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CoNGO COMMUNICATION No.15 - March 2015

Post-2015 development agenda

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1. Presidential Introduction

In CoNGO COMMUNICATION No. 14 I urged paying greater attention to - and using for public awareness purposes - the plethora of UN DAYS that fill the calendar. Such DAYS draw attention to a major positive cause to be supported (for example International Day of Sport for Development and Peace, on April 6); a major negative issue to be combatted (e.g. International Day of Zero Tolerance to Female Genital Mutilation, on February 6); or call for universal honouring of persons who have greatly suffered (e.g. Day of Remembrance for all Victims of Chemical Warfare, on April 29).

Since these UN DAYS are prepared well in advance by the relevant UN Secretariat units, NGOs specializing in the respective issue have the opportunity to offer their technical, professional or community knowledge to provide input to the publications, videos, radio programmes or other media productions that will be used worldwide before and on the Day itself. This would enhance the quality and breadth of the material produced, and thus make them more relevant and useful to civil society actors at all levels. I recall that one purpose of the UN DAYS is to raise citizens' awareness of the extraordinary variety and depth of work the UN does every day of the year, in so many different areas. The Days also provide the opportunity for civil society actors to engage with partners - and potential partners - to highlight the issue at hand, and to generate new or expanded support for the programmes they are undertaking in that particular area.

To highlight some of the future UN Days that could be built upon along the path towards the SDGs and the Post-2015 Development Agenda, I give here some additional examples beyond the cut-off date of August that I used in COMMUNICATION No. 14:

- September 12: UN Day for South-South Cooperation
- September 15: International Day of Democracy
- September 27: World Tourism Day
- October 5: World Habitat day
- October 13: International Day for Disaster Reduction
- October 17: International Day for the Eradication of Poverty
- November 6: International day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict
- November 19: World Toilet Day
- December 3: International Day of Persons with Disabilities
- December 18: International Migrants Day

And not to forget that October 24-30 is the World Disarmament WEEK.

There is thus unlimited scope for advancing the Post-2015 Development Agenda in multiple ways, multiple fora, multiple communities, multiple networks.
Let NGO imagination loose!

Once more Nathalie Schenker, CoNGO's 2014 intern, has utilized her skills and her own time outside her full-time job to prepare this issue of CoNGO COMMUNICATION. Deepest thanks to her for this and for the example she sets.

Cyril Ritchie
President of CoNGO

2. “2015: Time for Global Action”

UN system-wide campaign

As 2015 is a critical year for the global community and the United Nations where several decisions have to be taken (on disaster risk reduction, financing for development, sustainable development, and climate) the Department of Public Information launched a UN system-wide campaign called “2015: Time for Global Action”.

The website aims to build public support for the sustainable development agenda and shows the issues behind some of this year’s most important events. The website will serve as a source of news, as a portal to UN system websites, and as the anchor for a robust social media campaign. It will also link to the extensive civil society mobilization under way through the concurrent Action 2015 campaign. 17 issues pages – one for each of the proposed SDGs – provide facts and figures boxes and links to relevant UN agencies.

Visit the website, which is soon available in the 6 UN languages: www.un.org/action2015

3. High-Level Thematic Debate on Means of Implementation

Need for better funding

Despite sufficient global liquidity, “a huge financing gap for infrastructure” remains, said UN Assembly President Sam Kutesa. At the High-Level Thematic Debate on Means of Implementation for a Transformative Post-2015 Development Agenda he underlined the need for better financing in order to fully satisfy the breadth and scope of the new UN development agenda.

Funding needs to come from “all sources” – public and private, domestic and international. Moreover, the General Assembly President reminded participants about “the important development role of parliaments” in determining budgets and monitoring policy implementation.

There has been significant progress in meeting the MDG targets. For example, global poverty has been halved well ahead of the 2015 deadline; in developing countries, 90% of children now enjoy primary education; the number of people lacking access to improved drinking water has halved, and the fight against malaria and tuberculosis has shown results, according to the UN.

But challenges persist, the SDG Agenda will aim to address issues such as the 73 million young people are looking for work and many more are trapped in exploitative jobs.

source: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=50052>

4. Partnerships for development

ECOSOC promotes multi-stakeholder approach

ECOSOC president, Martin Sajdik, said that multi-stakeholder partnerships are crucial for achieving global development – it requires more than work of States alone, a diverse cross-section of actors must be drawn in. “I think that without an all-encompassing approach towards the implementation of the post-2015 agenda, we will not be able to really fully succeed and implement the agenda,” said Mr. Sajdik.

The new Post-2015 Agenda will be funded by bilateral and multilateral donors, foundations and non-profits – the agenda's framework and funding will include both private sector and other non-State actors. “You cannot only rely on State actors,” Mr. Sajdik emphasized, “if we want to have a development agenda that is for all countries of the World, both developed and developing, we cannot ignore the fact that there are many more actors.”

Also the UN Secretary-General emphasized in his report “The Road to Dignity by 2030” that strengthening the means of implementation to revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development is essential. To that end, Mr. Sajdik said the UN is eager to more actively engage with business.

“Engaging with the private sector can mean more than generating financial support, but also tapping into skills and innovative solutions for addressing the root causes of poverty, and advancing the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development,” he said, adding: “We must work closely with stakeholders like the private sector [...] to build a climate that is open to the needs of enterprises and the very real determinants that effect how they make decisions.”

source: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=50074>

5. Climate change and sustainable development

Low-carbon growth needed for SDGs

At the Delhi Sustainable Development Summit, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon called for countries to take a low-carbon approach to development in the coming years.

“Over the next fifteen years, the world will make massive investments in new infrastructure for cities, energy and agriculture,” he said. “If this spending is directed towards low-carbon goods, technologies and services, we will be on our way towards a more sustainable, equitable future. But if we ignore the low-carbon pathway, we may fail to achieve the sustainable development goals,” he added.

This year's summits on sustainable development and climate change are complementary and interdependent; renewable energy can contribute to cleaner air and better health, climate-smart agriculture can boost water and food security. Action is necessary because "climate change threatens to undermine hard-earned development gains [...] But combatting it is an opportunity for low-carbon growth that will benefit people and the planet."

The Secretary-General underlined the need for governments to build policy frameworks in order to build the momentum necessary to pursue the correct, sustainable course and said the private sector, civil society and the scientific community also had important roles to play.

"We need all hands on deck to meet the climate challenge," he said. "Now is the moment. It is time for action – time for a global agreement."

source: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=50004>

6. UN Climate Talks

Agreement on text for the key Paris Climate Summit

In Geneva, UN member states agreed on a 86 page formal draft negotiating text for the COP21 summit in Paris in December. The six-day conference was the first formal climate meeting since the Lima summit in December and according to Christiana Figueres, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), very successful: "I am extremely encouraged by the constructive spirit and the speed at which negotiators have worked during the past week. We now have a formal negotiating text, which contains the views and concerns of all countries. The Lima Draft has now been transformed into the negotiating text and enjoys the full ownership of all countries."

It was decided to add three special sessions to this year's schedule of climate dates including talks about "intended nationally determined contributions", the commitments to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions that are seen as central to achieving low-carbon development.

Now the governments have to submit their national plans by a deadline that runs from March to June. In June, the negotiators need to reach consensus on the content of the new climate deal and formal negotiations will continue in Bonn, Germany.

This blueprint of the new global agreement will be translated into the UN's six official languages and then circulated to all the parties in the first quarter of 2015, according to the UNFCCC.

source: <http://climateactionprogramme.us5.list-manage.com/track/click?u=d193bc5a2d5ae9b88e6ae7d36&id=056fe490e2&e=5efbf2ccd>

7. World Meteorological Organization (WMO)

2014 was the hottest year on record

In advance of the climate change negotiations in Geneva (8-13 February), the United Nations World Meteorological Organization (WMO) released its latest findings on its global temperature analysis.

The year 2014 is ranked as the “hottest year on record”, and this is part of a larger climate trend. Devastating weather patterns and increasing temperatures will last into the foreseeable future as global warming is expected to continue. “The overall warming trend is more important than the ranking of an individual year”, clarified WMO Secretary-General Michel Jarraud.

High sea temperatures have contributed to exceptionally heavy rainfalls and floods in many countries and extreme drought in others in the last year. This diverse climate impact which afflicted nations around the planet throughout 2014 was, in fact, consistent with the expectation of a changing climate, stated Mr. Jarraud.

In addition, 14 of the 15 hottest years recorded have all been in the 21st century, adding to the UN agency's expectation that global warming would continue “given that rising levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere and the increasing heat content of the oceans are committing us to a warmer future.”

source: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=49970>

To read the WMO's press release (including some figures):

<https://www.wmo.int/media/?q=content/warming-trend-continues-2014>

8. “Technology Bank” for least developed countries

New UN initiative for science, technology and innovation

At an international gathering in Gebze, Turkey, a High-Level panel – established by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon last year – agreed to prepare a study on the creation of a “Technology Bank” aimed at addressing science, technology and innovation (STI) gaps in least developed countries (LDCs). A key undertaking of the new study will be to identify existing international initiatives in order to limit duplication of effort, as well as to take into consideration streamlined management and costs.

“Once operational, the Bank will make critical contributions to transforming the lives of the poorest segments of the global community”, said Gyan Acharya, UN High Representative for LDCs. As the state of science and technology is weak in those countries, they face immense challenges in their use of science, technology and innovation to fight poverty and improve the socio-economic conditions of their people. Acquiring new technologies and building a knowledge base is critical for the socio-economic transformation of the LDCs.

The genesis of a multilateral effort to advance and accelerate science and technology among LDCs emerged from the 4th UN Conference on the Least Developed Countries which was held in Istanbul, Turkey in May 2011. That gathering called for an evaluation of a proposed Technology

Bank, Science, and Information support mechanism, which would help improve research, promote networking institutions and help LDCs access critical technologies.

source: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=50116>

9. UN ECOSOC e-discussion

From MDGs to the SDGs

UN DESA and UNDP have co-organized an electronic discussion on the 2015 ECOSOC theme. From 17 February to 17 March 2015 you can discuss the topic "Managing the transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the sustainable development goals: What it will take".

The purpose of the e-discussion is to engage policymakers, experts, practitioners and stakeholder groups in a global dialogue on specific aspects of the 2015 ECOSOC theme. It consists of four concurrently running thematic windows, each led by an expert moderator. The thematic windows address: policy choices and mindset change for an integrated agenda; adaptation by institutions and structures; partnerships for the implementation of the SDGs and the post-2015 agenda; and monitoring and review.

To get further information and join the discussion, please visit:

<http://www.unteamworks.org/amr2015>

10. Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform

Various information on the SDG process

The UN Division for Sustainable Development (DSD) is an institution that provides leadership in promoting and coordinating the implementation of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Agenda. It aims to support the effective participation of major groups in the UN political processes and its analytical and capacity development work.

With its Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform it gives wide access to information and knowledge for sustainable development.

The website provides information on:

- Post 2015 process
- High-Level Political Forum
- Library with 10,000+ records
- Events
- Newsletter
- And much further information

Visit the website:

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/5977Intergovernmental%20Negotiations%20Post2015%20Dev.Agenda%20-%206%20February%202015.pdf>

11. UN Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities

For full inclusion in the SDGs

During the Second Session of International Negotiations on the Post-2015 Development Agenda in mid-February in New York, UN human rights experts warned that “one billion people – 15% of the world’s population – are persons with disabilities, and their rights cannot be ignored.”

“No one should be left behind if we want to ensure a fully inclusive society for all,” they said, urging international negotiators and all UN Member States to firmly include the human rights of persons with disabilities in the new development framework.

“The inclusion of persons with disabilities in the SDGs is fundamental if we are to achieve sustainable development that is genuinely rights-based. This commitment must also be reflected in the Financing for Development Outcome Document,” said the new UN Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities, Catalina Devandas Aguilar.

She noted that, “as we enter the critical final stages of negotiations on the new SDGs, it is imperative that we maintain the important achievements already attained and that the global community fulfils its promise to guarantee human rights and development for all on an equal basis, including for persons with disabilities.”

A key issue for many people with disabilities is food security. Worldwide, an estimated 805 million people are chronically undernourished. Since many persons with disabilities live in absolute poverty, these two large populations overlap to a considerable extent, making food security of utmost importance.

“We know that nutrition and disability are closely linked. Both children and adults are often discriminated against, due to social stigma and negative cultural norms,” the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Hilal Elver, said. “Food must be physically and economically accessible,” Ms Elver added. “To achieve this, States must ensure that a disability perspective is taken fully into account in nutrition policy and programming, maternal and child health policy, and broader health initiatives.”

“The scope of the post-2015 development goals and the Financing for Development Outcome Document provides a unique opportunity to ensure persons with disabilities are not just more visible, but are also active participants in the global agenda, and it is an opportunity that should not be missed,” the experts concluded.

source:

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=15592&LangID=E>

12. UN Committee of Experts on Public Administration (CEPA)

Discussion on Sustainable Development Goals

The 14th session of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration of ECOSOC will be held from 20 to 24 April 2015 at the United Nations Headquarters, in New York.

The main issue for discussion will be “Building trust in government in pursuit of the sustainable development goals, what will it take?” The three sub-issues will be:

1. Redefining relationships and responsibilities to support participatory governance and responsive public service delivery, including through e-solutions
2. Strengthening innovation, prioritization, informed decision-making and integration of policy development processes for enhanced impact
3. Promoting accountable institutions, ethical leadership and integrity to enhance confidence in efforts to deliver sustainable development

Registration is open to NGOs in consultative status with ECOSOC. The deadline is 20 March 2015. To register for this meeting please click here: <http://bit.ly/17AEk4Y>

For more information on the event please visit: <http://www.unpan.org/cepa>

13. UNESCO-Japan Prize on Education for Sustainable Development

New award for outstanding activities

Officially announced at the UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in November 2014 in Japan, the UNESCO-Japan Prize will be awarded for the first time in 2015. The purpose of the UNESCO-Japan Prize on Education for Sustainable Development is to reward the outstanding efforts of individuals, institutions, organizations or other entities engaged in activities on ESD, within the framework of the Global Action Programme on ESD (GAP).

The Director-General of UNESCO will officially invite the submission of nominations to the Secretariat of the Prize, by 30 April. Governments of Member States, in consultation with their National Commissions, as well as non-governmental organizations maintaining official partnerships with the organization and active in relevant fields covered by the prize can submit candidates. Every year, a jury will designate three prize winners which will receive 50,000 US Dollar each.

For further information on the prize, please visit:

<http://unesco.us8.list-manage.com/track/click?u=ed96882dc5043627b08300be8&id=dc2bd40d57&e=ebd2c64ae2>

14. 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

March

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>

until March 17: UN ECOSOC: e-discussion – "Managing the transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the sustainable development goals: What it will take".

<http://www.unteamworks.org/amr2015>

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: Means of implementation and Global Partnership for Sustainable Development (UN Headquarters, New York)
http://www.un.org/pga/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2014/12/181214_post-2015-intergovernmental-negotiations.pdf

April 20-24: ECOSOC: Committee of Experts on Public Administration: 14th session – “Building trust in government in pursuit of the sustainable development goals, what will it take?” (UN Headquarters, in New York)
<http://www.unpan.org/cepa>

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-July 8: 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

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/>