

## Key Recommendations from the Asia Post-2015 Alternative Narratives Meeting

23 - 24 March, 2013 Bali, Indonesia

*Representatives of civil society organizations, people's movements, academics and researchers deliberating over two days to consider alternative narratives on development, propose the following analysis and recommendations for the consideration of the High Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda<sup>1</sup>.*

The discourse on a successor development framework to the MDGs is taking place at a time of profound shifts and changing dynamics. We are deeply concerned about the continuing harsh environment for sustained well-being, inclusive economic growth, social transformation, and fulfilment of human rights. The structural and systemic underpinnings of the crisis of finance, energy, food, land and water, and the resulting turbulence and uncertainties; widening global and national inequalities; a model of global economic governance that imposes excessive fiscal discipline on borrowing countries; cutbacks in public spending in areas such as health, education, water, sanitation and programs for social protection; and poorly regulated privatisation and public-private partnerships continue to stifle economic and human potential.

Rising risks and vulnerabilities from climate change; growing numbers of working poor and people with precarious livelihoods; excessive dependence on extractive industries that are environmentally destructive and unsustainable; and persistent and new conflicts, intensify and entrench poverty and suffering, increase the numbers of internally displaced persons and refugees, and raise levels of violence against women, young people and the most disadvantaged.

These harsh economic conditions interact with long-standing social inequalities, biases and discrimination, as well as with key aspects of population dynamics such as migration, urbanisation and changing age structures to determine who is most severely affected. This includes *inter alia* children, girls and women, subordinated and oppressed castes and racial / ethnic /indigenous /religious groups, people living with disabilities or HIV, sexual minorities, migrants and sex-workers, as well as widows, and older people. The historical and newly emerging social, geographical and economic inequalities and vulnerabilities they face are being intensified by current growth models. It is these people whose human rights, including their economic, social, cultural, sexual and reproductive rights, are most at risk and need to be protected, promoted and fulfilled.

Faced with these challenges, the post -2015 Development Agenda needs to move boldly beyond the limited focus and approach of the MDGs to tackle the challenges posed by critical structural factors and the policies of neoliberalism and the Washington Consensus; to address the pressing needs and rights of those suffering from multiple and intersecting

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<sup>1</sup> This statement is also being distributed to other key stakeholders and the media.

forms of discrimination and abuse; and to tackle the institutional deficits that result in weak accountability within countries and internationally, including by the private corporate sector.

### *Tackling Structural Challenges*

The post 2015 Development Agenda should:

**Prioritize climate change mitigation** as integral to addressing poverty, inequality and marginalization. Annex 1 countries should reduce their greenhouse gas emissions by 80 to 90 per cent of 1990 levels by 2030, and the big emerging economies should bring down their carbon emissions in line with the principle of historical and common and differentiated responsibility. The Green Climate Fund should be operationalised urgently with adequate funding. Unsustainable production and consumption especially in developed countries and among the wealthy must be reduced.

**Create a fair and equitable global financial architecture, and international trading rules and frameworks** that provide a level playing field to all countries. **Financial re-regulation** should be prioritised especially the banning of derivatives, institution of capital controls, and expansion of financial transactions taxes. **Inequality reduction** should be seen as an important focus of transforming economic relations with particular attention to inter-country inequalities.

**Food sovereignty** is integral to the post-2015 agenda to solve the problems of hunger and poverty. Action against land grabs, and agrarian reform is essential to food security, including through expansion of land tilled by small holders and under agro-ecological production.

**Decommodification of public goods and commons** through legislative and regulatory frameworks is essential to rein in the trend to privatize the commons, and to protect public goods.

**Industrialization** is the only reliable pathway to sustained removal of poverty and can result in greater economic diversity with environmental safeguards built in.

### *Towards people-centred development based on human rights*

**Comprehensive social protection** is a universal requirement to address the needs and rights of the most vulnerable and subordinated groups. We call on the HLP to support increased resources to build people's **capabilities** through quality, life-long education, skills development and training, access to finances and information, access to clean drinking water, sanitation, and safe affordable and reliable energy, and health including sexual and reproductive health especially of adolescents; to insist on the collection of **disaggregated**

**data including by age, sex and minority status** in order to strengthen the implementation of laws, policies and programs; to ensure strengthened **infrastructure and technology** for improved production, communication and exchange among people, better access to markets and innovation and access to all social services; to ensure that the challenge of rising **violence against girls and women**, especially sexual violence, is prioritised and addressed; and to recognise through strengthened policies and programs the central role of **women's unpaid work** in caring for people and supporting human development.

The post 2015 Development Agenda should address:

1. the causes of structural poverty among *children* in various contexts; good governance and accountability around child rights and protection; and enabling children to benefit from economic transformation through initiatives that promote quality education for girls and boys, health care, sexual health, information, adequate nutrition, and services for children including those with disabilities or HIV, and protection of children from all forms of violence and exploitation including early and forced marriage;
2. realize the potential of the demographic dividend through comprehensive *youth* policies that include young people's effective participation at all levels of governance, accountability and policy-making, provision of more and better education, support for young people to obtain decent and well-paid jobs, access to finance and knowledge to become innovators and entrepreneurs, as well as the ability of all young people, especially adolescents to obtain comprehensive sexuality education, and sexual and reproductive health services, and to empower and resource girls to prevent teenage pregnancies and violence, and provide sensitisation and training for boys to promote gender equality and prevent violence;
3. the achievement of gender equality, the protection of *women's* human rights including sexual and reproductive rights and support for women's empowerment through ownership and control over assets, and representation at all levels of governance are critical to the success of the entire post 2015 development agenda; the post 2015 development agenda should include a reinforced stand-alone gender equality goal and expanded gender targets and indicators across the entire framework.
4. full and equal participation of people with *disabilities, other minority groups, and older people* in all stages of the economic process including decision making, to strengthen focus on disability as a cross-cutting theme across all the goals including through the collection of accurate and comprehensive data, prevent and redress the effects of discrimination and exclusion, and ensure access to services for effective participation in economic and social transformation; and to pay special attention to girls and women with disabilities and the needs and rights of widows;
5. reform labour laws and policies to ensure full and decent employment for all and that all *workers* including disabled workers obtain a living wage, and support for freedom of association, collective bargaining and social dialogue for decent work; to urgently address the human rights of women workers to equal wages, maternity leave, child care,

safe and decent working conditions including clean toilets, private spaces for breast-feeding, adequate rest breaks, the prevention of practices such as virginity tests, and protection from sexual violence in the workplace.

### *Critical benchmarking principles for accountability*

A recurrent criticism of the MDGs is that they did not provide for effective accountability by different stakeholders. An accountability framework for the post 2015 agenda should be located at four levels: global, regional, national and local and should cover governmental, quasi-governmental and corporate bodies. It is also necessary to devise a mechanism for holding multilateral/bilateral and inter-governmental agreements to account. The use of the Measure, Report and Verify approach can be useful.

A possible global accountability mechanism can be modelled around the Universal Periodic Review processes of the Human Rights Council. The central importance of data and information to accountability processes means that care must be taken to ensure that no single agency or body dominates the process of data collection and analysis. UN agencies that have a data gathering capability and credibility could be a possible location for global accountability structures. At the regional level, it is important to look beyond a one-size-fits all approach and to consider the array of possible institutional frameworks for accountability, depending on the context. National level accountability depends on recognising people's right to information, as well as transparent mechanisms for the collection, analysis and dissemination of data. The involvement of human rights institutions, civil society organizations, as well as strengthening legislative mechanisms for oversight and accountability is key. An inter-agency mechanism for accountability with powers guaranteed by the Constitution may be essential. At the local level, transparency and oversight by elected people's representatives as well as grievance redress are important.

We strongly believe that the Post-2015 Development Agenda should be based on a vision of socio-economic transformation and a strategy that will have at its core a commitment to address the challenge of transforming structures, to protect and promote the human rights of people, to build their economic capabilities, and thereby to harness their potential and to recognise them as key contributors to development.

We call upon the HLP to ensure that the post-2015 development framework increases financial resources and policy space for human development and human rights, and creates incentives, institutions and processes in which people and civil society organisations can participate effectively to design, implement and monitor economic and social trends, funding, policies and programs. This will be essential to building a truly inclusive and sustainable development agenda.