

Preparing towards the Conference Declaration - Compilation of input by Drafting Committee Focal Points/Lead Experts - Last update 25 Aug 08:00 EDT

SECTION I - VISION

(By Chris Dekki and Aashish Khullar)

In our attempt at the Post-2015 process we have embarked on a journey to create a transformative agenda that is meant to usher us into a new era of sustainable development and in harmony with nature, that is rights based and ensures no-one is left behind.

Our goal is to develop a framework that embraces all our diversity, is based on agreed principles and human rights-based approach and results in a just and equitable economic and social environment. We have made some progress. But this progress is certainly far from what we expected and have fought for.

In order to reach this goal, Governments must ensure that the Post-2015 agenda is firmly rooted in a human rights framework. They must guarantee minimum floors of socioeconomic well-being for all; comprehensively address inequalities within and between countries; guarantee human rights accountability, including of the private sector; ensure the decriminalization and protection of environmental and human rights defenders; eliminate all discriminatory laws and practices; and commit to implementing human rights instruments.

Our rights cannot be termed controversial and longstanding inequalities and discrimination, particularly pervasive inequalities based on gender, cannot continue to undermine human rights and social, economic, and environmental development for all. The destruction of our natural environments, indigenous cultures, and diversity cannot be classified as progress. And a flawed paradigm that does not recognize our one planet's basic limits, climate change and prevents our development in a truly holistic way cannot be considered transformative. This is simple and not open to negotiations.

It is unacceptable that our human rights, including our sexual and reproductive rights, our autonomy, our health and our sexuality are questioned, traded and violated. It is also unacceptable that we witness the definitions of peace, justice, and social security as controversial or see the means to implement the transformative agenda weakened at the hands of powerful business and private profit.

We understand and recognize that these are complex issues, burdened with instructions from capital. But we need to do better, much better, in order to deliver on the greatest challenges of our time and to secure a safe world for current and future generations. We are witnessing the harm of short-sighted thinking and a lack of urgency by people around the world that compromise the needs of future generations. If we don't take the appropriate action here, in these comfortable seats, the fight for achieving a sustainable world is useless.

The current development model has inflicted a global system of extraction, exploitation, oppression of people and their rights, and mass consumption. This needs to change, if we are to create the future that people need. The time has come for us to work together strongly, between countries, and between generations. This collaboration will require a commitment to much greater levels of equality both within and between nations.

We stand at a moment in time of exceptional possibilities. A moment when an agenda that long seemed unattainable is within our reach. A moment, when dangers of unprecedented magnitude threaten the future of humanity. But at the same time we have it in our collective abilities to solve these threats.

We will work with you, encourage you, support you, and also critique you. But above all, hold you accountable. We are here, and here to stay.

Sources: MGCY Closing Statement at OWG 13-
<http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/10923children.pdf>

SECTION IV - MONITORING & ACCOUNTABILITY

(By Rebecca Brown)

If the Post-2015 Agenda is to have the transformative impact that is so clearly needed, it is essential that it includes rigorous accountability systems that are firmly rooted in human rights norms and standards. The outcome document of the Open Working Group does not provide anything approaching such a framework. A system of voluntary reporting on development commitments will not be enough to deliver a just and sustainable world for current and future generations. It is crucially important that all actors be held accountable under the new system, including high-income countries, international institutions, donors and corporations. Real progress requires that a broad spectrum of accountability mechanisms, at the national, regional and international levels, function cohesively to create an effective system of accountability. To this end, new SDG-specific bodies will have to function in complementarity with existing accountability mechanisms, including parliamentary, judicial and administrative bodies, along with UN monitoring bodies. Particular attention should be given to gender equality and women's empowerment, so as to ensure realization of women's human rights, including sexual and reproductive rights.

Human rights-based accountability is multifaceted. It requires public participation in the design and implementation of programs to address and monitor state obligations and commitments. It also requires that states collect data that is disaggregated and publicly accessible, and for states to use that data to consistently report to accessible and effective monitoring mechanisms. Finally, it requires that individuals are able to be volunteers and engage in support of accountability and monitoring and to have access to effective and meaningful remedies at the national, regional, and international level when there are violations of individuals' rights. It will also be crucial that the voices and volunteer actions of ordinary people be at the very heart of accountability structures. The SDG monitoring process should foster enabling conditions for citizens' voices and volunteer actions to be heard and acted upon by development decision-makers. Indeed, systems of monitoring should be citizen-led and should empower all, including the most marginalized communities and citizens, to participate. The creation of meaningful participation processes at both the national and international levels, along with achievement of the mooted "transparency/data revolution", will likewise be necessary preconditions to facilitate the kind of transformative accountability systems that are necessary.

Actions and recommendations

1. Rigorous human rights-based accountability systems, based on compulsory reporting, must be established at both the domestic and international levels as part of an effective system of accountability. This must also

guarantee the right to effective remedy through accessible, effective and impartial justice systems at both national and international levels

2. Citizen-led “participatory monitoring” systems of monitoring of performance in meeting the goals must be established. Individual and collective “Volunteer action” in support of such systems must be established. Volunteer organizations can potentially support such effort.

3. Monitoring and accountability systems must also address fiscal policy, including taxation, so as to ensure the sufficiency of resources available for development and the equitable distribution of costs and benefits. Accountability over financing requires complete transparency and enhanced participation in these areas.

4. A ‘multiple accountability’ approach should be applied to track development actors’ performance with regard to gender equality and girls’ and women’s rights, including sexual and reproductive rights.

5. In light of the emphasis on private sector partnerships in development, the accountability of this sector should be assured through legislative and regulatory measures - in accordance with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights - and mandatory human rights and sustainable development impact assessments of the activities of these actors.

6. Existing barriers to accessing justice, such as violence and discrimination, particularly for women, people living in poverty, and all other disadvantaged or marginalized groups, must be eradicated.

7. There must be a mandate to follow up on the implementation of voluntary commitments and provide entry points for civil society to sufficiently provide the accountability framework going forward.

8. We must be equipped with effective monitoring and implementation mechanisms. A hybrid “AMR-UPR+” accountability mechanism similar to, but building upon, the successes of both the ECOSOC Annual Ministerial Review (AMR) and the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process of the Human Rights Council. Reports would be delivered on an annual or semi-annual basis.

9. The view of citizens and non-state actors must be integrated in the process through mechanisms of independent shadow reporting. The framework must be inclusive, participatory and multi-layered using a human rights-based approach. The Inclusion of civil society will strengthen legitimacy and credibility of the monitoring structure. Individual and collective “Volunteer action” in support of accountability for implementation of the SDGs must be taken into consideration within such a monitoring structure.

10. No target is considered met unless it is met for the poorest quintile of the national population (when applicable).

<http://childrenyouth.org/2014/08/22/hlpf-closing-speech/>

<http://childrenyouth.org/2014/06/30/hlpf-statement-from-the-major-group-for-children-and-youth-supported-by-the-farmers-and-ngo-major-groups/>