

# Beyond2015

## Civil society is a game changer for sustainable development

**New York (and globally), 27 September 2015** - The private sector has been promoted as a key player in realising the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030, but if there was ever any doubt about the role of civil society in this 15-year journey, **Beyond 2015**'s high-level event today proved otherwise.

'Implementing the post-2015 agenda – building political leadership for transformative change', saw world leaders and civil society come together to celebrate the positive action that has already been taken at country level and the role everyone has to play in moving from policy to action.

If we are to make sure these goals become a reality and reach people at a local level, government and civil society must work together. Only through partnership will we make sure we leave no one behind. Civil society has a crucial role in raising awareness of the universal goals, bringing them into context at the local level, and holding leaders to account. *"The onus on implementing the goals lies on all of us. Long gone are the days when civil society and private sector sit on the fence and finger point. It is time for civil society to become part of the solution"* declared H.E. Dr. Jakaya Mrisho Kiwete, President of the United Republic of Tanzania.

The governments of Tanzania, Colombia, Kenya, Indonesia and Sweden recognised today that they cannot work alone and must involve civil society to ensure local ownership of the new goals. Colombia, for instance, outlined ongoing dialogue with civil society as a pivotal step in ensuring transparent and effective decision-making, while Kenya stressed that the participation of civil society is crucial to realising the unfinished business of the SDGs.

*"We need a heart and we cannot afford to fail on this. These goals have been signed in our presence and we must deliver. People are looking to us and saying 'do not fail us now', God help us."* This impassioned plea came from Jean Patrice Ngoyi K from the Justice, Development and Peace Commission (JDPC), who challenged governments to show leadership across all sectors and ensure civil society participation in reaching the goals. Earlier, Emele Duituturaga from the Pacific Islands Association of NGOs (PIANGO) reminded everyone that *"people and not profit must be front and centre of the new agenda"*.

The adoption of the SDGs this week is historical, but today's event was a reminder that the road ahead is complex and requires political leadership and willingness to change. Alejandro Barrios from the Partnership for Development Effectiveness (CPDE) rallied civil society to challenge governments to ensure people's rights, equitable partnerships and tackle inequality, while Tanya Cox from PLAN International stressed the universality of the new agenda, calling on richer countries to both support developing countries while focusing on the well-being and human rights of their own populations.

Alicia Bárcena, Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and moderator of today's event, echoed Beyond 2015's call for countries to act now and include civil society to deliver the SDGs, while adding that it is also time for countries to 'prove' and 'move'. The five countries on the podium at today's event have showed political leadership to start planning the delivery of the SDGs together with civil society. It is time for the rest of the pack to follow and for all countries to enable civil society to play its critical role.

**Contact:** Ella Masle-Farquhar, **Beyond 2015** International Officer, [efarquhar@beyond2015.org](mailto:efarquhar@beyond2015.org), 19295751678 – <http://www.beyond2015.org/>