



NSI The North-South
Institute

Research Report

Reflecting on the MDGs and Making Sense of the Post-2015 Development Agenda

May 2013

by
Kate Higgins

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	iii
About The North-South Institute	iii
About the Author	iii
Executive Summary	iv
Introduction	1
The Power of Global Goals: Reflections on the MDGs.....	2
Historical background	2
The MDGs: An overview	3
Global MDG progress	4
Country-level MDG progress	5
MDG progress as MDG success?	7
MDGs: Strengths, limitations, and lessons	9
A New Set of Global Development Goals Post-2015?	13
Changing global context	13
Expectations for new global goals	15
Establishing the post-2015 framework: Process.....	16
Establishing the post-2015 framework: Priority issues.....	18
Establishing the post-2015 framework: Architecture.....	23
Establishing the post-2015 framework: Emerging challenges	28
Conclusion	31
Annex 1: MDGs, Targets, and Indicators	32
Annex 2: Calendar for Establishing the Post-2015 Development Agenda	36
References.....	37

Acknowledgements

The author would like to sincerely thank Geoffrey Cameron, Felix Dodds, Shannon Kindornay, Kate McInturff, Yiagadeesen (Teddy) Samy, Rodney Schmidt, and John Sinclair for their useful comments on earlier drafts. Many thanks to Nathan Bowers-Krishnan for excellent research assistance and Michael Olender for excellent copy-editing.

The North-South Institute (NSI) thanks the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and International Development Research Centre (IDRC) for financial support for this project. This paper does not reflect the views or opinions of NSI, NSI's Board of Directors, CIDA, IDRC, or anyone consulted during its preparation

The author accepts responsibility for any misinterpretations of data or factual errors.

About The North-South Institute

Founded in 1976, NSI is Canada's leading independent policy research institution specializing in effective international development. Ranked in 2012 as the world's top small think tank by the Global Go To Think Tanks Index for the second year in a row, and Canada's leading international development think tank, NSI's mission is to conduct high-quality, policy-relevant research and stimulate constructive dialogue and debate that contributes to a safe and prosperous world free of poverty and extreme inequality.

About the Author

Kate Higgins leads the Governance for Equitable Growth program at NSI. Her research interests include inclusive growth, trade, poverty dynamics, women's economic empowerment, and global development frameworks such as the Millennium Development Goals and the post-2015 development agenda. Previously, she was a Research Fellow with the Growth, Poverty and Inequality program at the Overseas Development Institute in the United Kingdom and worked at the Australian Agency for International Development. She has worked with the United Nations, the World Bank, and a number of bilateral development agencies including the United Kingdom's Department for International Development, the Canadian International Development Agency, and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. She has extensive field experience in East Africa and has also worked on shorter assignments in Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, Thailand, and Yemen. She holds a Master of Philosophy in Development Studies from the University of Oxford and a Bachelor of Economics (Hons I) from the University of Sydney.

Executive Summary

In the year 2000, world leaders adopted the Millennium Declaration. A commitment to a peaceful, prosperous, and just world, the declaration included a set of targets for development and poverty reduction to be reached by 2015. These came to be known as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Over the past decade, the MDGs have become a central reference point for aid and international cooperation, not only providing a compelling vision for international development, but also a set of quantitative benchmarks against which development progress can be measured. As the 2015 end date approaches, policy-makers have turned their attention to what will replace the MDGs. Preoccupation with the post-MDG agenda has led to a proliferation of analyses, discussions, and summits on what should come next.

This report seeks to provide a comprehensive but manageable *tour d'horizon* of the post-2015 agenda. Specifically, it assembles and synthesizes the burgeoning MDG and post-2015 literature to reflect on the MDGs and identify the processes, issues, architecture, and emerging challenges that are framing and influencing the post-2015 agenda.

Reflecting on the MDGs

The MDGs are a set of eight global development goals, 21 targets, and 60 indicators. They were designed as global goals with global targets. Much effort has been devoted to measuring progress against the MDGs and on the whole progress has been mixed. Some goals and targets, such as those focused on extreme poverty reduction, primary education, and HIV/AIDS, look set to be met. Progress against others, such as maternal mortality and vulnerable employment, has been less impressive.

While the direct development impact of the MDGs is difficult to determine, they have been credited with shaping international development discourse and debates, generating popular awareness for ending poverty, and supporting increases in aid. Much attention has been devoted to identifying the strengths and limitations of the MDGs and, based on this analysis, lessons for the post-2015 framework. These lessons include:

- Adopt a simple, clear, and time-bound framework that is compelling, easy to communicate, and measurable.
- Support an inclusive, accessible, and transparent process to develop the post-2015 framework that is bottom-up rather than donor-dominated and top-down.
- Select goals and targets that are ambitious yet reasonably achievable.
- Select targets and indicators that are clearly specified and underpinned by robust data, or targets and indicators where the opportunity exists to develop robust data.
- Adopt global goals that reflect global priorities but targets that can be tailored to national and sub-national contexts.

- Capture the distributional nature of progress (i.e., inequality) by tracking progress in a disaggregated way.
- Expect industrialized countries to take concrete, time-bound, and measurable action beyond aid.
- Prioritize and do not overburden the agenda.
- Consider intermediate targets as “stepping stones” toward long-term goals.

Changing global context

The MDGs were conceived in an era of relative stability and strong growth, when global power was more concentrated and the development lexicon was largely focused on more and better aid from rich countries and better policies in poor ones. While many of the principles outlined in the Millennium Declaration remain relevant, it is clear that the context today is considerably different from that in which the MDGs were agreed. The geopolitical map is more complicated and fragmented today than it was in 2000. Stakeholders outside government, such as the private sector, philanthropic foundations, and citizens’ movements, are more woven into global affairs. The front-and-centre issues in international development have changed. While aid remains a critical resource for many low- and middle-income countries, other sources of finance for development, including taxation, remittances, and investment, are of greater importance now than in 2000. Today many of the challenges that the world faces, including climate change, financial regulation, tax avoidance, and insecurity, require global solutions. But this is at a time when confidence in the multilateral system is waning. For the post-2015 framework to be a success, decision makers will need to take this changing context into account to ensure that the framework is fit-for-purpose not only in 2015 but also the decades beyond.

Establishing the post-2015 framework: Process

The wheels for establishing the post-2015 framework are in motion. Two United Nations (UN) processes are running in parallel: the post-2015 development agenda, which is currently being informed by the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which were agreed on in principle at Rio+20 and are being developed by an intergovernmental Open Working Group on the SDGs. The High-Level Panel will present its report to the UN secretary-general on May 30, 2013. The Open Working Group is expected to submit a report to the UN General Assembly during its 68th session (September 2013 to September 2014). Stakeholders have consistently expressed their desires that the post-2015 development agenda and the SDGs processes converge to establish just *one* set of global development goals.

In addition to these two processes, there is the UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda, which is mandated to coordinate, in consultation with all stakeholders, UN system-wide preparations for the post-2015 agenda. Beyond this, the UN Development Group has undertaken the most comprehensive global consultation ever undertaken by the UN. Given the success of the MDGs as a mobilizing and organizing framework for international development, many stakeholders

are engaging in substantial analysis, debate, and lobbying to influence the post-2015 framework in their favour.

Establishing the post-2015 framework: Issues

Perhaps unsurprisingly, there is a broad range of issues that have been proposed as priorities for the post-2015 development agenda. Many of these reflect contextual shifts that have occurred since the MDGs were established in 2000. There appears to be overall support for the post-2015 framework to have sustainable development at its heart, but there is no consensus yet on which priorities should receive the most attention. Some observers are calling for a framework that prioritizes “finishing the job” of the MDGs and “getting to zero”—effectively ending extreme poverty and basic deprivations. Others see the new framework as a chance to be more ambitious and an opportunity to not only focus on ending extreme poverty but also coordinating global action to manage pressing transboundary challenges and global public goods.

A number of the issues that are gaining traction feature in the MDGs, such as health, education, poverty reduction, and gender equality. But a range of other issues are attracting attention, largely in response to analyses of the world’s most pressing problems. These include environmental sustainability, inequality, growth, jobs, and governance, including governance in fragile and conflict-affected states.

Establishing the post-2015 framework: Architecture

While there appears to be consensus that the post-2015 framework will retain the goals, targets, and indicators format of the MDGs, there will likely be some changes in the architecture that frames the goals. The MDGs were designed as global goals with global targets, where the “locus of change” was overwhelmingly expected to be in developing countries. It is likely that while the next set of global goals will retain a focus on ending extreme poverty and supporting sustainable development in developing countries, the “locus of change” will be broadened to track development progress in industrialized countries and/or expect more from industrialized countries in terms of domestic policy commitments to supporting global development and securing global public goods.

An approach to structuring the post-2015 framework that appears to be gaining considerable attention is having global goals that resonate universally, but tracking progress through targets at the national level. This approach would reflect collective global priorities while taking into account the different starting points and diverse needs of individual countries. It would also enable a more meaningful connection between global goals and domestic priorities, and make new targets more useful for national monitoring purposes.

Establishing the post-2015 framework: Emerging challenges

There is still considerable time before the next set of global goals will be agreed on by the UN General Assembly in September 2015. While much work has already been done to move the post-2015 agenda forward, a number of issues remain unresolved and will likely be subject to lengthy negotiations.

Moving from aid to sustainable development and managing global public goods

Many of the analyses of contemporary global challenges point to the need to do a better job at promoting sustainable development, tackling transboundary challenges, and managing global public goods through internationally coordinated collective action. This shift is hotly political, however. Least developed countries are concerned that the shift may result in less aid for them and more resources diverted to middle-income countries. Middle-income countries have expressed concern that they might be constrained in their choice of development pathway. Donors are uncomfortable with linking development cooperation, which has historically been grounded in the notion of solidarity, with sustainable development and the principle of common but differentiated responsibility. Further, while it may make sense in principle to move toward a framework that is more focused on sustainable development and securing global public goods, experience with MDG 8, which lacks specific targets for industrialized countries and where progress has been mixed, suggests that this may be difficult to achieve in practice.

Accepting a universal framework

There is much energy behind the idea of adopting a universal framework that tracks progress on contributions toward global goals in *all* countries. But the political feasibility of such a framework needs attention. Will industrialized countries commit to a universal framework, where their progress on sustainable development in their own countries and their contributions to sustainable development globally are scrutinized internationally? And even if they do commit, will this result in action?

Enabling prioritization

A key challenge in negotiating the post-2015 framework will be balancing the need to prioritize the issues that should be captured by the goals with expectations that a broader and more complex range of issues will make up the framework. Given that the simple and limited nature of the MDGs has been hailed as one of their best attributes, the post-2015 framework should not be overburdened with too many goals and priorities.

Developing a framework that makes sense to a diverse range of stakeholders

The actors engaged in international development are more diverse than when the MDGs were established. Aid donors today are a more diverse set of countries, philanthropic foundations play a much larger financing role in development, and the private sector is considerably more engaged in global development issues, through initiatives such as the UN Global Compact. Emerging economies are playing a more assertive role in global politics and many developing countries have strong opportunities for growth. At the same time, there are countries that continue to face conflict and humanitarian crises. Decision makers will need to take this diversity of actors into account when developing the post-2015 framework. It will be important for this range of stakeholders to see how they can usefully contribute to the agenda.

Balancing measurement with norm setting

One of the strengths of the MDGs is that they are goals against which development progress can be measured. This feature will likely be retained in the post-2015 framework because there appears to be much interest in connecting aspirational goals with metrics that measure development progress. But it will need to be balanced with the important norm-setting role that global goals can play, which can signal the collective development priorities of all countries. Balancing the role that global goals can play as norm setters, with demands for robust data and measurement, will likely be a difficult balance to strike.

Conclusion

If the MDGs are anything to go by, the post-2015 framework will have significant influence on global and national development priorities in the decades beyond 2015. But to be relevant and meaningful not only in 2015 but also the decades that follow, the framework will need to respond to the changing global context and numerous long-term challenges. It will also need to be structured in a way that will generate buy-in from a diverse range of countries and stakeholders.

The post-2015 framework presents a major opportunity to mobilize the world around a set of global goals that have the potential to catalyze real action on development priorities that can no longer go ignored. The process of developing and agreeing on goals is consuming a lot of time, energy, and money, and critics are questioning its relevance in the context of fiscal austerity and waning faith in multilateralism. But this is a process that should not be taken lightly. Based on the experience with the MDGs, the framework will likely play an important role in framing national and global policy and decision making for decades to come. Doing our best to get it right is not only an opportunity, but this generation's responsibility.

Introduction

In the year 2000, at the United Nations (UN) Millennium Summit in New York, world leaders adopted the Millennium Declaration. A commitment to a peaceful, prosperous, and just world, the declaration included a set of targets for development and poverty reduction to be reached by 2015. These came to be known as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). They comprise eight goals on poverty alleviation, education, gender equality, child and maternal health, HIV/AIDS reduction, and environmental sustainability in developing countries, as well as a “global partnership for development” (MDG 8), covering rich countries’ commitments to aid, an open and non-discriminatory trading and financial system, technology transfer, and debt relief.

The MDGs have been hailed a success for uniting the international community around a global agenda for development. Over the past decade, the MDGs have become a central reference point for aid and international cooperation, not only providing a compelling vision for international development, but also a set of quantitative benchmarks against which development progress can be measured.

As the 2015 end date approaches, policy-makers have turned their attention to what will replace the MDGs. Preoccupation with the post-MDG agenda has led to a proliferation of analyses, discussions, and summits on what should come next. Currently, there are two parallel but connected global policy processes in place: the UN-led post-2015 development agenda process and the intergovernmental post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) process.

This report seeks to make sense of the complex post-2015 discussions and debates. Specifically, the report assembles and synthesizes the burgeoning MDG and post-2015 literature around the following questions:

- What are the strengths and limitations of the MDGs, and what elements should be retained in the post-2015 development framework?
- What are the processes in place for elaborating the post-2015 development framework?
- What are the key issues that are emerging as priorities for the post-2015 development framework?
- What options are being discussed for the architecture of the post-2015 development framework?
- What are the emerging challenges to be resolved in negotiating and establishing the post-2015 development framework?

The intention of this report is not to add to the ever-growing set of reports on the post-2015 agenda that propose priorities and frameworks that should make up the next set of global development goals. Rather, it is to make sense of these analyses by providing a comprehensive but manageable *tour d’horizon* of the post-2015 agenda and identifying the implications of the analyses for the path that the post-2015 agenda is likely to take.

While the hope is that individuals who are deeply engaged in the post-2015 discussions will find this report an accurate depiction of the analyses of the MDGs and the post-2015 agenda thus far, its primary audience is those individuals who are *not* deeply engaged in discussions on the post-2015 framework but understand its importance for global development.

The Power of Global Goals: Reflections on the MDGs

Historical background

The 21st century began with an unprecedented international commitment to a new consensus on ending global poverty. World leaders from 189 countries, including 147 heads of state and government, gathered at the UN General Assembly and adopted the Millennium Declaration. This declaration was an ambitious and visionary document which reiterated commitment to certain fundamental values, namely freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, respect for nature, and shared responsibility. Alongside statements on peace, security, and disarmament, protecting our common environment, human rights, democracy, and good governance, protecting the vulnerable, meeting the special needs of Africa, and strengthening the United Nations was a section on development and poverty eradication which, among other things, included time-bound and measurable targets.

As with many UN resolutions, the Millennium Declaration could have been forgotten. Indeed, Jan Vandemoortele (2012, 5), one of the chief architects of the MDGs, notes that the Millennium Declaration looked to be going down the same path as many international declarations of the 1990s, where a summit concluded with a declaration with a number of specific targets that captured attention for some time but gradually receded into oblivion. As Claire Melamed (2012a, 2–3) notes, there had been a flurry of global conferences in the early 1990s that set specific global goals on issues such as infant and maternal mortality, education, sustainable development, and social development. But following a crowded timetable of summits through to 1995, summitry fatigue set in and discussions on global targets moved to smaller fora, including the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC). The OECD-DAC established a *Groupe de Réflexion*, which tasked the DAC Secretariat with drawing up a list of all declarations agreed at UN summits in an attempt to pull together something more coherent. In May 1996, the *Groupe* published a paper titled *Shaping the 21st Century: The Contribution of Development Cooperation*, which proposed a set of "International Development Goals" (OECD-DAC 1996). These goals, largely drawn from UN summit declarations, initially had limited influence, but by 1998 they had gained momentum and plans were underway for the Millennium Summit.

To avoid having the Millennium Declaration fade into obscurity, in early 2001 Michael Doyle, a special adviser to then UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, and Vandemoortele established and co-chaired a group of experts from across the UN, World Bank,

International Monetary Fund, and OECD-DAC to provide some structure around the promises made in the Millennium Declaration. They extracted targets from the declaration, selecting those with agreed indicators and robust data, and turned them into eight goals. The group also clarified the period over which the targets were to be met, choosing the period of 1990 to 2015 largely because it was unrealistic to meet some of the targets (for example on poverty and hunger) between 2000 and 2015 and because most of the targets that were used had their origin in the 1990s, when commitments were made at various world summits and international conferences (Vandemoortele 2011a, 4–5). As Jonathan Karver, Charles Kenny, and Andy Sumner (2012, 18) note, the MDG architects had to walk a “tightrope” between ambitious targets that had been set at previous UN conferences and targets that were politically palatable and could be plausibly met. Once the title of “Millennium Development Goals,” the eight goals, 18 targets, and 48 indicators had been agreed, the MDGs needed to be launched in the UN system. At the time, a “Road Map” for the Millennium Declaration—a report of the UN secretary-general to the UN General Assembly on monitoring implementation of the declaration—was being finalized. The goals, targets, and indicators that made up the MDGs were annexed to the report, and “although no explicit mention was made of the MDGs, they got an implicit blessing from the UN members states” (Vandemoortele 2011a, 6). At the UN Conference on International Financing for Development at Monterrey in 2002, the MDGs received additional (albeit unofficial) endorsement when funding commitments on the basis of the MDGs started to be made (Melamed 2012a, 3).

The MDGs: An overview

The MDGs are a set of eight global development goals, 21 targets, and 60 indicators (see Figure 1 and Annex 1).¹

Figure 1. The MDGs

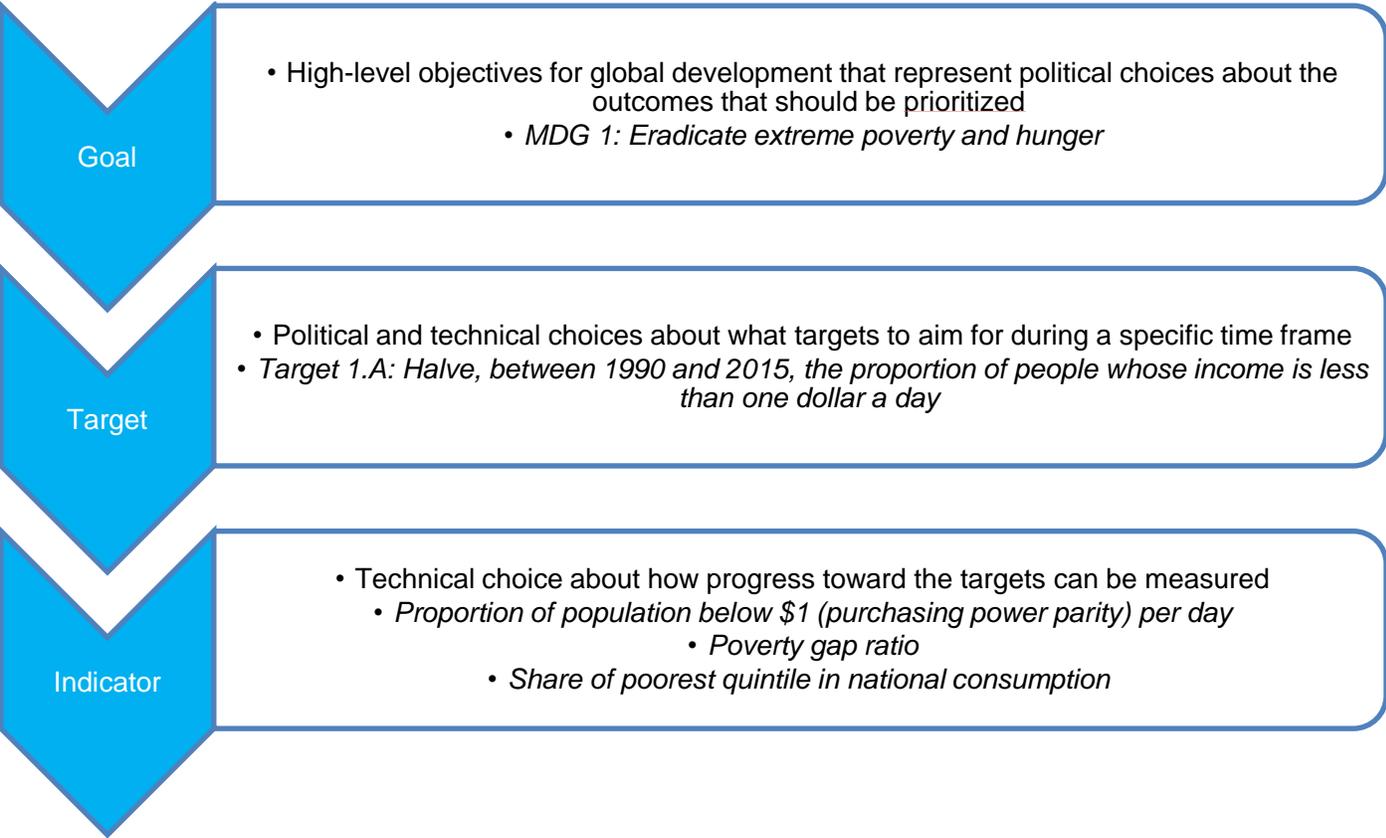


¹ These were updated to include additional targets and indicators to those first agreed.

The MDGs are a collection of goals, targets, and indicators, yet they were developed to be more than that. Vandemoortele (2011b, 14–15) argues that, first, they represent a political statement of what is feasible at the global level, based on global progress witnessed in the 1970s and 1980s. Second, they were devised as a selection of practical priorities, rather than an exhaustive list of all desirable outcomes. Third, they represent ends or ultimate aims, but do not indicate the means by which the ends should be achieved.

As Figure 2, which features MDG 1 as an example, illustrates, the goals can be understood as high-level objectives for global development that represent political choices about the development outcomes that should be prioritized. The targets are political and technical choices about what should be aimed for during a specific time frame. The indicators are technical choices about how progress toward the targets can be measured.

Figure 2. Goals, targets, and indicators



Source: Adapted from Melamed (2012b, 17)

Global MDG progress

The MDGs were designed as *global* goals with *global* targets. They were meant to be achieved collectively, not by every country individually. An assessment of whether or not they will be achieved therefore needs to look at global progress.

The UN argues that significant progress is being made against the MDGs (UN 2012a, 4). An often-cited headline indicator is that the proportion of people living in extreme poverty is falling in every region of the world for the first time since poverty trends began to be monitored and the poverty reduction target has been met (largely due to poverty reduction in China). The proportion of people living on less than US\$1.25 a day fell from 47 per cent in 1990 to 24 per cent in 2008—a reduction of people living in extreme poverty from over 2 billion to less than 1.4 billion. There has also been progress in non-income dimensions of poverty. The world has met the target of halving the proportion of people without access to improved sources of water and has achieved parity in primary education between boys and girls. Access to treatment for people living with HIV/AIDS increased in all regions and the world is on track to achieve the target of halting and beginning to reverse the spread of tuberculosis (UN 2012a).

But progress on other goals and targets has been less impressive. For example, vulnerable employment—defined as the share of unpaid family workers and own-account workers in total employment—has decreased only marginally. Progress on maternal mortality has been too slow and the world is far from meeting the 2015 target. Critically, hunger remains a global challenge (UN 2012a, 4). Progress on the “global partnership for development” has been mixed. For example, while aid flows have been increasing since the mid-1990s, the most recent MDG Gap Taskforce Report found that in 2011 official development assistance (ODA), or aid, from rich countries to poor countries fell for the first time in a number of years (MDG Gap Task Force 2012).

Country-level MDG progress

Despite the design of the MDGs as global goals and global targets, there has been a widespread tendency to misinterpret the MDGs as “one-size-fits-all” goals and targets for every country (Vandemoortele 2012, 8). This interpretation is incorrect. As William Easterly (2009) has vehemently argued, it makes the attainment of the MDGs less likely in countries with low starting points, many of which are in sub-Saharan Africa, even when progress is in line with or above historical and contemporary experiences in other parts of the world. This has reinforced the perception of “Afro-pessimism,” and led some to view Africa as “failing” (Vandemoortele and Delamonica 2010, 61).

Regardless of the intentions, if the MDGs are to be applied at the country level, it does not make sense to only measure progress in relative terms (for example, “Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day”). Research by the Overseas Development Institute, for example, emphasizes that if one is to look at progress on the MDGs at the country level, then it is important to do this in absolute as well as relative terms. Absolute progress measures the total amount of change that has been made. Low-income countries, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, tend to rank at or near the top in terms of their success on absolute progress. Relative progress measures the rate of progress relative to a country’s starting position, which in the case of the MDGs highlights the degree to which a country has closed the gap with the MDG target. Middle-income countries tend to do better when it comes to relative progress (ODI 2010).

This is best illustrated through concrete examples. In the Overseas Development Institute's assessment, Thailand, a middle-income country, ranked at the top in terms of relative progress on reducing under-five mortality because between 1990 and 2007 it reduced the number of deaths (per 1,000 live births) from 31 to seven, representing a relative reduction of 77 per cent. As such, it is a top performer when it comes to the MDG target of reducing under-five mortality by two-thirds. Niger, a low-income country, was the top performer when it comes to absolute progress on under-five mortality, achieving an absolute reduction in under-five mortality of 128, from 304 to 176 (per 1,000 live births) over the same time period. This is more than five times greater than the absolute reduction in Thailand. But Niger does not feature at the top on relative progress because relative to its starting position, the reduction was only 42 per cent. The key message from this research is that low-income countries can make rapid progress in an absolute sense, but can rarely compete with middle-income countries in achieving relative progress. Starting from a low base, many African countries have made substantial progress since 1990, but this progress is often not recognized because the focus of measuring MDG progress has been on relative progress against global targets, which tends to highlight the achievements of countries with better initial conditions (ODI 2010). In essence, both absolute and relative progress should be recognized when measuring progress at the country level.

Sakiko Fukuda-Parr, Joshua Greenstein, and David Stewart (2013) propose an alternative approach to assessing MDG progress at the country level. Their method evaluates performance based on the *rate of progress*. Their analysis, which examines 25 MDG indicators and countries of the world for which sufficient data are available,² found an improved performance (defined by faster progress) by the majority of countries examined (over 50 per cent of the countries examined) for just five of the 24 indicators analyzed. They therefore concluded that “there is no convincing evidence of a marked post-MDG acceleration of improvement in reducing human poverty for the world's countries as a whole” (Fukuda-Parr, Greenstein, and Stewart 2013, 22). Interestingly, however, when the analysis was conducted just for sub-Saharan African countries, a more positive picture emerged: the majority of sub-Saharan African countries show acceleration of progress for 16 indicators following the adoption of the MDGs. Their analysis suggests that since the MDGs came into being, the pace of poverty reduction across the world has been disappointing, but the pace in sub-Saharan Africa is outpacing global trends. Further, they noted that “conventional” MDG reporting could result in misleading assessments of country performance that could have serious consequences: countries that are making significant progress but are evaluated as “failures” may be encouraged to revise policies that are in fact effective and aid predicated on rewarding good governance and policies could be misdirected (Fukuda-Parr, Greenstein, and Stewart 2013, 22–28).

² The number of countries for which sufficient data are available varies among the indicators, ranging from 51 countries to 216 countries.

In sum, the MDGs were designed as global goals with global targets to measure progress on poverty reduction and development. To claim that sub-Saharan Africa's performance is worse than that of other regions is incorrect: many sub-Saharan African countries started from a lower base and so will not meet global targets by 2015. Misinterpreting the MDGs as "one-size-fits-all" targets ignores the significance of initial conditions and distorts interpretations of development progress (Vandemoortele 2011b, 12).

MDG progress as MDG success?

Some progress on the MDGs has been made when measured in both absolute and relative terms. The pace of progress has been varied. But the bottom line is that it is highly unlikely that all the MDGs will be achieved by the end of 2015. Does this mean that they have not been a success?

This assessment depends on the criteria against which success is judged. If success equates to the achievement of all eight goals, then it is clear that success has been mixed. But are there other ways of understanding the success (and failures) of the MDGs? After all, as Vandemoortele and Enrique Delamonica (2010) argue, the MDGs were designed not only as benchmarks to monitor progress, but also to encourage donors and governments in developing countries to make greater efforts to end global poverty.

Jeffrey Sachs, one of the key advocates of the MDGs, has acknowledged that the MDGs took some time to gain traction (Sachs 2012a). European governments were faster to embed the MDGs in their aid programs than other OECD governments and, critically, many developing countries. The United States refused to directly engage with the MDGs in their early years, though under the administration of US President Barack Obama there has been stronger rhetorical support for the MDGs (McArthur 2013). Even the 2005 UN World Summit outcome document only begrudgingly recognized the MDGs, and civil society groups, particularly in the South, were initially wary of them. This was largely because of the overriding focus on social sectors at the expense of economic aspects of development, a focus on the symptoms of poverty rather than the causes of poverty, and the weak nature of MDG 8 (Melamed 2012a, 4).

In time, however, many stakeholders realized the political opportunities afforded by the MDGs. This comes as no surprise to Richard Jolly (2010, 49), who, reflecting on the UN Intellectual History Project, argues that global goals have historically been effective in mobilizing political commitment and generating popular awareness of and support for development. There is now widespread consensus that the MDGs have not only played a key role in shaping international development discourse and debates, particularly by defining poverty as a multidimensional phenomenon, but also in becoming the international barometer by which development progress is judged (Aryeetey et al. 2012, 1; Fukuda-Parr 2012, 2). They have institutionalized ending poverty as an international norm (Fukuda-Parr and Hulme 2011) and become so embedded in international development discourse and policy that "the MDGs have become a convenient shorthand of development and poverty alleviation" at the international level (Fukuda-

Parr 2012, 2). Indeed, as Melamed (2012a, 5) observes, “no global leaders communiqué is now complete without a reference to the importance of achieving the MDGs.”

Apart from influencing and directing international discourse on international development, perhaps one of the most concrete impacts of the MDGs is the influence they have had on aid flows. In their analysis of the achievements of the MDGs, Kenny and Sumner (2011, 3–5) find that the MDGs have played a role in increasing the quantity of aid. Whereas the 1990s was a period of aid stagnation, following the Millennium Declaration there was resurgence in aid. Between 2000 and 2009, ODA climbed from US\$72 billion to US\$128 billion (though levels, measured as a percentage of rich-country gross domestic product, were no higher than in 1991). In addition, aid flows shifted toward countries and income groups that faced some of the greatest challenges meeting the MDGs (research by Richard Manning [2009, 5] concludes similarly). For example, following a declining trend of aid to countries in sub-Saharan Africa during the 1990–2000 period, there was an increase from US\$12 billion to US\$42 billion in 2000–09. The sectoral allocation of aid flows suggests that aid was directed at MDG priorities, with a shift to social sectors following the adoption of the MDGs. Melamed (2012a, 6) provides a concrete example of the MDGs’ impact on aid commitments: an estimate made by Sachs on how much each donor needed to raise its aid spending to reach the MDGs (an increase of US\$50 billion a year) became the target set by then Prime Minister of the United Kingdom Tony Blair for his fellow leaders at the Group of Eight summit in Gleneagles in 2008. Todd Moss (2010, 218) concurs, arguing that “the link between the MDGs and the spike in aid is highly plausible.”

What about the influence of the MDGs beyond aid flows? Did the MDGs lead to faster rates of poverty reduction and development? At the policy level, a review of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers and donor policy statements by Fukuda-Parr (2010) found a high degree of commitment to the MDGs overall. Manning (2009, 5) also finds a good deal of rhetorical support for the MDGs in his review of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers. In practice, however, the MDGs were integrated and implemented selectively, with a focus on investment in social sectors, as well as an assumption that “trickle-down” would achieve the poverty reduction objectives of the MDGs (Fukuda-Parr 2010, 33).

In terms of real development impact, as a number of analysts have recognized, it is difficult to establish definitively that the MDGs contributed to more and better poverty reduction and development (Kenny and Sumner 2011, 24; Melamed 2012a, 8). There is no counterfactual, and as Kenny and Sumner (2011, 24) found, while there is some evidence of faster progress toward improved quality of life in developing countries since 2000, demonstrating the role of the MDGs in this progress is not straightforward. They conclude that “the weak available evidence suggests they may have had only limited impact on policies in developing countries and on the course of global broad-based poverty reduction” (Kenny and Sumner 2011, 24). According to Duncan Green, Stephen Hale, and Matthew Lockwood (2012), given the substantial financial and political investments that have been made in the MDGs, the lack of sound evidence on the development impact of the MDGs is highly problematic. They argue that the scant

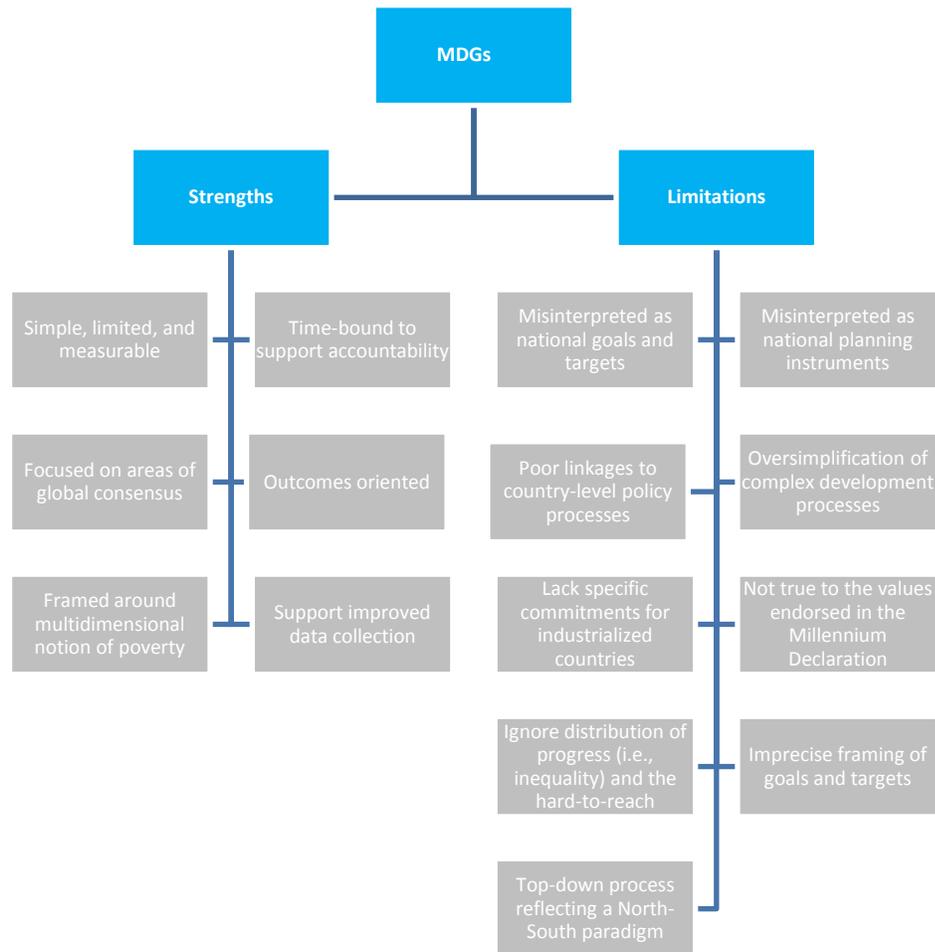
evidence on the MDGs' impact on the behaviour of industrialized countries is particularly problematic because progress on MDG 8 has in some areas been disappointing. And, yet, many proposals for the post-2015 regime seek to place more obligations on industrialized countries in areas such as climate change and resource consumption.

What, then, can be identified as the strengths and limitations of the MDGs? And what lessons should inform the development of the post-2015 development framework?

MDGs: Strengths, limitations, and lessons

Policy-makers, analysts, and academics have put considerable effort toward identifying the strengths and limitations of the MDGs and how these should inform the post-2015 development framework. The strengths and limitations discussed in further detail below are illustrated in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Strengths and limitations of the MDGs



Perhaps one of the greatest strengths of the MDGs is that they are simple, limited, and measurable, which has enabled them to be effective as a communications and advocacy tool. As Ernest Aryeetey et al. (2012, 5–6) argue, they distill the broad challenges of extreme poverty and sustainable development into a suite of simple, compelling, and understandable goals. The numerical targets provide objectives and act as a straightforward scorecard with which the world can measure its progress (Aryeetey et al. 2012, 5–6). They are also ambitious and framed around the highly motivating concept of tackling global poverty (Manning 2009; Melamed 2012a; Nayyar 2011, 21).

Another strength is that the 2015 deadline provides a clear mechanism by which the commitments made by political leaders can be assessed against metrics for success, thereby supporting accountability (Aryeetey et al. 2012, 6; Fukuda-Parr, Greenstein, and Stewart 2013, 19). At the same time, the MDGs' 15-year time frame has helped governments, development institutions, and other key stakeholders look beyond immediate electoral and financing cycles to focus on medium-term priorities for change. In addition, this time frame has enabled the international community's often slow-moving processes to respond to and integrate the MDGs (Aryeetey et al. 2012, 6).

The priorities articulated in the MDGs are areas of global consensus that are difficult to disagree with or challenge (Melamed 2012a, 5; Nayyar 2011, 21). Further, Stephan Klasen (2012, 6) argues that decision makers were right to focus on goals and targets where there was not only broad consensus, but where quantifiable indicators, at least in principle, are useful to track progress. As Moss (2010, 218) notes, the MDGs supported a shift from a focus on inputs (for example, how much money was spent, or how many books were purchased) to outcomes and outputs, such as healthier and better-educated people, which was valuable for the development community. They are not intended to be prescriptive: by focusing on the ends and not the means, countries and their partners can themselves determine the best development strategies for contributing to the achievement of the MDGs (Vandemoortele 2011a, 8).

The MDGs are framed around a multidimensional conception of poverty and their focus on human development shifted policy attention well beyond economic growth objectives, which had dominated previous development agendas (UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda 2012). Finally, the MDGs and the political attention that they have attracted has encouraged the collection of better data to evaluate progress (Melamed 2012a, 7). They drew attention to the many gaps in data and the need to strengthen the statistical systems and capacity of governments and international organizations (Cameron 2012; UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda 2012, 6).

The MDGs are not without limitations, however. They have been misinterpreted as development planning instruments, which was not their intention. As Fukuda-Parr (2012, 16) notes, goals, targets, and indicators are best interpreted as benchmarks for monitoring implementation, not as hard planning targets. Klasen (2012, 7) argues that the MDGs can be interpreted as a tool to design vertical programs to ensure progress on particular goals, but this misinterprets the transmission channels to reach those goals. For example, reductions in child mortality are unlikely to be achieved sustainably by piling money into vertical programs to address particular health issues. Rather, a

broad mix of interventions is required, including nutrition interventions, health sector reforms, greater female education, investments in safe drinking water, and higher and more stable household incomes.

This leads to the critique that the MDGs were less successful at framing the development agenda at the country level (Klasen 2012, 1). They were, however, used to assess progress, albeit unfairly, at the country level. Despite their design as global targets to be reached collectively, as discussed above, the MDGs were applied as “one-size-fits-all” targets for all countries to meet. This has led countries starting with lower bases in terms of initial conditions, many in sub-Saharan Africa, to be labelled “failures” despite significant absolute progress. The MDGs are set in terms of aggregates, masking inequalities in progress and disincentivizing a focus on the poorest and hardest to reach (Melamed 2012a, 2; Nayyar 2011, 21). They have also been criticized for missing issues at national and international levels that are critical for development. This includes principles captured by the Millennium Declaration, such as equity, human rights, sustainability, and empowerment (Fukuda-Parr 2012, 21), but also important policy areas such as such as climate change, growth, job creation, security, and demographic change (Karver, Kenny, and Sumner 2012, 3).

The MDGs have also been criticized for simplifying complex ideas and conveying misplaced scientific precision and certitude (Fukuda-Parr 2012, 21). Klasen (2012), for example, is critical of the way that the goals are structured and the implications of this for measuring progress. Some goals, such as the child and maternal mortality goals, measure outcomes, but most only measure outputs. For instance, the education goal has focused on universal primary completion rates with no regard for education quality. In addition, some goals cannot currently be measured: there are no reliable country-level or global figures on maternal mortality, which makes tracking global progress on this goal almost impossible. Further, the MDGs have suffered from “mission creep.” Lobbying from various UN agencies resulted in the expansion of the set of goals and targets in 2005. This resulted in the inclusion of targets where measurement is unreliable. For example, undernourishment began to be tracked despite the Food and Agriculture Organization’s method being known for being unreliable, and “decent work” began to be measured despite the lack of robust indicators. Vandemoortele (2011a, 12) argues that it is unwise to attempt to count something when it cannot be accurately counted, noting that the MDG target to achieve significant improvements in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers is problematic since not only is “significant improvements” ill-specified but there is no generally accepted definition of “slum dweller,” making monitoring with any degree of accuracy very difficult.

Many have problems with the MDGs being mainly about more and better aid from industrialized countries to developing countries, and better policies and more development progress in developing countries. The MDGs lack specific commitments for industrialized countries: MDG 8, the “global partnership for development,” does not include specific quantitative targets or deadlines for industrialized countries to meet (Melamed 2012a, 7; Karver, Kenny, and Sumner 2012, 3). Moreover, some argue that the values underlying the Millennium Declaration have been “lost in translation” (Nayyar 2011, 21). Fukuda-Parr (2010, 33) argues that whereas the Millennium Declaration

sought an agenda for more inclusive globalization, where the benefits of globalization were more widely shared and rooted in the ethical values of equality and global solidarity, the MDGs enabled the implementation of orthodox Washington Consensus policies.

Finally, as outlined above, the process for agreeing on the goals, targets, and indicators that make up the MDGs was dominated by a small group of donor country experts, mainly from multilateral agencies, with minimal inputs from developing country stakeholders (Melamed 2012a, 7). In essence, the MDGs are rooted in a North-South paradigm, reflecting historical power relations between rich and poor countries. A more inclusive consultation and development process may have led to a more effective framework by, for example, generating a better understanding of the need to adapt global goals and targets to country contexts (UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda 2012, 7). Such a process may have also led to a more robust MDG 8, with more specific targets for industrialized countries to meet.

So as we look toward 2015 and beyond, which lessons from the MDGs should we draw on? Figure 4 below draws on the analysis above to suggest lessons for the post-2015 framework.

Figure 4. Lessons for the Post-2015 development framework



A New Set of Global Development Goals Post-2015?

Changing global context

For the post-2015 framework to be a success, it will need to be fit-for-purpose not only in 2015 but the decades beyond. The MDGs were conceived in an era of relative stability and strong growth, when global power was more concentrated and the development lexicon was largely focused on more and better aid from rich countries and better policies in poor countries (Klasen 2012, 3; Sumner and Tiwari 2010). While many of the principles outlined in the Millennium Declaration remain relevant, it is clear that the context today is considerably different from that in which the MDGs were agreed. What has changed since 2000 and what trends and conditions need to be considered in the shaping of the post-2015 framework?

First, the geopolitical map is more complicated and more fragmented today than it was in 2000. The line between rich and poor countries has blurred and the traditional categories of “North” and “South” and “developed” and “developing” no longer ring true. Emerging economies are growing as Western economies implement austerity policies, while strong growth in Africa, especially in resource-rich countries, has led to the emergence of the popular “rising Africa” narrative (Higgins 2013a, 9). The Group of Eight is no longer the core economic grouping on issues of global importance, since emerging economies and the Group of Twenty have made global governance more diffuse. Emerging economies, particularly Brazil and China, are playing more assertive roles on the global stage and becoming aid donors despite also being aid recipients (Melamed 2012a, 34–35). At the same time, while lower-income countries remain relatively powerless in international politics, many are growing impatient with the lack of political will and courage from well-resourced and more powerful players and are reluctant to accept a “developed world” agenda, particularly one where the onus for change is on low-income countries (Frecheville 2013). On top of this, as John McArthur (2012, 19) argues, stakeholders outside government are more woven into global affairs, with businesses taking action on climate change and development and strategizing to secure supply chains, non-governmental organizations becoming more global and business-like, and individual citizens across the world participating more actively in global society. Foundations, such as the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and philanthropists are playing more prominent roles in global development today, and anti-poverty movements have great reach through information and communications technologies.

Second, the front-and-centre issues in international development have changed. While the MDGs reflect a focus on extreme poverty and social development, with a particular emphasis on health, the priority issue areas today are different. The threats of climate change and environmental degradation to global prosperity and security have resulted in broad consensus that the international development community must do a better job of integrating environmental sustainability into its architecture and actions. The global

financial crisis triggered a loss of confidence in the economic orthodoxy of the pre-crisis era, and concerns about “jobless growth,” particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, have led to a heightened focus on the pattern and pace of economic growth. In addition, the locus of poverty has shifted from low-income countries to middle-income countries and rising inequality is of much greater universal concern than it was at the start of the millennium.

Third, while aid remains a critical resource for many low- and middle-income countries, other sources of finance for development, including taxation, remittances, and investment, are of greater importance now than in 2000 (Greenhill and Prizzon 2012; Bhushan 2013). Developing countries are clear that development policy today needs to mean more than providing aid: they want the trade rules that are stacked against them changed and the destruction of our shared planet to stop (Barder 2012). This, along with fiscal pressures on donors’ aid budgets, is triggering a rethinking of the role of aid specifically and the global development cooperation architecture more broadly, with new modalities for delivering aid (Calleja and Bhushan 2013) and partnerships with the private sector (Kindornay and Reilly-King 2013) attracting increased attention.

Fourth, today many of the challenges that the world faces require global solutions, including climate change, financial regulation, tax avoidance, macroeconomic imbalances, and insecurity (Barder 2012). While the new millennium was a time when the belief in multilateralism and its ability to deliver was moderately strong (Haddad 2012), faith in the multilateral system and summit processes is low today following the disappointing outcomes of two important multilateral processes, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change process and the Doha Development Round of the World Trade Organization (Melamed 2012a, 33). This was reflected at the latest UN Conference on Sustainable Development, widely known as Rio+20, held in June 2012, where the ambition and outcomes of the conference paled in comparison to those at the first Earth Summit held two decades earlier (Higgins 2013b). This waning confidence in multilateralism is happening at a time when the need for multilateral solutions to transboundary challenges is stronger than ever.

Finally, as Duncan Green (2013) argues, the intellectual landscape has changed. While the 1990s in the West marked the high point of “planner” mentality in public policy, today there is increased attention paid to systems thinking, complexity, and change, with development portrayed “as an emergent, inherently unpredictable and discontinuous process”.

These changes represent what Sumner and Richard Mallett (2012) have argued is a shift from Aid 1.0, where the focus of development was on the transfer of resources, to Aid 2.0, where the focus is on collective action such as the development of co-financed global public goods and the transfer of knowledge to address global challenges. The Independent Research Forum on a Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda, which has argued along similar lines, outlines a number of shifts that development policy needs to undergo to be fit-for-purpose in 2015 and beyond (see Figure 5). While these shifts are perhaps more geared toward middle-income countries and secure, growing low-income countries than fragile states, policy-makers and analysts are nonetheless grappling with how to support such a transition.

Figure 5. Shifts required for “fit-for-purpose” development policy

From		To
Development assistance		A universal global compact
Top-down decision making		Multi-stakeholder decision making
Growth models that increase inequality and risks		Growth models that decrease inequality and risks
Meeting “easy” development targets		Tackling systemic barriers to progress
Concepts and testing		Scaled-up interventions
Multiple discrete actions		Cross-scale coordination

Source: IRF2015 (2013)

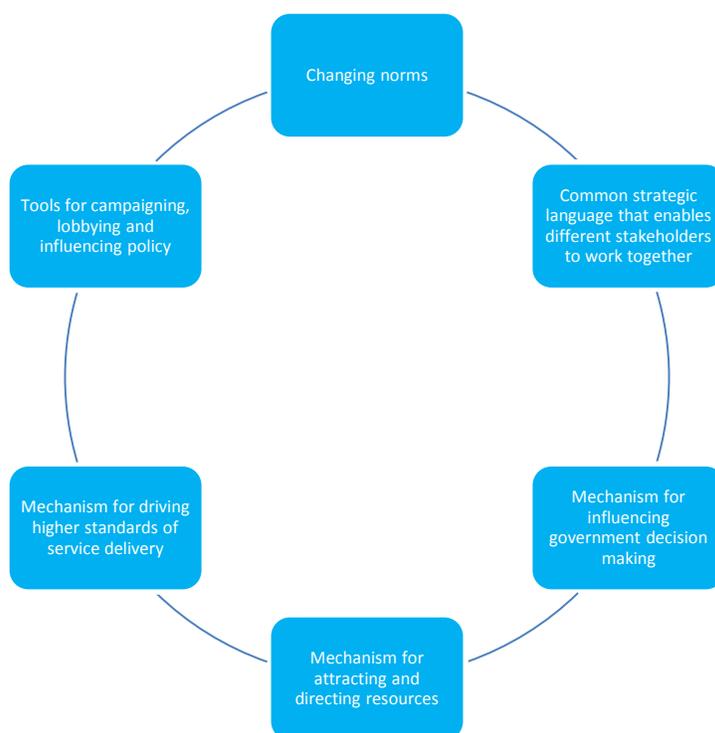
Expectations for new global goals

Perhaps the biggest challenge that those individuals designing and negotiating the post-2015 framework will face will be designing a framework that responds to this changing global context and is politically feasible. After all, it must be adopted by UN member states at the UN General Assembly, most likely in September 2015.

It appears that the clear and compelling MDG framework comprised of goals, targets, and indicators will likely be maintained in the post-2015 era. Sachs (2012b, 2206) observed that “the world’s governments seem poised to adopt a new round of global goals to follow the 15 year MDG period.” Amy Pollard and Bernadette Fischler (2012, 19) concur, arguing that it is unrealistic to think that the political capital that has been built up around the MDGs could be successfully transferred to an entirely different kind of framework.

It is of course hoped that the post-2015 framework spurs progress against the goals that are chosen. But given the absence of robust evidence on the extent to which the MDGs are responsible for accelerating development progress, what is the least that countries can expect from the next set of global goals, especially in a context in which rich countries insist on quantifiable results? David Steven (2013) argues that three things can be expected from new normative global goals: a focus for debate, advocacy, and policy development; a “common strategic language” that enables different types of stakeholders and actors to understand each other and work together; and a mechanism for attracting and directing resources and driving higher standards of service delivery. Green, Hale, and Lockwood (2012) argue that international instruments can exert influence by: changing national norms, which can lead to changes in policies, laws, and behaviour; directly influencing government decision making through “carrots” (for example, aid, contracts, approval) and “sticks” (for instance, sanctions and disapproval); and giving civil society organizations and other domestic stakeholders tools with which to campaign, lobby, and influence their governments. These expectations are illustrated in Figure 6.

Figure 6. What can we expect from global goals?



Source: Generated by author based on Steven (2013) and Green, Hale, and Lockwood (2012)

Establishing the post-2015 framework: Process

The wheels for establishing the post-2015 framework are in motion. Currently two UN processes are running in parallel: the post-2015 development agenda, which is currently being informed by the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, and the SDGs, which were agreed on in principle at Rio+20 and are being developed by an intergovernmental Open Working Group on the SDGs.

The High-Level Panel, 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 comprising representatives from government, the private sector, civil society, and academia, has been tasked by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to “prepare a bold yet practical vision . . . on a global post-2015 development agenda,” with the fight against poverty and support for sustainable development at its core. The panel met on five occasions in late 2012 and early 2013 and is expected to submit its report, which will include an annex with a list of aspirational goals, to the secretary-general at the end of May 2013. This report will serve as a key input into a UN MDG review summit in September 2013. It is currently unclear whether the outcome of this summit will be a negotiated outcome document, as demanded by the Group of 77, in which case it will be a political agreement that has an impact on the post-2015 agenda, or a summary report, as proposed by most

industrialized countries and the European Union, in which case it will have no concrete bearing on the post-2015 discussions (ACPPP 2013).

The Open Working Group on the SDGs comprises 30 representatives nominated by UN member states from the five UN regional groupings and is currently chaired by Kenya and Hungary. The group first met in March 2013 and has since been convening on a monthly basis. They are consulting with the nine major groups³ and are expected to submit a report to the UN General Assembly during its 68th session (September 2013 to September 2014).

In addition to these two processes, in September 2011 the UN secretary-general established the UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda to coordinate, in consultation with all stakeholders, UN system-wide preparations for the post-2015 agenda. The task team brings together senior experts from over 50 UN system entities and other international organizations. It submitted a key report, *Realizing the Future We Want for All* (see UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda 2012), to the UN secretary-general in June 2012. Beyond this, the UN Development Group has undertaken the most comprehensive global consultation ever undertaken by the UN, convening 11 thematic consultations, over 80 country-level consultations, and a global e-consultation to get feedback on what should come after the MDGs. A recently launched global survey for citizens called MY World, which is supported by the UN and other partners, is seeking to capture people's voices, priorities, and views on what the post-2015 priorities should be through online, mobile phone, and on-paper voting. There is also the Sustainable Development Solutions Network, led by Sachs, which is tasked with highlighting the scientific knowledge necessary to underpin the post-2015 framework.

Beyond the UN system, a vast range of stakeholders are engaging in and seeking to influence the agenda. For example, civil society is mobilizing around the Beyond2015 campaign as well as several regional and issue-based platforms. Think tanks and research institutes, overwhelmingly from the North, but also from the South through the Southern Voice on Post-MDG International Development Goals initiative are providing reams of analysis on what should come after the MDGs. Compared to the process that was undertaken to establish the MDGs, considerable time and resources have been devoted to active consultation on the part of the UN. Given the success of the MDGs as a mobilizing and organizing framework for international development, many stakeholders are engaging in substantial analysis, debate, and lobbying to influence the post-2015 development framework in their favour.

While currently on parallel tracks, UN member states, civil society, and other stakeholders have consistently expressed their desires for an integrated process and, ultimately, a single set of global development goals. There is deep concern that each of

³ Major groups are: business and industry, children and youth, farmers, indigenous peoples, local authorities, non-governmental organizations, the scientific and technical community, women, and workers and trade unions.

the processes – the post-2015 development agenda and the SDGs – will be diluted if the tracks are pursued in parallel (Sachs 2012a). The Rio+20 outcome document clearly states that the SDG process “needs to be coordinated and coherent with the processes to consider the post-2015 development agenda” (UN 2012b). The High-Level Panel has been asked by the UN secretary-general to work with the intergovernmental Open Working Group on the SDGs to ensure that the processes are mutually reinforcing and to advise him on how the SDGs relate to the broader post-2015 development agenda (UN 2012c). How the two processes will connect and coordinate is still unclear but it is highly likely that there will just be *one* set of global development goals agreed on for the post-2015 era. While to date much attention has been placed on the UN-led process and the High-Level Panel, the intergovernmental process on the SDGs is gaining considerable traction and may be the more likely place for negotiations on the post-2015 development goals to occur. Annex 2 outlines the calendar for establishing the post-2015 development agenda.

Establishing the post-2015 framework: Priority issues

Perhaps unsurprisingly, there is a broad range of issues that have been proposed as priorities for the post-2015 development agenda, many of which reflect contextual shifts that have occurred since the MDGs were established in 2000. Melamed and Paul Ladd (2013), for example, note that the opportunity for the post-2015 agenda is to agree on a set of goals that reconcile the two most important trends in recent years: growing wealth and increasing environmental degradation. The UN has sought to bring the international community together around these issues over the past two decades, namely through the MDGs and “international development,” on the one hand, and Agenda 21 and “sustainable development” on the other (IRF2015 2013). On the whole, these two agendas have been on separate paths, largely because sustainable development became synonymous with environmental sustainability (Higgins and Chenard 2012). The post-2015 agenda offers an important opportunity for convergence.

Policy-makers appear to have recognized this opportunity. It seems likely that the post-2015 set of goals will have the true notion of sustainable development—one which acknowledges the importance of and interlinkages between the economic, social, and environmental pillars of development—at its heart. For the SDGs, given their name and endorsement at Rio+20, this is clear. But the post-2015 development agenda also looks set to move in this same direction. Indeed, the High-Level Panel, in the statement from its fifth meeting in New York in April 2013, reiterated “the imperative need for a renewed Global Partnership that enables a transformative, people-centered and planet-sensitive development agenda, realized through the equal partnership of all stakeholders [and] reaffirmed its vision to end extreme poverty in all its forms in the context of sustainable development and to have in place the building blocks of sustained prosperity for all” (High-Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda 2013b).

To achieve this, the post-2015 framework will need to balance at least three priorities: first, eradicating extreme poverty; second, limiting the global ecological footprint by supporting economic growth that is sustainable, is resource-sensitive, and incorporates environmental protection; and third, securing and overseeing global public goods to

manage the impact of globalization on the poor and support prosperity within planetary boundaries.

There is no consensus yet on which of these priorities should receive the most attention. On the one hand, some observers are calling for a framework that prioritizes “finishing the job” of the MDGs and “getting to zero”—effectively ending extreme poverty and basic deprivations (Save the Children 2012; Aryeetey et al. 2012).⁴ While these might be laudable objectives, Kenny (2013) encourages caution when it comes to zero targets, arguing that while getting to zero in some areas, such as extreme poverty, might be realistic,⁵ in others (e.g., child and maternal mortality from preventable conditions and/or diseases, access to sanitation, modern energy access, and household violence) it is either unrealistic or the data simply do not exist to track progress. Overreaching on zero goals, in his opinion, could compromise the credibility of the goals and contribute to their irrelevance.

On the other hand, some observers see the new framework as a chance to be more ambitious and an opportunity to not only focus on ending extreme poverty but also coordinating global action to manage pressing transboundary challenges and global public goods. Fukuda-Parr (2010, 34), for example, argues that the MDGs were unprecedented in their impact on increasing public awareness and forging consensus on poverty reduction as the ethical challenges of the 21st century. The challenge for the post-2015 framework, in her opinion, is to establish global goals for inclusive and sustainable globalization.

Alongside this debate on how the post-2015 development framework should be framed is a discussion on the specific issues that should be prioritized. Table 1 lists the priority issues that have been identified in a range of reports that were the product of various official processes.

⁴ Save the Children (2012) proposes “zero” targets on absolute poverty reduction, hunger, preventable child and maternal deaths, and unsafe drinking water and sanitation. Aryeetey et al. (2012) suggest “zero” targets on extreme poverty, hunger, child stunting, and illiteracy.

⁵ Kenny (2013) also notes that the US\$1.25 a day poverty line is extremely low and many living above it still experience extreme levels of deprivation and lack basic opportunities.

Table 1. Priority issues according to select official documents

High-Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda ⁶	MY World Survey Results ⁷	UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda ⁸	Open Working Group on SDGs ⁹	UN National Consultations ¹⁰	Sustainable Development Solutions Network ¹¹
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poverty eradication • Sustainability • Inclusive growth and productive capacity • Conflict • Gender equality and women's empowerment • Job creation • Education • Enabling business environment • Youth • Rights and equity • Good governance • Resilience to shocks • Social protection • Health • Global governance • Environmental protection • Sustainable consumption and production 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equality between men and women • Affordable and nutritious food • A good education • Better job opportunities • Better health care • Support for people who cannot work • Reliable energy at home • Access to clean water and sanitation • Protecting forests, rivers, and oceans • Action on climate change • An honest and responsive government • Protection against crime and violence • Phone and internet access • Freedom from discrimination and persecution • Better transport and roads • Political freedoms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eradicating income poverty and hunger • Reducing inequalities • Ensuring decent work and productive employment • Adequate nutrition for all • Quality education for all • Reduced mortality and morbidity • Gender equality • Universal access to clean water and sanitation • Freedom from violence, conflict, and abuse • Conflict-free access to natural resources • Protection of biodiversity • Stable climate • Resilience to natural hazards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eradication of poverty and hunger • Employment and decent jobs • Sustainable consumption and production • Gender equality and empowerment of women • Access to and good management of the essentials of human well-being, such as food, water, health, and energy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflict, violence, and disaster • Education • Energy • Environmental sustainability • Food security and nutrition • Governance • Growth and employment • Health • Inequalities • Population dynamics • Water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End extreme poverty including hunger • Achieve development within planetary boundaries • Ensure effective learning for all children and youth for life and livelihood • Achieve health and well-being at all ages • Improve agricultural systems and raise rural prosperity • Empower inclusive, productive, and resilient cities • Curb human-induced climate change and ensure green energy for all • Secure ecosystem services, biodiversity, and good management of natural resources • Transform governance for sustainable development

⁶ Extracted from communiqués from High-Level Panel meetings in New York, London, Monrovia, and Bali during 2012 and 2013.

⁷ Issues to be prioritized according to MY World survey results (see UN 2013).

⁸ Issues identified in an integrated framework outlined in Realizing the Future We Want for All (see UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda 2012, 24).

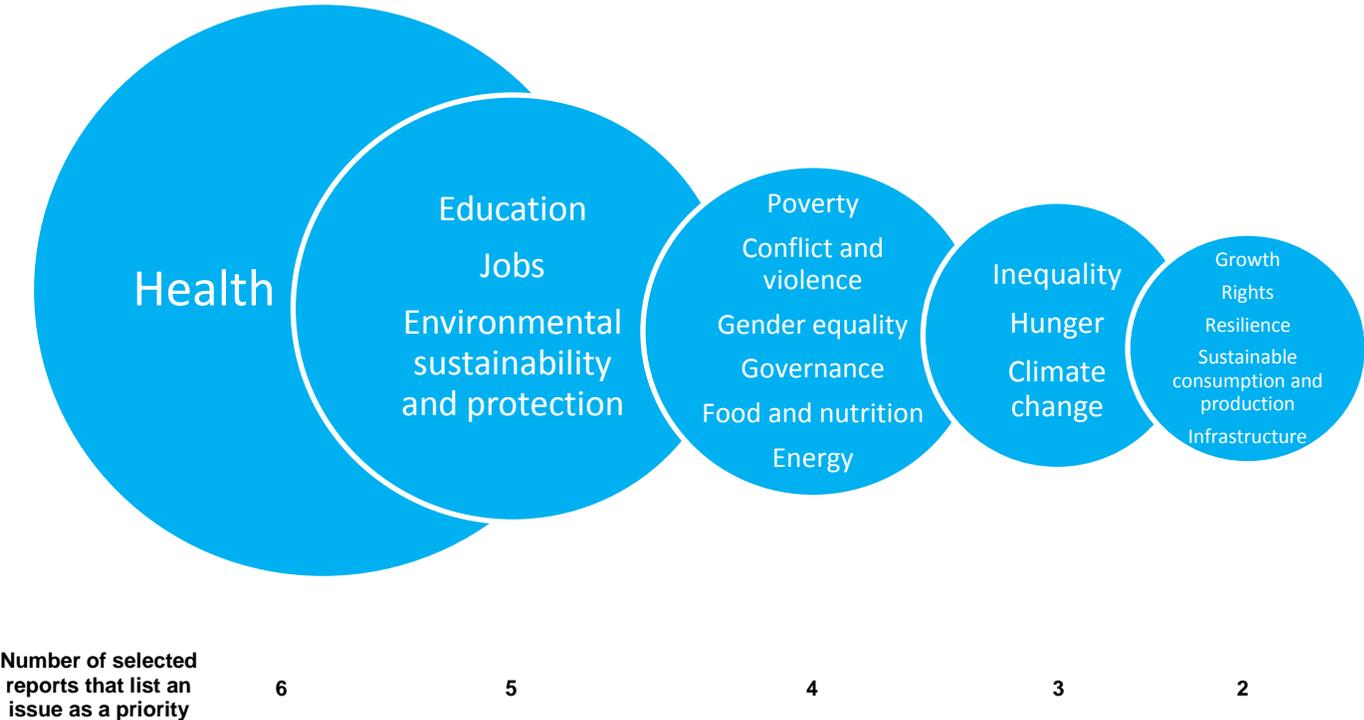
⁹ Issues identified in the first meeting of the Open Working Group on SDGs (see IISD 2013a).

¹⁰ Issues identified in a synthesis of country-level consultations prepared by the UN Development Group (see UNDG 2013).

¹¹ Goals proposed for discussion in a draft report on the SDGs prepared by the Sustainable Development Solutions Network for public consultation (see SDSN 2013).

Figure 7 synthesizes Table 1 by identifying the issues that feature most prominently in selected official documents on the post-2015 framework.

Figure 7. Post-2015 priority issues



Issues that are prioritized in only one document include business environment, youth, cities, population dynamics, and agriculture.

While this is a superficial assessment, it is nonetheless a useful illustration of the issues that are gaining traction in official circles. The results featured in Figure 7 are comparable to the top priorities that have been identified so far through the MY World survey, a global survey on the post-2015 agenda for ordinary people. The most recent results were released in May 2013. By May 10, 2013, the survey had mobilized over 530,000 people in 194 countries to vote for the priorities that are most important to them. Over half of these votes were collected offline using pen and paper, over one-third came through the MY World website, and around 8 per cent came through mobile phones (UN 2013). The top priorities are ranked in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Global priorities according to MY World survey results

Rank	All Participants	Women	Men
1	A good education	A good education	A good education
2	Better health care	Better health care	Better health care
3	An honest and responsive government	An honest and responsive government	An honest and responsive government
4	Better job opportunities	Access to clean water and sanitation	Better job opportunities
5	Access to clean water and sanitation	Better job opportunities	Access to clean water and sanitation
6	Affordable and nutritious food	Affordable and nutritious food	Affordable and nutritious food
7	Protection against crime and violence	Protection against crime and violence	Protection against crime and violence
8	Better transport and roads	Protecting forests, rivers, and oceans	Better transport and roads
9	Protecting forests, rivers, and oceans	Equality between men and women	Political freedoms
10	Freedom from discrimination and persecution	Freedom from discrimination and persecution	Protecting forests, rivers, and oceans

Source: UN (2013)

A number of the issues prioritized in official documents and the MY World survey feature in the MDGs, such as health, education, poverty reduction and gender equality. But a range of other issues are attracting attention in the post-2015 discussions, largely in response to analyses of the world’s most pressing problems. These include environmental sustainability, inequality, growth and jobs, and governance.

“Ensure environmental sustainability” is one of the MDGs, but it arguably received relatively little attention. The post-2015 framework will likely place a much greater emphasis on the environment, potentially highlighting issues such as sustainable consumption and production, sustainable energy, and climate change (though climate change will be more political and may be tackled through the separate climate change negotiation process, which will come to a head in Durban, South Africa, in 2015) (see Evans 2012).

Inequality has also attracted much attention. As discussed earlier in this report, one of the limitations of the MDGs is that they measure progress in an aggregate way, masking inequalities and often missing excluded and hard-to-reach populations. There appears to be consensus growing on the need for the post-2105 framework to contain greater incentives to reduce inequality between the poorest, particularly in terms of income, and the rest *within* countries (Melamed and Samman 2013). Understanding—in a disaggregated way—the distribution of development progress across economic and social groups beyond income (gender, age, location, and race, for example) and in other dimensions of development (for instances, health, education, and jobs) has also been attracting some attention. Discussions on reducing inequality *between* countries are largely wrapped up in debates on how MDG 8 could be extended and improved and how global public goods can be best integrated into the post-2015 framework.

The importance of economic growth and jobs for development and poverty reduction has also featured prominently in post-2015 discussions. As Kenny (2012) notes, values surveys across the globe demonstrate that work, or a job, is critical for poverty reduction. Work and economic issues were given short shrift in the MDGs, maybe because aid is a minor factor when it comes to global progress in employment and growth. The post-2015 framework seems poised to have a stronger focus on these issues.

Finally, governance is attracting significant attention since it is a driver of *how* development goals can be achieved. Jody Zall Kusek and Jos Verbeek (2013) argue that as countries look to 2015 and beyond, the *how* and a focus on implementation require attention. Cameron, in his capacity as co-chair of the High-Level Panel, noted that the panel's upcoming report focuses on the need to address the *causes* of poverty, not just the symptoms, the report will recommend a commitment to governance and strong institutions in the post-2015 framework (IISD 2013b). Related to this, conflict and violence, and development in fragile and conflict-affected states, is also attracting considerable attention, particularly through the g7+ group of fragile and conflict-affected states and the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States, established at the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan in 2011 (see McKechnie 2013).

Establishing the post-2015 framework: Architecture

While there appears to be consensus that the post-2015 framework will retain the goals, targets, and indicators format of the MDGs, there will likely be some changes in the architecture that frames the goals. These may include the countries to which the goals and targets apply, how the goals are financed, and the partnerships in place to support progress toward the goals.

As mentioned, the MDGs were designed as global goals and targets. The “locus of change” was overwhelmingly expected to be in developing countries, though MDG 8 outlines what industrialized countries should do to support development progress in the developing world. It is likely that while the next set of global goals will retain a focus on ending extreme poverty and supporting sustainable development in developing countries, the “locus of change” will be broadened to track development progress in industrialized countries and/or expect more from industrialized countries in terms of domestic policy commitments to securing global public goods. In essence, the goals will be “universal” in nature, albeit requiring different types of commitments from different types of countries. Table 3 illustrates the spectrum of potential options.

Table 3. Potential options for the architecture of the post-2015 framework

Structure of goals, targets, and indicators	Global goals, targets, and indicators	Global goals, targets, and indicators or Global goals, but national targets and indicators	Global goals, but national targets and indicators	Global goals, but national targets and indicators	Global goals, but national targets and indicators
Focus issues and “locus of change”	Focus on poverty eradication and development in developing countries	Focus on poverty eradication and development in developing countries, but a change in the issues that are prioritized to reflect current realities	Focus on poverty eradication and development in developing countries, but a change in the issues that are prioritized to reflect current realities Some focus on managing transboundary challenges and securing global public goods, expecting action from industrialized countries	Universal focus, with progress on sustainable development monitored in all countries Politically feasible priorities chosen	Universal focus, where exclusive priority is action to manage transboundary challenges and secure global public goods
	Status Quo	MDGs “Plus”	MDGs + Global Public Goods	“One World” Goals	Securing Global Public Goods

The “MDGs + Global Public Goods” option seems the most likely at this stage of the post-2015 discussions. This option may be somewhat akin to a proposal made by Douglas Brooks et al. (2013) in a recent Asian Development Bank publication. They proposed that the post-2015 framework should adopt a “ZEN” approach, which means that the framework comprises three *types* of goals:

- Goals for achieving “zero” extreme poverty in its many forms (Z).
- Goals for tackling country-specific (“epsilon”) socio-economic challenges beyond extreme poverty (E).

- Goals for addressing the environmental imperatives that underpin long-term development (N).

Across the numerous proposals that have been made,¹² an approach that appears to be gaining considerable attention is having global goals that resonate universally, but tracking progress through targets at the national level. This approach would reflect collective global priorities while taking into account the different starting points and diverse needs of individual countries. It would also enable a more meaningful connection between global goals and domestic priorities, and make new targets more useful for national monitoring purposes (Kim 2012; Sinclair 2013).

This was a topic of discussion at the second session of the Open Working Group on the SDGs in April 2013. The International Institute for Sustainable Development notes that delegates seemed torn between the need for simple, clear goals like the MDGs, on the one hand, and a framework that is not just “global in nature” but also “universally applicable to all countries” on the other (IISD 2013c). According to reporting from the International Institute for Sustainable Development, Two main options were laid out in an issues brief by the UN Technical Support Team:

- A common set of goals coupled with the adoption of differentiated targets and/or timelines calibrated to level of development and national circumstances.
- A common set of goals with multiple targets and indicators under each (a dashboard or menu), from which countries could prioritize when devising their own development agendas, in keeping with their levels of development and national circumstances.

The idea of a global dashboard seemed to be favoured, although some countries expressed concern that too many targets and indicators might make the SDGs look like “a Christmas tree with too many trimmings” (IISD 2013c).

This latter approach has been advocated by the Centre for International Governance Innovation and Korea Development Institute, which have proposed a set of 10 “Bellagio Goals”:

The Bellagio Goals would apply to both developing and developed countries. They would set global targets and allow for national targets to reflect an individual country’s context. Universal goals, formulated through an international consultation process, would be required to provide a sense of direction and coherence for global development, but targets and indicators should be locally adapted to ensure country ownership and development effectiveness. Unlike the current MDGs, which tried to extrapolate global trends to arrive at global targets, countries should instead be asked to come up with their

¹² See the North-South Institute’s “Tracking Post-2015” tool to get a sense of the specific proposals for goals, targets, and indicators made to date: <http://cidpnsi.ca/blog/portfolio/tracking-post-2015>.

own targets, preferably above a universally agreed minimum level. Each country, based on its own context and patterns, should set its own targets, global targets could then be deduced by looking at the weighted average of country targets as well as global trends. (Bates-Eamer et al. 2012, 5)

But how would this work in practice? What would be the process for establishing national targets? And what institutional infrastructure would be required to make this approach happen?

Karver, Kenny, and Sumner (2012, 39) suggest that following agreement on the new global goals, all signatories could commit to providing the UN secretary-general, within 18 months of the new declaration, with plans outlining national commitments toward meeting the goals laid out in the declaration. Melamed (2012b, 3) advises that clear criteria for establishing country-level targets would need to be established, such as identifying suggested ranges for new targets based on country classifications or other criteria, a clear time frame in which targets should be agreed, and a baseline which every country would be expected to meet. This could help prevent targets from becoming overly politicized within countries and encourage the setting of ambitious but realistic goals. Andrew Norton (2012) notes that one of the key constraints of this approach would be that UN General Assembly declarations do not typically have mechanisms that require countries to follow up. UN machinery to “receive” national targets, document country contributions and progress, and aggregate these to provide a global overview, would be required. I have suggested elsewhere that this is a role that the new high-level political forum on sustainable development, which was agreed at Rio+20 and will replace the Commission on Sustainable Development, could play (Higgins 2013c). The negotiation process is being co-chaired by Brazil and Italy and the first session of the forum is expected to be held on September 24–26, 2013.

An approach that is more universal in nature and more centred on sustainable development will require a financing model that goes far beyond aid. As Jonathan Glennie (2013) notes, there has been a gradual shift in the “interminable discussions” on the post-2015 framework toward not just what the world should try to achieve but *how* the world can achieve it (or, in UN jargon, the “means of implementation”). This largely comes down to how the post-2015 framework will be financed.

In their assessment of financing in the context of the post-2015 framework, Romilly Greenhill and Annalisa Prizzon (2012) argue that the financing model underpinning the original MDGs focused largely on domestic resource mobilization and ODA, with an implicit underlying assumption that when countries were unable to mobilize sufficient funds through domestic resources, the gap should be filled either through aid or debt cancellation. The current financing landscape, they note, is considerably different. Traditional ODA is under pressure and there has been a proliferation of actors in development financing, including non-DAC donors, philanthropists, and providers of climate finance. Box 1 outlines some of these trends.

Box 1. Trends in financing for development

Expanded domestic tax revenues: Developing countries have been expanding their domestic tax revenues, giving more scope for development to be funded domestically.

Increased foreign direct investment, remittance, and philanthropic flows: Foreign direct investment and remittances tripled in nominal terms between 2001 and 2010, while philanthropic funding more than tripled between 2003 and 2009.

Decline in the relative importance of ODA: The relative importance of ODA has declined compared to other forms of finance. In middle-income countries, ODA/gross domestic product ratios nearly halved in the 2000s. These trends are uneven across countries, however, with private cross-border flows concentrated in middle-income countries, and low-income countries remaining dependent on aid to finance development.

Growth in “aid-like” development finance: While traditional ODA is under pressure, there has been rapid growth in forms of development finance that are “aid-like”—they are not classified as ODA but have a public-interest purpose (for example, South-South cooperation, philanthropy, and climate finance). Flows of “aid-like” development finance have been growing significantly over the past decade.

Source: Greenhill and Prizzon (2012)

The High-Level Panel has reflected on this changing development financing landscape and noted that a diverse range of financing instruments will need to be drawn on in the post-2015 era. Indeed, its communiqué from the March 2013 meeting in Bali states:

We agreed that a post-2015 agenda should clearly specify the means of implementation, including financing for development. A greater commitment to improving and using country systems as well as the global system in this regard is particularly important. Ownership at all levels is crucial. Adequate, stable and predictable financing, as well as efficient use of resources, is required to support development. This will require honoring international, regional, and national financing commitments, enhancing domestic resource mobilization, and multiple complementary and innovative sources of finance -- such as private investment, corporate social responsibility, philanthropy, North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation, public-private partnerships, debt swaps, guarantees and market mechanisms. Particularly important will be the regulation of tax havens and illicit financial flows. Enhanced knowledge sharing, capacity building, technology transfers, data collection and trade will also be key. (High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda 2013a)

These discussions will likely play out in the Expert Committee on Sustainable Development Financing. An outcome of Rio+20, the committee will comprise 30 experts nominated by regional groups and will evaluate and propose options for effective financing for development. The permanent representatives of Kazakhstan and Norway have been appointed to facilitate the process of establishing the committee. As Amy Cutter (2013) acknowledges, the committee has a huge task ahead of it: estimates on additional investment needed to fund sustainable development in developing countries is as high as US\$1 trillion per year during coming decades. She also notes that to be successful, the committee will need to utilize and build on the commitments made in the past, including the Monterrey Consensus, Doha Declaration on Financing for Development, and Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, and build

on efforts to raise finance for climate change. The co-facilitators have begun the process of recruiting experts. They circulated an indicative list of expertise that is needed, which includes ODA and aid effectiveness, domestic resource mobilization and taxation, climate financing, innovative financing, and asset management.

Establishing the post-2015 framework: Emerging challenges

There is still considerable time before the next set of global goals will be agreed on by the UN General Assembly in September 2015. While much work has already been done to move the post-2015 agenda forward, a number of issues remain unresolved and will likely be subject to lengthy negotiations. While the post-2015 framework presents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to define global goals that the world can collectively work to achieve, ambition will have to be balanced with pragmatism, acknowledging geopolitical multi-polarity, ideological heterogeneity, and different fiscal realities.

Given this context, a number of likely challenges for negotiating the post-2015 framework can be identified.

Moving from aid to sustainable development and managing global public goods

Many of the analyses of contemporary global challenges point to the need to do a better job at promoting sustainable development, tackling transboundary challenges, and securing global public goods through internationally coordinated collective action. This shift is hotly political, however. In the lead-up to Rio+20 in 2012, for example, least developed countries expressed their concern that shifting focus from poverty reduction to sustainable development may result in less aid for them and more resources diverted to middle-income countries. Middle-income countries expressed concern that they might be constrained in their choice of development pathway. Both low- and middle-income countries have consistently argued that sustainability considerations should not be turned into “green conditionalities” (IISD 2012a).¹³

Donors have also expressed concern with this shift, demonstrating a reluctance to link development cooperation, which has historically been grounded in the notion of solidarity, with sustainable development and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities (IISD 2012b). More recent global meetings, such as the second meeting of the Open Working Group on the SDGs in April 2013, hinted at developed countries framing negotiations in a “new emerging global order,” in which past principles, such as common but differentiated responsibilities, are redundant (IISD 2013c). Further, while it may make sense in principle to move toward a framework that is more focused on

¹³ The rejection of “green conditionalities” was one consistently discussed in the lead up to Rio+20. This is reflected in the Rio+20 outcome document, which explicitly states that such conditionalities should not be contemplated (UN 2012b, para. 58).

sustainable development and securing global public goods, experience suggests that this will be difficult to achieve in practice. The lack of quantitative targets for MDG 8 and mixed progress toward this goal, for example, demonstrate that industrialized countries are often reluctant to make concrete, measurable commitments. There is also scant evidence that MDG 8 has had much political traction with governments and advocates at the domestic level in industrialized countries (Green, Hale, and Lockwood 2012).

Accepting a universal framework

There appears to be much energy behind the idea of adopting a universal framework that tracks progress on contributions toward global goals in *all* countries. But the political feasibility of such a framework needs attention. Will industrialized countries commit to a universal framework, where their progress on sustainable development in their own countries and their contributions to sustainable development globally are scrutinized internationally? And even if they do commit, will this result in action?

So while universality makes sense in principle, the political viability of a universal framework requires further analysis and groundwork. Based on their assessment of successful international agreements, Emily O'Brien and Richard Gowan (2012, 3) contend that "agreements are most likely to be successful when there is real political buy-in in advance . . . without political buy-in, a well-designed agreement will founder." This suggests that the political feasibility of the universal applicability of the post-2015 framework needs attention—by negotiators, policy-makers, and analysts—sooner rather than later.

Enabling prioritization

The UN consultation process and energetic engagement from a range of stakeholders have opened the debate on the post-2015 framework for broad discussion. A number of issues—including poverty, human rights, employment, governance, and the environment—have been the subjects of consultations, analysis, and advocacy. A key challenge in negotiating the framework will be balancing the need to prioritize the issues that should be captured by the goals with expectations, which have been raised through the consultation process, that a broader and more complex range of issues will make up the framework.

The criteria by which decision makers will choose the new goals are not yet clear. Such criteria require further politically informed analysis. Clearly politics will play a key role and some issues (for instance, tax havens, inequality, and climate change) will be more political than others (poverty eradication, health, and education, for example). There are other factors that decision makers should consider. Pollard and Fischler (2012) argue that a priority could be selected on the basis of three criteria: it is of great significance for people living in poverty; it needs to be addressed through international cooperation; and international goals on it will drive actual progress in the real world. Melamed (2012c) has also proposed a set of criteria: simple (not too many issues), specific (some numbers), and symmetrical (with obligations and commitments for all countries). Given that the simple and limited nature of the MDGs has been hailed as one of their best

attributes, the post-2015 framework should not be overburdened with too many goals and priorities.

Developing a framework that makes sense to a diverse range of stakeholders

The actors engaged in international development are more diverse than when the MDGs were established. Aid donors today are a more diverse set of countries, philanthropic foundations play a much larger financing role in development, and the private sector is considerably more engaged in global development issues, through initiatives such as the UN Global Compact. Emerging economies are playing a more assertive role in global politics and many developing countries have strong opportunities for growth. At the same time, there are countries that continue to face conflict and humanitarian crises. Decision makers will need to take this diversity of actors into account when developing the post-2015 framework. It will be important for this range of stakeholders to see how they can usefully contribute to the agenda.

Balancing measurement with norm setting

Indeed, one of the strengths of the MDGs is that they are goals against which development progress can be measured. This feature will likely be retained in the post-2015 framework because there appears to be much interest in connecting aspirational goals with metrics that measure development progress. But it will need to be balanced with the important norm-setting role that global goals can play, which can signal the collective development priorities of all countries.

Striking such a balance will likely pose a challenge. While improvements in data may be one of the greatest legacies of the MDGs, data availability and quality is often poor even for their core priorities. For extreme poverty, for example, estimates for 2008 are based on household survey data collected in 127 countries, but the data were sufficiently up to date in only 86 countries (Mistiaen 2012). Improving data capacity has been outlined by the High-Level Panel as a priority (High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda 2013a), yet if the post-2015 framework moves from a focus on poverty reduction to sustainable development, the data gaps will likely be even more acute. Some observers, such as Klasen (2012, 13), argue that decision makers should not be tempted to expand the ambit of the post-2015 agenda to include issues that are unmeasurable. Good indicators do not exist for some worthy goals.

On the other hand, if the post-2015 framework is also about norm setting, the issues that world leaders, informed by the extensive consultations that are underway, think are the most pressing will need to be given prominence. This again will be a political decision. The extent to which poor data quality should limit the inclusion of critical issues will need due attention. Too much focus on data robustness will risk excluding important issues and certain segments of populations that require serious policy attention. At the same time, the post-2015 framework should be seen as an opportunity to improve data capacity and quality around specific issues that the world deems as priorities. In short, balancing the role that global goals can play as norm setters, with

demands for robust data and measurement, will likely be a difficult political conversation.

Conclusion

If the MDGs are anything to go by, the post-2015 framework will have significant influence on global and national development priorities in the decades beyond 2015. But to be relevant and meaningful not only in 2015 but also the decades that follow, the framework will need to respond to the changing global context and numerous long-term challenges. It will also need to be structured in a way that will generate buy-in from a diverse range of countries and stakeholders. Ultimately, the new framework will be a political agreement.

The post-2015 framework presents a major opportunity to mobilize the world around a set of global goals that have the potential to catalyze real action on development priorities that can no longer go ignored. The process of developing and agreeing on goals is consuming a lot of time, energy, and money, and critics are questioning its relevance in the context of fiscal austerity and waning faith in multilateralism. But this is a process that should not be taken lightly. Based on the experience with the MDGs, the framework will likely play an important role in framing national and global policy and decision making for decades to come. Doing our best to get it right is not only an opportunity, but this generation's responsibility.

Annex 1: MDGs, Targets, and Indicators

Goals and Targets (from the Millennium Declaration)	Indicators for monitoring progress
Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger	
Target 1.A: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day	1.1 Proportion of population below \$1 (purchasing power parity) per day 1.2 Poverty gap ratio 1.3 Share of poorest quintile in national consumption
Target 1.B: Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people	1.4 Growth rate of gross domestic product per person employed 1.5 Employment-to-population ratio 1.6 Proportion of employed people living below \$1 (purchasing power parity) per day 1.7 Proportion of own-account and contributing family workers in total employment
Target 1.C: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger	1.8 Prevalence of underweight children under-five years of age 1.9 Proportion of population below minimum level of dietary energy consumption
Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education	
Target 2.A: Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling	2.1 Net enrolment ratio in primary education 2.2 Proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reach last grade of primary 2.3 Literacy rate of 15–24 year-olds, women and men
Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women	
Target 3.A: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015	3.1 Ratios of girls to boys in primary, secondary, and tertiary education 3.2 Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector 3.3 Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament

Goal 4: Reduce child mortality	
Target 4.A: Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate	<p>4.1 Under-five mortality rate</p> <p>4.2 Infant mortality rate</p> <p>4.3 Proportion of one-year-old children immunized against measles</p>
Goal 5: Improve maternal health	
Target 5.A: Reduce by three quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio	<p>5.1 Maternal mortality ratio</p> <p>5.2 Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel</p>
Target 5.B: Achieve, by 2015, universal access to reproductive health	<p>5.3 Contraceptive prevalence rate</p> <p>5.4 Adolescent birth rate</p> <p>5.5 Antenatal care coverage (at least one visit and at least four visits)</p> <p>5.6 Unmet need for family planning</p>
Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases	
Target 6.A: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS	<p>6.1 HIV prevalence among population aged 15–24 years</p> <p>6.2 Condom use at last high-risk sex</p> <p>6.3 Proportion of population aged 15–24 years with comprehensive correct knowledge of HIV/AIDS</p> <p>6.4 Ratio of school attendance of orphans to school attendance of non-orphans aged 10–14 years</p>
Target 6.B: Achieve, by 2010, universal access to treatment for HIV/AIDS for all those who need it	<p>6.5 Proportion of population with advanced HIV infection with access to antiretroviral drugs</p>
Target 6.C: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases	<p>6.6 Incidence and death rates associated with malaria</p> <p>6.7 Proportion of children under five sleeping under insecticide-treated bednets</p> <p>6.8 Proportion of children under five with fever who are treated with appropriate anti-malarial drugs</p> <p>6.9 Incidence, prevalence, and death rates associated with tuberculosis</p> <p>6.10 Proportion of tuberculosis cases detected and cured under directly observed treatment short course</p>

Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability	
Target 7.A: Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programs and reverse the loss of environmental resources	7.1 Proportion of land area covered by forest 7.2 CO2 emissions, total, per capita and per \$1 gross domestic product (purchasing power parity) 7.3 Consumption of ozone-depleting substances 7.4 Proportion of fish stocks within safe biological limits
Target 7.B: Reduce biodiversity loss, achieving, by 2010, a significant reduction in the rate of loss	7.5 Proportion of total water resources used 7.6 Proportion of terrestrial and marine areas protected 7.7 Proportion of species threatened with extinction
Target 7.C: Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation	7.8 Proportion of population using an improved drinking water source 7.9 Proportion of population using an improved sanitation facility
Target 7.D: By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers	7.10 Proportion of urban population living in slums
Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development	
Target 8.A: Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system Includes a commitment to good governance, development, and poverty reduction—both nationally and internationally	Some of the indicators listed below are monitored separately for the least developed countries, Africa, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States. 8.1 Net ODA, total and to the least developed countries, as percentage of OECD-DAC donors' gross national income 8.2 Proportion of total bilateral, sector-allocable ODA of OECD-DAC donors to basic social services (basic education, primary health care, nutrition, safe water, and sanitation) 8.3 Proportion of bilateral ODA of OECD-DAC donors that is untied
Target 8.B: Address the special needs of the least developed countries Includes: tariff and quota free access for the least developed countries' exports; enhanced program of debt relief for heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC) and cancellation of official bilateral debt; and more generous ODA for countries committed to poverty reduction	8.4 ODA received in landlocked developing countries as a proportion of their gross national incomes 8.5 ODA received in small island developing countries as a proportion of their gross national incomes 8.6 Proportion of total developed country imports (by value and excluding arms) from developing countries and least developed countries, admitted free of duty 8.7 Average tariffs imposed by developed countries on agricultural products and textiles and clothing

<p>Target 8.C: Address the special needs of landlocked developing countries and small island developing countries (through the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and the outcome of the 22nd special session of the General Assembly)</p>	<p>from developing countries</p>
<p>Target 8.D: Deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries through national and international measures in order to make debt sustainable in the long term</p>	<p>8.8 Agricultural support estimate for OECD countries as a percentage of their gross domestic product</p> <p>8.9 Proportion of ODA provided to help build trade capacity</p> <p>8.10 Total number of countries that have reached their HIPC decision points and number that have reached their HIPC completion points (cumulative)</p> <p>8.11 Debt relief committed under HIPC initiative and Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative</p>
<p>Target 8.E: In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries</p>	<p>8.12 Debt service as a percentage of exports of goods and services</p> <p>8.13 Proportion of population with access to affordable essential drugs on a sustainable basis</p> <p>8.14 Fixed telephone lines per 100 inhabitants</p>
<p>Target 8.F: In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications technologies</p>	<p>8.15 Mobile cellular subscriptions per 100 inhabitants</p> <p>8.16 Internet users per 100 inhabitants</p>

Annex 2: Calendar for Establishing the Post-2015 Development Agenda

1 st Meeting of the High-Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda	2 nd Meeting of the High-Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda	3 rd Meeting of the High-Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda	1 st Session of Open Working Group on SDGs	4 th Meeting of the High-Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda	2 nd Session of Open Working Group on SDGs	5 th Meeting of the High-Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda	3 rd Session of the Open Working Group on SDGs	Report of High-Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda released	4 th Session of the Open Working Group on SDGs
New York, United States, September 25, 2012	London, United Kingdom, October 31–November 2, 2012	Monrovia, Liberia, January 20–February 1, 2013	New York, March 14-15, 2013	Bali, Indonesia, March 25–27 2013	New York, April 17-19, 2013	New York, May 13–15, 2013	New York, May 22–24, 2013	May 31, 2013	New York, June 17–19, 2013

20 th Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development	68 th Session of the UN General Assembly	1 st Session of the High Level Political Forum	UN General Assembly Special Event to Follow Up Efforts Made Towards Achieving the MDGs	Open Working Group on SDGs to submit report to UN General Assembly during its 68 th session	69 th Session of the UN General Assembly	70 th Session of the UN General Assembly (likely forum for agreeing on the post-2015 development goals)
September 2, 2013 (tentative)	New York, September 17–30, 2013	New York, September 24–26, 2013	New York, September 25, 2013	September 2013-September 2014	New York, September 16–29, 2014	New York, September 2015

References

- ACPPP (Africa CSO Platform on Principled Partnership). 2013. *Summary from Engagement with the UN and Government Representatives (PRs) in New York on the SDG and Post MDG Agenda*. Nairobi: ACP PPP.
- Aryeetey, Ernest, Daniel Esty, Edwin Feulner, Thierry Geiger, Daniel Kaufmann, R. Andreas Kraemer, Marc Levy, John McArthur, Robert Steele, Anand Sudarshan, Andy Sumner, and Mark Suzman. 2012. *Getting to Zero: Finishing the Job the MDGs Started*. Global Agenda Council on Benchmarking Progress. <http://johnmcarthur.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/Getting-to-Zero-Final-Draft-PDF.pdf>.
- Barder, Owen. 2012. "Development Policy: Time to Look beyond Simply Managing Aid." *New Development Models Hub, Guardian*, November 28. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/global-development-professionals-network/2012/nov/27/partnership-as-part-of-development-policy>.
- Bates-Eamer, Nicole, Barry Carin, Min Ha Lee, and Wonhyuk Lim, with Mukesh Kapila. 2012. *Post-2015 Development Agenda: Goals, Targets and Indicators*. Waterloo: Centre for International Governance Innovation and Korea Development Institute.
- Bhushan, Aniket. 2013. "Domestic Resource Mobilization and the Post-2015 Agenda." *GREAT Insights* 2 (3): 22–23.
- Brooks, Douglas H., Kaushal Joshi, John W. McArthur, Changyong Rhee, and Guanghua Wan. 2013. "A ZEN Approach to Post-2015: Addressing the Range of Perspectives across Asia and the Pacific." ADB Economics Working Paper No. 327, Asian Development Bank, Manila.
- Calleja, Rachael, and Aniket Bhushan. 2013. "Aid Innovation: Motivating Reforms from the Outside?" In *International Development in a Changing World: Canadian and Global Perspectives on Growth, Aid, and Global Governance*, edited by Kate Higgins, 35–37. Ottawa: The North-South Institute.
- Cameron, Grant. 2012. "Statistics for the New Agenda." *MDGs and Beyond* 2: 1.
- Cutter, Amy. 2013. "Financing Our Future: The Expert Committee on Sustainable Development Financing Strategy." *Sustainable Development 2015* (blog), May 16. <http://sustainabledevelopment2015.org/index.php/blog2/item/281-financing-our-future-the-expert-committee-on-sustainable-development-financing-strategy>.
- Easterly, William. 2009. "How the Millennium Development Goals are Unfair to Africa." *World Development* 37 (1): 26–35.
- Evans, Alex. 2012. *Climate, Scarcity and Sustainability in the Post-2015 Development Agenda*. New York: Center on International Cooperation.
- Frecheville, Neva. 2013. "What Are the Politics? MDGs in a Changing World." *Serpents and Doves* (blog), Catholic Agency for Overseas Development, January 11. <http://cafodpolicy.wordpress.com/2013/01/11/mdgs-in-a-changing-world>.
- Fukuda-Parr, Sakiko. 2010. "Reducing Inequality – The Missing MDG: A Content Review of PRSPs and Bilateral Donor Policy Statements." *IDS Bulletin* 41 (1): 26–35.
- . 2012. "Should Global Goal Setting Continue, and How, in the Post-2015 Era?" DESA Working Paper No. 117, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, New York.
- Fukuda-Parr, Sakiko, Joshua Greenstein, and David Stewart. 2013. "How Should MDG Success and Failure Be Judged: Faster Progress or Achieving the Targets?" *World Development* 41: 19–30.
- Fukuda-Parr, Sakiko, and David Hulme. 2011. "International Norm Dynamics and 'the End of Poverty': Understanding the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)." *Journal of Global Governance* 17(1): 17–36.
- Glennie, Jonathan. 2013. "If We Want to Change the World, Where's the Cash Going to Come From?" *Poverty Matters Blog, Guardian*, April 25. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/global-development/poverty-matters/2013/apr/25/want-change-world-where-cash-from>.

- Green, Duncan. 2013. "Anyone Fancy a Post-2015 Wonkwar? Me v Claire Melamed on the Biggest Development Circus in Town." *From Poverty to Power* (blog), Oxfam, April 30. <http://www.oxfamblogs.org/fp2p/?p=14450>.
- Green, Duncan, Stephen Hale, and Matthew Lockwood. 2012. "How Can a Post-2015 Agreement Drive Real Change? Revised Edition." Oxfam Discussion Paper, Oxfam, Oxford.
- Greenhill, Romilly, and Annalisa Prizzon. 2012. "Who Foots the Bill after 2015? What New Trends in Development Finance Mean for the Post-MDGs." Working Paper No. 360, Overseas Development Institute, London.
- Haddad, Lawrence. 2012. "'Post-2015' Fever: Heat? Yes. Light? No." Presentation at the Australian Agency for International Development, Canberra, August.
- Higgins, Kate. 2013a. "Introduction." In *International Development in a Changing World: Canadian and Global Perspectives on Growth, Aid, and Global Governance*, edited by Kate Higgins, 9–11. Ottawa: The North-South Institute.
- . 2013b. "Rio+20 and Sustainable Development in a Changing World." In *International Development in a Changing World: Canadian and Global Perspectives on Growth, Aid, and Global Governance*, edited by Kate Higgins, 42. Ottawa: The North-South Institute.
- . 2013c. "A Sustainable Forum." *OpenCanada.org*, Canadian International Council, April 23. <http://opencanada.org/features/the-think-tank/comments/a-sustainable-forum>.
- Higgins, Kate, and Helen J. Chenard. 2012. *Rio+20: What Might It Mean for International Development?* Ottawa: The North-South Institute.
- High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda. 2013a. "Communiqué: Meeting of the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda in Bali, Indonesia, 27 March 2013." March 27. <http://www.un.org/sg/management/pdf/Final%20Communique%20Bali.pdf>.
- . 2013b. "Statement of the High Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda." May 15. <http://www.post2015hlp.org/featured/statement-of-the-high-level-panel-on-the-post-2015-development-agenda>.
- IRF2015 (Independent Research Forum on a Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda). 2013. *Post-2015: Framing a New Approach to Sustainable Development*. Washington, DC: IRF2015.
- IISD (International Institute for Sustainable Development). 2012a. "Post-2015 Panel Reports on Emerging Areas of Consensus." *IISD Reporting Services*, November 7. <http://post2015.iisd.org/news/post-2015-panel-reports-on-emerging-areas-of-consensus>.
- . 2012b. "Summary of the UNCSD Informal Informal Consultations: 23 April – 4 May 2012." *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* 27 (35): 1.
- . 2013a. "Summary of the First Session of the UN General Assembly Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals: 14-15 March 2013." *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* 32 (1): 1.
- . 2013b. "HLP 5 Reviews Second Report Draft." *Post-2015 Policy and Practice, IISD Reporting Services*, 15 May.
- . 2013c. "Summary of the Second Session of the UN General Assembly Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals: 17-19 April 2013." *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* 32 (2): 1–2.
- Jolly, Richard. 2010. "The MDGs in Historical Perspective." *IDS Bulletin* 41 (1): 48–50.
- Karver, Jonathan, Charles Kenny, and Andy Sumner. 2012. "MDGs 2.0: What Goals, Targets, and Timeframe?" Working Paper No. 297, Center for Global Development, Washington, DC.
- Kenny, Charles. 2012. "What the World Wants from UN Goals." *Bloomberg Businessweek*, September 16. <http://www.businessweek.com/articles/2012-09-16/what-the-world-wants-from-un-goals>.
- . 2013. "Absolute(ly Not) Zero." *Global Development Views from the Center* (blog), Center for Global Development, April 2. <http://www.cgdev.org/blog/absolutely-not-zero>.
- Kenny, Charles, and Andy Sumner. 2011. "More Money or More Development: What Have the MDGs Achieved?" Working Paper No. 278, Center for Global Development, Washington, DC.
- Kim, Jim Yong. 2012. "Post-2015 Global Development Framework: Is There a Role for a Next Generation of MDGs?" Presentation to the World Bank-IMF Annual Meetings, Tokyo, October.

- Kindornay, Shannon, and Fraser Reilly-King. 2013. *Investing in the Business of Development: Bilateral Donor Approaches to Engaging the Private Sector*. Ottawa: The North-South Institute and Canadian Council for International Co-operation.
- Klasen, Stephan. 2012. "MDGs Post-2015: What To Do?" Discussion Paper No. 123, Courant Research Centre, Georg-August-Universität Göttingen, Goettingen
- Manning, Richard. 2009. *Using Indicators to Encourage Development: Lessons from the Millennium Development Goals*. DIIS Report 2009:01. Copenhagen: Danish Institute for International Studies.
- McArthur, John W. 2012. "Rethinking Global Development Goals." *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Fall.
http://www.ssireview.org/pdf/Fall_2012_Rethinking_Global_Development_Goals.pdf.
- . 2013. "Own the Goals." *Foreign Affairs* (March/April).
<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/138821/john-w-mcarthur/own-the-goals>.
- McKechnie, Alastair. 2013. "Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goals: Looking Beyond the MDGs." In *International Development in a Changing World: Canadian and Global Perspectives on Growth, Aid, and Global Governance*, edited by Kate Higgins, 55-56. Ottawa: The North-South Institute.
- MDG Gap Task Force. 2012. *The Global Partnership for Development: Making Rhetoric a Reality*. New York: United Nations.
- Melamed, Claire. 2012a. *After 2015: Contexts, Politics and Processes for a Post-2015 Global Agreement on Development*. London: Overseas Development Institute.
- . 2012b. *Post-2015: The Road Ahead*. London: Overseas Development Institute.
- . 2012c. "David Cameron, Beware: The Post-2015 Aid Agenda is an MDG Minefield." *Poverty Matters Blog, Guardian*, October 31. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/global-development/poverty-matters/2012/oct/31/david-cameron-post-2015-aid-mdg>.
- Melamed, Claire, and Paul Ladd. 2013. *How to Build Sustainable Development Goals: Integrating Human Development and Environmental Sustainability in a New Global Agenda*. London: Overseas Development Institute.
- Melamed, Claire, and Emma Samman. 2013. *Equity, Inequality and Human Development in a Post-2015 Framework*. New York: United Nations Development Programme.
- Mistiaen, Johan A. 2012. "What Will It Take to Improve Poverty Data?" *MDGs and Beyond 2*: 2.
- Moss, Todd. 2010. "What Next for the Millennium Development Goals?" *Global Policy* 1 (2): 218–20.
- Nayyar, Deepak. 2011. *The MDGs beyond 2015*. Research Paper No. 38. Geneva: South Centre.
- Norton, Andrew. 2012. "Global Goals, National Targets – Squaring the MDG Circle?" *Post2015.org* (blog), October 29. <http://post2015.org/2012/10/29/global-goals-national-targets-squaring-the-mdg-circle>.
- O'Brien, Emily, and Richard Gowan. 2012. *What Makes International Agreements Work: Defining Factors for Success*. New York: Center on International Cooperation.
- ODI (Overseas Development Institute). 2010. *Millennium Development Goals Report Card: Measuring Progress Across Countries*. London: ODI.
- OECD-DAC (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development-Development Assistance Committee). 1996. *Shaping the 21st Century: The Contribution of Development Cooperation*. Paris: OECD.
- Pollard, Amy, and Bernadette Fischler. 2012. *Post-2015 Policymaking: What Is Being Planned, What Might Actually Happen, and CAFOD's Current Policy Lines*. London: Catholic Agency for Overseas Development.
- Sachs, Jeffrey D. 2012a. "From Millennium Development Goals to Sustainable Development Goals." *Lancet* 379 (9832): 2206–11.
- . 2012b. "Post-2015 Development Framework - Reflections and Challenges." YouTube video, 34:48. Posted by "overseasdevelopment", December 10.
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iKeVKUbxkkU>.
- Save the Children. 2012. *Ending Poverty in Our Generation: Save the Children's Vision for a Post-2015 Framework*. London: Save the Children.

- SDSN (Sustainable Development Solutions Network). 2013. *An Action Agenda for Sustainable Development*. Draft for public consultation, May 7. New York: United Nations.
- Sinclair, John. 2013. "One Size Only, One Global Customer? Why Universality and Tiering Should Be part of the Post-2015 MDG Conversation." In *International Development in a Changing World: Canadian and Global Perspectives on Growth, Aid, and Global Governance*, edited by Kate Higgins, 48–49. Ottawa: The North-South Institute.
- Steven, David. 2013. *Goals in a Post-2015 Development Framework: Options and Strategic Choices*. New York: Center on International Cooperation.
- Sumner, Andy, and Meera Tiwari. 2010. "Global Poverty Reduction to 2015 and beyond: What Has Been the Impact of the MDGs and What Are the Options for a Post-2015 Global Framework?" IDS Working Paper No. 348, Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, Brighton.
- Sumner, Andy, and Richard Mallett. 2012. *The Future of Foreign Aid: Development Cooperation and the New Geography of Poverty*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Pivot.
- UN (United Nations). 2012a. *The Millennium Development Goals Report 2012*. New York: UN.
- . 2012b. *The Future We Want*. A/CONF.216/L.1. New York: UN.
- . 2012c. "UN Secretary-General Appoints High-Level Panel on Post-2015 Development Agenda." July 31. <http://www.un.org/sg/offthecuff/?nid=2455>.
- . 2013. *MY World Summary of Results: May 2013*. New York: UN.
- UNDG (United Nations Development Group). 2013. *The Global Conversation Begins: Emerging Views for a New Development Agenda*. New York: UNDG.
- UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda. 2012. *Realizing the Future We Want for All: Report to the Secretary-General*. New York: UN.
- Vandemoortele, Jan. 2011a. "The MDG Story: Intention Denied." *Development and Change* 42 (1): 1–21.
- . 2011b. "If Not the Millennium Development Goals, Then What?" *Third World Quarterly* 32 (1): 9–25.
- . 2012. *Advancing the Global Development Agenda Post-2015: Some Thoughts, Ideas and Practical Suggestions*. New York: United Nations System Task Team on the Post-2015 United Nations Development Agenda.
- Vandemoortele, Jan, and Enrique Delamonica. 2010. "Taking the MDGs Beyond 2015: Hasten Slowly." *IDS Bulletin* 41 (1): 60–69.
- Zall Kusek, Jody, and Jos Verbeek. 2013. "Make MDGs about the HOW, not just the WHAT." *Let's Talk Development* (blog), World Bank, May 8. <http://blogs.worldbank.org/developmenttalk/make-mdgs-about-how-not-just-what>.