



CoNGO COMMUNICATION

July 2014

UN Post-2015 development agenda

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1. Presidential introduction

This Eighth Issue of the CoNGO COMMUNICATION on the UN Post-2015 Agenda is in some ways a transition edition. The collection and review of material is reverting to the University of Sherbrooke (Québec, Canada) which has kindly made a new student, Julien Bédard, available to CoNGO to work on this subject for several months. I repeat our warm thanks to the University of Sherbrooke and its Ecole de Politique Appliquée for their generous cooperation with CoNGO in working on this vitally important topic which involves such a broad range of international actors, intergovernmental and non-governmental.

The transition reference also applies to the international debate itself, for while the "New York carousel" of Post-2015-related meetings and negotiations continues to turn at a hectic pace, the deliberations and exchanges are moving from concepts and frameworks to possible outcomes.

Keeping abreast of the negotiations and consultations continues to pose practical problems for those NGOs/CSOs that do not have an office or a representative permanently in New York and this series of CoNGO COMMUNICATIONS has been widely welcomed as a contribution to enhanced comprehension and participation on the part of the broader CoNGO community.

I would like to draw attention most particularly to a particular event in late August that will enable the world's non-governmental and civil society communities to get more intensively to grips with the substantive content of the Post-2015 Agenda. This is the 65th UN DPI/NGO Conference, being held at UN Headquarters on August 27-28-29 with the title "2015 AND BEYOND: OUR ACTION AGENDA". A working group has already produced a "zero draft" Conference Action Agenda which has been posted on the Conference website (<http://outreach.un.org/ngorelations/conference/>) Electronic contributions and observations are welcome until July 15, to enable the preparation of a more substantive document.

It is also possible to register for the Conference on the website, and the deadline for that is August 13. I encourage the CoNGO community to participate in this most timely event, so that we may collectively demonstrate and bring to bear our knowledge, insights and convictions. The Post-2015 Agenda is preparing the world for future generations: we cannot fail them.

Cyril Ritchie
President of CoNGO

2. Where the agenda is coming from

In the past CoNGO Communications, we have seen plenty of important events that evolved since then. In the March 2014 publication, several meetings were announced. More specifically, the Intersessional for the third international conference on Small Islands Developing States (SIDS) meeting on April 21st to 25th at the UNHQ, in New York city. There was also 2 meetings of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing (ICESDF), one regional consultation in Africa; the other is the fourth session of the ICESDF in New York, which occurred on May 12-16. We will also overview the related meetings of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. An expert group meeting was held on 30 April and 1 May 2014. Finally, a few words on the World environment day held on June 5th and an idea that will help on a small scale to preserve our oceans.

2.1. Intersessional for the third International Conference on Small Islands Developing States

In the March 2014 CoNGO communication, we talked about a meeting preparing the third International conference on Small Islands Developing States (SIDS). This meeting was held on April 21st to 25th. This week of meeting was for negotiations on which action the SIDS must take to influence the post 2015 agenda. The director of the sustainable development, Mr. Nikhil Seth outlined the importance of being able to take actions instead of inactions in his opening statement.

“The Conference will seek to accomplish the following goals: to assess the progress to date and the remaining gaps in the implementation ; to seek a renewed political commitment by focusing on practical commitment and on practical and pragmatic actions for further implementation; to identify new and emerging challenges and opportunities for the sustainable development of SIDS and means of addressing them; and to identify priorities for the sustainable development of SIDS to be considered in the elaboration of the post-2015 UN development agenda.”

Reminder: This conference will be held 1-4 September 2014 in Apia, Samoa

2.2. Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing

The objectives of the African regional consultation was to discuss and articulate clear priorities and key messages on sustainable development financing, from Africa’s perspective, for consideration during the 4th session, held on 12-16 May 2014.

The fifth session of ICESDF will be held 4-8 August 2014 at UNHQ, New York.

2.3. Political Forum on Sustainable Development

An expert group meeting was held in New York on 30 April to 1 May 2014. It had to establish the new structure that the High Level Political forum would look like to get to the new development agenda and mostly, beyond that point.

To see the outcome, visit

<http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&nr=998&type=12&menu=1556>

2.4. World environment day

This year's World Environment day came in relation with the UN international year of Small Islands Developing States. The main focus is the sea level as their slogan says "Raise your voice, not the sea level". The message of Christiana Figueres, the executive secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change for this day and the rest of the year is that "it is time to push this groundswell forward towards a new agreement that must include a global commitment to reduce green house emissions rapidly enough to keep a global temperature rise under 2 degrees Celsius this century. This is the promise the world must deliver to the Small Island Developing States."

To read the whole letter, visit

http://www.unep.org/french/wed/docs/message_from_Christiana_Figueres_for_World_Environment_Day.pdf

Taking advantage of the World Environment Day and its ocean preservation theme, Yann Arthus-Bertrand, of GoodPlanet launched an international campaign to protect the oceans. We cannot forget this year's slogan as the foundation released a movie directed by Michael Pitiot, available at <http://www.youtube.com/PlanetOceanTheMovie>. Also, an application for Smartphone has been developed and made public freely to all. This application will help people to consume sea products responsibly and become an actor of ocean preservation. It is called "Planet Ocean" and is available for android at <http://bit.ly/PlanetOceanAppAndroid>, and for IOS at <http://bit.ly/PlanetOceanAppIOS>.

3. Post-2015 agenda

The 12th session of the Open Working Group (OWG) on Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) opened in NYC on June 16th with statements of four major groups; the business and industry, the children and youth, the NGOs and the workers and trade.

3.1. Business and Industry

This group was represented by Louise Kantrow, permanent representative to the UN for the international Chamber of Commerce. She was speaking on behalf of the Global Business alliance. She said that the revised version of the Zero draft was much appreciated by her group, but they still had a few recommendations. Their recommendations refer more specifically on the size of the SDGs

documents. Their main critic was the 17 goals aligned with 20 pages of sub-goals. They proposed to have them clustered into the three pillars of sustainable development, economic development, social development and environmental protection, to clarify the whole thing. They also wanted to eliminate redundancies, so they proposed to merge some of the goals and sub-goals for a better comprehension from every one of the SDGs.

For more info, consult the transcript at

<http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/10329Business%20and%20Industry.pdf>

3.2. The Children and Youth

The spokesperson for that Major group brought on the table some interesting points. First, they wanted the young people to be included in the chapeau of the declaration of SDGs. Then, they wanted the international community to shift the paradigm of economic growth to a paradigm of economic development as a central enabler to end poverty. The economy should not grow to an undefined number. It should develop to make sure everyone can get its share of it. Following this statement, Goals 1 and 8 fall short of this. They should be reviewed. Also, they brought forward the respect for the planetary boundaries for sustainable consumption and production patterns. To achieve it, they want to incorporate metric indicators to promote the minimization and management of the waste created by current production methods.

Read more at

<http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/10344Children%20and%20Youth%20Major%20Group.pdf>

3.3. NGO

The statement for the NGOs was delivered by the co-chair of Beyond 2015 Campaign, secretary of international affairs and Kenya representative, George Ndung'u, from the Organization of African Youth. The position of NGOs is very optimistic towards the SDGs. They welcome strongly the re-introduction of inequality as a goal. It enhances the "leave no one behind" principle that was proposed by the U.N. high level panel and makes it closer to reality. Along with the youth, they are optimistic about getting to a better understanding of sustainable development. The slight paradigm change behind the use of "sustainable economic growth" instead of "sustained economic growth" is welcome. This change presents a clear focus on sustainable consumption and production for the future. Finally, Ndung'u reiterates that for the NGOs, "the post 2015 framework must reflect and support the active participation of ALL people in their individual and collective development process".

For more information, visit

<http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/10339NGO%20Major%20Group.pdf>

3.4. Workers and Trade Unions

They came up with the longest list of additions and modifications to be made on the SDGs and the sub-goals. To sum up, they want to incorporate in the sub-goals, targets of social protection floors. Education also takes a great place in their demands, as a tertiary quality education should be free for all by 2030. In addition, education should not, according to the Workers and Trade Unions, be aligned with labour market needs. It should be focusing on skill development and vocational training. Furthermore, some changes that had been made since the 11th OWG session are not welcome for this Major group. Under goal 8 (“**Promote strong, inclusive and sustainable economic growth and decent work for all**”) for example they want to re-include certain targets as they find that the targets have regressed.

To see the specific demands, visit

<http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/10334Workers%20and%20Trade%20Unions.pdf>

4. The controversial elements in post 2015 agenda

As part of the 12th OWG on SDGs, Olav Kjørven, a special advisor on the post 2015 development agenda was interviewed by Paul Stephens, of Devex, about the controversial elements in the agenda. Kjørven brought up three issues that don't reach a consensus amongst the groups. First, some members prefer if the goal on governance and peace was split in two because “they view governance with rule of law and capable institutions [...] and then you have the issues of secure peace and absence of violence and crime”. Also, some countries think that these issues should not be in the agenda, because they are outside of development context. There is another conflict on climate change. As we know, there are two visions; one is that we don't know enough on the impacts of climate change, so we shouldn't incorporate them in the agenda. On the other hand, some countries wouldn't find the agenda credible if it does not include climate change. The last issue Kjørven brought up is a political issue on Means of Implementation, how we are going to achieve those goals.

Learn more at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qnUdhJAz_pQ

5. French government position on post 2015 agenda

The realization of the Post 2015 agenda is a high priority for the French government. This agenda will define common goals that will be capable of giving dignity to almost nine billion individuals on a limited resourced planet. The document was produced along with civil society and more than 60 NGOs.

Firstly, the post 2015 agenda must take place on the solid basis that Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) brought since 2000. They played a major role in diminishing poverty amongst the world. In

fact, a few of those goals are going to be achieved by 2015, according to the 2012 UN report on MDGs. On the other hand, in many countries, in many regions, some of the goals are not nearly achieved. This is why, according to the French government, the MDGs must be used as a springboard towards the post 2015 agenda. Thus, the agenda must be defined by a limited number of objectives, but assorted by indicators that will help to identify where we are at. It has to keep the Millennium Declaration as a political fundament, integrate all sectors covered by the MDGs and complete them regarding the people in need and the future decade's challenges.

Secondly, sustainability is once again demanded. This marks a shift of paradigm in the way the development works. Groups now want to see a development that we will be able to sustain to make sure that the future generations will be able to profit from the Earth's resources. This paradigm shift has been brought up by the Children and Youth Major Group and the NGOs in the 12th session OWG. In addition, the focus on only basic social needs to assure the development in certain countries proved not to be enough. The coalition behind this position base their analysis on the theory of Amartya Sen, saying that what defines development is an expansion process towards individual liberties. Thus, the SDGs should be about job creation, infrastructure development, promotion of agriculture and diversification and structural alteration of economies.

Finally, the French government position document reveals the ten most important goals according to their research and consultation. All of them have been used by the UN for the Zero Draft.

1. Food and nutritional security (**Goal 2**)
2. Universal access to the drinking water and to purification (**Goal 6**)
3. A quality education for all throughout his/her life (**Goal 4**)
4. Gender equality (**Goal 5**)
5. Health for all (**Goal 3**)
6. Decent work for all (**Goal 8**)
7. Give to all a durable, decent and connected living environment (**Goal 11**)
8. A sustainable energy for all (**Goal 7**)
9. A durable environment for all (**Goal 13**)
10. A democratic governance and multi-levels for the sustainable development (**Goal 16**)

The French government's position document can be found at

<http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/photos-videos-publications/publications/brochures-institutionnelles/article/la-position-francaise-sur-l-agenda>

For the UN report on MDGs, visit

http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/MDG/english/The_MDG_Report_2012.pdf/

6. Calendar

August 2014

- 27-29: UN Department of Public Information-NGO Conference (New York, United States)
<http://outreach.un.org/ngorelations/conference/>

September 2014

- 1-4: Third International conference on Small Island Developing States, SIDS (Apia, Samoa)
<http://www.sids2014.org>
- 22: UNGA Special Session on ICPD Beyond 2014 (New York, United States)
<http://icpdbeyond2014.org/key-events/view/15-icpd-beyond-2014-review-timeline>
- 22-23: UN General Assembly High Level Plenary Meeting serving as a World Conference on Indigenous Peoples (New York)
<http://wcip2014.org/world-conference-on-indigenous-peoples-september-2014>
- 23: 2014 Climate Summit, organized by the UN Secretary-General (New York, United States)
<http://climate-l.iisd.org/2014-climate-summit/>

October – November 2014

- October 20 –November 7: International Telecommunications Union, Plenipotentiary Conference (Busan, Korea)
<http://www.itu.int/en/plenipotentiary/2014/Pages/default.aspx>

November 2014

- 10-12: World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development, organized by UNESCO (Aichi-Nagoya, Japan)
<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/events/calendar-of-events/education-global-conferences/>
- 21-24: CIVICUS International Civil Society Week <http://civicus.org/index.php/en/get-involved-128/2014-04-25-05-16-07/civil-society-week>

2015

- United Nations Organization: 70th Anniversary year

- World Conference on Women, Beijing 1995: Beijing +20 Campaign
<http://www.unwomen.org/en/how-we-work/intergovernmental-support/world-conferences-on-women>
- World Summit on Social Development-Copenhagen+20
<http://undesadspd.org/CalendarofEvents.aspx>

April 2015

- 12-17: 7th World Water Forum (Daegu, Gyeongbuk, Korea)
<http://worldwaterforum7.org/en>