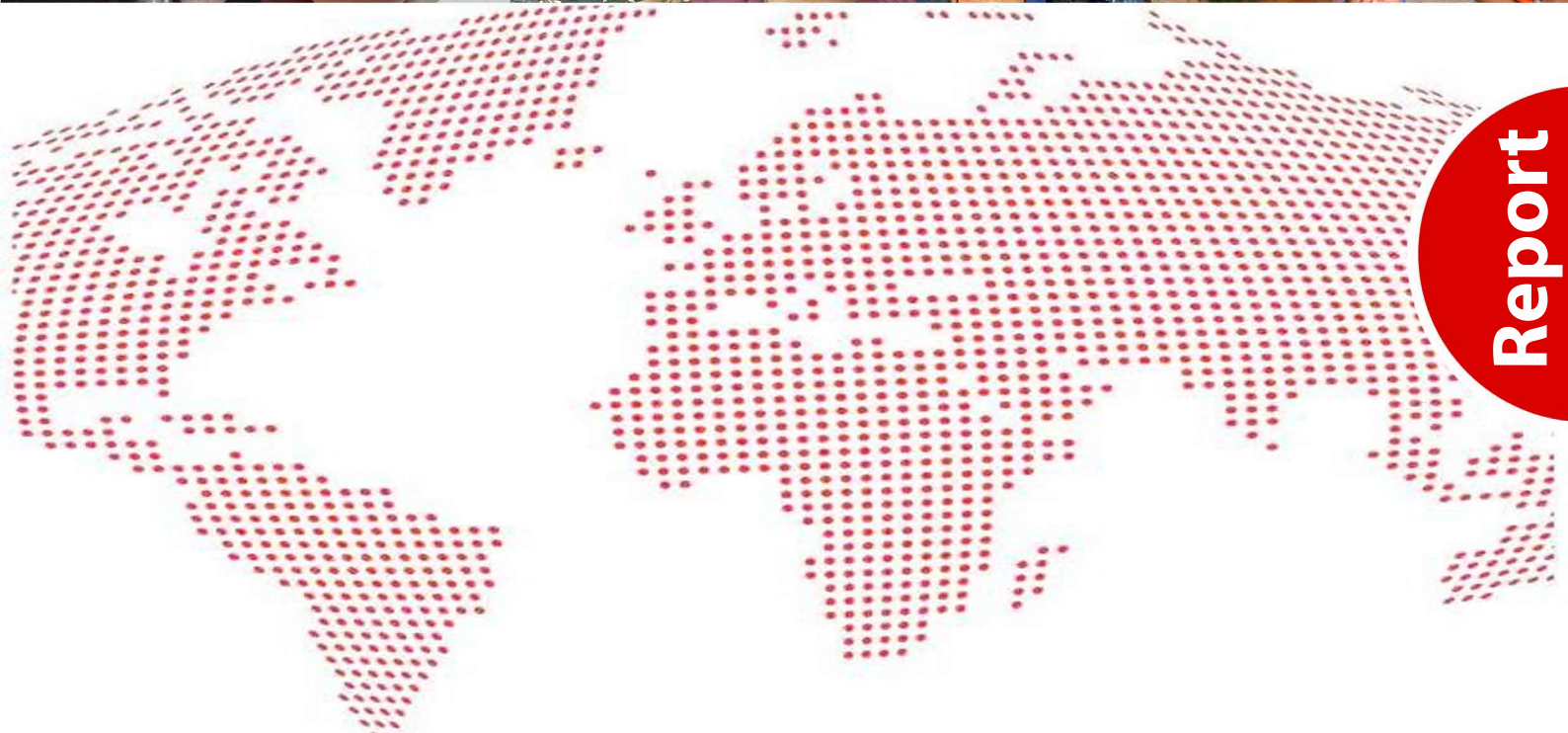


# Civil Society Demands for the Post-2015 Agenda from 39 Countries



Report



International Forum  
of National NGO  
Platforms  
IFP

## Beyond2015



Global Call To Action  
Against Poverty  
GCAP

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# Introduction



Since September 2012, Beyond 2015, the Global Call to Action Against Poverty (GCAP) and the International Forum of National NGO Platforms (IFP) have been convening national, regional, and community civil society deliberations in 39 countries in Europe, Latin America, Africa, and Asia. Representatives from thousands of CSOs took part. This report synthesizes the outcomes of these deliberations.

There is a collective understanding across national contexts that the world is in **crisis**. There have been fundamental changes since the Millennium Declaration in 2000. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) played a useful role in bringing many stakeholders into a common conversation, but the deliberations agreed that it is time to develop a framework that will capture the transformational changes needed to realise human rights for everyone. At the end of May, the UN High Level Panel (HLP) issued a report titled *A New Global Partnership: Eradicate Poverty and Transform Economies Through Sustainable Development*. While this report made positive steps in insisting a post-2015 framework leave no one behind, it did not go far enough in articulating a transformative, alternative development path.

The national deliberations raised an urgent need to work collectively to find new ways of organizing society, our relationship to the planet, and the logic of our economy. We have received contributions from people around the world echoing the same demands. Civil society is concerned about rising inequality. People acknowledge that social protection is decreasing, leaving more people vulnerable to vagaries like climate change and fluctuating food prices. Those who already live in poverty are being further marginalized. Even in places where economic growth is robust, many people are not included.

A post-2015 framework needs to meaningfully integrate the following themes that emerged from the national deliberations, which are the main sections of the report:

**Equality** – gender equality, social inclusion, and just global governance are essential for achieving transformation.

**Environmental Sustainability** – all development must happen within planetary boundaries, and corporations must be held responsible for the environmental destruction they cause.

**Human Rights** – rights must be at the core of a post-2015 framework, ensuring no one is left behind.

**Eradication of Poverty and Hunger** – there is no excuse for hunger. The time to end poverty is now. We need to redefine poverty to be a more holistic measure of inclusive development.

**Accountability and Participation** - In order to be effective, the future framework must emphasize accountability to all stakeholders through transparent access to information, and enable the meaningful participation of people.

# Vision



“We envision a world of peace, equality and sustainability, a future where society is free of poverty, inequality and powerlessness, and development takes place through the full exercise of economic, social, political, civil and cultural rights of all citizens, within the carrying capacity of our natural environment.” - Philippines

Many countries presented a vision of how they saw the realization of true development after 2015. People are calling for a framework that is transformative. It should not only look at incremental changes to alleviate poverty, but rather fundamental changes that help us collectively rethink our system of production and consumption, as well as how we define wealth. While the specificities of each national context influenced the vision, there were several common themes.

Specifically, the deliberations envisaged:

- A post-2015 framework that looks at the **wellbeing** of people, not economies. Poverty has a financial element, but is not only about money. In recognition of this, seven deliberations called for holistic measures of wellbeing, such as Gross National Happiness, being pioneered in Bhutan. Human rights will only be realized when they are seen as an integral part of the way we live with each other and contribute to society.
- A developmental framework that sees human development and environmental development as inextricably interlinked. There is no doubt that our current patterns of production and consumption are putting the planet at risk. Every single deliberation called for **respecting planetary boundaries** in our development trajectory.
- An agenda that centers around **equality**, and respect for **human rights**. The post-2015 development framework needs to treat all people as equal. This means addressing gender injustice, as well as specifically considering marginalized communities in a new developmental framework.
- Active, **engaged citizens** who are empowered to hold governments to account for progress in the post-2015 framework.

“The economy is growing, but poverty is increasing. Clearly, we need to change the way we define progress.” – Nigeria

# Purpose

The deliberations reflected on the value of the MDGs, within the framework of thinking on the vision, purpose, values, and criteria of a post-2015 framework. While most did not explicitly reflect on this thinking, some outcomes of the deliberations are relevant to the discussion. We heard from eight coalitions about the value of having an agenda that led civil society, government and international organisations to speak the same language about development. It was also an advantage for raising public awareness, and keeping poverty on the media agenda. Some coalitions found the precise, time bound nature of the MDGs to be an advantage in their advocacy, while others found it restrictive, making the MDGs unable to adapt to national contexts and realities. A post-2015 framework should maintain its role as a common reference point, while employing common but differentiated responsibilities to allow for flexibility to acknowledge national realities in a universal framework.



# Values

“The post-2015 framework must prioritise the realisation of people’s rights and the key human rights-based principles must underpin it, including participation, non-discrimination and equality, empowerment and accountability.” – Beyond 2015 European Task Force

For the eradication of poverty and the survival of the planet, a framework must be based on four values:

- human rights,
- equality and justice,
- environmental sustainability,
- good governance, participation, and accountability.

The outcomes of the national deliberations put forward a strong consensus on the right of each person on the planet to live a life free from poverty. A post-2015 agenda must make explicit provisions for social protection and service provision, to provide an opportunity for all to live in dignity. It should be a framework that does not look to define poverty based on narrow measures of income. Rather, it should seek to measure human development in a way that is holistic, taking into account equality, the environment, and well-being, which should include social protection and access to services. Additionally, it should explicitly make human rights more important than business interests, ensuring that this is expressed through its language, structure, and accountability mechanism.

People coming together to participate in the deliberations, regardless of national origin, share the opinion that inequality is one of the biggest challenges facing the world today, and all nations have an equal obligation to create a more just world. Acknowledging this, a post-2015 framework needs to focus on equality, through promoting gender justice, progressive redistribution, structural transformation, corporate regulation and social protection.

National deliberations pointed to the need for a new development framework to express **universal** values. All countries, rich and poor, in all regions of the world, are tied up in the same crisis. However, the way governments have responded has played a critical role in people's lives, with some countries making great strides in human development, while other countries, with more resources, are not moving forward. The crisis has different expressions in different contexts, ranging from unemployment to environmental degradation, domestic violence to hunger; but a fundamental, transformative shift will require all countries to commit to upholding common values of equality and justice, respect for human rights, just governance and environmental sustainability.

Finally, concern was raised in many national deliberations about the threat of poor governance to achieving current and future goals. Therefore, accountability, universality and good governance must underpin a new framework. Without clear delineations of responsibilities as well as rights, and without a mechanism for holding actors to their account for commitments, progress will not be made. Additionally, people affected by the outcomes of the framework need to be included and participate actively in building the more just world envisaged by the deliberations.

"Civil society in Indonesia has not found conclusive evidence to substantiate claims of an inclusive and equitable development process. Hard facts on the multiplying wealth of the selected few and extreme inequalities are compelling evidence on the urgency for a shift in development orientation.... In view of this, all development efforts and measures must be directed at eliminating these inequalities. We strongly urge for a shift away from a growth-oriented development paradigm to sustainable development with the intent to end all inequalities." – Indonesia

# Equality



“Participants of the consultation meeting have raised strong voices that the poverty continues to exist in our society because of unequal access to resources and services such as land, education, health and opportunities such as employment, and participation in decision-making.” - Nepal



Inequality was brought up as the defining feature of poverty by 32 deliberations. Clearly, grappling with inequality will be crucial both to ending poverty, but also to creating a transformative change needed to address social exclusion, accountability, and environmental sustainability. Governments in both the North and South must take responsibility for charting a new development path that is both just and sustainable. As such, the post-2015 framework must be **universal**, with nations working on, reporting against and contributing to all issues as relevant to their national context.

In the MDGs’ focus on halving poverty, an aggregate approach at the national level was taken, as opposed to a human rights approach. As a result, many countries found that social exclusion is making many people slip through the cracks. A goal can be achieved even if hunger is worsening among the poorest of the poor. This is something we heard of from 26 countries deliberations. Even when children are now in school – what about children with disabilities? Even when child health has improved dramatically – what about indigenous children? With inequality growing across the world, a message that came out very strongly is that for a new framework to be effective, data needs to be disaggregated. Even where there is aggregate progress, inequality and social exclusion means that the aggregate picture may be incomplete. In a post-2015 framework, it is essential that **nobody is left behind**.

“People live in poverty not because the resources are lacking but because its distribution is inequitable.” – Philippines

## Gender

Equality is essential to a new development agenda. This includes **gender equality**. Every single deliberation recognized that there can be no equality without gender justice. Violence against women is a major inhibitor to development, as well as a violation of human rights. While equality begins in the household, it must extend to the national level.

The HLP report does provide a stand alone goal on gender equality, as well as specific targets supporting sexual and reproductive rights. Even so, it does not go far enough in acknowledging the structural causes of the feminization of poverty. The national deliberations were very clear that we cannot continue with more of the same, incremental progress, while inequalities grow. To achieve gender justice, a fundamental transformation of the economy that prioritizes human rights is crucial.

“A gender-transformative, gender-inclusive and gender-responsive policy frame guided by principles of gender equality and equity is essential to advance and achieve full potential of all women in all spheres of life, namely, economic, social and political.” - India

## Social Exclusion

With inequality so high, even in places that have experienced economic growth or made substantial progress to meeting the MDGs, many communities of people have been left behind. For example, indigenous communities, people with disabilities or ethnic minorities are often experiencing even deeper poverty. This highlights the fact that poverty must not be seen as an aggregate, economic phenomenon. It is multifaceted, and therefore requires a response that acknowledges the indivisibility of human rights.

The recommendation of the HLP report to “leave no one behind” is commendable, and the national deliberations were clear in their support for this. However, the report does not go far enough in making sure this happens. Universal social protection must be made a reality. The post-2015 framework must make a clear link between a transformation of the economy around a logic of human rights, and the inequality that is excluding people.

## Global Governance

Equality between people is essential, but right now 85% of a person’s income can be explained by their country of birth. This clearly illustrates that equality cannot be achieved without a drastic reform of global governance. To ensure equality between nations, fair terms of **trade** and a just system of **global governance** is required. For a post-2015 framework to tackle equality meaningfully, it must promote the progressive redistribution of resources, corporate regulation, an end of tax havens, and a promotion of democracy at the global level.



The deliberations recognized that change demands a shift in our current systems of production and consumption. Reducing inequalities between countries is a necessary step to ending poverty, and doing so will require a new approach to the stalled trade negotiations and flawed global financial architecture.

“You cannot speak of human development without looking at the system of global governance, the place of multinational corporations, and an equal sharing of wealth between people.” – Morocco

### Recommendations:

“The most disadvantaged have seen few or no improvements and the disparities between them and others have only increased.” – Finland

The post-2015 framework should:

- Explicitly acknowledge the challenge of inequality and work towards building a more equitable society. This should be done by social protection, but also by supporting progressive taxation, nationally and globally.
- Design goals, targets, and indicators to explicitly ensure the needs of marginalized communities are addressed, including ensuring gender justice.
- Ensure that data is disaggregated by gender, marginalized groups and for the poorest.
- Be universal, incorporating the responsibilities of both northern and southern governments and other stakeholders employing the principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibility.
- Combat extreme inequality by addressing unfair terms of trade, tax havens and corporate accountability. This should be done by ensuring an alignment between human rights commitments and trade negotiations, and not allowing unfair terms of trade to continue violating people’s rights.
- Incorporate targets on the reform and democratisation of global institutions, particularly the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF).

“We need attention to specific goals, targets, and indicators for marginalized and vulnerable groups, including people with disabilities, indigenous communities, the elderly, women, youth, and children.” – Ethiopia

“Focus on Structural Change: unjust, oppressive or badly designed structures are often at the root of many of the issues that the framework must tackle.” – Senegal

# Environmental Sustainability

There was a consensus in all countries: **climate change** poses an eminent threat to society. In every region, it was noted that people living in poverty are already feeling its effects. A post-2015 framework must take into account the interconnectedness of social and environmental consequences of our growth path. Particularly in rural areas, where many marginalised communities live, climate change is affecting everything from access to services to maternal health.

In developing countries, the deliberations strongly condemned a lack of action on climate change, and acknowledged that people living in poverty are left increasingly vulnerable to natural disasters, droughts and other effects of climate change. Already impoverished rural communities have been unable to cope with the added effects of climate change. It is a matter of justice, since countries least responsible for causing climate change are feeling its effects the most.

The national deliberations linked people's experiences of the effects of climate change to generalized inequality, with industrialised countries polluting, and developing countries paying the price. Deliberations further linked climate change to accountability; with extractive industries and multinational corporations being on the forefront of environmental destruction, changes in national policies will only be as effective as their accountability mechanisms. Due to the inherent linkages between economic development, industrialization, trade and fossil fuels emissions, a more just world needs to be created for people and the planet together.



"The development framework should be based on climate rights; the poor and vulnerable people affected from the climate action must be protected. Climate change governance must be transparent and responsible to the people who have been victimized by the action of industrialized countries." – Nepal

**FOOD. WATER. ENERGY.  
FOR ALL. FOREVER**

### Recommendations

The post-2015 framework should:

- Acknowledge and be more ambitious than existing commitments adopted in international climate negotiations on emissions reductions and climate financing.
- Acknowledge the interconnectedness of sustainable human development, by having one single set of post-2015 goals that combines environment and development holistically.
- Be explicit about the planetary boundaries within which development activities must take place.
- Require governments and enable people to hold multinational corporations and extractive industries to account for the environmental damage they cause.
- Provide for a mitigation of the effects of climate change on the most vulnerable people.



# Human Rights

It emerged very strongly from the national deliberations that **human rights** must underpin a new development framework. This means poverty must be eradicated, not reduced, and coverage must be universal for fundamental human rights. The universality and indivisibility of human rights should be recognized in the post-2015 agenda.

“The existing MDGs have largely ignored the universality, indivisibility, inter-dependence and inter-relatedness of human rights. If the post-2015 development agenda is to remain relevant, it must emphasize on the fundamental inalienability of human rights as the macro frame to locate within it specific goals and targets.” - India

One strong criticism of the MDGs was that they set targets that left people behind (for example, halving the portion of people who are hungry). We must not make the same mistake again. While it is commendable that the HLP report mentions human rights, they are often narrowly limited to civil and political rights. The deliberations were clear that a post-2015 framework must explicitly include economic, social and cultural rights. We now understand that rights are indivisible, and there are a range of mechanisms to uphold and enforce human rights that need to be strengthened through increased legitimacy and recognition.



“In order to attain significant and sustainable changes in the lives of people and communities, and not simply reduce gaps in statistics, it is essential to rethink the current paradigms of social and economic development from the human rights perspective.” – Mexico

## Recommendations

The post-2015 framework should:

- Be explicitly linked to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the International Covenant on Social, Economic, and Cultural Rights, and other existing human rights agreements.
- Where needed, provide explicit definitions and benchmarks for the progressive realisation of rights.
- Be wholly consistent with and reinforcing of international human rights commitments, law and standards, address injustice, and demonstrate how progress towards its goals will also allow progressive realisation of these rights for all.

# Eradication of Poverty and Hunger



“End hunger and achieve long- term food security — including better nutrition — through sustainable systems of production, distribution and consumption.” – Bangladesh

The right to live a life of dignity, free from poverty and want, and the right to food, are the most fundamental human rights. Aiming to **eradicate poverty and hunger** is an essential foundation to a new development agenda, identified by every national deliberation.

Food insecurity and obesity are two sides of the same coin, and while every deliberation mentioned hunger, 18 also mentioned non communicable diseases and primarily lifestyle diseases such as diabetes and heart disease. Genetically modified food was linked to hunger by 9 deliberations, and agricultural subsidies were targeted as problematic by 11 deliberations.

Eradicating hunger requires extending specific support to farming communities and rural areas, which experience poverty differently than cities. Just land distribution and the right to secure tenure were identified as fundamental to eradicating hunger in 16 national contexts. Agricultural subsidies in rich countries are strong drivers of rural poverty in other countries, and it was recognized in 11 national deliberations that their harmful effects need to be ended as a matter of urgency

## Recommendations

The post-2015 framework should:

- Acknowledge the fundamental rights of all people to live free from poverty, and enjoy a minimum level of social protection.
- Define poverty more broadly than a completely inadequate amount of \$1.25 per day.
- Explicitly acknowledge gender justice as an essential element in eradicating poverty.
- End policies and practices that contribute to hunger, including harmful agricultural subsidies and land grabbing.

# Accountability and Participation

Finally, concern was raised in many national deliberations about the threat of poor **accountability** to achieving current and future goals. Therefore, accountability, good governance must underpin a new framework. Without clear delineations of responsibilities as well as rights, and without a mechanism for holding actors to their account for commitments, progress will not be made. A post-2015 agenda should be underpinned by a comprehensive and inclusive accountability mechanism that should empower existing human rights structures. It must also provide for financing in a way that is fair.



Even if the post-2015 framework is prepared through consultations to ensure a meaningful result, civil and political rights must be firmly entrenched, including freedom of expression and assembly. Access to **information** is a priority for the accountability of both governments and businesses. As such, critical budget information must be made publicly available in all countries - national security cannot be used as an excuse to withhold this information.

It is essential that a post-2015 framework explicitly target an enabling environment for civil society as crucial for upholding human rights, ensuring progress towards all goals and monitoring the implementation of the post-2015 framework.

National deliberations were clear: sustainable development will only be achieved through a genuine, equitable partnership of all sectors across national contexts. People, who must be at the center of the post-2015 framework, must **participate** in building their future for the vision of a development framework to be realized.

"So far, we haven't heard any information about the government of China's positions on the Post-2015 process. A key challenge is the block of related government information and lack of formal public participation channels." - China

### Recommendations

The post-2015 framework should:

- Be underpinned by a strong accountability mechanism.
- Be harmonized with existing international agreements, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- Be localized at the national level.
- Include minimum standards on an enabling environment for civil society, as well as access to information.
- Include a funding mechanism integrated into the framework, so progress is not dependent on fundraising or aid.
- Include targets on military spending.



# Conclusion

We have a unique opportunity to transform the current global social, economic and environmental system into one that is more just and inclusive. It is clear from the national, local and community deliberations that have taken place that the knowledge exists within civil society to eradicate poverty, uphold human rights, respect the planet, and build a more just future. As the MDGs come to an end, civil society in 39 countries has provided a roadmap for a framework that is holistic and inclusive in ensuring a more just world. This includes the following key demands:

- Gender justice and social inclusion are essential for realizing rights; nobody should be left behind.
- Human rights, economic, social and cultural rights specifically, must be at the center of a post-2015 framework.
- Equality - including income equality - should be central to the post-2015 framework, and included prominently in goals and targets.
- The obligation of governments to uphold the economic, social and cultural rights of all people, through adequate and universal social protection should be recognized.
- For poverty to be eradicated, a post-2015 agenda must fundamentally transform the economy to
- serve people, not corporate interests.
- Global governance structures must be democratized for any discussion of equality to be meaningful. Development must respect planetary boundaries.

Governments must heed the call of these national deliberations, and develop a post-2015 framework that will address the root causes of poverty, inequality, and environmental degradation. We must ensure widespread, meaningful participation from a community level, and collectively set an agenda that will be responsive to the needs of people living in poverty and affected by climate change.



## Reports from the following Countries are included in this synthesis

Africa	Asia	Latin America	Europe
Benin	Bangladesh	Bolivia	Denmark
DRC	Cambodia	Colombia	Finland
Ethiopia	China	Dominican Rep.	France
Kenya	India	El Salvador	Germany
Liberia	Indonesia	Guatemala	Ireland
Mali	Japan	Mexico	Italy
Morocco	Nepal	Peru	Spain
Nigeria	Pakistan	Uruguay	UK
Senegal	Philippines	Venezuela	
Uganda	South Korea		
Zambia	Sri Lanka		

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