

Comments and recommendations to zero draft of the outcome document for the UN summit to adopt for the Post-2015 Development Agenda

The Danish 92 Group¹ and Global Focus² welcomes the zero draft of the outcome document by the Co-facilitators of the post-2015 development agenda and see it as a good starting point for the intergovernmental negotiations in June and July. However, we also see areas in the document which must be strengthened in order to ensure the success of a new truly transformative framework. We have following comments and recommendations, which we hope Denmark will consider and work for in the upcoming intergovernmental negotiations.

The three dimensions of sustainable development

We welcome that the three dimensions of sustainable development (environment, social, economic) are acknowledged in the document, as this is vital for the success of new framework, however in some parts the document lack a more balanced approach between the three dimensions (para 3, 15, 16). The text should also emphasize more strongly on the fact of the value of integrating the various aspects of sustainable development highlighting the interlinkages between the three dimensions. In general in some parts the environmental references seems added randomly and in other parts key issues within the social dimension are not reflected sufficiently.

Universality

It is crucial that the emphasis on universality is reflected throughout the document and a continued emphasis on the agenda being 'accepted by, and applicable to, all'. We welcome the focus on the roles and responsibilities of all member states and key stakeholders in delivering, as well as designing, the 'first ever global compact on people and planet' (para 6). In some areas though a full understanding of the universality aspect should be reflected stronger especially when considering the responsibility of high income countries. An example is that the text on sustainable consumption and production has no reference to how to ensure that high income countries only are using their fair share of global resources (para 25).

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² Globalt Fokus er en platform for 73 danske civilsamfundsorganisationer, som arbejder med international udvikling, miljø og humanitært arbejde. DanWatch og 3F er medlemmer af Globalt Fokus, men er ikke medunderskrivere på denne henvendelse.

Leave no one behind

We fully endorse 'Leave no one behind' (para 4) as a guiding principle and a practical deliverable for the framework. But when looking at 'the goals and targets are met by all social and economic groupings' (also para 4) this part needs to be strengthened to ensure a commitment to put the most disadvantaged first and prioritise how to tackle inequality. 'Economic and social groupings' is vague and open to interpretation; instead it needs to be clear that the goals across all dimensions of sustainable development are to be met for all.

Human rights

Some references to human rights are included in the document but it could be a lot stronger. Human rights should be reflected as a critical enabler and prerequisite to achieving sustainable development and a foundation for planning, implementation and review process towards the SDGs. There should be clear references and full consistency and compliance with existing multilateral agreements, conventions, processes and commitments. Furthermore, commitments to the integration of a human rights-based approach across the framework should be included. When referring to the human rights instruments it needs to be explained in detail which instruments are being referred to (para 10). There should be a paragraph recognizing indigenous peoples right to free, prior and informed consent and overall decision-making over national resource extraction in their lands and territories included in the declaration part of the document.

Gender equality

We support a stand-alone paragraph on gender equality (para 18), however, important references are missing including women's human rights, and it does not reflect the vision of the targets under goal 5 of the Open Working Group proposal. The paragraph must be strengthened by including reference to ending harmful practices, to the importance of ensuring women's and girls' health (including their sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights), to freedom from discrimination, to reducing and redistributing unpaid care work and ensuring women's economic rights, including their rights to land, inheritance and other resources, as well as reference the commitment to increase girls' and women's participation and leadership at all levels.

We are generally concerned about how the empowerment of women and girls and gender equality as cross-cutting issues are not reflected thoroughly in important parts of the document such as the declaration, as they are essential in achieving several goals and targets.

Children and youth

We welcome that children and youth are recognised as vulnerable sections of the population (para 21). However, the need for protection and development of children and youth needs to be clearly emphasised. We therefore propose to include a new paragraph (following 18) reflecting that children and youth should be protected from all forms of abuse, exploitation and violence. Every child deserves quality education and healthcare, as well as growing up in an enabling and safe environment. The protection, survival and development of children to their full potential, is the foundations of stable societies and a critical element for future sustainable and inclusive economic growth.

Education

We welcome the focus on quality education and securing education as a stand-alone goal. In the document education must cover life long learning but in some places education is only referred to as basic education (para 15), which needs to be strengthened. Further, we urge the authors to include 12 years of publicly funded schooling in possible revisions of the document and to use a stronger language on financing for public quality education in line with Declaration of Incheon endorsed by 160 states.

Climate change and environmental sustainability

We are positive about that the reference to climate change as one of the challenges facing 'Our World Today' (para 12) is included and that there is a standalone paragraph on climate change under 'Our Agenda' (para 27). However, we are concerned about the overall limited reference to climate change, the effects of sustainable practices of consumption and production and sustainable energy access in the document.

Further, inequality and the connection to climate change is overall lacking, which is a key concern. In general, the text is less ambitious than the Open Working Group proposal and the UN Secretary General's Synthesis report.

There is little recognition to the fact that those who have contributed the least to climate change are the ones being most severely affected by its impacts and without rapid action to reduce global carbon emissions, sustainable development will be undermined and the poorest, most vulnerable communities will be hit hardest. Especially para 27 needs to be strengthened in this respect and a clear reference to the principle of common but differentiated responsibility needs to be added.

Sustainable or renewable energy as a way of eradicating poverty and fight climate change is missing, and the overall lack of reference to sustainable energy throughout the document is concerning. In relation to this para 24 should include 'universal access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all'.

Even though there is a positive reference to 'harmony with nature' (para 15), the document does not commit to decouple economic growth from ecosystem degradation or respect for planetary boundaries.

Means of Implementation Follow up and Review

We are concerned about the lack of clarity in the section on Means of Implementation, in particular regarding the global partnership, the need for and enabling global economic environment and the concrete responsibilities of the Global North in these respects. This section lacks detail – for example, it should reference the wide range of different funding sources that could be leveraged by governments to implement the sustainable development agenda. We recommend that the opening paragraph state explicitly that national governments have leadership, responsibility and ownership in respect of their own national sustainable development plans and their means of implementation, and additionally should define their own policy frameworks for dealing with donors and other external actors according to their national priorities

Follow up and Review

We welcome that the document recognizes that follow up and review is a *responsibility* of government and notes the need for 'accountability'. However, this section of the outcome document sets only a minimal standard for a 'systematic', three-level approach to review and follow up. An example is the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) Resolution (A/RES/67/290) commits to reviewing 'implementation

of sustainable development commitments and objectives' but the current proposal aims only to review 'progress'. For this to be a genuine *follow-up* framework, there should be clear feedback mechanisms supporting the reviews conducted at each level. When referring to the follow up and review the document must include core principles underpinning a people-centered follow-up and review process with a focus on universality, participation, accountability and equality. It is critical to ensure strong national follow-up and review by making firm commitments to develop ambitious national responses to the SDGs and targets and to strengthen the proposal for state-led reviews at the HLPF and to support peer reviews of national progress, align with human rights mechanisms, follow-up on recommendations and providing adequate resourcing for the HLPF.

The document does not address mechanisms for reviewing the contribution of stakeholders other than states. We recommend that review mechanisms should monitor compliance of all stakeholders, including civil society, the private sector and public-private partnerships, with human rights, gender equality, labour and environmental standards. The latter entails supporting the request to the UN Secretary General to prepare guidelines for national and international reporting and review, which include recommendations on timelines for implementation and review, citizen participation, steps to raise public awareness of the SDGs and peer reviews the HLPF.