

Beyond 2015 Copenhagen Conference report

Background

From 13 – 14 November 2014, the Beyond 2015 Copenhagen Conference brought together 170 representatives from **Beyond 2015** participating organisations in 46 countries, who share a **common vision** of an equitable and sustainable world where every person is safe, resilient, lives well, and enjoys their human rights, and where political and economic systems deliver well-being for all people within the limits of our planet's shared resources.

The campaign discussed the vital importance of inclusion of **equality across all levels and themes** of the post-2015 framework, and through implementation and accountability mechanisms **addressing all three dimensions of sustainable development** (social, economic and environmental).

Opening dialogue: stocktaking of the 69th UN General Assembly and the post-2015 agenda

Arelys Bellorini, World Vision and Beyond 2015 UN Working Group, recognised that at the end of UNGA 69 the UN will celebrate its 70th anniversary but the level of ambition agreed in the post-2015 agenda will determine whether it will be 70 years old or young. She also highlighted the 'UN Fit for Purpose' discussion on the role of the UN and the question of partnerships.

Tanya Cox, Plan International and co-chair of Beyond 2015's European Task Force, commended the OWG co-chairs for comprehensive results but questioned whether it produced something transformative. Too little of the discussion challenged existing paradigms, and the Outcome Document was not truly universal. It focuses on income poverty, not multidimensional poverty. She called for better integration through interlinking issues, and a stronger focus on governance in the 3 pillars.

George Ndungu, Organisation of African Youth and co-chair of Beyond 2015, reflected on the amount of work Beyond 2015 has done on the post-2015 agenda already and that the SDGs need to reflect the 3 dimensions of sustainable development. Participating organisations in the campaign work on many different themes and issues; Beyond 2015 will use the framing of People, Planet and Participation to communicate this. He called for the OWG outcome to be the floor, not the ceiling of the post-2015 agenda.

Marianne Haahr, CARE Denmark, recognised the increasing impact the private sector has on development progress, and that increasingly there is a need to engage with agribusiness, as well as governments and the UN. She also called for a framework that points a finger at those in the global north and that Goals such as G12 'ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns' were the revolution in the new framework.

Tom Thomas, PRAXIS India and the Participate Initiative, questioned what was left *unsaid*. He considered the challenges of presenting voices of people experiencing poverty. *Participate* research shows that respect for all, as individuals and citizens, free from discrimination, is a pre-requisite. Honest and responsive government for pro-active, pro-poor arbitration, freedom of speech, participation and expression are the foundational elements for the post-2015 framework. Proxies for a better world include child-safe spaces, women and transgender safe spaces, and freedom of speech.

Discussion centred on the role of parliamentarians and ensuring implementation on the ground. One participant highlighted the deluge of documents in this process, and that he had stopped reading them, as well as the difficulty of challenging those who benefit from growing inequality. How can civil society change this pattern, especially in a context when they only allow civil society to speak when it is favourable to the dominant power-holders?

The importance of including children and youth in this agenda was highlighted: we are accountable to the next generation, and those after them. What does a “people-centred” agenda mean for us and for the people that we represent? The panel recognised the need for us all to keep asking this question.

The need to make changes in rich countries for things to get better in developing countries; the world is not at the disposal of rich countries. Ambitious and Actionable are not mutually exclusive.

The conference split into 8 thematic breakout groups to create recommendations for the Beyond 2015 Copenhagen Statement: *Equality at the core: a call for a strong commitment to tackling inequalities through post-2015* [[link](#)]

Closing debate: Strategizing the way forward

Taking the agenda forward, the panel identified that it is the interrelation between topics that is important; it is about the level of ambition, not the number of goals and targets. Issues need to be anchored in the real world so that they translate into changes into peoples’ lives. **Priscilla Miranda, CEPEI Colombia and member of Beyond 2015 Executive Committee**, encouraged the campaign to stay focused and ensure capacity is developed at local level. **John Ulanga, The Foundation for Civil Society Tanzania**, urged civil society to understand our responsibility to take action when legitimacy fails. Transparency is key to more equal distribution group. Urgently needed transformation will not take place if we leave governments and corporate actors to themselves! **Andrew Griffiths, Sightsavers and co-chair of Beyond 2015**, called for us to be better organised to reinforce work at national and global level. The three themes of legitimacy, transparency and transformation were highlighted. **Helle Munk Ravnborg, MS ActionAid** referenced people in Denmark living a comfortable life but at expense of people in other places and our collective responsibility to raise the awareness of this.

Discussion looked at improving the ability for people experiencing marginalisation, such as those with disabilities, to participate meaningfully. Defining indicators will be key and has begun already but with little transparency. Indicators are one of the most important aspects as they hold the key to measuring progress and holding countries accountable. Regional consultations have taken place and will be reflected in the forthcoming UN SG’s synthesis report. The panel reflected on transforming policy advocacy conversations to a broader audience. Making alliances with others, such as the private sector, were acknowledged as key; however it is critical to ensure sound regulation and enforcement mechanisms in place to avoid engagement at the cost of negative environment or social impacts. Civil society should be unafraid to challenge corporate actors, and some voices are becoming too silent. Finance is an area of concern that needs to be taken seriously and domestic resource mobilisation should play a key role in enabling countries to determine their own development path.

Opening Session of the High Level Segment

Andrew Griffith, Sightsavers and co-chair of Beyond 2015 called for ambition to remain high and for civil society to prepare for 2015, building on the critical frames of People, Planet and Participation. Many CSOs are ensuring that voices of people affected by poverty are heard for a post-2015 agenda that meets the needs of people on the ground. **George Ndungu, OAY** recognised that an inclusive agenda is key and urged the campaign to use its collective messages in the intergovernmental negotiations. **Lars Udsholt, Global Focus** said it was time to end the talk amongst ourselves and reach out to a new audience.

A video message from **Amina Mohammed** highlighted how far we have come in shaping a transformative agenda and the positive role that CSOs have played in this process. The necessity to take into account inequalities cannot be underestimated; we must take all the dimensions of inequalities and build on goals that address this issue. The UN Secretary General's Synthesis Report will take into account the work done by Member States and his intention is to meet the balance found in the OWG and respect the need for transformation. The UN will work with key stakeholders including Beyond 2015 and other civil society champions, and they count on CSOs to facilitate implementation of meaningful commitments, to make sure promises turn into action, and to keep governments to their word. 2015 is a time for action!

Addressing inequality in the post-2015 framework as a stand-alone goal and though mainstreaming

The first thematic debate focused on two key questions: What should be kept, what should go in and what should be improved in specific goals on equality, and how can equality be mainstreamed throughout the post 2015 framework to ensure that no one is left behind?

Laust Leth Gregersen, Save the Children Denmark defended the standalone goal on inequality and that all goals should be looked at through the lens of inequalities. **Anjali Sen, IPPF** spoke about sexual and reproductive rights, and the continued marginalisation of women in various regions, with the post-2015 agenda a moment to ensure that the rights of women and girls are a priority across the globe. The fight against poverty and exclusion can never be finished when 50% of the world population lack of realisation of their rights. One of the fundamental battles is the ability for women and girls to control their fertility. Gender equality means the full participation of women in influencing decision-making; today, there are hardly any women finance ministers. Inequalities are not just economic, social inequalities are also key.

Paul Ladd, UNDP said that the Member State-led process is supported by the UN and CSOs. The UN has said publicly that the agenda should be based on human rights, and that inequalities must be mainstreamed in the agenda. The OWG report will be the primary source to include goals and targets; some governments want fewer goals but the majority of governments do not and they fear that if the document is re-opened, the most transformative goals will disappear. In terms of improving the inequality debate, the main gap is on sustainable development, and that engagement in the indicator process is important, starting next year. The indicator process should be technical rather than political. In March-April, there will be a focus on developing indicators, assuming that goals and targets similar to the OWG's Outcome Document will be agreed on by Member States in September 2015.

Anjali Sen emphasized citizens' role in governance through monitoring and accountability, and that to achieve quality we need to be guided by those who are marginalized by bringing their experiences into the

framework. **Laust Leth Gregersen** underlined implementation of no target achieved if not met for all, as it starts with the most affected people. Local policies make tangible differences in helping marginalized people's "catch up".

A question from the audience challenged the strategy of protecting the OWG document, as from experience, ambition has been undermined by trying to defend the status quo. **Anjali Sen** recognised far more progressive documents from the Pacific and Asia, while the UN space is driven by geopolitics. Advocacy at the national level is crucial, through awareness on the ground and looking at issues that matter for communities (governance, education, information sharing and the role that media plays). **Paul Ladd** noted that the OWG document is not agreed on, but that intuition from people who have been engaging the post-2015 process for a long time is that if it is re-opened, then the risks would outweigh the potential benefits. If it is reopened, people suspect that sexual and reproductive rights will drop out, same thing for goal 16, inequalities and climate. There is more risk than benefit in re-opening it, and that with the Financing for Development process running simultaneously, there were chances of no agreement in September 2015 if the document is reopened now. **Laust Leth Gregersen** said that it was positive that inequalities remained in the agenda and the way people speak about inequalities is encouraging, but there is still tricky road ahead.

A video message from **Jan Eliasson, UN Deputy Secretary General** welcomed the conference as a timely moment to take stock and define strategy for the coming year, to deliver a life of dignity for all against social, economic and environmental aspects of inequality. He noted that the SDGs should finish the work of the MDGs, using an approach of universality and human rights. Climate change means that an agreement in Paris is important for the post-2015 agenda. Focus both on the "what" and the "how": financing for development will be an important moment. ODA is not in itself sufficient; mobilisation from all sources is needed. Monitoring will be critical including the data revolution and new partnerships are crucial. The coming year will be of vital importance; remember the first words of the UN charter: "We the peoples..."

Thematic debate: addressing inequality in an integrated and universal post-2015 framework

John Patrick Ngoyi, JPDC Nigeria and member of Beyond 2015 Executive Committee opened the second thematic debate on addressing inequality in an integrated and universal post-2015 framework by motivating the audience get behind equality. Three questions framed this session: how can an integrated post-2015 framework address economic, social and environmental dimensions of inequality; how can a universal post-2015 framework address inequality between and within countries; and how can the post-2015 framework ensure that inequality will be an integrated part of the Means of Implementation?

Bernadette Fischler, WWF UK and co-chair of Beyond 2015 UK, highlighted that we cannot address development challenges without addressing environmental challenges: environmental, economic and social justice are one agenda. The sustainable and development constituencies have merged on the long journey from Rio+20 in 2012. Environmental sustainability is driver and symptom of inequality, and represents the transformative new aspect added to the MDGs. A "green thread" is needed throughout all goals and targets, with some in particular need of improvement including the SCP and economic goals. Sustainable and equitable management of resources is needed, and to decouple economic development from environment degradation.

Rachel Shebesh, Kenyan MP highlighted the important role that parliaments can and should play, and suggested that inequality is recognised within the legislation to ensure implementation. Parliaments approve budgets and have an oversight role, and it is important to avoid siloes. But there is a lack of implementation of treaties and resolutions e.g. human rights. The Pan African parliament could support on governance but what is missing for implementation? Political goodwill.

Jean Saldanha, CIDSE, and member of Beyond 2015 European Steering Committee, recognised that the technical input phase is over, and now negotiations will begin. The universality principle requires developed countries to put their own house in order, to prepare **all** relevant ministries. Finance is a critical aspect of the negotiations and there are huge risks for all agreements to be made next year in Addis, Paris or New York. There is a risk in opening ODA and bringing in private sector; domestic mobilisation of resources provides opportunities. Finance for Development is a crucial framework for implementation of the MDG agenda and for establishing a new architecture for global partnership around financing sustainable development.

Youth Lab

Four youth representatives from the global south and four from the global north invited the audience to take part in a youth-led, future lab-session. They started by stressing the fact that forty-three percentage of the world's population is under the age of twenty five. Youth involvement is necessary to radically change the world for the better. Youth should take part in defining and setting goals, finding and implementing solutions as well as evaluating efforts in order to hold key actors accountable. Besides involvement, the youth representatives agitated for contextualisation of developmental actions as well as increased focus the resilience of actions.

Key note speech from Mogens Lykketoft, Speaker of the Danish Parliament and candidate for the position of President of the UN General Assembly 2015 – 2016

Mogens Lykketoft outlined his aspirations to play a constructive role in successful conclusion on the Post-2015 agenda. He reflected on the Danish welfare model, which created a high degree of equality through tax and redistribution, limiting inequalities the market would have caused. He called for societies that are both competitive and socially cohesive. At the global scale however, in recent decades inequalities have increased both within and amongst countries, and we are witnessing unacceptable inequalities and wealth accumulation. He highlighted corruption, access to justice and tax as key issues, and that multinational corporations and rich individuals will avoid paying tax where they earn their money, with tax avoidance a significant challenge in particular in developing countries

Strategizing for the future dialogue

The final dialogue session focused on strategizing for the future was chaired by **Neva Frecheville, CAFOD and member of Beyond 2015 Executive Committee**, and looked at the role civil society can play in pushing equality into the heart of the future post-2015 agenda; how the UN can facilitate the focus on inequality; and how countries can champion the importance of inequality.

Martin Bille Herman, State Secretary for Development Policy Denmark acknowledged the importance of embracing equality to eradicate poverty and sustainable development, and that Denmark had been a

champion country since hosting the inequality consultation with Ghana in the post-2015 process. Denmark believes that tackling inequality is part of completing the work of the MDGs and ensuring sustainable development for all, and that human rights must be part of the solution. A human rights framework of non-discrimination is a powerful equaliser and that we must make sure that principles can be turned into actions, with equality in rights to both access and opportunities, and equality across generations.

Advocate Mabedle Lawrence Mushwana, Chair of the ICC and SAHRC recognised the importance of the human rights framework and gave an insight into how national, regional and global mechanisms can turn principles into tangible actions. He recommended that transparency is key and that the Universal Periodic Review mechanism is a useful tool in holding governments accountable that had potential applications to the post-2015 development agenda.

Deborah Rogers, President of the Initiative for Equality called for equality to be at heart of the post-2015 agenda, with equitable participation throughout **all phases** of the process. This needs to integrate themes from environmental sustainability, poverty reduction, climate change, economic inequality and more. Inclusive and participatory forms of monitoring can ensure that all groups experience equitable outcomes. She called for civil society to respond to political challenges and build new alliances.

Mogens Lykketoft promoted the fight against inequalities through education and by using advocacy and political systems to raise issues of avoidance of pay by private sector. Fighting poverty is about diminishing inequality. While Denmark is starting from a good place, inequalities in Denmark have been rising. Will the SDGs contribute to reducing inequalities?

During the debate, panellists recognised that supporting global equality is important for sustainable development to ensure people a decent life wherever they live; responding to climate change through sustainable development is in the long-term self-interest of rich countries, as all are affected.

Herman Bille Martin said that the challenge in communicating this new agenda is that the SDGs are not “MDGs version 2” but a different game entirely; the SDGs are born out of a different world. It is important to live up to obligations but also we need to recognise that new innovative partnerships are required. The Danish Aid Agency needs to engage with development partners on the ground and that we should recognise that the OWG report is the best we have based on a genuine process.

Video dialogue with John Gilroy, Permanent Mission of the Republic of Ireland to the UN, New York

John Gilroy at the Irish Mission (co-facilitators for the discussion on the modalities of the post-2015 negotiations) informed the audience that a broad variety of ideas from about 50 countries provided insight into positions held by member states. He said civil society should expect a high-level declaration addressing all three dimensions of sustainable development, including goals and targets in outcome document and the OWG document should be basis for those goals and targets. The indicators should be development at expert level by UN Statistical Commission, and that Means of Implementation is critical and should be aligned with FfD to ensure coherence. It is also important to pay attention to the UNFCCC process in 2015. Another agenda item is the ‘UN Fit for Purpose’ discussion to transition the UN to deliver on a universal agenda. Monitoring needs to be taking place at both national and global level, and that accountability framework should be applying not only to member states. Another issue important to member states is the mechanism



for technology transfer. The data revolution is high on the agenda, with the Independent Expert Advisory Group report feeding into the UN SG's synthesis report, which is expected in December. Civil society and academia continue to remain relevant to the process.

Negotiations will take place from January to July, following a road map to be developed in early December and that we should expect a 'food for thought' think piece – though this is only the beginning, as 2016 begins the even more critical process of implementation!