Business & the Sustainable Development Goals

GLOBAL VALUE Monitoring Report 1

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1. Background

1.1. Millennium Development Goals

The Millennium Summit in September 2000, the largest gathering of world leaders in history, adopted the UN Millennium Declaration committing their nations to a new global partnership to reduce extreme poverty and setting out a series of targets known as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The deadline for reaching the eight goals was set for 2015. Recently the MDGs are the world's time-bound and quantified targets for addressing extreme poverty in its many dimensions - income poverty, hunger, disease, lack of adequate shelter, and exclusion - while promoting gender equality, education, human rights and environmental sustainability (Millennium project, n.d.).

Goals	Targets
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. Target 1.B: Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people. Target 1.C: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.
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
Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women	Target 3.A: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, prefer-ably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015
Goal 4: Reduce child mortality	Target 4.A: Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate
Goal 5: Improve maternal health	Target 5.A: Reduce by three quarters, be-tween 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio. Target 5.B: Achieve, by 2015, universal access to reproductive health
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. Target 6.B: Achieve, by 2010, universal access to treatment for HIV/AIDS for all those who need it. Target 6.C: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases.
Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability	Target 7.A: Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources Target 7.B: Reduce biodiversity loss, achieving, by 2010, a significant reduction in the rate of loss. Target 7.C: Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation. Target 7.D: By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers.
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 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 programme 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

Goals	Targets
	Target 8.C: Address the special needs of landlocked developing countries and small island developing States (through the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and the outcome of the twenty-second special session of the General Assembly) 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. Target 8.E: In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries. Target 8.F: In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications.

Table 1. Millennium development goals and targets.

Source: Official list of MDG indicators. Available at:
http://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/host.aspx?Content=indicators/officiallist.htm

1.2. Achievements and failures

The 2013 Millennium Development Goals Report of the UN draws a rather shiny picture about the supposed success of MDG. According to this report the world has made significant progress in achieving many of the MDGs. To support this statement the UN states that as a result of the global development process: "The proportion of people living in extreme poverty has been halved at the global level; over 2 billion people gained access to improved sources of drinking water; remarkable gains have been made in the fight against malaria and tuberculosis; the proportion of slum dwellers in the cities and metropolises of the developing world is declining; a low debt burden and an improved climate for trade are levelling the playing field for developing countries; the hunger reduction target is within reach" etc. (UN, 2013a).

Later the same report also admits that progress has been far from uniform across the world - or across the Goals. There are huge disparities across and within countries. By most accounts, the world is still far away from sustainable development. Poor countries are unable to produce adequate growth, and extreme poverty is omnipresent. Economic growth widens the gaps between the rich and poor. And some of the poorest countries remain the most vulnerable to violent conflicts. Looking forward the report calls for accelerated progress and bolder actions in the following areas:

- Environmental sustainability is under severe threat, demanding a new level of global cooperation.

- Big gains have been made in child survival, but more must be done to meet the obligations to the youngest generation.

- Most maternal deaths are preventable, but progress in this area is falling short.

- Access to antiretroviral therapy and knowledge about HIV prevention must expand.

- Too many children are still denied their right to primary education.

- Gains in sanitation are impressive but not good enough.

- There is less aid money overall, with the poorest countries most adversely affected.

- Rural-urban gaps persist access to reproductive health services and to clean drinking water are only two examples.

- The poorest children are most likely to be out of school.

- Gender-based inequalities in decision-making power persist (UN, 2013a)

Ever since the launch of the MDGs many criticism have been made of the goals, their implementations and their claimed success. The main criticisms are focusing on the following areas:

- <u>MDGs are donor-led:</u> The top-down approach of MDGs has been heavily questioned with its bias towards donor interests (Khoo, 2005). As such, many criticize MDGs that they pay little attention to local context and in this way penalize and stigmatize the poorest countries where achieving the goals is a greater challenge (Melamed and Scott, 2011).

- <u>Missing dimensions of development:</u> Critics identify several missing issue areas development. These include climate change (and the broader context of sustainable development), human rights (with a special focus on inequality), infrastructure, peace and security (Khoo, 2005; Melamed and Scott, 2011; Harris and Provos, 2013).

- <u>Focusing on welfare and aid programs</u> instead of investment in productive sectors thus promoting 'welfare and aid dependence over growth and self-reliance' (Manning, 2010).

- <u>The interpretation of economic growth:</u> Some suggests that the chosen means of economic growth and market liberalization undermines the human approach to development especially from human rights perspective (Kanbur, 2004).

- <u>Vague measurement:</u> Critics argue that many MDGs suffer from lack of scientifically valid data. While progress on each of these goals is portrayed in time-limited and measurable terms, often the subject matter is difficult to measure, or the measurements are not adequate enough, that one cannot know the baseline condition before the MDGs, or know if the desired trend of improvement is actually occurring (Attaran, 2005).

- <u>Silo structure of the goals:</u> Focusing on separate goals defined by sectors instead of correlations of the issues and encouraging lobbying for funds in specific sectors (Rippin, 2013).

Others have defended MDGs for their role in mobilizing public and political support for development; by claiming that goals give quantitative expressions to development related objectives; for their role in providing guidelines for action at national and global levels etc. (Khoo, 2005).

1.3. Post 2015 process

The European Sustainable Development Network published a concise report on the MDGs and the post-2015 debate (Prammer and Martinuzzi, 2013). Several of the conclusions of this report are used in the following summary.

After the first decade of activities related to the implementation of the MDGs it became clear that the original timeframe of fifteen years would not be enough to achieve the goals. At the September 2010 MDG Summit, UN Member States initiated steps towards advancing the development agenda beyond 2015, and a process of open, inclusive consultations on the post-2015 agenda had been started. Civil society organizations have also begun to engage in the post-2015 process, together with academia and other research institutions, including think tanks. At the two-third mark an independent expert group also made important recommendations for framing future development goals in the so-called Lancet Report (Lancet, 2010). It emphasized the importance of a) a holistic approach, creating synergies among interlinked goals and avoiding the silos mentioned above; b)

equity as a key component of sustainability in achieving the targets set for the implementation of goals; and c) an institutional framework for supporting obligations and measuring performance.

A consensus emerged to broaden the original scope of MDGs, not just extend the time horizon for implementation. A more holistic view of development helped connect the existing MDGs to a global sustainable development agenda. The set of eleven global thematic consultations and national consultations in over 60 countries is facilitated by the United Nations Development Group and involves partnership with multiple stakeholders. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has established a UN System Task Team to coordinate preparations for beyond 2015. Meanwhile, the outcome document of the 2012 Rio+20 Conference on Sustainable Development, *The Future We Want*, initiated an inclusive process to develop a set of sustainable development goals. There is broad agreement that the two processes should be closely linked and should ultimately converge in one global development agenda beyond 2015 with sustainable development at its core. An important consideration is continuity and the expectation is to prepare these goals by the year 2015 to make a seamless transition from the MDGs to the SDGs. The main point is that "Any new development agenda, however it may look like, should ideally build on the legacy of the MDGs, avoid their mistakes and build upon their strengths." (Rippin, 2013)

In order to support work on the post-2015 development agenda, the UN Secretary General also established a High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons (HLP) with representatives of civil society, private sector and government. The HLP was mandated to provide recommendations with regard to the direction of the post-2015 development agenda, suggest principles to help reshape the global partnerships for development and accountability, and recommend ways to build political consensus around an ambitious post-2015 development agenda that covers environmental sustainability, social equity and economic growth. The HLP submitted its report to the Secretary General in 2013 and suggested 12 universal goals with corresponding indicators. In addition to the High-level-Panel several other fora are involved in the 2015 process including the MY World survey, the United Nations global survey for a better world, national and regional consultations, Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) or the UN Global Compact. Meanwhile, the UN General Assembly constituted and tasked an Open Working Group (OWG) to develop the Sustainable Development Goals (see more on this at 2.1.). (UN, n.d.a.) (UN, n.d.b.)

1.4. Business and the MDGs

It is important to note that the MDGs are the outcome of an inter-governmental process in which the primary actors who supposedly would be responsible and accountable for the results are national governments and inter-governmental organizations (like the UN) and their specified agencies. While other actors (NGOs, scientific communities and the private sector) have also participated in the implementation process, their role has not been formalized. The private sector has been invited to engage in the development process as reliable partner already in 2002 by the so called Monterrey Consensus (UN, 2002) but its accountability for the success or failure of the implementation of MDGs has never been raised, despite the fact that Chapter 9 of an early (semi-official) report on the MDGs had been devoted to the role of the private sector and civil society (UNDP, 2005).

This report, beyond emphasizing the obvious statements on the benefits of MNCs presence in developing and poor countries (producing essential goods and services, increasing productivity and job creation, supporting overall technological advance, providing a larger source of tax revenues to the government), is highlighting the importance of creating special local business ecosystems (vertical supply chains and horizontal industry clusters) which are essential "for diffusing technologies and skills, bringing local firms into the formal economy, and increasing market opportunities for local suppliers" (quoted from UNDP 2004). It also points to the role of public-private partnership, corporate responsibility and corporate philanthropy in helping achieve development goals. Yet most of the recommendations remain on a very general level of what should be done, without offering any specific hands-on details on these mechanisms and policies.

According to an expert recommendation, a different approach should be based on the cooperation between the public and the private sector for promoting business participation in the implementation of development goals. *"A range of complementary public policies is needed to create competitive sectors and overcome internal constraints, especially in small-scale economies."* (Altenburg and von Drachenfels, 2006). However, even this analysis is focusing mostly on financing problems and the role of the cooperation in promoting new business services for development.

An important view that emerges from different analyses of private sector involvement is that the sector should be involved already in the design stage when the goals are set and then in the implementation stage "particularly as economic growth, trade and jobs are high on the agenda. Yet discussions on a new framework have to date mostly included development practitioners, governments and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and have largely excluded the private sector." (Lucci, 2012)

2. Sustainable Development Goals

2.1. The policy process

During the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in June 2012, governments agreed to launch a process to develop a set of SDGs. A so called Open Working Group format was created to elaborate a proposal for SDGs. The OWG is comprised of 30 representatives from the five UN regional groups, nominated by UN Member States. The OWG has been engaged in consultations with civil society, the scientific community and other stakeholders to ensure broad representation of perspectives and priorities. The OWG held its first nine meetings between March 2013 and March 2014 at UN Headquarters in New York. The work of the OWG will feed into international negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda, beginning in September 2014. As a final step, a Global Summit will be held in September 2015 to agree on the new UN development agenda. The OWG will submit a report to the 68th session of the Assembly.

The Rio+20 outcome document outlines, inter alia:

- the importance of remaining firmly committed to the full and timely achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and of respecting all Rio Principles, taking into account different national circumstances, capacities and priorities;

- the SDGs should be action-oriented, concise and easy to communicate, limited in number, aspirational, global in nature and universally applicable to all countries, and focused on priority areas for the achievement of sustainable development;

- the need to ensure coordination and coherence with the processes considering the post-2015 development agenda;

- the need to assess progress towards the achievement of the goals, accompanied by targets and indicators, while taking into account different national circumstances, capacities and levels of development; and

- the importance of global, integrated and scientifically-based information on sustainable development and of supporting regional economic commissions in collecting and compiling national inputs to inform this global effort.

The first eight sessions of the OWG were considered as "stocktaking" and covered the following discussion points:

- OWG-1 (14-15 March 2013): initial views on both the process and substance of the SDG framework;

- OWG-2 (17-19 April 2013): an overarching framework of poverty eradication and sustainable development, and cross-sectoral issues including: governance; gender equality and women's empowerment; human rights and rights-based approaches; and means of implementation;

- OWG-3 (22-24 May 2013): food security and nutrition, sustainable agriculture, desertification, land degradation and drought, and water and sanitation;

- OWG-4 (17-19 June 2013): employment and decent work for all, social protection, youth, education and culture, and health and population dynamics;

- OWG-5 (25-27 November 2013): sustained and inclusive economic growth, macroeconomic policy questions (including international trade, international financial system and external debt sustainability), infrastructure development and industrialization, and energy;

- OWG-6 (9-13 December 2013): means of implementation (science and technology, knowledge-sharing and capacity building), global partnership for achieving sustainable development, needs of countries in special situations, African countries, least developed countries (LDCs), landlocked developing countries (LLDCs), and small island developing states (SIDS) as well as specific challenges facing middle income countries, and human rights, the right to development, and global governance;

- OWG-7 (6-10 January 2014): sustainable cities and human settlements, sustainable transport, sustainable consumption and production (including chemicals and wastes), and climate change and disaster risk reduction; and

- OWG-8 (3-7 February 2014): oceans and seas, forests, biodiversity, promoting equality, including social equity, gender equality and women's empowerment, and conflict prevention, post-conflict peacebuilding and the promotion of durable peace, rule of law and governance.

Based on the first eight sessions, the OWG Co-Chairs released a "stocktaking" document on 14 February 2014 and a "focus areas" document on 21 February 2014. (IISD, 2014b)

- OWG-9 (3-5 March 2014) served as the first session of the OWG's second phase, which began the process of narrowing down preferences for a set of SDGs following an extensive, eleven-month "stocktaking" phase. Delegates discussed the list of 19 "focus areas" and the way forward for the next session, which began on 31 March 2014. In addition, they decided to prepare four informational documents to assist delegates in their deliberations at OWG-10: a revised focus areas document (based on the feedbacks received after the first rounds of discussions)[1]; a compendium of existing targets on various issues; a matrix of interlinkages between issues; and working definitions of goals, targets, and indicators.

- OWG-10 (31 March – 4 April 2014). Member States and Major Groups commented on the revised list of 19 "focus areas" and potential targets related to each focus area. Delegates also discussed the way forward for its remaining three sessions. During the OWG meeting, on 2nd April the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) has released a compendium of 603 existing goals and targets related to the 19 focus areas. The document was prepared by the Technical Support Team (TST) for the OWG, and aims to inform the second phase of the OWG's work, to agree on and adopt a report on SDGs and targets by July 2014[2]. At the end of the meeting, the Co-Chairs indicated that they would revise the focus areas document again, based on the discussions at OWG-10. During the upcoming

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[1] The most recent version of the proposed 19 focus areas are listed in the Annex.
2 The document that lists the 603 goals and targets can be found here: http://uncsd.iisd.org/news/dsd-compiles-existing-goals-and-targets/

sessions, the OWG discussions (and tweets) are expected to shift from the identification of individual positions to issues on which all can agree. (IISD, 2014c)

- OWG-11 (5-9 May, 2014). OWG-11 delegates commented on the again revised list of "focus areas" and approximately 150 potential targets. The co-chairs noted general agreement that poverty eradication, food security, education, health, gender, and water should be included as goals in the new framework. The discussion on "newer" issues, such as climate change, ecosystems, oceans, sustainable consumption and production, energy, industrialization, infrastructure and economic growth and employment, human settlements, means of implementation, peaceful societies, and rule of law, revealed that delegates still have not settled whether these focus areas should be included in the framework and whether some of the areas should be combined or divided. (IISD, 2014d)

On 2nd June, 2014 the OWG officially released their Proposed Goals and Targets on Sustainable Development for the Post 2015 Development Agenda. This document can be downloaded from:

http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/4044140602workingdocument.pdf

2.2. Major challenges in the SDG development process

Participants after the first series of OWG meetings acknowledged that about 80% of the proposals for goals and targets have broad consensus among Member States. However, they noted that the remaining 20% represent some of the most challenging issues, including universality and broader financing issues as the most debated ones.

2.2.1. Universality[3]

MDGs were about actions by the South financed by the North. The notion of universality in the context of future SDGs implies that developed countries need to make changes in their own countries, not just pay for changes in developing countries. So, how can the SDGs be universal in nature and, at the same time, take into account different national realities? Governments have expressed different views on how to reconcile these two needs. Some delegates support a goal framework that applies to developing and developed nations alike, with each goal having universal responsibility and universal application. Others have favored an agenda that distinguishes between groups of countries, setting universal participation in the context of national circumstances.

According to a discussion note informally distributed to participants during the OWG process, there are three mutually supportive interpretations of universality:

- Local/national challenges have applicability not just in developing but also in developed countries (development goals today have universal relevance);
- Local/national challenges in LDCs, low and middle-income countries may require support from high income countries;
- Global challenges, like climate change, require global solutions.

According to this note, incorporating such approaches into the SDG framework would mean that it should be: globally agreed; reflective of common aspirations of all countries; and relevant for all countries, based on universal responsibility. But, as the discussions at OWG-7 illustrated, universality in the context of an intergovernmental process cannot be discussed without the complementary notion of "differentiation," recognizing that all UN Member States are sovereign and are at different

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3 The UN parlour accepted this terminology which is otherwise incorrect. Universality refers to unquestionable values, essentials while neither the UN Member States nor major players agree on such values. A much more correct terminology reflecting the intentions of the parties is 'global' and 'global scope' referring to global coverage, global interests and, consequently, global participation.

stages of development—and even that some may have a greater "historical responsibility" than others for the current state of affairs and for resourcing the needed solutions. (IISD, 2014a)

There is a tacit intention that SDGs should complement the tools of international law, such as global treaties and conventions, by providing a shared normative framework. Universality also reflects the following question: Which goals, targets and indicators are universally applicable and therefore come under the scrutiny of international review and accountability processes, and which ones are differentiated and country-specific?

2.2.2. Financing

According to the World Bank actors - for accountability and credibility of accepted development goals - require an accelerated pace of implementation, *the capacity to measure and track the progress[4]*, and better and smarter aid construction (WB, 2014). In terms of financing, the main question is still this: Which goals are to be funded and pursued directly by the countries, and which are to be supported by the international community? In addition, participants of the OWG cycles agree that new sources of finance are also crucial to achieve SDG implementations. This also means that the focus should go "way beyond" traditional official development assistance (IISD, 2014a). However, ways of implementation are still highly debated and far from mutual agreements.

2.3. Most relevant outcomes so far

As discussed earlier, one of the key elements of the Post-2015-process is to ensure broad participation of stakeholders in the entire development process. As a result, several actors announced their proposed set of global development goals.

2.3.1. The first set was issued by the *UN High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons (HLP)* in May 2013 representing the national and international government sector. The 12 UN HLP illustrative goals and targets can be found under the following link: http://www.un.org/sg/management/pdf/HLP_P2015_Report.pdf

2.3.2. The second set of goals was proposed in October 2013 by the *Sustainable Development Solution Network (SDSN)*. Launched by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in August 2012, SDSN mobilizes scientific and technical expertise from academia, civil society, and the private sector in support of sustainable development problem solving at local, national, and global scales. The aim of SDSN is to accelerate joint learning and help to overcome the compartmentalization of technical and policy work by promoting integrated approaches to the interconnected economic, social, and environmental challenges confronting the world. The SDSN Secretariat is hosted by Columbia University with staff in Paris, New York, and New Delhi. The list of SDSN's proposed Sustainable Development Goals and targets is available from: http://unsdsn.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/An-Action-Agenda-for-Sustainable-Development.pdf

2.3.3. The third set of SDGs was proposed by the *Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF)* in January 2014 representing the combined views of an intergovernmental organization and the NGO sector. ASEF is the only permanently established institution of Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM); it is funded by voluntary contributions from its partner governments and shares the financing of its projects with its civil society partners across Asia and Europe. After the Rion+20 conference in 2012, 51 Asian and European heads of states or governments participating in ASEM decided to support the identification of sustainable development goals through the Asia-Europe Environment Forum (ASEF, n.d.). In order to undertake the research, a small group of leading experts from Asia-Pacific and Europe was commissioned through the International Institute for Sustainable Development-Europe (IISD-Europe). The project aims to contribute to the development of a global set of SDGs in terms of its

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4 Emphasis added

substantive content and process design. Their 11 illustrative SDGs can be found under the following link:

http://www.asef.org/images/stories/publications/ebooks/ASEF_Report_Sustainable-Development-Goals-Indicators_01.pdf

2.3.4. In the recent phase of the policy process the *UN Open Working Group* is mandated to elaborate a proposal for the final set of SDGs, as discussed earlier under 2.1. In order to narrow down preferences the Co-chairs of the OWG issued a list of focus areas. Based on the feedbacks received after three rounds of discussions this list has been finalized and published as the Proposed Goals and Targets on Sustainable Development for the Post 2015 Development Agenda on 2nd June 2014. At the moment the below set of goals can be considered as the most relevant, agreed upon list of future SDGs:

2.3.5. List of Proposed Sustainable Development Goals to be attained by 2030:

1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere

2. End hunger, achieve food security and adequate nutrition for all, and promote sustainable agriculture

3. Attain healthy life for all at all ages

4. Provide equitable and inclusive quality education and life-long learning opportunities for all

5. Attain gender equality, empower women and girls everywhere

6. Secure water and sanitation for all for a sustainable world

7. Ensure access to affordable, sustainable, and reliable modern energy services for all

8. Promote strong, inclusive and sustainable economic growth and decent work for all

9. Promote sustainable industrialization

10. Reduce inequality within and among countries

11. Build inclusive, safe and sustainable cities and human settlements

12. Promote sustainable consumption and production patterns

13. Promote actions at all levels to address climate change

14. Attain conservation and sustainable use of marine resources, oceans and seas

15. Protect and restore terrestrial ecosystems and halt all biodiversity loss

16. Achieve peaceful and inclusive societies, rule of law, effective and capable institutions

17. Strengthen and enhance the means of implementation and global partnership for sustainable development

The full list of proposed goals and targets is available here: http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/4044140602workingdocument.pdf

2.4. Timeline including upcoming events

OWG-12: The OWG will continue the consideration of sustainable development goals, targets and indicators. **Dates:** 16-20 June 2014 **location**: UN Headquarters, New York.

UNGA High-level Event: Human rights and the rule of law in the post-2015 development agenda. Dates: 17-18 June 2014 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York.

2014 Substantive Session of ECOSOC: The 2014 substantive session of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) will include a High-level Segment, as well as the second meeting of the High-level Political Forum on sustainable development (HLPF). **Dates:** 23 June - 18 July 2014 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York.

OWG-13: The OWG will continue the consideration of sustainable development goals, targets and indicators. **Dates:** 14-18 July 2014 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York.

Fifth Session of Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing: Dates: 4-8 August 2014 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York.

Special Session of the General Assembly on the follow up to the Programme of Action of the ICPD: An eight-hour Special Session to Follow Up on the Programme of Action from the International Conference on Population and Development is being organized to coincide with the high-level segment of the general debate of the UN General Assembly. **Date**: 22 September 2014 **location**: UN Headquarters, New York.

UN Climate Summit: UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon will convene the Summit with the aim of mobilizing political will for a universal and legally-binding comprehensive climate agreement in 2015. **Date**: 23 September 2014 **location**: UN Headquarters, New York.

3. Updates and Implications for the Global Value Project

What role for business? This question is still unanswered in a convincing way. One set of problems is related to the process by which business can be best involved in the design and effective implementation of the new SDGs. It cannot be taken for granted that businesses really want to be part of this process as many of them prefer to avoid multilateral processes. The other set of problems is related to the question of how to deliver on SDGs by businesses in general and MNCs in particular. Presently business involvement is not part of a designed process and is mostly *ad hoc* in character.

The ESDN report (Prammer and Martinuzzi, 2013) summarizes that "(a)s of now, the chance of including the private sector in the development debate has been largely missed". Government-business cooperation remained on small scale without targeting MNCs. Business contribution to the development process is on the international agenda already for a few years. The so-called Busan Partnership document (OECD, 2011), a non-binding statement of consensus, agreed that "(t)he donor community should put due emphasis on the mobilisation of the foreign and domestic private sector and leverage non public sources of development finance to boost investment infrastructure, agriculture, and many other economic sectors." (p. 116) Beyond such generalities, however, very little was said on actual mechanisms and practical tools that help achieve the desired mobilization.

The toolkit we wish to develop must cover the four main dimensions of SDGs: economic growth and the end of poverty, social inclusion, environmental sustainability, and good governance. Our project may frame the assessment and indicator issues more broadly around the notion of accountable and effective SD governance. This may require the rethinking of the goals, accounting systems and indicators of development. There is a technical side to this discourse on what to measure and how,

which is a re-emergence of an old and unfinished agenda. A particularly challenging task for the project is to link these frames to business interest and justify why business should a) pursue strategies that contribute to global development and b) use tools that measure the impact of implementation of such strategies.

Our expectation is that the upcoming consultation process will produce a shorter and more or less finalized list of goals and a set of proposed measurement tools/indicators that our project would be able to use as the reference for our work. The GV project may build on some previous efforts to measure private sector contribution to the implementation of MDGs and develop guidelines and/or frameworks for corporations how to do it. One of the very few efforts in this area has been made by the Dutch Sustainability Research, an institute that developed a Business in Development program (DSR, 2005). According to this framework, measurability, comparability, and discernibility are the key issues in compering MNCs performance over time and against the performance of their peers. The methodology is described in the program and the framework was tested on six Dutch MNCs.

All six participating companies contribute positively to the MDGs. Most of the contribution came from core business activities. The MDG framework is capable of measuring MNC contributions towards the achievement of the MDGs. It is clear that the MNCs have taken proactive steps towards implementing the MDGs into their operations. The non- availability of information however was sometimes a significant factor in the scoring. The added value of the MDG framework for companies lies in making it clear to companies where development impact is large or small. This quantitative approach makes discussions about the contributions of the private sector to development less speculative. The project has improved awareness and discussion on the MDGs within and among companies. All have expressed that the exercise was valuable. However, comparability between companies is limited due to sectoral differences. It is unrealistic to compare small differences in MDG scores. The framework provides useful insights when looking at a single companies performance over time or when comparing companies within the same sector." (NCDO, 2006)

The analysis prepared by the Overseas Development Institute (Lucci, 2012) recommended three scenarios for proper private sector involvement in development:

1. Business coalitions are consulted on their preferences on goals that they best could help achieve;

2. Businesses make pledges and commitments to contribute to the implementation of specific goals; and

3. Public and private sector agreement on a standardized measurement and reporting system on business contribution to the goals.

The GV project may capitalize on certain recommendations such as the third one above by analyzing the necessary measures that are needed to help companies to contribute to the implementation of SDGs.

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