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CoNGO COMMUNICATION No.14 - February 2015

Post-2015 development agenda

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1. Presidential Introduction

The process for finalizing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and giving definitive shape to the Post-2015 Development Agenda is now so charged with meetings and consultations, virtually all at UN headquarters in New York, that it is more than a full-time job to follow attentively the multiple stages and intricacies. There is an evident determination on the part of the UN General Assembly President, the UN Secretary-General, many member governments, and of course the multitude of engaged civil society actors, to maintain and even accelerate the momentum. This is essential if serious, long-term and implementable decisions are to be made by the UN General Assembly next September.

Civil Society has a crucial role: in raising public awareness of, and support for, the SDGs and the Post-2015 Agenda; in maintaining a healthy and informed public pressure on governments to fulfil the promises they made at the 2012 UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) and since; and in responsibly insisting on incorporating all the core components of a people-centred, human-rights-anchored Agenda.

I suggest that in the next months we also use a somewhat neglected part of the UN apparatus to highlight "people issues" and the obligation to devote adequate attention to the needs of future generations. I refer here to the plethora of UN DAYS, which can be used much more effectively to spread essential messages worldwide: reaching schools, villages, communities, cooperatives, local officials, indeed all those constituencies that ought to know just how important to them are the endless deliberations within the United Nations. Over the next months we could usefully take greater advantage of the documentation and outreach of, for example.

- February 20 - World Day of Social Justice
- March 8 - International Women's Day
- March 22 - World Water Day
- March 23 - World Meteorological Day
- April 7 - World Health Day
- May 17 - World Telecommunications and Information Society Day
- May 22 - International Day for Biological Diversity
- June 5 - World Environment Day
- June 6 - World Oceans Day
- July 11 - World Population Day
- August 9 - International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples.

Civil Society ingenuity is unlimited, and can make of the UN Days a more effective mobilizing and integrating factor for the inclusiveness we seek for the Post-2015 Agenda. Go to it!

I again thank most warmly Nathalie Schenker, CoNGO's recent intern who has, while now in a full-time job, volunteered her time and skills to producing this issue of the CoNGO COMMUNICATION. Around CoNGO the volunteer spirit is alive and kicking! You are all welcome to join in.

Cyril Ritchie
President of CoNGO

2. “Delivering the Post-2015 Agenda”

Interactive Hearings in New York

The President of the 69th session of the UN General Assembly, H.E. Sam Kahamba Kutesa, organized interactive hearings that will take place in advance of the five high-level thematic debates and events. They are hosted as a contribution to delivering on and implementing a transformative post-2015 development agenda.

Dates:

- 9-10 February 2015: High-Level Thematic Debate on Means of Implementation for a Transformative Post-2015 development agenda
- 6 March 2015: High-Level Thematic Debate on Advancing Gender equality and empowerment of Women in the Post-2015 development agenda
- 6 April 2015 (tbc): High-Level Thematic Debate on Promoting Tolerance and Reconciliation
- 15 May 2015: High-Level Thematic Debate on Strengthening Cooperation between the UN and regional and sub-regional organizations
- 29 June 2015: High-Level Event on Climate Change

→ you can find an extensive list of the major events on the road towards the SDG adoption in our calendar at the end of this CoNGO Communication!!

Further information on the events is available at: <http://www.un.org/pga/interactive-briefing-with-civil-society/>

3. The 17 (provisional) Sustainable Development Goals

As of July 2014

Proposals by the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals to the General Assembly adopted in July 2014.

- Goal 1: End poverty in all its form everywhere
- Goal 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
- Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
- Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
- Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
- Goal 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
- Goal 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
- Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

- Goal 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation
- Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries
- Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
- Goal 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
- Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts*
- Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
- Goal 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss
- Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
- Goal 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

** Acknowledging that the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is the primary international, intergovernmental forum for negotiating the global response to climate change.*

4. UN NGO Committee on Mental Health, New York and the NGO Forum for Health, Geneva

Call for Briefs Request for Endorsement of Statements for SDGs

Hereafter, is the one page Joint Statement of the UN NGO Committee on Mental Health, New York and the NGO Forum for Health in Geneva in support of the inclusion of language to reframe and integrate mental health into Goal 3 (Health) of the proposed UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Their previous efforts were successful in advocating for the inclusion of mental health, which appears in paragraph 5 of the July 2014 UN NCD (Non-Communicable Diseases) Review Outcome Document, which is also the foundation for the connection between physical and mental health link with NCDs in Goal 3.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals Draft.

They are now requesting your support for reframing and integrating mental health into SDG Goal 3. This would be an important step forward in the recognition of parity between physical and mental health and utilizing language integral for evidence based assessment. In addition, the inclusion of the reference to the WHO NCD Action Plan and the WHO Mental Health Action Plan in Goal 3.4 is an important way to include timelines and markers for implementation. Underlined words are recommended for inclusion.

Integrating Mental Health into the Post 2015 Development Agenda

Goal 3 - Health

We, the NGO Committee on Mental Health (New York) affiliated with the Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations (CoNGO) and the NGO Forum for Health (Geneva), together comprising a consortium of over 80 multi-disciplinary NGOs, jointly support the integration of mental health into Goal 3 of the Post 2015 Development Agenda and efforts to ensure its implementation at all levels.

It is important to build on agreed upon resolutions and documents in all areas to achieve an overarching and comprehensive Post 2015 Development Agenda.

With regard to health, we are pleased to see that a health goal has been included in the current draft. However, whereas Goal 3 is intended to be comprehensive, it fails to include mental health as a cross-cutting issue fundamental to development, and therefore, it is important to reframe Goal 3.

Why is it important to reframe Goal 3 to include "mental health" in the title which, at present, makes reference only to "well-being"?

There is a notable lack of evidence-based health measures for "well-being" as well as a lack of an agreed definition. Whereas, to the contrary, there are evidence-based measures to assess mental health diagnostic categories, which are critical to the measurement of change and the evaluation of progress.

Furthermore, the WHO constitution and UN human rights standards make reference to the right of all to the "highest attainable standard of physical and mental health", and a rights-based approach is a necessary foundation for sustainable development. It is time that parity between physical and mental health be given its appropriate place in the global agenda for development.

*For these reasons, the NGO Committee on Mental Health and the NGO Forum for Health urge that "mental health" be specifically added to the title of Goal 3 in internationally agreed language, that would now read: **"Ensure healthy lives and promote physical and mental health and well-being for all at all ages".***

It is important also to continue to build on other negotiated agreements. Integration of the WHO Mental Health Action Plan 2013-2020, was agreed in the UN NCD Review outcome document of July 2014, which addresses the challenges of the burden of disease on society. Depression is projected by WHO to become the number one contributor to the burden of disease by 2030, surpassing all other NCDs.

*Therefore, Goal 3.4 must include reference to both the WHO NCD Action Plan and the WHO Mental Health Action Plan as follows: **"by 2030, reduce by one-third preventable mortality from non-communicable diseases (NCDs) through prevention and treatment in accordance with the WHO Global Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases, and promote mental health and well-being in accordance with the WHO Comprehensive Mental Health Action Plan 2013-2020**. This is the most effective way of including agreed timelines and targets to ensure successful implementation of global health goals.*

If your organization would like to sign on to endorse the statement, please send the following information to drcarll@optonline.net

- Organization Name, address, contact information
- Is your organization in consultative status with ECOSOC?
- Name of person submitting endorsement

For Further Information Contact:

NGO Committee on Mental Health, United Nations, New York - mentalhealthngo@optonline.net

NGO Forum for Health, Geneva - info@ngo-forum-health.ch

5. Secretary-General's priorities for 2015

"It can and must be the time for global action"

At the General Assembly's briefing, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon presented his priorities for 2015 – a "year of opportunity". He called for transformative global action that would ensure sustainable development and human dignity for all.

Ban praised the Member States' work to build a new development agenda, including a set of sustainable development goals, and said: "In my synthesis report, now delivered to you – The Road to Dignity by 2030: Ending Poverty, Transforming All Lives and Protecting the Planet – I am offering my support of this work and some further ideas on the road ahead."

The adoption of the new agenda would be the "signal moment" of 2015. Moreover, there is a number of upcoming UN conferences this year – on disaster risk reduction in March, on financing for development in July, and on climate change in December, as well as a summit-level meeting in New York this coming September – which all seek to tackle the linked challenges of sustainable development. "At each of these milestones, we will continue to be ambitious to end poverty, reducing inequality and exploit the opportunities that accompanied the climate challenge," he said.

Further, the Secretary-General made a specific reference to the impact on development of the Ebola outbreak in West Africa, the impacts of war in Syria, Ukraine, Central African Republic, northern Mali and elsewhere, pointing out that several other countries were at risk of conflict because of their domestic situations. Welcoming the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty, he said peace and security is not achievable in a world where nuclear weapons were available. Despite having endorsed the principle of "R2P" 10 years ago, the international community still failed to act on early warning signs in too many crises – he urged reclamation of the people-centred focus.

As the United Nations enters the year marking its 70th anniversary, it is faced with huge responsibilities but also opportunity. "If our work unfolds as it should, by the end of this year, our Organization will be enriched with a new vision for development, new ideas for the maintenance of peace and security, a renewed embrace of human rights, and a stronger United Nations to help bring it all to life," he said.

source: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=49752#.VLajGiuG9yU>

6. UN Climate Change Conference (UNFCCC)

Way towards a “meaningful” climate agreement

The UN Climate Change Conference (UNFCCC), also known as Conference of the Parties (COP 20), held its 12-day meeting in December in Lima in order to frame a new universal treaty which would enter force by 2020. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon hailed the outcome of the climate conference reached by the 196 parties which is setting the groundwork for a more conclusive agreement to be reached in December 2015 in Paris.

“The Secretary-General urges all Parties, at their first meeting in February [...] to enter into substantive negotiations on the draft text of the 2015 agreement coming from the Conference.” Ban acknowledged the promising capitalisation for the Green Climate Fund and applauded delegates for having made “important advances” in clarifying their needs for preparing their so-called *Intended Nationally Determined Contributions* (INDCs – the commitments countries are expected to make in order to keep average global temperature rise below 2°C) to the new agreement and in “finalizing the institutional architecture for a mechanism on loss and damage.”

Discussions on the differentiation between the obligations and responsibilities of developing and developed countries were a reason for the conference to be “very, very challenging” (UNFCCC Executive Secretary, Christiana Figueres). Nevertheless, the Secretary-General called on all parties, especially the world's major economies, to submit their “ambitious national commitments well in advance of Paris” and added that he looked forward to working on a new Lima-Paris Action Agenda to “catalyse action on climate change to further increase ambition before 2020 and to support the 2015 agreement.”

source: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=49600#.VLapryuG9yU>

7. UN Global Compact Board

Global Action for Sustainable Development

Chaired by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, the UN Global Compact Board held its first meeting of the year in January. The meeting focused on the priorities including Global Compact Local Networks, engagement of small- and medium enterprises (SMEs), and opportunities to go to scale. The meeting was held in the context of the UN preparing the new sustainable development agenda and reaching a global climate agreement – in which the private sector will play important roles.

The Board is composed of representatives from business, civil society, labour and the United Nations. The Secretary-General commended them for their wide ranging efforts to drive the corporate sustainability movement – and encouraged Board members to do more to advance the SDGs in a critical year of global action and leadership. “I have never seen such a committed group of leaders. [...] No organization is as committed, has such a strong solidarity and unity of purpose. You are really fit for purpose”, he said. “Ending poverty, transforming lives and protecting the planet is not easy. [...] I count on your strong support on this matter”.

source: <https://www.unglobalcompact.org/news/1591-01-09-2015>

Visit the UN Global Compact Board's website here:

https://www.unglobalcompact.org/AboutTheGC/The_Global_Compact_Board/index.html

8. UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction

“Major milestone” in earthquake risk assessment

The UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) has welcomed the launch of a new web-based platform called *OpenQuake*. It will provide global access to critical information on earthquakes and enable “cutting-edge” risk assessment aimed at limiting the hazard of these potentially devastating natural events.

Margareta Wahlström, head of UNISDR, called the platform a “major milestone” for the international community of earthquake hazard and risk experts. “Loss of life and economic loss from earthquakes can only be mitigated or prevented through disaster risk reduction (DRR) efforts that include urban planning , improved regulation through building codes and compliance with those codes”, she said.

The Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction is scheduled to take place from 14-18 March in Sendai, Japan. The Conference will adopt a new framework for DRR, and discuss seismic risk as one of its major themes.

In addition, Wahlström urged for a diffusion of tools to further assess exposure, hazard, building vulnerability, community resilience and assistance in developing the capacity of member countries and other stakeholders.

source: http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=49861#.VMpt_f5wva4

Visit the UNISDR's website here: <http://www.unisdr.org/>

Register here to participate at the Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction:

<http://www.wcdrr.org/conference/registration/>

9. World Economic Forum 2015

SG urged for global action on development, gender equality, climate change

Ban Ki-moon travelled to the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos, Switzerland, to push the UN agenda for 2015 which is a critical year for the organization and its member states as they confront the imminent deadline for achievement of the landmark MDGs and work to achieve a meaningful global agreement at the climate conference.

The Secretary-General urged the world leaders to maintain their focus on a broad range of climate, development and gender equality issues, warning that as the global community continues to face multiple crises, the new year must be a time for “strong commitment” from international stakeholders. “With the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda, with a set of sustainable development goals and a universal and meaningful climate change agreement

by December this year in Paris, I think we can set our lives, our world, on course for a better future”.

In a separate meeting, he underscored the importance of delineating a credible sustainable development goal strategy to pick up where the MDGs leave off, adding that Member States would need to devise “very robust, visionary, and ambitious targets” in order to finalize the Millennium targets stated hope of ending poverty. The Secretary-General also underlined the importance of adopting a people-centred agenda and to achieve gender equality (with particular reference to the HeForShe campaign).

In Davos civil society also launched a major mobilization called “Action2015” and plans for a series of “LiveEarth” were made public.

source: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=49884#.VMpuYv5wva4>

Information on the WEF: <http://www.weforum.org/>

10. Calendar

NOTICE

1. The CoNGO Calendar is a service to the NGO constituency to enable each individual organization to determine, in good time, its possible or desired involvement in the events mentioned, in accordance with the organization's own statutory or programmatic focus.
2. The conferences and meetings listed in the CoNGO Calendar are not under the convening or invitational or access responsibility of CoNGO. They are listed for the information of readers, and any queries about any event should be addressed solely to the organizer of the event, not to CoNGO.

Cyril Ritchie, President of CoNGO

2015

70th Anniversary of the United Nations Organization (1945-2015)

http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=48149#.U9oWsvl_vTo

World Summit on Social Development-Copenhagen+20

<http://undesadspd.org/CalendarofEvents.aspx>

March

March 6: UN GA: High-Level Thematic Debate on Advancing Gender equality and empowerment of Women in the Post-2015 development agenda (UN Headquarters, New York)

<http://www.un.org/pga/interactive-briefing-with-civil-society/>

March 9-20: UN ECOSOC Commission on the Status of Women: CSW59 / Beijing+20 – "Implementing the Beijing Platform for Action" (UN Headquarters, New York)

<http://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/csw59-2015>

March 14-18: UNISDR: 3rd World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (Sendai, Japan)

<http://www.unisdr.org/we/coordinate/wcdrr>

March 23-27: Post-2015 Intergovernmental: SDGs and targets (UN Headquarters, New York)

http://www.un.org/pga/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2014/12/181214_post-2015-intergovernmental-negotiations.pdf

April

April 6 (tbc): UN GA: High-Level Thematic Debate on Promoting Tolerance and Reconciliation (UN Headquarters, New York)

<http://www.un.org/pga/interactive-briefing-with-civil-society/>

April 8-10: Development Cooperation Forum (DCF): High-level Symposium – “Development cooperation for people and planet: What will it take?” (Incheon, South Korea)
<http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/newfunct/dcfrok.shtml>

April 12-17: World Water Forum: 7th World Water Forum – “Water for Our Future” (Daegu and Gyeongbuk, South Korea)
<http://worldwaterforum7.org/en>

April 20-24: Post-2015 Intergovernmental: Mol and Global Partnership for SD (UN Headquarters, New York)
http://www.un.org/pga/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2014/12/181214_post-2015-intergovernmental-negotiations.pdf

May

May 15: UN GA: High-Level Thematic Debate on Strengthening Cooperation between the UN and regional and sub-regional organizations (UN Headquarters, New York)
<http://www.un.org/pga/interactive-briefing-with-civil-society/>

May 18-22: Post-2015 Intergovernmental: Follow up and review (UN Headquarters, New York)
http://www.un.org/pga/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2014/12/181214_post-2015-intergovernmental-negotiations.pdf

May 28: Partnership forum (UN Headquarters, New York)
<http://esango.un.org/irene/ecosoc.html?page=viewContent&nr=25134&type=8>

June

June 2 (tbc): UN GA: Informal hearings with NGOs, civil society, major groups and the private sector (UN Headquarters, New York)
<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=13&nr=1012&menu=1561>

June 22-25: Post-2015 Intergovernmental: Negotiations on outcome document (UN Headquarters, New York)
http://www.un.org/pga/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2014/12/181214_post-2015-intergovernmental-negotiations.pdf

June 23-25: UN Global Compact Board: Global Compact+15 – “Business as a force for good” (New York)
https://www.unglobalcompact.org/NewsAndEvents/event_calendar/index.html

June 26-28: High Level Political Forum: Strengthening integration, implementation and review – the HLPF after 2015 (UN Headquarters, New York)
<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf/2015>

June 26-July 8: Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform: High-level Political Forum 2015, 3rd Session – "Strengthening integration, implementation and review – the HLPF after 2015" (New York)
<http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?menu=1556>

June 29: UN GA: High-Level Event on Climate Change (UN Headquarters, New York)
<http://www.un.org/pga/interactive-briefing-with-civil-society/>

June 29-July 2: 8th World Environmental Education Congress – "Planet and People" (Gothenburg, Sweden)
<http://weec2015.org/>

July

July 13-16: UN: 3rd International Conference on Financing for Development (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia)
<http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/third-conference-ffd/index.htm>

July 20-24: Post-2015 Intergovernmental: Negotiations on outcome document (UN Headquarters, New York)
http://www.un.org/pga/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2014/12/181214_post-2015-intergovernmental-negotiations.pdf

June 27-31: Post-2015 Intergovernmental: Negotiations on outcome document (UN Headquarters, New York)
http://www.un.org/pga/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2014/12/181214_post-2015-intergovernmental-negotiations.pdf

September

September 25-27: UN: High-level Summit on the SDGs (UN Headquarters, New York)
<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/summit>

November

November 30-December 11: COP 21 Climate Change Conference (Paris, France)
<http://www.cop21.gouv.fr/en>

2016

UN Commission on Human Settlements: HABITAT III
<http://unhabitat.org/habitat-iii/>

May

UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs: UN World Humanitarian Summit
(Istanbul, Turkey)

<http://www.worldhumanitariansummit.org/>

May 23-27: UN Environment Assembly: Second Meeting of the UN Environment
Assembly (Nairobi, Kenya)

<http://uncsd.iisd.org/events/second-meeting-of-the-un-environment-assembly/>

2018

UN-Habitat: 9th World Urban Forum (WUF9)(Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia)

<http://unhabitat.org/kuala-lumpur-to-host-world-urban-forum-in-2018/>