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*Disclaimer:* The contents of the news articles at the Focus, China, BASIC and International section are provided for information and do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the United Nations or its Agencies.
Co-Chair Csaba Kőrösi opens the final day of OWG 8 with an interactive exchange of views on “Conflict Prevention, Post-Conflict Peacebuilding and Promotion of Durable Peace, Rule of Law and Governance”

The eighth session of the Open Working Group (OWG 8) on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) took place from the 3rd to 7th of February 2014, at UN HQ in New York. It was the final “stocktaking” session. The meeting addressed the following issues: oceans and seas, forests, and biodiversity; promoting equality, including social equity, gender equality and women’s empowerment; and conflict prevention, post-conflict peace building and the promotion of durable peace, rule of law and governance. Read extracts from IISD’s coverage – and summary – of OWG below:

Delegates also considered the way forward for the five scheduled “decision-making” sessions, between March and July 2014. In this context, an informal consultation was held on the evening of 4 February 2014, during which Member States were informed that the Co-Chairs will formulate a stock-taking document, taking into account everything that has been discussed over the past year, to be released on 14 February. They will then present a document around which a conversation of SDGs and targets can begin, listing “priority areas” that Member States may wish to discuss, by 21 February.

The agenda for the week-long OWG-8 meeting could not have been more full. Delegates emphasized that oceans, seas and forests account for a large percentage of global biodiversity, and noted the importance of each of these topics for poverty alleviation, food security, water quality and other development objectives. Discussions on equity and gender equality, and conflict and rule of law were highlighted by many to be integral components of sustainable development. Past, unresolved debates over these issues and their underlying implications for sovereignty, the international structure, and resource flows revealed that the Group’s task over the upcoming five decision-making meetings will be complex and will require careful navigation to maintain the spirit of what Co-Chair Kamau called, in closing OWG-8 on Friday evening, “our lovely OWG.”

Link of agenda:
UN General Assembly President Launches Initiative for Post-2015 Development Agenda

7 February 2014

“Like all of you, I am all too aware of the enormous challenges facing our globe,” he told an interactive briefing of global civil society representatives from UN Headquarters in New York. “With the 2015 deadline looming, we need to be collectively focused on building momentum for the post-2015 agenda.”

Mr. Ashe has made the effort to achieve a new post-2015 development agenda to succeed the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) the hallmark of his year-long Assembly presidency which ends in September.

http://unsdn.org/?p=13169

UN Global Compact Releases 2014-2016 Strategy

10 February 2014

The UN Global Compact has released its 2014-2016 strategy on 10 February 2014, which describes how to make corporate sustainability a transformative force in achieving a shared, secure and sustainable future, so as to align with and contribute to the UN process for setting the post-2015 development agenda.

As detailed in the strategy, over the next three years, the Global Compact will accelerate its transition from incremental progress implementing corporate sustainability to transformational action, with impacts on the financial, environmental, social and ethical spheres. It hopes to achieve this through focusing on: effective participant engagement; Local Networks (clusters of participants working together to advance the Compact and its principles within a particular geographic context); its global portfolio of issues; and responsible business in support of UN goals and issues.

More specifically, the Global Compact aims to:

reach 13,000 business participants by 2016, while focusing on enhanced levels of reporting and transparency; empower Local Networks by setting standards and enabling them to facilitate actions and solutions that will affect the post-2015 development agenda; ensure coherence of its global portfolio of issues, including human rights, labor standards, environment and anti-corruption, as opportunities for business to advance corporate sustainability; develop a sustainable funding model; strengthen the governance framework and accountability; and improve partnerships to advance UN goals, enhance the UN system’s capacity to more effectively partner with the private sector, and illustrate the ways in which the ‘Post-2015 Business Engagement Architecture’ can contribute to the post-2015 development agenda.

The Global Compact’s management and staff developed the strategy with support from Deloitte, following 18 months of consultation with a range of stakeholders, including the Global Compact Board, governments and Local Networks. Since 2004, the Global Compact has conducted periodic reviews and developed three-year plans.

Programme for Post-2015 Stakeholder Engagement Launched

February 2014

A two-year programme for multi-stakeholder engagement in the post-2015 development agenda and post-Rio+20 processes has been launched. 'Sustainable Development 2015' is being led in partnership by the Stakeholder Forum and the World Alliance for Citizen Participation (CIVICUS), in collaboration with the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) and with financial support from the EU.

The program aims to provide stakeholders with the tools to engage and contribute to the global negotiations around the post-2015 development agenda, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). With five focus areas - raising awareness, increasing engagement, empowering stakeholders, coordinating advocacy, and strengthening governance - the aim of Sustainable Development 2015 (SD2015) is to increase participation in the post-2015 deliberations, while facilitating the future agenda's implementation.

The programme is organizing both national and international projects, including briefings of national parliaments and training for media outreach. SD2015 will also provide opportunities for stakeholders to engage with Member States and the UN system, and enhance communication between diverse groups.


African Ministers Support Stand-alone Gender Goal

6-8 February 2014

Consultations for the Africa region, held in preparation for the 58th UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW 58), have concluded with a Ministerial Declaration voicing “unequivocal support” for a stand-alone goal on achieving gender equality, women's rights and women's empowerment in the post-2015 development agenda and mainstreaming gender equality across all goals.

The consultations took place from 6-8 February 2014, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Addressing the meeting, Ngone Diop, Chief of Gender, UNECA, said the "gender gap" costs Africa up to US$255 billion per year.

Recommendations in an outcome document focus on women's economic empowerment, governance, institutional frameworks, peace and security and social transformation. On economic empowerment, ministers recommended: strengthening women's role in trade; increasing women's access, control and ownership of land and resources; facilitating women's access to information and communications technology (ICT), markets and networking; and leap-frogging the gender digital divide.

On social transformation, ministers recommended that the post-2015 framework: address ending violence against women and girls; and provide for women's and girl's sexual and reproductive health, rights and services. Participants also agreed that ending early, forced marriage and pregnancies and ending female genital mutilation are essential for the education, empowerment and health of the girl child. Participants also pledged to intensify efforts to implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in 2015 by mobilizing new investments in gender equality, renewed political commitment and social mobilization.

UN Women organized the consultations with the African Union Commission (AUC) and the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA).
Global Updates

Post-2015 a focus at World Economic Forum in Davos
22-25 January 2014, Davos, Switzerland

The 44th Annual Meeting of the World Economic Forum (WEF) focused on "The Reshaping of the World: Consequences for Society, Politics and Business." Many speeches, events and presentations throughout the meeting centered on the impacts of climate change and global poverty, while participants looked forward to an ambitious post-2015 development agenda to address many of these challenges.

At an event on 'The Post-2015 Goals: Inspiring a New Generation to Act,' participants discussed how cooperation and mutual accountability can inspire the vision and implementation of the post-2015 development agenda. Speakers included: Bono, U2; David Cameron, UK Prime Minister; and Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Nigeria's Minister of Finance. Bono emphasized the need to consult the global poor in the making of the post-2015 agenda, while other panelists called for the agenda to build on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Cameron highlighted the importance of including governance, transparency, and corruption in the next set of goals.

Held in Davos, Switzerland, from 22-25 January 2014, this year's WEF brought together 2,500 leaders of business, governments, NGOs and the UN system to discuss issues of economic, social and environmental development. Events focused on, inter alia: gender equality; global energy sources; information and communications technology (ICT); the socio-environmental consequences of business; healthcare systems; the science and impacts of climate change; emerging economies of developing countries; entrepreneurship, education, and employment; opportunities for youth; oceans; development finance; sustainability; and human rights.


Workshop Considers Governance of and for SDGs
1 February 2014, New York, the United States

The workshop on 'Governance "of" and "for" Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)' took place on 1 February 2014, in New York, US, and was sponsored by the Tokyo Institute of Technology, the Earth System Governance project, the UN University Institute of Advanced Studies (UNU-IAS), and the POST2015 project (which is funded by the Ministry of Environment, Japan).

Topics discussed included: the functions of SDGs, including targets and indicators; how governance will be included in the agenda; resources required for the implementation of the goals; the relationship between the SDGs and the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF); the monitoring, evaluation, and financial mechanisms of the SDGs; and UN engagement with outside actors to fulfill the development agenda. The meeting was conducted under Chatham House rules.

In keynote presentations, academics discussed the mechanisms, functions, and design of the SDGs. One keynote highlighted the governance strategy embedded in "goal-making," and pressed participants to consider how rhetorical goals will guide or influence the behavior of society. A second keynote presentation examined the role of the HLPF in implementing the future development goals, and the presenter suggested that this Forum take on the role of "orchestrator" of the SDGs.
Break-out discussions brought the academic and practitioner participants together in discussion of the main themes. On the functions of SDGs, group discussions highlighted the need to distinguish between aspirational or "problem-solving" goals. They also discussed: the possibility of designing sub-goals to better articulate certain issues; the need for goals to lead to political mobilization, communication, and monitoring; and the creation of clusters of practitioners to implement each goal. On governance, most participants agreed that the issue should be integrated into the agenda both through a stand-alone goal and by mainstreaming it across the agenda. However, several participants cautioned that the definition of "governance" is constantly in flux, so the term must be appropriately defined in the agenda.

On the implementation of the SDGs, participants discussed the importance of informal partnerships, national plans, private capital, and specific implementation mechanisms to ensure that the goals are carried out. When considering the role of the HLPF, participants stressed that in order for the Forum to have the ability to facilitate the implementation of the SDGs, it must be given a specific enforcement role by Member States. Discussion groups also offered various means for UN engagement with stakeholders, including through partnerships, soliciting voluntary commitments, and crowd-sourcing of data. On monitoring, participants stressed that review mechanisms should not be goal-specific, but should evaluate broader, common challenges. It was stressed that NGOs, the private sector and academic institutions should be involved in the monitoring process.

The results and discussion of this workshop will be made into a report produced by the sponsors, which will identify the main ideas, proposals, and research of the participants.


EESC Conference Calls for Uniting Poverty, Environmental Aims

13-14 February 2014, Brussels, Belgium

European civil society stakeholders discussed unifying poverty eradication with environmental sustainability aims in the post-2015 development framework, at a European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) conference. The conference recommendations are contributing to a forthcoming EC communication that will be the basis for an EU position in negotiations of the post-2015 development agenda. The EESC is a consultative body of the EU. Its conference on ‘A new global partnership: European civil society positions on the post-2015 framework' took place from 13-14 February 2014, in Brussels, Belgium.

In opening remarks, Csaba Kőrösi, Permanent Representative of Hungary to the UN and Co-Chair of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) Open Working Group (OWG) on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), said the world must eradicate extreme poverty within the next generation, and manage natural resources and environmental conditions for the benefit of generations to come.

Mr. Janez Potočnik, European Commissioner for Environment, affirmed the role of stakeholders in ensuring an open society and ownership of SDGs. He said the UN is moving toward a single framework and single set of global goals to tackle the challenges of poverty eradication and sustainable development together. He outlined the EU's support for five main elements in the post-2015 framework: basic living standards; inclusive and sustainable growth; sustainable management of natural resources; equity, equality and justice; and peace and security.

The two-day meeting comprised consecutive discussion sessions on: fighting poverty and securing basic needs; drivers for inclusive development and social justice; managing natural resources and protecting the planet's ecosystems; and governance for sustainability. The meeting concluded with discussion of a global partnership for transition to a new sustainable development model.

UNGA President Announces Organizational, Financing Steps towards Post-2015 Agenda
3 February 2014, Strasbourg, France

UN General Assembly (UNGA) President John Ashe, speaking at the Joint Meeting of the Committees for Foreign Affairs and Trade at the European Parliament, outlined UN actions that are being taken to “set the stage” for post-2015. The meeting took place in Strasbourg, France, on 3 February 2014. Ashe said means of implementation will be crucial, and intergovernmental consultations toward a Third International Conference on Financing for Development (FFD) have begun. This was agreed for 2015 or 2016, to assess progress on the implementation of the Monterrey Consensus and the Doha Declaration on FFD.

UNGA President Ashe noted that the EU is the single largest financial contributor to UN system, providing almost 40% of its regular budget, two-fifths of the peacekeeping operations budget, and about half of all contributions to UN funds and programmes. He welcomed the EU’s decision to maintain its official development assistance (ODA) commitments in its 2014-2020 budget, including allocations for development and humanitarian assistance.

Ashe pledged to support members of the UNGA's Open Working Group (OWG) on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing (ICSDF) to reach their respective agreements outcomes by September 2014. He also recalled his recent appointment of two co-facilitators, including one from the EU, to start intergovernmental consultations on the organizational modalities for the September 2015 summit that is to adopt the post-2015 development agenda. The co-facilitators are Ib Petersen, Permanent Representative of Denmark, and Robert Aisi, Permanent Representative of Papua New Guinea (PNG).

Following a meeting with Ashe, European Commission President José Manuel Barroso highlighted the EU’s framework on climate and energy currently under discussion, which includes commitments to a domestic, unconditional cut of 40% in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2030 as compared to 1990 levels, a long-term objective of reducing emissions by 80-95% by 2050, and a target of at least 27% of renewable energy.


IFAD Highlights Food Security in Post-2015 Agenda
18 February 2014, Rome, Italy

Participants discussed how to achieve a sustainable, food-secure future for all at an event hosted by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) in Rome, Italy, on 18 February 2014. Panelists stressed the importance of investing in smallholder family farmers and empowering rural livelihoods to ensure global food security and nutrition.

The event on ‘Achieving a sustainable future for all: Rural transformation and the post-2015 agenda’ aimed to raise awareness about the post-2015 development agenda and the opportunities it presents to advance and implement a transformative agenda for smallholder family farmers.
Participants focused on four thematic areas: leveraging the rural-urban nexus for development; an empowerment agenda for rural livelihoods; investing in smallholder family agriculture for global food security and nutrition; and promoting the resilience of poor rural households.

These topics also are the subject of four IFAD policy briefs launched at the event. Each brief identifies challenges, entry points and approaches for a policy agenda, as well as including proposed goals and targets for the post-2015 development agenda.

Delhi Sustainable Development Summit Discusses Energy, Water and Food Security
6-8 February 2014, New Delhi, India

Participants highlighted growing demand for energy, water and food, and recommended actions at the 14th Delhi Sustainable Development Summit (DSDS). This year's summit took place on 6-8 February 2014, in New Delhi, India, under the theme 'Attaining Energy, Water, Food Security for All.'

Africa must choose an industrialization path that allows it to be “part of the sustainable development solution without having to forfeit its right to industrialize,” stressed Carlos Lopes, UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) Executive Secretary. He proposed a six-point strategy for Africa that: leap-frogs to a low carbon development pathway; invests in climate science, services and data to facilitate development of early warning systems, research on climate adaptation, impact and vulnerability and a knowledge economy; improves institutional and policy capacity; shares experiences through South-South partnerships, including among Africa and Caribbean and Pacific small island developing States (PSIDS); leverages agriculture and invests in innovation, sustainable land management (SLM) and water use efficiency; and recognizes tourism potential.

At the Asia regional launch of the UN Decade for Sustainable Energy for All (SE4ALL), Kandeh Yumkella, SE4ALL CEO, said “sustainable energy is not about poor countries alone but about rich and emerging countries” working together in partnerships, especially with the private sector. He proposed establishing three “Creative Coalitions:” the Solar Coalition for Increased Cost Reduction; the Energy Efficiency Coalition; and the Coalition of Progressive Transformers—in line with SE4ALL goals and efforts to achieve a SE4ALL goal in the post-2015 development agenda.

On the post-2015 agenda, speakers discussed climate change, the blue and green economies, inequalities, and monitoring and accountability, inter alia. Achim Steiner, UN Environment Programme (UNEP) Executive Director, recommended that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) framework incorporate comprehensive wealth accounting, drawing on the Inclusive Wealth Indicator (IWI) and including natural capital valuation, quality of life, security and social protection.

Speakers also discussed increasing food production to meet the needs of a growing population, protecting food producing ecosystems, and restoring degraded ecosystems. Noting that one third of all global food production is wasted, Steiner recommended “consuming better” through sustainable consumption and production (SCP). Nakao said Asia needs to recognize that “food wasted is water and energy wasted.”

The Energy and Resource Institute (TERI) organizes the Summit annually to facilitate knowledge exchange on all aspects of sustainable development.
“Lives are at risk; businesses, small and large; economies; the security of nations. The evidence is all around us. We need to act. Now. Together.”

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon wrapped up the themes at the UN Global Compact, the world’s largest corporate sustainability initiative, with the participation of 8,000 companies and 4,000 civil society organizations from 145 countries, which seeks to link business engagement with global priorities, including poverty and disease eradication, climate change mitigation, women’s empowerment, children’s and labour rights, and fighting corruption.

He stressed the imperative of business participating in the efforts to combat climate change, achieve the MDGs and define a post-2015 development agenda for eradicating extreme poverty and protecting the planet’s resources.


“In order to develop a successful post-2015 development agenda we will have to find a way to incorporate and stimulate the power of the young, of women and that of entrepreneurs.”

In an Op-Ed for Project Syndicate, the World Bank President's Special Envoy, Mahmoud Mohieldin, has addressed the challenge of financing an ambitious post-2015 development agenda amid falling levels of Official Development Assistance (ODA). Mr. Mohieldin points to four foundational pillars of development financing: domestic resource mobilization; better and smarter aid; domestic private finance; and external private finance.


“Financing a transformative development agenda will require an unprecedented level of cooperation among governments, donors, and the private sector, as well as policies and institutions that facilitate more efficient use of existing resources and attract new and diverse sources of funding.”

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