

Feedback report on the Post-2015 agenda: Estonia, Finland, Latvia and Lithuania

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Abbreviations

AKÜ - Estonian Roundtable for Development Cooperation
CONCORD – The European NGO confederation for relief and development
CSO _ Civil Society Organisation
EU - European Union
EU12 Member states – Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia
ETF - European Task Force
GA - General Assembly
GCAP – Global Call to Action against Poverty
HLP - High Level Panel
IO - International Organisation
LAPAS - Latvian Platform for Development Cooperation
MDGs - Millennium Development Goals
MFA - Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MEPs - Members of European Parliament
NGO - None Governmental Organisations
NGDO - None Governmental Development Organisation
SDGs - Sustainable Development Goals
OWG - Open Working Group
ODA - Official Development Assistance
PCD - Policy Coherence for Development
UN - United Nations
UNDP - United Nations Development
UN-DESA United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNICEF - The United Nations Children’s Fund
UNISDR – The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
UN-PBSO – Unites Nations Peacebuilding Support Office
UN-SDSN - UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network
UNSG - United Nations Secretary-General

Context of the Feedback Report

The process around the post-2015 agenda has been evolving since 2010 when the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) requested from the United Nations Secretary-General (UNSG) to make recommendations to advance the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015. Since then, the global discussion for post-2015 has included various players, stakeholders and methods. The main reason for a wide public consultation at a global level is to have an inclusive, open and transparent process with multiple stakeholder participation, which will produce a framework with the best development impact. Discussion intensity however differs from country to country. Although the European Union at its highest level is actively taking part in the post-2015 process, the same cannot be said about all its member states and especially about EU12 (countries that have joined the EU after 2004). Active debate about the post-2015 process is lagging behind. General public awareness about what are MDGs and what is the post-2015 process is missing.

Compared to the previous MDG set up process, this one is more open and it is very satisfactory that a broad number of civil society organisations are involved in it, however not only the developing world's needs should be addressed, those who are contributing should not be ignored either. The EU12 countries were aid recipients just a decade back and have just lately become emerging donors. Their fresh transitional experience, strong focus on human rights and democracy, together with the close relations with the Eastern Neighborhood and other countries, comprise an added value that they can bring to the post-2015 debate.

Although the global process is reaching its final point with UNSG's report on post-2015 which will be presented for the 68th GA in September 2013, the debates at national level will continue very intensively when the report will be accepted.

The feedback report is a part of project "Development Co-operation in the Nordic and Baltic countries: advocacy for post-MDGs agenda" which is supported by the Nordic Council of Ministers. The overall objective of the project is to involve and amplify the voices of the NGDOs from the Baltic and Scandinavian countries in advocacy efforts to shape the post-2015 agenda. The project directly involves NGO practitioners from NGDO platforms from Latvia, Estonia, Finland and Lithuania.

Although the Baltic states are not as an experienced and generous development cooperation player as Finland, that is also taking part in the project, their participation allowed each country to compare how processes are moving forward and what good practices can be implemented and transfused from one country to another. With the help of the project and the summary paper, the aim is to involve and amplify the voices of the NGOs working in development from the Baltic and Scandinavian

countries in advocacy efforts to shape the post-2015 agenda through the EU presidencies of Latvia and Lithuania.

After gathering information from all four project countries on questions such as what are the benefits and limitations of current MDGs, what should be the future MDG framework according to each country and what should be the new priorities, how should post-2015 be shaped out and what principles should be avoided, common conclusions were gathered and are reflected at the end of the report. The feedback report will serve to understand better the positions of the four project countries.

Global UN Process

In 2010, the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly (GA) on the MDGs requested from the Secretary-General to initiate discussions on a post-2015 development agenda and include recommendations in his annual report on efforts to accelerate the MDG progress. Since then, the global discussion for post-2015 has included various players, stakeholders and methods¹.

The main reason for a wide public consultation at a global level is to have an inclusive, open and transparent process with multiple stakeholder participation which will produce a framework with the best development impact. The goal is also to provide input for UNSG's report on post-2015, which he will present at the 68th GA in September 2013. The report will be prepared by UN-DESA as per institutional mandate, in consultation with the UN System-wide Task Team. The Task Team is co-chaired by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and it comprises of more than 60 UN organisations and entities providing analytical input to various stakeholders.

The UN Task-Team has released a report, "Realizing the Future We Want for All"², in May 2012, in order to jumpstart various consultations and discussions around the world. Following the report, in Rio+20 Conference on Sustainable Development³, the Member States decided to launch a process to develop a set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). To this effect, the GA established an Open Working Group (OWG) that comprised of 70 countries sharing 30 seats, to oversee the creation of the SDGs. A primary output from the Group is to prepare a proposal on the SDGs to be presented to the 68th UN GA. The OWG will build upon the MDGs and converge with the post 2015 development agenda. There is broad agreement on the need for close linkages between the two processes to arrive at one global development agenda for the post-2015 period. This has been promoted e.g. by shared Secretariat between the OWG and HLP under UNDP. In addition, in 2012 the UNSG launched the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN), led by economist Jeffrey Sachs, to provide technical assistance to both HLP and OWG. Special Adviser on Post-2015 Development Planning, Ms Amina Mohamed, will advise the SG and provide the link to the OWG.

Other Rio+20's decisions affecting the post-2015 framework include intergovernmental process to prepare a strategy for sustainable development financing⁴; establishing a high-level political forum for sustainable development⁵; and

1 <http://cafodpolicy.files.wordpress.com/2012/11/post2015-un-and-b2015-processes.jpg>.

2 http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/untaskteam_undf/report.shtml.

3 <http://www.uncsd2012.org/>.

4 <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?menu=1557>.

adopting the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production patterns⁶.

Besides the SDG process, there are altogether four different processes which aim to produce content and views for the SG's report: High-Level Panel (HLP), thematic consultations, country consultations and online consultations.

The High-Level Panel (HLP)⁷ was appointed by the SG and consists of leaders from civil society organisations, the private sector, governments and academia. The work of the Panel will reflect new development challenges while also drawing on experience gained from implementing the MDGs and the idea is to support the post-2015 process led by the UN member states. They have met several times during 2012-2013 to discuss various thematic issues. There has been outreach to other stakeholders during the meetings. The panellists, altogether 27, have also conducted outreach of their own in their respective countries/regions. The HLP Report was published on May 31st,2013

The UN has also initiated a series of **thematic consultations**⁸ on 11 themes: Inequalities, Health, Education, Growth and employment, Environmental sustainability, Food security and nutrition, Governance, Conflict and Violence and Disaster, Population dynamics, Water and Energy. The themes have been discussed online, in country consultations and in other fora. Each thematic consultation is co-led by two UN agencies and each theme has a hosting government as well as an expert reference group which provides advice, critical thinking, and quality assurance throughout the consultation process. For example, the consultation on the theme Conflict, Violence and Disaster, co-hosted by PBSO⁹, UNISDR¹⁰, UNICEF and UNDP and hosted by the government of Finland, held consultations in Liberia, Indonesia and Panama before the final High-level meeting in Finland in March 2013. The themes have progressed at a various pace; some of the consultations are still on-going online while others have been wrapped up.

There are also 83 **country consultations** taking place in developing and developed countries in various forms and shapes. They include online and offline outreach tailored to national circumstances and needs, using various methods – focus group discussions with vulnerable groups, roundtables with various stakeholders and online and SMS methods for greater outreach. They are closely linked to national development priorities. The consultations are organised by UN Country Teams, under

5 <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?menu=1556>.

6 <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?menu=204>.

7 <http://www.post2015hlp.org/>.

8 <http://www.worldwewant2015.org/sitemap>.

9 UN Peacebuilding Support Office.

10 UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction.

the leadership of the UN Resident Coordinator, who are working with a wide range of stakeholders including governments, civil society organisations, the private sector, media, universities and think tanks.

The **online consultation**, which includes a web platform, The World We Want 2015¹¹, as well as an open survey, MY World¹², is co-hosted by civil society and the UN. The World We Want 2015 has served as a platform for the exchange of views among civil society, academia, think tanks, UN entities etc. Through creative online and offline methods, MY World asks individuals which six of sixteen possible issues they think would make the most difference to their lives. The issues have been extracted from the priorities expressed by poor people in existing research and polling exercises and they cover the existing MDGs plus issues of sustainability, security, governance and transparency.

The UN has published a mid-term report based on 36 national consultations, thematic consultations and other regional discussions. In the report, “The Global Conversation Begins”¹³, it is stated that the new framework needs to be balanced and holistic in order to be successful; it also needs to be genuinely universal, be based on Human Rights and provide “real” results. According to the report, 200,000 people have participated in one way or another to the consultations; 130,000 have contributed to the country consultations, there are 3,000 active users and 50,000 registered users on worldwewant2015.org and 75,000 have voted on myworld2015.org. In addition, it is estimated that 1 million people are aware of the consultation process.

Content-wise, it seems that the most prevalent issues arising from the consultations include: a good education, better healthcare, an honest and responsive government, better job opportunities and access to clean water and sanitation. At CSO level, the discussion has focused particularly on universality of the goals, equality, linking environmental sustainability and a Human Rights Based Approach. The discussion on financing and on concrete goals, targets and indicators has not yet officially begun, even though there are several suggestions and lists made. Before the 68th GA it seems that the focus is mainly on the process and preparation of the discussion than on the content.

In addition to the UN activities, there are also global non-UN discussions going on, including civil society projects (Beyond 2015, GCAP etc.), private sector discussions (Global Compact etc.), think tank research (ODI, Southern Voice, Brookings Institution, North-South Institute etc.).

11 <http://www.worldwewant2015.org>.

12 <http://www.myworld2015.org/>.

13 <http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/MDG/english/global-conversation-begins-web.pdf>.

ESTONIA

The comments presented below are based on consultations with the Estonian civil society organisations (CSOs) in August 2012, and with other stakeholders and the wider public in September 2012. The consultations took place in the format of seminars and written consultations on the internet. The national consultations were organised by the Estonian Roundtable for Development Cooperation (AKÜ)¹⁴ – a network of 22 Estonian CSOs that work on development cooperation and global education – and this report is a summary of the consultations. These positions have also been presented to the European Commission’s public consultation “Towards a Post-2015 Development Framework” on 14 September 2012.

The MDGs: benefits and limitations

The primary purpose of the MDGs is to **create a just and sustainable world in which every human being can realize their rights**. The Estonian CSOs sincerely believe that this purpose should also guide any future development framework.

Thinking of the benefits of the MDGs, the Estonian CSOs have concluded that one of the greatest benefits of the current framework is that it has enabled the international community to agree on a **common focus** for development work and to commit resources toward the same ends. The framework has supported a continuous dialogue and public debate on development issues. Furthermore, the Estonian CSOs appreciate that the goals have been relatively concrete and measurable, which is crucial for evaluating progress.

On a critical note, the Estonian CSOs would like to emphasize that the current global development cooperation system is **highly Eurocentric**. The responsibilities and accountability mechanisms are too often biased to favour the donors’ interests and neglect the greatest common goal of reducing poverty and improving the well-being of people in the developing countries.

In addition, the **policy coherence for development** has not been at the centre of policy making, which means that much of the good done via development cooperation is still erased by harmful policies in other spheres (i.e. trade, agriculture, finance, security). In turn, the incoherencies have forced poorer countries into aid dependency.

In particular, the Estonian CSOs are concerned that the environmental aspects of global development have not been given adequate attention. **Sustainable development** is too often only a nice political talking point and the measures taken have not been sufficient to guarantee that future generations can lead their lives in a decent environment.

¹⁴ More information about AKÜ at www.terveilm.ee.

The failure to meet all of the MDGs by 2015 is largely due to the fact that there is **no real accountability mechanism**, which would motivate all actors to fulfil their numerous promises. A part of this is a lack of adequate monitoring of processes and results.

Future framework: feasibility, scope and shape

The Estonian civil society believes that the scope of the new **framework must be global** in order to truly address the global challenges faced by people in low, middle and high income countries. The Estonian CSOs support the idea that the framework should be guided by the principle of **common-but-differentiated responsibility**, whereby every country has obligations but they may differ to reflect the country context. In any case, all countries should agree to make development progress, both individually and collectively. The emerging donors and all other actors must be consulted for a consensus on these goals, so that the post-2015 framework would have true global legitimacy.

It is crucial that all the principles and goals of the new framework are coherent and contribute to the achievement of the overall development objectives. The Estonian CSOs prefer a focus on a few concrete thematic goals to an overly general approach. The issues that the Estonian CSOs consider of highest importance are **education**, development of **global civil society** and improving **development effectiveness**, which are the prerequisites for any development.

As mentioned above, the **coherence of all other policy areas with development goals** is a must-have element of the new framework.

The post-2015 framework must further express a genuine commitment to **mutual accountability** which encompasses the impact of richer and emerging countries' policies in areas such as trade, tax and financial regulation etc. and the role of all players impacting on sustainable development objectives in any way.

On a more practical level, it is crucial to place special focus on **good governance at all levels**. Open governance, empowerment of the civil society and vulnerable groups, transparency, respect for human rights and upholding democracy must not be overlooked in any phase of development.

Related to mutual accountability and good governance, **appropriate and rigorous accountability mechanisms**, applicable to all players, are crucial for the success of achieving goals and turning aspirations or 'commitments' into obligations. For the best development results, it is important to guarantee that all players commit to making progress based on commonly agreed values, such as **human rights**. Grounding the post-2015 framework in human rights standards and offering mechanisms for citizens to hold governments accountable is needed at different levels, including at least both the global and national levels.

Furthermore, there is a strong need for a thorough and transparent system of **monitoring and evaluation** of development results across the world. The prerequisite for this is a set of **long-term, realistic and measurable indicators**.

Last but not least, the Estonian CSOs believe that maintaining the current levels of commitment for development financing (i.e. 0.7%) must be the minimum standard to strive for. The currently highly fragmented development **financing must be harmonised** and made more coherent, including in terms of the standards applied when it comes to its accountability and transparency.

FINLAND

In Finland, the discussion around post-2015 has started as a process contributing to the common EU position early 2013. Finland was the host government for the UN consultation theme “Conflict, Disaster and Violence”, and held a High-Level Meeting on the subject in March 2013. Finland aims to be an active contributor to the issue both within the EU and the UN. Finland has also put forward a candidate for the Means of Implementation working group, set in Rio+20 Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012. In terms of Finland’s main themes or content, it remains to be seen. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs has a coordinator for the issue as well as an assistant while the overall responsibility lies with the Under-Secretary of State responsible for Development Cooperation. The theme is also discussed in other ministries and representatives from different ministries hold a weekly meeting on the subject to remain updated. The Development Policy Committee has also produced a position paper on the issue with contributions from several ministries and its own members (which include political parties, NGOs, private sector, academia etc).

The Finnish NGDO Platform to the EU Kehys is an ideologically, politically and religiously independent service and advocacy organisation. Kehys aims to increase the Finnish NGO’s knowledge of the development policy and cooperation practiced by the European Union. Accordingly Kehys works to increase the funding opportunities of Finnish development organisations and contributes to the networking and collaboration between Finnish and European NGOs. With 38 member associations, Kehys provides services for its members and other players who are interested in areas related to EU’s development cooperation and policy. Kehys also aims to develop project management capacity for Finnish NGOs.

Kehys has been active in coordinating the national discussion of post 2015 in Finland. The main reason for activating ourselves and others to discuss the theme at this particular time was the fact that the EU’s process of finalizing its position on the subject was conducted during spring 2013 and thus we felt it was important to get Finnish NGDO’s viewpoints into the process. The EU’s development ministers adopted the Conclusions on May 28th, the ministers for environment on June 18th, and the General Affairs Council on June 25th. The main source of data for Kehys has been national discussions, which Kehys has coordinated: we’ve organised altogether 14 national discussions for NGOs and NGDOs. These discussions include both general and thematic discussions. Altogether, we have had around 130 people participating in our discussions. These participants represent various NGDOs, public entities, government, private sector, academia and other stakeholders. It is notable, however, that our position papers were signed only by NGDOs, which suggests that the post 2015 process was seen by different stakeholders as a development/environment sector’s process, not as something that would be of interest to different policies or representatives.

The thematic discussions we organised (9 in total) were based on the themes identified by the UN for their consultations:

- Inequalities
- Health and Population Dynamics
- Education
- Growth and employment
- Environmental sustainability (including water and energy)
- Food security and nutrition
- Governance and
- Conflict, violence and disaster

A similar type of discussion was also conducted about migration.

The thematic discussions were organised because in the one of the general discussions the participants felt that the process and content of the post 2015 framework could be better understood and dealt with in thematic meetings, as the framework comprises of several aspects and different organisations and entities are interested in different ideas.

As the invitation was sent to the thematic discussion, a list of background material was given for the participants to be able to familiarize themselves with the material and also a list of questions was given in order to facilitate the discussion. Apart from one discussion¹⁵, we have conducted the discussions as a group discussion without a keynote speaker but with an introduction to the theme from the global, EU and national point of view. The current situation of Beyond2015's European Task Force¹⁶ was also introduced, as Kehys is a member of the ETF's Steering Group. After the introduction, a briefing was given about the theme in question and the questions which were sent beforehand were raised in order to get the discussion going. During the discussion, a report was written and sent to the participants afterwards, as well as a position paper listing 3 or 4 key messages based on the discussion. These position papers were written to represent the main issues organisations could agree on and which were seen as the most important issues for the new framework from that theme. The papers were open for comments and afterwards they were open for signatures from organisations and individuals. The position papers were also translated into English and used as a common ground for advocacy work by Kehys and by those who signed the papers.

15 In the discussion about education in the post 2015 framework we had keynote speaker from University of York, Canada, UNESCO chair Mr Charles Hopkins.

16 <http://www.beyond2015.org/european-task-force>.

There have also been four general discussions about the topic, one already in 2011, two in 2012 and one in 2013. In these discussions, a position paper was developed (similar to the thematic ones) from a more general point of view. In addition, a separate NGO meeting was organised about Conflict, Disaster and Violence, as Finland was the host government of the theme and NGOs had been invited to the High-Level Meeting of the theme in March 2013.

We have had a total of around 130 participants in our thematic and general discussions. These participants represent various NGOs, public entities, government, private sector, academia and other stakeholders. It is notable, however, that our position papers were signed only by NGOs, which suggests that the post 2015 process was seen by different stakeholders as a development/environment sector's process, not as something that would be of interest to different policies or representatives.

In the discussions, the current MDGs were reviewed from a positive and negative side. On the positive side:

- A key benefit from the MDG framework has been the major progress in reducing poverty and progress in other important areas such as access to primary education and access to clean water.
- The MDG framework was built on a set of concrete goals and predominantly quantifiable targets that were relatively simple and straightforward to understand, to explain and to monitor.
- The MDGs helped also to mobilize public opinion and raise media attention in some countries.

However, some weaknesses were also listed:

- The most disadvantaged have seen few or no improvements and the disparities between them and others have only increased- the goals have gone for “low-hanging fruit” (i.e. easiest to reach).
- The MDGs did little to tackle the root causes of poverty and marginalization.
- Some key aspects were left out due to the narrow focus on a number of social issues (aspects such as peace and conflict, rising inequalities, environmental limits, governance and anti-corruption, decent work and social protection) and the design of the MDGs was a technocratic, top-down exercise (lack of participation and ownership)
- There was also a lack of rights-based approach to development and notion of human rights.

Other aspects were mentioned as well, such as policy coherence for development, accountability, universality of the framework (Common but Differentiated Responsibility) and fairly shared financing across and between goals and countries.

In the discussion there were also several issues identified which were seen as key items in several thematic discussions for the post 2015 framework. Four common issues could be identified:

1. Eradicating poverty must be goal number one.
2. Goals must be universal.
3. Goals must be based on implementing human dignity and Human Rights.
4. Future goals must be based on the fulfilment of existing agreements commitments and exceed these commitments in terms of ambition.

Eradicating poverty by the agreed deadline was seen as the primary goal of the new framework. Even though the current MDGs have succeeded in reducing the relative share of world's poor, it is predicted that there will still be approximately one billion people living in extreme poverty in 2015. In addition, relative poverty is common in many Western countries. That is why poverty must be understood as a broad concept instead of measuring it as a certain amount of money earned per day which does not indicate whether in reality a person can make a living or not. In terms of universality, according to the current MDGs, the responsibility of development process has been entrusted mainly to the developing countries. New goals must be universal and every state must commit to implementing them in full. This means we all have to recognize our responsibility in promoting development and we are also responsible for involving others besides development players in the process. Also, Human Rights and every person's right to exist and to be appreciated must be taken into account when drawing up and implementing future goals. Every individual has a right to live in a world where one can fulfil themselves free from poverty and violence. Therefore the success of the framework is directly related to how well the most marginalized groups have been able to succeed in the new framework. Finally, in several discussions it was noted that the world is already full of international and binding agreements that have been approved and ratified by the members of United Nations. These agreements must be a default for the post-2015 framework and no state can neglect already signed agreements. The future goals must be more ambitious than the existing ones. A world which is more equal and sustainably developing can only be achieved by ensuring the implementation of already existing agreements.

“The environment does not need humans, but human needs the environment.” - Quote from the environmental sustainability discussion

Based on the discussions, the scope of the framework should be global in order to recognize the obligation of all countries to address the challenges faced by people in low, middle and high income countries. In order to make this framework relevant at a global level, it will be necessary to take into account historical differences, development levels, economic and technical capacity, local contexts and needs when developing strategies for implementation. This also means moving away from the traditional ‘developing-developed/North-South’ division. It will therefore be necessary to differentiate at regional and national level to establish realistic targets

and timeframes that reflect individual countries' strengths and weaknesses in any given priority area (common but differentiated responsibility approach). All countries should agree to make development progress, both individually and collectively. This is supported by the fact that Human Rights are universal which means they must be realized both at national and international levels and they must be respected by all actors, including the private sector. A global framework will also enjoy greater legitimacy and acceptance than one which is not.

In terms of principles that should be avoided, based on the lessons learned from the MDGs, the following were identified:

- 1. Top down approach** – the new framework should result from a genuinely participatory and inclusive process, where all nations (both developed and developing economies) and all stakeholders (governments, CSOs, grassroots organisations, private sector, IOs) are part of the negotiations. Whilst this will be a time- and resource-consuming process, it will certainly increase ownership and consequently facilitate implementation; create mutual accountability mechanisms; and ultimately guarantee the legitimacy of the framework.
- 2. Creating two sets of goals** – there has been an on-going discussion about creating development goals (MDG 2.0 or MDG+) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). However, there is a consensus that the new framework should create only one set of goals which would include all necessary elements to promote human development and well-being as well as environmental sustainability.
- 3. A dominant focus on economic growth** – A comprehensive plan, with PCD at its heart and key principles such as gender equality and Human Rights as pillars will need to replace a too narrow economic quantitative approach. A mix of quantitative and qualitative indicators is needed; for example, a goal regarding education should not only include number of students or teachers but measure also the qualitative aspects of education such as literacy, mathematics or life skills. Environmental sustainability requires acknowledging the fact that development can occur without unsustainable use of natural resources which drives our economic development and unsustainable consumption and production today. When tackling the issue of poverty, the future framework should maintain a multi-dimensional approach to poverty eradication focusing on the different root causes may they be economic or social or political, and focus more widely on comprehensive well-being.

The results from the thematic and general discussions were gathered to Kehys' website and the position papers have also been sent to Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Environment, Finnish MEPs, Permanent Representation of Finland to the European Union and to CONCORD – Beyond2015's European Task Force, as Kehys

is a member of its Steering Group. The results have also been brought out in several seminars, meetings and discussion in Finland and elsewhere.

The discussion will continue in 2013 and beyond with special focus on the 68th General Assembly of the UN, a special event on the MDGs organised along with the GA and on Finland's and EU's positions and discussion before, during and after the meeting. Kehys will continue to work on developing EU's performance, contributing to the Finnish position and bringing together various stakeholders to discuss what the post 2015 process means to them. Kehys is also actively promoting awareness of the post 2015 framework among Finnish people by consulting them in different public events (including Europe day, World Village festival etc.) with a questionnaire similar to www.myworld2015.org, where we ask what matters the most to Finnish people. These results will be used as a resource for Kehys for the near future as this will give us an idea what the Finnish want for their world after 2015.

“In fragile states, the problem is both the fragility and the state.” – Quote from Conflict, Violence and Disaster discussion

LATVIA

Although the European Union at its highest level is actively taking part in the Post-2015 process, the same cannot be said about all its member states, especially about EU12 (countries that have joined EU after 2004). Active debate about Post-2015 process is lagging behind. There is no awareness amongst the general public with respect to MDGs and the post-2015 process. The situation in Latvia is no exception. Public awareness with respect to MDGs is very low and only few people are aware of the Post-2015 process. The Latvian Platform for Development Cooperation (LAPAS) is the only civil society organisation in Latvia that is working on these questions; however, raising public awareness with respect to the question related to MDGs is very hard, one of the reasons being limited resources, but most importantly, the lack of support from state representatives.

LAPAS is a non-governmental umbrella organisation of 26 Latvian NGOs which are united behind promoting sustainable global development and it was established in 2004. LAPAS advocates for development education and development cooperation, helps its members build their capacity in the field and promotes Latvia's transition experience as well, primarily in the European Neighbourhood.

In June, 2013 LAPAS organised its first conference / debate on the subject - towards post-2015 with unique experiences: Is there anything to contribute from EU12 perspective? Debate's main task was to understand the role of NGO's in framing post-2015 agenda, to explain the negotiation results at EU level and worldwide, to get to know if there are EU12 specific objectives for post-2015 framework and to inspire national level to stir up debate in EU12. It was unique and first time experience for Latvia. It was great success high level debate, where European Commissioner for Development A.Piebalgs and Chief of Staff, One UN Secretariat for the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda R.M.Valdes participated, however there is need for more debates on the subject and for more diverse audiences. It is especially important, because Latvia is going to hold its Presidency of the Council of the European Union in 2015. This is year is important not only, because it is time when MDGs expire, but this year has been announced as European year for development.

For the report LAPAS gathered opinions from its stakeholders and seven ministries (Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development, Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Economics, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Foreign Affairs) in order to understand how individuals and institutions are evaluating MDGs overall (pros and cons) and how they see the Post-2015 process - what should be avoided from previous experience and what should not be missed and merits additional attention in the new framework.

Benefits and limitations of current MDGs

A strong and, at the same time, weak side of the current MDGs is the fact that they are specified and very concrete. On one hand, this makes them universally understandable and goals have brought enormous support from numerous stakeholders, including governments and civil society organisations. On the other hand due to narrow focus, some key aspects were left out: peace and conflict, environment and its limitations, good governance, social protection, unemployment, rising inequality.

Although most of the problems that were addressed in the MDGs still exist and need to be tackled, the fact that one of the biggest benefits of the current framework has been major progress in reducing poverty cannot be denied. Progress also can be seen in other crucial areas such as access to clean water, tackling malaria and other diseases, broadening access to primary education.

Nevertheless, progress has been uneven and differs from one country to another. While in East Asia, especially China, poverty has been reduced significantly, other regions, such as Sub-Saharan Africa, lag behind. The most vulnerable groups (the poorest of the poor and disadvantaged, women and girls and those living in crises) have not been reached effectively. Essential differences also remain between urban and rural areas.

The biggest problem and limitation of the current framework is its wide approach to problems, which surfaces when the root cause of diverse challenges is not addressed. Because of the focus on outputs, rather than long-term goals and effects, interventions have often had questionable impact and sustainability.

Future MDG framework / priorities

The MDGs have been very successful and this momentum should not be lost, in terms of their international recognition. Most of the principles have to be included in the new framework since they are still relevant and need to be worked on, however there are many other priorities, which need to be addressed in the new global agenda.

The new framework should be global since it is relevant to everybody and it should reflect national and regional realities according to the local civil society and its organisations, whose role needs to be strengthened based on the fact that CSOs are owners and watchdogs of the process. Also new players, especially those that have significant global influence, have to be taken into account. Further, the new global agenda should be “people-centred” and “action-oriented” towards vulnerable communities.

In order to create a people-centred framework, LAPAS believes that human security and securitability has to be taken into account besides human rights. People need to feel safe in order to see opportunities rather than threats and develop security strategies rather than disengage and feel helpless. “Securitability” (resilience) is applicable to any disadvantaged community, not only in conflict prone areas. One way of strengthening the factors is to look at the role of the potential security providers in circles around a person: himself/herself; family; friends; community; local

government, national government etc. The security factors can include individual characteristics, positive close relations, predictable and sufficient income, the ability to network, or the ability to trust and cooperate with local communities or intergovernmental organisations. The role of CSOs as well as authorities and governments is then to help develop security strategies and create security constellations.

Goal number one should be eradicating poverty. Reducing inequality, exclusion, unemployment has to go hand in hand with the goal. Eradication of the poverty is not as easy as setting one number that needs to be reduced. It must be based on nationally defined poverty lines and focus on well-being, since measurements of Gross Domestic Product fail to capture the entire picture, as the benefits of growth are not shared equally. With the new framework, those who are most disadvantaged need to feel that there are changes happening and they are not forgotten.

Sustainable development and environment sustainability includes themes such as climate change, energy, food security as well as social and economic aspects of “development beyond aid” and gender mainstreaming have to be an organic part of the new global agenda and cannot be excluded this time. Problems caused by people should be decreased, which at the same time also means solving economic and social problems, since there is strong correlation between the two factors.

We stress that goals have to be diverse and include everyone who is in need, however the new framework should also be simple with quantitative and qualitative outcome indicators, understandable methodology, clear action plans, milestones and evaluation. Mutual accountability is more important rather than donor-focused reporting. In order to achieve this, good governance, accountability and transparency principles have to go through the framework.

During the research for this paper, a new priority came up: the need for communication technologies. In the contemporary world technologies are providing the possibility to react to problems of different scale much faster and more efficiently. In some ways, communication technologies are increasing one’s ability for resilience against unexpected problems or situations.

Shape of Post-2015 and principles that should be avoided

The new global agenda must address all three dimensions of sustainability (social, economic and environmental) and it must tackle problems at their root cause. The new framework must take into account all those documents, agreements and goals that have already been created and agreed on by countries, that way ensuring the continuity of systematic work in the development field. However, the future global agenda also has to be flexible with respect to emerging challenges since the world is changing and there might be new problems that need to be addressed after a few years.

The top-down approach is the most important mistake that needs to be avoided when framing the new global agenda. Discussions must carry on not only in development countries, but also in developed countries, due to the fact that both sides have worked with MDGs, which gives them unprecedented experience and expertise. The new framework has to take into account ideas, views and opinions that are suggested by diverse stakeholders including state players, civil society organisations, private sector, international organisations, non-governmental organisations ect.

The global framework should remain simple, but it should not become simplified. It has to be framed in a way that problems are tackled at their root cause. Results have to be measurable and a common system should be used in order to assure players' accountability, efficiency and transparency.

We believe that the EU has to stay as a strong development policy player, especially if we take into account those countries that have recent transitioning experience and could share the valuable experience.

LITHUANIA

Post-2015 processes in Lithuania

Discussions on the post-2015 agenda are slowly appearing on the Lithuanian public agenda: the Lithuanian NDGOs pioneer in raising the issue among public, addressing the politicians and educating the general public, whereas the Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) participate in the political discussions at the European Union and United Nations level. Unfortunately these two processes are rather disconnected.

On one hand, the MFA advocates for greater attention to human rights issues, gender equality, good governance, country ownership, participation of NGOs, mobilization of domestic and private sector resources, in particular emphasizing countries-in-transition (MFA information, 2013). Though MFA advocates for global goals, the specific position of the MFA with emphasis on the poorest and most fragile countries as expressed in the post-2015 framework open consultation of the EC, and with the little involvement of other ministries, it creates an image that the post-2015 debate is reduced to a developmental issue applicable to developing countries only.

On the other hand, given the momentum of the Lithuanian EU Presidency (2013, July-December), the Lithuanian NDGOs have engaged in post-2015 agenda, especially in awareness raising and advocacy of the civil society position, promotion of an overarching global framework which is applicable to both developing and developed countries, with the realization of human rights by each human being in its core.

The following sections of the report have been prepared by the staff of the Eastern Europe Studies Centre based on the position of the Lithuanian NDGO Platform as expressed in the open EC consultation on the post-2015 framework and independent research. The position of the Lithuanian NDGO Platform has been prepared in consultation with its members, also reflecting the position of Beyond 2015 European Task Force.

Post-2015 content

Current Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) framework

First of all, it is important to acknowledge that with the accession to the European Union in 2004, almost overnight Lithuania has transformed from recipient country to donor country contributing with its financial resources to the development of other countries. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were essential for the Lithuanian development cooperation policy framed in the Policy Paper of Lithuania for the provisions of the Development Assistance for 2003-2005 (it continued several years afterwards).

Benefits of the current MDGs framework

- The MDGs made the fight against poverty one of the key elements of the development policy.
- The MDGs framework was especially useful as an advocacy tool for the Lithuanian NDGOs working in the post-Soviet area in order to convince the governments of the target countries to focus on social issues interrelated with poverty reduction and sustainable development. The MDGs no 3, 5 and 6 were instrumentally beneficial for targeting some (although not all) marginalized groups usually excluded from the political agenda.
- By structuring and focusing onto several easily understandable goals, the MDGs contributed to raising the public awareness of the challenges the poor are facing in the developing countries.
- They have also contributed to mobilizing public and political support for development, which is clearly visible in the increased (until 2010) flows of the official development assistance (ODA).
- The MDGs has focused the international attention on measurable outcomes instead of the common practice to calculate inputs.

Shortcomings of the current MDGs framework

- Over-simplification and over-generalization of the global development agenda imposing the wrong presumption that „one size fits all”.
- By focusing on very simplified goals, targets and indicators, the current MDGs framework fails to address the root causes of poverty and marginalization, excludes issues of social justice. They also do not address the issues of inequality, e.g. spatial (rural-urban), vertical (high-low income), horizontal (cultural-ethnic group), issues related to security, human rights, good governance, economic growth and service delivery.
- The MDGs were not formulated in a participatory way thus lack national ownership, alignment with the developing countries’ programmes.
- By setting quantitative indicators, the MDGs focus rather on quantity instead of quality.
- The MDGs are mostly applicable to developing countries thus in the context of Lithuania, the MDGs assessment report produced by UNDP Lithuania evaluated the Lithuanian achievements in the MDGs area, by introducing the additional indicators better reflecting poverty reduction and its trends.
- The focus on primary education has neglected the importance of post-primary and adult education.
- Sustainability issues are reduced to water and sanitation thus omitting issues causing global concern, i.e. climate change, natural resources depletion and environmental degradation.
- The MDGs related to health exclude the non-communicable diseases, health status of the aged and mental health issues.

- Unfortunately we could observe that the MDGs became rather a formal requirement in the donor's requirements instead of real commitment.
- The MDGs clearly lack a long-term legally binding commitment for the donor countries especially in the area of policy coherence for development (PCD). Moreover, aid delivery commitments are violated with reducing the ODA (as expressed in the Paris declaration on Aid Effectiveness and Accra Agenda for Action).

Contours of post-2015 framework

Main principles / shape

- Primary purpose of a future framework should be to create a just and sustainable world in which every human being can realise their rights and live free from poverty.
- Believing in the universality of human rights it is obvious that the scope of the post-2015 framework should be global not only focusing on the poorest and most fragile countries. In order to ensure national / local ownership the globally agreed goals should have nationally relevant targets and indicators, time- bound commitments.
- We firmly stand that the future global framework must embrace the principle of common-but-differentiated responsibility, which must be clearly reflected in the financing for development, policy coherence for development and consumption patterns.
- The principles of PCD in the future framework should be combined with the clear political will and legally binding commitment to review and align current agricultural, natural resources, migration and trade policies with the developmental goals. Moreover, it is important to acknowledge that PCD is political and not a technocratic solution, thus trade liberalization should be treated with utmost caution as scientific research proves that instead of lifting people out over poverty it may contribute to within-country inequality.¹⁷

Finally: *“A post-2015 agreement does not need to encapsulate everything that is known about how to reduce poverty. Instead, it needs to focus on those aspects of development that can be addressed through coordinated global action.”*¹⁸

Main principles that should be avoided in post-2015 agenda

17 Slocum-Bradley, Nikki, Bradley, Andrew (2010): Is the EU's Governance “Good”? An assessment of EU governance in its partnership with APC states, in *Third World Quarterly*, 31(1), 2010, p.p. 31-49.

18 Melamed, Claire, Scott, Lucy (2011): *After 2015: progress and challenges for development*, Overseas Development Institute, background note March, 2011.

- Top-down approach, clear Global North and South division and applicability of the future framework only to the developing countries.
- Focus on quantitative indicators only, lack of clear and time-bound commitments from all the signatories.
- Focus on set of goals that exclude the overarching principle of human rights thus not addressing the root causes of poverty.

Despite the fact that the discussions on the post-2015 agenda are accelerating on the EU level, we wish to point out that 2 more years remain to try to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and for greater involvement of the EU citizens in the debates about the post-2015 agenda and the world they want.

CONCLUSION: Shared viewpoints on the Post-2015 agenda: Estonia, Finland, Latvia and Lithuania

By analysing current MDG and Post-2015 processes, development platforms and NGOs in Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia and Finland, we believe that the new global framework should be based on the following principles:

- A global framework that ensures national/local ownership and includes nationally relevant targets and indicators (common but differentiated responsibility approach). This means that everyone will have to recognize their responsibility in promoting development and we are also responsible for involving others besides development players in the process. Moving away from the traditional ‘developing-developed/North-South’ divide is also crucial;
- The future global framework must be balanced and holistic in order to be successful. The most disadvantaged people have seen few or no improvements and the disparities between them and the richest have only increased - only the goals that have been easier to reach have actually progressed;
- Human-centred approach which is based on human rights, human security and securitability. The framework has to be based on human rights, they have to permeate all goals;
- Result from a genuinely participatory and inclusive process, where all countries (both developed and developing economies) and all stakeholders (governments, CSOs, grassroots organisations, private sector, international organisations) are part of the negotiations. Technocratic and top-down approach should not be retaken from previous experience in setting the global agenda. Already existing agreements and commitments should be taken into account and the new framework has to exceed these commitments in terms of ambition;
- Primary goal should be reducing poverty and improving well-being of the people around the world. The new framework should be based on principles that are meant to tackle the root causes of problems;
- Should create only one set of goals, which would include all necessary elements to promote human development and well-being as well as environmental sustainability; New aspects such as peace and conflict, rising inequality, environment limits, governance and anti-corruption, decent work and social protection must be adequately addressed;
- New goals should include both qualitative and quantitative indicators that can be measured. Ensure efficient monitoring and evaluation system. The framework has to be based on accountable and transparent principles. Donor based approach has to be left out.

Useful Links

1. Millennium Development Goals
<http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>
2. High-level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda
<http://www.post2015hlp.org/>
3. Beyond 2015 is a global campaign aiming to influence the creation of a post 2015 development framework that succeeds the current UN Millennium Development Goals
<http://www.beyond2015.org/>
4. The World We Want is gathering the priorities of people from every corner of the world and helps build a collective vision that will be used directly by the United Nations and World Leaders to plan a new development agenda launching in 2015, one that is based on the aspirations of all citizens!
<http://www.worldwewant2015.org/>
5. LAPAS is a non-governmental umbrella organisation of 26 Latvian NGOs which are united behind promoting sustainable global development and it was established in 2004. LAPAS advocates for development education and development cooperation, helps its members build their capacity in the field as well as promotes Latvia's transition experience, primarily in the European Neighbourhood.
<http://lapas.lv/>
6. The Estonian Roundtable for Development Cooperation (AKÜ) – a network of 22 Estonian CSOs that work on development cooperation and global education.
<http://www.terveilm.ee/en/>
7. Lithuanian Umbrella (LU) formed by the two Lithuanian NGDO networks Lithuanian National Platform of Development NGOs and Lithuanian Development Education and Awareness Raising Network (LITDEA) in 2012
<http://www.pagalba.org/en/index.html>
<http://www.litdea.eu/>
8. Kehys: the Finnish NGDO Platform to the EU, Kehys offers services to NGOs on EU development policy issues. Kehys also follows and promotes debate about EU development policy. Kehys position papers in English:
<http://www.kehys.fi/beyond2015/kehys-1>

<http://www.kehys.fi/en>

9. CONCORD – Beyond 2015: Putting People and Planet
First: <http://www.concordeurope.org/234-report-putting-people-and-planet-first-concord-beyond2015-tf>
10. Lithuanian NDGO Platform: www.pagalba.org

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- <http://cafodpolicy.files.wordpress.com/2012/11/post2015-un-and-b2015-processes.jpg>
- http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/untaskteam_undf/report.shtml
- <http://www.uncsd2012.org/>
- <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?menu=1557>
- <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?menu=1556>
- <http://www.worldwewant2015.org>
- <http://www.myworld2015.org/>
- <http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/MDG/english/global-conversation-begins-web.pdf>
- <http://www.beyond2015.org/european-task-force>