



Response from CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation to the Civil Society Consultation Questionnaire for the High-level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda

December 2012-January 2013

A. The shape and content of a post-2015 development framework

1) From the Millennium Development Goals, what lessons can be learned about designing goals to have maximum impact?

Firstly, the goals need to be holistic and mutually supportive by spanning a broad spectrum of human development conditions such as the rights guaranteed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Unfortunately, the MDGs were unable to provide a comprehensive framework for human development as they prioritised some rights over others. Secondly, a rights based approach needs to be adopted with regard to comprehensive achievement of the goals. Unfortunately, the MDGs did not place any legal obligations on governments to ensure fulfilment of the goals which led to patchy and lopsided achievement across regions and among the goals themselves. Thirdly, the goals need to be supported by robust democratic institutions at the national and international levels to ensure accountability by decision makers towards the goals. Deficits in democracy in many parts of the globe have led to the marginalisation of civil society and public spirited individuals exposing obstructions to the achievement of the MDGs.

2) How should a new framework address the dimensions of economic growth, equity, social equality and environmental sustainability? Is an overall focus on poverty eradication sufficiently broad to capture the range of sustainable development issues?

As highlighted above, the new framework needs to be underpinned by democratic institutions designed to prevent the capture of national and international agendas by narrow vested interests. The focus of the new framework needs to be on economic, social and political justice as the drivers of development rather than being limited to the eradication of extreme poverty.

3) What elements should be included in the architecture of the next framework? What is the role of the Sustainable Development Goals in a broader post-2015 framework? How can the SDG process be aligned with the post-2015 process?

The new framework should flow from the six "fundamental values" elaborated in Article 6 of the Millennium Declaration and described as "essential to international relations in the twenty first century." These are: (i) freedom, (ii) equality, (iii) solidarity, (iv) tolerance, (v) respect for nature, and (vi) shared responsibility. It is essential that the SDG process is closely aligned with the post MDG process and takes place alongside it to minimise duplication and maximise harmonious co-existence. In particular, oversight institutions for both frameworks need to be closely integrated and work in tandem.

4) Mindful that poor and vulnerable people may not have the capacity to participate directly in an online consultation, the following question that the Panel is considering is also posed for individuals and civil society organizations who engage with these constituencies directly and regularly: "What issues do poor and vulnerable people themselves prioritize?"

A key priority area to ensure fulfilment of the needs of the poor and vulnerable is to ensure the establishment of independent complaints mechanisms to highlight grievances with regard to access to public services and entitlements.

5) How should a new framework address resilience to crises?

The new framework needs to both strongly support civil society and be reliant on civil society to ensure substantive resilience to crises. In particular, it needs to support an enabling environment for civil society so that government institutions in times of crisis can draw sustenance from a well-developed and functioning civil society.

6) How should a new framework reflect the particular challenges of the poor living in conflict and post-conflict settings?

The new framework should clearly recognise the particular vulnerabilities for the poor in conflict and post-conflict settings. It should create mechanisms for targeted international support and solidarity to protect vulnerable and marginalised groups in conflict situations including the responsibility of the international community to ensure that the international human rights framework is respected and upheld under all circumstances.

7) How can we universalize goals and targets while being consistent with national priorities and targets?

The goals need to be broad and sufficiently holistic while being based on internationally agreed human rights and development values. An effective way to ensure a harmonious blend of universality and consistency with national priorities and targets is to base the new framework on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Millennium Declaration.

8) What time horizon should we set for the next phase in the global development agenda (e.g. 10, 15, 25 years, or a combination)?

The goals should be revisited and reevaluated at intervals of 10, 15 and 25 years, thus being based on a combination of the above.

B. Partnership and accountability for development

1) How can a new framework tackle the challenges of coherence and coordination among the organizations, processes, and new mechanisms that address issues that are global in scope?

Oversight of the new framework and its attendant mechanisms should vest in a single global institution while implementation can be undertaken by multiple institutions.

2) How can we build and sustain global consensus for a new framework, involving Member States, the private sector and civil society?

Emphasis needs to be placed on a sustained inclusive global dialogue on the new framework between the three actors. There needs to be fair and equal representation of civil society in decision-making bodies. Additionally, efforts should be made to involve the mass media in the global dialogue to ensure greater outreach.

3) How specific should the Panel be with recommendations on means of implementation, including development assistance, finance, technology, capacity building, trade and other actions?

It is vital that the Panel comes out with comprehensive recommendations in the interests of coherence and transparency.

4) How can accountability mechanisms be strengthened? What kind of monitoring process should be established? What elements would make it effective? How to account for qualitative progress?

Accountability mechanisms can be strengthened by placing emphasis on democratic freedoms and participation at the national level and by creating legal obligations and reporting requirements for governments at the international level. Monitoring processes should be based on a multi-stakeholder approach with an institutional role for civil society to ensure effective monitoring.

5) How can transparency and more inclusive global governance be used to facilitate achievement of the development agenda?

In order to facilitate the achievement of the development agenda, transparency and more inclusive global governance should buttress all multi-lateral processes. Specific indicators should be designed to ensure that these two values are incorporated fully.

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