

Beyond2015

Goals, Targets and Indicators – Critical elements of the post-2015 agenda

Beyond 2015 messages for the third intergovernmental negotiation session on the post-2015 development agenda

Mar 23-27 2015, New York

The third session of the post-2015 intergovernmental negotiations will take place from March 23rd to 27th in New York with the aim of discussing Goals, Targets and indicators of the post-2015 agenda. This is a crucial round of negotiations where Member States are expected to take clear positions around the SDGs, including on the status of the report of the Open Working Group on the SDGs (OWG).

Beyond 2015 would like to present some key comments as inputs to the discussions:

On Goals and Targets:

- Beyond 2015 [has welcomed the OWG report](#) as a good starting point for the negotiations as it includes a series of transformative requests and proposals reflecting input from civil society.
- The OWG report must represent the **floor, not the ceiling**, of ambition for a truly transformative people-centered agenda. Its commitments cannot be watered down.
- Any potential “technical **review**” of the proposed goals and targets should be done in an open and participatory manner, with a view to improve and strengthen the proposal, not weaken it.
- We have already [expressed our concern](#) that efforts to make targets ‘concise’ and ‘achievable’ should maintain the highest ambition in order to reframe sustainable development and not diminish the interdependent and integrated character of the goals and targets.
- The **universality of the agenda must be recommitted to**. All countries have a responsibility to achieve all goals within their own countries as well as to contributing to progress beyond their borders, with the greatest positive impact on the lives of people experiencing poverty and marginalization. The post-2015 agenda must apply to all countries, to all actors, to all people. It is also important that Member States commit to clearly focus on the implementation of all goals and targets and not only the “lowest hanging fruit”, including those that necessitate tough political changes.
- We have also expressed [our concern](#) that the six elements proposed in the Secretary-General synthesis report do not adequately capture the integrated vision proposed by Member States at the OWG and do not reflect the integrated, human rights-based approach to development that governments, civil society and individuals have been calling for the post-2015 agenda. We would recommend an approach that considers **People, Planet and Participation** underlined by a focus on **economic justice**. Without a focus on the systemic issues, progress on these essential **3 P's** risks being undermined.

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Indicators

- Indicators will need to be **broadly disaggregated** across all relevant goals and targets to ensure that disparities and inequities in progress are visible, and that the impact (or lack of it) of the SDGs on the poorest and most marginalized people are not obscured by medians or national averages as was the case with the MDGs.
- The SDGs indicators should abide by the principle of **non-regression** and cannot be less ambitious than the agreed targets or previously agreed indicators. Further, it should be faithful to the nature of the target which means measuring what the target is clearly calling for.
- It is no longer acceptable to use GDP as a proxy for development outcomes. Human development requires a more nuanced understanding of different elements of human wellbeing and equity; our commitment to sustainable development must **include adequate measurement of environmental factors**. Progress must be measured in ways that **go beyond GDP** and account for human well-being, sustainability and equity.
- The '**Data Revolution**' has made it clear that availability and access to data are essential components of inclusive, effective development. Member states at the UN need to make a commitment to increasing availability, accessibility and inclusivity of data, including disaggregated data across key sectors.
- Member States should agree on the creation of a **set of universal indicators that can be shared across countries**. This is essential to guarantee comparability of progress across different contexts and to foster cooperation in achieving the SDGs, particularly within regions. Additionally, a transparent and inclusive process should be set at national level to establish indicators that capture the national realities and to ensure that every country is doing as much as they can and to guarantee the universality of the agenda.
- The process to set up indicators should be **led by technical experts in a transparent, participatory and inclusive process** that includes the experience and knowledge from civil society experts. The discussion and agreement of indicators for the SDGs should not become political, as robust technical inputs are needed to avoid perverse incentives.
- It is crucial that the indicators do not prioritise measuring the outputs of States over outcomes for people. Information on people-focused outcomes can be gathered through surveys of **people's experiences and perceptions**, the latter of which are crucial for knowing what people think and whether they believe that things are improving.
- The indicators should facilitate people on the ground to directly **participate in the process** of measurement of progress, from design, collection of data, and analysis and communication of the results. This 'bottom-up' approach to data will ensure that people living in poverty are able to communicate their own realities and shape their own development pathways.

About this paper: This paper was prepared by the Beyond 2015 Secretariat based on key messages from [previous positions](#) from the Campaign. A draft version was submitted to the review of the Co-Chairs of the Beyond 2015 Executive Committee, Regional Coordinators, Beyond 15 Partners and UN Working Group Operational Group.