaning of this phrase, and examples have been touted about the east Asian developmental states and the various lessons in prioritising economic development over human development and human rights.

From our research at SPII, it is clear that for many people, the hope of being able to develop a sustainable livelihood strategy for themselves and their households remains elusive in the face of very high formal unemployment. There appears to be a significant mismatch between interventionist policies designed and implemented at all three levels of government, and the actual challenges and



Photo: Christian Aid/Sarah Filbey

**‘We believe an important lesson to learn is to limit ourselves to the most crucial, most visible and most inclusive targets.’**

obstacles people face. The growing informal economy also appears to elude policy makers. The poor and marginalised continue to find themselves at the mercy of policies that are not designed with their realities in mind. In truth, such policies will always be challenging: this is because they will always be situated in environments that are fuzzy and that exist beyond the current mainstream approach to the relationship between a political state and an informed, formalised, empowered and active citizenship.

### **Enforcing rights**

A new developmental framework needs to crack the perceived dissonance between rights and development. Policies should be audited against a human-centred evaluation system that includes extensive qualitative research capturing people’s real experiences of attempting to establish and maintain secure livelihood strategies. This must be located in an ongoing strategy to inform people about their rights, and how to enforce these in the face of a state presence that is often at best, chaotic, and at worst, corrupt and dysfunctional.

What is required are advice centres that advance knowledge of rights, as well as practical business skills and information about access to markets, credit and other forms of assistance. Policies need to address the tough questions about how to expand to the informal sector, which, by definition, is unregistered and invisible. This is illustrated in the rights-based question of how to extend access to social protection as a country: we need to prioritise the way we relate to the patterns, rhythms and needs of people operating in atypical forms of employment and in the peripheries of the formal sector.

Learning from international experiences is important, but so too is an awareness of the need to apply that to local realities, and this is where ordinary people need to be included in the policy audit, programme design, and monitoring and evaluation systems.

Sadly, the MDGs have had little practical impact on our work in South Africa. Despite the ruling party committing itself to achieving the main MDGs in 2014, one year ahead of the MDG target date (due to the end of the current administration’s term), there has been no significant traction from either the state or civil society, in any sustained or programmatic manner. This is something that must be addressed in any post-2015 agenda – namely, a concerted agreement on realistic targets and indicators that multi-actor bodies can oversee.

Perhaps one of the challenges that we have faced in South Africa is a seemingly overwhelming number of plans and priorities with too little faith in the realisation of any of the fundamentals. ‘Better fewer, but better’ is a call made by a previous president in South Africa, and we believe an important lesson to learn is to limit ourselves to the most crucial, most visible and most inclusive targets. Once those are clearly achieved, it will be easier to select and apply the same energy and commitment to subsequent ones.

**Studies in Poverty and Inequality Institute (SPII) is a not-for-profit trust based in Johannesburg. It was established seven years ago, principally to respond to a perceived absence in civil society of empirical research into poverty and inequality – research necessary for advancing a range of civil society campaigns in South Africa and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) sub-region.**

**SPII’s methodology combines primary research at a community level, together with policy analysis and engagement with government, organised business and organised labour. Among the current areas of research are a Socio-Economic Rights Programme, which includes a campaign to introduce a SADC-wide basic income grant funded by a tax on extractive activities, and a Basic Needs Basket Programme, which includes a primary household income and expenditure project.**

[www.spii.org.za](http://www.spii.org.za)

## TAX JUSTICE AT THE HEART

Alvin Mosioma, director, Tax Justice Network – Africa



Many regard tax as a complex subject that should be left to experts, but the history of developed economies shows that taxation lies at the heart of any meaningful development and state-building. However, until very recently the international discourse on economic development in poor countries has been devoid of any discussion on tax or tax revenue as a key source of finance. The MDGs pay absolutely no attention to tax, and neither did the much-lauded Millennium Declaration.

The question of how governments the world over fund schools, hospitals, roads and other vital services is not rocket science. Tax is the only stable, reliable and sustainable source of income that can enable governments to fulfil their obligations to citizens in guaranteeing access to basic essential services.

It is therefore vital that a new 'global partnership for development' or goal on finance – like the one proposed recently by the High-Level Panel – prioritises taxation as a source of development finance. Addressing all the

challenges and malpractices that deny developing countries their duly owed tax revenue should lie at the heart of the any new global development framework. These efforts should include measures to encourage the generation of tax resources and to curtail revenue leakage from poor countries through flawed global financial systems.

With over 1.3 billion, or nearly one fifth, of the global population living on less than US\$1.25 a day, it is a scandal and morally unacceptable that more money is flowing out of poor countries to the rich north, than the other way round. An estimated US\$10 flows out of poor countries for every dollar that flows in.

Recent studies indicate that the African continent loses over US\$50bn annually as a result of illicit flows. It is interesting to note that while a lot of focus has been put on fighting corruption, the larger portion of resources lost to the continent is due to corporate malpractice by multinational corporations who take advantage of weak global regulation to dodge paying their rightful share of tax. It is estimated



Photo: Christian Aid/Charlotte Marshall

## 'Achieving tax justice should be placed at the heart of the new post-2015 agenda.'

that US\$21tn dollars is stashed in offshore accounts in tax havens by wealthy business people and corporations evading or avoiding tax.

While the link might not be immediately apparent, lost tax revenue in poor countries is money that could, for example, have gone to save the lives of 150,000 children in Kenya who die each year because they cannot get to hospital in time due to the poor roads, because the hospital did not have the adequate medicine, because the doctor was not available, or simply because the child did not get enough to eat.

### Aspirational yet practical

It is obvious – though not the only factor – that the state's ability to provide services is directly linked to its ability to generate sufficient resources to cater for such services. As the post-2015 agenda takes shape we should learn from the pitfalls of the MDGs and put measures in place to ensure that the new framework is not just aspirational, but also practical.

In this regard I would propose the following recommendations, which I believe could help to close the floodgates that allow resource-leakage and could significantly alter the fortunes of developing countries.

Considering that corporate tax evasion and tax avoidance represents the largest source of illicit flows, we must get global governance right and ensure that corporations pay their fair share of taxes. This should include measures that would make it difficult for these companies to hide under anonymous shell companies by legislating for beneficial ownership – we should know who ultimately owns what, and where. Additionally, there is a need to encourage an internationally agreed framework on corporate reporting and exchange of tax information.

Transparency must apply at a global level, as well as at a national level. Perhaps this is not very easy 'goal' territory, but a universal development framework is going to have to tackle complex issues in order to be taken seriously.

Secondly, let's think about how new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) can promote fairer domestic tax systems. In many countries, it is the poor who end up paying more tax as a proportion of their income and this is just not right. When the rich are able to avoid paying their fair share of taxes, a government must rely on the rest of its citizens to fill its coffers. In Africa, we see a shift towards reliance on value-added tax, which results in price hikes on basic necessities the poor can barely afford, such as food, healthcare and education. A goal or

target on income inequality, or an indicator that requires the publication of the direct–indirect tax ratio, might encourage governments in the right direction. It is important to note that while tax dodging goes unchecked, governments are severely hampered from putting in place progressive tax systems – so fairer domestic tax systems depend on global transparency measures.

Thirdly, we should recognise that when implemented fairly, taxation can also be the tool that holds a government accountable to its citizens. A government of the people, by the people, and for the people, can only be realised when the resources that finance development are generated locally and when development is not dependent on external aid.

Ultimately, achieving tax justice should be placed at the heart of the new post-2015 agenda. This means ensuring that the rightful share of tax revenues is kept in countries where meaningful economic activities takes place, thus enabling states to finance their own development.

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**Tax Justice Network – Africa (TJN-A) is a pan-African initiative and a member of the Global Alliance for Tax Justice. It aims to promote socially just, democratic and progressive taxation systems in Africa. TJN-A advocates for tax systems that are favourable to the poor and that finance public goods. It challenges harmful tax policies and practices that favour the wealthy and that encourage unacceptable inequality.**

[taxjusticeafrica.net](http://taxjusticeafrica.net)

Photo: Mopani Copper Mine in Zambia, which is largely owned by a subsidiary of FTSE100 giant Glencore. The multinational corporation has been accused of dodging tax in Zambia – an allegation it denies. The mine causes significant local environmental damage. A Christian Aid partner has supported a local campaign group to demand improvements to the environment.

# WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT IS VITAL

Written by young women from UCF-Angola



There are still many development challenges facing Angola. Here, we outline some of the things that we feel should be included in a post-2015 agenda.

Firstly, women's economic empowerment is vital to eradicating poverty and inequalities, in order to achieve the full development of society. Women and girls should have access to education opportunities to develop their skills as entrepreneurs, through internships, scholarships and educational exchanges at national, regional and global level.

It is essential that women's access to job opportunities is guaranteed, together with the adoption of policies that protect women domestic workers from exploitation. Fair policies should also be put in place to make sure that women, young and old, have the right to land and property.

Social and cultural barriers that prevent women from owning property and land should be challenged and removed (for instance, when the male partner dies, the inheritance passes to the eldest son or, in his absence, to the husband's family). Meanwhile, Angola has ratified a great number of

international conventions and treaties, but the big challenge is their implementation. One example is the Law Against Domestic Violence, approved by the Angolan Parliament in 2011. It is a very important step for protecting the most vulnerable people and punishing the perpetrators of violence, and a lot needs to be done to put it into practice.

## Prioritising education

Governments should also prioritise universal primary education as a first step to help build a more critical, educated and empowered society. In its MDG Monitor, the UN says that this is one goal where Angola has seen greater progress. Yet, there are more private than public schools in our communities. What's more, poverty forces children to stay out of school because their families can't afford school fees. We also believe education should be guaranteed and tailored to the student's age.

Access to services and information on reproductive and sexual health should be available and easily accessible for



Photo: Christian Aid/Lily Peel



## ‘Governments should prioritise universal primary education as a first step to help build a more critical, educated and empowered society.’

young people as part of the government’s health policies, which are almost non-existent in this area. There is still a great cultural obstacle when it comes to speaking about sex, and young people have no access to contraception. According to the World Bank, Angola’s adolescent fertility rate was the fourth highest in the world in 2010, at 157 births per 1,000 girls aged 15-19.

In rural areas, resource centres and libraries should be encouraged so that everyone has access to information. Sport and physical activities should be promoted, especially among young women, as part of integral physical, mental and intellectual development.

Opportunities to develop leadership skills among young people should be encouraged. Leadership promotes virtues such as knowledge, commitment, responsibility and the development of trust: qualities that generate a more just and ethical society.

Women leaders are inspirational role models for younger women and can influence positive changes in communities. One example is the inspirational minister, the Rev Deolinda Teca, who is the first female secretary-general in the history of the Angolan Council of Christian Churches. The girls and young women who participate in our programmes have been making a difference in their communities and families. Some are now at university, others have jobs. They are the future leaders of Angola.

Education has an impact on community health, while improving women’s health helps to cut child mortality rates. Governments should create and implement policies to prevent diseases that affect children and ensure their access to treatment and medicine. For instance, malaria is a big threat to development in Angola, so investing in education and basic sanitation would help to reduce the high rates of people affected and killed by the disease.

The majority of Angola’s health professionals are women, serving poor communities in rural and urban areas. However, they do not have the adequate resources to carry out their work. The country needs more, better-paid health workers. Meanwhile, women with disabilities or mental health problems, particularly young women and girls, often suffer discrimination and abuse. Special programmes on reproductive and sexual health should be available to them, according to their needs and circumstances.

Finally, it is worth remembering that HIV is still a challenge for many in Angola. There is little access to anti-retroviral treatment for poor people, and very often community health centres have no supplies of reagents needed for carrying

out HIV tests. On the other hand, discrimination against people living with HIV is falling because more information is being disseminated on the radio and on TV, via government campaigns and activists in churches and schools.

In conclusion, we believe that there are enough resources in Angola to benefit society’s most excluded people, and we hope their needs will be prioritised in the post-MDG goals.

UCF-Angola (União Cristã Feminina/Women’s Christian Union) is part of the global network, Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA). It develops strategic work in education, gender and HIV, and encourages young Angolan women to develop their capacities, enabling them to intervene in public issues and build a society with more favourable conditions for women. UCF works in the poverty-stricken suburbs of the capital city, Luanda, where rates of HIV, discrimination and violence against women are high. It offers work opportunities and professional training programmes for young women, literacy courses, and peer education campaigns on health, social and citizenship issues. UCF is also committed to improving HIV awareness among young women. On many occasions, it has influenced traditional male decision-making structures, by bringing issues affecting Angola’s young women to their agendas.

[worldywca.org](http://worldywca.org)

Profile photo: UCF-Angola writers, from left – Tuiku Kiakayama Elisa, Apolonia Manuel Gabriel, Juliana Feliciano, Maria Mendes, Eloina Teresa dos Santos, Sofia Ambrosio.

Main photo: Young people from the Girls Building Bridges project in Angola take part in a warm-up game before their class, singing and clapping. Girls Building Bridges is a life skills programme run by UCF-Angola in a poor suburb of the country’s capital, Luanda.

# MATERNAL HEALTH MUST NOT BE FORGOTTEN

The Rev Phumzile Mabizela, executive director, INERELA+



Women have a right to decide where and when to have children, irrespective of their class, race and HIV status; yet, the rights of women living with HIV (WLWH) are not being realised.

Much more needs to be done to improve maternal health, tackle the root causes of gender inequality and ensure that there is universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support. INERELA+ has a Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) programme that seeks to empower young women, including WLWH, and we would like to see their needs addressed in post-2015 goals.

Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission (PMTCT) policies and services need particular attention. They are available in many countries, but access is limited. The services are still not integrated: they are provided at different centres and at different levels. Of severe concern is the practice of pressurising WLWH to sign consent forms giving health practitioners a right to sterilise them. The signing of these forms, in many cases, takes place when a woman is

in labour and the consequences of the procedure have not been fully explained to her. This shows considerable lack of knowledge of PMTCT and other prevention methodologies on the part of these practitioners.

This is one example of an area that has a profound impact on the rights of women and their maternal health. As we look towards post-2015 goals, there is clearly still a lot to be done under the existing MDGs. In Mozambique, Zambia and South Africa, unsafe abortions, malaria and HIV directly and indirectly account for maternal deaths and other birth-related complications. Malaria remains a key cause of maternal deaths. Indirectly, it exacerbates the physiological impacts of pregnancy, together with HIV that batters the immune systems of most pregnant women in sub-Saharan Africa. In these countries, transformation in socio-cultural norms to address early marriages, infidelity and the causes of obstructed labour, remains a major challenge.

In Mozambique, high teenage pregnancy is an issue. HIV response has been challenged in different ways, such



Photo: Christian Aid/Rachel Stevens

‘Much more needs to be done to improve maternal health, tackle the root causes of gender inequality and ensure that there is universal access to HIV prevention, treatment and support.’

as by promoting behavioural change toward increased safer practices, including condom use. Our network thus viewed it crucial enough to target both religious leaders and their congregants (mainly youths) and trained them on HIV prevention with an approach known as SAVE (Safer practices, Access to treatment, Voluntary testing and counselling, and Empowerment).

The mainstreaming of sexual education into school curriculums is another important issue – and the integration of all SRHR services, to make sure they are all under one roof, would also encourage women to seek and utilise these services that could save their lives.

### Priority areas

We all need to increase our advocacy in these areas, especially on SRHR, and greater involvement of faith-based actors would be particularly positive. Among other things, the following areas should be priorities, both now and post 2015:

- increased socio-economic protection for women
- policy change and legislation to deliver modern contraceptive methods, including the involvement of women in prevention strategies to give them greater control over their reproductive health
- reduced early-teen pregnancy
- increased public awareness on SRHR issues
- reduced maternal deaths
- reduced mother-to-child transmission
- human and child rights programming
- promotion of pro-SAVE strategies around SRHR
- more work with men, empowering them to adopt health-seeking behaviours
- economic empowerment for women
- eradication of gender-based violence, especially ensuring that sexual minorities are protected.

We, as the faith community, have the responsibility of applauding our governments for the positive developments, but also challenging them to strengthen their programmes that seek to achieve MDGs 3, 4 and 5. Women in Africa are the backbone of communities and society. Governments have to invest more in programmes that prolong their lives.

**INERELA+ is an international network of religious leaders – lay and ordained, women and men – living with, or personally affected by, HIV. INERELA+ recognises that religious leaders have a unique authority that plays a central role in providing moral and ethical guidance within their communities; indeed, their public opinions can influence entire nations. INERELA+ looks to empower its members to use their positions of respect within their faith communities in a way that breaks silence, challenges stigma and provides delivery of evidenced-based prevention, care and treatment services. INERELA+ has its headquarters in Johannesburg, South Africa, and it includes the African network, ANERELA+.**

[inerela.org](http://inerela.org)

Photo: Children sing, dance and play at a kids club for families affected by HIV at Eziamma Uli school in southern Nigeria. The weekly club teaches children about HIV, healthcare and moral issues, helping them to cope with their situation.

# PARTNER VOICES: ASIA AND THE MIDDLE EAST



Christian Aid/Dorhanna Rogers

Christian Aid partner WASSA (The Women's Activities and Social Services Association) runs a tomato processing project in Afghanistan, to empower women in local communities to develop business skills and earn a living. Tomatoes are cooked, prepared, stored in jars and then sold at the local market.

# EQUITY SHOULD BE CENTRAL TO DEVELOPMENT

Jessica Reyes Cantos, co-convenor, Social Watch Philippines



Social Watch Philippines has been leading the post-2015 consultation process in my country. While we continue to advocate on the MDGs, we are facing the sad reality that in the Philippines, MDGs on poverty reduction, universal access to education, lower maternal mortality rates and the spread of HIV will not be met by 2015.

Of course, we have tried, and from our perspective the MDGs really represent only a minimum level of development – people should expect more. We have lobbied legislators in Congress on the achievement of the goals, and more recently the government itself, and we have had some victories.

These include bigger budgets for educating out-of-school young people, organic farming, climate change training for farmers, and money for the proper sterilisation of medical equipment in public hospitals. But during the government of Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, these were mostly ‘paper’ wins. The bigger budgets promised were there in black and white as part of the General Appropriations Act, but the president never released the money.

From 2010, the new Aquino government was more receptive to our demands. We’ve had legislative victories with the signing into law of the People’s Survival Fund and the Universal Health Care Act. The first is an amendment to the Climate Change Act, which will make available and release more funding for climate change adaptation; the latter is an amendment to the Philhealth charter, which depoliticises access to health cards that were previously dispensed by politicians. Of course, the passage of the Reproductive Health Bill into law is a much-awaited measure.

## People before profits

We have also been working at local government level, with the aim of making local government budgets more people-driven and sensitive to the MDGs. We targeted farmers, fisherfolk, indigenous peoples, market vendors, youth and women’s groups, senior citizens and tricycle drivers. We educated them about how local government spending is decided and taught them to read and analyse budget and audit reports.

To our surprise, we found that people were not just interested in how their taxes will be spent – they also realised how poorly-funded some of the basic social services were, and they were willing to help boost local revenues. For instance, they encouraged relatives in the capital Manila and other cities to pay their community taxes

in their hometowns, rather than in urban areas, knowing that these urban areas have big local revenues to begin with.

This achieved some results. For instance, in a small town in the Visayas, a new classroom was built with the extra taxes that people helped their local government to raise. This kind of sensitisation, public involvement and availability of information will be essential if governments are going to deliver on post-2015 goals, which we hope will be even more ambitious than the MDGs.

But we need more than just money and information. We need a fundamental rethink of our economic paradigm. Yes, there is economic growth in the Philippines, but it has been accompanied by greater inequality, unemployment, underemployment and environmental degradation.

So our central message is this: post-2015 must not be business as usual. People must be put before profits, corporate social responsibility should not be an afterthought, and global partnerships are the way forward. We need fairer trade, aid, real investments rather than short-term capital flows, and climate financing rather than debt repayments.

These principles should have been central to the MDGs themselves. Now, in planning for 2015 and beyond, we finally have the chance to make them a reality.

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Social Watch Philippines is an alliance of over 100 civil society organisations (CSOs) and networks. It is part of a global network, Social Watch, which brings together national coalitions of CSOs struggling to eradicate poverty and the causes of poverty, to end all forms of discrimination and racism, and to ensure an equitable distribution of wealth and the realisation of human rights. It is committed to peace and to social, economic, environmental and gender justice. Social Watch holds governments, the UN system and international organisations accountable for the fulfilment of national, regional and international commitments to eradicate poverty.

[socialwatchphilippines.org](http://socialwatchphilippines.org)

## NO DEVELOPMENT WITHOUT ELIMINATING CASTE-BASED DISCRIMINATION

N Paul Divakar, general secretary and founder of National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights (left), and Lee Macqueen Paul, research and advocacy officer, National Dalit Watch, India



The post-2015 agenda must balance poverty reduction and environmental sustainability. The debates so far have recognised the need to promote social inclusion through structural change.<sup>18</sup> However, the lack of focus on human rights – including rights of access to land and natural resources – is disappointing. This perhaps reflects the top-down nature of global goal-setting, with its bias towards donor interests and expert views, which frequently overlooks the interests of the most marginalised.

The situation of South Asia's most vulnerable groups, including dalits (formerly referred to as 'untouchables') and adivasis (indigenous people), remains deplorable and is underpinned by discrimination based on work and descent (DWD),<sup>19</sup> – an issue affecting an estimated 260 million people worldwide.

Those affected by DWD suffer from a lack of recognition of their rights, including increasingly restricted and constrained access to the natural resources on which their livelihoods depend or which originally belonged to them.<sup>20</sup> One

example is the Almatti Dam in Bijapur district of Karnataka, where the submersion of large areas of fertile lands resulted in the world's largest rehabilitation and resettlement process.

In many locations across South Asia, the depletion of groundwater aquifers and inappropriate use of agricultural chemicals for commercial cropping is causing ecological damage and increasing production costs, with dalits and adivasis dependent on aquaculture and agriculture often hardest hit.<sup>21</sup> Some bear the impacts of the destruction of ecosystems more heavily than others, with the costs to vulnerable and excluded groups insufficiently recognised.

Notions about the 'ownership' of the environment and natural resources pose particular problems for these groups. Dalits traditionally, and institutionally, have been kept outside the purview of natural resource ownership, despite depending heavily on these for their livelihoods. Meanwhile, adivasi communities frequently do not recognise individual ownership of land and resources, which they have



Photo: Christian Aid/Sarah Filbey

**‘The post-2015 agenda should be founded on the principles of social and economic justice, equality and inclusion of the most vulnerable communities in all national schemes and initiatives.’**

traditionally managed communally. The legal and economic implications of biodiversity conservation models that assign an economic value to natural resource conservation therefore affect these groups in very specific ways.

Privatisation and neo-liberal policy have done much harm to Indian communities dependent on biodiversity/natural resources for their survival and livelihoods. The changing seasons – summers, monsoons and winters – have lost their balance and timings: cultivation has been badly affected, causing distress migration with no social safety net. Climate change and ill-conceived development projects in most parts of India have increased vulnerability to floods and droughts, and depletion of biodiversity is adversely affecting agricultural patterns. Dalits and adivasi communities, and other socially-marginalised minorities, are struggling to grapple with these changes.

### **Stringent checks and balances**

The post-2015 global agenda would prove fruitful in the Indian context if it were to ensure inclusion of biodiversity-dependent communities (dalits and adivasi) in all preparedness, adaptation and mitigation measures, vis-à-vis climate change patterns and the growing frequency and intensity of natural disasters. It should also support land redistribution and recognise collective rights over resources.

Holding onto the global vision of a poverty-free world, the Government of India needs to institute stringent checks and balances for ensuring accountability to the poorest and excluded sections of society, and for upholding the human rights of marginalised communities. To ensure these communities’ social inclusion, rights to natural resources must be recognised, protected and guaranteed. This would also contribute to conservation, as groups traditionally dependent on natural resources for their livelihoods have also often protected and conserved those habitats.

The Government’s National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) includes measures to promote and spread awareness of its schemes for climate change adaptation and preparedness among these communities. It also includes measures to recognise and map the vulnerabilities of communities dependent on natural resources and biodiversity, and to generate employment opportunities to stop poverty deaths and distress migration.<sup>22</sup> Globally, the three Rio Conventions on Biodiversity, Climate Change and Desertification also address the interdependent issues and should dovetail with the post-2015 agenda, with a focus on unacknowledged communities and socially excluded groups across the region.

While some current proposals rightly focus attention on curbing ‘environmental depletion’ through corporate/industry activities, and on ‘green economies’, it is high time that nations check the impact of development activities on poorest groups.

The post-2015 agenda should be founded on the principles of social and economic justice, equality and inclusion of the most vulnerable communities in all national schemes and initiatives, especially on questions of environmental sustainability.

The agenda should be a clear call to action and should contain very specific measurable targets and of course, the principle of community consultation involving local and national civil society organisations should be non-negotiable.

The National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR) is a forum committed to the elimination of discrimination based on caste. Set up in 1998, it carries out several campaign programmes advocating for various rights for dalits and adivasis, using thematically distinct movements. These include: All India Dalit Mahila Adhikar Manch (AIDMAM); National Dalit Movement for Justice (NDMJ); Dalit Arthik Adhikar Andolan (DAAA) and National Dalit Watch (NDW); together with national and international advocacy work.

[ncdhr.org.in](http://ncdhr.org.in)

The National Dalit Watch is an initiative of NCDHR-DAAA. It has developed tools and methods to identify, expose and document discrimination in humanitarian assistance. Through the regular monitoring of Disaster Risk Reduction initiatives, it has initiated advocacy and mobilisation processes to pressure the state and major humanitarian stakeholders to take corrective steps and institute a policy environment that recognises and counters such discrimination.

<http://nationaldalitwatch-ncdhr.blogspot.co.uk>

Photo: A team of adivasi honey collectors in Udaipur District, Rajasthan. A Christian Aid partner in India has supported forest producers by providing protective clothing, as well as identity cards to help protect them from being harassed by forest officials.

# A GLOBAL, NATIONAL AND LOCAL RESPONSE TO CLIMATE CHANGE

Dr Dwijen Mallick, fellow, Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies (BCAS)



Bangladesh is one of the countries most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. It has a high population density (over 160 million within 147,500km<sup>2</sup>), widespread poverty and a host of development challenges. It is the poor who are hit the hardest by climatic variability and extremes in different parts of the country (cyclone and salinity-affected coastal areas, drought-prone uplands, flood-affected riverine islands and hoar basin wetlands).

This has led to people migrating to cities for employment and better livelihoods, where they end up living in slums without basic amenities and suffering from economic hardship, food insecurity, a scarcity of drinking water, sanitation problems, health risks and social insecurity. Over 40 per cent of people in Dhaka city live in slums and fringe areas with poor housing. People in both rural and urban settings are destroying the environment's carrying capacity for their economic interest. Building adaptive capacity and resilience to climate change is key to addressing social and environmental challenges.

## Limited progress and barriers to achieving the MDGs in Bangladesh

In the last decade or so, Bangladesh has made laudable progress towards some MDGs, including targets in the areas of poverty alleviation, primary school enrolment, maternal health, child mortality, reducing gender disparity and the empowerment of women. However, there has been less progress in ensuring environmental sustainability – and achievements in MDGs have been obstructed by the impact of climate change and natural disasters, such as frequent and devastating cyclones, storm surges and floods.

The government of Bangladesh has prepared a climate change strategy and action plan (BCCSAP), but there is a lack of action on the ground to address impacts. And the effects of climate change are having a negative impact on poverty alleviation, food security, water supply, health, social security and environmental sustainability. Further, inadequate policy guidance, institutional weakness, poor implementation, and a lack of resources and technologies are all barriers to future progress.

The economic impact of climate change cannot be underestimated. The recent super cyclones in Bangladesh affected agriculture, fisheries and rural livelihoods, aggravating poverty in the coastal districts. Increasing salinity, water-logging, high tides and sea levels in the coastal regions, as well as devastating floods and drought in other regions, have damaged resources and properties and

caused huge economic losses to vulnerable communities. Recent studies by BCAS and the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) have suggested that the loss and damage due to climatic variability and extreme events could increase to an even greater extent in the near future. It is the poor and marginalised communities (indigenous people, fishers, farmers, women, children and elderly people) who are most vulnerable to the local consequences of climate changes, and yet they are not responsible – this is a great injustice.

Over 60 per cent of the population in the developing world, including in Bangladesh, depend on natural resources (land, water, forests, fisheries, biodiversity) and ecosystems for their subsistence and livelihoods. Climatic factors are affecting these resources and undermining the livelihoods and potentials of poor communities, threatening their food security, nutrition and employment, and contributing to increased rural to urban migration in Bangladesh. Many climate migrants are forced to live in city slums and as a result, there are tremendous pressures on urban ecology and on basic services such as housing, water supply, energy and sanitation. The process has already intensified competition over scarce resources leading to social conflicts, violence and violation of human rights.

Climate change has enhanced inequity and injustice between and across regions and countries, and within societies. Rich countries have created the problems while poor countries and poor sections within society suffer the most. It will generate further inter and intra-generational inequity and injustice unless appropriate mitigation, adaptation and disaster risk reduction (DRR) measures are taken urgently. The long arm of climate change impacts is likely to undermine various fundamental human rights and basic security, and affect the achievements of the post-2015 era. Local, national and global responses to address climate change should be based on equity principles, fairness and justice for the poor.

## The challenges of climate-resilient development

The problems of climate change and destruction of natural resources, environment and ecosystems have been created by unequal development, as well as unsustainable production and consumption, trade and business. The challenge before us is how to make the development process and outcomes more climate-resilient. If progress is to be sustained, then it is necessary to ensure long-



## ‘The challenge before us is how to make the development process and outcomes more climate-resilient.’

term food security, water, livelihoods, health and social security (in the face of millions of climate migrants) for poor and vulnerable communities. This will require a huge amount of resources, new knowledge, technologies, skills and capacity-building. During the last UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), it was strongly felt that a new development pathway based on low-carbon green growth and resilience to climate must maintain, ensure and rebuild natural capital, as well as critical economic assets and resources for public benefit.

Now we are moving towards SDGs, while many poor nations have not yet achieved the MDG targets. Further, while MDGs were for poor nations, the SDGs should be for all countries: there is a risk that the perspectives and priorities of poor countries – such as poverty alleviation, food, water and health security issues – could be undermined in the post-2015 era. However, civil society organisations and the research community in Bangladesh are helping the government to identify appropriate goals and targets for a post-2015 framework, focussing on environmental sustainability, including social protection for those affected by climate change, disaster risk management and energy security for all.

The post-2015 framework must consider climate justice and human rights issues seriously. It must also provide global, national and local responses based on equity, fairness and justice for the poor. Global, national and local environmental sustainability, climate change resilience and protection of human rights all are interconnected. We have to achieve these simultaneously and collectively.

The Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies (BCAS) is a non-governmental policy, research and implementation institute working on sustainable development at local, national, regional and global levels. This independent non-profit body was established in 1986, and over 25 years it has grown to become a leading research institute in the non-government sector in Bangladesh and, more widely, in South Asia.

[www.bcas.net](http://www.bcas.net)



Photo: Christian Aid/Steven Buckley

Photo: Members of the Pani Parishad (water council) project in Banagram village, Bangladesh, have installed three deep tube wells with the support of BCAS. Through the work of the Pani Parishad, villagers have learned that access to safe water is a right, and not a luxury.

## THE INCLUSION OF WOMEN IS AN ABSOLUTE NECESSITY

Leeda Yaqoobi, deputy director, Afghan Women's Network



From our perspective, any new development framework or post-2015 goals should focus, without doubt, on the tangible inclusion of women in all aspects of social, economic and political life. This will need to go beyond MDG 3 and a narrow focus on education. Enforcement of existing legislation and implementation of already agreed-upon policy measures are critical.

To date, most of the targets that have been established to promote the involvement of women have failed to translate into action. For example, Afghanistan's Peace and Reconciliation Program has language saying that women and minorities must be consulted. However, efforts to implement this and to engage women have been minimal and must be improved upon. Both the donor countries and implementing partners are let off the hook too easily and excuses are all too common. 'We have called for women to come, but none have showed up to participate in the process,' is a regular refrain.

Similar excuses are given for failing to reach the target that the Afghan government set on civil service recruitment: 30 per cent of women in the civil service. Yet there are examples of departments and companies where women have been protected and successful, due to commitment and will of leadership.

For example, the Ministry of Urban Development has 30 per cent of all civil engineer positions filled by females, including a woman civil engineer as director of the Department of Urban Development in a northern province. This was only possible due to the commitment of high and middle management in the Ministry. Yet, the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development – the darling of the donors – has failed to hire female civil engineers because women, allegedly, could not be civil engineers.

### Recognising the reality of people's lives

There are many underlying reasons for the existing underachievement, which a post-MDG framework could address. Education is one reason, but hundreds of girls now graduate from Afghanistan's public and private universities every year, so it cannot explain everything.

We need to extend education, but we also need to explore the barriers that are preventing girls and women from entering into paid employment opportunities and participation in public life. Often, girls and women will not come forward when prospective candidates are being sought. This is because they have no daycare facilities for their children, they have no access to safe and secure

transportation to and from work, and the working hours are so rigid that it prevents them from maintaining a balance between their professional and private life. The same goes for consultative meetings, when calls are often made without giving women enough notice to be able to organise transportation and daycare.

This is the reality of people's lives and it must therefore be recognised in a new development framework. The inclusion of women is an absolute necessity, but it cannot be fulfilled on the cheap. The post-2015 development agenda must therefore include specific targets to ensure that funding is allocated from government budgets and from donors, to enable the full participation of women in activities.

We will need to think about how goals are implemented at a national level. There will need to be a way to monitor and enforce the implementation of legislation and other global agreements. For example, a board could be set up to identify, investigate and follow up on any violation, with public reporting of results on a quarterly basis.

New targets should also result in specific budget lines that allow women to participate in employment and public life. This will include funding for the provision of daycare, adequate, safe and secure transportation, the provision of toilets at work, and flexible working hours.

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Founded in 1995, the Afghan Women's Network (AWN) is a cornerstone of Afghanistan's fledgling women's movement. It serves as a well-established network for the growing number of women's organisations and individuals working to empower Afghan women and ensure their equal participation in Afghan society. AWN represents the interests of over 110 member organisations and around 5,000 individuals. This non-profit, non-partisan network has a strong presence in several Afghan provinces. Its main office is located in Kabul, while its regional offices are based in Herat and Jalalabad. As well as acting as a network, AWN carries out advocacy work on issues such as women's peace and security, women's political participation and leadership, and women's legal and social rights.

[afghanwomennetwork.af](http://afghanwomennetwork.af)

## A RIGHTS-BASED FRAMEWORK FOR LASTING CHANGE

Bihter Moschini, programme and research officer,  
the Arab NGO Network for Development



At a time when the global development community is focused on finishing off the MDGs and planning the post-2015 agenda, the Arab region is undergoing a dramatic political transition together with escalating sectarian and civil tensions. All these factors have tremendous and devastating impacts on peace, stability and development in the region. The uprisings that started in late 2010 well reflected this. People demanding freedom, dignity, participation and social justice were calling for an end to all forms of exclusion: be it economic, political, social or cultural. Those demands recalled the objective put forward by the Millennium Declaration in 2000: namely, 'the collective responsibility to uphold the principles of human dignity, equality and equity at the global level'. They also reflected people's desire to see genuine action to ensure equitable development.

In this regard, a new framework that could contribute to the region's needs must adopt a comprehensive approach to development: one that takes political, social, economic, environmental and cultural rights into account. It must place citizens and the universality, indivisibility, interconnectedness and interrelatedness of their human rights at the centre. Given that the development challenges faced in the Arab region also reflect problematic global governance itself, the new framework must democratise global governance by strengthening developing countries' participation in decision-making, and by building on a system based on equal participation and common but differentiated responsibilities.

What we have learnt from the MDG framework, particularly in the Arab region, is very significant. The uprisings clearly demonstrated **the lack of direct linkages between economic growth and development**. The rentier economies of Arab countries adopted models of growth that neglected human developmental objectives and economic and social rights. Policy makers prioritised integration in the global economy through trade and investment liberalisation, borrowing, expansion of privatisation deals and public-private partnerships, and overall economic deregulation. Even though most countries achieved economic growth, poverty, unemployment and inequities grew dramatically.

Deregulated market-led growth has been failing the poor, and political systems have been unable to implement checks and balances. While numerically, countries were making progress on specific MDG goals on health and education, this did not mean corresponding progress was being made on the underlying problems causing poverty. The fact that these markers for success did not adequately reflect the situation on the ground demonstrates the short-sightedness of the framework and goals. Indeed, following a regional consultation on the post-2015 agenda organised by ANND,

civil society groups in the Arab region called for the main focus of the debate to shift from merely setting new goals and targets for post-2015, towards the analysis of the deep causes of poverty and how to tackle them.

On 30 May 2013, the High-Level Panel published its report on a post-2015 framework, introducing 12 new goals within another 15-year timeframe. While the questions and challenges listed are laudable, the proposals once again take a narrow approach, rather than seeking transformative shifts. We cannot deny that the report has positive aspects – for instance, 'universality', 'a stand-alone goal for women's empowerment and gender equality', a recognition of the 'environment-development nexus', 'recognition of peace as a cornerstone of sustainable development' – but it does not forge a new path. It focuses on market-led growth, but does not focus on developing the productive sector; there is an emphasis on delivering good jobs but no goal dedicated to ensuring decent work. Accountability is mentioned, yet it is highly dependent on self-regulatory mechanisms that simply do not exist in the Arab region. Human rights are discussed, but economic and social rights are given a secondary role by being referred to as basic needs.

Last but not least, for the Arab region and many others, the link between peace and development is critical – and by only mentioning internal conflict, the report fails to acknowledge the real impact of external conflicts on limiting development. In the Arab region this is clear: the ongoing and unresolved conflict between Israel and the Palestinians, and the impact of the Syrian crisis on the region, both demonstrate how conflict reverses and impedes development. In this regard, the post-2015 agenda must acknowledge the importance of ensuring a just and lasting peace.

Fifteen years passed in the blink of an eye, another 15 years will do the same. The adoption of a new and sustainable development framework, responding to the needs of all people with a holistic approach that takes political, social, economic, environmental and cultural rights into account, will be the only way to bring lasting change.

The Arab NGO Network for Development (ANND) works in 12 Arab countries, with seven national networks and an extended membership of 200 CSOs. It aims to strengthen the role of civil society, enhancing the values of democracy, respect for human rights and sustainable development in the region. ANND advocates for more sound and effective socio-economic reforms in the region that integrate the concepts of sustainable development, gender justice and the rights-based approach.

[annd.org/english](http://annd.org/english)

# PARTNER VOICES: LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN



Christian Aid/Hannah Richards

Alivio Aruquipa in his field of maize, beneath the Illimani glacier in La Paz, Bolivia. His community is one of many that depend on melting snow from the glacier for the water to feed their crops. As the ice mass on the glacier shrinks, this precious source of water is dwindling. 'We are the ones who feel the impact of climate change, we're the ones who are suffering,' Alivio says. Christian Aid partner Agua Sustentable has worked with his community to build a reservoir.

# A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO AN ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AGENDA

Mónica López Baltodano, climate change officer, Centro Humboldt, Nicaragua



We believe that we should prioritise the post-2015 inter-governmental process as it represents a real moment for global policy and decision-making.

We must ensure that government representatives from our region assume their responsibilities as official delegates, analyse the policy approaches prevalent in our region, and identify the country groupings that support the issues. All these issues must be discussed within the different civil society groups who work on climate, risk management and environmental sustainability.

We have identified the need to draw up an agenda on environmental sustainability, with an emphasis on key issues such as climate change, biodiversity, drinking water, food security and sovereignty, nutrition, the impact of extractive industries and energy.

That is why, in the various networks in which we work, we are encouraging a holistic approach, which will address all areas that are being adversely affected by the impact of global warming. However, it is not very clear how to 'mainstream' the challenges posed by climate change in discussions on sustainable development, so this must be a priority in future talks.

We need to think more creatively, and this reasoning also applies to issues such as biodiversity, integrated risk management and gender equity – issues that are also struggling to be integrated in negotiations on sustainable development in a cross-cutting way.

## Listening to local views

As part of a push by the National Roundtable for Risk Management (Mesa Nacional para la Gestión de Riesgo – MNGR) and the Regional Coordination for Risk Management (Concertación Regional para la Gestión de Riesgo – CRGR), Nicaragua and the region have been working on a report that will give 'Views from the Frontline' (VFL). Climate networks in Nicaragua have also decided to expand the focus of their work, from climate change to environmental sustainability.

**2015 is an important year. Consequently, we hope that the post-2015 process will contribute to the effective adoption of a fair and binding global climate instrument to be agreed by 2015 and in force by 2020.**

We also recognise that, despite the importance of the global agenda, national and regional networks need to link this to local processes and actions. Thus, the adoption of the global agenda should not be at the expense of community, national and regional agendas. Achieving the active involvement of

civil society in the post-2015 agenda will require deeper capacity building. At the same time, the breadth and complexity of the process to define the post-2015 agenda has overwhelmed the current capacity of civil society to coordinate and act in consensus.

To date, we believe that the consultation has really been inadequate, both in terms of theme and location. Many of the consultations have been carried out through 'existing global networks', which are not necessarily representative of national issues. Much more needs to be done to give space to the contributions of local and grassroots organisations.

We are planning to conduct an analysis of the impact of the MDGs in Nicaragua but we believe that some of the **key principles that should underpin a new global development agenda are: climate justice, gender equity, redistribution of wealth and environmental sustainability.**

Centro Humboldt was created in 1990. It engages in climate change advocacy at local, national, regional and international level, and within alliances in Nicaragua. Its objectives include working on environmental public policies and promoting efficient environmental management. Centro Humboldt seeks to empower different areas of civil society to provide information, to help build capacity and to carry out monitoring and research on environmental impact.

The organisation is a member of various networks, including Climate Action Network Latin America (CANLA), the Building Bridges Initiative (Building Bridges), Accra Caucus on Forests and Climate Change, the Nicaraguan Alliance for Climate Change (ANACC) and the Central America Forum on Climate Change.

[humboldt.org.ni](http://humboldt.org.ni)

## EQUALITY, PARTICIPATION AND RECIPROCITY MUST BE GUARANTEED

Rafael Soares de Oliveira, executive director, KOINONIA, Brazil



The environmental reality in Brazil presents many challenges. Here are several glaring examples of these challenges: we face the destruction of the Amazon's biodiversity through agribusiness projects, mainly soya beans; we suffer under government plans on energy production in the Amazon and Atlantic Forest, with hydroelectric projects displacing thousands of farmers and traditional communities; we are threatened by the growing use of genetically modified crops in agribusiness (almost all the corn in the country is already genetically modified) and the rise of pesticides (five litres per person per year); climate change has generated rainfall and landslide disasters – there have been five disasters in as many years, with official records listing over 2,000 deaths.

Today, against these challenges and many more, we live under a development model based on a GDP growth target of four per cent per annum, and under governments that are insensitive to popular campaigns where the contrasts between development, socio-diversity and biodiversity are made clear.

Any future post-2015 development plan should consider biodiversity, socio-diversity (ensuring that different communities with different traditions are able to live alongside one another in the natural environment, being sustained by it, protecting and guaranteeing its continuity), and the management of risks caused by climate change and other systemic environmental changes produced by human activity.

Such planning should ensure that minorities (regardless of race, ethnicity, gender and social group) and all peoples living in our shared environmental system are heard in their entirety. Equality, participation and reciprocity must be guaranteed. This means that those who are often treated as unequal have a voice, that everyone has the conditions (time and material resources) to participate, and that all costs of a participatory system are borne by those with greater power and resources.

The participation of all is, of course, essential and should be prioritised by our decision makers. For example: where there is inequality of educational levels, we should not wait



Photo: Christian Aid/Tatjana Ross

**‘We will need local, national and international institutions, including inter-faith and ecumenical organisations, to hold our leaders accountable for their promises on sustainable development.’**

until everyone is fully literate before letting them voice their views on the best education they want for the future: oral communications, use of interpreters and other means must ensure that all are heard now. The planning processes should occur in open, egalitarian spaces, where even economic inequality does not lead to imbalance between the parties.

We also believe that there should be one comprehensive action plan for sustainable development, given our dependence on the ecosystem.

### **Mechanisms for compliance**

A starting point for a post-2015 agenda should be existing international agreements like the DHESCA (human, economic, social, cultural and environmental rights) and the ILO Conventions. Hence, if new agreements must be signed, they must provide compliance mechanisms and sanctions on signatories’ countries. The MDGs and other agreements have not been met and the states suffer no penalty.

Another important cross-cutting aspect of planned and participatory development is the dimension of business or corporate interests. In our ecosystem, it is crucial that business interests are not promoted at the expense of environmental protection, cultural reproduction and the fight against inequality. Indicators that demonstrate this balance should be constructed in open, egalitarian spaces.

In implementing a post-2015 development agenda, we cannot rely solely on the goodwill of the state. The state has not always championed the interests of the most vulnerable people or those who have no financial or power resources. So we will need other local, national and international institutions, including inter-faith and ecumenical organisations, to hold our leaders accountable for their promises on sustainable development.

We are optimistic that genuine participation is possible; a number of examples from Brazil and around the world offer some glimpses of hope. These include:

- **Hearings and community planning consultations for indigenous and tribal peoples, guaranteed by the International Labour Organisation Convention 169.**
- **Disaster risk reduction and emergency risk management.**
- **Participatory Base Education Processes for community empowerment (in which communities and local leaders are encouraged to form their own plans for sustainable development).**

- **National and international public advocacy: parallel conferences, campaigns for just relations (taxes, trade and others), social forums, and faith group campaigns for peace in conflict situations.**
- **International systems for the protection and enforcement of rights.**
- **International agreements developed at grassroots levels (for instance, at People’s Summits).**
- **Global agreements established by nation states.**

These are good starting points that must be seriously considered by all governments negotiating post-2015 goals, and we would expect appropriate indicators to emerge naturally from this kind of participation. For example, indicators that can ensure the right balance between financial profit and socio/cultural/environmental sustainability; indicators that can measure how satisfied people are with the plans; and indicators that can address the concerns of minority and vulnerable populations.

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**KOINONIA Ecumenical Presence and Service was established in 1994 with a commitment to continue the ecumenical tradition of service to local communities, social movements and churches. KOINONIA works closely with rural workers, people of diverse religious traditions and, in particular, young people and women. In Bahia and Rio de Janeiro states, KOINONIA works with remnant communities of quilombolas and Candomblé people, providing legal advice, educational advocacy and dialogue to overcome religious intolerance. In 2011, it incorporated humanitarian aid into its work, in response to the disaster caused by heavy rains in Rio that year. KOINONIA also lobbies for people’s rights. During the 2012 People’s Summit – the parallel event to the UN’s Rio+20 conference on sustainable development – it carried out advocacy work and established the ‘Religions for Rights’ network.**

[koinonia.org.br](http://koinonia.org.br)

Photo: The Rev Arthur Cavalcante, Secretary General of the Episcopal Anglican Church of Brazil. His role includes being an active congregational priest, leading the Church’s involvement in global summits such as Rio+20, and championing ecumenism between Brazilian churches.

## REDUCING INEQUALITY AND PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Clara Esther Martinez, business administrator, Corambiente, Colombia



Our top priority for a new development framework in Colombia, just as in other Latin American countries, is the need to address inequality in all its forms, including between rural and urban areas, as well as gender inequality. This is the main cause of poverty, unemployment, food insecurity and malnutrition.

Rural areas, and more specifically areas of peasant economy, have been and still are a source of resources, goods and services essential to the whole country's life and development, and to food sovereignty. Indeed, rural areas are dependent on a peasant economy, as it produces about 70 per cent of the food consumed nationwide, and some 80 per cent of the water supplied to over 90 cent of our population. It was these peasant areas that, until recently, generated the main export: coffee.

However, there is no equity between urban and rural development in Colombia – a trend across Latin America. On the contrary, there has been a gradual widening of the gap in development conditions:

- In Colombia, 12% of landowners hold over 67% of the land, while 88% of small-scale landholders own 33% of the land.
- Poverty levels are higher in rural areas:
  - According to the UNDP, poverty measured by the level of Basic Unmet Needs (NBI) in urban centres was 33.4%, compared to 74.7% in rural areas.
  - The rate of secondary education coverage in urban areas was 75%, while in rural areas it was 27.5%
  - The under-five mortality rate per 1,000 live births (closely linked to conditions of malnutrition) in urban areas was 17.39, compared to 30.09 in rural areas.<sup>23</sup>
  - A third of people in Colombia's countryside experience extreme poverty; 29.1% of people in rural areas are on the edge of hunger.
- A study published by UNICEF and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean



Photo: Christian Ald/Isabel Ortigosa



## 'The reduction of inequality and the welfare of everyone on the planet are two basic principles that should underpin the new global development agenda.'

(ECLAC) concludes that in Latin America and the Caribbean, a child in a rural area is four times more likely to be extremely poor, compared with a child in an urban setting.<sup>24</sup>

- Severe difficulty in accessing water, either because of an uncertain source, distance or lack of supply, affects 17.9% of the child population in the countryside and 1.3% in cities.

To this context of urban/rural inequality, we can add segregation by gender:

- Rural women suffer social and intra-family violence, high levels of poverty and extreme poverty, poor access to basic services, few linkages to the labour market, and less favourable conditions in health and education.
- The depth of poverty in female-headed households in Colombia is higher than in those with male heads. This suggests that female household heads in rural Colombia and their families are mired in a poverty trap higher, and more difficult to overcome, than other rural households.

Changing this situation requires deep political will and leadership, which should be promoted and encouraged both by other countries and by the United Nations system.

Faced with the problems of rural Colombia, a new development framework would need to inspire government policies that explicitly seek to strengthen the poles of regional development and promote investment towards rural areas. Investment that encourages road and production infrastructure; access to credit; joint management of territory between urban centres and areas producing food and services; better training and education services appropriate to the contexts and rural needs; and the promotion and strengthening of the dynamics of peasant organisations, especially for women.

Peasant production must be joined up with markets and the national food industry, based on equal and fair treatment, in order to reduce brokerage costs and receive advice on quality control and safety in production processes. Government policies need to encourage land management mechanisms that prioritise food production and protection of strategic ecosystems to generate water.

Through a new development framework, the government should promote the inclusion of a climate variable in planning both for farming and for water resources. It should also promote alternative strategies to ensure water supply, with differentiated approaches between cities and/or small

communities, and should protect water resources through sanctions and incentives.

Policy-makers should also confront the triple discrimination affecting rural women, with a focus on gender, rights and acknowledgement of their social and economic contributions. Gender policy should be cross-cutting and holistic, based on the full enjoyment of rights, recognition of gender differences and rural women's contributions.

### Measurements and monitoring

To date, the MDGs have become a tool for monitoring national public policies and building alliances in the public and private sectors. They have also served as an incentive to formulate national, regional and local public policies. However, the national government has adjusted the system of indicators to allow for a change in the measurement of the variables included in the MDGs. For example: how to measure unemployment, income and malnutrition. These changes make it difficult to identify the causes of the various problems, such as the effects of policies implemented.

Colombia has made significant progress in poverty reduction according to the percentages set out in the MDGs. Yet, for a middle-income country, the goal for 2015 is very modest – we are a country of nearly 50 million<sup>25</sup> and there are still 15,232,000 people living in poverty, with 4,844,000 people below the extreme poverty line. However, the most critical issue has to be the situation in rural areas (where poverty levels have risen by some 80,000 people), and the deterioration in the situation for women.

The reduction of inequality and the welfare of everyone on the planet are two basic principles that should underpin the new global development agenda.

**Corambiente (Corporación Buen Ambiente)** carries out grassroots work on food security, nutrition and climate change. For 15 years the NGO has worked with rural communities in the areas of sustainable development, organic food production and providing support for organisational processes, particularly women's organisations. It works to improve conditions of food security, focusing its efforts on children and women suffering predominantly from the armed conflict. It has also implemented climate prevention and adaptation projects, and works to improve local authorities' accountability to citizens, particularly in the areas of agriculture and the environment.

[corambiente.com](http://corambiente.com)

Photo: Two women prepare rice for a community meal in an improvised kitchen of a Las Pavas camp, in Colombia.

# PRODUCTIVE RESOURCES, EMPLOYMENT AND PARTICIPATION

UNITAS, Bolivia



Since 2012, UNITAS has been involved in driving forward in Bolivia the discussion and proposal for a new global framework for development. The main results of this process have included participatory research with residents in urban and rural areas across seven municipalities in the country.<sup>26</sup> This participatory research has been complemented by consultations held with representatives of civil society at national level.

Using the views of research participants as the main reference point, we have identified a set of core problems that cause poverty. These relate to: lack of access to strategic resources such as land and water; sensitivity and vulnerability to the climate; lack of access to financial capital, markets and training; lack of employment opportunities; insecurity and absence of protection in work; social vulnerability and the scarcity of public services; inequality of state services in urban centres and rural areas; 'clientelism'; limited political participation; lack of information and political training; and limitations of public policy.

These core problems can be classified in four groups, namely: access to productive resources; employment and working conditions; social protection and social security; and political participation. The prospects for change in each of these key areas, as outlined by research participants, are presented below as the foundation for a new global framework for the post-2015 development agenda

## Access to productive resources

On this theme, the common views of research participants in urban and rural municipalities were based on productive development, economic diversification and the expansion of support services to production, taking advantage of local potential. Along with the vision of productive communities and municipalities, another strategic component for bringing about change was identified as the development of the workforce and small farmers, through education, technical training and on-the-job training.



Photo: Christian Ald/Hannah Richards

**‘There are demands for a radical transformation in the current conditions, in which power and control lies in the hands of small groups of people.’**

Demands related to productive resources are concentrated in four areas. Firstly, strengthening indigenous and peasant farming through the provision of different financial (capital) and technological (machinery and equipment) supplies, and technical/production training. Secondly, strengthening artisanal/traditional activity through accessible credit, opening of markets and the provision of supplies. Thirdly, building municipalities based on production and tourism. Lastly, the installation or improvement of road infrastructure, education and health services, and spaces for recreation and sports. The granting of land and the protection of forests and ecosystems in rural municipalities also appear as other key areas, but to a lesser degree.

### **Employment and working conditions**

The shared vision is for municipalities to enjoy potential for production that will generate sufficient job opportunities, by implementing policies with an impact on employment, creating new industrial businesses and professionalising new generations. The common expectation is that wages and earnings would improve to a level sufficient enough to cover the essential consumption needs of workers and their families.

Work-related demands suggest that central government plays a role in improving working conditions (wages and benefits), protection of all workers’ rights, particularly in the countryside, and generating jobs, especially for young people in towns and cities.

### **Protection and social security**

Hopes around protection and social security are based on the possibility of cities and villages enjoying optimum living conditions, and a substantial improvement in basic services. The views of rural and indigenous people particularly seek a higher quantity and quality of health and education services, given the large deficiencies in service provision in these communities.

Both rural and urban participants seemed to agree on the need to demand that municipal, departmental and national governments make significant improvements to infrastructure, health services (including the creation of hospitals with specialised care) and public education, with a guarantee of good nutrition for students. Many of the groups demanded that central government also improve access to social security and retirement benefits of wage-earners, and called for the creation of a ‘health system’ for artisans, with a view to developing a universal health system for informal workers.

### **Political participation**

Views on participation are aimed mainly at a critical assessment of the work of local authorities and their new ‘commitment’ to respond to the needs of the population and implement development plans. Views were also expressed on the role of the leaders from neighbourhood and other social organisations.

In rural municipalities, some political views coincided – for example, the demand that local authorities have a ‘development vision’, ‘listen to the people’s demands’, place ‘greater concern on care for the poorest people’, and create ‘agreements’ with public and private institutions (NGOs) to raise funds for the benefit of the population. Also identified was the need for a population with a ‘collective conscience’, trained and politically united with ‘one foot in the countryside in order to maintain their traditional roots’, and the need for ‘empowered young people and women’.

While these approaches may seem general and discursive, they accurately reflect the demands of several social sectors for a radical transformation in the current conditions, in which power and control lies in the hands of small groups of people who support the ruling parties, are rooted in local government bodies, and who seek to use social organisations for their own political advancement.

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The National Union of Institutions for Social Action Work (UNITAS) is an NGO founded in 1976. Its mission is to contribute to alternative proposals for development and social change towards a democratic society – compassionate, fair and just – in collaboration with social movements and popular organisations. UNITAS works on a variety of topics under the conceptual framework of human rights-based development. It runs various projects, including promoting and enforcing the collective rights of indigenous peoples, peasants and urban communities, and training and strengthening leadership, advocacy and the generation of local and national public debate on development and human rights issues. It also supports small community development projects.

[redunitas.org](http://redunitas.org)

Photo: Juan de la Cruz Noe Muiba is passionate about protecting the forest that his indigenous community now owns in Beni, Bolivia. ‘What gives us life is the earth, and that’s what we’ve got to protect,’ he says.

## ADDRESSING THE 'SOCIAL JUSTICE DEFICIT'

Iara Pietricovsky de Oliveira, co-director, INESC, Brazil



The previous Brazilian government knew how to focus on social policies to improve the living standards of the poorest and most vulnerable Brazilians. Indeed, poverty has become central to the national political agenda. However, Brazil has failed to address the more serious issue of increasing inequality, illustrated by its archaic political structure and uneven wealth distribution. Although even the poorest Brazilians have become consumers, the richest have become even richer and the wealth more concentrated.

However, there is a difference in the rhetoric we hear from the Brazil we see on the international stage – a champion of measures to tackle social inequality, implementing successful cash transfer policies such as the Bolsa Família programme – and the reality of a country where extreme inequalities still persist, defined by the conditions of race, ethnic identity, gender, sexual orientation and social class.

There is an invisible wall that prevents social mobility. It condemns the poor and their children, women, indigenous and black Brazilians to low-quality education, a precarious health system, and a lack of sustainable and humane housing. The country's regressive state tax system harms the poorest, since they pay a higher proportion of their income in tax than the richest. Furthermore, the extremely wealthy contribute very little to the tax system, as their profits are generally channelled through tax exemptions and other mechanisms. So it is the poor and the middle-classes who support Brazil's social public policies.

We have recently seen changes in the Brazilian Forest Code, an example of the Brazilian government's contradiction of international versus domestic rhetoric. The revised legislation on forests supports frenetic growth in the form of mega-projects and agribusiness, rather than compliance with greenhouse gas emission targets.

Brazil has the world's sixth largest economy – but we haven't yet been able to carry out a redistributive social pact, confront the racism that marks and divides our society, achieve full equality and full rights for women, or guarantee the right of our indigenous and afro-descendant peoples to a decent life (instead, we are killing them through the violence generated by big agri-business and the state's failure to guarantee their rights). When thinking about priorities for a post-2015 development agenda, we have to recognise that the MDGs were a scandalous reduction of an entire framework of international treaties and conventions that had been established since 1992, in the so-called UN Social Cycle, and did not do justice to the Millennium Declaration.

Any new goals need to be built on an ethic of human rights, social justice and sustainability. They must be relevant to the

financial, economic, political and food crises we face, and must translate into national contexts to generate the public policies and budgets that we need. We believe governments are stepping back from human rights, women's rights in particular, and have instead become hostages of corporations and financial capital. We saw this at Rio+20 where the idea of a 'green economy' – essentially understood by civil society as the commodification and commercialisation of nature – was promoted despite resistance.

So, there are big questions that the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) must answer. Firstly, what goals and targets will there be for rich countries? Without significant action, based on the CBDR principle (Common but Differentiated Responsibilities), a fair and sustainable world will not be possible. Secondly, how can we deepen democratic participation in a world of growing inequality and persistent discrimination on the basis of gender, race and sexual orientation? Power and wealth, as we know, often go hand-in-hand – so if we are serious about change, then different groups require access to political power, and wealth needs to be more equally distributed.

Thirdly, how do we ensure decent and sustainable work to every human being in a world where youth unemployment is increasing in so many countries, including in Europe? And how can we ensure people's labour rights are protected in the face of so much exploitation? Fourthly, how can we better protect, through new SDGs, our public spaces and common assets such as water and land? How do we also change our patterns of production and consumption to preserve rather than destroy nature?

Finally, there needs to be a conversation about who is paying the bill! At the moment, it feels like there is a 'deficit of social justice' in the world: exploding inequalities before our eyes, corruption and misappropriation of public money, regressive tax systems where the poor pay more than the rich and, globally, an economic system that enables the wealthy to hide profits offshore and avoid their financial responsibilities. A post-2015 agenda must face these issues urgently.

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**The Instituto de Estudos Socioeconômicos (INESC) works to improve representative and participatory democracy in Brazil and to ensure the realisation of human rights, by strengthening the voice of civil society and increasing social participation in public policy making. It opens dialogues between civil society and governments, strengthens indigenous movements, defends the rights of women, young people and children, and develops projects to fight poverty and discrimination.**

# A SOCIAL EQUITY AGENDA IN HARMONY WITH MOTHER EARTH

Martin Vilela, co-worker, the Bolivian Climate Change Platform



As we near the 2015 deadline for achieving the Millennium Development Goals with limited success to date, and following the disappointment of Rio+20, the process that is driving the United Nations' post-2015 development agenda still insists on a conventional model of development.

Twenty years on from the 1992 Earth Summit, 13 years on from the creation of the MDGs, and on the threshold of a profound climate crisis, the debate around the post-2015 development agenda leaves us with a sense of insufficiency. As it happened in the run up to Rio+20, there is a lack of detailed, deep and systematic analysis of the impact of global environmental and development policies.

What is clear is that scientific evidence increasingly shows, with eloquence, that environmental degradation has already crossed several planetary limits, such as the acceleration of the rate of loss of species and the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. We are thus facing a high probability of triggering a chain of climatic events that would directly lead to an environmental crisis with no return, drastically reducing the possibility of maintaining a life with dignity in the not-too-distant future. Moreover, in recent years, enormous economic and social inequities, far from being resolved, have rather been exacerbated. Despite greater economic growth, wealth is increasingly concentrated in fewer hands.

The Bolivian Climate Change Platform believes the efforts of states and international institutions have been hijacked by multinationals, who remain committed to boosting formulas that perpetuate the economic growth model as though it were synonymous with universal wealth and welfare. Even 'progressive' South American countries such as Bolivia, who use a powerful rhetoric of living well and respecting Mother Earth, apply policies based on extractive development<sup>27</sup> and the perpetuation of market-led models, systematically violating the rights of historically marginalised and vulnerable populations. Determined to boost economic growth, they are missing a unique historic opportunity to show the world the possibility of committing to an alternative and truly sustainable development model.

The proposals from CSOs<sup>28</sup> tend not to take the structural dimension of development fully into account, confining their suggestions to narrow – though just – demands on women, poverty, food, health and so on. These are important contributions to the debate, but in many cases they do not fully take into account the structural basis of the current development model, like the economic and social order.

On the threshold of multiple global crises for the planet, the impetus of a development agenda to eliminate social and

economic inequalities, and restore the balance with Mother Earth, is subject to achieving a profound change in the structural basis of the current economic and social model, global production systems, the energy matrix and political structures – in line with the challenges facing humanity over the coming years.

It is necessary to reconsider the conceptual basis for development, leaving behind the concept of development as synonymous with economic growth, and adopting an approach that generates sustainability and equality through 'green' investments. That's why it is important to evaluate, critically, the path we have followed up until now. The planet's limits must be at the centre of the debate. Strategies for achieving human wellbeing must be informed by the Earth's capacity to repair the damage caused by human activities: planning, rational consumption and redistribution with justice and equity must be the new guidelines for the future of societies. In this context, living well continues to represent an opportunity for people, their organisations and their communities to propose alternatives to development.

For South America and a country like Bolivia, as well as for other developing countries, tackling this agenda is an even bigger challenge – on the one hand because of their current state of poverty, but mainly because they must abandon the race of irrational resource and energy consumption, based on extraction and industrialisation. They should therefore seriously consider environmental issues and make great efforts to change their internal structures.

Escaping poverty cannot be an excuse to repeat the mistaken ways of western development. The Bolivian Climate Change Platform, as a national network, is promoting this debate linking the development model discussion, climate justice and rights of indigenous peoples to their territories and own ways of life. Despite discouraging scientific predictions, powerful corporate interests and the lack of political openness, today more than ever we need to ensure a cohesive civil society agenda for purposeful action, to achieve real structural change.

**The Bolivian Climate Change Platform is a national network of social movements and NGOs. Founded in 2009, it aims to develop proposals to combat climate change through national policies in Bolivia and proposals for global action. The platform is led by the Secretaries of Natural Resources of Bolivia's five main social movements, who collectively represent over 3 million people. It receives technical support and funding from Bolivian and international NGOs.**

[cambioclimatico.org.bo](http://cambioclimatico.org.bo)

# AN AGENDA FOR EQUITABLE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The priorities reflected in these contributions from Christian Aid partners range from the specific – the inclusion of women in all aspects of social, economic and political life (AWN) and the need for tax justice to be central and regarded as a core development issue (TJN-A) – to an overarching concern about the participation of poor, minority and vulnerable communities in the post-2015 debate (KOINONIA), the deepening of consultation (Centro Humboldt) and a rallying call for equitable and sustainable development (Social Watch Philippines, INESC, UNITAS, ANND).

## Sustainability

Christian Aid and ACT Alliance, the global network to which we belong, have sought for some time to give voice to those communities that are vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. The rationale is spelt out clearly by Herbert Mwalukomo from CEPA, who points out that Malawians 'are on the frontline' in responding to the impacts of climate change. Herbert not only highlights the increase in climate-related disasters experienced by communities in Malawi, but also the wide-ranging implications that go beyond death, injury and economic loss, to disrupt other areas such as education.

It is for this reason that many working on issues of **resilience and disaster risk reduction (DRR)** are calling for them to feature strongly in and across a new post-2015 set of goals, to ensure much greater priority, investment and integration with national development plans. Mathieu Ouedraogo from Réseau MARP, Burkina Faso, gives further detail, suggesting that a post-2015 development agenda could help to develop early warning systems, build local capacity for the prevention and management of disasters, and drive investment into infrastructure for the reduction and mitigation of disaster risks. Dr Dwijen Mallick from BCAS in Bangladesh points out that this is needed at both an urban and rural level – it is not just about resilient cities.

Clear links are also made with the need for **climate change adaptation**. An example of national-level legislation in this area is given by Social Watch Philippines, who highlight the passing of the 'People's Survival Fund', which will release more funding for adaptation; consideration may therefore be given to how a post-2015 framework might drive similar legislative change elsewhere, as well as having an impact on policy and funding priorities. Legislation might help to address some of the implementation challenges that are highlighted by Dr Mallick: 'The government of Bangladesh has prepared a climate change strategy and action plan' he writes, 'but there is a lack of action on the ground to address impacts'.

A number of contributions allude to the importance of integrating an environmental perspective throughout a new post-2015 framework. **Energy security** is mentioned by BCAS, as well as by CEPA in Malawi who point out that there is an unsustainable dependence on biomass energy, leading to deforestation and thus greater vulnerability to flooding. Proposals on the table for clean energy access will be very important in addressing these current imbalances, and Christian Aid sets out examples of renewable developing in Africa in the report, *Low-Carbon Africa: Leapfrogging to a Green Future*.<sup>29</sup> This report looks at sustainable ways of giving energy access to the 1.4 billion people who do not currently have it, and draws on case studies from South Africa, Nigeria, Kenya, Rwanda, Ghana and Ethiopia.

One proposal in the aforementioned report, from ICEED in Nigeria, is for a 'leapfrog fund' that could, among other things, 'bridge the high costs of investing in small-hydro, solar and other small-scale renewable sources by providing funding to close the gaps in the costs of these technologies'.<sup>30</sup> What seems clear is that the delivery of a sustainable development agenda, going forward, will be wholly dependent on the delivery of promised **additional climate finance**. Without this funding, it will be very hard for countries such as Nigeria to adopt a low-carbon pathway, particularly in regard to energy.

A sustainable approach to **water** is also mentioned by Corambiente in Colombia, who talk about the need to protect water through sanctions and incentives. With demand for fresh water increasing, it is estimated that by 2020, 75-250 million people in Africa will be affected by water stress, and that by 2050, a decreasing volume of fresh water in large river basins in Asia will affect over 1 billion people. Water demand is projected to overshoot supply by 40 per cent in 20 years' time,<sup>31</sup> so a sustainable approach to resource management is urgently needed.

**Food and nutrition security** is another area that must be underpinned by a strong environmental perspective, and Corambiente's contribution also makes the connection with land management and the impact of climate variability on farming. The High-Level Panel recommendation to include a target on sustainable agriculture<sup>32</sup> and increasing smallholder yields addresses some of these concerns and should be built upon in any future proposals.

Finally, the contribution from Centro Humboldt in Nicaragua notes the importance of also securing a fair and binding climate change deal in 2015. Indeed, a number of partners express strong support for the principle of **Common but**

## ‘The importance of addressing inequality through a new post-2015 agenda comes through in nearly all Christian Aid’s partner contributions.’

**Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR)** to be reflected in post-2015 goals – under this principle wealthy countries, who have the greatest responsibility for climate change, do most to counter its effects. This is mentioned explicitly by CEPA and by Iara Pietricovsky from INESC in Brazil, who notes that: ‘without significant action based on CBDR, a fair and sustainable world will not be possible’. Fundamentally, this is about equity and about ensuring that everyone has a fair share in the context of planetary boundaries. As BCAS note, the communities most vulnerable to climate change – indigenous people, fishers, farmers, women, children and the elderly – ‘are not responsible for human-induced rapid climate change’.

A fair post-2015 sustainable development agenda will therefore require all countries to play a part to ensure there is enough finance to deliver new goals, to share the technology needed, and also to take the actions at home – such as reducing waste, increasing energy efficiency and investing in renewables. The changes required to move us towards more sustainable global patterns of production and consumption must not be underestimated. Martin Vilela (Bolivian Climate Change Platform) argues that it is only through radical structural change and the adoption of a new economic paradigm that people will be enabled to live well ‘in harmony with Mother Earth’.

### Inequality

The importance of addressing inequality through a new post-2015 agenda comes through in nearly all of our partner contributions. Some emphasise the current patterns of discrimination and exclusion that hold particular groups back and stand in the way of poverty eradication. The example of **caste discrimination** from India is a hard-hitting reminder that 260 million people continue to experience discrimination based on work and descent, and have their basic human rights undermined as a result. It is also a reminder of the important links, not only between inequality and human rights, but also between inequality and environmental sustainability.

As N Paul Divakar (National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights) and Lee Macqueen Paul (National Dalit Watch) write, it is the most vulnerable and excluded groups who bear the cost of degraded ecosystems, as well as the cost of pressure and conflict surrounding access to land. Issues around land rights must be addressed, as it is an issue that disproportionately affects the poorest and most vulnerable, often rural indigenous and tribal peoples, including Afro-descendant and other minority groups in the developing

world.<sup>33</sup> There are few public policies specifically designed to address these problems, in particular land reform and land redistribution, or to correct the imbalances in favour of disadvantaged groups and territories.

Inequalities are not just experienced by social groups, but they also have a strong geographic dimension, and **urban/rural inequalities** are brought out by Corambiente from Colombia. A much higher rate of poverty, under-five mortality and water shortage is experienced by rural communities. For the authors, the answer lies in government policies that ‘explicitly seek to strengthen the poles of regional development’ and ‘which promote investment towards rural areas’. From another perspective, BCAS discuss increasing urbanisation, driven in part by ‘climate migrants’ who move to city slums and put considerable pressure on urban ecology and basic services.

Many of the contributions make specific points or recommendations on **gender**. Damaging social norms around gender continue to perpetuate violence and the subjugation of women, as well as limiting the participation of women in public life and decision-making roles within the household. Whilst the current MDG 3 on Gender Equality focuses on an education target, an area that still needs attention (UCF-Angola), civil society organisations here identify a much wider agenda for post-2015.

The piece from the Arab NGO Network for Development commends the High-Level Panel report for its inclusion of a stand-alone goal on gender equality and women’s empowerment, which is perhaps a good starting point for discussion of more specific issues.<sup>34</sup> For AWN in Afghanistan, the primary objective should be around the inclusion of women in public life, including the take-up of employment opportunities. AWN’s Leeda Yaqoobi highlights the importance of funding, but also of addressing external factors such as a lack of safe transportation and daycare facilities, which can often prevent women from participating in social, economic and political life.

The contribution from INERELA+ highlights the need for continued progress on HIV and maternal health – two existing MDG areas – but brings out some significant challenges, including on sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), early marriage and pregnancy, the integration of services, and the scandal of violence against women and girls, which some have described as ‘the missing MDG’. Similar themes come through from UCF-Angola, who also express concerns about the wider health system and argue for more and better-paid health workers.

Other writers focus more on economic empowerment, including access to finance (Réseau MARP, Burkina Faso), linkages to the labour market (Corambiente, Colombia) and inheritance rights (UCF-Angola).

What seems clear from all of these pieces is that gender equality is and should be regarded as a core development priority – not only do women constitute the majority of people living in poverty around the world, but they also hold the key to poverty eradication.

All of these inputs underline the need for a ‘data revolution’, as set out in the High-Level Panel’s recent report; they also give weight to the Panel’s narrative and proposal to ‘leave no-one behind’ by tracking progress towards new goals across social groups, as well as across income quintiles. However, many contributions go further and seek to challenge **increasing income inequality**, an over-emphasis on growth, and the policies such as weak financial transparency and regressive tax systems, which concentrate wealth and power in the hands of a few.

Iara Pietrovsky from INESC in Brazil has the strongest words on this and on taxation, writing that ‘the country’s regressive state tax system harms the poorest as they pay more tax than the richest’. It is essentially, ‘the poor and the middle classes who pay for Brazil’s social public policies’ such as the much-lauded Bolsa Familia programme. Alvin Mosioma, from TJN-A, makes a similar point and identifies a trend towards increasing Value-Added Tax (VAT) across Africa, ‘which results in price hikes on basic necessities the poor can barely afford, such as food, healthcare and education’ he says.

Alvin and Iara also make links with the global tax and financial systems, which enable tax avoidance and evasion, and corruption, thereby perpetuating wealth inequality and poverty. This is also an area that was explored recently in the thematic consultation on inequalities, whose synthesis report observed: ‘The inequalities that stem from international financial systems, including tax avoidance and evasion, are increasingly identified as drivers of disparities both within and between rich and poor countries.’<sup>35</sup>

That report also recommended that reducing inequality be incorporated at goal level, ‘as the explicit purpose of national and international economic strategies’.<sup>36</sup> While this proposal failed to make its way into the High-Level Panel report, it chimes with the emphasis on social inclusion and tackling relative poverty within the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) report<sup>37</sup> and with a proposal on reducing the Gini coefficient, put forward by the Global Compact.<sup>38</sup>

The consensus from reports to date, and from civil society, is that economic inequality matters: people do not want to live in societies with a widening gap between the rich and the poor.

Several contributions mention other specific policy solutions such as **employment** and **social protection** (UNITAS in Bolivia, SPII in South Africa). ANND points out that the emphasis on job creation within the High-Level Panel report fails to reference ‘decent work’ explicitly. Iara from INESC makes a similar point, also shining a light on the protection of labour rights, while UNITAS also mentions wages and benefits. The issue of jobs has arisen again and again within post-2015 debates to date, and many of the strongest advocates for the inclusion of a goal or target on jobs are young people.

The contribution written by young women from UCF-Angola mentions the need for internships and scholarships to open up job opportunities, as well as policies to protect female domestic workers from exploitation. This will not however be an easy task and the contribution from SPII in South Africa delves into some of the deeper structural economic issues that relate to employment.

SPII’s Isobel Frye points out that there is often a tension between economic development and human rights, and that economic strategies are often designed and implemented without ‘the realities’ of poor communities in mind. She makes a strong case for a focus on sustainable livelihoods that is people-centred, rights-based and gives people ‘practical business skills and information about access to markets, to credit and to other forms of assistance’.

## **Peace, good governance and human rights**

Human rights are a recurring theme throughout these contributions and there is a clear demand from organisations for a rights-based framework. KOINONIA (Brazil) propose that existing conventions and international agreements should be the ‘starting point’ for a post-2015 agenda.

Nearly all of these contributions make specific reference to ‘rights’, and this should therefore send a strong signal to those negotiating a post-2015 framework to favour a rights-based approach. The realisation of people’s rights does of course require both financial resourcing and a strengthened relationship between citizen and state, two areas where tax can play a key role. Tax avoidance and evasion not only undermines the government’s ability to deliver its obligations, but it can also weaken governance by skewing accountability towards donors and creditors.



## ‘People do not want to live in societies with a widening gap between the rich and the poor.’

The area of governance is further touched on by a number of authors, and Jessica Reyes Cantos from Social Watch Philippines shows how more participatory governance and access to information can lead to stronger development outcomes. The work Social Watch Philippines is doing to help communities analyse budget documents at a local level is clearly having an impact. It is this kind of process that will enhance accountability and therefore hopefully secure the delivery of any post-2015 goals.

Finally, it is important to note that a number of contributions come from countries or regions regarded as ‘fragile’ or ‘conflict-affected’. The ANND piece focuses in on the Arab region and recent political developments, arguing that governments must take political, social, economic and cultural rights into account if there is to be lasting peace. As the MDGs have so clearly illustrated, conflict can impede and often reverse development – the new emphasis on peace-building and state-building within the post-2015 discussions is therefore very welcome.

### Global partnership

We have chosen to give most space in this report to Christian Aid partners around the world because it is ultimately through them, and in partnership with them, that change will come about. Christian Aid is also working globally with members of ACT Alliance, who have prioritised four themes for the post-2015 development agenda: inequality, environmental sustainability, conflict and fragility, and governance.<sup>39</sup>

Other partners will also need to play their part, including faith-based and private sector actors. Christian Aid works actively with many faith communities and faith leaders, and the contribution from INERELA+ highlights the important role they have played in tackling HIV and promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Faith communities have been hugely important in the delivery of the MDGs to date – and no more so than in the areas of health and HIV. Going forward, it will therefore be important to include faith-based actors in conversations about post-2015, harness the networks that faith-based organisations can offer and work with them in key areas related to social and cultural norms – for example, on the issue of gender-based violence.<sup>40</sup>

A post-2015 development agenda will also require the engagement of private sector actors. The subject can prove very emotive, and the destruction and exploitation of communities by unaccountable and often large private

companies will inevitably, and quite rightly, provoke anger. Whether it is the displacement of indigenous and other minority groups due to land grabs, profit-shifting by transnational corporations or a failure to uphold basic labour rights, it is evident that much more needs to be done to ensure a responsible private sector, raise standards and enhance accountability.

One way of increasing accountability would be to introduce reporting standards that would require companies to be more transparent and make financial and non-financial information (relating to environmental impact and human rights) available to all stakeholders. A greater emphasis on the enabling environment that would allow small and medium-sized enterprises to flourish within the domestic economy could also help to shift the debate. Meanwhile, a post-2015 sustainable development agenda could be enriched by drawing on the experience of cooperatives and other alternative business models.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

A huge amount of work has already been done on the post-2015 development agenda: it will now be important to build on this consultative work to ensure that the contributions made by civil society to date are not lost as the process moves forward. Reports from both the national and thematic consultations are important in this regard and should be taken very seriously by those negotiating a new framework.

As it says in the UNDG report, *The Global Conversation Begins*, 200,000 people have taken part in consultations so far,<sup>41</sup> 130,000 in national dialogues.<sup>42</sup> In the words of *Beyond 2015*, the process must continue to be, 'participatory, inclusive, and responsive to the voices of those directly affected by poverty and injustice.'<sup>43</sup>

Some of those voices feature here in this report and while a range of views are expressed, there are several common calls for a post-2015 sustainable development agenda:

- a clear and consistent rights-based approach
- an agenda underpinned by low-carbon development and environmental sustainability
- a strong emphasis on social, environmental and economic inequalities
- a bold and empowering agenda for women and girls
- a commitment to strengthen resilience, addressing the risks and hazards that threaten development gains
- a universal set of goals, with targets set according to common but differentiated responsibilities.

As the process moves forward and priorities are considered by UN member states involved in the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and potentially others beyond this, there will be a need to make political choices about development priorities, and also a need for more technical work on targets and indicators.

Getting the priorities right is fundamental – and if we are serious as a global community about eradicating poverty,

tackling inequality and achieving sustainable development, then we should not shirk difficult issues such as illicit financial flows, tax justice or climate change.

Other potential priority areas that have been suggested by contributors to this report include: decent jobs, social protection, sexual and reproductive health and rights, the economic and social empowerment of women, improved education and healthcare systems, disaster risk reduction, sustainable agriculture, fair and progressive tax systems, financial transparency, peace-building, tackling discrimination based on caste and ethnicity, and addressing income inequality.

Ensuring that there is a strong accountability mechanism in place, applicable to developing and developed countries alike, will also be important for the successful delivery of any new goals. Ideas put forward by the High-Level Panel on Post-2015 – such as the proposal for all countries to submit national sustainable development plans and participate in a regional peer review structure – should be considered and developed further.

Finally, it is worth noting that an ambitious plan for sustainable development financing must be agreed in order to deliver a post-2015 development agenda and an equitable global climate deal in 2015. The coordinated mobilisation of global finance will continue to be important for the foreseeable future, but there is also a need for consideration of how developing countries can maximise domestic resources, including tax revenues, and prevent illicit financial flows.<sup>44</sup>

**The challenges before us are huge but not insurmountable. This report began with a consideration of poverty and wealth in our world, as well as the potentially devastating impacts of climate change. The moral task is clear: poverty is an affront to human dignity and should be eradicated. The future is less clear: a more sustainable and equitable world is possible, but only if we work together to make bold choices in the coming years, for the sake of both people and planet.**

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