

# UN SYSTEM TASK TEAM ON THE **POST-2015** UN DEVELOPMENT AGENDA



## MDGs post 2015: Beacons in turbulent times or false lights?

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Following on the outcome of the 2010 High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals, the United Nations Secretary-General established the UN System Task Team in September 2011 to support UN system-wide preparations for the post-2015 UN development agenda, in consultation with all stakeholders. The Task Team is led by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the United Nations Development Programme and brings together senior experts from over 50 UN entities and international organizations to provide system-wide support to the post-2015 consultation process, including analytical input, expertise and outreach.

# MDGs post 2015: Beacons in turbulent times or false lights?

## Abstract

Although the MDGs have, since their inception in 2001, played a positive role in drawing more attention to development aid, current socio-economic developments, notably increasing inequalities, strong GDP growth in emerging countries and climate change, as well as current geopolitical changes, call for a new approach to a post-2015 framework. Such a post-2015 agenda needs to be based on a global social contract, relevant to people in the South and the North, rather than being dominated by development aid professionals. The discussions leading to such a global social contract post 2015 are as important as the outcome itself.

## Table of Contents

	Introduction	4
A.	Lessons from the MDGs for a post-2015 agenda	5
	1. MDGs: Goals without a theory or a theory without goals?	5
	2. Living up to the promises of the MDGs?	6
B.	Critical development issues for a post-2015 framework	7
	3. A changing geo-political and poverty landscape	8
	4. Employment	11
	5. Inequality	
	6. Environment	
	7. Human rights	
C.	Towards a global social contract	
	8. Social floor	
	9. Global governance	
	10. Can we measure what we wanted to measure?	
D.	Summary and conclusions	
	References	

## Introduction<sup>1</sup>

This paper reviews the experience of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), analyses socioeconomic and geopolitical trends that have changed the world since their inception in 2001, and draws implications for the post-2015 development agenda.

The contribution starts with a brief evaluation of the MDGs. Section A argues that the MDGs have played a positive role in drawing more attention to development aid, but that they lacked a theoretical underpinning (chapter 1). For this reason, the MDGs were vulnerable to focus mostly on those specific concerns that were raised by aid agencies. As a result, they tilted development concerns to social development issues (chapter 2).

Section B reviews socio-economic developments that will have a strong impact on global development and that will have to figure more prominently in a post-2015 framework as a consequence. They include strong GDP growth in emerging economies and changing patterns of poverty (chapter 3), the global rise in unemployment (chapter 4), increasing inequality (chapter 5), the ever greater urgency to address climate change (chapter 6) and development of human rights (chapter 7).

Lastly, section C discusses in more detail the implications of both lessons learned and emerging trends for a future global development agenda. It argues that the notion of the MDGs providing a social floor in global development needs to be strengthened (chapter 8), that global governance in a post-2015 framework needs to be greatly enhanced (chapter 9), and that the measurement of economic and social progress has to be improved (chapter 10).

Framed this way, a post-2015 framework will, as argued in section D, take the form of a global social contract, relevant to people in the South and the North, rather than being dominated by development aid professionals as is the case in the current MDG structure. The paper further argues that the new agenda has to be agreed upon in an open and

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<sup>1</sup> I would like to thank participants at the UN-DESA expert meeting on a Post 2015 Framework, New York, 27-29 February 2012 and especially Diana Alarcon and Rob Vos for constructive and stimulating comments.

transparent process: the discussions leading to such a global social contract in a post-2015 agenda are as important as the outcome itself.

## **A. Lessons from the MDGs for a post-2015 agenda**

### **1. MDGs: Goals without a Theory or a Theory without Goals?**

An enthusiastic group in the Secretariat of the United Nations created the MDGs in 2001. They were based on an earlier conceptualization of development goals by the OECD and drew on the Millennium Declaration, accepted by all heads of state at the Millennium Summit of the UN in September 2000. The Declaration itself contains a longer list and higher set of aspirations, and should not be confused with the very specific and time-bound set of indicators which comprise the eight MDGs and 21 targets through which progress towards the MDGs are measured (Melamed, 2012, p.4).

The MDGs reflected the wish of many development practitioners to have, at a global level, clear goals and measurable outcomes for a number of desirable development challenges, without prescribing a fixed set of policies. Being overly prescriptive would have led to great controversy and resistance to an otherwise generally accepted policy document (Vandemoortele, 2011). Once agreed upon, the MDGs have led to a flurry of research papers, discussions and conferences over the last 10 years. Google searches for the MDGs have grown exponentially and overtaken searches for the Human Development Index. The mere fact that a socio-economic phenomenon has received so much attention indicates that the MDGs have had a certain impact (Melamed, 2012, p.5).

The MDGs have been distilled from the Millennium Declaration and they were influenced by UNDP's human development approach. In this sense, one could argue that the human development approach represents a theoretical foundation and that structured development thinking was indeed part of constructing the MDGs. Yet, there was also a deliberate decision not to dwell on different theories of development in order to achieve broad consensus (Vandemoortele, 2010). Prescribing a specific development theory, as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank did in the 1980s and 1990s, when they promoted structural adjustment and a set of policies commonly referred to as the

Washington Consensus, would have led to rejection of the MDG framework by many developing countries.

In a later stage, when the MDGs were implemented on the ground, much of the discussion around the MDGs was however dominated by development aid officials in the industrialised countries after all, and the MDGs gradually became synonymous with a Western and donor-driven approach to development. Furthermore, the country-specific interpretations of the Washington Consensus - in the form of the Poverty Reduction Strategies and the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers - continued to dominate the Western aid landscape and pulled the implementation of the MDGs in the same direction (see for example Fisher, 2010; Saith, 2006).

While the outcome-focused approach of the MDGs helped to avoid some of the pitfalls of a descriptive development theory, their success with the donor community did lead to a neglect of issues that were not explicitly mentioned in the MDGs (e.g. DFID 2011).<sup>2</sup> A 'perverse' game ensued where all development efforts by donors had to be mapped onto one or more of the goals. Development organizations lobbied to get their specific concerns tagged onto one or more MDGs or to have indicators of specific targets extended to get their concern explicitly mentioned. Challenges explicitly covered in the MDGs trumped other development concerns that arguably were equally important. In order to avoid this process in a post-2015 agenda, one important first lesson is to avoid a donor-driven process of preparing and implementing a new agenda. The post-2015 framework has to include more reflections of Southern thinkers and activists (AIV, 2011; Easterly 2009; Severino and Ray, 2009).

Moreover, in light of this experience, it is questionable whether a post-2015 framework of goals and targets should be drawn up without a theoretical foundation. The extraordinary events of the triple food, financial and environmental crisis (see Addisson et al., 2011) call

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<sup>2</sup> A recent example is the way DFID has been analysing the 'effectiveness' of different UN organizations with respect to development. Organization dealing with normative issues received lower markings in terms of effectiveness, because activities of these Organizations could not fit the numerical targets and metrics designed by DFID experts to rate effectiveness! See DFID, 2011

for a more comprehensive and theoretically grounded development policy in a post-2015 framework. The UN World Economic and Social Survey (WESS) of 2010, *Retooling Global Development* (UN-DESA, 2010) provides a wide range of options in this vein. Their political feasibility might be questioned by some, but many of the suggestions and recommendations in the WESS 2010 can be traced back to the Millennium Declaration, accepted by the heads of state in 2000. The political consensus achieved in the Millennium Declaration in 2000 therefore forms a solid base for framing a more coherent and more theoretically as well as a politically sound post-2015 framework.

## **2. Living up to the Promises of the MDGs?**

In the absence of any counterfactual, it is difficult to assess whether progress in development since 2000 has been the result of the MDGs or the result of other factors (Fukada-Parr 2010). However, applying a '*post hoc ergo propter hoc*' approach, recent reviews report that some MDGs have been reached at a global level, especially the target of halving the proportion of people living in absolute poverty, and that substantial progress has been made in others (Melamed, 2012). This positive global assessment however is largely the result of successes in a limited number of large and fast-growing countries.

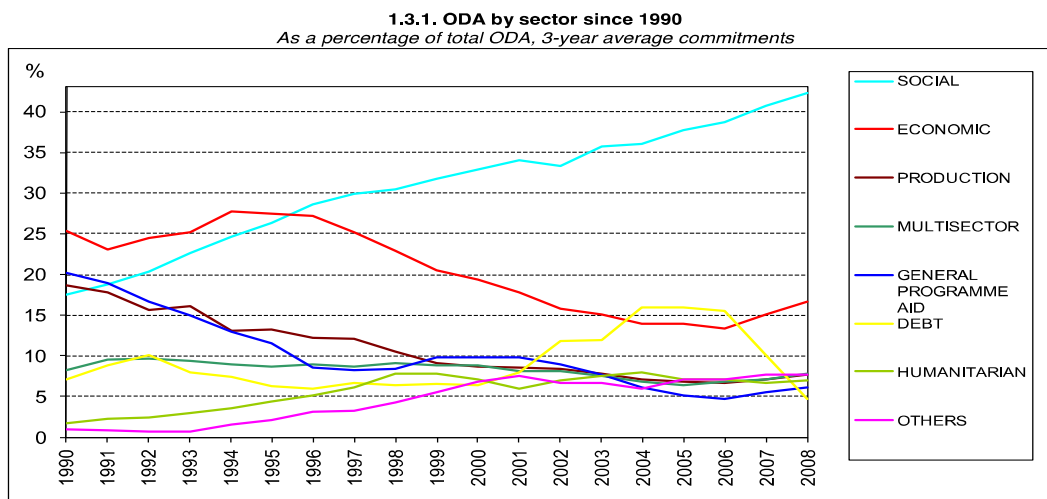
The decline of the world's poor by 445 million people, from 1.820 billion people in 1990 to 1.375 billion in 2005, is entirely due to the decline in the number of poor people in China. In fact, in various regions of the world the number of poor has actually increased between 1990 and 2005. Countries that were characterized by below-average economic or institutional performance at the onset of the MDGs in particular performed worse than countries that had a better starting position (World Bank 2011, Ch. 1).

Did the MDGs lead to higher development aid? The picture is mixed. Official development assistance (ODA) in general increased, but this was partly due to the huge expenses for the war in Iraq and spending on other countries in the Middle East. It also should be noted that ODA increased much less than G8 countries had promised at the Gleneagles summit in 2005, when promises of substantial ODA increases were made on the basis of calculations of the costs of achieving the MDGs (UN, 2011).

The purpose of this paper is not to provide a conclusive review of what the MDGs did achieve (see for example AIV, 2011; UN 2010a and 2011; Melamed, 2012; World Bank 2011). Yet, it is important to note that this question probably cannot be answered satisfactorily. What we can observe is that the MDGs put a strong emphasis on social issues.

Other issues, such as environmental concerns (part of MDG7) and global governance (MDG8), were brought in at a later stage and contain much less concrete goals and indicators. It is not surprising then that the MDGs contributed to a (already existing) trend of an increasing share of ODA commitments for the social sector over the last two decades:<sup>3</sup> from 16 per cent in 1990 to 34 per cent at the introduction of the MDGs in the year 2000, to over 40 per cent in 2008 (Fig 1.) This was not only the case for ODA commitments to poorer countries: in all major groupings, ODA commitments on social sectors amounted to 42 per cent or more in 2009 (fig.2).

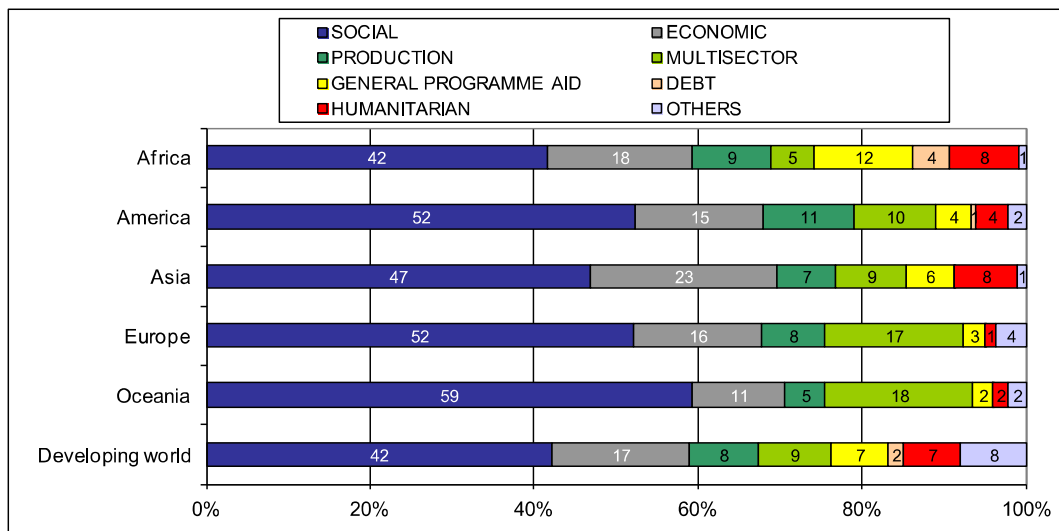
Figures 1 and 2: ODA by region and sector



<sup>3</sup> OECD DAC online, consulted 15-01-2012



**1.3.2. ODA by region and by sector in 2009**  
As a percentage of total ODA committed for each region



Source: OECD DAC secretariat online database

The OECD ODA statistics relate to traditional donors. Indications are that new donors like China and India dedicate a larger share of their aid to infrastructure, transport, mining, and other productive sectors.<sup>4</sup> At this point, these flows are still considerably smaller than the flows from traditional donors, but they are increasing faster than traditional ODA and might in future change the current emphasis of ODA on social sectors.

The focus on social development issues has in some cases taken attention from other, equally important aspects of development, such as employment generation. One illustration for the effects of this prioritization is the ‘Arab spring’ of 2011. At the beginning of 2011, various Arab regimes were toppled by populations that not only asked for more democracy, but perhaps even more importantly, for good jobs and the prospect of advancement in life for their youth. Yet this turmoil took place in countries that scored very high on progress indices of the Millennium Development Goals (table 1).

<sup>4</sup> Information Office of the State Council, The People's Republic of China, 2011, China's Foreign Aid, April 2011, Beijing



Table 1: MDG progress ranks and youth unemployment, selected countries

Country	MDG progress rank 2010	Youth unemployment 2009
Egypt	6	24.7 (2007)
Tunisia	1	30.6 (2005)
Jordan	6	26.9
Brazil	5	15.5
Vietnam	6	4.6 (2004)

Source: GCD (2011), ILO (2011)

Tunisia, Egypt and Jordan were among the eight best performing countries with respect to progress in the MDGs in 2010 (CGD, 2011). Their leaders at that time belonged to the Socialist International and many politicians and researchers hailed the progress in human development in the Arab world.<sup>5</sup> Yet, despite this very good score on MDG progress, youth unemployment was and remained stubbornly high in these countries. Progress in achieving the MDGs is not a guarantee for broad-based social development.<sup>6</sup>

## **B. Critical development issues for a Post 2015 framework**

Developments since the formulation of the MDGs in 2000, in particular the triple crisis of food, finance and the environment (Addisson 2011), as well as the Arab Spring, have given more urgency to a number of additional development concerns that were not adequately addressed in the MDGs. A post-2015 framework will have to create a framework that enables sustained, equitable and inclusive growth. To do so, a number of critical issues that have either been absent or did not receive sufficient attention in the MDG agenda, or that did not play a similarly important role a decade ago, will need to be addressed. These new and emerging concerns need to be part of evaluating the role and functioning of the MDGs and also need to inform the formulation of development goals in a post-2015 framework.

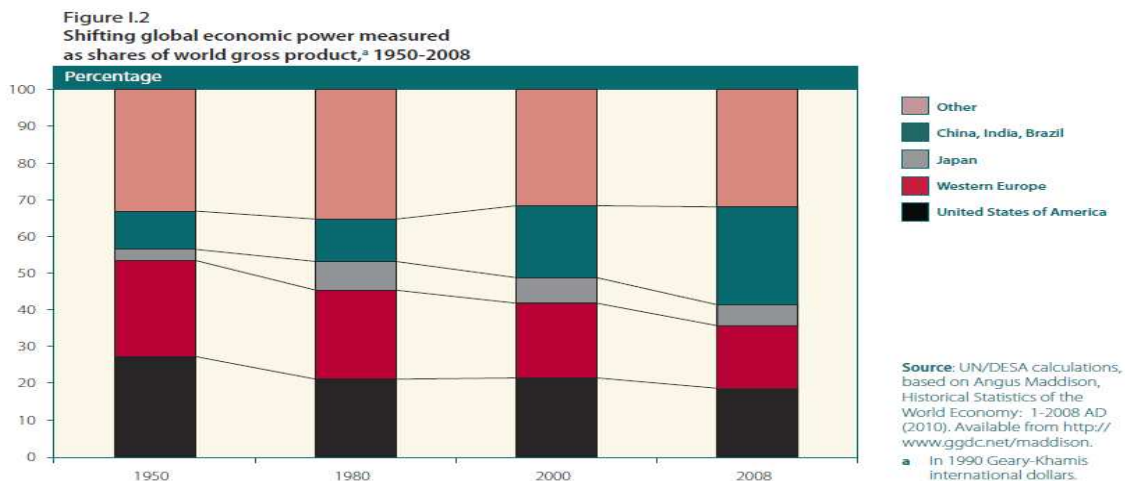
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<sup>5</sup> See for example the blog of Dani Rodrik ‘The unsung development miracles of our time’ Nov.13 2010 which commends the educational policies and access to health which also empowered women

<sup>6</sup> After the change in regimes in various Arab countries in spring 2011, the leaders of development agencies quickly retorted that something must be done about employment. e.g. Helen Clark ‘Jobs, Equity and Voice: Why both Economic and Political Inclusion matter in the Arab world’ (Huffington Post, 7 April 2011)

### 3. A Changing Geo-political and Poverty Landscape

One of the most important trends of recent years is the rapid growth of large developing countries such as China, India and Brazil. The figure below shows the growing economic weight of these countries, especially over the last decade. The share in global GDP of Western Europe and the US, the principal providers of ODA, has fallen to below 40 per cent in 2008. Ironically, however, it was not the greatly increased GDP of the emerging countries, but the financial crisis of 2008 that led to changes in global governance that better reflected the shifts in economic power. The G-20 replaced the G-8 as the key institution of global economic governance to fend off the crisis and to build a basis for an improved global financial structure. A post-2015 framework of development cannot ignore the changed geo-political landscape and thus can no longer be driven by traditional donors alone, as was the case in 2000.



Source: UN-DESA, WESS, 2011

The MDGs were formulated as goals at the global level. Various authors have pointed out that it is therefore not appropriate to break these global targets down to a regional or national level: this would be especially unfair to poorer countries (Easterly, 2009). However there are also drawbacks to keeping the MDGs restricted to the global level. When MDGs are interpreted to be of relevance only at the global level, the performance of a few large and fast growing countries will determine any global outcome. For example, depending on exact

definitions and interpretation of the time frame,<sup>7</sup> the MDG 1 target of halving poverty has been achieved long before 2015 because of the extraordinary growth in China, India and Brazil.

Because of these extraordinary growth performances, three quarters of the world's poor now live in middle-income countries. A number of large low-income countries in 2000 have 'graduated' to the group of middle-income countries. As a result, most of the world's poor no longer live in poor countries but in middle-income countries (see table below, Sumner 2010). This trend will continue in the coming years. Only 28 per cent of the poor now live in low-income countries, of which 12 per cent live in fragile and conflict-affected countries and 16 per cent in stable countries.

**Table 4.2 Estimates of the change in global distribution of world's \$1.25/day poor (percentage) 1988 versus 2007–8**

	% of world's poor		Millions	
	1988-90	2007-8	1988-90	2007-8
<b>Middle-income country (MIC)</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>120.88</b>	<b>956.57</b>
MIC minus China and India	7	22	120.88	293.18
MIC FCAS	1	11	18.25	143.51
MIC NON-FCAS	6	61	102.64	813.06
<b>Low-income country (LIC)</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>1,547.13</b>	<b>370.76</b>
LIC minus China and India	31	28	408.68	370.76
LIC FCAS	13	12	210.08	156.38
LIC NON-FCAS	80	16	1,337.05	214.38
Fragile and conflict-affected states (FCAS = 43)	14	23	228.33	299.90
Sub-Sahara Africa	13	27	223.99	355.07
Least Development Countries (50)*	14	25	241.06	334.98
China and India	68	50	1,138.45	663.39
Total	100	100	1,668.02	1,328.69

Source: Processed from World Development Indicators. Notes: 2007–8 estimates based on poverty data for 2007 or nearest year in WDI; LIC/MIC status based on World Bank country classifications for FY2010 which are based on 2008 data. 1988–1990 estimates based on poverty data for 1990 or nearest year in WDI. LIC/MIC status based on World Bank country classifications for FY1990 which are based on 1988 data. 1988–90 estimates should be treated with caution due to data availability. In both 1988–90 and 2007–8 Fragile and Conflict-affected States are 43 country compilation of the three FCAS lists (based on data from various years); Least Developed Countries = same group of 50 used in both time points although Cape Verde graduated in 2006 and some of these LDCs are now MICs.

<sup>7</sup> This important discussion on quantifying the targets, setting the trajectory and the initial values, which is not only a technical one but which also has political ramifications will not be reproduced here: for a discussion see Fukada-Parr 2010.

These changes have important consequences for poverty reduction and for other MDG targets. For most of the world's poor ODA in the traditional sense will be less relevant. Poor households in middle income countries would benefit more from an improvement in income distribution, improved access to social services, good productive jobs, and a well-functioning rights-based system that gives people access to government services and ensures that workers benefit from labour rights. Development goals in a post-2015 framework therefore have to be formulated in a way that the poor in middle income countries benefit from development in their countries. Hence a post-2015 framework has to deal with human (economic, social and cultural) and labour rights as well as with issues of inequality and redistribution.

It has also become clear that people in fragile and conflict-affected countries (23 per cent of the world's poor) cannot be adequately reached through traditional development aid. In this sense the goals and targets designed in 2000 are relevant only to 16 per cent of the world's poor.

The changing geopolitical landscape and the diversity of developing countries, as well as the fact that the poor live in countries of radically different development levels and development patterns all imply that a post-2015 development framework needs to give much more attention to development patterns, goals and targets at the national level.<sup>8</sup> An emphasis on the national level would also allow strengthening the special position of the least developed countries and the poor which are living in these countries. A post-2015 framework could continue to give special attention to least developed countries.

Lastly, the prolonged debt crisis in developed countries and its dramatic impact on job markets make it clear that protecting the poor and the socially disadvantaged in industrialised countries has become a serious political and societal problem. One might therefore contemplate to set targets for developed countries as well. Firstly, such targets would better capture the growing globalization and greater interconnectedness that is

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<sup>8</sup> This is actually already an on-going trend: since 2000 various countries have either reproduced or translated MDGs at their own national level.

creating hardship and vulnerability for different socio-economic groups in developed countries as well. Secondly, targets for developed countries in a post-2015 framework should also better express the continuing responsibility of these countries for a global development agenda.

#### **4. Employment**

Globalization and especially financial globalization have had a huge impact on working conditions and employment security. The nature of work is changing: more flexible work in developed countries and a continuously high or even growing role of informal work in many developing countries. Work opportunities in the formal sector may have increased in more dynamic developing countries, but were accompanied by increasing wage inequality and increasing insecurity.

Financial globalization started in the 1990s with the liberalisation of banking systems in many developed countries. At the same time, the Bretton Woods institutions exerted growing pressure on developing countries to liberalize external capital markets. This has given rise to eight trends on labour markets worldwide:

1. An increase in service employment;
2. Declining labour-force participation, especially of males;
3. A continuously high share of workers in the informal economy;
4. Continuing or increasing youth unemployment;
5. A declining wage share in national income;
6. Increasing wage and income inequality;
7. Growing importance of multinational enterprises; and
8. A growing number of migrant workers in industrialised countries.

These paint a general picture of increased “precarisation” of many workers and their families in most countries in the world.

The crisis of 2008 had great repercussions on labour markets around the world. As was the case in previous crises, employment did not recover as quickly as GDP growth. In addition,

most workers, both in the global North and South had not benefited from the pre-crisis bubble.

*Table 1.1 Effects on various socioeconomic groups in different countries*

	Pre crisis	Crisis	Postcrisis stimulus	Postcrisis fiscal austerity	Back on track
<b>Developed countries</b>					
Capital owners	++	—	++	+	?
Skilled workers	++	—	+	—	?
Unskilled workers	—	—	+	—	?
Excluded	—	0	0	—	?
<b>Emerging developing countries</b>					
Capital owners	++	+	++	+	?
Skilled workers	++	—	+	+	?
Unskilled workers	+	—	+	—	?
Peasants	—	—	+	—	?
<b>Poor developing countries</b>					
Capital owners	+	0	+	+	?
Skilled workers	+	—	+	—	?
Unskilled workers	—	—	+	—	?
Peasants	—	0	+	—	?

Source Van Bergeijk, de Haan and van der Hoeven, 2011

Actually, poor workers and their families were hurt three times (table 1.1 of van Bergeijk et al.): firstly, because they were left behind in the run up to the crisis; secondly, they were severely affected during the crisis; and thirdly, they are now suffering from reduced government expenditure as a consequence of increased public debt, which was used largely to bail out banks and to stimulate the economy during the crisis.

Governments did act during the 2008 crisis, and in this sense their response was much better than during the world economic crisis of the 1930s.<sup>9</sup> The crisis of 2008, and the bold measures that were initially taken, could have been a signal for an overhaul of financial globalization and of arresting the trend of growing inequality and precarisation in labour markets (van der Hoeven, 2010a). However, this did not happen. Most governments shied

<sup>9</sup> Demand stimulus of 1.7 % of world GDP took place. Banks were massively bailed out, costing Europe and the US an amount equal to one-sixth of world GDP.

away from special measures to protect labour. Governments and international organizations acted as a lender of last resort, but not as an employer of last resort in order to protect workers and in order to stimulate employment growth.

The current sovereign debt problems in Europe underscore this point. Instead of aspiring to higher growth, leading to more employment and to reduced debt-to-GDP ratios, governments are slashing public expenditure, further reducing growth and thus making it near impossible to reduce public debt.

On the other hand, the adverse consequences of unfettered globalization and the ensuing crisis have resulted in increased concern for employment and for decent work and productive employment in the current discourses on development and development cooperation (Ocampo and Jomo, 2007; ILO, 2011).

It should be recalled that employment issues were notably absent from the MDGs when they were first formulated in 2000. Mkandiwire (2011) and the late Amsden (2011) argue that the neglect of attention to employment issues in the 1990s and the beginning of the third Millennium resulted from too much focus on poverty alleviation: 'To slay the dragon of poverty, deliberate and determined investments in jobs above starvation wages must play a central role, whether for self-employment or paid employment. The grass roots approach to solving poverty doesn't go far enough, because it aims only at improving the supply side of the labor market, making job seekers more capable, and not the demand side, making new jobs available for them. ... Employment generation is different from poverty alleviation because it has a concept behind it, "capital." This means that the labor market is influenced by, and influences, all flows through the savings-investment nexus, including accumulation, distribution and innovation. It is at the heart of political conflict.' (Amsden 2011)

However, five years after the formulation of the Millennium Development Goals, the World Summit 2005 outcome document did contain a reference (paragraph 47) to employment



issues.<sup>10</sup> This led to the inclusion of a new sub-goal (under MDG 1) in 2007: ‘Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people’.<sup>11</sup>

Many questions, however, remain unanswered. In recent writings (see for example Melamed et al., 2011), there is a growing concern that too little coordinated effort has been undertaken, even though the goal of full employment has now been established. A recent review of the MDGs (UNDG, 2010), issued five years after the inclusion of the sub-goal of employment in the MDGs, reports on the progress or regress in employment issues globally as well as in some countries by means of a number of employment indicators. 18 narratives explain how certain development projects have contributed to more or better employment in individual countries. Successful examples include employment schemes, training schemes for entrepreneurs, training schemes for unemployed youth, and improved collective bargaining.

However, looking at the different examples chosen in the UNDG 2010 review, it is not always clear how international support in general has contributed to more or better employment since the introduction of full employment as a target in the MDG framework. Most of the examples do not make use of any counterfactual analysis or even mention whether other schemes have been contributing to employment creation as well. Notably absent is any macroeconomic analysis of total volumes of aid on growth and its possible impact on employment. It therefore remains difficult to distil how successful development and development aid efforts have been with regards to creating more and better employment.

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10 ‘We strongly support fair globalization and resolve to make the goals of full and productive employment and decent work for all, including for women and young people, a central objective of our relevant national and international policies as well as our national development strategies, including poverty reduction strategies, as part of our efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. These measures should also encompass the elimination of the worst forms of child labour, as defined in International Labour Organization Convention No. 182, and forced labour. We also resolve to ensure full respect for the fundamental principles and rights at work’. UN,2005

11 With four indicators: (1) Growth rate of GDP per person employed; (2) Employment-to-population ratio; (3) Proportion of employed people living below \$1 (PPP) per day; and (4) Proportion of own-account and contributing family workers in total employment.

Young people have suffered particularly heavily from the deterioration in labour market conditions. The rate of youth unemployment rose globally, from 11.7 per cent in 2007 to 12.7 per cent in 2011. Advanced economies were particularly hard hit, with the youth unemployment rate jumping from 12.5 per cent to 17.9 per cent over this period. In addition to the 74.7 million unemployed youth around the world in 2011 – a growing number of whom are in long-term unemployment – an estimated 6.4 million young people have given up hope of finding a job and have dropped out of the labour market altogether. Young people who are employed are increasingly likely to find themselves in part-time employment and often on temporary contracts. In developing countries, youth are disproportionately represented among the working poor (ILO, 2012). It is somewhat ironic to note that MDG goals and targets exist for youth in terms of literacy rates and knowledge to HIV prevalence, but not in terms of how these young people could obtain a decent job and contribute actively to society.

A post-2015 system thus needs to develop a better approach and better indicators for employment, including youth employment.

## **5. Inequality**

Various authors (van der Hoeven, 2010c, Vandemoortele, 2011, Melamed, 2012) have argued that the MDGs, by emphasizing targets at a global level, have ignored inequalities that average figures conceal. They suggest that attention to inequality should be a basic element of all targets, and that they should be broken down for different socioeconomic classes or for different income groups. This would reveal whether poorer income groups or excluded socio-economic classes have gained access to social services or gained from increases in national income. These arguments have recently been strengthened by analysis that shows that greater equality and more equal access to government services will also contribute to improved and sustained development in general (Wilkenson and Pickett, 2009).

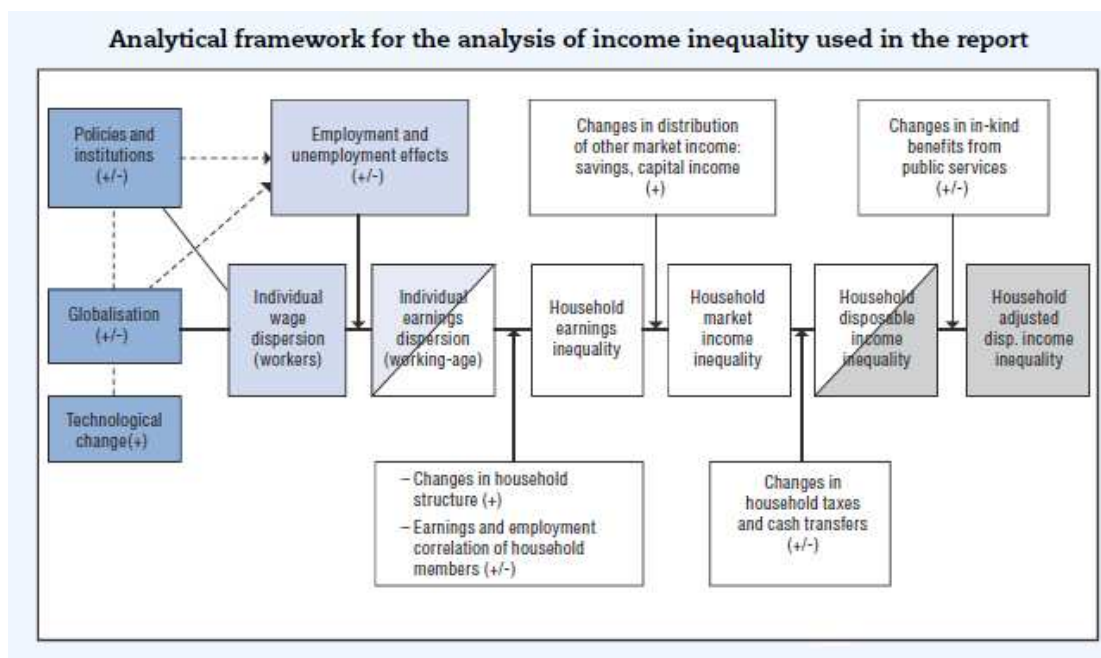
However, for a workable post-2015 framework, more visibility of its impact on poorer groups and suggestions for correctives in terms of public and development aid expenditure will not be sufficient. There is a need for a better understanding of the underlying causes of

enormous (and often growing) inequalities. Such analysis would inform whether a post-2015 strategy should explicitly incorporate economic policies that are pro-poor and that reduce inequalities.

One important aspect of rising income inequality is the change in the functional income distribution in the course of the last three decades. A recent report by Stockhammer (2012) for the ILO observes that, as part of a broader trend towards greater social inequality, wage shares in national income have declined in all OECD countries. In developing and emerging economies the picture is less homogenous, but in most of these countries wage shares have also declined. Stockhammer argues that *financialisation* emerges as the single most important cause for the decline in the wage share, accentuated by the retrenchment of the welfare state and by globalisation. He refutes two widely held views about income distribution. First, changes in income distribution in advanced economies have not been driven primarily by technological change. While technological change has had a negative effect on wage shares in developed economies, this effect is relatively small. Second, globalisation did not benefit workers in developing and emerging economies. In fact, globalisation has a negative impact on wage shares in developing economies.

These findings have important implications for economic and social policy. They suggest that income distribution is not primarily determined by technological progress, but rather depends on social institutions and on the structure of the financial system. Strengthening the welfare state, strengthening the bargaining power and greater inclusion of groups that are at the bottom of the income distribution as well as financial regulation could help increase the wage share with little, if any, cost in terms of economic efficiency or growth.

A recent report on growing inequalities by the OECD (2011) provides a useful way of analysing the different causes and consequences of inequality and provides insights into monitoring growing inequality and into ways to implement corrective actions (see figure below).



Source: OECD, 2011

A post-2015 framework therefore should not only give more attention to inequalities, but should also be more explicit about the causes of substantial and growing inequality. It should further incorporate goals and targets in relation to social and economic systems, which will lead to reduced inequality.

## 6. Environment

A post-2015 framework needs to be more cognisant of challenges to the environment and energy consumption. In the discussions leading up to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), various proposals were made. The High Level Panel on Global Sustainability (2012) underscores the following issues:

1. The number of people living in poverty is declining, but the number of hungry people is rising;
2. Inequality in wealth distribution is rising;
3. Access to clean water is increasing, but 2.6 billion people lack access to modern sanitation;

4. By 2030, demand for food will rise by 50 per cent, demand for energy by 45 per cent and demand for water by 30 per cent;
5. Women are too often excluded from economic opportunities;
6. The financial crisis was partly caused by market rules that encourage short-termism and do not reward sustainable investment; and
7. The current economic model is "pushing us inexorably towards the limits of natural resources and planetary life support systems".

The panel recommends that governments should adopt indicators of economic performance that go beyond simple GDP, and that instead measure the sustainability of countries' economies. In addition, governments should change the regulation of financial markets to promote longer-term, more stable and sustainable investment. It recommends that subsidies that damage environmental integrity be phased out by 2020. Currently, governments spend more than \$400bn each year subsidizing fossil fuels, while OECD countries alone spend nearly the same amount on agricultural subsidies. The panel argues that, in parallel to these more general recommendations, access to energy, clean water, sanitation and food should be increased, not only to meet existing MDGs, but going beyond them. New targets should be established that ensure "universal access to affordable sustainable energy" by 2030. Governments "should consider establishing a global fund for education" in order to meet the existing MDG on universal access to primary education by 2015, and aim for universal access to secondary education by 2030. According to the Commission, these and other targets should be incorporated into a new set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), to be drawn up in the next few years.<sup>12</sup>

Should such Sustainable Development Goals be conceived? What targets might be selected for these goals in a post-2015 framework? The current MDGs have four goals and targets related to the environment (MDG 7),<sup>13</sup> of which two relate to clean drinking water and

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<sup>12</sup> Some of these recommendations run with parallel the initial draft agreement drawn up for the Rio+20 Summit.

<sup>13</sup> Target 7.A Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programs and reverse the loss of environmental resources.

Target 7.B Reduce biodiversity loss, achieving by 2010 a significant reduction in the rate of loss

Target 7.C Halve by 2015 the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation

Target 7.D Have achieved a significant improvement by 2020 in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers

people living in slum dwellings. The Global Monitoring Report 2011 (World Bank, 2011, p. 39) states that Goal 7 on environmental sustainability and biodiversity has no well-defined targets, but it affects other MDGs such as child health and human development more generally.

If sustainability becomes a core aspect of the post-2015 framework, then it will have to be measured. The Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi (SSF) commission (Stiglitz, 2010) offers four ways to measure sustainability: (1) large and eclectic dashboards; (2) composite indices; (3) indices that consist of correcting GDP in a more or less extensive way; and (4) indices that essentially focus on measuring how far we currently 'over-consume' our resources (including the ecological footprint). Each of these indicators has its limitations. The SSF commission therefore argues that it is, as yet, not possible to devise a single indicator for sustainability, because such an indicator comprises too many uncertainties.

Measuring sustainability differs from standard statistical practice in a fundamental way (p. 263), since projections rather than merely observations are needed for adequate measurement. Some would argue that, in a world of perfect capital markets, all the relevant information on this future path of the economy is conveyed in the current valuation of assets or of the services that they currently provide. Yet, recent events have confirmed to what extent even well-established capital markets can be mistaken in their implicit predictions of future economic developments. The SSF commission also warns of measuring sustainability by merely surveying people, as is often the case for the measurement of well-being. Measuring sustainability also entails prior responses to normative questions: the coexistence of different appreciations of sustainability may not only reflect different predictions of what the future can be, but also different views about what will really matter in the future for us or for our descendants. Thirdly, sustainability cannot be assessed by each country separately. The problem is global. Instead of measuring national sustainability, the contribution of each country to global sustainability or unsustainability has to be measured.

The SSF report therefore recommends that a sustainability assessment requires a well-identified global dashboard, and that sustainability has to be treated separately from the

measurement of monetary or non-monetary dimensions of current well-being. All components of such a global dashboard should be interpretable as variations of “stocks”. However, phrasing sustainability in terms of preservation of stocks or “capital” goods does not imply that these stocks or goods must be managed or traded like ordinary capital goods. The question of sustainability is a question of knowing whether we pass enough of all this stock of wealth on to future generations.

The SSF report further argues that a monetary index of sustainability has its place in a sustainability dashboard, but that it should essentially remain focused on economic aspects of sustainability. A stock-based approach to sustainability can look at variations in each stock separately, with a view to doing whatever is necessary to keep it from declining, or it could summarize all stock variations in synthetic figures. Since aggregation cannot be based on market values, one has to turn to imputations, which raise both normative and informational difficulties. For these reasons, the SSF commission suggests a more modest approach, focusing the monetary aggregation on items for which reasonable valuation techniques exist, such as physical capital, human capital and fossil resources. The stock/flow indicator that is best suited to play this role is “the ecological footprint”, since it essentially focuses on contributions to global non-sustainability.

A post-2015 agenda should therefore have a small dashboard of sustainability indicators, firmly rooted in the logic of the “stock” approach to sustainability, which would combine:

- An indicator more or less derived from the extended wealth approach, “greened” as far as possible on the basis of currently available knowledge, but whose main function would be to send warning messages concerning “economic” non-sustainability. This economic non-sustainability could be due to low savings or low investment in education, or to insufficient reinvestment of income generated by the extraction of fossil resources (for countries that strongly rely on this source of income).
- A set of well-chosen physical indicators, which would focus on dimensions of environmental sustainability that are either already important or could become so in the future, and that remain difficult to capture in monetary terms.

## 7. Human Rights

Chapter five of the Millennium Declaration refers specifically to the importance of respecting human rights and confirms principles of international equality and shared responsibility. The AIV Report (2011, p. 64) notes that: "...although not formulated in terms of 'rights', the MDGs are an important milestone in achieving economic, social and cultural rights. Conversely, human rights strategies support achievement of the MDGs, because they address the discrimination, exclusion and accountability failures that often underlie poverty and development problems" (see also van Ginneken, 2011). In a human rights approach, promoting development is not seen as charity. "Development is considered to be the right of every individual and it is the duty of the state to guarantee it. A human rights approach provides principles on which action should be based. They include non-discrimination, human dignity, participation and accountability".

The AIV report reviews how human rights can strengthen the MDGs in a variety of areas. "Firstly, this approach focuses on vulnerable groups, and on people who are discriminated against or whose rights are violated and those who are responsible for this. At the moment, the MDGs are based on average progress by countries as a whole. Secondly, a human rights approach can provide working principles for achieving the MDGs; non-discrimination, participation and accountability can act as guidelines in implementing development policy. Thirdly, changing a goal into a right can encourage people to demand accountability from the state. The MDGs would then no longer be mere targets, but legal obligations to be fulfilled by the state. Specifying human rights in relation to the MDGs could result in improved monitoring mechanisms.<sup>14</sup> Fourthly, a human rights approach could ensure that attention is devoted to the quality of services, and not only the quantity. Human rights treaties often prescribe minimum criteria, which could also be used to measure the MDGs."

The AIV report stresses that "these rights will continue to be valid after 2015; in the long term, all rights must be achieved for all people. In this respect a human rights approach is more sustainable and focuses on overcoming structural causes of rights violations and underdevelopment". Various international human rights lawyers (e.g. Allston, 2005) have

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<sup>14</sup> For example by making use of information gathered and assessed as part of existing human rights procedures, e.g. under the International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR).



argued that the lack of a human rights basis of the MDGs is a serious omission. According to them, a rights based approach could support groups which are negatively affected by globalisation and financialisation in obtaining a greater share of national income or access to state-provided social services and thus would contribute to achieving the MDGs.

The Report discusses three options in which human rights approaches could play a greater role in a post-2015 framework:

- One option is that countries add an extra goal, following the example of Mongolia which has drawn up a ninth national MDG on human rights and democracy.
- A second option is to indicate how each MDG relates to existing human rights. Many countries already use their reporting obligations under international human rights conventions to report on progress on the MDGs.
- The third option, preferred by the AIV, entails a general reference to the importance of the human rights approach in the post-2015 framework through a differentiated measurement and incorporation of references. This would enable the underlying principles of human rights to be declared applicable to all stages in the MDG process. Goals and targets in a post-2015 framework could thus be explicitly linked to broadly endorsed agreements from the past, through references to the Beijing Declaration on women's rights (MDG 3), the Cairo Declaration on population and development (MDG 5) and relevant articles from widely ratified UN human rights conventions. This would also allow avoiding a difficult process of renegotiation.

This third option is indeed the most pragmatic way of incorporating a human rights approach into a post-2015 framework while preserving the existing international consensus.

## **C. Towards a global social contract**

If greater attention is given to the inclusion of developing countries in preparations for the post-2015 agenda, and if inequality and human rights become an integral part of the agenda, then the post-2015 development agenda essentially becomes a global social contract. This

contract would guarantee LDCs concessional resources to achieve inclusion in the world economy and to reduce poverty, while families in LDCs, emerging and developed countries would have the ability to exercise economic, social and labour rights for a better share of national development outcomes, and where they would benefit from a minimum set of safeguards (a social floor) for social protection, especially in times of economic turmoil.

## **8. Social Floor**

The financial crisis has clearly demonstrated the need for a social floor on a national level. Although a global social floor is only one element of a broader socio-economic strategy, evidence shows that it can arrest growing trends of inequality and poverty in several circumstances (see WCSSDG, 2004; Van Ginneken, 2009). The need for a global social floor was recognized in the 2010 MDG outcome document (UN 2010b)<sup>15</sup> and discussed in the WESS 2010 (p. 43-45).

Most recently, the Social Protection Advisory Group (2011) argues that “With the Millennium Development Goals deadline fast approaching, it is important to intensify efforts to achieve existing commitments and to start discussing a new framework for coming decades. The social protection floor can be of help in this endeavour. By addressing multidimensional vulnerabilities in an integrated and interconnected way, it complements the MDGs perspective and provides a coherent and consistent social policy tool to accelerate the achievement of the MDGs before 2015 and beyond. We recommend that the floor approach be taken into consideration in the design of future development commitments.” One of the members of the commission (Herfkens, 2011) observes that progress in MDGs in global averages masks the prevalence of continuous and, in many cases, growing inequalities within countries—which make it difficult to achieve the MDGs for the very poor. As noted above, inequalities have neither been emphasized nor properly monitored in the MDG framework. Moreover, the sectoral focus of most MDGs has deemphasized integrated approaches to development, focused attention solely on income poverty, and created policy fragmentation in the pursuit of individual goals.

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<sup>15</sup> Paragraph (23) f: Promoting universal access to public and social services and providing social protection floors. (UN 2010)

Herfkens further argues that the establishment of a Social Protection Floor (SPF) in developing countries would address these shortcomings in achieving the MDGs. Social protection floors are instrumental in ensuring that the very poor are not left behind, and they provide enabling frameworks for comprehensive approaches to address income and non-income inequalities. She recalls that the major responsibility for achieving the MDGs rests with developing countries themselves. In particular, middle-income countries have the resources and capacities to establish their own SPF. Many are doing so using home-grown approaches that are more likely to be successful than adopting approaches from developed countries. Low-income developing countries will need ODA in order to create effective SPF. Herfkens maintains that *ODA funding for SPF has the potential of addressing the needs of the poor in developing countries, being effective, and satisfying the political requirements of donors.*

Three observations would be relevant for a post-2015 framework:

1. Greater attention within the MDG framework on setting and monitoring both income and non-income equality targets;
2. Developing countries and emerging countries should establish or further develop SPF as a means of reducing inequality and achieving the MDGs or their successors; and
3. Donors should increase ODA to low income countries and place greater emphasis and resources on a SPF.

## **9. Global Governance**

Although the Millennium Declaration had a special paragraph on strengthening the role of the United Nations and on improved global governance in general, the MDGs did not contain explicit references to global governance, with the exception of vague references in MDG 8. With hindsight, this neglect of global governance has had a negative impact on the implementation of the MDGs. Whether it was the major cause for missing some of the targets is open for debate, but it has certainly been one of the causes. The hike in food prices in 2007 and in subsequent years, climate change, and the great recession in 2008 (Addison 2011) were all the consequence of failed global governance. The reforms in global governance that we did see in this period, most importantly the greater role for the G-20 in

global economic governance, have been the result of these crises rather than an outcome of the MDG process.

The most important aspect of an improved global governance system is enhanced policy coherence in economic, social and environmental policies, both at the national and the international level (WCSDG, 2004, van der Hoeven, 2010, UN-DESA, 2010). Although there is a notion of policy coherence in MDG 8, a post-2015 framework has to pay much greater attention to policy coherence will have to go far beyond what is contained in MDG 8.

On the other hand, calls for policy coherence could lead to international institutions dictating a certain development ideology, thereby limiting policy space for smaller actors – as was the case with Structural Adjustment Programs of the international financial institutions in the 1990s (van der Hoeven, 2010b). This concern was expressed by the World Commission of the Social Dimensions of Globalization in 2004, but has since decreased because major emerging and developing countries play an increasingly large role in global governance. Industrial countries would thus find it difficult to simply dictate a development model (see for example G-20, 2010).

By now, there is a broad understanding of the major development trends that contributed to achieving the MDGs and which need to be made more explicit in a coherent post-2015 development agenda. Nayar (2012) lists the following: necessity of economic growth; institutional mechanisms to translate growth into meaningful development by improving conditions of people; the importance of public action; and employment as the only sustainable means of poverty reduction. This requires coherence between various aspects of economic policy (macroeconomic, trade and investment policy), social policy and environmental policies. The G-20, born out of the 2008 financial crisis, might be seen as a first attempt to improve coherence at the global level. But the G-20 is neither an adequate nor a sufficient forum. It is not adequate because the secretariat functions are performed by the IMF, and it is not sufficient as it lacks international political legitimacy. Ocampo and Stiglitz (2011) therefore suggest using the political momentum for improved policy coherence to strive for a Global Economic Coordination Council (GECC). The latter would

have more global political legitimacy, and it would be an ideal forum to foster the necessary policy coherence for a post-2015 framework of development.

High on the agenda of a GECC would be the formulation of a coherent global response to national and international financial crises and the inherent financial instability that characterizes the current financial system. Increased attention to crises and global financial instability is important in a post-2015 agenda for development. As argued above, the global financial crisis in 2008 caused a major setback in the achievements of the MDGs (World Bank 2101) and halted the upward trend in development assistance. A formulation of the post-2015 agenda should therefore refer to possible risks of future financial crises, it should contain indications of how resources for achieving goals and targets will be safeguarded in times of global financial crises, and it should indicate how policies for economic recovery will include special measures to reduce poverty and social deprivation. One example are automatic stabilizers at a global level, such as a global social floor discussed above.

National policy space would be another priority of the GECC. Rodrik (2011) argues for a system of global governance that respects national policy space as much as possible, allowing countries and people to choose their preferences in terms of social policies and social protection, for example. The combination of improved global governance with ample room for exercising national social policies needs to be a cornerstone of a post-2015 framework of development.

In addition to improved policy coherence, the provision of global public goods is another essential part of an improved system of global governance. Even though the discussion on public goods is sensitive because of its potential impacts on national sovereignty, it cannot be ignored in a post-2015 framework. As the AIV (2011) argues: “Global public goods present new opportunities to define common interests, now that the traditional idea that development is essentially a national public good is changing. In a time in which more and more doubts are being expressed about the effectiveness and efficiency of development aid and when international solidarity is no longer taken for granted, global public goods point to the interests that the developed countries increasingly share with developing countries. What does the global public goods agenda offer over and above classical international

cooperation? In addition to highlighting the above-mentioned need for a joint approach – with the corresponding funding – in a mutually dependent world, the concept of global public goods can also clarify how this need should be met”.

In reaction to the financial crisis, the call for the provision of global public goods has become even stronger. The chief economist of the Financial Times, Martin Wolf (Wolf 2012) recently stated that “a central element of the debate is how to avoid extreme financial instability. Such instability is a public bad. Avoiding it is a public good. Those acting inside the market system have no incentive to supply the good or avoid the bad. [...] Our states cannot supply public goods on their own. They need to co-operate. Traditionally, the least bad way of securing such co-operation is through some sort of leadership. The leader acts despite free riders. [...] But as we move again into a multipolar era, the ability of any country to supply such leadership will be limited. Even in the unipolar days, it only worked where the hegemon wanted to provide the particular public good in question. [...] Ours is an ever more global civilization that demands the provision of a wide range of public goods. The states on which humanity depends to provide these goods, from security to management of climate, are unpopular, overstretched and at odds. We need to think about how to manage such a world. It is going to take extraordinary creativity.”

A post-2015 agenda for development therefore needs to contain an articulation of the various sets of global public goods, how they are financed, and which global institutions can be held accountable for the provision of these global public goods.

## **10. Can we measure what we want to measure?**

During the implementation of the MDGs, various authors have argued for improved measurement of development and social progress, for example in the Stiglitz, Sen, Fitoussi (SSF) Report on Measuring of Economic Performance and Social Progress (Stiglitz et. al., 2010, see also chapter 6 above). It refers explicitly to earlier work of Amartya Sen on human development and on the capabilities approach, which had influenced the Millennium Development Declaration and the formulation of the MDGs. The SSF report might provide useful pointers for the design and monitoring of a post-2015 framework, especially because it was issued partly in response to the great recession of 2008.

The SSF report suggests improvements in measuring three areas of development:

1. An improvement in measuring GDP;
2. An attempt to quantify the quality of life; and
3. Proposals for measuring sustainable development and its impacts on the environment.

The report names various reasons for the gap between the statistical measurement of socio-economic phenomena and citizens' perception of the same phenomena (p. 7-8):

- The statistical concepts may be correct, but the measurement process may be imperfect;
- In many cases, there are debates about what are the right concepts, and about the appropriate use of different concepts;
- When there are large changes in inequality (more generally a change in income distribution), GDP per capita may not provide an accurate assessment of the situation in which most people find themselves. If inequality increases enough relative to the increase in average per capita GDP, a majority of people can be worse off even though average income is increasing;
- The commonly used statistics may not be capturing phenomena which have a large and increasing impact on the well-being of citizens;<sup>16</sup>
- Current reporting and use of statistical figures may provide a distorted view of economic trends. For example, much emphasis is usually put on GDP, even though net national product (which takes into account the effect of depreciation), or real household income (which focuses on the real income of households within the economy) may be more relevant. These numbers may differ markedly. GDP is not a wrong measurement as such, but it is used in the wrong context; and
- The adequacy of current measures of economic performance has been a matter of concern for a long time, in particular those solely based on GDP. GDP is an

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<sup>16</sup> For example, traffic jams may increase GDP as a result of the increased use of gasoline, but obviously not the quality of life. Moreover, if citizens are concerned about the quality of air, and air pollution is increasing, then statistical measures, which ignore air pollution, will provide an inaccurate estimate of what is happening to citizens' well-being.

inadequate metric to gauge well-being over time, particularly in its economic, environmental, and social dimensions, and in terms of its sustainability.

The SSF report is relevant for the post-2015 discussions for various reasons:

- Correctly measuring inequality (chapter 5 in this paper);
- Concepts of development (chapter 1 and 3 in this paper); and
- Measuring important phenomena affecting the quality of life, particularly wellbeing and sustainable development (chapter 6 in this paper).

With its recommendations, the SSF commission aims to paint a more accurate picture of the contemporary distribution of income, access to social services and enjoyment of a quality of life, within countries and communities, between countries and communities, and between present and future generations.

Some observers argued that the SSF report saw economic growth as less important or even completely unimportant, and that for this reason, development aid should be concentrated on social issues like education, health, and income-generating programmes for disadvantaged groups. The ensuing debates argued about whether development aid should stimulate more economic or social development (see e.g. WRR. 2011). However, this is a mis-interpretation of both the MDGs and the SSF report.<sup>17</sup> A post-2015 agenda should thus incorporate the relevant conclusions of the SSF Report on improved measurement of economic, social and sustainable development.

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<sup>17</sup> Questioned by the public whether economic growth should be given less emphasis in the context of a Human Development Strategy, Amartya Sen remarked that when the UNSG asked his opinion on the MDGs, he informed the SG that developing countries might have gotten a bad deal as there was little on growth and economic convergence in the MDGs. Sen also reminded the audience that in the wake of the great recession of 2008, and the subsequent debt crises, many countries needed more rather than less economic growth. (7th Meeting of the Human Development Association, 5 sept. 2011, The Hague).



## D. Summary and Conclusion

Taking the post-2015 development agenda as an opportunity to formulate a global social contract as suggested in the previous sections might be seen as risky by some - it might undo one of the major perceived strengths of the current MDG framework, its simplicity.<sup>18</sup>

However, in light of the triple crises of nutrition, finance and environment, as well as political manifestations like the Arab spring, it has become clear that traditional development aid interventions, as formulated in the MDGs, are no longer the most effective response. Neither do they enable the poor to grow out of poverty. New and emerging challenges need to be confronted in a post-2015 framework, but they have to be put in the context of a global social contract. This contract can answer the question of “how families and poor households in developing countries can rely on a post 2015 development agenda in times of economic crises”.<sup>19</sup>

In the process of developing this framework, all concerns should be discussed; precluding certain issues or concerns beforehand, because they may make a future set of development goals too broad, is not helpful at this point. If issues are kept off the table, the future agreement on a post-2015 development framework might be compromised from the beginning.

The discussions leading to such a global social contract for a post-2015 framework are as important as the outcome itself. Ideally, these discussions will take the Millennium Declaration of 2000 as their starting point. On this basis, a (restricted) set of development goals and targets in a post-2015 era can be formulated.

Framing the deliberations for a post-2015 Development Framework on (an actualization of) the Millennium Declaration would thus base its preparations on a set of issues that carry a globally accepted political consensus and would thus avoid a laundry list of good intentions.

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<sup>18</sup> The 8 points of the Millennium Declaration led to a much smaller number of MDG clusters (Development and Poverty Eradication and more limited: Protecting the Vulnerable and protecting our Common Environment).

<sup>19</sup> A point made by Jan Pronk at a UNDESA working group on a post 2015 framework, New York 27 -29 February 2012.

The following table provides some elements that could be discussed in the lead-up to a global post-2015 framework for development. This table is not exhaustive but is intended to guide discussions and deliberations for a post-2015 development framework.

	MDGs	Post-2015 development agenda	Referred to in paper
Process	Secretariat, donor driven	Wider consultations	Chapter 1
Macro-economic framework	Absent	Sustainable and equitable growth	Chapter 1
Principle means to achieve goals	Development aid, national public expenditure	Changes in international system, national public expenditure, aid for fragile and low income states	Chapter 2
Measurement	Inequalities, sustainability, well being not fully captured	Improved measurements of goals/targets	Chapter 10
Target group	Poor in developing countries	Poor in all countries	Chapter 3
Employment	Added in 2005	Better approach and indicators	Chapter 4
Inequality	Not adequately reflected	Explicit attention, including goals and targets	Chapter 5
Environment	Not adequately reflected	Inclusion of sustainable development goals	Chapter 6
Human rights	Absent	Reemphasizing existing rights, global social floor, claims for redistribution	Chapter 7, 8
Targets	Global	Global and link to national	Chapter 8, 9, 10
Global governance	Not adequately reflected	Provision of global public goods	Chapter 9

In conclusion, the MDGs have played a positive role in drawing more attention to development aid since their inception in 2001. But current socio-economic developments, notably increasing inequality, strong GDP growth in emerging countries and climate change, current geopolitical changes as well as changes in the poverty landscape call for a new approach to a post-2015 framework. A new framework has to be based on a global social

contract, relevant to people in the South and the North, rather than being dominated by development aid professionals and merely applicable to the South. A global social contract strives for sustainable and equitable growth in all countries, while paying particular attention to employment, inequality, sustainable development, human rights, a global social floor, and to improved global governance. The establishment of a Global Economic Coordination Council will result in better policy coherence between economic, social and environmental policies at national and international level, as well in a better provision of a number of essential global public goods. It will thus be an important element to achieve improved global governance in a post-2015 framework. Reformulated and reconceptualised MDGs in this framework can become beacons in the turbulent times to come.

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## **UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda**

### **Membership**

*Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), Co-Chair*

*United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Co-Chair*

*Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)*

*Department of Public Information (DPI)*

*Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)*

*Economic Commission for Europe (ECE)*

*Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)*

*Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)*

*Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)*

*Executive Office of the Secretary-General (EOSG)*

*Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO)*

*Global Environment Facility (GEF)*

*International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)*

*International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)*

*International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)*

*International Labour Organization (ILO)*

*International Maritime Organization (IMO)*

*International Monetary Fund (IMF)*

*International Organization for Migration (IOM)*

*International Telecommunication Union (ITU)*

*Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)*

*Non-Governmental Liaison Service (NGLS)*

*Office of the Deputy Secretary-General (ODSG)*

*Office of the High Commission for Human Rights (OHCHR)*

*Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (OHRLLS)*

*Office of the Special Advisor on Africa (OSAA)*

*Peace building Support Office (PBSO)*

*United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)*

*United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)*



*United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)*  
*United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)*  
*United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women (UN Women)*  
*United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)*  
*United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)*  
*United Nations Fund for International Partnerships (UNFIP)*  
*United Nations Global Compact Office*  
*United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)*  
*United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT)*  
*United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)*  
*United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR)*  
*United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR)*  
*United Nations Millennium Campaign*  
*United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA)*  
*United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)*  
*United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)*  
*United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)*  
*United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)*  
*United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD)*  
*United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination Secretariat (CEB)*  
*United Nations University (UNU)*  
*United Nations Volunteers (UNV)*  
*United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)*  
*Universal Postal Union (UPU)*  
*World Bank*  
*World Food Programme (WFP)*  
*World Health Organization (WHO)*  
*World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)*  
*World Meteorological Organization (WMO)*  
*World Trade Organization (WTO)*

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