

A Red Flag for the Post-2015 High Level Panel

As members of civil society representing diverse constituencies and communities around the world, including over one billion impoverished people, we are deeply concerned about the direction that the High Level Panel on Post 2015 Development may take, particularly as regards the roles of government, business and multilateral institutions in any sustainable development agenda.

We caution against developing a set of reductive goals, targets and indicators that ignore the transformative changes required to address the failure of the current development model, which is rooted in unsustainable production and consumption patterns and exacerbates inequality as well as gender, race and class inequities.

The "poison threads" in society -- like corporate land grabs that impoverish communities, an unjust global trade and financial architecture, corruption and privatisation of social services like education, health, water and sanitation -- must also be addressed. We must create some rules and remove others to ensure that the global frameworks do not constrain human rights and development goals.

Former German President and High Level Panel member Horst Kohler reminded us in his keynote address, we can not "talk about food security without regulation of financial markets . . . poverty without (addressing) unfair trade, peace and security without small arms control, land degradation without talking of climate."

GDP and existing corporate financial reports are neither adequate nor accurate metrics; they must factor in social and environmental impact and the well-being of people.

Goals need to be universal. Ending inequality is paramount. Women, children, youth, indigenous peoples, marginalised communities and differently-abled people must be at the center of development. The responsibilities of the rich and powerful need to be clearly spelled out. We must respect and build upon the overarching principle of equitable sharing of atmospheric space, taking into account historical responsibility between and also within states as well as inter-generational justice. Commitments by all stakeholders must be time-bound; accountability and transparency are also paramount.

As the members of the High Level Panel prepare to meet in Bali and in the spirit of partnership and collaboration, we would like to raise a 'Red Flag'. For us to support a Post 2015 framework - or the High Level Panel's recommendations - the following eight points must be addressed:

1. Land and Water Grabs

All too often, businesses and governments acquire land, water and other natural resources -- be it 'legally', illegally or through a corrupt process -- without the free, prior and informed consent of individuals and communities, displacing and impoverishing people in the process. This must stop.

2. Extractives Development Model

People living near mega-mines, oil wells and other extractive sites frequently face a loss of livelihoods and serious adverse health effects. The Post 2015 framework should eliminate financial support for these harmful economic activities, introduce regulations that protect communities as well as mechanisms for redress that require companies to clean up and pay for their messes. In addition, we must recognise the rights of indigenous people to land for food sovereignty and insure that economic activities do not negatively impact people, particularly women, migrants, fishermen, forest dwellers, First Nations, pastoralists and other marginalised communities.

3. Planetary Boundaries

Planetary boundaries and the rights of future generations need to be respected. The principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities requires that the burden of adjusting to these limits be equitably shared.

4. Gender Justice

The Post 2015 Framework must affirm the human rights of women and men, girls and boys, young people, and people with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities to bodily integrity, guarantee sexual and reproductive rights and universal access to quality, comprehensive, integrative sexual and reproductive health services.

5. Economic and Financial Architecture

The current economic and financial architecture causes and perpetuates poverty. We must urgently reform financial and trade regimes to ensure fair trade, just sovereign debt workout mechanisms and stop illicit capital flows. The new architecture should ensure gender, environmental and social justice as well as recognise that care and social reproduction are intrinsically linked with the productive economy and should therefore be fully reflected in macroeconomic policies.

6. Human Rights

Poverty is a cause and consequence of human rights violations. The Post 2015 agenda must be rooted in the existing international human rights architecture, which has been developed over six decades. Human rights law provides a universally-recognized framework that clearly delineates the common but differentiated responsibilities of all actors to respect, protect and fulfill human rights, both within and between countries.

7. Peace and Conflict

No society can develop in an environment of fear and insecurity. Peace is not simply the absence of violence nor is conflict limited to fragile states; it is based on dignity, social justice, the fulfillment of human rights and well-being for all. Violence and conflicts are often products of struggles for resource control, lack of decent work and livelihoods, inequalities, failed structures and corporate interests. The Post 2015 framework should be conflict-sensitive and ensure the safety, security and sustainability of life, ensure an end to gender-based violence, promote social cohesion, people's participation and foster an environment where people live in freedom and with ownership and control of their own resources.

8. Accountability & Corruption

For the Post 2015 framework to succeed, clear transparent accessible mechanisms of accountability must be created, strengthened and implemented for all. We must monitor commitments and address corruption. Accountability mechanisms must be universal, participatory and empower all people to monitor and hold governments, financial institutions, development actors and the private sector to account in order to be legitimate and effective. In a number of cases, good laws rest on the books; they must be implemented and enforced.

This note was drafted by global members of civil society at a conference titled "Advancing the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda: Reconfirming Rights, Recognizing Limits, Redefining Goals" held in Bonn, Germany from 20 - 22 March 2013. We invite individuals and organisations to endorse it.