



CoNGO Communication

UN Post-2015 Development Agenda

June 2014

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President's Introduction

Dear Colleagues:

Once again you will find a wealth of succinct information in this issue of the CoNGO COMMUNICATION on the UN Post-2015 Development Agenda. The preparation of the issue was initiated by CoNGO intern Jin Woo Kim, and carried forward and completed by our new Intern Alexander Zu Mecklenburg, who arrived with us on May 18. I thank both of them most warmly for their intelligent inputs into, and organization of, this valuable service to the CoNGO membership.

The UN process of moving towards the Post-2015 Agenda remains as complex as ever, as the entire UN System grapples with the hundreds of possible contents and items that have been put on the table- or rather on the tables, since there are so many actors and fora where the discussions are taking place. However there are clear signs of some consensus emerging through the channel of the UNGA Open Working Group (shortly to convene its Fourth negotiating session in New York) although there are still many competing claims and interests as each "sector" argues and lobbies for its prime concern. Creating the Post-2015 Agenda is a not-to-be-missed opportunity for the UN System to work coherently together to achieve not only "The Future We Want" but "The Future We Need". Simultaneously, the Post 2015 Agenda is a not-to-be-missed opportunity for collective brain-storming and harmonized action by the NGO/CSO community worldwide. The more deliberately we work together on the Post-2015 Agenda, the more impact we will have on the outcomes.

A significant opportunity for such working together will be provided by the UN.DPI-NGO Conference taking place in New York on August 27-28-29, 2014, which will focus on the action needed to achieve the Post-2015 Agenda. CoNGO has offered its cooperation, and of course the seven issues published thus far of this CoNGO COMMUNICATION will constitute useful reference material for Conference participants. I encourage CoNGO members to register for the August Conference, and I look forward to sharing experience and insights with you there.

Cyril Ritchie, President of CoNGO

The Post 2015 Agenda

The 8 Millennium development goals (MDGs), which are intended to be implemented by 2015 are not the end of future sustainable development thoughts. The MDGs will be succeeded by the so called Post 2015 Agenda. Currently the Post 2015 Agenda is being developed by the UN member states, who are determining what future sustainable development goals should be. This intergovernmental determination process has been initiated by the Rio+20 Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012.

"In the Rio+20 outcome document, member States agreed that sustainable development goals (SDGs) must:

1. Be based on Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.
2. Fully respect all the Rio Principles.
3. Be consistent with international law.
4. Build upon commitments already made.

5. Contribute to the full implementation of the outcomes of all major summits in the economic, social and environmental fields.
6. Focus on priority areas for the achievement of sustainable development, being guided by the outcome document.
7. Address and incorporate in a balanced way all three dimensions of sustainable development and their interlinkages.
8. Be coherent with and integrated into the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015.
9. Not divert focus or effort from the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.
10. Include active involvement of all relevant stakeholders, as appropriate, in the process.”

WG I contribution to the fifth assessment report of the IPCC (WG I AR5)

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) published, in 2013, the contribution of Working Group 1 (WG I) to the fifth assessment report of the IPCC. It lists elements of our environment which climate change affects and presents a number of summary statements along with supporting data.

To read the document Climate Change 2013- WG I, go to: <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar5/wg1/>

WG 2 contribution to the fifth assessment report of the IPCC (WG II AR5)

On March 30 of this year the WG II contribution to the fifth assessment report of the IPCC was released.

The report is divided into three sections, A, B, C.

1. Section A describes observed impacts, vulnerability and exposure, and adaptive responses to date.
2. Section B studies future risks and potential benefits.
3. Section C considers principles for effective adaptation and the broader interactions among adaptation, mitigation, and sustainable development.

“Compared to past WGII reports, the WGII AR5 assesses a substantially larger knowledge base of relevant scientific, technical, and socioeconomic literature. Increased literature has facilitated comprehensive assessment across a broader set of topics and sectors, with expanded coverage of human systems, adaptation, and the ocean.”

1.1: Observed impacts of climate change

“Human interference with the climate system is occurring, and climate change poses risks for human and natural systems. The assessment of impacts, adaptation, and vulnerability in the WG II AR5 evaluates how impacts and risks and potential benefits are shifting due to climate change.

In recent decades, changes in climate have caused impacts on natural and human systems on all continents and across the oceans. Evidence of climate-change impacts is strongest and most comprehensive for natural systems. Some impacts on human systems have also been attributed to climate change, with a major or minor contribution of climate change distinguishable from other influences.”

1.2: Vulnerability and exposure

An important point raised in WGII AR5 is that “differences in vulnerability and exposure arise from non-climatic factors and from multidimensional inequalities often produced by uneven development processes (*very high confidence*). These differences shape differential risks from climate change. People who are socially, economically, culturally, politically, institutionally, or otherwise marginalized are especially vulnerable to climate change and also to some adaptation and mitigation responses (*medium evidence, high agreement*).

Assessment of the widest possible range of potential impacts, including low-probability outcomes with large consequences, is central to understanding the benefits and trade-offs of alternative risk management actions. The complexity of adaptation actions across scales and contexts means that monitoring and learning are important components of effective adaptation.”

1.3: Adaptation across the globe

“Adaptation experience is accumulating across regions in the public and private sector and within communities (*high confidence*). Governments at various levels are starting to develop adaptation plans and policies and to integrate climate-change considerations into broader development plans.”

It is becoming embedded in certain planning procedures, with more regulated implementation of responses (*high confidence*).

1.4: “The decision-making context”

“Responding to climate-related risks involves decision-making in a changing world, with continuing uncertainty about the severity and timing of climate-change impacts and with limits to the effectiveness of adaptation (*high confidence*).” Since decision making on such complex topics has the potential for large consequences, an iterative risk management framework is useful.

Adaptation and mitigation choices in the near-term will affect the risks of climate change throughout the 21st century (*high confidence*).” Due to the importance of related decisions, “the WGII AR5 relies on diverse forms of evidence”, while “expert judgment is used to integrate evidence into evaluations of risks.

Uncertainties about future vulnerability, exposure, and responses of interlinked human and natural systems are large (*high confidence*). This motivates exploration of a wide range of socioeconomic futures in assessments of risks.”

2.1 “Future risks”

“Key risks are potentially severe impacts relevant to Article 2 of the United Nations Framework

Convention on Climate Change, which refers to “*dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system.*” Risks are considered key due to high hazard or high vulnerability of societies and systems exposed, or both.” These risks are referred to as RFC (reason for concern).

Experts suggest that “increasing magnitudes of warming increase the likelihood of severe, pervasive, and irreversible impacts.”, however, “the precise levels of climate change sufficient to trigger tipping points (thresholds for abrupt and irreversible change) remain uncertain, but the risk associated with crossing multiple tipping points in the earth system or in interlinked human and natural systems increases with rising temperature (*medium confidence*).”

By limiting the rate and magnitude of climate change, its overall risks can be reduced. When comparing between the assessed scenario with the lowest temperature projections and the highest, risks are reduced significantly, especially in the second half of the 21st century, reducing the scale of potentially needed adaptation (*very high confidence*). However, all the assessed scenarios for adaptation still carry risk from adverse impacts (*very high confidence*).

2.2 “Opportunity for adaptation”

Sea level rise is one of the most immediate threats posed by climate change, it will need to be dealt with in a creative and smart manner. “Due to sea-level rise projected throughout the 21st century and beyond, coastal systems and low-lying areas will increasingly experience adverse impacts such as submergence, coastal flooding, and coastal erosion (*very high confidence*). The relative costs of coastal adaptation vary strongly among and within regions and countries for the 21st century. Some low-lying developing countries and small island states are expected to face very high impacts that, in some cases, could have associated damage and adaptation costs of several percentage points of GDP.”

Freshwater management will become increasingly important, because “climate change over the 21st century is projected to reduce renewable surface water and groundwater resources significantly in most dry subtropical regions (*robust evidence, high agreement*), intensifying competition for water among sectors (*limited evidence, medium agreement*).” However, “adaptive water management techniques, including scenario planning, learning-based approaches, and flexible and low-regret solutions, can help create resilience to uncertain hydrological changes and impacts due to climate change (*limited evidence, high agreement*).”

“Many global risks of climate change are concentrated in urban areas (*medium confidence*). Steps that build resilience and enable sustainable development can accelerate successful climate-change adaptation globally. Reducing basic service deficits, improving housing, and building resilient infrastructure systems could significantly reduce vulnerability and exposure in urban areas.”

To read the document Climate Change 2013-WG II go to:

http://ipcc-wg2.gov/AR5/images/uploads/IPCC_WG2AR5_SPM_Approved.pdf

Open Interactive Dialogue on the Post-2015 Agenda and Goals
Ecumenical Centre, Geneva, April 24th, 2014 (notes by Jinwoo KIM, CoNGO intern)

1. Mrs. Arancha GONZALEZ: Executive Director, International Trade Centre

From implementing MDGs over the past decade, we've learned that we need to connect every goal in a coherent way in order to eliminate poverty. In addition, the future economic growth should be sustainable, inclusive, fair and more development-friendly. In this sense, the growth of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) is necessary so that they could play a role as the engine for promoting more qualitative growth.

2. Mr. David NABARRO: Rep. of UN Secretary General on Food Security & Nutrition

The vision of the Post-2015 development agenda is different from that of the MDGs in 2000. New agendas are more universal and deal with issues from diverse dimensions and sectors. For effective implementation, we must come up with interactive multi-stakeholder partnerships and more organized governance models.

3. Mr. David EVANS: Director of the Dep. Of Health Systems Financing, WHO

The Post-2015 development agenda shares an important similarity with health issues. Like health issues, the agendas affect everything, and everything the agendas. We need to consider how our own professionalism can contribute to sustainable development. For instance, from the health-sector, WHO is exerting all its efforts to implement universal health care coverage, which will eventually contribute to achieving the Post-2015 development agenda.

4. Mr. Marc Van AMERINGEN: Executive Director, Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition

Every issue in the Agenda is closely interconnected with all others. For example, a nutrition matter is affected by education and energy issues. This means that we need to approach the Post-2015 Agenda with a more integrated framework. Furthermore, partnerships among different actors are necessary, especially more involvement from civil societies, to achieve the new goals.

Remarks:

All the panellists agreed that we need close partnerships and interconnected approaches. As Mr Ameringen pointed out, it would be a key issue to involve more NGOs and citizens into the implementation process. For this, three elements are required: adequate information to be provided to civil society, convergence among experts in different fields and informal meetings where people can freely exchange their views.

WHO input to preparing the Post-2015 Development Agenda

Under the overarching health goal, WHO has completed a provisional technical summary based on a consideration of existing goals and targets in WHA resolutions, inputs from WHO programs,

interactions with UN agencies and informal conversations with Member States. Its purpose is to inform discussions about possible goals, targets, and eventual indicators.

The overarching health goal has 4 sub-goals:

Sub-goal 1: Achieve the health MDGs

There has been enormous progress in health during the era of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), but many targets have not yet been reached. There is a strong, international consensus that the MDGs explicitly related to health, namely 4 (reduced child mortality), 5 (improved maternal health) and 6 (combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases), should be integrated to the Post-2015 Agenda. More ambitious targets for the coming decades have been, or are being, developed by different constituencies.

Sub-goal 2: Address the burden of non-communicable diseases, injuries and mental illness

Non communicable diseases (NCDs), mental health and injuries have become the dominant causes of morbidity and mortality globally. NCDs were not included in the MDG framework, and there is general agreement that these causes of ill health should be recognized as a priority in the Post-2015 Agenda. The World Health Assembly resolution on a NCD action plan forms the basis of proposed goals and targets.

Sub-goal 3: Achieve Universal Health Coverage including financial risk protection

The Rio Political Declaration on Social Determinants of Health, the UN Conference on Sustainable Development report entitled *The Future We Want*, and UN General Assembly resolutions in 2012 and 2013 on global health and foreign policy, all recommended that universal health coverage (UHC) be considered as part of the Post-2015 Agenda. UHC supports efforts to meet the MDGs, and is also a way of stepping up the response to NCDs, mental health, injuries and other emerging health challenges. UHC is seen both as a means of achieving good health outcomes progressively (through full coverage of health services, and across all stages of life) and as a desirable end in itself (through the assurance of protection from financial risk). To achieve universal health coverage is therefore of benefit to everyone.

Sub-goal 4: Address the social and environmental determinants of health

To address the social and environmental causes of health, there is growing awareness of the need for action across all sectors of society, as highlighted in the Rio Political Declaration on Social Determinants of Health. One challenge is to link Post-2015 goals and targets across different sectors so as to achieve better outcomes, considering health alongside, for example, gender equality, education, employment, environment, water and sanitation, and disaster risk management. So as to capture the social dimension of health, data for this and other sub-goals should be disaggregated by wealth, place of residence, disability and gender, and by other important characteristics of population groups. Disaggregated data expose inequalities in health and health services that are targets for action.

Sustainable development goals: Tools for implementation and mainstreaming

International Environment House, Geneva, 23rd May, 2014 (Notes by Alexander ZU MECKLENBURG)

How can the effectiveness of sustainable development goals (SDGs) in the Post-2015 Agenda be improved in comparison to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)?

The Geneva environmental panel agreed that the current 16 focus areas and 150 potential areas, should be mainstreamed. To aid this process a new guiding document will be released at the 12th Open Working Group (OWG).

Video message of Mr. NABARRO

Development is a difficult process, and in particular sustainable development (SD), which requires extraordinary political effort.

An important question is what should come after the Post-2015 Agenda? The logical way to continue would be SD. To establish SDGs, economic, social and environmental factors have to be taken into consideration, and when deciding on SDGs it is very important that there should not be too many goals set. The issues that slow down SD are that it is rather difficult to finance and the questions of how climate change should be integrated and progress measured?

The current progress is driven by member states, who have regular working groups to condense input, with one of the current focus areas being poverty reduction.

Susan BROWN:

WWF's vision and advocacy objectives

Current state of play:

At present a political divergence is occurring since environmental protection is seen as a constraint to economic growth and poverty eradication. So the question is, whose obligation is it to protect the environment?

Developing countries want more poverty eradication plans, sustainable peace building programs and less environmental goals. The WWF is concerned that environmental protection could be pushed out of development plans by politics.

Advocacy approach:

Multilateral negotiations in New York, need to make clear that ecosystems have to be intact to provide food, clean water, raw materials and other services to combat poverty.

The WWF is interested in the Post-2015 Agenda and the MDGs because it is a way for it to make a change from the ground level upwards. The WWF also advocates a stand-alone goal on water and feels the need to include natural systems protection in other MDGs more heavily.

Hans HERREN:

Millennium Institute

The Millennium Institute is a non-profit organization which offers its systems know-how as a tool for wise-, inclusive-, equitable- and sustainable development. The Millennium Institute's goal is to help governments to make informed decisions about development, to ensure long term thinking and appropriate solutions to issues. A serious problem of today's development politics in developing countries is the fact that many uninformed decisions are made and are only short terms fixes. The destruction of the environment, which provides us with food and clean water, along with other services, is among those problems. Growth can also have negative impacts on the social environment and currently, this is another issue not appropriately addressed.

Michael RÜTIMANN:

Findings of Biovision

To date issues addressed best in developing countries are hunger and malnutrition, the empowerment of smallholders, and the reduction of losses and waste in food systems. However, there are other issues, the most important being more sustainable food systems, built on diversity, resilience and productive soils, and reshaped trade policies with less volatile food prices, and inclusive decision-making processes, which need to be addressed with higher priority at this stage.

To be able to fulfil Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), multi-stakeholder assessments of sustainable food production and food security need to be carried out on a national level. This should then be followed by Guidance on multi-stakeholder assessments by the Committee on World Food Security, on a global level. The next step then is to put in place actions and policies conducive to implement sustainable agriculture.

Fulai SHENG:

UNEPs' understanding of challenges associated with the concept of Green Economy (GE)

1. UNEP considers the latest efforts to implement SDGs better than previous ones.
2. The latest Post-2015 Agenda document integrates social, economic and environmental factors better than previous documents.
3. The latest Post-2015 Agenda document treats the environment like a threat, instead of looking at it as chance to gain beneficial services, useful for GE.

SD and SDGs present an ambitious goal, which, nevertheless, gives us a direction as to which way development should go. GE is an important tool for the implementation of the SD and SDGs and is composed of four pillars: clean technology, environment, humanity and a social aspect. These four pillars need to be considered in all SDGs. However, SDGs need to be more specific in pinpointing necessary tasks and what the final goal of SD is.

For GE to take off, more and constant investments are needed. In other words, to achieve the SDGs substantial investments are needed.

For more information on this meeting, go to:

<http://www.genevainternational.org/navigate.php?kind=1&id=803&lang=en&last=55&lastsub=68>

Calendar

June 2014

- 23-27: United Nations Environmental Assembly (Nairobi, Kenya) <http://climate-iisd.org/events/un-environmental-assembly-of-unepl/>
- June 30- July 9: High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (New York) <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?menu=1768>

July 2014

- 8-9: UN ECOSOC- Annual Ministerial Review (New York) <http://post2015.iisd.org/events/2013-substantive-session-of-ecosoc/>
- 10-11: ECOSOC- Development Cooperation Forum (New York, United States) <http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/newfunct/2014dcf.shtml>
- 14-18: Open Working Group Negotiations on SDGs –Fifth Meeting (New York, United States) <http://uncsd.iisd.org/events/open-working-group-negotiations-on-sdgs-fifth-meeting/>

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-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>