



**Leave No One Behind!**

## **Initial GCAP Response to the UN Post-2015 High Level Panel Report**

**10 June 2013**

Let's be clear: we live in a time of sharply rising inequality in which planetary boundaries are not respected and the human rights of billions of people living in poverty are denied on a daily basis. But governments and businesses created this situation and we can overcome it. The right policies and framework – together with sound implementation – will enable us to transform our communities and to create a just world, The World We Want.

The UN High Level Panel on Post-2015 (HLP) has presented its vision and recommendations for a new global development framework that will take effect when the Millennium Development Goals expire in two and a half years. In this brief background document, GCAP presents its initial assessment of what the panel got right and what needs to be improved. A more detailed analysis will follow in the weeks ahead.

The HLP report includes a number of important recommendations that meet longstanding civil society demands and which importantly go far beyond the Millennium Development Goals. These include:

### **1. The topline principle of “Leave no one behind” and ending extreme poverty**

The HLP is clear on the necessity of addressing social inequalities, writing that the Post-2015 development agenda “must ensure that . . . neither income nor gender, nor ethnicity, nor disability, nor geography, will determine whether people live or die, whether a mother can give birth safely, or whether her child has a fair chance in life.” The reports authors go on to add, “This is a major new commitment to everyone on the planet who feels marginalised or excluded, and to the neediest and most vulnerable people, to make sure their concerns are addressed and that they can enjoy their human rights.”

### **2. Human Rights**

The HLP places poverty eradication and development within the context of human rights, which is mentioned eighteen times in the report (plus another fourteen times in an appendix of issues raised during consultations). The report states that “new goals and targets need to be grounded in respect for universal human rights” and that we must “achieve a pattern of development where dignity and human rights become a reality for all”. It also says that human rights are a key principle for global partnership.

**BUT . . .** human rights are too often narrowly framed in the report in terms of civil and political rights with lack of explicit reference to economic, social and cultural rights. In fact, the HLP does not make any direct mention of economic, cultural or social rights – such as the rights to food, water, education and rights at work – nor does it address the need for access to justice and remedy when these rights are denied.

### **3. Gender Justice**

While promoting gender equality is a topline goal of the MDGs, the framework has very limited targets and indicators related to primary school education and the percentage of women in parliament and working in the wage economy. The HLP recommendations address this gap by including indicators calling for zero violence against women, an end to child marriage, ensuring universal sexual and reproductive health and rights, the elimination of gender discrimination, and equal rights to own and inherit property, sign a contract, register a business and open a bank account. The HLP report also says that women and girls must have an equal voice in decision-making and that a people-centred agenda must ensure that women and girls have “full and equal

rights in political, economic and public spheres."

**BUT . . .** there is no reference to care economy or the rights of people with different sexual orientations (except in the annex listing recommendations made by civil society during consultations).

#### **4. Clear linkages between poverty and climate change**

The report notes that people living in poverty "suffer first and worst from climate change" and that if we do not address climate change, "we will not succeed in eradicating extreme poverty". It also includes an indicator on capping global temperatures at 2° C above pre-industrial levels.

#### **5. Focus on Peace, both as a topline goal and as a cross-cutting issue**

Like the report's authors, we know too well that without peace, there can be no development and without development, there can be no enduring peace. The HLP addresses this by making Peace one of its new topline goals, adding that peace is a 'core element of well-being, not an optional extra'.

**BUT . . .** the report misses out on the fact that most contemporary conflicts are caused by greed and competition for natural resources. The indicators and targets also need to have a greater focus on global and regional actors who fuel conflicts, not just domestic governments. The Post-2015 framework should reiterate the principle of "Do No Harm" that requires governments to ensure that their actions and those of businesses do not fuel conflict. The framework should also address government's military expenditure, particularly as it diverts resources from social spending.

#### **6. Good Governance, Transparency and Access to Information**

Noting that the MDGs did not include metrics on good governance or effective institutions, the HLP recommends a topline goal focusing on these issues. Like peace, the HLP says that good governance is "not (an) optional extra". The report also includes a target on guaranteeing the public's right to information and access to government data. Access to information is crucial for civil society and others to track a government's performance.

#### **7. Disaggregated Data and Monitoring**

A statistical discussion may seem academic, but we know that if we are to eradicate poverty and inequality, it is essential to track a government's performance across different communities and not just at a national level. The HLP acknowledges this fact, writing that "to ensure equality of opportunity, relevant indicators should be disaggregated with respect to income (especially for the bottom 20%), gender, location, age, people living with disabilities, and relevant social group. Targets will only be considered 'achieved' if they are met for all relevant income and social groups." The HLP also calls for national level monitoring and regional peer reviews. This could be comparable to the Universal Periodic Review that regularly tracks every country's human rights performance.

***In addition to the points mentioned above about human rights, gender justice and peace, there are unfortunately a number of other areas where the the HLP misses the mark . . .***

#### **1. Inequality**

Income inequality across the planet is rising sharply as the top 0.5 % of the global population holds over 35% of the wealth. The HLP report acknowledges that inequality is a cross-cutting issue, but it emphasises equality of opportunity rather than redistribution. Inequality is unfortunately largest absent from the proposed goals and indicators. Equality should be a Goal of the Post-2015 framework and indicators could be related to a nation's Gini Index or Palma Ratio. Instead, though, the HLP writes that it is up to national governments to formulate policies on this key issue. To eradicate poverty, it is essential to address the causes of the growing income gap.

## 2. Financing

The HLP addresses tax evasion and illicit capital flows and calls for a fair trade regime. But it is silent when it comes to sovereign debt. It mentions international aid – renewing a call for developed countries to spend 0.7% of GNP on official development assistance – and says that domestic revenues are the most important source of financing sustainable development. But there are no binding mechanisms. The Post-2015 plan must also include more specifics about a **state's** responsibility to respect rights and deliver essential services.

## 3. Poverty Line

The benchmark indicator of US\$1.25/day is too low. More accurately, it is a 'hunger' not a 'poverty' line. The HLP says it hopes this figure will be raised to US\$2/day by 2030, but this is far too far in the future. The Post-2015 framework should track people living on at least US\$2 and US\$4 per day. As our colleagues at the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) note, US\$1.25/day is "what Bangladeshi workers producing garments for global markets are paid today, as are construction workers building skyscrapers and football stadiums in Gulf countries and agricultural workers producing for global food corporations. Corporate accountability can not be left out of the equation if we are to truly tackle the roots of extreme poverty."

## 4. Private Sector and Economic Growth

The HLP could be charting a course that over-relies on the private sector, without providing sufficient oversight or regulation. There are numerous 'poison threads' - destructive corporate practices like land grabs, mega-mining and the privatisation of social services like education, health, sanitation and water - which must also be clearly addressed. In the years since the Millennium Declaration, it has become even more apparent that economic growth is not sufficient to eliminate poverty and that it can exacerbate inequality if the growth is not inclusive. The HLP Report notes that profits and GDP are not the best indicators for companies and governments. But while it acknowledges that environmental impact must be taken, it is silent on social impact.

## 5. Social Protection

While the HLP mentions Social Protection in reference to the principle of Leave No One Behind, the panel suggests that universal social protection is 'utopian' and risks undermining the quality of such systems. However, Social Protection is an internationally-acknowledged human right, which national governments have an obligation to fulfill. In addition, joint research by the IMF and ILO demonstrates the economic feasibility of national social protection schemes and their effectiveness in addressing inequality.

Earlier this year, GCAP joined other campaigners to submit [a "Red Flag"](#) statement to the High Level Panel, outlining key elements for the Post-2015 framework. In our subsequent analysis, we will compare how the HLP Report measures up on each of the eight areas.

## Background

Following ten months of discussion and consultations, the UN High Level Panel on Post-2015 (HLP) has presented [its recommendations](#) on how best to address growing planetary crises and on what should replace the Millennium Development Goals when they expire at the end of 2015. Over the next three months, the panel is planning a series of national and regional events to introduce the report and gather feedback. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon will also draw on the HLP's recommendations in his own report to the UN General Assembly in September. Over the next two years, UN member states are expected to debate and formulate a post-2015 development agenda.

GCAP organised and supported [consultations](#) on the Post-2015 development agenda in forty countries. GCAP constituents also participated in regional and thematic consultations as well as HLP meetings. GCAP will continue to press the UN and its member states for the policies and direction needed for social justice and to create The World We Want.

***About GCAP: The Global Call to Alliance Against Poverty, one of the world's largest civil society networks, challenges the structures and institutions that perpetuate poverty and inequality. More information at [www.whiteband.org](http://www.whiteband.org).***