

“Towards a post-2015 development framework” – EC Public Consultation
Submission of the International Trade Union Confederation
and the European Trade Union Confederation
Brussels, September 2012

A: The MDGs: benefits and limitations

1. To what extent has the MDG framework influenced policies in the country/ies or sectors you work in/with?

The MDGs have been an important framework serving as a base and a reference for the vast majority of other international and national development plans and policies, including the recent Busan Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation, improving the coordination and coherence between them. The reference to MDGs helped to focus the policies on poverty eradication and related goals. The MDGs have also led or been an important reference for many sectorial international agreements and frameworks, including the ILO Recommendation concerning HIV and AIDS and the World of Work (No. 200, 2010).

The MDGs have also been relevant for the elaboration of national programmes related to development and poverty eradication, such as the ILO Decent Work Country Programmes and the IMF Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, where the MDGs were a useful advocacy tool, helping to bring more focus on employment and decent work, as well as calling for local (workplace), national and international action on HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, education and gender equality.

2. To what extent has the MDG framework been beneficial for the poor in the country/ies or sectors in/with which you work?

Thanks to focusing the policies on poverty eradication, but also on employment and decent work, the MDG framework encouraged a number of highly successful programmes supporting decent employment and social protection (as a part of the ILO Decent Work Agenda), involving trade unions in delivering the MDGs. Some of the programmes can be found on [the ILO website dedicated to MDG1B](#).

The reference to the MDGs has been also helpful for the trade unions, the ILO and the labour ministries to engage the whole governments in the efforts to implement the ILO Decent Work Agenda.

Still, in their current shape and with the current set of indicators, MDGs seem not to have contributed strongly enough to the reduction of poverty among working people. The MDG Report 2012 states that there were still 456 million workers in the world living below the \$1.25 a day poverty line in 2011 (according to ILO estimates based on a new methodology) and that the decrease in this number observed in the last 10 years was mostly influenced by dramatic reduction in Eastern Asia – overall decline between 2000 and 2011 from 26.4 to 14.8% workers living below poverty line; if exclude Eastern Asia, the decrease is only from 25% to 17.4%. Furthermore, vulnerable employment (defined as the share of unpaid family workers and own-account workers in total employment) accounted for an estimated 58% of all employment in developing regions in 2011, down only moderate from 67% to decades earlier. This moderate decline in proportion was not sufficient to prevent the absolute number of workers in vulnerable employment from increasing by 136 million since 2000, bringing the global number to 1.52 billion. A high share of workers in vulnerable employment indicates the widespread prevalence of informal work arrangements – under these conditions, workers typically lack adequate social protection and suffer from low pay

and from difficult working conditions in which their fundamental rights may be violated or undermined.¹

3. What features and elements of the MDG framework have been particularly valuable in the fight against poverty?

The MDGs are clear, globally agreed targets that focused on key aspects of human development. The MDGs represented a welcome shift away from the structural adjustment focus of development practice in the 1980s and 1990s, towards a focus on key aspects of human development. They have probably been the strongest international consensus ever on a development direction which has helped mobilise ODA and governmental development spending.

One of the most valuable aspects of the MDG framework was its nature of a truly global agreement that provided guidance and legitimization for development policy and practice all around the world, thus contributing to reinforcing political will around development issues, improving coherence and coordination and increasing funding for some development work.

For the trade union movement a particularly valuable element was the target 1B under the MDG1, focusing on full employment and decent work. The target has proven to be a useful advocacy tool on national and international level, showing clearly the link between decent work and poverty eradication and thus helping to put the issues of employment more in the focus of economic and social development policies and programmes. Good examples are the Decent Work Country Programme papers in [Kenya](#) and [South Africa](#). The target 1B has received however much too little attention to become an effective policy tool on a wider scale. In fact, very few governments have adopted this target as a strategic objective in their development cooperation strategies.

The MDGs, especially thanks to their clarity and simplicity, have also been very useful as a tool for awareness raising and education on global development issues both in the North and South, contributing to increasing individual engagement and accountability of the development policy and practice by the governments, UN agencies and international organisations.

4. What features and elements of the MDG framework have been problematic, in your view?

The key problem with the MDGs framework is that it presents a rather narrow and shallow vision of development, addressing a limited scope of issues that are symptoms rather than the core of development challenges. Please see point 5 for more about the issues not covered by the framework.

What is more, the framework focuses on quantitative outputs rather than qualitative results. Especially the understanding of poverty – an extremely complex social and economic phenomenon, expressed by the accompanying indicators is very limited. It addresses the symptoms of poverty rather than trying to tackle the underlying causes or it, including systemic and institutional problems. The target 1B that offers more useful indicators have not received enough attention.

In that aspect, MDG8 and its attempts to build a more just trade and financial systems is far too vague and weak to lead to any results, just like in the case of other targets under that goal. It also failed to call for the creation of green and decent jobs, which are a prerequisite for human development. Also, apart from the first target, the framework did not point out to any of the structural and institutional factors (embedded, among others, in the global economic and governance systems and national income redistribution strategies) that lead to the perpetuation of poverty, inequalities, conflicts and environmental degradation.

This was also the only goal referring to actions that need to be taken by other countries than the developing ones. Building a 'global framework' that comprises only goals for one group of countries,

¹ MDG Report 2012, UN <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/MDG%20Report%202012.pdf>

especially when those goals were largely decided by countries that do not belong to that group, undermines the legitimacy and effectiveness of the framework itself.

Setting the goals at global and national level allowed for hiding economic and social inequality within and across countries, which is a growing international and national development concern. It also made the goals less relevant and effective in terms of improving the living conditions of people living in Middle-Income Countries, where the goals could be easily achieved without bringing any significant change to the situation of the countries' most vulnerable groups or addresses underpinning structural factors.

Other important shortcomings of the MDG framework are the lack of adequate indicators that would allow for a meaningful measurement of the progress on achieving the goals and targets as well as the lack of mechanisms that would allow keep governments accountable for their efforts towards achieving the goals.

5. In your view, what are the main gaps, if any, in the MDG framework?

First of all, the framework misses a wider understanding of economic and social development and human wellbeing. The understanding of poverty, as mentioned in point 4, remains limited to economic indicators rather than a wider socio-economic concept. The way the targets around this goal were formulated does not allow addressing income inequalities within and between the countries.

Main issues that are missing in the MDG framework include: human rights, social protection, public services and global public goods. None of these domains, crucial for improving the living conditions of the worlds' most vulnerable groups, was addressed or taken up as a goal or target.

The issues of decent work, gender equality, and environmental sustainability (esp. with the reference to the respect of environmental boundaries as well as stopping and mitigating climate change) were not sufficiently addressed.

The MDG framework lacks not only any reference to the human rights, but misses also the wider Human Rights Based Approach which does not only make the framework less effective, but also the national and UN policies – less coherent.

Last but not least, the framework fails to demonstrate how all of these issues are interlinked and tied to the deeper structural challenges, rooted in the wider economic approach, geopolitical and historical settings, as well as global governance shortcomings.

B. Feasibility of a future framework

6. In your view, in what way, if at all, could a future framework have an impact at global level in terms of global governance, consensus building, cooperation, etc.?

The new framework offers the opportunity to redefine global development and the approach to development policy and practice and create a joint, democratically elaborated development framework for all – in developing, emerging and developed countries. By doing so, the new framework can permanently change the perception and shape of development policy and practice, breaking for good with the North-South split and donor-recipient dynamics.

The new development framework can also go beyond MDGs and beyond aid, which means that it can enlarge and better focus the scope of issues addressed and agree on concrete, measurable actions taken to achieve them. It can also relate to the areas of policy other than development and economics, ensuring that global and national policies on agriculture, migration, trade, security, welfare etc. work hand in hand with development to achieve the new global and national goals.

Such a framework, anchored in the Human Rights Based Approach, would bring more coherence in the development paradigm and actual policies influencing development on national, regional and international level. In this way, the new framework could also pave the way to the very much needed systemic changes in the global financial architecture, trade agreement, environmental policies and other elements of global and national policies.

Building the new framework offers the opportunity to make it more responsive and adequate in relation to the new and emerging issues and trends incl. the multiple crisis and environmental challenges. The new framework can and should also take into consideration the rapidly shifting geopolitical and donor environment.

What is important is to keep one global development framework. The Sustainable Development Goals process should be integrated with the post-2015 process in order to deliver one comprehensive framework.

7. To what extent is a global development framework approach necessary or useful to improve accountability with regard to poverty reduction policies in developing countries?

Since at least a part the root causes of poverty, inequalities and environmental degradations always lie beyond the country concerned, a global development framework approach is crucial to address them fully and effectively. The new integrated global development framework should include mechanisms that would keep governments mutually and democratically accountable for national and global progress in terms of social and economic development both at national and at global level. This includes building and strengthening tripartite social dialogue structures, in the spirit of the ILO conventions.

The new framework should rely on the concept of mutual accountability as a real partnership and shared responsibility in achieving global targets and goals.

Like in the case of the MDGs, a new, clear and understandable framework could be a useful tool for education and awareness raising that would contribute to increasing citizens' engagement in development policy and practice and thus improve democratic accountability in countries of all levels of income and role in development cooperation. A transparent, inclusive and legitimate process leading to the elaboration and endorsement of the document is crucial for ensuring a global, democratic ownership and support of the framework.

8. What could be the advantages and disadvantages of a global development framework for your organisation/sector, including how you work effectively with your partners?

A good global development framework has the potential to be an extremely important and useful tool for the trade union movement on global, regional and national levels providing a base for advocacy efforts and a guideline for practice, as well as a reference for measuring the effectiveness of development work.

However, the new framework approach comes with a number of risks. If the new framework is weak, 'watered down' and disappointing, like many other global agreements recently, incl. the Rio+20 declaration, it might only further decrease the political will and momentum for development and discourage citizens and all the actors involved.

There is also a risk that if the new framework opens up to some of concerning new trends, it might pave the way to potentially harmful policy and practice. The new framework should e.g. under no conditions undermine the role and responsibility of the national government in ensuring the access to basic social services as well as to the protection and realization of human rights to all citizens. It should not limit the regulatory role of the state including in financial, trade and environmental policies.

The process of elaboration of the new framework should by no means undermine the current efforts to achieve the MDGs. Also, some of the MDGs might remain relevant after 2015 and should therefore be incorporated in the new framework.

C. The potential scope of a future agenda

9. In your view, what should be the primary purpose of a future framework?

The primary purpose of the new development framework should contribute to a more just and sustainable world through building and mainstreaming a global understanding of the development paradigm and actions that need to be taken to achieve it.

The framework should also contribute to building and cementing coherence and coordination of various areas of policy at national, regional and international level.

The elaboration of the framework, done in a way that ensures ownership and commitment of all governments and other actors, should lead to and include concrete, actionable and time-bound commitments related to advancing social and economic development, while ensuring environmental sustainability. The commitments should be accompanied by appropriate indicators for monitoring the progress and mechanisms for ensuring accountability between and within states.

The aim of the future agenda should also be to provide guidance, legitimization and accountability framework for all actors involved in development work and related domains, including states, multilateral institutions, local, regional and international civil society organisations, social partners, private sector and private foundations etc.

10. In your view, should its scope be global, relevant for all countries?

The scope of the agenda should be global and relevant for all countries, building a global understanding of the development paradigm, stressing shared responsibility and outlining global development goals. The goals should include global goals for the international community as well as targets that would be adapted to the country context and specified on national level, whether in scope or in timeline.

The framework should also address the issue of global public goods and global governance in a way that is based on the principle of shared responsibility and partnership and aims at securing access to realizing human rights for all.

11. To what extent should a future framework focus on the poorest and most fragile countries, or also address development objectives relevant in other countries?

While recognizing and addressing the challenges faced by the poorest and most fragile states, the framework should also address issues relevant for the emerging and developed economies, as well as global issues relevant for all countries. The issues of global relevance include climate change, environmental degradation, depletion of natural resources and gender inequality. They should all be addressed by the new framework.

The specific challenges of the emerging and developed economies that should be addressed by the framework include national level income inequality, gender inequality, insufficient and non-inclusive social protection, labour and trade union rights (incl. migrant workers' rights), lack of social dialogue structures, taxation and fighting illicit financial flows, overexploitation of natural resources, environmental degradation as well as the coherence of policies for development.

The implementation targets, adjusted to the country context, should address their particular needs and gaps.

12. How could a new development agenda involve new actors, including the private sector and emerging donors?

The new framework should clearly put the responsibility for development results in the hands of governments, accountable to their citizens through national democratic structures and processes, including the tripartite social dialogue structures.

The new framework should also point to the shared responsibility and encourage international solidarity in all forms, including the traditional forms development cooperation, 'South-South' and triangular cooperation, private foundations and others. All forms of cooperation should however comply with the highest standards of development effectiveness, including untying aid, transparency and predictability, democratic ownership and alignment of development programmes, strong mutual accountability mechanisms as well as adopting the Human Rights Based Approach.

When engaging with the other actors, the new agenda should adopt the useful approach of Major Groups, following the model fostered by the UN Commission on Sustainable Development.

The possible contribution of the other actors, incl. trade unions, organized civil society, private sector etc. should be recognized and taken into consideration. Appropriate structures enabling their engagement and maximizing their contribution to development should be established, including building and strengthening tripartite social dialogue structures. All actors should however be held accountable for their actions, through appropriate mechanisms, including sector-specific development effectiveness standards (following the example of the Istanbul Principles for CSO Development Effectiveness).

Concerning the engagement of the private sector, what needs to be recognized in the first place is the diversity of actors and their potential contribution to social and economic development, in terms of job creation, improved living wages and transfer of technologies. To maximize these positive contributions, priority should be given to the support for local private sector and social economy entities and ensuring that all private sector entities respect workers and trade union rights.

An integrated approach for an enabling environment for sustainable enterprises should be supported at country level. As defined in the 2007 ILO resolution on the Promotion of Sustainable Enterprises, supporting the enabling environment for sustainable enterprises requires contributions from various stakeholders, including the engagement of social partners themselves, donor support and multilateral technical assistance where appropriate.

When it comes to both in-country and cross-border private sector activities, including the Multinational Enterprises, UN and OECD resolutions and standards as elaborated and monitored by the ILO supervisory system. The private sector, including transnational companies, should observe the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights: Implementing the United Nations 'Protect, Respect and Remedy' Framework, the ILO Tripartite Declaration on Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy, and the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises. Any private sector entity seeking support within development policy and cooperation, should be able to demonstrate their compliance with the above mentioned standards. The framework should address the global rise in the business-related human rights abuses.

Private-Public Partnerships (PPP) in development should be based on a thorough analysis of real needs, appropriateness on the longer term, fair risk sharing for the community as well as the accessibility and affordability of the services and goods produced. The private sector's engagement in development should by no account decrease the role and responsibility of governments to ensure decent work (incl. social protection), the rule of law and sustainable, inclusive social and economic development for all citizens. Social protection, core public services and public goods should under no condition become subject to privatisation. Where such services have been privatised, governments should ensure access to them for all citizens.

13. How could a future framework support improved policy coherence for development (PCD), at global, EU and country levels?

The key to ensuring policy coherence lies in the thorough analysis of underlying causes (including systemic and institutional failures) that result in poverty, inequality and environmental degradation. Ensuring that the new development framework properly addresses these issues will automatically require improving policy coherence between sectors on national and international level.

In order to make sure that the analysis is sound and comprehensive, the elaboration of the framework should engage not only development and economy experts, but also experts and policy makers from other domains, incl. labour, social protection, gender, agriculture etc. It is also crucial that in the analysis the voices and perspectives of people most directly affected by the development challenges are fully heard and reflected.

14. How could a new framework improve development financing?

If coherent and comprehensive enough, the new framework could provide a useful reference for directing the various sources of development finance (ODA, climate finance, new development finance etc.) to achieving common goals in a coordinated manner and in the spirit of policy coherence.

By addressing a wider policy setting for development, the new framework should identify and enable the use of new sources of development finance (e.g. by addressing the shortcomings in financial policies, it could call for the introduction of a global Financial Transaction Tax and improvement of the efficiency of remittances transfers). In that aspect, the framework should also address the issue of illicit financial flows, including tax heavens and tax evasion. Tackling those problems could be a major source of additional finance for less economically developed countries to implement their social development policies. Supporting progressive and effective taxation measures could be an efficient way of leveraging domestic funding for necessary policies and fighting income inequality in countries of all levels of income.

New development finance should not undermine the existing ODA commitments, which should be reinforced by the new framework.

D. The potential shape of a future agenda

15. What do you consider to be the "top 3" most important features or elements which should be included in or ensured by any future development agenda?

- *Goal: Full employment and decent work for all*

Work is a key element of social and economic development. Through job creation and better working conditions people, communities and countries can lift themselves out of poverty and improve livelihoods. This happens only when work is decent, with fair wages, underpinned by rights. A decent work goal must include concrete targets for full employment, green job promotion, international labour rights for all workers and gender equality at the workplace.

- *Goal: Universal social protection*

Ensuring universal access to basic guarantees of social protection is a human right and a direct and efficient way of reducing inequalities. The new framework should include a goal on the implementation of social protection floors as defined in the "Bachelet Report", and the ILO Recommendation 202 which has set an international standard. Targets must be set and realised on

income security for the unemployed, the sick, the disabled, pregnant women, children and the elderly as well as on access to health care, education, housing and sanitation.

- *A comprehensive approach anchored in the human rights framework and policy coherence*

The new framework should look holistically at the human wellbeing and environmental sustainability and address the root causes of problems rather than symptoms. The framework should adopt and promote the Human Rights Based Approach and build policy coherence for better and more sustainable development results. The framework should also break with the focus on quantitative outputs and introduce more qualitative measures that would allow for a meaningful monitoring based on disaggregated data and systemic analysis.

16. What do you consider to be the "top 3" features or elements which must be *avoided* in any future development agenda?

- *Focus on economic indicators*

The new framework should hold human rights and wellbeing at the very centre, suggesting appropriate social and economic policies to achieve human rights and wellbeing for all and paying a special attention to the issue of increasing income inequalities. Economic growth, while undoubtedly an important element often contributing to the improvement of people's livelihoods, esp. in low income countries, is only an element of wider social and economic policies that jointly can ensure job creation, an equitable distribution of resources and a universal access to basic goods and services. Therefore, economic growth and private sector as such cannot and should not be in the focus of development policies neither on national nor global level.

Job creation is fundamental to advancing human development and bridging income and social inequalities. Inclusive, green and sustainable economic development and growth can contribute to the creation of employment. However, in the times when economic indicators are often in the focus of attention, special consideration should be given to sectors and services that in the current econometric practice do not contribute to the increase of GDP, including many of the social protection schemes, house work and child care as well as essential public services. Social protection as well access to basic goods and services such as water, electricity and education are human rights and their delivery is the sole responsibility of the state. Under no condition should they become a subject to privatisation, even if it would generate a higher GDP. Public-Private Partnership schemes should also be designed and applied with much consideration, as they have all too often turned out to limit the access to these services for the marginalized groups rather than expand it.

- *Limiting states' policy space for development*

The framework should include strong commitments on global and country level, ensuring a fair distribution of responsibility and contributions within the global governance. However, it should not limit the scope of national policies that ensure human rights and wellbeing. The responsibility of the state towards its citizens and democratic structures of accountability should always be prioritized.

- *Inapplicability of the framework*

The last years brought many rather disappointing global agreements and frameworks that have not given the results that the stakeholders – including people most directly affected by the development challenges – hoped for. In the times of multiple crises, disappointment with multilateralism and fear of geopolitical power plays overshadowing development policies, all efforts should be put into making the new development framework a success, a meaningful contribution and a boost to development efforts around the world. To be truly effective, the framework must include strong, actionable and focused commitments, avoiding 'watering down' or a 'shopping list' approach with

many unrelated and weak goals and no political will behind them. The Co-Chairs of the High Level Panel and the Lead Author of the HLP report will need to ensure that the framework proposal stays focused, coherent, comprehensive and actionable.

17. Should it be based on goals, targets and indicators? If any, should goals have an outcome or sector focus? Please give reasons for your answer.

The new framework should be based on actionable global goals with clear and time-bound targets and adequate indicators. While specific and measurable, the targets should focus as much as possible on results rather than outputs and include both qualitative and quantitative indicators.

Depending on the particular goal, the specific targets could be adapted to national contexts, whether in scope or in timeline.

In order to allow democratic ownership and accountability, the framework should be formulated in a clear, accessible way that can be easily understood and followed by wide public and citizen groups around the world. Accessibility is the key to generating a broad support for and engagement in delivering the framework. The framework itself should foresee popular education programmes in all countries involved that would build understanding, support for and personal engagement in monitoring and delivering the development framework. In Europe the framework could draw on the experience and structures related to Development Education and Awareness Raising concepts.

18. How should implementation of the new framework be resourced?

Built on the principle of policy coherence, the new framework should be recognized by and integrated in the relevant existing international and national programmes focusing on development and related domains (education, trade, migration etc.) and therefore tap into the existing budgets.

In order to increase the available domestic resources for the delivery of the framework, a focus should be put on introducing progressive and effective taxation systems and addressing the tax evasion problems.

As elaborated in point 14, by addressing a wide range of policies, the new framework could contribute to the generation of additional development finance (e.g. by the introduction of a global Financial Transaction Tax) that could support the implementation of the framework on global level and in lower income and post-crisis countries.

Additional resources and references:

- [ITUC Development Cooperation page](#) (with a collection of news, reports and reactions relating to various development policy processes)
- [Growing Green and Decent Jobs report](#), ITUC, 2012
- [Social Protection Floor – made simple](#), ITUC, 2012
- [Financial Transaction Tax – made simple](#), ITUC, 2012
- [Exiting from the crisis: towards a model of more equitable and sustainable growth](#), ETUI, 2011