


WADA NA TODO ABHIYAN

**RENEWING
THE
PROMISE**

**Defining India's Priorities for the
Millennium Development Goals
(MDGs) after 2015**





The global dialogue on the development agenda that could replace the MDG framework after it reaches its deadline in 2015 is quickly gathering momentum. This debate provides an opportunity to engage governments on the lessons available from the efforts undertaken in the last decade, while also reflecting the new challenges faced by vulnerable and excluded communities across the world today. In the context of India, there is a need for a greater dialogue on the process that will define the post 2015 framework; and a proactive, collective effort to frame the priorities that will shape the new development agenda in India and at the global level.

A Time For Change

The Millennium Development Goals, derived from the UN Millennium Declaration, have dominated the global development discourse since its inception in 2003. The framework of eight goals and associated targets has contributed significantly to shaping the policy and program initiatives at the national and regional levels, and has played a crucial role in putting the agenda of poverty at the heart of the development discourse in the last decade. On the other hand, analysts have also pointed to the disadvantages that the target-oriented framework has reinforced. The apparent failure of the MDGs to address the structural causes of poverty and inequality has been a cause for serious concern, particularly in the aftermath of the financial crisis and the resultant economic and political upheavals that we have seen around the world in the last four years.

India has, at the policy level, wholeheartedly embraced the MDG framework in the past decade. The National Development Goals (2005) were adapted to correspond with the global development targets, and the MDGs were also referenced in the National Common Minimum Program (NCMP) – the governance charter of the United Progressive Alliance that formed the government in 2004. India has in this period been credited with several

contributions to the achievement of the MDGs, including the fulfillment of MDG.1 – the aim of halving the number of people living in extreme poverty. India has also been noted for taking initiatives such as the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act and the National Rural Health Mission, which are among the most wide-reaching and ambitious social programs that the world has seen in this period.

Yet, India too has also struggled to deal with more complex issues of inequality and gender equity. According to the OECD report of December 2011, income inequality has doubled in the last 20 years, since the economic reforms were unleashed in 1991, making it the worst performer on this count of all emerging economies. The top 10 percent of wage earners now make 12 times more than the bottom 10 percent; up from a ratio of six in the 1990s. The Country Report on the MDGs (2011) indicates that women's share in wage employment in non-agricultural sector stands at 18.6 percent in 2009 and has increased only by 2 percent in five years. Clearly, the challenge of poverty has not been mitigated and we are facing, instead, with a crisis of rising inequity that calls for a plan of action, which addresses fundamental challenges related to the governance, growth and social protection.

Rethinking the Global Development Framework

A number of strategic initiatives have been launched at the level of the United Nations (UN) to enable wide-reaching consultations on the 'post-2015 agenda,' which includes the creation of a 26-member expert group or High Level Panel (HLP) chaired by the President of Liberia, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf; the President of Indonesia, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and the Prime Minister of UK, David Cameron. The High Level Panel is expected to advise the UN Secretary General on the possibilities for the post-2015 agenda ahead of the next UN General Assembly and is due to submit its recommendations in the first quarter of 2013.

The UN system will also facilitate national consultations in 50+ countries, including India; and will also anchor thematic consultations on the key issues of 2009 – including inequalities, growth, governance and environmental sustainability. Public outreach initiatives such as a 'crowd-sourcing' project and a digital conversation on the post 2015 agenda have also been planned. In addition to this, a UN Task Team (UNTT) has also been put in place to coordinate system-wide preparations in over 60 UN entities, agencies and international organizations. The Task Team presented its recommendations to the content and process of the post 2015 agenda through a report – Realizing the Future We Want for All (May 2012) – which will serve as the basis for future consultation.

Against this backdrop, civil society coalitions working on the MDG agenda have called for a strong consultative process to be put in place to define the post 2015 agenda. The civil society led by 'Montreal Declaration and Plan of Action on Post-2015' (2012) calls for 'the multilateral process on the post-2015 development agenda must be open, inclusive, transparent, consultative, and take the aspirations of people most affected by poverty and climate change, as expressed by those people themselves, as a starting point.' The Declaration also stresses the importance of linking the environmental sustainability, human rights and anti-poverty agenda, with the objective of producing a 'coherent framework' that links the post-2015 process with the outcomes of the Rio+20 Summit.

India and the Post-2015 Development Agenda

Within India, the discourse on the post-2015 agenda is quickly gaining momentum. The debate on the global development framework provides an opportunity to engage governments on the lessons learnt from the implementation of the MDG framework in the last decade, while also reflecting the new challenges faced by vulnerable communities across the world. The debate also provides a window to reinforce the insights and demands that were framed by civil society in relation to the recently concluded consultations on the Twelfth Five Year Plan, and enable a broader

The report of the Task Team sets out a vision for such an agenda, guided by the three fundamental principles of human rights, equality and sustainability.

It also proposes four interconnected core dimensions that can serve as the basis for the definition of goals and targets:

- (a) Inclusive social development;*
- (b) Environmental sustainability;*

- (c) Inclusive economic development;*
- (d) Peace and security.*

– Annual Report of the Secretary General, Sep 2012

public engagement with the next phase of National Development Goals. In addition to this, India's role as a country that hosts one-third of the world's poor on one hand, but one that is also recognized as a global economic power, with growing influence in forums as the BRICS and G20, puts an additional onus on civil society in the country to play a proactive role in shaping the agenda and structure of the debate on the post 2015 agenda.

Priorities For Engagement

Wada Na Todo Abhiyan (WNTA) has been at the forefront of mobilizing public and political engagement with the Millennium Development Goals in India, and in relation to global initiatives undertaken through alliances, such as the Global Call to Action against Poverty (GCAP). We recognize that India faces the dual challenge of responding decisively to the internal challenge of poverty and inequality within, while also making a substantive contribution to the contours of the global development agenda. In this context, we believe that the process undertaken to shape the new development agenda must be organized around the following priorities:

1. Integrating Community Experiences and Expectations

Community insights and aspirations must be at the heart of the post 2015 process and will ensure that the operational lessons from the first round of the MDGs – its successes and failures – are effectively integrated into the discourse on the second generation of development goals. The direct involvement of communities in the agenda setting process – with a special focus on women and other socially excluded groups – will help create the basis for a locally relevant and accountable development framework.

2. Facilitating Civil Society Consensus

A widespread dialogue to capture and consolidate expectations of civil society organization with regard to the second round of the MDGs is imperative. Consensus building around key themes and strategies for the post 2015 agenda would enable the greater mobilization of energies, inputs and insights necessary to shape an agenda that is strongly rooted in the principles of human rights and social justice – while also setting the stage for the supporting and monitoring processes that need to be in place once the new development agenda is adopted.

3. Supporting Critical Research and Analysis

The engagement of academic institutions and policy experts located in the global south is a fundamental part of the engagement process. The inputs that shape priorities for the post 2015 agenda must be significantly located in the experience of countries that have struggled with the question of poverty and inequality over the last decade; while also supporting governments to determine the goals and mechanisms that needs to be adopted/adapted at the national and sub-national level after 2015.

4. Reaching Policy Makers

Inputs from the consultations held with community groups, civil society organizations and academicians must form the basis for an active advocacy engagement with the agencies and individuals who are responsible to shape India's policy positions on the post-2015 agenda. This includes engaging relevant ministries and governance institutions, such as the Ministry of External Affairs at one level, and enabling dialogues between communities and elected representatives from local to national levels on the other.

5. Contributing to Global Advocacy Efforts

A strategy to ensure meaningful engagement with relevant inter-governmental negotiations that will be held in the lead up to 2015, monitoring of developments across regional blocs like the African Union and European Union and a plan to engage with positions on the post 2015 agenda emerging from forums such as BRICS, IBSA and the G20 are also some important components of the advocacy process around this agenda.

6. Enabling Public Engagement

In the interest of creating a larger environment for accountability, there is a need to invest in building public engagement with the post 2015 agenda and process beyond traditional development constituencies. Efforts in this direction include creating special initiatives that will inspire the involvement of young people and urban populations – such as the use of online and digital tools for outreach – as well as developing a strong media presence through the engagement of public figures as ‘champions’ of the new development agenda

and the support of relevant agencies to run sustained media campaigns in this regard.

7. Ensuring Corporate Accountability

Mindful of the contradictions in the role of the private sector vis-à-vis the larger development agenda – where there is potential for a strong and stabilizing influence on the social and economic agenda of the country/region on one hand, and scope to generate conflict and deprivation on the other – we believe that there is an urgent need for dialogue on the mechanisms for corporate engagement and accountability to the new development agenda. In the Indian context, some of these conversations are being held in the context of policy discussions around land acquisition, rehabilitation of project affected families and the regulatory framework for extractive industries. The post 2015 agenda however offers an opportunity to look at both safeguards and complementary efforts that can be put in place by the private sector with regard the national development goals and the post 2015 global agenda.

ABOUT WADA NA TODO ABHIYAN

Wada Na Todo Abhiyan - which means “Don’t Break Your Promises” - is a national campaign that is organized around the mission of “holding the government accountable to its promise to end poverty, social exclusion, and discrimination”.

At the World Social Forum 2004, Mumbai, human rights activists and social action groups agreed on the need for a forceful, focused, and concerted effort to make a difference to the fact that one-fourth of the world’s poor live in India, and continue to experience intense deprivation of opportunities to learn, live, and work in dignity. Wada Na Todo Abhiyan emerged from this consensus.

Wada Na Todo aims to make a difference by monitoring the commitments made in the UN Millennium Declaration (2000) the National Development Goals, with a special focus on the Right to Livelihood, Health, Education and Exclusion. The campaign strives to ensure that the concerns and aspirations of Dalits, Adivasis, nomadic tribes, women, children, youth, people with disability and people living with HIV-AIDS are mainstreamed across the programmes, policies and development goals of the government.

The campaign brings together over 4000 rights action groups across 28 states and three Union Territories of India and is governed by a Campaign Coordination Group and an elected Steering Group. Its activities are coordinated by a National Secretariat is based in New Delhi. Wada Na Todo is also affiliated to the Global Call to Action against Poverty (GCAP).

Advocacy Milestones

An immediate effort is required to ensure a proactive dialogue on the new development agenda at the national level and its conversion into inputs that can be contributed to relevant regional and

global negotiations that will be held on this agenda across the next three years. Key milestones in the UN process for the post 2015 agenda include:

2012

January 2012-September 2015: ‘The Global Conversation Campaign’ enables a series of online conversations that bring people across the globe together to focus on poverty and its root causes.

May 2012-June 2013: 50+ Country Consultations and Thematic Consultations

June 2012-December 2014: Process to develop Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and its potential linkages with the post 2015 agenda. An Inter-governmental Working Group formed to lead this effort

2013

February 2013: The High Level Panel (HLP) formed to advise the UN Secretary General on the post-2015 agenda will produce its report, which will inform intergovernmental negotiations on the framework.

September 2013: High Level Event on the MDGs to be held as part of the 68th UN General Assembly (UNGA).

September 2013: Report of the Intergovernmental Working Group containing a proposal for SDGs for consideration and appropriate action to be submitted to the 68th Session of UNGA.

Join the conversation on the post 2015 agenda by linking up with the initiatives that are being facilitated by a range of civil society actors across India and beyond!

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2014

March 2014: Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) to review challenges and achievements in the implementation of MDGs for women and girls.

July 2014: The Fourth Development Cooperation Forum (DCF) will focus on how development cooperation will feature in the post 2015 agenda. The 2014 ECOSOC Annual Ministerial Review (AMR) will also be held during this time that will assess challenges for meeting the MDGs in 2015 and sustaining development gains in future.

September 2014: UN General Assembly Special Session on the Review of the 1994 ICPD Program of Action.

2014: World Conference on Indigenous Peoples and Ten Year Review of Almaty Program of Action (issues relevant to landlocked developing countries and small island developing states).

2015

April 2015: World Conference on Education for All (EFA)

2015: 20th Anniversary of the Beijing World Conference on Women

2015: High Level Mid-Term Review on the Istanbul Program of Action (special focus on ODA commitments for LDCs)

2015: Ten Year Review of the Mauritius Strategy of the Barbados Program of Action for the sustainable development of Small Island Developing States.