

# Brown Bag Dialogue Series

## Issue 05 | The Post-2015 Development Agenda Issue

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## Kickstarting the Post-2015 Debate in Zimbabwe

National consultations on the Post-2015 development agenda kicked off in Zimbabwe with a call to stay the course of fighting poverty through inclusive growth and economic transformation for sustainable development.

At a UN organized MDG dialogue event held on 11 April 2013 in Harare, Government and UN officials, policy makers as well as representatives of academia and NGOs took stock of the progress so far made in achieving MDGs, and the challenges that lie ahead. The discussion, under the theme *1000 days to the Millennium Development Goals deadline and the post-2015 development agenda* has heralded the first major national conversation on the Post-2015 development agenda in Zimbabwe.

It was noted that with GDP growth rates of 5.4% in 2009, 8.1% in 2010 and 9.3% in 2011 Zimbabwe is considered one of fastest growing economies in Africa, albeit from a low base. This growth, however needs to translate into poverty reduction and job creation. In fact, youth unemployment is a "political time bomb" not only in Zimbabwe but in the sub-Saharan Africa region, said the secretary of state for economic planning and investment promotion, Dr. Desire Sibanda..

Therefore, inclusive growth or "growth with equity" underpins the country's development priority, going forward, he emphasized.

Zimbabwe has made significant progress in meeting some MDGs, most notably MDG 2 on universal primary education, achieving gender equality in schools and in fighting HIV/AIDS. But with less than 1000 days remaining to the 2015 deadline, maternal health and poverty eradication—amongst other goals—are unlikely to be achieved.

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Reflecting on the global MDG campaign, the forum noted that the MDGs are a milestone in the international development discourse. "The Post-2015 discussion needs to recall that MDGs reflected one of the best poverty messaging campaigns" said UNRC, Mr. Alain Noudehou, explaining that the simplicity and structure of MDGs allowed them to endure. This approach, described by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon as the most successful anti-poverty push in history, is a lesson that any successor framework should benefit from, said the UNRC.

country to deal with environmental challenges, including climate change and access to basic social amenities like access to water, sanitation, and electricity for the urban poor and the majority population living in rural areas.

"There is growing convergence between the imperative of environmental sustainability and the necessity of economic growth to achieve long-term development," said Udo Etukudo, UNDP Economic Advisor supporting the ministry of economic planning and investment promotion.

In a lively question and answer session, Mr. Mufunda of the NGO Caritas, proposed that for development effectiveness, the new framework should be more nuanced and practical. "For instance, how can you measure aid effectiveness?" he posed, referring to MDG8 on developing a global partnership for development.

Other panellists listed access to information technology, the democratization of trade regimes and enhancing global partnerships as topping the list of "unfinished business" in the Post-2015 development agenda.

**“...with less than 1000 days remaining to the 2015 deadline, health and poverty eradication—among among other goals—are unlikely to be achieved.**

As in most countries in sub-Saharan Africa, Zimbabwe's consultations on the Post-2015 development agenda have started, albeit at a slow pace. However, the release of the national 2012 MDG Progress Report provides a fitting background for this dialogue. The report posits that the post-2015 development agenda should adopt a new approach that seeks to include critical problems that affect all communities such as the plight of the poor, political, social and economic stability, inequality as well as peace and security.

This holistic approach is in line with "triple wins" strategy advocated by UNDP that embraces the economic, social and environmental dimensions of development. This would enable the

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**The Post-2015 discussion needs to recall that MDGs reflected one of the best poverty messaging campaigns**

**- Alain Noudehou, UN Resident Coordinator**

The meeting proposed to form an Inter-Ministerial Committee to guide the preparation of a country position on Post-2015.



Ms. Constance Chigwamba, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Education, Sports, Art and Culture, second from right and other panelists during the launch of the 2012 MDG report and the Accelerated Action Plan on MDG2 (Photo: UN RCO)

## Brown Bag Dialogue Series

The Brown Bag Dialogue Series is a quarterly publication of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Zimbabwe. The publication reflects the ongoing exchange or conversation with our key partners, the Government of Zimbabwe, other UN Agencies, development partners, Non-Governmental Organisations and the private sector in seeking lasting solutions to the plethora of development challenges facing the country.



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# Reflections on the Emerging Framework

In a section on the Post-2015 development agenda, the 2012 MDG Progress Report poses the following questions: Do the MDGs adequately address the key development challenges in Zimbabwe?

If not, what has been left out and how can it be formulated into concrete and measurable goals for the next 15 to 20 years? How can a new set of goals best address the changing context and development challenges in Zimbabwe?"

This, in a nutshell, encapsulates the tone of the Post-2015 debate in Zimbabwe. On the issue of growth for instance, there is no doubt that the country has witnessed economic turnaround since the formation of the inclusive government in 2009. The launch of Short-Term Emergency Recovery Programmes (STERP I and II) and the formulation of the 2011-2015 Medium Term Plan (MTP) laid the foundation for sound macro-economic management, resulting in strong GDP growth rates of 5.4 percent in 2009, 8.1 percent in 2010 and 9.3 percent in 2011.

"Our experience with the MDGs has given us vital information and experience on how any successor framework could be shaped and implemented," said the UN Resident Coordinator. The Resident Coordinator was speaking in a forum to mark the release of the 2012 MDG Progress Report and the Accelerated Action Plan for MDG2 for Zimbabwe, on 29 May 2013.

The Resident Coordinator went on to say that because national policies and programmes were informed by MDGs and therefore, there's so much to learn—and build on—from the current framework. He reiterated that the simplicity, concise and measurable nature of the MDGs, ensures that they are easily understood by the global public.

According to Dr. Ray Ndhlukula, the Deputy Secretary to the Office of the President and Cabinet (OPC), economic growth without poverty reduction creates social problems. "Therefore, ending poverty is not just an ends in itself, it is a means to achieving economic growth" he says, adding that "poverty reduction should be the number one development aspiration."



L-R Dr. Ray Ndhlukula, Alain Noudehou and Dr. Desire Sibanda making presentations at the release of the 2012 MDG Progress Report (Photo UNDP)

Echoing similar sentiments, Dr. Desire Sibanda, the permanent secretary in the ministry of economic planning and investment promotion advances the view that focus on human development and poverty eradication should remain at the core of the post 2015 development agenda. "There is need to retain the format of the MDGs especially that of having goals, targets and indicators post 2015."

"The health MDGs, specifically have what experts say is a very nuanced approach. 'They are imbued with a clear vision, well-defined goals and measurable targets for improving specific health outcomes. These attributes are widely regarded as the reasons why they have been embraced widely," observed UNDP Economic Advisor, James Wakiaga.

Meanwhile in their report submitted to the UN Secretary-General in May 2013, the UN High-level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda takes the ideas behind the Millennium Development Goals, which have improved the lives of millions of people, to the next level, addressing any unfinished business from

the MDGs and offering a path towards prosperity and the fulfilment of human rights and dignity.

"So a new development agenda should carry forward the spirit of the Millennium Declaration and the best of the MDGs, with a practical focus on things like poverty, hunger, water, sanitation, education and healthcare," states the report.

Noteworthy is the issue of climate change which the panellists say will impact on millions of people worldwide. "People living in poverty will suffer first and worst from climate change. The cost of taking action now will be much less than the cost of dealing with the consequences later."

Governments have agreed on a deadline of 2015 for reaching a new deal on climate change, for implementation in 2020. This, according to experts, will "ensure that climate negotiations become an increasingly dominant item on the international agenda," notes researchers Alex Evans and David Steven in paper for the Center on International Cooperation, New York University.

# Lessons from the accelerated plan for MDG2

The Ministry of Education, Sports, Art and Culture with support from the United Nations launched the Accelerated Action Plan (AAP) for MDG2 for Zimbabwe that aims at ensuring that by 2015, all Zimbabwean children—boys and girls alike—will be able to complete primary education.

The plan, which has been developed using the MDG Accelerated Framework (MAF) methodology, identifies Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM), School Feeding Programme, Second Chance Education and School Improvement Grants as selected focus areas of intervention. The methodology defines opportunities for scaling up the effectiveness of these interventions to meet the MDG targets by 2015.

Through these measures, Zimbabwe hopes to retain its pole position in sub-Saharan Africa in the area of universal primary education.

After independence in 1980, Zimbabwe enjoyed some of the highest levels of net enrolment in Africa. However Net Enrolment Ratio (NER), that reflects the share of children of official primary school age that are enrolled in primary school declined to 91 percent in 2009 from a peak of 99 percent in 2000, according to the Ministry of Education, Sport, Arts and Culture.

Compared to the African aggregate of 87 percent in 2010 (MDR 2013), this is still a relatively high figure.

However, there's growing concern that the number of children who remain in primary school until grade 7 is now much lower than in the past. For instance, there was a decline between 1996 (82.6 percent) and 2006 (68.2 percent), according to the education ministry.

During the launch of the Accelerated Action Plan for MDG2 report for Zimbabwe that was held on 29 May 2013, the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Education, Sports, Art and Culture, Ms. Constance Chigwamba expressed the government's full commitment to the plan.

"Going forward, the AAP will be launched



provincially in August 2013 and implementation will follow immediately. An updated progress report is expected on the state of MDG 2 in December 2013," she said, stressing the need for resource mobilization to meet costs of implementation.

"The interventions are considered 'low hanging fruits' to be scaled up in the near future to generate high-impact results" states the AAP adding that these policy measures will benefit from past successes in the area of primary education in Zimbabwe as well as improve on existing strategies and structures.

"Education has been given the priority because it affects all the goals. Educated and empowered people can work towards ending poverty, which affects all other MDGs," remarked UNDP Economic Advisor, James Wakiaga.

Against the background of constrained resources, UNESCO suggests that government and education partners should intensify their efforts to increase resources for programmes such as BEAM and ensure that teachers can be retained by improving their conditions of service and opportunities for professional development. Providing the same conditions for early childhood

development programme as for primary schools is necessary. In addition, UNESCO urges building capacity of the planning department of the MoESAC in respect of data processing and analysis.

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Realizing that many countries have been experiencing severe challenges to achieving MDGs, the UNDP developed and tested an MDG Framework (MAF) in 2010. It has since been endorsed by all UN development agencies as members of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG). The framework is intended to enable countries to better analyze why they are lagging behind on specific MDGs, to prioritize bottlenecks to progress, and to identify accelerated collaborative solutions involving governments and all relevant stakeholders.

Furthermore, MAF helps to address new challenges related to meeting the MDGs in a particular country context.

# The Road to Post-2015 Agenda: The Global Conversation

Since August 2012 the United Nations system has facilitated an unprecedented series of consultations with people the world over to seek their views on a new development agenda to build on the successes of the MDGs. This global conversation responds to a growing call for active participation in shaping the ‘world we want’.

“Taking place well before governments sit down to negotiate and finalize such a new agenda, the consultations underway provide evidence and perspectives to governments on the challenges people face in improving their lives and those of their families and communities,” states a 2013 publication of the United Nations Development Group titled *The Global Conversation Begins, Emerging Views for a New Development Agenda*.

The report reveals that so far over 200,000 people have been able to contribute to this global conversation; 83 national dialogues are under way in all continents and across a range of countries. The UN is partnering in each country with governments, civil society, the private sector and think tanks.

“The Global Conversation represents an effort to dramatically widen the net of engagement in discussions leading to the formulation of a successor development framework, even as work continues towards the current set of goals”.

At the UN level, three work-streams are currently involved in the post-2015 agenda: the High-Level Panel of 27 eminent persons nominated by the UN Secretary General, the Open Working Group of 30 members decided by the Rio Conference to set up Sustainable Development Goals and the UN task team, co-chaired by UNDP and the UN’s Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), comprising more than 60 UN agencies and international institutions.

## **The High Level Panel (HLP)**

In July 2012, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon announced the 27 members of a High-level Panel to advise on the global development framework beyond 2015, the target date for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The Panel was co-chaired by President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono of Indonesia, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia, and Prime

Minister David Cameron of the United Kingdom, and it includes leaders from civil society, private sector and government.

The Panel was part of the Secretary-General’s post-2015 initiative mandated by the 2010 MDG Summit. The Panel’s work was closely coordinated with that of the intergovernmental working group tasked to design Sustainable Development Goals, as agreed at the Rio +20 conference.

The Panel’s report was released at the end of May 2013. The report proposes a new set of goals based on five ‘transformational shifts’ to replace the MDGs. These include moving from reducing poverty to ending it or the so-called ‘leave no-one behind’ and the need to have sustainable development at the core of economic development. Others are transforming economies for jobs and inclusive growth; build peace and effective, open, and accountable institutions for all; and forge a new global partnership.

In addition to the HLP, the UN Secretary General has nominated Ms Amina J. Mohammed, who is a member of the HLP, as his Special Advisor on Post-2015 Development Planning, in accordance with the priority accorded to this process in the SG’s Five Year Action. The Advisor is part of a group of four Assistant Secretary Generals (from UNDP, DESA and UN Women) which guide and coordinate the one, UN-led, Post-2015 Secretariat hosted by UNDP.

## **The UN Task Team**

Together with the UNDESA, UNDP is co-chairing the UN post-2015 Task Team (UNTT) that started activities in January 2012. The report of the UN Task Team (UNTT) “Realising the Future We Want for All” was submitted to the SG just before Rio. It served as an input to the work of the HLP, and is also likely to be taken into consideration by the new Open Working Group.

## **Open Working Group (OWG)**

Launched as an outcome of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), the Open Working Group report is expected to be submitted to the UN General Assembly in September 2014. The OWG consists of 30 member countries representing the UN regions. Zimbabwe and Zambia are the Southern Africa representatives. The HLP’s work will be closely coordinated with this working group. The reports of both groups will be submitted to Member States for their further deliberations.

## **Regional and National Consultations**

In Africa, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) is coordinating regional consultations. In addition, the African Union will be presenting the Common Position to inform the discussion during the 68th United Nations General Assembly in September 2013.

At the national level, Zimbabwe has embarked on a number of initiatives to capture the voices of the people in shaping the post-2015 development agenda. In April, an MDG dialogue was convened and the post-2015 development agenda was among the issues discussed (see leading story).

In addition, the Government and United Nations jointly presented the 2012 MDG Progress report and Accelerated Action Plan (AAP) on MDG 2, (Refer to story on page 4) specifically targeting completion rates in primary education. The forum took stock of the progress made towards achieving the MDGs and what measures could be taken to accelerate progress. The recent launch of a web dialogue by the Development Resources Institute (DRI) to capture public views on the Post-2015 development agenda would further enrich the national dialogue.

# What next after the MDG's: The post-2015 debate

“..to fulfil our vision of promoting sustainable development, we must go beyond the MDGs”

- Report of HLP of Eminent Persons, May 2013

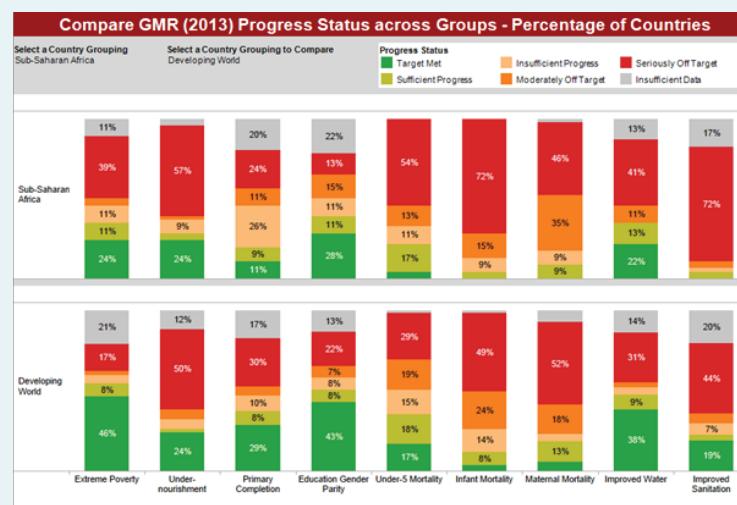


Table: MDG Progress to-date (2013). Source: World Bank interactive database

## Context:

With the 2015 deadline for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) fast approaching, the United Nations and its member states have been consulting on a new development framework that will succeed the MDGs. Initially, two streams of consultations were taking place around a new global development framework. One stream was based on the outcome document of the 2010 MDG Summit, which focused primarily on developing a new global agenda beyond 2015. The other stream was built around the 2012 Rio+20 Conference on Sustainable Development which preferred an inclusive dialogue process to develop a set of sustainable development goals. To date, a broad agreement has been reached that the two processes should be linked and ultimately converge into one global development agenda beyond 2015, with sustainable development at its core. To that end, the report by the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons presented to the UN Secretary-General provided recommendations linking development with environment, based on five big transformative shifts that would help respond to new global challenges, with a view to ending extreme poverty. These are: (1) Leave no one behind; (2) Put sustainable development at the core; (3) Transform economies for jobs and inclusive growth; (4) build peace and effective, open and accountable institutions for all; and (5) Forge a new global partnership.

## What is at stake?

Firstly, there is the critical issue of having a single set of goals that addresses what the September 2014 outcome document refers to as “common but differentiated responsibility”. This is because previously neglected issues of the right to development and democratic governance take on prominent roles in the new debates.

Second, the UN Secretary-General is expected to deliver a report to the September 2014 General Assembly meeting that frames and sets out the parameters for final negotiations around the development framework that replaces the MDGs. At the September 2015 General Assembly meeting, all Heads of State and Government will be expected to adopt the new global framework.

And finally, there is the issue of financing for the new development framework. While attention, so far, has focused largely on negotiating a replacement framework, expectations around the financial requirements or a financing deal remain very much unclear.

## What have been the lessons learned?

### Positive contributions

- Focused attention on the poverty;
- MDG's have been mainstreamed into national development plans;
- Greater focus on results, with its specified targets and indicators;
- Fostered evidence-based planning, monitoring and reporting.

### Challenges and shortcomings

- Did not do enough on reaching the extreme poor and the most excluded sections of society;
- Overly silent on the effects of conflict and violence on development;
- Did not consider the importance to economic development of good governance and institutions that promote the rule of law, free speech, and open and accountable government;
- Criticized for being too general, thus overlooking different contexts;
- Disproportionately focused on social indicators at the expense of employment creation and the productive sectors;

# Highlights from the UN General Assembly 2013

The theme of this year's 68th General Assembly – "The Post 2015 Development Agenda: Setting the Stage!" sought to provide a blueprint to totally eliminate poverty and its attendant ills in the decades following the end in 2015 of the MDGs cycle.

"We must go beyond the traditional relationship between donors and recipients through the creation of partnerships with the involvement of new international actors," Portuguese Foreign Minister Rui Machete said, calling for a broader, more inclusive and strategic vision that will build on the MDGs' focus on poverty reduction and sustainable development while giving special attention to the needs of the least developed countries.

"Different modalities of assistance, new sources of financing, a reinforced principle of shared responsibility, leadership and ownership by developing countries are, for Portugal, the main guiding principles for the post-2015 development agenda."

Andorra's Head of Government, Antoni Martí Petit, said he hoped that the goals of the post-2015 agenda will be even more ambitious than the MDGs and "that we will be able to dedicate a lot more effort to them," noting that most of the Millennium targets will not be reached by their deadline.

"Otherwise, we will run the risk of citizens seeing their institutions, and also the United Nations, as something far removed from their everyday lives and real problems," he warned.

Elmar Maharram Oglu, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan said that his country believed one of the key elements within the post-2015 agenda should be information and communication technologies (ICTs), "which is a driving force of development and progress."

To achieve the objective of ensuring improved access to new technologies, he said, there is a need for intensified efforts to enhance regional synergies for promoting investment in ICT capacity building, refocusing tools and contents

for addressing particular needs of populations, and thus ICTs can be better adapted in the service of sustainable development.

For his part, Vladimir Makei, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belarus, stressed the need to devise a comprehensive post-2015 UN development agenda comprising those areas not covered by the MDG, for example, migration, energy and employment.

"We believe that each and every goal must be realized through appropriate thematic global partnerships that bring together States, international organisations, civil society and private sector," he said suggesting that such cooperation could emulate the Global Partnership against Slavery and Trafficking in Persons that is being now successfully implemented.

**“Otherwise, we will run the risk of citizens seeing their institutions, and also the United Nations, as something far removed from their everyday lives and real problems”**

Titus Corlatean, Minister of Foreign Affairs  
- **Andorra's Head of Government, Antoni Martí Petit**

of Romania, said the new framework should reinforce the international community's commitment to poverty eradication and sustainable development. The yet-to-be-agreed sustainable development goals should be universal, applicable to all States and provide references and clear suggestions for action and innovative mechanisms for

measuring their implementation.

"At the same time, the goals should be based on national ownership and taking into account different national circumstances in order to provide political space and the right to development for each country," he said

From West Africa, Mauritanian Foreign Minister Ahmed Teguedi called on rich countries to approve a range of important elements for developing countries in the post-2015 agenda, including debt cancellation, technological transfers, improvements to North-South trade exchanges and the elimination of customs barriers.

"On the threshold of 2015 we must today put in place plans and programmes that take into account the failures of the past and the challenges of the future," he said. "To this effect we call on the rich countries to keep their promises regarding the financing of development programmes in those countries which are in urgent need of them."

Jose Maria Pereira Neves, Prime Minister of Cape Verde called climate change a "pressing problem of our times" that should be addressed with urgency and a great sense of responsibility. The issue deserved a major focus in the post-2015 development agenda, as its fallout impacts food security and ocean acidification, and exacerbates social tensions, opening doors to potential national and regional conflicts.

With that in mind, he said that as delegations move forward with the sustainable development goal process, the General Assembly must "come together in a historic convergence on behalf of the environment," with the aim of ensuring social, economic and human development for all