



Parliamentary Handbook

THE ROLE OF PARLIAMENTARIANS IN ADVANCING THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AGENDA



United Nations Environment Programme



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About European Parliamentary Forum On Population And Development - EPF⁽¹⁾

WHO WE ARE

EPF is a Brussels-based parliamentary network that serves as a platform for cooperation and coordination for the 31 all-party groups in Parliaments throughout Europe that focus on global health, and particularly on improving sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) at home and abroad. EPF seeks to empower Members of Parliament (MPs) in Europe to meet their international commitments to advocate for population and development issues in a national, regional and international setting. By offering MPs a framework for cooperation and debate at a pan-European level, EPF and its network of member parliamentary groups across the continent are able to effectively mobilise the resources to achieve the funding and policy commitments of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

EPF's expertise derives from its exclusive focus on parliamentarians. Its core activities include conducting field visits to developing countries, supporting parliamentary activities, organising conferences on key topics, and providing training to develop understanding and expertise in SRHR, HIV/AIDS, reproductive system cancers and other health-related issues.

EPF provides a pan-European framework for parliamentarians to forge consensus and collaborate on resource mobilisation strategies. EPF also frequently works with United Nations (UN) agencies, inter-governmental organisations and national, regional and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) that have an interest in working with parliamentarians.

EPF began as a project of the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) European Network. It was legally registered in Belgium and recognised by Royal Decree in 2000. In 2004, EPF became a fully independent not-for-profit organisation.

WHAT WE BELIEVE

EPF believes that parliamentarians have the opportunity and the responsibility to promote global health and, particularly, SRHR and gender equality, which are core elements of human dignity and central to human development.

⁽¹⁾ EPF website : www.epfweb.org

About United Nations Environment Programme - UNEP⁽²⁾



UNEP

United Nations Environment Programme

UNEP, established in 1972, is the voice for the environment within the United Nations system. UNEP acts as a catalyst, advocate, educator and facilitator to promote the wise use and sustainable development of the global environment.

UNEP work encompasses:

- **Assessing** global, regional and national environmental conditions and trends;
- **Developing** international and national environmental instruments;
- **Strengthening** institutions for the wise management of the environment.

MISSION

“To provide leadership and encourage partnership in caring for the environment by inspiring, informing, and enabling nations and peoples to improve their quality of life without compromising that of future generations.”

MANDATE

“To be the leading global environmental authority that sets the global environmental agenda, that promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimensions of sustainable development within the United Nations system and that serves as an authoritative advocate for the global environment.”

⁽²⁾ UNEP website : www.unep.org

Foreword

Designing a future global development agenda that is universally applicable, captures current and future challenges for humankind and is owned by the world's people is one of the greatest endeavours that are currently undertaken. Environmental, socio-economic development, health and human-well being are so closely linked that development cannot be sustainable without considering these dimensions.

With discussions about the design and format of the Sustainable Development Goals on-going, this Handbook aims to provide Members of Parliament and other decision-makers with a concise overview on where we stand in the post-2015 process. Specific focus is placed on the role and contribution of Parliamentarians in advancing environmental sustainability in the post-2015 framework and we provide concrete examples and recommendations on how interested decision-makers can get involved.

Members of Parliament are uniquely positioned to shape, advance and implement the sustainable development agenda within their countries and beyond. They can lead the development of relevant legislation and policies, monitor implementation, ensure oversight, accountability, transparency and good governance. As representatives of their electorate, they can make the voice of citizens heard and define the fiscal and budgetary regimes needed to mobilise sufficient resources.

Yet, Members of Parliament are often overlooked as stakeholders and drivers of change in these processes. This is why this manual also looks at how parliamentary involvement can be concretely harnessed, fostered and intensified. It identifies which current and future entry points exist to make parliamentary involvement in the process and its implementation a long-term reality.

Finally, it is EPF's and UNEP's hope to establish a fruitful and long-term partnership in advancing environmental sustainability alongside health, human well-being and women's empowerment at all levels in the post-2015 development agenda and we look forward to working together on this.



Neil Datta
Secretary
European Parliamentary
Forum on Population
and Development



Jan Dusik
Acting Director
and Regional
Representative
UNEP/Regional Office
for Europe

Purpose

This Handbook aims to give Parliamentarians and other decision-makers a concise overview of where we stand in the process to design a new global development agenda and how they may interact and influence the sustainable development agenda. Priority will be laid on the role and contribution of Parliamentarians in promoting, advancing and implementing the sustainable development goals with a focus on environmental sustainability in the post-2015 development agenda. The Handbook looks at how Parliamentarians can create ownership for these goals at national level and within their constituencies and provides concrete and hands-on examples of what Parliamentarians can realistically do at this stage of the process and beyond.



Parliamentary Viewpoint
by Hon. Petra Bayr, MP (Austria)

Post MDGs and SDGs – two sides
of the same coin

There are so many linkages between the development and environment agendas that strictly separating them always seemed somewhat artificial. The whole post-2015 discourse provides us with a wonderful opportunity to address the challenges common to both areas.

Challenges like affordable access to clean water, nutrition and food sovereignty, sustainable use of natural resources and, most importantly, climate warming seem to be two sides of the same coin. It is also a question of global public goods which have to be protected. Climate warming causes huge problems for human development, ecocide creates food sovereignty challenges and destroying the oceans results in a loss of biodiversity and of a food source.

There is no sense in facing these challenges in different arenas – the COPs and the development conferences – and integrating them is the great challenge of the post- 2015 Agenda. But we have to be very careful: The answer is not simply the doubling of financial flows (ODA and climate) but designing projects which create synergies and a common understanding of the three dimensions of sustainable development: social, environmental and economic.

International Development: From MDGs To SDGs

A. THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS (MDGS)

In order to understand the post-2015 process it is necessary to look at how and why the MDGs were designed, what their purpose and impact was and which challenges remain which will be explored on the following pages.

B. THE “MAKING OF” OF THE MDGS

The Millennium Declaration, on which the MDGs are based, was signed by all 192 United Nations member states in September 2000, agreeing to achieve them by 2015. The impetus for this document came from a number of UN conferences during the 1990s, and was further driven by the adoption of the International Development Goals (IDGs). A range of reports such as:

- ‘Shaping the 21st Century: The Contribution of Development Cooperation’⁽⁴⁾ (OECD, 1996);
- ‘We the Peoples: The Role of the United Nations in the 21st Century’⁽⁵⁾ (Kofi-Annan, 2000);
- ‘A Better World for All: Progress towards the International Development Goals’⁽⁶⁾ (World Bank, International Monetary Fund, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and the United Nations).

provided key inputs to the September 2000 Millennium Summit negotiations. At the end of these negotiations, the **UN Millennium Declaration** was adopted and endorsed a framework for development.

“The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are the world’s biggest promise. A global agreement to reduce poverty and human deprivation at historically unprecedented rates through collaborative action. They differ from all other global promises for poverty reduction in their comprehensive nature and the systematic efforts taken to finance, implement and monitor them”.⁽³⁾

Prof. David Hulme

It was agreed that countries and development partners would work together to increase access to the resources needed to reduce poverty and hunger, and tackle ill-health, gender inequality, lack of education, lack of access to clean water and environmental degradation.

They established **eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)**, set targets for 2015, and identified a number of indicators for monitoring progress. All goals and their targets are measured in terms of progress since 1990. While developing countries would have primary responsibility for achieving the goals, donor countries would have a particularly important role to play in supporting a global partnership for development. This includes commitments to increase both the quantity and the quality of aid to developing countries.

⁽³⁾ http://www.seed.manchester.ac.uk/medialibrary/bwpi/publications/working_papers/bwpi-wp-10009.pdf (The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs): A Short History of the World’s Biggest Promise)

⁽⁴⁾ See: <http://www.oecd.org/dac/2508761.pdf>

⁽⁵⁾ See: <http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/un/unpan000923.pdf>

⁽⁶⁾ See: <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/jointpub/world/2000/eng/bwae.pdf>

International Development: From MDGs To SDGs

At the 2010 MDG Summit, Member States re-affirmed their commitment to achieving the MDGs. At the same time, the 2010 high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly on the MDGs⁽⁷⁾ mandated the UN Secretary-General to accelerate progress towards achieving the MDGs and called on him to lead the work in advancing the United Nations Development agenda beyond 2015.

C. IMPACT AND LIMITATIONS OF THE MDGS AND THE WAY FORWARD

In 2012 discussions began to take stock of the efforts made towards achieving the MDGs, discuss ways to accelerate progress until 2015 and start exchanging on what could follow after the MDG target year of 2015. This process necessitated a closer look at the impact of the MDGs so far, the progress that was made and what needs to change when designing a future development agenda.

D. WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED AND WHICH CHALLENGES REMAIN?

In their report, the UN System Task Team summarised the impact of the MDG framework as having “helped to galvanise development efforts, set global and national priorities, and focus action at all levels. Important progress has been made in most countries, particularly towards the goals of eradicating poverty and improving access to primary education. Yet, trends have been uneven within and across countries and regions. The poorest and those most discriminated against on the basis of gender, age, disability, ethnicity or otherwise have often been the most disadvantaged.”⁽⁸⁾

For an overview of achievements and remaining challenges for each of the goals, please consult the Annex.⁽⁹⁾

E. LIMITATIONS OF THE MDGS, WHAT HAS TO CHANGE AND WHY?

Much attention has been devoted to identifying the strengths and limitations of the MDGs. The most commonly cited limitations of the MDG framework are⁽¹⁰⁾:

- The **top-down and donor-led** process that has guided their formulation and adoption resulting in a lack of ownership of the MDGs by many developing countries;
- The **root causes of poverty** were not addressed properly and the MDGs tended to focus more on its symptoms;
- **Systemic issues** such as rights and non-discrimination, inequality, vulnerability and resilience, peace and security, governance and anti-corruption, economic growth and job creation, accountability, empowerment and participation, social norms and power relations were only marginally addressed;
- **Sustainable development** in its three dimensions: **economic, social and environmental** was not adequately addressed;

⁽⁷⁾ http://www.un.org/en/mdg/summit2010/pdf/outcome_documentN1051260.pdf

⁽⁸⁾ “Realising the Future We Want for All”. Report to the UN Secretary General, p.5. http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/untaskteam_undf/untt_report.pdf

⁽⁹⁾ These figures are taken from the “End Poverty 2015 Millennium Campaign”: <http://www.endpoverty2015.org/mdg-success-stories/mdg-1-end-hunger/>

⁽¹⁰⁾ See: http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/what/millennium-development-goals/documents/12-12-06_report-final.pdf

International Development: From MDGs To SDGs

- Too **narrow indicators** were used to measure progress towards the goals and targets;
- The **lack of disaggregated data** has masked poverty by **overlooking inequalities** within countries and regions;
- The absence of proper **accountability mechanisms** is seen as one of the main deficiencies.

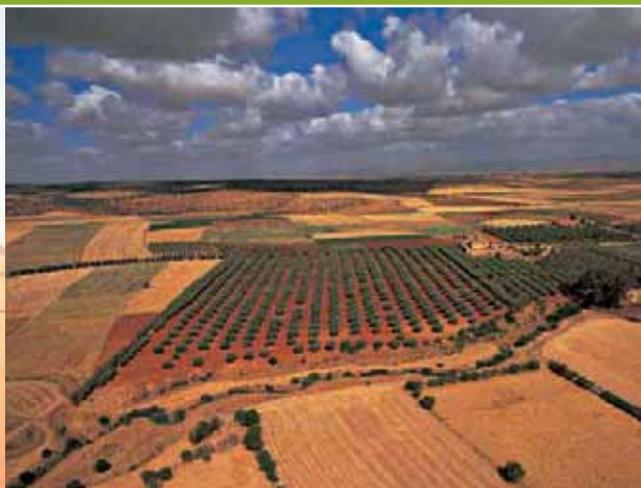
Based on these and other points and analysis, lessons for the post-2015 framework were drawn. Kate Higgins from the Canadian North-South Institute⁽¹¹⁾ provides a good summary of these lessons that include:

- Adopting a **simple, clear, and time-bound framework** that is compelling, easy to communicate, and measurable;
- Support an **inclusive, accessible, and transparent process** to develop the post-2015 framework that is **bottom-up** rather than donor-dominated and top-down;

- Select **goals and targets that are ambitious yet reasonably achievable**;
- Select **targets and indicators that are clearly specified and underpinned by robust data**;
- **Adopt global goals that reflect global priorities** but targets that can be tailored to national and sub-national contexts;
- Capture progress (i.e. inequality) by **tracking progress in a disaggregated way**;
- Expect industrialised countries to take concrete, time-bound and measurable action beyond aid;
- **Prioritise and do not overburden the agenda.**

⁽¹¹⁾ Kate Higgins; "Reflecting on the MDGs and making sense of the post-2015 development agenda", <http://www.nsi-ins.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/2013-Post-2015.pdf>.

⁽¹²⁾ The numbers in this section have been taken from the following document: European Commission Communication: "A Decent Life For All: Ending Poverty and Giving the World a Sustainable Future". See: http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/documents/2013-02-22_communication_a_decent_life_for_all_post_2015_en.pdf



The Context – A Changing World

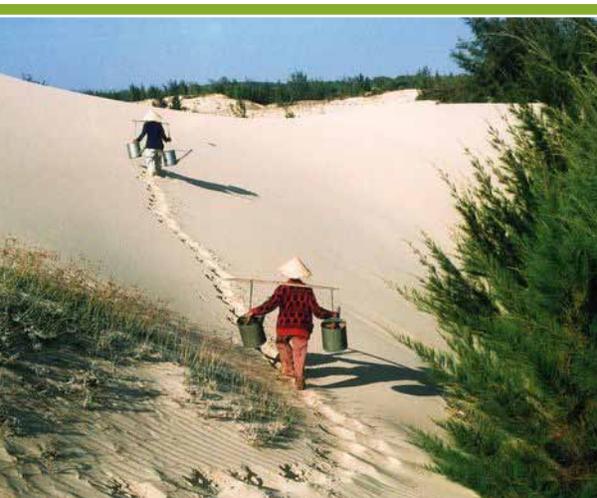
Before taking a closer look at the post-2015 process, its architecture, actors, and underlying rationale the changed context in which the negotiations are taking place have to be highlighted. This part of the handbook looks at what has changed since 2000 and why it has to be reflected in the future development agenda.

The world has undergone enormous change over recent years, including major shifts in the global economic and political balance, increased global trade, climate change and depletion of natural resources, technological change, economic and financial crises, increased consumption and price volatility of food and energy consumption, population changes and migration, violence and armed conflict and natural and man-made disasters, and increased inequalities. New actors, including private and other non-governmental players, have arisen in the global arena.

At the same time, inequalities within countries have increased in most parts of the world. The majority of the poor now live in middle income countries, in spite of their fast growth. In addition, the unsustainable use of the natural resources is one of the greatest long term threats to humankind. Already today:

- Climate change, depletion of natural resources and ecosystem degradation are having a **significant impact on livelihoods**;
- Since 1992, natural disasters have caused **€ 750 billion of damage and killed 1.3 million people**;
- It is estimated that global agricultural **production in 2050 will have to increase by 60%** over 2005 levels, putting increasing pressure on already scarce natural resources, in particular land, forests, water and oceans;
- At the same time, **up to half of global food production is wasted**;
- Water use is projected to increase by 50% by 2025, by which time roughly 5.5 billion people – two thirds of the projected global population – will live in areas facing **moderate to severe water stress**;
- It is projected that the **world population will reach more than 9 billion by 2050**, with the population of sub-Saharan Africa set to more than double;
- **Together, Africa and Asia will represent nearly 80% of the world's population by 2050.**⁽¹²⁾

It is in this context that the sustainable development agenda will be formulated, negotiated and implemented.



Sustainable Development Goals

A. THE BASICS

Before looking more in depth into the SDG process, it is important to understand the difference between the SDGs, post-MDGs and post-2015 development process as these terms are often used in the same context but do have different backgrounds.

The SDG Process was launched at the 2012 UN Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD/Rio+20) where Member States agreed to set up an intergovernmental process 'with a view to developing global sustainable development goals to be agreed by the General Assembly.' The outcome document of the "Rio meeting", *The Future We Want*⁽¹³⁾, includes a global commitment to create the SDGs through an inclusive process.

The Post-MDG process is led by the UN Secretary-General, responding to a mandate from the General Assembly in 2010 following an event to accelerate progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), calling on him to lead on work to advance the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015.

The Post-2015 Development Agenda has become an umbrella term for both processes.

B. EXPECTED OUTPUTS OF THE POST-MDG AND THE SDG PROCESSES

Post-Millennium Development Goals – On 25 September 2013 the UN Secretary-General published his 2013 annual report on efforts to accelerate progress in achieving the MDGs and for further steps to advance the agenda beyond 2015 during the General Assembly Special Session.⁽¹⁴⁾ In their Outcome Document the Heads of State and Go-

vernment resolved to accelerating progress on the MDGs before 2015 by targeting the most off-track MDGs such as environmental sustainability, child mortality, universal access to reproductive health, including maternal health, as well as access to water and sanitation.⁽¹⁵⁾

Sustainable Development Goals - The so-called Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (OWG) is mandated to present its final report to the General Assembly by the end of its 68th Session (September 2014). Its report should contain a set of SDGs that are universal, limited in number, aspirational, easy to communicate and address the three dimensions of sustainable development - social, environmental, economic - in a holistic manner.

⁽¹³⁾ See: <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N11/476/10/PDF/N1147610.pdf?OpenElement>

⁽¹⁴⁾ http://www.stakeholderforum.org/fileadmin/files/Outcome_document_MDG.pdf

⁽¹⁵⁾ Outcome Document UNGA Special Session 25 September 2013: <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/Outcome%20documentMDG.pdf>

"Establishing a parliamentary working group on the post-2015 process was a good approach. It allowed flexibility and gave interested MPs a forum to become involved, active and outspoken on the issue."

Senator Vanessa Matz, Belgium

Sustainable Development Goals

C. WHO IS DRIVING THE PROCESS?

The following section looks at the actors behind the processes of designing the Sustainable Development Goals and the post-MDG process.

MAIN ACTORS BEHIND THE SDG PROCESS

1. The Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (OWG)⁽¹⁶⁾

Most of the official work on the SDGs is being done by the UN General Assembly Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (OWG). The "OWG" has 30 seats which are shared by a group of 70 Member State representatives. The creation of the OWG was mandated by the Rio+20 Outcome Document, tasked with preparing a report containing a proposal on a set of SDGs which should address the three dimensions of sustainable development (social, environmental, economic) in a balanced way.

The report will be submitted to the 68th session of the Assembly (September 2013 – Sep-

tember 2014) for consideration and appropriate action. The below diagram provides a timeline of OWG's Programme of Work following its initial two meetings which took place in March and April 2013.

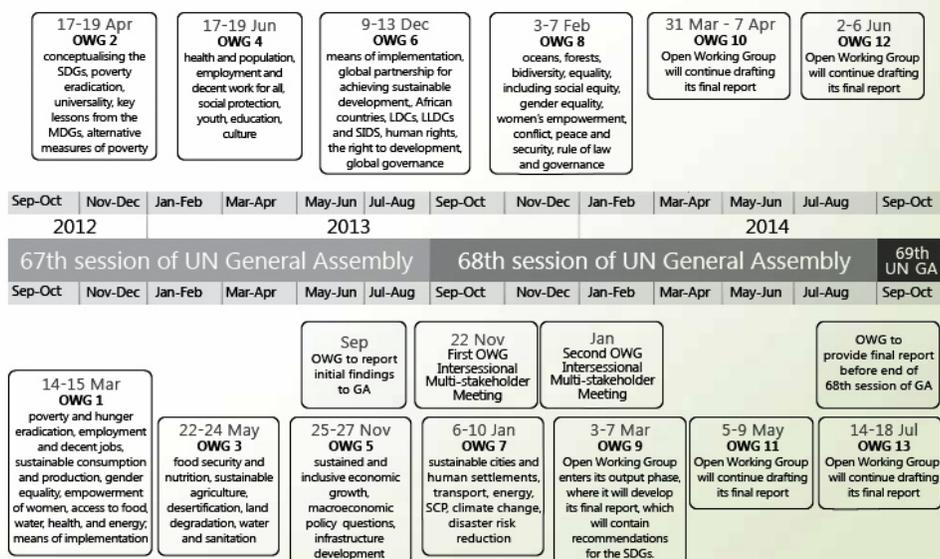
2. The UN System Technical Support Team⁽¹⁷⁾

The UN System Technical Support Team (TST) has been established to provide the Open Working Group with analytical inputs, background material, expert panellists and other forms of technical support. The TST is co-chaired by the UN's Department for Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and consists of over 40 UN entities. It works under the umbrella of UN System Task Team on the post-2015 development agenda.

⁽¹⁶⁾ For further information on the OWG, including a list of its Member State representatives, information on its meetings and other resources, see: <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?menu=1549>.

⁽¹⁷⁾ <http://www.sustainabledevelopment2015.org/index.php/uncsd-official-docs/understanding-the-post-2015-processes>

Fig. 1 : Timeline of OWG's Programme of Work



Sustainable Development Goals

“The added value of involving Parliamentarians in the post-2015 process is that it increases their awareness about the process and allows them to better follow up and scrutinise their government’s actions”

Senator Vanessa Matz, Belgium

MAIN ACTORS IN THE POST-MDG PROCESS

3. The UN System Task Team

The UN System Task Team was established by the UN Secretary-General to support system-wide preparations for the post-2015 UN development agenda, in consultation with all stakeholders, including Member States, civil society, academia and the private sector. Interestingly, no Members of Parliament sit on this Task Team to input and make their voice heard. It brings together over 60 UN entities and agencies and international organisations. It supports the multi-stakeholder consultations being led by Member States on a post-2015 global development agenda, by providing analytical inputs, expertise and outreach.⁽¹⁸⁾

4. The High Level Panel of Eminent Persons (HLP)⁽¹⁹⁾

In July 2012, Secretary-General announced the 27 members of a High-level Panel to advise on the global development framework beyond 2015, the target date for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The Panel was co-chaired by President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono of Indonesia, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia, and Prime Minister David Cameron of the United Kingdom, and included leaders from civil society, private sector and government.

The Panel was part of the Secretary-General’s post-2015 initiative mandated by the 2010 MDG Summit. UN Member States have called for open, inclusive consultations involving civil society, the private sector, academia and research institutions from all regions, in addition to the UN system, to advance the development framework beyond 2015.

The work of the Panel reflected new development challenges while also drawing on experience gained in implementing the MDGs, both in terms of results achieved and areas for improvement.

The Panel submitted a report⁽²⁰⁾ containing recommendations to the Secretary-General in May 2013.

5. The Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN)

The UN Secretary-General announced the launch of the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) in August 2012. It is led by Jeffrey Sachs, who holds the title of Special Advisor to the UN Secretary-General. The SDSN is a global, independent network of research centres, universities and technical institutions that works with stakeholders including business, civil society, UN agencies and other international organisations. The network established 12 thematic groups⁽²¹⁾ of global experts to support global problem solving in twelve critical areas of sustainable development and it delivered a report to the UN Secretary-General in September 2013 called “An Action Agenda for Sustainable Development”⁽²²⁾.

6. The United Nations Development Group (UNDG)

The United Nations Development Group which “unites the 32 UN funds, programmes, agencies, departments, and offices that play a role in development”⁽²³⁾, was tasked with gathering in-

Sustainable Development Goals

put at the country level. The undg conducted consultations in more than 88 developing and developed countries. It also convened 11 “multi-stakeholder thematic consultations” covering topics like education, inequalities, health, governance, conflict and fragility, growth and employment, environmental sustainability, food security, population dynamics, energy, and water. It published its report (“A Million Voices: The Future We Want”) in September 2013.

D. WHERE ARE WE IN THE PROCESS?

On 30 May 2013, the HLP submitted its report on the post-2015 development agenda: “A new global partnership: eradicate poverty and transform economies through sustainable development”. The underlying rationale that guides this report is to **eradicate extreme poverty from the face of the earth by 2030**. The HLP’s approach was to carry forward the spirit of the Millennium Declaration and the best of the MDGs, with a practical focus on things like poverty, hunger, water, sanitation, education and healthcare but going beyond the MDGs and addressing their obvious lacks. This meant to integrate the economic, social, and environmental aspects of sustainable development and addressing the need to promote sustainable patterns of consumption and production with the aim of properly bringing environment and development together.

“For while we seek to craft an international agenda with elements of commonality at the UN GA level, the development model that each country employs must have its own peculiar DNA”

H.E. John W. Ashe, President of the 68th UNGA (November 2013)

In conclusion, the HLP is advocating for the post-2015 agenda being a universal agenda that needs to be driven by **five big, transformative shifts**⁽²⁴⁾:

- **Leave No One Behind.** It must be ensured that no person – regardless of ethnicity, gender, geography, disability, race or other status – is denied basic economic opportunities and human rights;
- **Put Sustainable Development at the Core.** There must be a rapid shift to sustainable patterns of production and consumption, with developed countries in the lead. The time to act is now to slow the alarming pace of climate change and environmental degradation, which pose unprecedented threats to humanity;
- **Transform Economies for Jobs and Inclusive Growth.** A profound economic transformation can end extreme poverty and promote sustainable development, improving livelihoods, by harnessing innovation, technology, and the potential of business. More diversified economies, with equal opportunities for all, can drive social inclusion, especially for young people, and foster respect for the environment;

⁽¹⁸⁾ For a list of the UN System Task Team, see here http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/untaskteam_undf/untt_members.pdf;

⁽¹⁹⁾ <http://www.un.org/sg/management/hlp/post2015.shtml>

⁽²⁰⁾ http://www.un.org/sg/management/pdf/HLP_P2015_Report.pdf

⁽²⁰⁾ These thematic groups look at the following themes: 1. Macroeconomics, Population Dynamics, and Planetary Boundaries; 2. Reducing Poverty and Building Peace in Fragile Regions; 3. Challenges of Social Inclusion: Gender, Inequalities, and Human Rights; 4. Early Childhood Development, Education and Transition to Work; 5. Health for All; 6. Low-Carbon Energy and Sustainable Industry; 7. Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems; 8. Forests, Oceans, Biodiversity, and Ecosystem Services; 9. Sustainable Cities: Inclusive, Resilient, and Connected; 10. Good Governance of Extractive and Land Resources; 11. Global Governance and Norms for Sustainable Development; 12. Redefining the role of Business for Sustainable Development.

⁽²¹⁾ See: <http://unsdsn.org/files/2013/11/An-Action-Agenda-for-Sustainable-Development.pdf>

⁽²²⁾ More about undg can be found here: http://undg.org/content/about_the_undg_1

⁽²³⁾ See: <http://www.post2015hlp.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/UN-Report.pdf>

Sustainable Development Goals

- **Build Peace and Effective, Open and Accountable Institutions for All.** Freedom from violence, conflict, and oppression is essential to human existence, and the foundation for building peaceful and prosperous societies. The HLP is calling for a fundamental shift – to recognise peace and good governance as a core element of wellbeing, not an optional extra;
- **Forge a New Global Partnership.** A new spirit of solidarity, cooperation, and mutual accountability must underpin the post-2015 agenda. This new partnership should be built on our shared humanity, and based on mutual respect and mutual benefit.

In November 2013 the Open Working Group, which is driving the SDG process, identified the following areas and points where a strong consensus has emerged:

Areas and points where a strong consensus has emerged:

- **Poverty eradication** must be the overriding objective;
- **Goals must be few**, measurable, and easy to communicate;
- The new agenda must **build on MDGs**;
- Must be **inclusive**, “leave no one behind”;
- Must be **universal** – apply to all countries – while recognising different priorities, levels of development;
- Must address the **three dimensions of sustainable development** – social, economic and environmental – **in a balanced way**.

There is also broad support for goals and/or targets on poverty, food security, water & sanitation, health, education, employment, and a universal attainment of a social development threshold.

Nevertheless, some challenging issues remain. These include the economic and environmental agenda and in particular the issue of how to address climate change and reinforce the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) process. Addressing the so-called “drivers and trends” also remains a challenge, especially answering the following questions:

- **How to anchor** the post-2015 agenda to human rights principles?
- **How to address** inequalities and what goals, targets and indicators should be used?
- **How is** the Right to Development **to be secured** in the SDG agenda?
- **How can** the governance, peace and security agendas **be integrated**?
- **How to address** the widening inequalities in many places?

E. WHERE ARE WE IN THE PROCESS?

The following table gives an overview of Open Working Group Sessions. As this agenda is constantly evolving, up-to-date information on timing and exact content of the sessions is made available on the United Nations Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform⁽²⁴⁾.

⁽²⁴⁾ <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?menu=1549>

“Health is a precondition and an outcome and indicator of all three dimensions of sustainable development”

The Future We Want, para 138 (June 2012)

Sustainable Development Goals

OWG 5 *from 25 to 27 November 2013*

- Sustained and inclusive economic growth;
- Macroeconomic policy questions (including international trade, international financial system and external debt sustainability);
- Infrastructure development and industrialisation;
- Energy.

OWG 8 *from 3 to 7 February 2014*

- Oceans and seas, forests, biodiversity;
- Promoting equality, including social equity, gender equality and women's empowerment;
- Conflict prevention, post-conflict peace building and the promotion of durable peace;
- Rule of law and governance.

OWG 6 *from 9 to 13 December 2013*

- Means of implementation (science and technology, knowledge-sharing and capacity building);
- Global partnership for achieving sustainable development;
- Needs of countries in special situations;
- Specific challenges facing the middle-income countries;
- Human rights;
- The right to development;
- Global governance.

On 13 December, the OWG Co-Chairs announced dates for five additional formal decision-making sessions that would take place after the conclusion of its eight initial stocktaking sessions, from **March** through **July 2014**. The OWG 9 took place from **3 to 5 March**; the OWG 10 from **31 March to 4 April**; the OWG 11 from **5 to 9 May**. The OWG 12 will take place from **16 to 20 June**; and the OWG 13 from **14 to 18 July**.

Those additional meetings are meant to be formal decision-making sessions to be accompanied by informal meetings to facilitate the negotiations, and draft the OWG's final report. The OWG will present its final report of recommendations for consideration by the UNGA by September 2014.⁽²⁵⁾

OWG 7 *from 6 to 10 January 2014*

- Sustainable cities and human settlement;
- Sustainable transport;
- Sustainable consumption and production (including chemicals and waste);
- Climate change and disaster risk reduction.

The following timeline illustrates the process and timeframe for deciding the SDGs:

<http://www.sustainabledevelopment2015.org/index.php/about/timeline>

⁽²⁵⁾ For more information see: <http://www.un-ngls.org/spip.php?article4385>

Sustainable Development Goals

2014

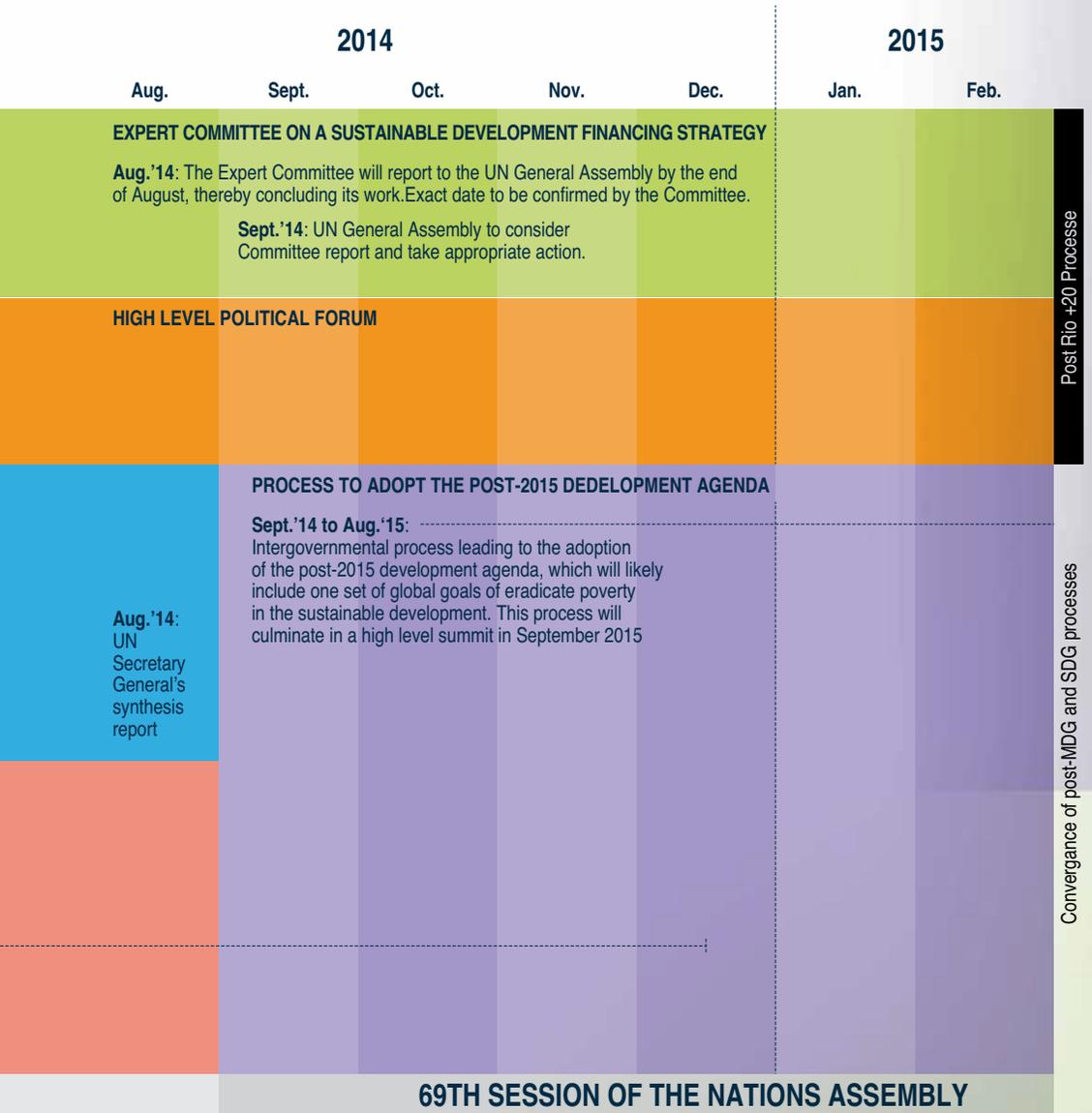
	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.
Post Rio +20 Prozesse	EXPERT COMMITTEE ON A SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FINANCING STRATEGY						
	HIGH LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM						Jul.'14: HLPF eight day meeting under the auspices of ECOSOC, including a three-day ministerial segment.
Post-2015 Development Agenda	POST MILLENIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS						
	Jan.'14: OWG meeting 7	Feb.'14: OWG meeting 8	Mar.'14: OWG meeting 9	Apr.'14: OWG meeting 10	May'14: OWG meeting 11	Jun.'14: OWG meeting 12	Jul.'14: OWG meeting 13
	Jan. to Dec.'14: United Nations Development Group Consultations. National, regional and global discussions focusing on means of implementation for the post-2015 development agenda.	Feb.'14: PGA thematic debate 1	Mar.'14: PGA high-level event 1	Apr.'14: PGA thematic debate x2 2	May'14: PGA high-level event 2	Jun.'14: PGA high-level event 3	
68TH SESSION OF THE NATIONS ASSEMBLY							

Finance for Sustainable Development: At Rio+20, the agreement was reached that, given the fact that finance is one of the most often cited barriers to the implementation of sustainable development, an intergovernmental process to evaluate and propose options for effective financing for sustainable development ought to be established. This process will run under the auspices of the General Assembly and will be carried out in open and broad consultations with international and regional financial institutions and other relevant stakeholders.

Governance: High Level Political Forum (HLPF): The universal intergovernmental High Level Political Forum is to follow up on the implementation of sustainable development. It is to build strengths, experiences, resources, and inclusive participation modalities of the Commission on Sustainable Development, and subsequently replace the Commission whereby an overlap with existing structures, bodies, and entities is sought to be avoided.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): During the Rio+20 Conference in 2012, governments agreed to launch a UN-led process to create a set of universal Sustainable Development Goals envisaged to be an international framework that will enable countries to better target and monitor progress across all three dimensions of sustainable development (social, environmental, and economic) in a coordinated and holistic way.

Sustainable Development Goals



Post-Millennium Development Goals: A process led by the United Nations (UN) that aims to help define the future global development framework that will succeed the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), a set of eight global development targets which come to an end in 2015. On this track you can see events and reports from the Global Compact Initiative, the High Level Panel on eminent persons, the Sustainable Development Solutions Network and Thematic and Country consultations.

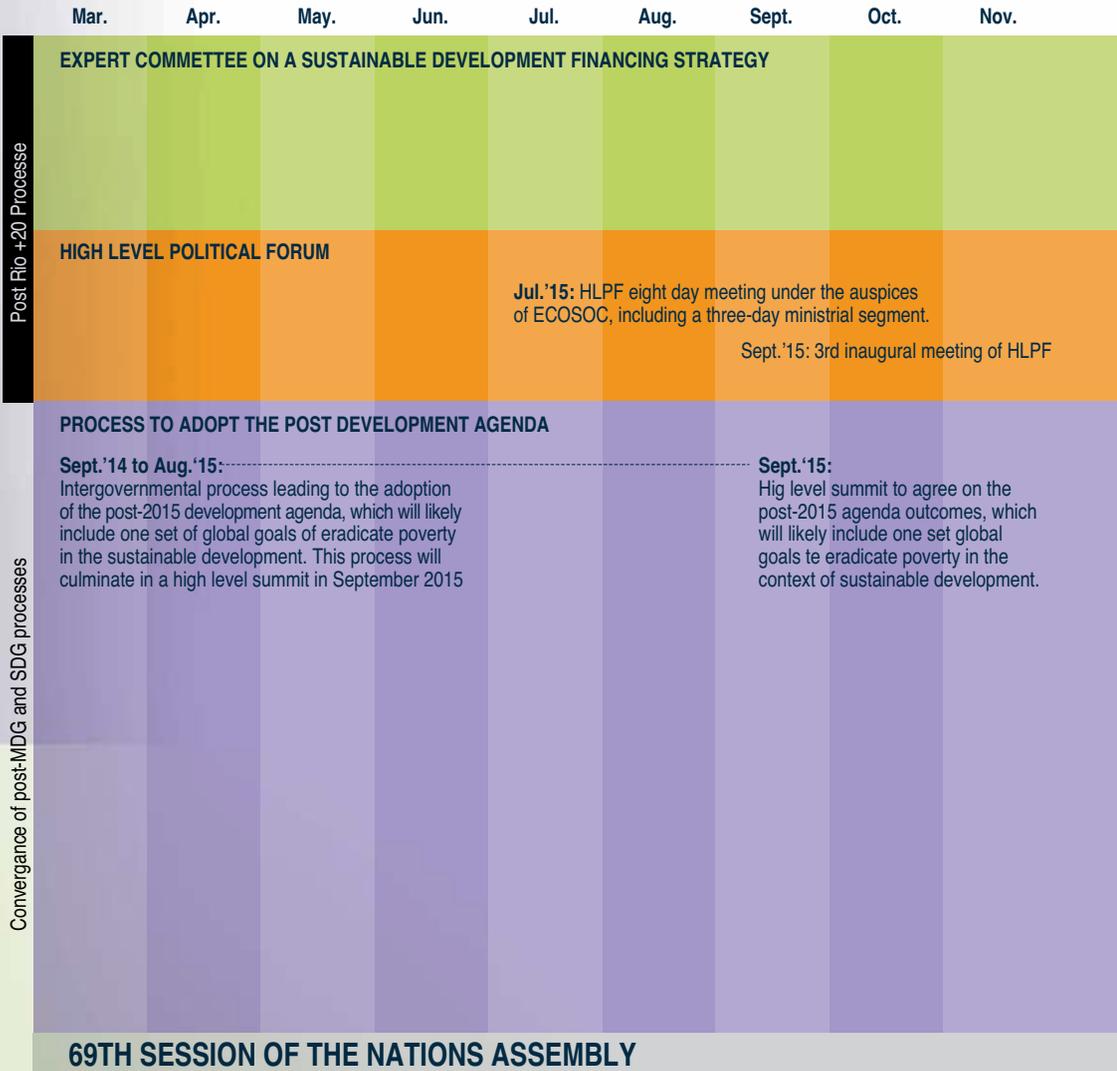
Process to adopt the post-2015 development agenda: At the beginning of the 69th United Nations General Assembly, Member States will engage in negotiations to bring the post-MDG and SDG processes together. The objective of these deliberations is to establish a coherent post-2015 development agenda, defined by one set of global goals to eradicate poverty in the context of sustainable development.

Post Rio +20 Processes

Convergence of post-MDG and SDG processes

Sustainable Development Goals

2015

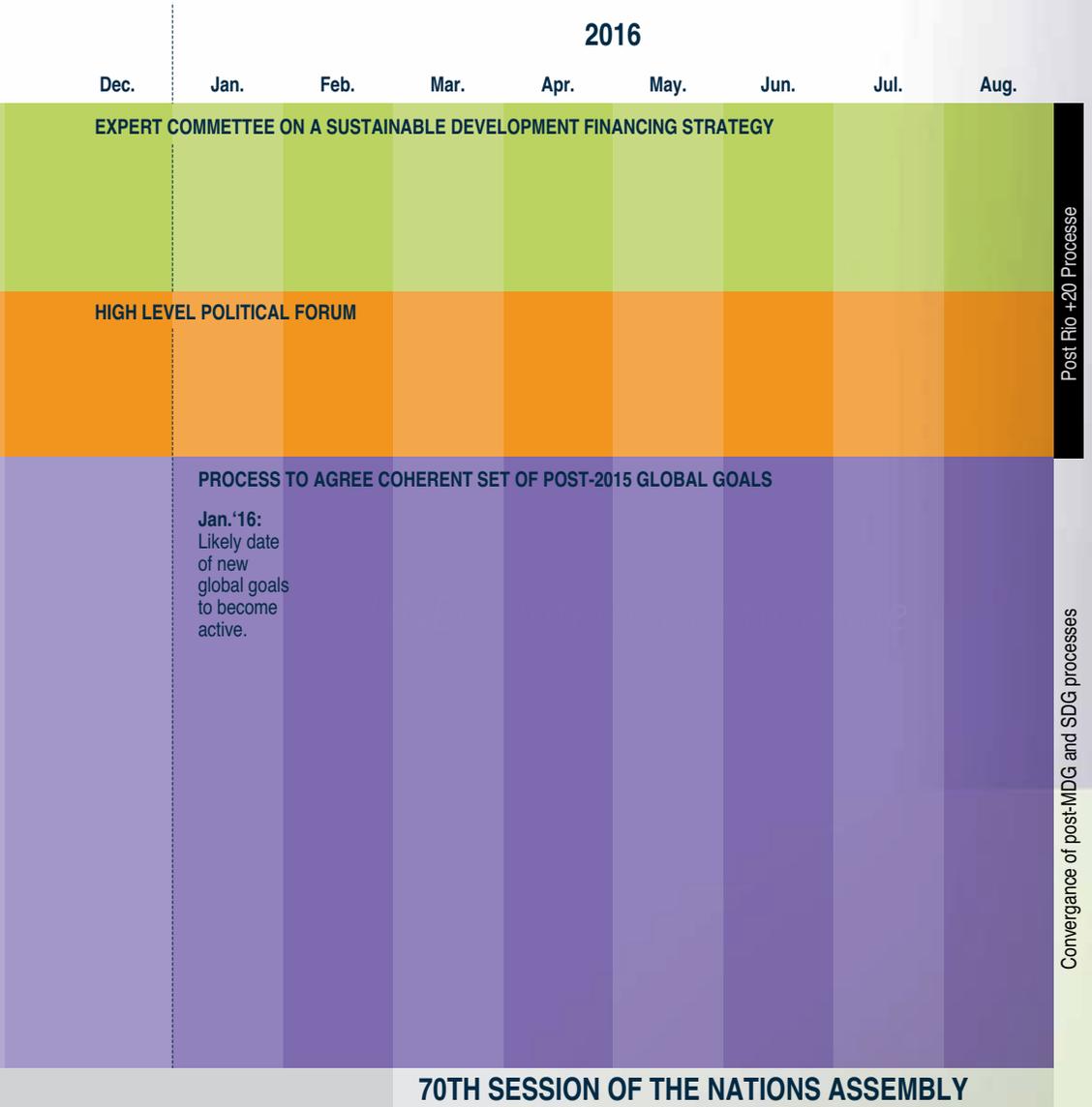


Finance for Sustainable Development: At Rio+20, the agreement was reached that, given the fact that finance is one of the most often cited barriers to the implementation of sustainable development, an intergovernmental process to evaluate and propose options for effective financing for sustainable development ought to be established. This process will run under the auspices of the General Assembly and will be carried out in open and broad consultations with international and regional financial institutions and other relevant stakeholders.

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Components Of Sustainable Development

This Handbook places specific emphasis on promoting, advancing and implementing the sustainable development goals with a focus on environmental sustainability in the post-2015 development agenda. The next section, therefore, takes a closer look at what this means and which role Parliamentarians play in supporting and advancing this particular component of the post-2015 process.

A. WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

In a world already undergoing dangerous climate change and other serious environmental ills, there is also widespread understanding that worldwide environmental objectives need a higher profile alongside the poverty-reduction objectives⁽²⁶⁾. As mentioned earlier, one of the principal outcomes of Rio+20 was the call to develop a set of universally applicable SDGs that carefully balance the environmental, social, and economic dimensions of sustainable development.

How can this be achieved? This section specifically looks at how environmental sustainability can be embedded into the SDGs and which benefits it would have for the health and well-being of people.

B. A FRAMEWORK FOR EMBEDDING ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY IN THE SDGS⁽²⁷⁾

Environment and socio-economic development are so closely linked that development cannot be sustainable without considering its environmental dimensions. Poverty eradication cannot be achieved without sustainable development, and sustainability cannot be achieved without poverty eradication.

At the same time, population dynamics, human health and well-being and environmental sustainability are intrinsically linked. Over

“A key challenge for the SDGs, is how to “decouple” socio-economic development from this overuse of resources and growing environmental degradation”⁽²⁸⁾

UNEP discussion paper

220 million women want, but currently lack access to modern contraceptives. As a result, 22 million unintended pregnancies occur every year.⁽²⁹⁾ Meeting this unmet need would improve overall health, reducing unsustainable levels of population growth, lessen demand for pressure on natural resources as well as advancing more sustainable consumption and environmental sustainability.

“But the relationship between development and the environment has not been favourable up to now since the payment for a higher standard of living has been the steady depletion of natural resources and increasing environmental impact.

Building on lessons from existing goals, UNEP proposes an integrated approach to the SDGs with the following characteristics and types of goals and targets:

⁽²⁶⁾ Jeffrey D. Sachs : » From Millennium Development Goals to Sustainable Development Goals ». In: Lancet 2012; 379:2206-11. <http://jeffsachs.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/From-MDGs-to-SDGs-Lancet-June-2012.pdf>

⁽²⁷⁾ If not mentioned otherwise, findings in this section are taken from the UNEP Post-2015 Discussion Paper 1 »Embedding the Environment in Sustainable Development Goals ». Version 2, 19 July 2013. <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/2037embedding-environments-in-SDGs-v2.pdf>

⁽²⁸⁾ See footnote 25

⁽²⁹⁾ Guttmacher Institute & UNFPA: “Facts Sheet on Costs and Benefits of Investing in Contraceptive Services in the Developing World”. June 2012. http://unfpa.org/webdav/site/global/shared/documents/Reproductive%20Health/Fact%20Sheets/AIU_2012_Estimates%20Factsheet_ENGLISH.pdf

Components Of Sustainable Development

- **Complementary set of goals and targets** – goals and targets should reinforce and complement each other by ensuring that they cover all of the main objectives of the environmental, social and economic dimensions of sustainable development;
- **Integrated goals** – the top level of the SDGs should be filled with a limited number of integrated goals that are simple to understand, but not necessarily simple in nature. Such goals should embody all three aspects of sustainable development – environmental, social and economic;
- **A mix of targets** – Each of the integrated goals should be underpinned by a mix of targets – some integrated, and some “non-integrated” – in the sense that they concentrate on either environmental, social or economic objectives.

The benefit of integrated targets are that they acknowledge the interlinkages between environmental, social and economic dimensions of sustainable development. However, they should only be used if they are specific enough to be easily understood as well as measurable under current or feasible measurement programs.

Looking at the necessary criteria that can be used for developing concrete SDG goals and targets fostering environmental sustainability, UNEP proposes the following six criteria which apply in some cases also to the social and economic dimension of sustainable development. The future SDGs should:

- Have a **strong direct link** to socio-economic issues leading to greater wellbeing and poverty eradication;
- Be able to **decouple socio-economic development from escalating resource use and environmental degradation**,

- by encouraging resource efficiency and sustainable consumption and production;
- **Include environmental problems** which are critical, growing in intensity, and/or cause irreversible changes in the global environment;
- **Take into account** global environmental goals and targets already agreed internationally since we cannot afford to backtrack on current commitments;
- Be **scientifically credible and verifiable**;
- Be **“trackable”** – progress towards achieving the goals should be measurable taking into consideration that some goals may require new indicators, and new data collection efforts.

This proposed framework that may function as a guidance for decision-makers and stakeholders involved in carving out the details of the post-2015 process is not free from challenges. Nevertheless, it also possesses undoubtable strengths. First, pursuing integrated goals requires a shift in thinking from governments, businesses and other institutions because it requires a high level of intersectoral coordination at the national and local level in order to reach simultaneous environmental, economic and social objectives.

Finally, giving the environment equal footing to social and economic considerations within integrated goals would demonstrate that environmental sustainability and investing in environmental goods and services provides a foundation for socio-economic development.

Taking the above and previous sections into consideration, the following parts of the handbook look at the role of parliamentarians in the SDG process. The sections examine their unique position in advancing, and implementing a new set of goals and provides concrete examples on how to contribute to this.

The Importance Of Parliamentarians In The SDG Process

A wealth of international landmark documents such as the Agenda 21, the Millennium Declaration and the Rio+20 outcome document “The Future We Want” have called for democratic governance, human rights and the participation of all stakeholders in building an inclusive model for sustainable development. Some of these documents refer specifically to the involvement of parliaments, whose members will also have a role to play in developing and realising the SDGs.

This is not without reason. With most legislatures responsible for legislating, policy oversight and budget approval, Parliaments are central to the development agenda. Parliamentarians are therefore uniquely positioned to influence the shape and content of their respective national development agendas and its implementation processes through the following features:

- Parliamentarians can exercise a **leadership role in policy formulation, the development of legislation** and most importantly its **implementation** at national level;
- Parliamentarians **hold the purse strings**. They have the power to define the fiscal and budgetary regimes needed to mobilise national resources toward financing development efforts, create new and innovative sources of financing in addition to official development assistance;
- Parliamentarians **have the means** to ensure oversight, accountability, transparency and the strengthening of the institutions of good governance at country level;
- Parliamentarians **represent their electorate** and can give expression to the will and voice of citizens.

“Parliaments will play a central role in shaping and implementing our new agenda”

Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary-General in a message to the IPU Annual Parliamentary Hearing in November 2013.

With regard to a future development agenda:

- Parliamentarians will have the task **to translate the future development agenda** into their very own national perspective, thus creating ownership and ultimately having the responsibility to formulating credible laws and establishing relevant institutions within the context of national realities;
- Parliamentarians should **strive to build new partnerships**, work more collaboratively across countries, and in interdisciplinary ways at their national levels;
- Parliamentarians will have the critical task of **ensuring national accountability** and oversight in the implementation of the post 2015 development agenda and the attainment of the SDGs;
- Finally, Parliamentarians must **ensure that (environmental) sustainability underpins the policy making** and implementation processes across all ministries, put in place the enabling conditions for the private sector and civil society to partner with governments to engender a green economy, review issues related to consumption and production patterns, initiate national dialogues, and reinforce the interconnection in the minds of the respective citizens among the three pillars of development.⁽³⁰⁾

⁽³⁰⁾ See: <http://www.ipu.org/splz-e/unga13/pgs.pdf>; <http://www.ipu.org/splz-e/unga13/unsg.pdf>

The Importance Of Parliamentarians In The SDG Process

However, parliamentary involvement in the SDG process is not free from challenges that have to be addressed, especially as Parliamentarians are often overlooked partners in the development process:

Looking back at the process leading up to the MDGs, it was argued⁽³¹⁾ that during the initial process of creating the MDGs and later on agreeing on them, ensuring the involvement of national and regional Parliaments was not prioritised. This process was largely led by the Executive branches of Governments on behalf of their countries. The lack of input from Parliaments on the MDGs created an initial disconnect between legislatures and the Goals that led to a general lack of engagement on key issues of legislation, policy oversight and budget scrutiny linked to the MDGs.⁽³²⁾

Parliaments will provide the legislative framework for the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda as well as prioritising financial resources and providing accountability for the development and implementation of any agreed agenda. Regional Parliaments and networks can play an important role in fostering regional consensus on development priorities.

It is important that national Parliaments are being involved and proactive rather than reactive with regards to their engagement in the SDG process. Otherwise, the SDGs risk seeing a lack of ownership in Parliaments, irregular oversight of SDG related policies and programmes and limited SDG related budget prioritisation and analysis.

^{(31), (32)} Dylan Jones: "Maximising the Involvement of Parliamentarians in the Post-2015 Development Agenda Consultations" Conference Paper for the Southeast, East and Northeast Asia and the Pacific Parliamentarian and CSO Forum on MDG Acceleration and the Post 2015 Development Agenda. 20-21 November 2012, Manila, Philippines.



What Can Parliamentarians Do?

First of all, Parliamentarians should not feel uncomfortable about the complexity of the post-2015 process with its multi-layered structures, multiple actors and decision-making procedures. There is no need to understand this process in all its details for MPs to be influential. What is, however, important for Parliamentarians to take into consideration is that their primary attention in promoting sustainable development should be devoted to focus on the accountability of their executive branch of government, i.e. are line Ministers and Ministries responsive to parliamentary requests and questions? Are decisions being made in a transparent way? Is Parliament regularly informed about progress and priorities in the relevant negotiations?

Taking the above into account, there are numerous options and levels All-Party-Parliamentary Groups (APPGs), Parliamentarians, and Parliaments can consider in order to get involved in and advance the sustainable development goals:

“Parliamentarians are key in implementing post-2015 decisions. They are the link between constituencies and government, not only giving a voice to citizens but foster ownership of the process and a responsibility to take this forward collectively”

Hon. Petra Bayr, MP (Austria)

Spokesperson on Development for the Social Democrats in the Austrian Parliament
EPF Vice-President

1. TAKE ACTION

- Invite the representative of the relevant Government Ministry to your Parliament’s Development/Foreign Affairs or other relevant Committee for a briefing on its priorities in the SDG process, its involvement and also its cooperation and coordination with other European partners;
- Ask Parliamentary Questions to relevant Government Ministries clarifying their involvement in and priorities for the upcoming negotiation process starting in September 2014 with the 69th UN General Assembly Session;
- Introduce a Report/Motion for Resolution on the post-2015/SDG process in their national parliaments or other regional parliamentary bodies (i.e. the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe)⁽³³⁾;
- Organise an event in Parliament and consider inviting relevant UN experts, CSO representatives and possibly researchers, academics, journalists etc.;
- Request that official national delegations taking part in SDG/post-2015 discussions/negotiations are opened for (a) qualified parliament representative(s) (i.e. the Chair of the Development/Foreign Affairs Committee or the post-MDG/SDG Taskforce should this exist).

⁽³³⁾ Good Examples are the European Parliament’s Report on “the Millennium Development Goals – defining the post-2015 framework” from 6 May 2013 and the Draft Motion for Resolution on “Stepping up action against global inequalities: Europe’s contribution to the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) process” that is currently discussed in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

What Can Parliamentarians Do?

2. BE ACCOUNTABLE

- Report back on your experience to your All-Party Parliamentary Group and the group's Secretariat. This can take the form of a briefing meeting after attending a relevant conference, delegation visit or other events related to the sustainable development goals;
- Report back to the NGOs working on the SDGs/environmental sustainability in your country. You might want to offer your availability as a (keynote) speaker for a relevant/suitable NGO event or organise a briefing (roundtable discussion etc.) with NGOs and possibly journalists yourself;
- Report back to your political group and relevant parliamentary committees. This can involve specific follow up proposals with the Executive branch of your government such as formulating a parliamentary question etc. An example of a parliamentary question on sustainable development can be found in the Annex of this paper.

3. SPEAK ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCES

- During Parliamentary meetings;
- During Committee/Plenary debates;
- To your Political Group/ within your political party context;
- To relevant Ministers and their staff;
- To media representatives; (journalists, TV, radio etc.)

4. CREATE VISIBILITY

- Use traditional and social media (Blogs, Twitter, Facebook, OpEds, articles) to inform your constituency/electorate about the SDG process, your governments' involvement in it;
- Write a press release or organise a press conference on relevant occasions (i.e. your participation in a conference, in negotiations, in high-level meetings);
- Use relevant international days to generate awareness around SDGs/post-2015 process and environmental sustainability (i.e. World Health Day – 7 April, International Mother Earth Day – 22 April, World Environment Day – 5 June etc.)⁽³⁴⁾

5. DEMONSTRATE YOUR COMMITMENT

- Write and talk about your activities on your blog, your and other relevant website, and via Twitter or Facebook.

⁽³⁴⁾ List of all international days: <http://www.un.org/en/events/observances/days.shtml>

Entry Points For Parliamentarians To Promote Sustainable Development

A number of reformed and/or newly created structures appeared as a consequence of the SDG process. Below is a short overview of the most promising ones and how Parliamentarians can use them.

A. THE HIGH LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON THE SDGS ⁽³⁵⁾

One critical outcome of the Rio+20 Conference was the decision to establish a universal intergovernmental high-level political forum on sustainable development. This new forum, which replaces the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) is of intergovernmental universal character and will:

- **Provide** political leadership, guidance and recommendations for sustainable development;
- **Follow-up and review** progress in the implementation of sustainable development commitments;
- **Enhance** the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development;
- **Have a focused, dynamic and action-oriented agenda**, ensuring the appropriate consideration of new and emerging sustainable development challenges.

The Forum will meet:

- **Every four years** under the auspices of the General Assembly at the level of Heads of State and Government - for two days at the beginning of the General Assembly session;
- **Every year** under the auspices of the UN's Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) - for eight days, including a three-day ministerial segment;
- Both meetings will **adopt a negotiated declaration**.

The Forum will be the “guardian of the sustainable development agenda for leaders to reflect on today's priorities and to review sustainable development commitments and objectives, including those related to the means of implementation within the context of the post-2015 development agenda, not in isolation but in an integrative and holistic manner”.

Summary of the first meeting of the high-level political forum on the SDGs, §8.

The Forum, under the auspices of ECOSOC, will conduct regular reviews, starting in 2016, on the follow-up and implementation of sustainable development commitments and objectives, including those related to the means of implementation, within the context of the post-2015 development agenda.

The inaugural meeting of the Forum was held on 24 September 2013, under the theme “Building the future we want: from Rio+20 to the post-2015 development agenda”. Participants in this inaugural meeting included Heads of State and Government, other high-ranking officials, including ministers, observers, members of major groups and other stakeholders, high level representatives of the organisations of the UN system but no parliamentarians.

The next meeting dates of the HLPF - to be held under the auspices of the ECOSOC - is previewed for 30 June – 3 July 2014 (non-ministerial meetings) and for 7-11 July (high-level segment of the Forum). The theme to be discussed will be ‘The MDGs and Charting the Way for an Ambitious Post-2015 Development Agenda, Including the SDGs.’⁽³⁶⁾

⁽³⁵⁾ For more information about the Forum see: <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?menu=1556>

⁽³⁶⁾ See: <http://uncsd.iisd.org/news/hlpf-agrees-on-theme-meeting-dates/228463/>

Entry Points For Parliamentarians To Promote Sustainable Development

The theme will take into account both the mandate of ECOSOC to evaluate achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and the mandate of the HLPF to implement the sustainable development agenda.⁽³⁷⁾

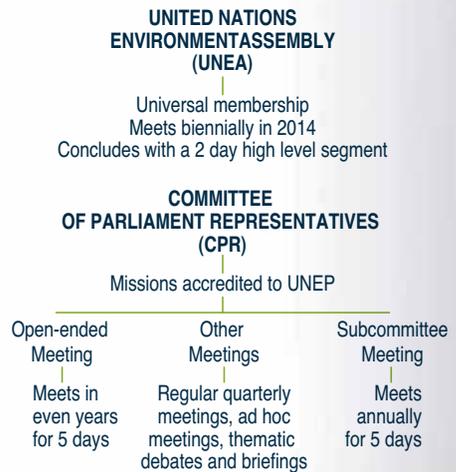
WHAT CAN PARLIAMENTARIANS DO?

- Use this “start-up” phase of the Forum to obtain more information from your government and its involvement in this new body i.e. through parliamentary questions;
- Since it is under the auspices of the UN General Assembly as well as under the UN’s Economic and Social Council consider asking Parliamentary Questions to your Government about:
 - a) An active involvement of your government/consideration of funding/progress on the structure of this new body;
 - b) The possibility for a debrief from the relevant person in the government on next steps and how the Government considers parliamentary involvement in the upcoming meetings and review processes on the SDGs of this body;
 - c) If the government is willing to open one or more seats for Parliamentarians when attending the sessions of this body.

B. THE UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT ASSEMBLY (UNEA)⁽³⁸⁾

Established in 2012, the United Nations Environment Assembly of the UNEP (UNEA) is the main governing body of UNEP.

Fig. 2 : Governance Structure of UNEA



UNEA has the following functions:

- **Setting** the global environmental agenda;
- **Providing** overarching policy guidance and defining policy responses to address emerging environmental challenges;
- **Undertaking** policy review, dialogue and exchange of experiences;
- **Setting** the strategic guidance on the future direction of UNEP;
- **Organising** a multi-stakeholder dialogue;
- **Fostering** partnerships for achieving environmental goals and resources mobilisation.

UNEA replaces UNEP’s Governing Council, which was established as a 58-member body in 1972 to promote international environmental cooperation and coordinated environmental activities within the UN system.

⁽³⁷⁾ For more information, see: <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/2873Draft%20note%20of%20the%20ECOSOC%20President%20on%20HLPF%20FINAL%20-CLEAN11decpm.pdf>, especially p. 7f.

⁽³⁸⁾ For more information about UNEA, see: <http://www.unep.org/about/sgb/UnitedNationsEnvironmentAssembly/tabid/129496/language/en-GB/Default.aspx>

Entry Points For Parliamentarians To Promote Sustainable Development

“Decisions on environmental sustainability must be taken in the interest of the most vulnerable, supporting their social protection, health, livelihood, population levels, education and gender-related issues”

Baroness Jennifer Tonge, EPF President and EPF Executive Committee Members

Forty years later, at the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), the international community decided to strengthen and upgrade UNEP including through the establishment of universal membership in the Governing Council. As a follow up to this decision, the Governing Council held its first session with universal membership in February 2013, where countries agreed to rename the Governing Council as the “United Nations Environment Assembly of the UNEP” (UNEA).

UNEA will meet biennially in Nairobi starting in 2014. UNEA is mandated to ensure the active participation of all relevant stakeholders in the governance of UNEP and to promote a strong science-policy interface.

What needs to be done?

The first meeting of the UNEA which is taking place 23-27 June 2014 should not happen without parliamentary involvement. Parliamentarians should contact their relevant Ministry to see if this meeting will be attended by a national delegation and request this delegation to be opened for Parliamentarians as well.

On a broader scale, UNEP can consider exploring closer working relationships with other relevant bodies, entities, programmes and funds within the UN System such as UNFPA. The priorities of both - climate change, envi-

ronmental sustainability, population dynamics and health complement and reinforce each other. Within the SDG process, UNEP and UNFPA could consider commissioning a joint report on the linkages between the above-mentioned issues that contributes to formulating relevant overarching goals and targets. In the run-up to ICPD+20 UNEP and UNFPA could explore taking up a leadership role through bilateral strategies and programmes in order to achieve environmental sustainability based on a human-rights based approach and taking into consideration the need of the most vulnerable groups such as women, children, poor people living in rural areas.

WHAT CAN PARLIAMENTARIANS DO?

- Use the tools at your disposal (drafting and amending laws, budgetary oversight, initiating parliamentary debates/public hearings) to highlight the need for environmental sustainability within your national context;
- Take a closer look at the current situation in your country and in how far your Executive acts environmentally sustainable – consider relevant proposals to improve the situation and formulate concrete responses to address existing challenges;
- Use your oversight capability and ensure that conventions, treaties and other international documents related to environmental sustainability and related topics are signed and ratified by your government. If this is not a case, consider asking Parliamentary Questions as a way to enquire why this has not yet been done.

Entry Points For Parliamentarians To Promote Sustainable Development

C. OTHER ENTRY POINTS AND FUTURE INITIATIVES THAT PARLIAMENTARIANS CAN PROMOTE

In a range of interviews that EPF conducted with Parliamentarians involved in the SDG/post-2015 process, a number of ideas and future initiatives of how Parliamentarians can promote, drive and implement the SDGs materialised:

1. Create a post-2015 Watch Entity

Hon. Petra Bayr, MP, EPF Vice-President and Spokesperson for Development and Environment for the Social Democrats in the Austrian Parliament suggested to create an internationally supported "Post-2015 Watch Entity" bringing together Parliaments from all regions, as well as relevant International Organisations and bigger CSO networks like Oxfam, Greenpeace, Human Rights Watch among others to closely monitor progress and implementation of post-2015 obligations for all regions.

This entity would conduct regular meetings and produce progress reports with the aim to show in which areas good progress is being made, where we are lagging behind, why and what can be changed. Such an entity should primarily be designed to bring together Parliamentarians, provide them with a forum for regular discussions and to find a common line on relevant topics - a pre-condition to make their collective voice heard as well as to exchange best practices, learn from each other and use different experiences to find solutions for similar challenges.

"The objective of the post-2015 working group in the Belgian Senate was two-fold: to inform MPs and Senators about the post-2015 process through expert briefings from various stakeholders. Second, to organise a colloquium in the Belgian Parliament on the post-2015 process. Resulting from the successful colloquium, a resolution was presented to the government on behalf of the parliament to stress the importance of having Belgium deeply involved in the post-2015 process. In fact, it was an encouragement for the government to defend an ambitious position during the discussions on the post-2015 agenda"

Senator Vanessa Matz, Belgium

2. Consider creating a Focal Point for MP engagement for implementing the SDGs

By nature, Parliamentarians are forced generalists, they have an open, stated commitment to a vision improving society and they are ambitious but with busy agendas. Therefore, Parliamentarians do rely on external expertise, they need 'actionable' solutions and they need experiences in order to cultivate visibility.

The SDGs/post-2015 process is a complex, multi-layered and oftentimes very technical endeavour with a lot of actors involved. Ensuring regular and effective parliamentary involvement therefore necessitates permanent and structured guidance.

Against this background, Hon. Petra Bayr, MP would invite other MPs to join her in her call to consider creating a Unit of Focal Points for MP engagement in the implementation of SDG/post-2015 decisions once they are finalised. Ideally, such a group would consist of 3-5 experienced staff dividing responsibilities across the world's regions with the aim to guide and

Entry Points For Parliamentarians To Promote Sustainable Development

help MPs in getting and remaining active in the process. This would for example include pointing out different possibilities of engagement in various relevant fora such as the ones portrayed above, provide regular briefings, updates and possibly assist Parliamentarians with concrete input in these fora and in their policy work at home.

Conclusion:

Parliaments and Parliamentarians are a key element in advancing the sustainable development goals at home and abroad. Their role in holding the executive branch of government accountable during the SDG negotiation process, ensuring transparency and accountability is of major importance. Yet, parliamentary influence and involvement in the process has not been fully capitalised on and leveraged. We hope this handbook provides decision-makers with a good overview of opportunities, tools as well as key dates that Parliamentarians can consider exploring and using in the coming months to ensure that the sustainable development goals are advanced and fully integrated into the future global development agenda.

EXAMPLES OF SUCCESSFUL PARLIAMENTARY ACTIVITIES AROUND THE POST-2015 PROCESS:

Sample Parliamentary Questions

United Kingdom:

“To ask the Government what are their priorities for the United Nations General Assembly’s open working group on sustainable development goals.”

“To ask the Government what steps they are taking to ensure that the negotiations for a successor framework to the post-Millennium Development Goals and the negotiations for Sustainable Development Goals result in one set of goals with sustainability as an integral component.”

Parliamentary Reports/Resolutions:

Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE): “Stepping up action against global inequalities: Europe’s contribution to the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) process”. Report by Sir Allan Meale (UK), December 2013:

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Sources And Additional Resources

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Sustainable Development Solutions

Network: An Action Agenda for Sustainable Development. Report for the UN Secretary General. 23 October 2013.

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UN System Task Team

on the Post-2015 Development Agenda:

“Realising the Future We Want”. Report to the UN Secretary General. New York, June 2012.

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UNEP

“Embedding the Environment in Sustainable Development Goals”. UNEP Post-2015 Discussion Paper 1, Version 2, 19 July 2013.

<http://www.unep.org/pdf/embedding-environments-in-SDGs-v2.pdf>

Other Sources

United Nations Advocacy Paper:

“Building more inclusive, sustainable and Prosperous societies in Europe and Central Asia. A common United Nations vision for the post-2015 development agenda”.

http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/publications/oes/images/Building_more_inclusive_sustainable_societies-English.pdf

United Nations General Assembly Document:

“Outcome document of the special event to follow up efforts made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals” (A/68/L.4*), 1 October 2013.

<http://www.scribd.com/doc/198948130/Outcome-document-of-the-special-event-to-follow-up-efforts-made-towards-achieving-the-Mill-ennium-Development-Goals>

United Nations General Assembly Document:

“Summary of the first meeting of the high-level political forum on sustainable development” (A/68/588), 13 November 2013.

http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/68/588&Lang=E

United Nations General Assembly Document:

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Recommended Websites



United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
<http://www.unep.org/>



European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development (EPF)
<http://www.epfweb.org/>



United Nations Sustainable Development Platform
<http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.html>



The World We Want 2015
<http://www.worldwewant2015.org/>



Sustainable Development 2015: Putting stakeholders at the core of post-Rio+20 Processes
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Portal for Parliamentary Development
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ACHIEVEMENTS AND REMAINING CHALLENGES FOR EACH OF THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

MDG 1: ERADICATE EXTREME POVERTY AND HUNGER

WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACHIEVE?

- Reduce by half the number of people who live on less than \$1 per day
- Guarantee stable employment
- Reduce by half the number of people who live in hunger

WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED?

- We have reduced the proportion of people living on less than \$1.25 per day by 600 million
- Between 1990 and 2008, the poverty rate dropped from 47% to 24%, despite world population growth

WHAT CHALLENGES REMAIN?

- There are still 850 million people living in hunger in the world
- Child malnutrition remains a concern. In 2010, almost 1/3 of children in Southern Asia were underweight

MDG 2: ACHIEVE UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION

WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACHIEVE?

- Ensure that all children, boys and girls alike, can complete a full course of primary schooling

WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED?

- Between 1999 and 2009, 43 million children worldwide were enrolled in primary education
- The rate of enrollment in sub-Saharan African has increased from 58 to 76 per cent
- Some of the most impoverished countries are those that have most advanced the access to universal primary education

WHAT CHALLENGES REMAIN?

- There are still 61 million children left to enroll in schooling worldwide and more than half of them live in sub-Saharan Africa
- The youth illiteracy rate exceeds more than 120 million people worldwide

MDG 3: PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACHIEVE?

- To eliminate gender inequality in education at all levels

WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED?

- We have achieved parity in access to primary education for boys and girls
- In 2012, women occupied 19.7% of the seats in single or lower houses of national parliaments
- 117 countries have passed laws regarding wage equality

WHAT CHALLENGES REMAIN?

- Only 9 of the 151 heads of state and 11 of the 192 heads of government are women
- Women represent two-thirds of the illiterate population in the world
- More than half of the women who work have unstable or vulnerable work conditions

MDG 4: REDUCE INFANT MORTALITY

WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACHIEVE?

- Reduce by two-thirds, the under-five mortality rate

WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED?

- Five in nine developing regions have reduced the under-five mortality rate by 50%
- In 20 years, the number of deaths in children under the age of 5, has decreased from 12.4 million to 7.6 million per year
- The number of deaths from measles worldwide has decreased by 74%

WHAT CHALLENGES REMAIN?

- Confronting preventable diseases like pneumonia, diarrhea and malaria is key to reducing infant mortality
 - Providing education to mothers is also fundamental in decreasing infant deaths
-

MDG 5: IMPROVE MATERNAL HEALTH

WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACHIEVE?

- Reduce the maternal mortality ratio by three quarters
- Achieve universal access to reproductive health

WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED?

- Between 1990 to 2012, maternal mortality has decreased by 47%
- During the last 10 years, the number of deliveries attended to by skilled health personnel increased from 55% to 63% and the percentage of women who received prenatal care increased from 63% to 80%

WHAT CHALLENGES REMAIN?

- Every 2 minutes, a woman dies due to complications from childbirth, 287,000 worldwide per year
 - Health coverage remains low in sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia, regions where the majority of deaths are concentrated
-

MDG 6: COMBAT HIV/AIDS, MALARIA AND OTHER DISEASES

WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACHIEVE?

- Halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS
- Ensure that by 2010, all people have access to HIV treatment
- Halt and begin to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases by 2015

WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED?

- Since December 2009, more than 1.4 million people have received HIV/AIDS antiretroviral treatment, the highest number ever achieved in one year
- Thanks to antiretroviral treatment, 2.5 million deaths have been prevented since 2005 in low and middle-income countries
- We have reduced the number of malaria infections by 50% in 43 of the 99 countries where malaria is endemic
- We have successfully treated 46 million patients with tuberculosis

WHAT CHALLENGES REMAIN?

- 16.6 million children have lost at least one parent to HIV, most of them live in sub-Saharan Africa
- HIV remains the leading cause of death among women of reproductive age worldwide
- There is still no vaccine available for malaria, a disease that is responsible for one fifth of all infant mortality

MDG 7: ENSURE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY**WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACHIEVE?**

- Incorporate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and reverse the loss of environmental resources
- Decrease biodiversity loss
- Reduce the number of people without access to safe drinking water and sanitation by half
- Improve the lives of at least 100 million people who live in slums by 2020

WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED?

- In 2010, 89% of the world's population, about 6.1 billion people, had access to safe drinking water. In 2015, that number will increase to include 92% of the world's population
- We have improved the lives of more than 200 million people living in slums
- 1,800 people have gained access to basic sanitation

WHAT CHALLENGES REMAIN?

- 2.6 billion people remain without access to healthcare
- 17,000 species of plants and animals are endangered
- The atmospheric levels of substances that destroy the ozone layer could increase 10-fold by 2015

MDG 8: GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP

It has been agreed that it is the primary responsibility of poor countries to work towards achieving the first seven Goals. They must do their part to ensure greater accountability to citizens and efficient use of resources. But for poor countries to achieve the first seven Goals, it is absolutely critical that rich countries deliver on their end of the bargain with more and more effective aid, more sustainable debt relief and fairer trade rules, well in advance of 2015.

THE TARGETS:

- Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system. (Includes a commitment to good governance, development and poverty reduction – both nationally and internationally)
- Address the special needs of the least developed countries (Includes: tariff and quota free access for the least developed countries' exports; enhanced programme of debt relief for heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC) and cancellation of official bilateral debt; and more generous ODA for countries committed to poverty reduction)
- Address the special needs of landlocked developing countries and small island developing States (through the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and the outcome of the twenty-second special session of the General Assembly)
- Deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries through national and international measures in order to make debt sustainable in the long term
- In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries.



Abbreviations And Acronyms

APPG	All-Party Parliamentary Group	TST	UN System Technical Support Team
DESA	UN Department for Economic and Social Affairs	UNCSD	United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development
EPF	European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development	UNDG	United Nations Development Group
HLP	High Level Panel of Imminent Persons	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
IDG	International Development Goals	UNEA	United Nations Environment Assembly
MDG	Millennium Development Goals	UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
MP	Member of Parliament	UNFCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation	UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
OWG	Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals	UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals		
SDSN	Sustainable Development Solutions Network		



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