

## Global Cooperation to Deliver the Post-2015 Development Agenda

*Presentation to the High-Level Event of the United Nations General Assembly on Contributions of North-South, South-South, Triangular Cooperation, and ICT for Development to the Implementation of the Post-2015 Development Agenda*

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**Mr. Chair, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,**

I have been asked to focus my remarks on the contributions of North-South, South-South, and Triangular cooperation to the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda. I will mention ICT only in passing, as this has been covered in the enlightening presentations from other panellists.

### **The Implementation Challenge**

I'd like to start by taking a step back in order to reflect on the scale of the task ahead of us. Before we can talk about how we are going to implement a new development agenda, we need to understand – in broad terms – what we have to implement.

Thanks to a number of contributions to the post-2015 debate, we are now beginning to gain an idea of what the priorities between 2015 and 2030 will be.

In particular, the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (OWG) has given us a working draft of goals and targets.<sup>1</sup> Of course, none of these are yet agreed – I would underline that – but they give us a sense of the size of the implementation task that faces us.

I think it is important that we are under no illusions: the post-2015 agenda will be tens if not hundreds of times more ambitious than the one set out in the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Take three components of the emerging agenda:

The first goal proposed by the OWG is: *end extreme poverty everywhere*. And the first target proposed under that goal is *eradicate extreme poverty by 2030*. There is, I think, universal agreement that ending extreme poverty is an overriding global priority, but it is going to be much harder to end poverty than it was to halve it (MDG target 1a).

As we reduce the number of people living in extreme poverty, those that are left will increasingly come from the most disadvantaged groups and the most marginalized communities, and a growing proportion will live in countries where conflict or the legacy of conflict has stopped or reversed development.

Getting to zero on this goal – taking all people out of absolute poverty regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, religion, disability etc. – is a huge task and one that can only be accomplished through extremely effective and targeted action that puts the most marginalized people first.

The same is true when we look at education. In 2015, we will fail to deliver the MDG goal to achieve universal primary education – with 50 million or so children currently out of school.<sup>2</sup> As part of the post-2015 agenda, these children must not just be given to chance to attend school every day, we must also ensure they learn properly.

At the moment, approximately 250 million children fail to gain basic literacy or numeracy skills and many more receive an education that is far from preparing them for the demands of the modern labour market.<sup>3</sup>

Building schools is easy. Getting all children to learn – including the poorest and most disadvantaged – will be much harder. Our post-2015 education aspirations are easy to talk about, but delivering them is a daunting prospect.

Finally, let me turn briefly to the challenge of energy. There is talk of targets to provide 100 percent access to modern energy by 2030, while doubling renewable energy and the pace of improvement in energy efficiency.<sup>4</sup>

This is an effort that will require a doubling or tripling of capital investment in the energy sector – maybe as much as another \$800bn of additional investment each year – and extremely effective action to direct that investment towards the parts of the world that need it most.<sup>5</sup>

At the same time, unprecedented advances in policy and rapid behavioral change are required if we are to build sustainable energy systems. Again, this is a massive task.

I could make the same argument about every focus area under consideration by the Open Working Group: about food and water, health and gender, jobs and infrastructure, natural resources and climate change.

In each case, we are going to see there is a massive gulf between business-as-usual trends and the goals and targets we are likely to set for 2030.

### Focus on Delivery

I propose viewing this implementation challenge through five well-established principles of development partnership: ownership, alignment, harmonization, managing for results, and mutual accountability.<sup>6</sup>

Let's start with ownership, alignment and harmonization.

These principles will look very different under a set of goals that will be "universally applicable to all countries while taking into account their national realities."<sup>7</sup>

National planning, and domestic resource mobilization, must clearly be at the heart of the new agenda. That requires work to start now – the most far-sighted countries are already beginning to work on policies, strategies and plans in order to be straight out of the blocks.

And it is not just national governments. Yesterday, I heard of a provincial government that is starting to plan for the future of its education system within the context of the post-2015 development agenda.

We need more policymakers to follow the example of these pathfinders, with every country – rich and poor – taking responsibility for how it plans to implement the new agenda at home.

Whether we're talking about North-South, South-South, or triangular cooperation, implementation will only be effective if there is genuine national ownership, and "effective alignment with national strategies, institutions, and procedures."<sup>8</sup>

Harmonization, meanwhile, will not simply be a job for a few donors, but the much greater endeavor of building effective multi-country and multi-sector partnerships that have the common purpose, knowledge and financing to deliver transformational progress.

At the same time, we will need to make a new commitment to managing for results.

The first step is a significant improvement in the nature and effectiveness of North-South cooperation. In part, this requires countries from the North to do more to work with partners from the South to create the conditions that make sustainable development possible. This is what is often known as the 'beyond aid' agenda.

But I would strongly disagree with those who play down the importance of official development assistance within the post-2015 agenda. Yes, it is true that aid is now dwarfed by other financial flows, but it is often the only additional finance that is available for investing in the prospects of the poorest and most marginalized people.

Aid can be directed at new and emerging challenges, and at reform, given that other public resources are often already allocated to recurrent expenditure. It also plays an important role in leveraging other sources of finance – private, philanthropic, innovative etc – and can attract a significant multiplier if carefully deployed.

South-South cooperation also involves important financial flows and will undoubtedly play an increasingly powerful role after 2015. But it brings something even more important than finance – a focus on solutions and effective models that have worked in one country and can be applied to others, with appropriate adjustments to a new context.

It is this flow of ideas and knowledge that we need to focus on and accelerate, if the ambitions of the post-2015 development agenda are to be delivered. We need to create laboratories of sustainable development.

I also wonder whether we need a term other than triangular cooperation – given that the global partnership of the future will be extremely diverse in its composition, creating forms of cooperation that have dimensions beyond the three points that define a triangle.

For me too, this is where technology comes into play. In the future, we will have a much greater ability to transfer resources directly to individuals and families. This is impossible without effective identity systems to identify the poorest people and payment systems that can cost effectively transfer large numbers of small payments.

We will also be able to invest in a new generation of institutions and partnership structures that could not have been supported by technologies of the 20th century, and to harness markets in ways that make sustainable development possible.

### **Accountability**

Let me close by emphasizing the importance of mutual accountability when we consider the contribution that North-South, South-South, and triangular cooperation can make to the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda.

Accountability starts today with our willingness to develop realistic plans to implement all parts of the agenda, along with baselines and monitoring mechanisms to allow us to see whether we are on track to achieve targets in 2017, 2023, or 2027.

Here are two numbers: 589 and 5475.

We have just 589 days before implementation of the post-2015 agenda must begin in 2016.

There's an immense amount of planning and preparatory work if we're to hit the ground running – and 95% of it is in areas where there are extremely high levels of consensus about what needs to be done, but much less about *how* we can do it.

From the beginning of 2016 to the end of 2030, we have just 5475 days in which to deliver a new set of goals and targets.

With so much to do, we cannot afford to lose any of that time. We must bring together all forms of cooperation – North-South, South-South, and triangular – into a new form of global cooperation that collectively can deliver the vision member states set out for the *future we want* at Rio+20.

Thank you

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, *Working Document for 5-9 May Session of Open Working Group* (New York: United Nations, 2014), available from <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/focussdgs.html>

<sup>2</sup>United Nations, *The Millennium Development Goals Report 2013* (New York: United Nations, 2013), available from <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/report-2013/mdg-report-2013-english.pdf>

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup><http://www.se4all.org/our-vision/our-objectives/>

<sup>5</sup><http://www.se4all.org/2013/11/29/sustainable-energy-se4all-hosts-high-level-finance-panel/>

<sup>6</sup>OECD, *The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action*, pp.3-8 (Paris: OECD, 2005/2008), available from <http://www.oecd.org/development/effectiveness/34428351.pdf>

<sup>7</sup>General Assembly resolution 66/288, *Rio + 20 Future we Want*, A/RES/66/288, Clause 247 (11 September 2012)

<sup>8</sup>OECD 2005/2008, *Op. cit.*