



A POST-MDG ROADMAP BASED ON LEARNINGS FROM EXPERIENCE¹

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Plataforma 2015 y más

1. INTRODUCTION: THE MDGS OUTSTRIPPED

It is now 2015, the year marking the deadline set by the international community of countries represented at the United Nations (UN) to eradicate poverty, hunger, lack of health care and access to education –the focus of the Millennium Goals (MDGs) in the year 2000. There was actually no need to reach the deadline to ascertain the strengths and weaknesses of the MDGs, as the crux of a great global agreement to fight international poverty. A number of analyses had already been highlighting major trends, prominent successes and ongoing challenges that were still to be overcome². In 2012, the UN started warning about the need to extend the term of commitment, with the explicit intention of factoring in learnings from the period covered and adapting the previous agenda to the present. The nearing deadline has spurred various proposals to draw up a new international development agenda to replace the previous one. However, there are indications that the MDGs have been patently and undeniably overwhelmed as the crux of the international development agenda. In reality, it would be difficult to maintain that the MDGs have provided an effective guide for international policy transformation in the last decade and a half. In the best-case scenario, some of their proposals may be considered to have been useful indicators for examining cooperation policies in donor countries and reflecting certain results of so-called *social policies* in countries with poverty problems. But, whether we examine the results of the 60 targets in question or whether we look beyond them and analyse the most relevant aspects of what has happened in the world over the last fifteen years, we will find that they have, in fact, been little more than that.

¹ Translated by Nicola Stapleton.

² See the annual work undertaken by *Economistas Sin Fronteras* and published in *Plataforma 2015 y más* yearbooks for more than a decade where data from a very significant set of MDG-monitoring indicators is analysed and note is taken of the major trends by action sector and by impact on different regions. <http://2015ymas.org/editorial-2015-y-mas/colecciones/4/1/anuarios#.VdRthLLtHz>



2. EVALUATION OF THE MDGS

The MDGs can be appraised on at least three different analytical levels: firstly, by examining the degree of fulfilment of the targets proposed; secondly, by evaluating their capacity to steer “global governance” regarding the causes of poverty and exclusion; and thirdly, by considering the extent to which their objectives have gained influence on countries’ development agendas. Three brief analyses follow accordingly: the first considering the MDGs as a set of goals and examining their degree of achievement; the second considering the MDGs as a *global governance* process based on an eminently intergovernmental agreement supported and managed by the most representative international institutions, such as the UN, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB); and the third interpreting the MDGs as a political mobilization agenda aiming to raise awareness and increase knowledge and importance of certain issues on the international community’s agenda.

Many reports and analyses have been published on achievement of the targets contained in the MDGs, including some suggesting that such targets cannot be applied at regional/national levels, but can only be calculated globally. There is some consensus that the best data on reducing poverty and hunger are closely determined by the behaviour of the Asian regions including China and India. Both countries account for a very substantial proportion of the different target groups addressed by the MDGs, and their results determine mean values with regard to a number of different indicators. Consequently, it has been highlighted that the situation in the vast majority of countries in the “sub-Saharan African” region –where poverty (and hunger) reduction data cannot be considered adequate– must not be concealed by average global values. Of the targets as a whole, some have performed better than others, and in certain regions similar dynamics are noted for several targets. But overall, the set of targets comprising the MDGs cannot be considered attained. Indeed, far from it. Now that the deadline has come, when analysed from the regional perspective, only about 30% of the targets will be achieved.

Results do not prove much more favourable when analysing what the MDGs represent in terms of the challenges of global governance, in other words, to what extent they have enabled generation of new institutions, legislation or regulations that have strengthened those areas of government requiring global perspective and management. Perhaps driven by the MDGs, or perhaps a result of the dynamics of greater efficacy in international aid system practices, it is true that complementarity, coordination, alignment and other principles regulating behaviour when countries share a common aim all gained importance in the early years of the new millennium. Consequently mechanisms were established which, although eminently technical, were able to provide coordinated global



governance experience in the field of development. Multi-donor trust funds, budgetary support and triangular coordination could be considered instances of this. Unfortunately, in recent years, although these initiatives have become relatively consolidated, they have to some extent given way on shared agenda to new behaviour more geared to the *financialization* of instruments, marking a return to a more competitive rationale and setting less store by agreements for joint governance. Outside the strict confines of the international aid system, disposition towards and successes in the area of governance offer little scope for satisfaction. Barely all that was done was to extend the informal G8 group to G20, while there is still no regulatory capacity vis-à-vis the financial system, global taxation or the application of protection and guarantee systems on issues such as the reduction of CO₂ in the atmosphere, the conservation of aquifers or the production and sale of food.

Thirdly, the ability of the Millennium Declaration and its resulting MDGs to strike at the heart of the major political decisions with most impact on people's lives cannot be considered substantial. A glance at the major events of the last fifteen years and their influence on history suffices to show that the MDGs have not had a significant effect in this respect. Rather, we might say that in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks and the response of the Bush administration there was, a return to security-driven international relations which undoubtedly affected development views and practices. The global financial crisis from 2007 and 2008 has also had a huge impact on specific development commitments. Proposals to end the crisis, in the form of fiscal adjustments in national budgets of donor countries, have encouraged the use of new financing mechanisms with so-called refundable financial cooperation, providing a way of maintaining certain levels of official aid without running up a budget deficit³. Although it would not be rigorous to claim that the financial crisis has been the obstacle to reaching the figures pledged in MDG8 on official development assistance (ODA) and external debt relief programmes, in 2011 there was nevertheless a drop in total ODA for the first time in many years. The profound crisis affecting international development aid cannot be slighted either. As of 2011, regrettable data show a failure to attain the targets which were proposed as part of the effectiveness and quality improvement process in 2005 (OECD, 2012). In the wake of this failure, the system was overwhelmed and superseded at the Busan conference, where there was an attempt to introduce a new coordination scheme among new and diverse actors, and among the different priorities and methods making it difficult to map out and coordinate development cooperation practice. The *Global Partnership*

³ See analysis on these methods and how they contradict development aims and principles, as well as the risks posed in my recent document <http://2015ymas.org/centro-de-documentacion/publicaciones/2014/1589/cooperacion-para-el-desarrollo-o-para-el-sector-privado-el-auge-de-la-cooperacion-financiera-reembolsable/#.VexW4rT4T0Q>



for *Effective Development Cooperation* has barely begun and is still a long way from being able to provide the legislative and regulatory capacity that a development-based transfer system should be capable of organizing. The announcements and review processes of calculating flow concessionality and the new framework of what is known as *Total Official Support for Development (TOSD)* still has some way to go and relevant issues to resolve before it can become an effective successor to the former ODA.

3. BUILDING THE POST-2015 AGENDA

Although the mandate is the result of the MDG follow-up summit held in 2010, the formal discussion and drawing up of the post-2015 agenda began in January 2012 when the United Nations Secretary-General set up a task team (UNTT)⁴ to coordinate the whole system, with a view to building the new agenda. The UNTT includes more than 60 bodies and agencies that are part of the UN system, as well as other international organizations. Joint coordination falls to UN DESA's Development Policy and Analysis Division and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The Solomonic decision to split co-direction of the team between the Departments of Social and Economic Affairs and the Development Programme clearly reflects the need to structure legitimacy and knowledge of the subject, while seeking bolster inter-agency options within the United Nations, in an attempt to shore up system coordination and coherence. With ECOSOC's supervision and support, the UNDP leads a major commitment to provide structure and coordination for the 32 UN agencies working on development issues which became part of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) in 2007 in a bid to articulate regional coordination, integrate all programmes in each country through an experiment piloted in eight countries, and offer new joint planning and programming methodologies⁵.

It must be acknowledged that there is a consistent logic in the attempt to reinforce key coordination spaces within the UN system, not only in terms of scheduling and executing programmes, but also in establishing debate on the contents of the new agenda. Consequently, a similar situation can be observed in the intensive efforts aimed at bringing together the work resulting from summits on sustainable development, particularly with regard to the mandate to put forward Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), drawn up after "Rio+20", and debates and processes geared to replacing the international agenda symbolized by the Millennium Development Goals.

⁴ http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/untaskteam_undf/

⁵ It is well known that, with this in-depth reform of the working method of its diverse agencies, the UN intended to enhance the "coherence, relevance and effectiveness" of its actions. See <http://www.undg.org/>



From the perspective of the different visions for development held by the main stakeholders in what is known as the international community, the UN is, in short, seeking to shore up a new international development agenda that will reinforce its conceptualization rooted in integrated economic, ecological and social dimensions.

In June 2012, the UNTT published a report containing its main recommendations for preparing the agenda. The report was based on the principles of the Millennium Declaration and experience drawn from the decade and a half of the MDGs' existence (UNTT, 2012). In March 2013, the UNTT published a second report focusing on the dimensions to be addressed when renewing the global partnership for development. The report openly voiced MDG8's inadequacy in mobilizing resources and policies that differed from the ODA because it had only served to perpetuate a "donor-recipient" relationship (UNTT, 2013).

A month after the first UNTT report, the Secretary-General created the High-level Panel on Post-2015 Development Agenda, consisting of 27 people who, although chosen in an individual capacity, were intended to represent the geographical diversity and the different actors involved in development. The Panel was given the mandate of compiling a report addressing three issues: a) the vision and shape the post-2015 agenda should take; b) the principles for reshaping the global partnership for development and strengthening accountability mechanisms, and c) how to build broad consensus on an ambitious development agenda tackling three dimensions: economic growth, social equality and environmental sustainability. The Panel, which reported directly to the UN Secretary-General, was created with a Secretariat led by Homi Kharas, who had chief responsibility for authorship of the report that was published, as planned, in May 2013. The report pointed to what it referred to as five priority transformational shifts for the post-2015 agenda, the first of which included the MDGs objective of eradicating extreme poverty, and those of placing development sustainability at the heart of the agenda, transforming economies to create employment and inclusive growth, building peace and effective, open and accountable public institutions and, finally, forging a new global partnership of all stakeholders. To face these challenges, it laid out a set of 12 goals. Apart from the contents of the report itself, which are beyond the scope of the brief analysis of the process discussed here, we should also highlight the resulting flood of comments and reactions, some more analytical than others, which contain varying depths of analysis. Many of the responses consider that the overall approach taken by the High-level Panel failed to pay sufficient attention to essential matters on human rights, the necessary transition towards sustainability and the consideration of social organization involvement in drawing up the agenda. A number of comments point, in our view correctly, to bias in the report towards



the positions advocated by the representatives of multinational companies and corporations, from which, as the report itself acknowledged, more than 250 contributions were received. The weight of this perspective is clearly apparent in the significance given to the concept of economic growth to the detriment of other dimensions of development and poverty that are barely even mentioned or considered⁶. Although, discursively speaking, the report's point of departure is to assume that a balance must be struck among three dimensions of sustainable development, i.e. economic, social and environmental, insofar as its proposals are concerned, sustainability goals are clearly made contingent on economic growth, with which the report finds no inherent problem. Likewise, the insufficient attention paid to inequality as a development issue suggests that the intended balance in fact reasserts the focus on economic growth as a factor that determines development⁷.

The third of the processes implemented virtually simultaneously was the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN), the result of a different mandate legitimized by the Rio+20 Sustainable Development Summit conclusions and agreements. The Network was set up in August 2012, comprising independent research centers, universities and technical institutions, as well as interest groups including companies, civil society and United Nations agencies. The Network's mandate was to develop a new sustainability framework for the post-MDG development agenda, based on four dimensions of sustainable development (economic, social, environmental and good governance) through the creation of twelve working groups. It concluded that, to do so, ten key challenges had to be addressed⁸. Published in June 2013, the report was explicit about the main challenge for the new agenda and the global partnership promoting it, which was "to move away from the Business-As-Usual (BAU) trajectory towards a Sustainable Development (SD) path" (SDNS, 2013). Twelve thematic working groups were formed, comprising global experts in the ten critical areas of sustainable development mentioned, supported and coordinated by the SDNS Secretariat led by Jeffrey D. Sachs. The report committed to a set of ten goals with three specific targets under each. In February 2014, a provisional list of 100 indicators was published and submitted to public consultation for the period of one month.

⁶ The report can be consulted here <http://www.post2015hlp.org/the-report/>. And the responses issued and published by different stakeholders are available on the same site <http://www.post-2015hlp.org/outreach/outreach-stakeholder-responses-to-the-hlp-report/>.

⁷ Martínez, Ignacio (2013).

⁸ These were: i) end extreme poverty including hunger; ii) achieve development within planetary boundaries; iii) ensure effective learning for all children and youth for life and livelihood; iv) achieve gender equality, social inclusion and human rights for all; v) achieve health and well-being at all ages; vi) improve agriculture systems and raise rural prosperity; vii) empower inclusive, productive and resilient cities; viii) curb human-induced climate change and ensure sustainable energy for all; ix) secure ecosystem services and biodiversity, ensure good management of water and other natural resources; and x) transform governance and technologies of sustainable development.



Also as part of the follow-up process to the Rio+20 Summit, in September 2012, an Open Working Group (OWG) on the sustainable development goals was commissioned to develop a proposal for SDGs that would “address and incorporate in a balanced way all three dimensions of sustainable development and their inter-linkages” so that they were coherent and could be integrated into the United Nations post-2015 development agenda. The OWG was to deliver its report in summer 2014 so that it could be included as a major input at the September General Assembly. The Working Group was set up with 70 countries, occupying 30 “seats”, in January 2013⁹. In an initial phase, the OWG met in nine sessions between March 2013 and February 2014, at which Member States pooled their different perspectives on different sustainable development issues in the form of an stocktaking of ideas drawn from experts, Member States and other stakeholders (OWG, 2014a)¹⁰, and discussed the main issues included in the Rio+20 Framework for Action and how these could be reflected in a series of SDGs. In a second phase, the OWG prepared the report for the General Assembly with its proposal for 17 Sustainable Development Goals, after a preparation process in which the intergovernmental rationale began to gain the upper hand in the discussions (OWG, 2014b)¹¹.

In the meantime, the United Nations had implemented a number of actions designed to encourage participation in and contribution to the debate on the main issues involved in building the new post-2015 agenda. The national consultations that began in more than 50 countries, together with 11 thematic consultations¹², have provided a significant series of channels for contributions that can be made via a number of paths been opened up by these processes. In March 2013, the first report published the results of the first systematized national consultations, with the aim, as indicated by the title, *The Global Conversation Begins*, of continuing debate and discussion (UNDG, 2013). Although just a preliminary report on the opinions voiced in dozens of consultations, this structured compendium reflects quite a clear and complete *needs-based* diagnosis, explicitly calling on the international community to put together a new agenda leading to a “transformative change”, which will “surpass the confines of current global

⁹ United Nations (2013) A/67/L.48/Rev.1 “Seat” number 25, for instance, is shared between Italy, Turkey and Spain.

¹⁰ The report on the stocktaking phase covers a series of ideas, challenges and proposals that still lack a logical structure and which in some cases respond to different perspectives and emphases. They therefore fail to rise to the challenge of offering a balanced response to the three dimensions of sustainable development (ecological, economic and social). The report can be consulted at: <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/3238summaryallowwg.pdf>

¹¹ The report was made public in August 2014 and can be consulted at: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/1579SDGs%20Proposal.pdf>

¹² The 11 thematic consultations include: Conflict and Fragility, Education, Environmental Sustainability, Governance, Growth and Employment, Health, Hunger and Food Security, Inequalities, Population Dynamics, Energy and Water.



consensus” (UNDG, 2013: 21). The main challenges persist, irrespective of economic growth, and there is clamoring for a new approach that does not deplete natural resources. From this standpoint, the consultations report places the accent on the need for an agenda to enable the vast majority of the world’s population *to overcome the situation of vulnerability through empowerment strategies, to face up decisively to the fight against growing inequality by means of inclusion policies and principles of equity and justice, and to ensure that the broadest possible recognition of the problems of unsustainability of the current model cease to be a threat and become an opportunity*. In general terms, the limitations of these consultation processes are apparent precisely in the way in which they were handled. Discretionality in the invitations, the sectorial nature of the themes, and control of the preparation of the documents of conclusions and summaries prevented these processes from being mistaken for any kind of participatory process. Admittedly, the launch and organization of the thematic and national consultations may have reflected a desire to obtain the opinions of stakeholders who would have had no other way of accessing the agenda-building discussion. Yet listening to or receiving opinions is not the same as opening a debate. Similarly, contributors may also not necessarily identify with the reports or summaries published.

For this reason, the United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service (UN-NGLS) promoted a specific consultation of the NGOs registered with it on four of the reports published in mid 2013 containing proposals for the new agenda (the High-level Panel of eminent persons, Sustainable Development Solutions Network, the Global Compact report and the report issued by the thematic and national consultations development group). This specific consultation was conducted in June and mid July, and its findings were debated in 14 teleconferences with 120 regional networks of organizations and social movements from Asia, the Pacific, Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa, Europe, North America and Arab states. The debate was not limited to *responding or expressing an opinion* on the four reports, but used them as a point of departure, establishing a broader discussion on the main challenges faced by the post-2015 agenda, as perceived by regional networks of social organizations.

The final report on these consultations –reviewed and approved by the participants themselves– was formally submitted to the President of the United Nations General Assembly on 22 September, 2013 (UN-NGLS, 2013). The report differed from previous ones because it called into serious question the prescriptions generally followed in current globalization policies, such as the indiscriminate liberalization of trade and finance, privatization and deregulation, export- and direct foreign investment-based growth, and the reduction of the role of the state, *as having caused a huge concentration of wealth and power, exacerbated inequalities and increased poverty* (UN-NGLS, 2013). The report expresses social organizations’



growing concern about the power relations observed in different contexts, identifying imbalances of power that have eroded justice and integrity in societies in all world regions. This perspective is fundamental to the set of goals and proposals put forward in the report, which states that the key question is *to rebalance power relations to make them fair in terms of transforming economies and specifically, reorienting policies and economic governance at all levels to fulfil human rights and the multiple dimensions of human wellbeing* (UN-NGLS, 2013). The proposal is developed through four main transforming objectives which, although common to every region, are detailed in specific actions and proposals for each: a) rebalancing power relations for justice; b) fulfilling human rights and overcoming exclusion; c) ensuring equitable distribution and safe use of natural resources, and d) establishing participatory governance, accountability and transparency. Since its publication, the UN-NGLS has been quite active in disseminating specific proposals in other agenda discussion processes and, in particular, outlining the main conclusions and proposals drawn up by the social organization networks in short summaries at OWG working sessions.

In short, the initial proposals aimed to replace the existing MDGs with another similar initiative, which rescheduled certain goals and included other aspects that had not originally been contemplated (MDG plus). Yet this initial approach has since been superseded by the set of processes put in motion, whose main features and suggestions we have outlined here. These point to the need for an in-depth review, not only of the agenda's definition of the agenda, but also of the mechanisms to be used by the international community to progress in its implementation. However, the fact that the debates threw up a need for such an in-depth review was no guarantee that the agenda would ultimately take in this broader perspective. Indeed, its ultimate definition has been determined by the limitations of the intergovernmental approach, as indeed occurred with the MDGs, where—after a decade of world summits on development leading to diverse goals, targets and action plans, many of which were complex and ambitious the eight goals finally adopted represented a bare minimum agenda. In this respect, the UN system's recent efforts, immediately prior to the start of the strictly intergovernmental negotiations have focused on the multi-distribution¹³ of the reports, proposals, contributions and demands made by different stakeholders so that they would not be ignored in the dialogue between governments, which tend to introduce elements into talks that are either of short-term interest and/or of strictly national concern, thus potentially not only jeopardizing response to development challenges in the breadth and complexity required, but also limiting countries' effective commitment to the implementation of the new agenda.

¹³ See the activity shown in the space provided by the UN to pool the contributions and demands made by different stakeholders on countries taking part in the negotiations <http://www.worldwewant2015.org/es>



In December 2014, all previous processes were, to some extent, brought to a conclusion, when what from then on was the single, definitive process to determine the final configuration of the post-2015 agenda was published in the Secretary-General's Synthesis Report entitled *The Road to Dignity by 2030: Ending Poverty, Transforming All Lives and Protecting the Planet*¹⁴ which endorsed the proposal comprising 17 SDGs drawn up by the OWG (UN SG, 2014). These SDGs would then remain unchanged through to the final wording. It is interesting to note that, in his Synthesis Report, the Secretary-General acknowledges and refers to all the processes implemented except that of the UN-NGLS. Its critical attitude to the major limitations imposed by a globalization model rooted in the centrality of economic growth is not seen in a positive light by the system. With their criticism of a model of global dialogue blurring the difference between the public and private status of the different stakeholders, and ambiguous consideration as private sector or members of civil society, the premises on which this report is based bear witness to the power relations among transnationalized stakeholders. These power relations cause discomfort to both global companies and the national governments who come under their pressure. Moreover, an analysis of the influence exerted by transnational business throughout the multi-process of drawing up the post-2015 agenda points to its financing the structures with which the UN coordinated the process. Such analysis also clearly indicates that the scope of the new agenda would not call into question the fictitious equality between the different stakeholders. Nor would it aim for the promotion of regulatory policies by public authorities whose role should be limited to fostering business and promoting incentives for those companies voluntarily deciding to take steps towards more sustainable practices that safeguard rights¹⁵.

On 2 August 2015, the document *Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* was adopted by consensus. It constituted the final version of the SDGs due to be brought before the UN General Assembly at the end of September. In the end, the proposal covers, with no substantial changes¹⁶, the version drawn up by the OWG a year earlier, and contains 17 SDGs and 169 targets, thus demonstrating the weight attached to intergovernmental negotiations over other kinds of dialogue or proposals. The consensus reached is indicative of many of the limitations referred to in the previous analysis and which were apparent during the debate and discussion processes. However, the draft resolution does incorporate certain

¹⁴ <http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/publications/files/2015/01/SynthesisReportSPA.pdf>

¹⁵ See the research on this conducted by a series of European NGOs at: <http://2015ymas.org/centro-de-documentacion/publicaciones/2014/1586/la-influencia-empresarial-en-el-proceso-post-2015/#.VexXE7T4T0Q> (Spanish version) https://www.globalpolicy.org/images/pdfs/GPFEurope/Corporate_influence_in_the_Post-2015_process_web.pdf (English version).

¹⁶ Only certain verbs were modified in some wordings put forward by the USA and the EU in a frantic final weekend during which some countries acted out their positions. See the report at: <http://agendaglobal.redtercermundo.org.uy/2015/08/27/agenda-de-desarrollo-post-2015/>



elements that differentiate and substantially improve upon the approach to and scope of the MDGs. To summarize, there are three particularly positive aspects in this new declaration: the inclusion of the various dimensions of sustainable development, the increased scope and breadth of the themes addressed, and the new agenda's universality which implies multi-level commitments.

The linking of two processes that initially arose separately, namely the "post MDGs" and the "post SDGs", can be considered a relative success to the extent that the inclusion of the environmental dimension in the goals of fighting poverty, exclusion and inequality highlights the need for change in production and sales. Otherwise, the approach to development would be excessively focal and highly inappropriate for the real world where the different dimensions are closely interwoven. Linkage between society, economy and ecology are apparent in many of the targets and, as the declaration's preamble states, must be considered as an integrated whole. Effective progress in targets with a single goal will prove to be impossible without considering progress in others.

Secondly, over the last two years an on-going discussion has been underway about the operationality of the new agenda. Powerful voices have tried to remove certain themes on grounds of the efficacy of the declaration. In this respect, given that a vested interest in not tackling certain issues specifically seems to be behind the proposals raised, it is very good news that all 17 SDGs have been retained. As a result, the threat that the new declaration would be relegated to a kind of "MDG-plus" agenda, which would have involved little more than extending the deadline and adding in a few minor issues, finally seems to have disappeared.

The key issue that represents a particularly relevant novelty is the universality of the post-2015 agenda. This agenda constitutes a first step on the road to abandoning the *developed* versus *developing* country vision of development. Every country, without exception, must be critical about its development models and achievements and adopt a new global perspective. Not only must countries act in terms of responsibilities towards each other, but also in terms of transforming the vectors and descriptors through which development has been thus far been understood. The new vision incorporated into the agenda has opened up major potential so that the policies and actions designed to drive us towards the goals pledged are taken beyond specific cooperation and development policies to place development obligations on every single policy and on every single stakeholder in the international community.

Despite this, the new post-2015 agenda remains a *prisoner* of the limits imposed by the transnational power relations system from which it is derived. The contradictions between development based exclusively on an indicator of national income and consequently the measurement of



economic growth, whose driving force is international trade, precisely because of its capacity to add value to that indicator, decrease the chances of bringing about real integration of the different dimensions of sustainable development without resorting to economicist supremacy. The transformative nature of the new agenda depends precisely on such limits, which would prevent major trends of overharnessing, inequity and concentration of power from being overcome by new universalizable, human-rights-based trends.

4. TOWARDS A ROADMAP FOR A TRANSFORMATIVE AGENDA

Because the list of indicators to measure the targets proposed will not be agreed until March 2016, one aspect of enormous relevance still remains to complete the new post-2015 agenda. The structure of the new agenda includes specific targets for each goal, some of which take the form of targets that gauge progress in the implementation of each of these goals. This requires considerable effort, especially if we consider that the MDGs simply established goals without any prescriptive guidelines as to which policies would be most appropriate to fulfil them. The targets thus formulated in each of the 17 SDGs, as well as the seventeenth SDG itself, entirely devoted to detailing means of implementation, attempt to establish prescriptions, albeit of very limited scope and often with contradictory approaches.

The goals clearly reflect the political crisis of representation which the world and its governing systems are currently undergoing. Instead of choosing global regulation mechanisms to address certain systemic issues, the declaration is barely able to conceal the interests of the transnationalized private sector. This is due not so much to its recognition of that sector's capacities and political role in the international community, but to the fact that it does so while disregarding its responsibilities as a political actor. The declaration simply appeals to the transnationalized private sector's will to innovate and stay in step with the principles of sustainable development, and establishes no direct responsibility in matters directly linked to output, such as labour rights, treatment of the natural environment and its resources, and gender equality. In short, the international community constituted in the Global Partnership for Development can be perceived as failing to distinguish between the responsibilities and capabilities of different actors and by so doing, contravenes the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities referred to at the start of the declaration.

Nevertheless, this new post-2015 agenda would surely not have included specific issues and relevant terms of guidance had it not been for the huge effort undertaken by civil society networks, which are also transnationalized.



The SDG on inequality in earnings and between countries, the goals devoted to gender equality and the empowerment of women, on the reduction of relative poverty in countries and the review of the production and consumption system, would not have been incorporated into this commitment had they not been put forward and defended by actors who, though less dominant in the global sphere, are increasingly staking out their place on institutional agendas. None of the social or political mobilizations that have taken place across the world, from the Arab Spring to the movements in the more consolidated democracies of rich countries, has succeeded in alerting governments and institutions as to the extent of the political crisis of representation. A new age for politics is upon us and will require global governance agreements on many of the key issues contained on any development agenda. Alternatives must be sought to the neoliberal order and architecture that have shaped recent decades. Sooner or later, key systemic aspects that the former agenda could not tackle will have to be addressed. A post-neoliberal development model will have to be established and understood, measured and communicated through new conceptualizations that are radically different from the currently-used gross domestic product and the limitations of its national boundaries.

Among other new perspectives that will contribute to opening up new horizons for the future, the potential that policy coherence for development can add should be highlighted. Based on a cosmopolitan conception not limited to the margins of national borders and their intergovernmental debates, it can offer a new vision for development that is truly rooted in its economic, environmental, social and political dimensions. 🍷

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This publication has been produced with the financial support of the Spanish Agency of International Development Cooperation (AECID), under Contract 10-CO1-117 "Applied research, social communication and citizen participation for human development, through the promotion of public policy coherence based on Human Rights, gender equality, environmental respect and fair trade". The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of AECID.

2015
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