

Equality at the Core:

Technical recommendations on equality in
the post-2015 agenda

An outcome of the
Beyond 2015 Copenhagen Conference
November 2014



Beyond2015

Campaigning for a global development framework
after the Millennium Development Goals

The Beyond 2015 Copenhagen Conference included detailed discussions of eight thematic aspects of inequality in the post-2015 agenda. The recommendations for the post-2015 process arising from each of these thematic discussions are below. These technical recommendations can be read in conjunction with the Beyond 2015 Copenhagen Statement, *Equality at the Core: A call for a strong commitment to tackling inequalities through the post-2015 agenda*.

Poverty, Social Dimensions and Inequality

Inequality has an impact on us all. It propels extreme poverty, conflict and insecurity, the violation of human rights, environmental degradation, climate change and interrelated challenges for human development. Addressing inequality is the only way to address poverty and ensure sustainable development.

To address **poverty and inequality**, the post-2015 framework should include measures to address and monitor:

- Wealth and income disparities, such as the Palma measure (top 10 per cent/ poorest 40 per cent) alongside wealth measure in order to address extreme differences between the top and bottom quintiles of populations, and a measure of wealth concentration (e.g. top 1%, top 10%).
- Social and environmental dimensions of inequality (not just income poverty), such as access to services by groups in situations of disadvantage, health inequalities, legal status, structural inequalities due to discriminatory laws, policies and practices, political inequalities and access to decision-making.
- Percentage spending on social protection systems, and implementation of universal social protection floors in all countries.
- Transition to economic systems, structural approaches, and macroeconomic (fiscal and monetary) policies that generate increasing equality rather than inequalities.
- Long term debt sustainability for developing countries through coordinated policies aimed at fostering debt financing, debt relief and debt restructuring.

All targets must prioritize the most marginalized and vulnerable groups and only be considered met if met by all.

Peace and Security and inequality

Inequality is not sustainable: exclusion leads to conflict. The post-2015 process ahead must create a narrative that:

- Spells out what is meant by peaceful societies.
- Stresses that peace must be promoted across the whole framework—including its goals and targets, especially through reducing inequalities.
- Puts the focus on the security of people – not states. National and international security agendas must not encroach on this.
- Stresses that the global level factors that drive conflict must be addressed – including for example irresponsible flows of arms and conflict commodities.

The post-2015 agenda, including the means of implementation, must:

- Ensure linkages are drawn between goal 16 and existing peacebuilding and conflict prevention processes at national, regional and global levels.
- Ensure that a range of stakeholders – and not just states - are involved in promoting peace.
- Make clear the linkages between inequalities and conflict, stressing that the evidence shows how inequalities, especially between groups, drives violent conflict and insecurity, and that violence creates or exacerbates inequalities. From a peacebuilding perspective, stakeholders should be encouraged to:
 - **Promote peace and address inequalities through goal 10:** Goal 10 is part of the response. Target 10.2, specifically, should be emphasized as having peacebuilding implications.
 - **Promote peace and address inequalities across the framework:** It will be important to ensure that economic, social and political targets across the framework do not create inequalities but instead help to redress them.
- **Call for indicators to be disaggregated by** characteristics to be defined through participatory, inclusive practices: This will not only ensure that no-one is left behind, but that conflict risks can be identified before they become intractable and damaging.

Put a strong focus on youth: Leaving youth behind – especially as we consider the looming global youth bulge – will increase the risks of violent conflict and insecurity.

Environmental Sustainability and Inequality

When it comes to sustainable development, all countries are developing countries. Some countries have to start living within their means for others to have the means to live. All have a role to play, depending on their individual context. An important step is to include a firm commitment to implement and operationalize existing multilateral environmental agreements and programmes.

To address the systemic environmental inequality between as well as within countries, the post-2015 framework should include:

- Equitable and sustainable management of natural resources and ecosystems services in goals and targets on food, water, energy and land.
- Greater emphasis on sustainable management in goals and targets on agriculture, economic growth and industrialization.
- Greater emphasis on equitable sharing and access in goals and targets on ecosystems, oceans, sustainable consumption and production, inequalities and governance.

To achieve a world where everybody can prosper without overstepping ecological limits, economic development should be decoupled from environmental degradation. The post-2015 framework should include the following building blocks for a world where people thrive in harmony with nature:

- Value nature and account for environmental and social costs in corporate and government reporting.
- Explore and implement measures that go beyond GDP to quantify economic development progress.
- Embed policy coherence for sustainable development across the framework and implementation.
- Create an enabling environment for 'green' innovation, research and development.

Climate Change and Inequality

Climate change is a manifestation of global inequality. The peoples and countries who have contributed the least to causing climate change are hit first and hardest by it, while people and countries who are historically responsible for carbon emissions have the greatest capacity to adapt and avoid the worst excesses. This calls for robust action to achieve emissions cuts, adaptation and resilience (building on traditional knowledge) to the impacts of climate change which must be integrated throughout the SDGs – including the goal of inequality – and be reinforced in a strong standalone goal on climate change.

Mitigation action on climate change and related inequalities in the post-2015 agenda must:

- Be in line with a 1.5°C temperature goal.
- Signal the end of the fossil fuel era by phasing out all fossil fuel emissions mid century in an equitable manner.
- Accelerate transition to 100% renewable energy future for all.
- By 2020 phase out production and consumption subsidies for fossil fuels and redirect them to support zero-carbon, inclusive development.
- Put energy efficiency and energy savings at the heart of the agenda to transforming our energy systems.

The post-2015 agenda must acknowledge the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities (CBDR-RC) in the context of climate change action across the framework. Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) action on climate change and related inequalities are key to achieving equality and therefore must be at the heart of the SDGs.

Cross cutting issues:

- The SDGs need to take into account the atmospheric carbon budget, planetary boundaries and the equal right of all people including future generations to natural resources.
- To effectively live up to the challenge to stay within planetary boundaries we need to improve the quality of governance and start to conceive climate change as part of the human rights framework through access to resources, justice, information, the right to expression and ensure larger civil society and citizen participation in defining policies and strategies.
- To tackle climate change we have to change our consumption, including, the rate of global material consumption has to fall in the next decade primarily in developed countries through action of governments, business and consumers.
- Climate finance needs to be additional to ODA and development finance must be "climate-proof" and not undermine climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts.

Human Rights, Governance and Inequality

Accountability, transparency, open governance and non-discrimination should be mainstreamed throughout the framework, as crucial elements of tackling inequality in all its forms. Empowerment and tackling power imbalances should also be an underlying aim of the overall agenda.

Inclusive, transparent, accountable governance at all levels - global, national and local - should be recognized as a core component of equitable sustainable development in its own right. A standalone goal on governance should therefore be maintained, with Goal 16 as it currently stands representing a minimum baseline. The framework should include (inter alia) the right to information, freedom of expression, freedom of association and assembly, the rule of law and access to justice for all people. All elements of the post-2015 agenda, including goals, targets and indicators, should be framed consistently with existing human rights and environmental standards and obligations.

To facilitate more effective identification of inequalities, comprehensive disaggregated data should be collected and shared, including data disaggregated by the grounds of discrimination recognized in international human rights law. The need to prohibit and ultimately end discrimination in all its forms should be recognized as a central component of addressing inequality.

Regulation/oversight of the private sector and corporate accountability should be recognized as a core element of good governance and protection of human rights. Private sector involvement in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals should be governed in accordance with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

Gender Justice and Inequality

The post-2015 process must keep the ambition high and advance gender equality and realisation of the human rights of all women and girls. In particular, with regard to gender justice and inequality, it must:

- Retain the standalone gender goal and improve gender mainstreaming through targets and indicators in other goal areas.
- Directly reference the human rights of all women and girls in the title of the gender equality goal.
- Include more transformative and ambitious targets and provisions on:
 - SRHR (include sexual rights, unqualified reproductive rights, SOGIE, inclusion of adolescent girls' rights).
 - Economic rights and empowerment of all women and girls as a target with a multiplier effect (either in goal 5 or 8, including access to and control over *inter alia* credit, land, inheritance).
 - Commitments to reduce and redistribute unpaid care and domestic work.
 - Meaningful participation and influence of all women and girls at all levels of decision making in the public and private spheres by addressing and removing all the social and economic obstacles that restrict such participation in different spaces.

Gender mainstreaming in the post-2015 framework should be more ambitious. Mainstreaming can be delivered through targets, indicators and the narrative, particularly:

- In terms of peace and security, the framework should ensure women's full participation in peacebuilding and peacekeeping, and as women's rights defenders. The post-2015 agenda should emphasize women's role in peace and justice, not just peaceful societies.
- Education, which should include comprehensive sexuality education.
- Access to sexual and reproductive health services for all, including youth-friendly access.
- Water, sanitation and hygiene.

Environmental sustainability / Climate change and disaster risk reduction. These impact heavily on women and girls and must be properly reflected in the framework.

Citizens' Participation and Inequality

- Governments and the UN must create an enabling environment to ensure inclusive participation and meaningful engagement of all civil society organizations (CSOs) and citizens in decision-making, implementation and monitoring and accountability, to address inequality of realization of civil and political rights. It must look beyond the usual suspects and ensure the inclusion of *all* development actors including grassroots women's organisations and community and national volunteers who are often overlooked as actors but who will be able to ensure this agenda is delivered in a sustainable and people centred way.
- A global participatory monitoring and feedback network should be formed to ensure input and feedback from all citizens, especially the most marginalized. This will require resources; capacity building of communities, civil society representatives and organisations, *and* decision-makers; a commitment to carry these voices into national and global governance processes; a global matrix of indicators cross-referenced with all relevant constituencies and sectors of society; and the right to access and challenge information, with parallel monitoring by citizens through shadow reporting.
- There should be a peer review mechanism to monitor implementation of the SDGs, potentially based on the Universal Periodic Review Mechanism (UPR) along with parallel civil society reporting processes, with universally compulsory government reporting at appropriate intervals (potentially 5 year milestones).

Finance, Tax and Development and inequality

The post-2015 agenda must:

- Deliver progressive domestic resource mobilization and redistribution both by addressing capacity building of national tax administration and systems as well as international tax rules and fiscal policies.
- Ensure transparency of financial flows and their effective regulation to ensure that they do not contribute to economic inequality. Require right to information and publicly available country-by-country reporting, disclosure on beneficial ownership, transparency of contracts negotiations, preventing Double Tax Agreements from undermining ability of countries to raise revenue domestically and disaggregated data on financial flows, including illicit flows.
- Ensure progressive spending of tax revenues on essential services for all, facilitate citizens holding their government to account on revenue expenditure and holding companies accountable for their tax obligations, and ensuring business practices that create shared value and operate in a way which contributes to equality and respects environmental and human rights standards.
- Contribute to reducing economic inequality through requiring equal representation of the global north and south in international tax negotiations and systems as well as building up local private sector through procurement rules.
- Recognise that domestic resource mobilization and the issues around private flows are universal agendas requiring global solutions.
- Fulfil the 0.7% GNI for development commitment.

We fear that the current discussion of broadening the ODA definition will contribute to increasing inequality.

Financing is important in furthering gender equality:

- Conditionality of donor funding is leading to de-prioritising of some gender equality and women's rights issues.
- The current lack of women's participation and influence in financing discussion at all levels needs to be addressed to ensure meaningful participation. Very few finance ministers are women, and the lack of women's involvement at community level mean that women's priorities are often little considered in budgeting and resource allocation.
- Financing of data collection must ensure disaggregated, quality data that captures the intersectionality of gender equality issues.
- The post-2015 agenda must include a commitment to gender responsive budgeting.

The messages presented in this document were developed by 170 civil society participants from 46 countries attending the Beyond 2015 Copenhagen Conference on Inequality which took place on November 13-14, 2014. Participants examined the intersections of inequality with other key aspects of the post-2015 development agenda in eight thematic discussion groups:

- 1) Poverty, social dimensions and inequality
- 2) Human Rights, Governance and inequality
- 3) Finance, Tax and Development and inequality
- 4) Peace and Security and inequality
- 5) Climate Change and inequality
- 6) Environmental sustainability and inequality
- 7) Gender Justice and inequality
- 8) Citizens' Participation and inequality

The discussions considered the main position papers developed by Beyond 2015 so far, including: the Essential Must Haves of the post-2015 agenda; inputs to the UN thematic consultations, national deliberations with GCAP and IFP in nearly 40 countries, regional discussions, global discussions at various conferences, the process to discuss the Vision, Purpose, Values and Criteria (VPVC), results of participatory research with those most affected by poverty and injustice, carried out by the Beyond 2015 co-chairs Participate initiative, the reactions of the Campaign to the outcomes of the Open Working Group on the Sustainable Goal (OWG), the Beyond 2015 Red Flags, and others. These processes have been led by participating organisations, and hundreds of participating organisations from countries in the South and in the North have helped create these messages.

Equality at the Core is the product of discussions about the vital importance of achieving equality across all levels and themes of the post-2015 agenda, and through implementation and accountability mechanisms addressing all three dimensions of sustainable development (social, economic and environmental). It contains recommendations to contribute to the forthcoming intergovernmental negotiations, and other decision-making processes relevant to the post-2015 agenda, including discussions around the UN Secretary General's Synthesis Report.

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