



CARE International

Recommendations on the Post-2015 Development Framework

December 2012

Introduction: Delivering Development Beyond 2015

CONTEXT

Since the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were agreed in 2000, the world has changed rapidly, with new opportunities arising from innovative technologies, globalisation and the changing roles and influence of different development actors, but also with new challenges to ending poverty and developing in an equitable and sustainable way.

The shifting balance of power with the emergence of more and stronger middle income countries and an increased role of the private sector in the development agenda have changed the global decision-making and financial landscapes. Private investment now exceeds Official Development Assistance and, increasingly, multinational and small- to medium-sized enterprises recognise that constraints on global resources and threats to sustainable supply chains require new solutions and technologies that could and should benefit poor people. The world is facing growing and proven threats from climate change as a result of historic patterns of development based on high fossil fuel consumption, with implications on energy, water, shelter and food security, disproportionately affecting the poorest people who bear the least responsibility for the problem. The last five years have also seen a major global financial crisis and economic downturn with negative impacts on development efforts, while in some parts of the world, conflict continues to undermine the development prospects of millions of people.

The world has also witnessed increased inequality and changes in the nature of poverty, with the majority of poor people now living in middle income countries and increasingly in cities, rather than rural areas. At the same time, women and girls continue to bear the brunt of poverty and conflict. Further, commitments made by the international community on fundamental rights, and more specifically on sexual and reproductive rights, are at risk of being reversed.

PROGRESS ON THE MDGs AND CHALLENGES

The MDGs have been a useful rallying point for mobilizing and prioritizing political energy and development resources around a shared set of poverty reduction targets. Yet, despite the progress made, significant numbers of people remain in poverty with well over 1.3 billion people living on less than US\$1.25 a day. While there have been significant improvements in some areas, there has been limited or no progress in others. In fact, many MDGs remain seriously off track. Also, even in sectors where substantial gains have been made, such as education¹ and health², this progress has been inconsistent between and within countries, and lack of progress in an MDG has often constrained achievements in other areas.

On gender equality, a main focus area for CARE International, progress has been recorded for women and girls across a range of MDG indicators, including the MDG 3 (gender equality and women's empowerment) target related to gender parity in education. Recent data indicate that gender parity has been reached at primary school level in much of the world, including 117 of the 173 countries with data³. Yet, gender inequalities remain pervasive and entrenched in many of these same countries. Globally, women and girls constitute a majority of those living in extreme poverty. Women predominate in the world's agricultural production (50-80%), but own less than 10% of the land⁴. Primary and secondary school enrolments for girls remain much lower than for boys in many Sub-Saharan African countries and some parts of South Asia; low educational quality means that many children, girls and boys, are leaving school without the skills and competencies needed to thrive.

Despite significant reductions in maternal mortality (MDG 5), many countries – particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia – have made minimal to no progress in reaching MDG 5. In those countries that have made advances, progress tends to be extremely inequitable, with poor and marginalized women and girls continuing to face immense barriers to improved health.

1. World Development Report, 2012: Gender Equality and Development

2. World Health Organisation, 2012, World Health Statistics

3. World Development Report, 2012: Gender Equality and Development

4. UNDP 2009. Resource Guide on Gender and Climate Change. United Nations Development Programme

Approximately 800 expectant mothers die every day of mostly preventable causes; 99% of these deaths occur in developing countries; and over 200 million women and girls, the majority of whom live in developing countries, lack access to modern family planning. In addition, an estimated one in three women globally has been subjected to various forms of gender-based violence⁵.

Gender disparities are particularly pronounced among the poorest women and girls and among those who face other forms of social exclusion such as ethnicity, language, caste, religion, disability and geography. It is also important to recognize that gender disadvantage does not just affect women and girls. For example in a number of countries there are more boys out of school than girls at primary and secondary level, and global assessments indicate that boys from poorer backgrounds are falling behind in learning outcomes in a number of low-, middle- and high-income countries⁶.

It also has long been recognized that the MDG targets and indicators do not adequately capture the multiple dimensions of gender inequality and injustice. MDG 3 is primarily framed around gender parity in education, but does not capture other key dimensions of gender vulnerability, including women's bodily integrity and freedom from violence, household decision-making, and use and control over productive resources.

There have also been other limitations in the MDG framework. For example, it fails to address the right to food and the root causes of hunger and food insecurity (MDG 1) in particular in the agriculture, livestock, fisheries, water and nutrition sectors, which have resulted in the MDG 1 targets and indicators being too narrow in scope and potential. It also fails to address land issues and the critical role of the natural resource base in providing food security.

Another challenge is that development gains since the establishment of the MDG framework are increasingly being eroded by climate change, with poor vulnerable women and children suffering its impacts the most. With paths to a global increase of less than 2 degrees Celsius increasingly difficult to achieve⁷, climate change will now inevitably and severely limit development opportunities for current and future generations, particularly in poor and lower-middle-income countries. There is a dire lack of progress in addressing environmental sustainability (MDG 7) with accelerating climate change, biodiversity loss and ecosystems degradation. These challenges are compounded by a failure of international processes to address the scale and urgency of the problem and by the lack of integration between environment and social concerns and the need to place equity, rights and governance, together with environmental wellbeing, front and centre in sustainable development efforts.

Further limitations of the current MDG framework include that it failed to address human rights, as well as peace, conflict and security; the indicators do not take equity or quality into account; guidance is not provided on country-level implementation; there is a lack of accountability mechanisms, particularly at the local and national levels; and there is not enough focus on engaging civil society around increased accountability and improving the quality of services, and as transformative powers in communities.

The scale of the challenges and increasingly interconnected nature of our global economies and societies means that delivering on global promises for poverty eradication and social justice can no longer be "business as usual". Instead, we all need to use the discussions around the "beyond 2015 framework" – and the coincidence of 2015 being the year of the new global climate change treaty as well as the 20th anniversary of the Beijing Conference on Women – to challenge existing norms and practices for delivering development, and instead build on what we know works best and what is most urgently needed for a rapid transition to a safer, more equitable and resilient world for all.

CARE'S EXPERIENCE

CARE International, one of the largest international non-governmental organisations, has been working for more than 65 years on development and humanitarian relief in over 80 countries. Our experience shows that tackling gender inequality and investing in women pays dividends above and beyond immediate returns. CARE International works worldwide with women and men, girls and boys, to achieve gender equality as a fundamental human right. By empowering women, entire families and communities can be lifted out of poverty. Our experience has shown that simply including women and girls in development projects does not empower them. It is necessary to promote fundamental changes in the root causes of inequality, including cultural and societal norms, as well as policies and power relations, in order to allow women and men to step into new roles and ensure equal opportunities.

5. UNFPA, <http://www.unfpa.org/gender/violence.htm>

6. UNESCO, 2012. Education for All Global Monitoring report

7. The International Energy Agency's 2012 World Energy Outlook warns that no more than one-third of already proven fossil fuel reserves can be used by 2050 if temperature increases are to be held below 2 degrees Celsius

CARE International provides the following recommendations on the post-2015 framework with a focus on its areas of expertise and drawing on its experience and lessons learned.

Recommendations for a post-2015 development framework

In light of the above, CARE International believes that **any future framework aiming at ending poverty and social exclusion must have a strong focus on women's empowerment and gender equality** and, on this foundation, it should address the following:

SOCIAL EQUALITY

1. Include women's empowerment and gender equality as a central pillar of the post-2015 development framework

CARE International's experience indicates that empowering women and girls requires a holistic approach that addresses all barriers to women's and girls' rights at various points in their lives. Such an approach includes, but must go beyond, efforts to empower women and girls with skills, information and resources. It must also involve efforts aimed at altering the power relations and institutions that surround women and girls and shape their choices and ability to make decisions. This requires engaging individuals (including men and boys), communities and leaders in challenging discriminatory norms that contribute to issues such as gender-based violence, inequitable distribution of power and resources and other injustices that impede the education, health and welfare of women and girls and limit the opportunities and resources available to them. It also requires policy changes tailored to address the specific gender concerns that drive marginalization in every context, including policies to promote women's rights to property; to address gender disparities in wages, employment and unpaid care work; improve access and quality of public services; and promote shared decision-making at household and public levels. It also needs measures to increase their resilience to external shocks, recurrent disasters and, increasingly, climate change.

Recognizing that gender inequality is a key driver of poverty and that it is manifested across multiple dimensions, women's empowerment and gender equality should be a central and cross-cutting goal of any future global development agenda. Beyond improvements in women's agency, the framework should place emphasis on long-term transformation of power relations within social, economic and political systems to address the root causes of gender inequality. CARE International believes that there is a need to ensure a strong and explicit focus on gender equality in any new global framework, with priority given to reaching the poorest women and girls. Thus, the post-2015 framework should:

- Have the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment as a central goal/pillar, as well as ensure that gender factors are made visible or mainstreamed within other development goals e.g. through gender-related indicators and targets across all development domains.
- Adopt a rights-based and transformative approach to capture and measure the many key dimensions of gender disadvantage. This requires expanding beyond targets or indicators focused on parity of numbers, towards a focus on high-level outcome indicators to track progress in addressing underlying structures and power relations that are the key drivers of inequality between women and men. This includes changes related to cultural norms and attitudes, workload, household and public decision-making, educational quality and gender-based violence. A focus on gender-based violence is particularly critical because it has such a significant and detrimental impact on all spheres of development.
- Include the need to build increased accountability among governments and other actors for the implementation of their commitments under existing women's rights treaties and frameworks, including the Beijing Platform for Action, the International Conference on Population and Development and the Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

2. Fully integrate human rights into the development framework with particular attention to women's and girls' rights

Fulfilling human rights is fundamental to ending poverty and inequality. CARE International thus believes that the post-2015 framework should:

- Make human rights principles of accountability, participation, transparency, and non-discrimination central to all development programming and funding. Interventions must address the extreme inequity that exists between and within countries (in particular in issues related to reproductive rights, the right to food and violence), focusing on the underlying drivers of poverty and paying a particular attention to women's and girls' rights.

- Ensure that donors and governments assess how to better operationalize international human rights frameworks to secure development outcomes. The UN Human Rights Council (in particular the process of Universal Periodic Review) offers an opportunity for states to hold each other accountable for their commitments to achieving greater progress towards economic, social and cultural rights.

HEALTH EQUITY

3. Give particular attention to sexual, reproductive and maternal health and rights

CARE International believes that access to sexual, reproductive and maternal health services is both a fundamental human right and a critical development issue, in line with the 1994 Cairo Programme of Action, which placed women's empowerment and reproductive rights at the centre of development. In many countries, the low status of women and girls and persistent gender inequality are closely associated with women's inability to exercise their sexual and reproductive rights⁸. The realization of the "right to health" cannot be achieved through direct services alone. Large-scale and sustainable change requires that we address underlying and systemic factors, including gender inequality, policy barriers, and power imbalances that have an impact on health. In our work in sexual, reproductive and maternal health, CARE has observed first-hand the transformative power of directly addressing inequitable social norms. Helping people to think differently about their roles and rights as women and men is a critical factor in empowering women and girls, in helping them make informed decisions about their reproductive choices and, ultimately, enabling behaviour change and improved health outcomes. CARE International believes that the following priorities are essential and that the post-2015 development framework should:

- Finish the work begun under the current MDG framework to dramatically reduce maternal mortality and promote universal access to reproductive health services. Significant action is still needed to ensure the coverage, quality and equity of reproductive health services.
- Ensure that indicators measure the disparities in health service quality and provision. Data should be disaggregated by poverty quintiles, socio-cultural group, age and geographic location (urban vs. rural), to ensure that progress is being made country-wide and across the entire population. Community-based data, which may not be included in health facility or institutional data systems, must also be also considered. Outcome indicators should measure the impact of health interventions, access to health services, and the quality – not just the quantity – of care. Addressing the unique barriers that prevent marginalized women, children and populations from accessing health services will be critical to help reach the poorest populations and increase the sustainability of results.
- Be comprehensive, cover a full 'continuum of care' and integrate with other health and development issues. Any framework must cover the broad spectrum of healthcare services that connects home to community, to clinic, to hospital and back again and across the life cycle. It must also support community-based approaches that integrate or link maternal and newborn health with child survival, sexual and reproductive health and family planning, nutrition, microfinance, education and HIV/AIDS in a coordinated manner.
- Ensure that civil society plays a strong role in shaping policy and practices. An active and informed civil society can enhance accountability efforts by supporting women and the broader community to better understand their health rights, demand improvements in policies and services, monitor and report on the quality of health services and hold governments and decision-makers accountable to their commitments. Moreover, genuine participatory mechanisms must be implemented, whereby health authorities and service providers dialogue with the users of health services in order to better understand and respond to their needs and demands.

INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH AND FOOD AND LIVELIHOOD SECURITY

4. Deliver inclusive and sustainable economic growth

Rapid economic growth is taking place in many developing countries, with Foreign Direct Investment four times larger than Official Development Assistance, but much of it is not directly benefitting the poorest people and is severely degrading the environment. Furthermore, it is occurring under a development paradigm of high dependency on fossil fuels and ecosystems degradation which is pushing the planetary limits of the environment and a stable climate. It is therefore vital to work with progressive private sector actors, many of whom now recognise that their global supply chains are threatened and are developing new technologies and solutions as a result. CARE International recommends that the post-2015 framework must:

- Encourage the transition of the global economy towards a sustainable model less dependent on fossil fuels, high carbon emissions and wasteful consumption.

8. Population Action International, 2011. Why Population Matters. Available at: www.populationaction.org/oldmedia/Why_Population_Matters.pdf

- Facilitate the establishment of new partnerships between non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the private sector and governments to harness current levels of economic growth in a manner that is inclusive and sustainable.
- Build on the United Nations' "Business Call to Action", and consider how to encourage businesses operating in developing countries to adapt 'inclusive and sustainable models', that expand access to goods, services and dignified livelihood opportunities for low-income communities.
- Place particular emphasis on two key sectors: i) increasing poor women's access to financial services (by considering how increased financial inclusion could be a measure of progress towards more equitable and inclusive economic growth); and ii) increasing women's share of agricultural value chains.

5. Renew commitment, investment and strategic approaches to tackle the root causes of hunger and food insecurity

CARE International believes that the post-2015 framework must:

- Finish the work begun under the current MDG framework in relation to hunger, ensuring that the right of the world's poorest women and their families to nutritious food is upheld and that they have equitable access to opportunities to secure stable, sustainable, and resilient livelihoods.
- Ensure that the necessary financial, human and material resources are allocated to deliver on the hunger and nutrition goals, giving priority to supporting sustainable smallholder farming and gender-responsive essential services.
- Support more research partnerships involving collaboration among poor farming communities, extension services and agricultural scientists and ensure research programmes examine what kinds of sustainable agricultural strategies, techniques, equipment and crops can most benefit women.
- Include a nutritional dimension into agricultural goals: increase the diversification of smallholder agriculture, providing a range of local varieties rich in micronutrients, monitoring nutrition-related outcomes, and supporting agricultural research that is conducted from a nutritional perspective.
- Encourage national governments to develop, implement and monitor gender-sensitive policies and legislation, relating not only to agriculture, food security or nutrition, but also closely related issues such as property/land rights, access to productive resources, social protection and basic services, and protection from domestic violence and non-discrimination that have an impact on food security.
- Collect, track and analyse comprehensive sex- and age-disaggregated data on food security and nutrition that is timely, accessible and comparable; and promote gendered analyses of food security and nutrition-related issues, such as food price volatility and land titling. A good example is the monitoring and evaluation system of Feed the Future – the United States Government's global hunger and food security initiative – which aims to track gender impacts through three main approaches: i) engendered performance monitoring; ii) gender-focused impact evaluations; and iii) the development and utilisation of the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

6. Address the impact of environmental degradation, climate change, and disasters on the achievement of poverty eradication and lasting sustainable development

Without sustainably managing our natural environment we will continue to compromise our efforts to tackle poverty. Without tackling poverty and, conversely, excessive and unsustainable consumption, we cannot secure development and environmental wellbeing. Tackling climate change requires an increased emphasis on issues of climate justice and strengthening the rights of the poorest and most vulnerable, whilst highlighting the need for developed countries with historic responsibility to take action for tackling climate change. The recent IPCC SREX report⁹ highlights that development practice, policy and outcomes are critical to shaping disaster risk, and that disaster risks are increased by shortcomings in development. Furthermore, the report provides robust evidence that inequality influences coping and adaptive capacity at local level, and compound disaster risk management and adaptation challenges from the local to the national levels. Environmental sustainability, including tackling climate change and poverty reduction, must be considered holistically and form the foundation for actions to achieve sustainable development. For this, the post-2015 MDGs framework should:

- Consider sustainable development as the underpinning basis of the post-2015 framework rather than a sub-section, with development that is equitable and operates within the Earth's limits. There is a need for high-level political reaffirmation that addressing climate change, through urgent concrete actions reflecting historic and common, but differentiated, responsibilities is key to sustainable development and to achieving a safe and just world.

9. IPCC SREX, 2012. Special Report on Managing the Risks Extreme Climate Events and Disasters to advance Climate Change Adaptation

- Signal a rapid transition based on equity and resilience for all countries to move from unsustainable growth to sustainable development. Progress towards more inclusive and equitable green economies should prioritize good governance, equity and the rights of the world's poorest and most vulnerable people.
- Recognise that catastrophic impacts from climate change can no longer be addressed by adaptation and mitigation only, and ensure that vulnerable groups incurring loss and damage from climate change impacts receive rehabilitation and compensation based on historic and common but differentiated responsibilities.
- Prioritize the need to ensure a rapid transition to a low-carbon world and build resilience, recognising that climate change and environmental degradation threatens to undermine all other areas of development gain.
- Prioritize disaster risk reduction by strengthening livelihoods, reducing vulnerability and creating resilience as a fundamental basis for poverty reduction. This should recognize that the world's poorest and most vulnerable people live on the environmental margins, such as floodplains, hillsides and drought-prone areas, but also on societal margins and are therefore most vulnerable to economic, social and environmental shocks, including disasters; and that the number of disasters occurring globally has been increasing exponentially over the last century.
- Develop key indicators across all new proposed goals that show the inter-relationship with environmental wellbeing.
- Ensure that the development of sustainable development goals agreed in the Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development are integrated in the post-2015 development framework, together with the new timeline for a 2015 global climate agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Hyogo Framework for Action on Disaster Risk Reduction. These should be part of a set of sustainable development and poverty reduction goals where environmental integrity is the foundation for achieving sustainable social and economic development.

HUMANITARIAN EMERGENCIES AND CONFLICT

7. Include a goal related to emergencies and natural disasters with a particular emphasis on the needs of women and girls

The negative effects of conflict and natural disasters often disproportionately affect the people least able to cope with them and exacerbate existing gender inequalities and pre-existing vulnerabilities. The damage from disasters and conflicts threatens development gains and can undermine years of investments in improving the lives of families and communities. For example, in many countries, natural disasters and conflict have reversed or prevented improvements in sexual, reproductive and maternal health. The need for sexual and reproductive health services is particularly acute in disaster and conflict settings where health systems may have collapsed, supplies are scarce, and conditions are hostile to pregnancy and childbearing. In these environments, women and girls are often subjected to an increased risk of sexual and gender-based violence, unwanted pregnancies due to lack of access to contraceptives and overall lack of control over their situation. CARE International believes that the post-2015 framework must:

- Account for and address the critical needs of millions of people that are living in emergency contexts.
- Ensure that gender equality is a central part of the strategies for response and that the needs of women and girls are met in emergency contexts, in particular maternal and reproductive health needs.
- Effectively link emergency relief and longer-term development.
- Recognize that putting functioning disaster risk reduction and response structures, as well as building poor people's resilience to rebound from the effects of disasters, is critical to achieving long-term sustainable development.

8. Address issues of peace, conflict and security with special attention to women, and prioritize development in conflict-affected states

No country experiencing conflict has met a single MDG. The post-2015 framework needs to address the needs of poor people living in insecure contexts, with special attention to women and girls. CARE International believes that the post-2015 framework should:

- Address explicitly issues of peace, conflict and security.
- Include conflict/peace issues of relevance to advancing goals related to women, peace and security as a matter of both "process" and "content". Involving women in processes linked to aid and wider political processes in conflict is essential if women's rights and concerns are going to be addressed. As such, processes need to be designed in a way that enables meaningful participation of women, including at grassroots level.

There are also specific substantive content issues – such as gender-based violence or women’s access to justice – which need to be addressed as they are often neglected in aid and wider political relations in conflict countries. In this regard, emphasis needs to be placed on achieving further progress on implementing UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and related resolutions. Further, women’s and girls’ maternal and reproductive health needs must be addressed in conflicts and post-conflict response activities.

- Explore the incorporation of the “New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States”, agreed at the Busan High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, and in particular, the focus on the model of “mutual accountability” for achieving better development outcomes between donors and states in conflict.
- Consider country-level, context-specific priorities and strategies, and mechanisms and processes to take action at this level.

OWNERSHIP, PARTICIPATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

9. Establish and implement country-level ownership of the future post-2015 framework

Country-level ownership, from governments and local communities, is essential to long-term sustainable poverty reduction and development and thus the post-2015 framework should:

- Ensure that ownership goes beyond the existence of government development strategies by putting in place processes in which the views and needs of relevant actors, such as parliaments, local communities and civil society organisations, are incorporated in policy development and implementation.
- Address the long-term and systemic need to create more inclusive and effective accountability and governance mechanisms that ensure that the poor people’s needs, views and interests are represented in the decisions around the way aid and development programmes are delivered and for what purpose. Ensure that aid contributes to, rather than undermines, a country’s ability to eventually exit the aid system and to become self-sufficient.
- Enable and allow for contextualization based on country-level realities.

10. Acknowledge the vital role of civil society

To counteract the increasing global trend that has seen the space in which global civil society operates being eroded, for example through the imposition of legislation making it difficult to organise and operate, CARE International believes that the post-2015 development framework must:

- Send a clear signal that civil society plays a vital role in achieving development outcomes: in monitoring commitments at local, national and international levels, in supporting women and the broader community to better understand their rights, and in demanding improvements in services.
- Linked to the country-ownership point above, develop genuine participatory and gender-responsive mechanisms, whereby governments and key decision-makers dialogue with the community and civil society in order to better understand and respond to their needs and demands. The most marginalized groups, including women, should participate in a meaningful way in such dialogues.

11. Commit to accountability and tracking results, including the design of new gender-disaggregated equity indicators that measure progress and are tracked and reported on regularly

CARE International believes that a comprehensive post-2015 development framework needs to:

- Fully integrate international, national and local-level targets and should provide guidance for regular reporting on the progress made in implementing financial, programmatic and policy commitments, including measurable results and any needed midcourse corrections. It must also focus on stewardship and ensuring the appropriate use of resources.
- Ensure that data collection is disaggregated as proposed under recommendations 3 and 5 above on sexual, reproductive and maternal health and on food and nutrition security and that accountability mechanisms, such as those suggested in the recommendations above, are developed and put in place.

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Founded in 1945, CARE is a leading humanitarian organisation fighting global poverty and providing lifesaving assistance in emergencies. CARE places special focus on working alongside poor girls and women because, equipped with the proper resources, they have the power to help lift whole families and entire communities out of poverty.

In Financial Year 12, CARE worked in 84 countries around the world to assist more than 122 million people improve basic health and education, fight hunger, increase access to clean water and sanitation, expand economic opportunity, confront climate change, and recover from disasters. To learn more, visit www.care-international.org.

