

Beyond 2015: Where next for the Millennium Development Goals?

Event Report



01st February 2012, Dublin



On the 1st of February 2012, Trócaire hosted the **Beyond 2015: Where next for the Millennium Development Goals?** event, bringing together people across the Irish development sector to discuss the major issues that need to be addressed in a successor framework to the current MDGs. Trócaire launched the policy briefing “Where next for the Millennium Development Goals?” which can be accessed at : <http://www.trocaire.org/resources/policy-resource/where-next-mdgs> The day was divided into three main parts, including panel and round-table discussions.

This report summaries the panel inputs and the results of the proceeding discussion¹. Part I, welcome and introductions, consists of excerpts from the speeches made by Mr. Justin Kilcullen and Minister Joe Costello. Part II summarises the key points presented by the four guest panel speakers. Finally, part III consists of a synopsis of the main issues arising from the roundtable discussion.

¹ The views presented in this summary report do not represent a Trócaire position on a successor framework to the current MDGs. Trócaire and its southern partners are currently developing this.

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PART I- WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Mr. Justin Kilcullen, Director of Trocaire: Welcome address

In our 2010 *Leading Edge* report, Trócaire identified future trends in international development and the key challenges that we now face in the fight against poverty and injustice (global crises – food, climate, energy, financial, shifting geo-political situation/BRICS, widening inequality, and increasing conflict linked to resource scarcity).

Alongside our partners, Trócaire is contributing to the achievement of a number of the MDGs over the last decade, assessing their strengths and weaknesses as a global framework for effectively addressing poverty, drawing valuable lessons. With only three years remaining before the current MDG deadline is upon us, and in a much changed and uncertain global environment, Trócaire believes we have an opportunity to build on the strengths of the MDGs, avoid their weaknesses, and address the gaps, in order to ensure that a post-2015 global framework responds to the needs of the poor and excluded and, ultimately, delivers the world we want.

The process to negotiate a post-2015 development framework needs to begin immediately.

Trócaire's discussion paper- *Where Next for the Millennium Development Goals?* - presents the key policy debates on the MDGs, our partners' experiences, and some important issues that we feel need to be considered as we look towards 2015.

We welcome the Minister here today and would urge the Government to initiate critical thinking and engagement on what should replace the current MDG framework in 2015 as a matter of urgency. In particular, we encourage the Government to use the opportunity of Ireland's Presidency of the EU Council in 2013 to actively promote and support the development of a strong and clear EU position on a successor MDG framework by hosting an informal ministerial on the issue ahead of the UN MDG Summit later that year.

This is a global discussion of which Ireland needs to be part. Trócaire is a founding member of Beyond 2015, an international campaign aiming to kick-start and accelerate the post 2015 development planning process, while at the same time continuing to work to ensure the attainment of the MDGs by 2015. Beyond 2015 now brings together 240 civil society organisations in over 60 countries, and is currently convened by Concord.

The members of this morning's discussion panel will provide us with valuable input on the current MDG framework from a variety of perspectives, and more importantly, present some key issues for us all to consider as we engage in debate and discussion this afternoon.

We need to proactively engage with post-2015 planning and develop clear and coherent asks in a participatory manner which is influential in the debate and, most importantly responds to the voices of men and women directly affected by poverty and injustice.



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The Minister of State for Trade and Development, Joe Costello TD

Trócaire's event on *Beyond 2015: Where next for the Millennium Development Goals?* helps us to focus, in a timely manner, on the major international challenge, in a difficult global environment, of working towards a new framework for global development.

It is clear that by working closely together, at home and abroad, we can make a lasting positive impact on the lives of women, men, and children living in poverty. The Government recognizes this, and we have explicitly reaffirmed our strong commitment to international development, as a central element in Ireland's foreign policy. The allocation for Official Development Assistance for this year is a clear demonstration of our continuing commitment to achieving the 0.7% of GNP target.

The "Beyond 2015" campaign challenges us to consider how the world has changed since the MDGs were first agreed at the turn of this Century. Both the substance of any new framework which will replace the MDGs, and the process of developing it, is equally important. The discussion this morning is timely.

The MDGs have led to significant progress in poverty reduction. They have provided the international community with a clear set of targets and goals. They have given a focus to what aid should be used for. And because they are easy to communicate, they have galvanized political support for results in areas where progress must be made. In Irish Aid's Programme Countries we have contributed to this progress and can see the results for ourselves.

But while there have been many positives the MDG approach has also revealed flaws. Global targets and results have hidden inequalities across regions and countries. Vital issues such as sustainable growth, job creation, trade and protecting the environment were not adequately addressed in the MDGs. A "one size fits all" gave the impression that problems and solutions are the same everywhere. Clearly they are not.

The discussions to agree a new international framework, beyond the MDG's need to reflect these changes, together with the evidence we have accumulated, and the lessons we have learnt, about contributing more effectively to a reduction of poverty and disadvantage. In terms of the process for agreeing goals beyond 2015 we need a fully transparent and inclusive approach is particularly important that we listen to the experiences of people who are themselves living in poverty and that the countries that are least developed have a strong voice. We need to find ways of including independent and genuinely representative civil society organizations, and the media, from the developing in the process so that they can fulfill their promise to defend the rights of the vulnerable in an unequal world.

In the coming months the international community will increase its focus on the post-2015 era, with the upcoming Rio+20 Conference on Sustainable Development. I am pleased that the UN Secretary General has already committed to





establishing a Task Team within the UN to start the preparatory process of formulating a post-2015 development framework. It seems likely that, later this year, the Secretary General will establish a High Level Panel of eminent persons to provide guidance and impetus for the development of such a framework.

We will use Ireland's 2013 EU Presidency to bring to bear our strong thematic focus on hunger and nutrition, and on the growing impact of climate change on the poorest countries and communities. We will focus in particular on Africa, and we will ensure that these priorities are reflected in the MDG Review Summit and the post-2015 process.

Ireland has an honorable reputation in international development assistance. At a time of great economic difficulty at home and across the world, we must continue to assist those who are in need overseas and in doing so. Our development programme is the right thing to do. I welcome the "Beyond 2015" campaign and look forward to continued discussions with the development community to ensure that Ireland's position in the process reflects the true values of the Irish people.

PART II- PANEL DISCUSSION

H.E. Catherine Muigai Mwangi, Ambassador of the Republic of Kenya to Ireland: *Kenya's MDG experience*

The Ambassador presented the Kenyan Government's perspective of the MDGs and what will form Kenya's development agenda post 2015.

Among the first signatories to the Millennium Declaration, Kenya has invested significant resources in pursuit of the MDGs. All ministries are required to mainstream MDGs in their policies, plans and budgets. The MDGs have become a key criterion for allocating resources to development programmes, whilst increased devolution to lower levels of government has allowed Kenya to localize the goals. These efforts have resulted in substantial progress in achieving the MDGs, including a significant reduction in the number of the population living below the poverty line (Goal 1), a steady increase in primary schools' net enrolment rates from 73.7% in 2000 to 92.9% in 2009 (Goal 2), as well as near gender parity in enrollment (Goal 3), and the rate of HIV prevalence was estimated to be 6.3% in 2009, down from 7.4% in 2007 (Goal 6). However, challenges remain and, as in many other countries, some of the MDGs will not be achieved by the 2015 deadline.

Looking beyond 2015, Kenya has established a national development plan, *Vision 2030*, that aims to transform Kenya into a modern, globally competitive, middle income country, offering a high quality of life for all citizens by the year 2030 over a succession of five-year planning periods which complements the MDGs. This is also supported by the new constitution, especially the Bill of Rights that guarantees all citizens access to basic and fundamental rights. *Vision 2030* attempts to address some of the well documented gaps of the existing MDG framework, including governance and human rights, inequality and exclusion, and environmental sustainability.

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In determining what should come after 2015, we should consider what has been achieved, what remains to be done and collectively look at the key challenges facing the attainment of the goals in each country, with a view to assessing whether the current frameworks are sufficiently supported and whether more efforts are required to overcome these challenges that have caused the non-attainment of the set goals. A number of the key challenges are related to Goal 8 , global partnership, including the need for fairer and more equitable trade conditions between developed and developing countries.

We also need to consider whether if fresh objectives and frameworks would slow down the momentum that has been achieved by most countries or whether new goals are needed to positively address gaps and challenges.

Finally, it is important that all stakeholders – governments, international non-governmental organizations, aid agencies and think-tanks are involved. The post-2015 process will need to:

- Ensure adequate consultations led by the stakeholders from developing countries to define specific benchmarks and time lines for achieving the remaining parts of the set goals;
- Ensure inclusiveness in accomplishing the remaining part of the existing goals, considering different countries have different priorities;
- Apply pressure on developing countries to deliver on their commitments as well as ensuring that fresh goals and or a framework will be established in the near future.

Mr. Peadar King, KMF Productions:

What in the World? A media perspective of MDGs looking towards 2015

Peadar King shared two important perspectives from his time filming the *What in the World?* MDG series.

The number of people, general public, politicians and media, who have never heard of the Millennium Development Goals is striking. Getting stories about the MDGs into mainstream media is extraordinarily difficult. When it comes to telling the stories of people in Africa, Asia and Latin America whose rights have been fundamentally violated, there is very little value or recognition given to that kind of work. The MDGs have failed to gain traction in the mainstream media and with very many of the political parties in Ireland. There has not been a groundswell of public support for the MDGs. And that lack of engagement with and support for the current MDGs was one of the key questions put to various people while filming the *What in the World?* Series. And the response is quite chilling. Shanta Shina is Professor of Political Science in Hyderabad university and when this was put to her, she simply said: “The West doesn’t care”. A lifelong advocate for the rights of child labourers, added: “Child labour exists because people find it acceptable”. We can invest huge time and energy in identifying new goals for 2015 onwards but past experience would suggest that unless we can garner widespread public support, unless we can really engage with people, unless we commit ourselves to information and advocacy, unless we hear the voice of those most affected by poverty and oppression, we will never get near the targets that we have invested so much time in setting. For that to happen we have to cease being passive recipients of news and current affairs and we have to really begin to shape that news. And we really need to do something about that. We really need to engage those who own and control our media. We need to both dialogue and

challenge them. And we should not forget that we have many allies from within the journalistic profession who are anxious to get involved in this work. Public understanding of and support for the MDGs is critical. A critical mass is required to effect real change. It seems to me that the impetus for change in the first round has come from too narrow a base. Without widening it, we will not succeed. Allied to this I think we really need to engage politicians and the media.

The second point made by Peadar related to global inequality. The debate on global poverty needs to open up into a much broader debate about global inequality; intra-country inequality as much as inter-country inequality. In trying to understand poverty in Africa, Latin America and Asia, the *What in the World?* series demonstrated how much wealth resides in these places and of course how much of it is spirited out of those places. Globally, in 2000, the richest 1% of adults own 40% of global wealth and the richest 10% of adults accounted for 85% of the world's wealth. In contrast, the bottom half of the world's population owned barely 1% of global wealth. And of course here in Ireland, we are not immune to the growing chasm between the rich and the poor. Ireland is sitting near the top of the inequality rankings in Europe nestled in behind our neighbours Britain. In 2010 the average income of those in the highest income quintile was 5.5 times that of those in the lowest quintile. The ratio was 4.3 one year earlier. Inequality wherever it manifests itself needs to be at the heart of the next set of Millennium Goals. I think the next round has to be all embracing. It has to speak to the 39 million poor people in the United States as it has to speak to the twelve million poor people in Vietnam as it must to the 85 percent of people in rural Zambia and the 34 percent in urban areas is still living in poverty. It must speak to the almost one-quarter of the Irish population experiencing double deprivation.

**Dr. Amy Pollard, Catholic Overseas Development Agency (CAFOD):
What will come after the Millennium Development Goals? The state of play**

Dr. Pollard emphasised the importance of political process, mapping out five scenarios for a post-2015 framework. The scenarios describe different possibilities for how a framework could emerge, together with some brief analysis of the risks and opportunities involved.

Scenario 1: A clearly led, legitimate framework:

In this scenario, the UN lead an inclusive, participatory and legitimate process to ratify an official framework for beyond 2015. This scenario is "ideal" from the perspective of those who believe that the *process* of developing a post-2015 framework is important and who want to maximise its legitimacy, ownership and buy-in. It is a marked contrast from the process through which the MDGs emerged, and would tackle a number of the criticisms that were levelled at these goals. Some have suggested, however, that ratification through the UN General Assembly risks ending up with a lowest common denominator framework – and that the original MDG framework (with all its shortcomings) would not have survived a 192 country process.

Scenario 2: A framework from the inside →out

In this scenario, expert insiders draw up a framework on the back of broad, inspirational vision, and gradually build it into formal structures. In this scenario, the authority of world leaders is in tension with the power of experts. Like the original MDGs (which were designed in exactly this way), the framework could be seen as lacking in legitimacy. It could be seen as a framework smuggled in „by the back door“ – which is able to secure a more ambitious set of goals precisely because it avoids bringing contentious and technical issues into political arena composed of 192 countries.

Scenario 3: A framework from the outside → in

In this scenario, a coalition of outsiders (CSOs, academics, policy entrepreneurs etc) agree a framework then gradually persuade governments to adopt it. There will be an “outside-in” movement regardless of how the official post-2015 process is organised – as civil society (and the development community at large) seize 2015 as a major policy window. In the scenario framed above, the great challenge will be getting to a collective agreement on one particular framework that a global campaign should be focused on; and getting this agreement in time for a campaign to mobilise and hit the 2015 opportunity. Getting governments to sign up to a new framework one-by-one also represents an enormous challenge. A framework would need a much longer time-scale than 15 years in order to account for the time required to get governments on board.

Scenario 4: A jigsaw framework

In this scenario, pieces of a new framework are brokered one-by-one through the G20, G77, UNFCCC and other international policy processes. They are then slotted together to form a new framework. Real politik plays a key role in this scenario, and from a civil society perspective there is a risk of deals being made behind closed doors, of a proliferation of advocacy targets (which are impossible to keep track of), and momentum growing behind parts of a new framework before there is a chance to input from outside. Brokering a new framework „piece-by-piece“ may appear more manageable than designing one in its entirety – but the challenge of integrating these components into a coherent framework should not to be underestimated.

Scenario 5: Failure

In this scenario, the international community fails to agree on a post-2015 framework. The MDGs are a one-off initiative, with no successor. This bleak scenario is a very real danger, and something that needs to be seriously borne in mind by those engaged in post-2015 thinking. The MDGs have become an iconic element of international development architecture. If a 2015 process fails, there may well be a crisis moment for international cooperation in general – and for the UN in particular.

The policy process to 2015 will not take the neat forms that these scenarios have described. In all likelihood some version of each of the scenarios will develop simultaneously – and these will clash, intermingle and compete with one another. The Beyond 2015 campaign requires a resilient strategy for manoeuvring within what will be challenging and unpredictable context. It would be wise to plan strategically for each of the five scenarios, and to think through how they may combine together in real life. Looking starkly at the scale of the challenge, there is no question that securing a post-2015 framework will require a significant global effort.

Dr. Ricardo Navarro, Friends of the Earth, El Salvador

Dr. Navarro challenged participants to look beyond the technocratic approach to addressing poverty and injustice, that currently dominates, and use opportunity presented by the post-MDG process to confront the structural dimensions of these global ills. Learning from our current context and global crises (food, energy, climate, financial), we need to adopt a one world-approach this time around. We speak of poverty reduction strategies, but what about wealth or consumption reduction strategies? If poverty reduction and development are to be sustainable, if this is what the MDG framework wishes to achieve, we need to acknowledge the interconnections between extreme wealth and consumption, poverty and the food, energy and climate crises, which act to further impoverish people. The various dimensions of poverty, health, education, etc, are often viewed as “imperfections” of our global system. This is not true.

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They are logical consequences of a political-economic-social system that focuses too much upon economic growth. The global crises are logical consequences of this system. Impoverished countries are “made” poor via the pro-active involvement of others. Large MNCs, for example, have a lot to answer for in many developing countries. Meat production produces more carbon emissions than all the transport in the world. The global system should promote local food production and consumption, if we want to address poverty in a sustainable way. To use an analogy: if poverty is like the broken windows in a building, one approach is to fix the windows. However, if the whole building is crumbling, then it makes no sense to fix the windows – we need to look at fixing the building.

In addressing these issues, we need to engage people. All problems begin in people’s minds, as norms, values and beliefs. Equally solutions have a similar beginning.

Our understanding of the concept of sustainability needs to be clear. Do we want sustainable development? We want to make our lives, communities, countries sustainable. Put another way, what is more important, that a boat be sustainable or its engine? We need to broaden “sustainability” agenda to encompass the “political”, tackling issues of power distribution

PART III: Discussion round-tables- Three key questions

The participants in the day’s discussion broke into groups of 10 in order to discuss three questions. A number of specific ideas and viewpoints emerged from the discussion session. Among those that were mentioned **by more than one table were:**

What are the most important issues for people and the planet that should be in a post-2015 context?

Sustainability-Climate change

Climate change is not evident enough in the MDGs. A new framework will need to address environmental, economic and social sustainability issues. There is a broader need for a shift in the overall development paradigm: Sustainability in all its forms needs to be integrated into global and national development models. Sustainability of the economy should not be our aim. Without sustainability of the planet/nature we will have no societies and economies to sustain. We need to be clear on what “green growth” is and is not, as this is the dominant “sustainable development” model being championed by Governments. Whatever the new framework is, it will need to deal with the effects of the global crises; food, energy, financial, natural resource scarcity and climate change.

Inequality:

One shortcoming of the MDGs was the fact that they provided a recipe for low income countries to act, whereas higher income countries continued to consume (Celtic tiger mode.) MDGs failed to really examine causes of global



inequality and challenge the dominant economic model. Some participants suggested a % reduction in inequality indicator should be included in a successor global development framework.

A broader understanding of basic needs is required. Everyone in the world should have income and resources to live a life of dignity. We need to include goals related to well-being, housing and income.

A new framework will need to address private sector related issues and how these cause or deepen poverty, such as tax evasion, natural resource crises, and unfair trade arrangements.

When we speak of equality and equity, we are not advocating for uniformity but equitable diversity: everyone who have equal access to the conditions and facilities necessary for their development.

The concept of shared but differentiated responsibility is important when we speak of inequality. A new framework needs to include strategies that promote prosperity without a growth-focus, e.g. wealth re-distribution, guaranteed basic income level.

Vulnerable groups:

Many vulnerable groups were forgotten the first time around: the elderly, ethnic minorities who face systematic exclusion and discrimination, people living with disabilities. We have an opportunity, indeed a responsibility, to ensure they are included in a new framework.

To address these issues effectively, what should a post-2015 framework look like?

One world approach:

The successor to the MDGs needs to be a truly global framework: universally applicable and address structural problems that lead to deep inequality in low, medium and high income countries. There are clear challenges in how the Irish public has been engaged in the past, and concerns about how they can be effectively engaged in the future. Perhaps a move to a truly global framework which also addresses domestic concerns in a changed economic climate will resonate better and help Irish citizens to have tools to hold their own government to account within this framework in terms of public expenditure on traditional MDG issue areas health, education etc.

However, participants also noted that in developing a post 2015 framework there are real risks that more inclusivity can merely mean moving from a process being driven by donor elites to include NGO elites, rather than more meaningful consultation.

SMART indicators or overarching principles?

The quantitative nature of the current MDG indicators is useful in terms of measurement and accountability. However, a new framework should include more qualitative indicators that better reflect the multi-dimensional nature of poverty and, more importantly, how people experience it.

There was a divergence of opinion between tables on the benefits of legally binding frameworks and indicators. Some felt there should be legally binding obligations but these often stifle ambition or are ignored by many states. A proposed alternative is for a coalition of small countries, North and South, to develop and agree a legal 'Declaration of Interdependence', ahead of 2015. If governments are not willing to pick up the idea this is something civil society could develop as a contribution to the debate ahead of 2015. Clearly there will be differences of views, experience, needs etc, but the dialogue involved would be as important as the outcome.

Others suggested that countries should commit to a number of future goals that are most relevant to them. This would ensure better compliance as countries would only sign-up to those most important to them. However, there are obvious dangers associated with this selective approach and some of the more politically sensitive goals may not be subscribed to, mirroring a developing trend with new actors and the post-Busan environment. Finally, one table suggested that we abandon indicators and instead opt for a set of principles which can be applied to any national-level policy/strategy.

We need to be careful not to lose the focused nature of the MDGs- a reasonably small number of the goals should be maintained. In order to address the gaps of current MDGs, including new important issues, whilst maintaining a limited realistic number of goals, issues should be grouped around goals.

Localising the Global:

A new framework, whatever it looks like, will need to be followed by country-level strategies and plans, and should build upon existing innovative processes, for example in the areas of climate change, food security, etc.

What should we in Ireland be doing to prepare for engagement with post-2015 processes?

There was broad consensus on a number of important areas of potential work:

Public engagement:

The vast majority of participants pointed to the need to build wider understanding of MDGs in the Irish context- particularly the interconnectedness of poverty/wealth and developed/developing countries. Political party agendas are "vote" driven- we need a bottom-up approach to effectively influence duty-bearers and decision-makers. In the current financial climate, Irish people are somewhat sensitized to issues traditionally considered as affecting global south. We need to convince Ireland that the economic growth model doesn't work. We need to develop clear, coherent messages and coordinate our advocacy efforts to this end. Public engagement strategies and broad based participation, north and south, will be essential to ensuring the necessary political will and commitment to make a new framework effective.

Irish Government:

Ireland, as a country, should seek to become truly sustainable – grow food for local consumption, invest in renewable energy etc. The Irish Government should take a lead in ensuring this.

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Ireland should challenge Europe to change its development narrative- use its presidency of the EU Council in 2013 to promote a strong EU position that addresses issues of inequality, structural causes of poverty, etc... Ireland can speak authoritatively within Europe due to its international reputation as having a cutting edge aid programme and approach to development. Ireland should ensure achievement of 0.7% target.

Irish civil society:

This is an opportunity to begin a cross-sectoral campaign on a number of important issues of national and international poverty and injustice that are important to all members of Irish civil society. It will be important to ensure that we facilitate the inclusion of a grass roots Irish perspective in any resulting initiative or campaign, and that development and community sectors work closely together.