

PEOPLES' SUSTAINABILITY TREATY ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

(zero draft for public comments – Please send comment by 25 May
to Robert Pollard: rpollard@stakeholderforum.org)

1. PREAMBLE

Sustainable development action has taken the form of a number of UN-led conference commitments primarily agreed during the 1990s. The Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21, the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development, the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation, have historically all guided the international community in sustainable development through their agreed objectives. The MDGs culminated from the Millennium Declaration, and are no different in this respect.

The MDGs, implemented in September 2000, were highly successful in rallying public, private and political support for poverty reduction by unifying the actions of nations. However there are a number of wider global development challenges which the current scope of the MDGs fails to address. Also, with the initial impetus for the construction of MDGs being to address the decrease in international aid flow reaching the developing south throughout the 20th century, generally the realisation of any MDG targets focused more on lessening poverty itself, rather than approaching the root causes. The SDGs are expected to address wider challenges in a globally inclusive manner, and should therefore also manage developed countries overconsumption which has significant impacts on the equitable division of resources to developing countries.

The idea for SDGs was originally proposed in July 2011 by the Governments of Columbia and Guatemala, as a concrete way of securing political commitment to sustainable development, and they are integral if we are to formulate a measurable strategy with targets and indicators to achieve this. The proposal gained significant momentum internationally, and featured prominently in many member states' and other stakeholders' Zero Draft submissions. The zero draft of the outcome document for Rio+20 subsequently supported the launch of universal, time-bound SDGs, a proposal which was backed further in the United Nations Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Global Sustainability report, 'Resilient People, Resilient Planet: A future worth choosing' (GSP Report).

The SDGs present the opportunity to approach current development challenges such as poverty alleviation and environmental protection, which are often considered disparate, in a holistic manner, addressing social well-being within global environmental constraints, ensuring equity for all in terms of gender/intergenerational, income, and resource. The SDGs would define future international development strategy, and serve as part of the post-2015 framework to continue build on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) after their deadline.

Following thematic areas proposed for the Sustainable Development Goals;

- 1. Food security: production, access and nutrition*
- 2. Integrated water management for sustainable growth*
- 3. Energy for sustainable development*
- 4. Sustainable and resilient cities*
- 5. Healthy and productive oceans*
- 6. Enhanced capacity of natural systems to support human welfare*
- 7. Sustainable consumption and production patterns*
- 8. Enhanced Employment*

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Certain broad thematic issues may be more appropriately addressed across the targets and indicators of all SDGs, rather than comprising a specific goal in its own right.

- **Poverty eradication** (*is an overarching goal to which all SDGs contribute*);
- **Equality** (*including gender equality, equality of resource access and distribution, income equality and intergenerational equality*);
- **Resilience** (*to both the natural disasters and the effects of climate change*);
- **Sustainable Consumption and Production** (*as in sustainable lifestyles and livelihoods*);
- **Planetary Boundaries** (*environmental limits*).

Based on this, we the Civil Society of the World urge an outcome of Rio+20 to be the launch of an agreed process for the creation of Sustainable Development Goals under the principles express hereby.

2. PRINCIPLES

We the Civil Society of the World judge that, as the fundamental premises under which an SDG framework would be defined, the key principles must be ambitious and aspirational. We urge the UN Bureau of the Preparatory Committee of Rio+20 and the member states to strongly consider these clearly defined principles as part of the outcomes of the SDG framework under discussion.

Principle #1: Universality: *globally agreed and relevant for all countries, involving international overriding goals, with countries developing their own pathways to targets. This will require strengthening governance practice and institutions.*

Principle #2: Focused on poverty eradication: *SDGs have to aim at eradicating poverty by addressing its root causes.*

Principle #3: Rights-based approach: *SDGs must be conceived under the language and action of a rights based approach, serving as an overarching guide to systematic change, upholding the Principle of Non-Regression (that nations cannot amend or repeal current laws designed to protect human rights).*

Principle #4: Comprehensiveness: *each goal must integrate social, environmental and economic dimensions, and interconnect these areas. This will provide a holistic and cross-cutting framework that can better deliver for people and the environment. The global challenges we currently face are interlinked, and therefore solutions must reflect this, using the relationships between the issues to address them in an integrated-systems fashion.*

Principle #5: Measurability: *SDGs must have clear and transparent indicators, along with near-term benchmarks within the longer-term scope of the goals. Qualitative metrics should also be used to judge progress, and identifying regional disparities otherwise not recognised through quantitative data. Universal definitions of terminology must also be agreed upon to help facilitate the process.*

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Principle #6: Participation and inclusiveness: *The design and implementation of SDGs must involve widespread consultation and active participation of all stakeholders, especially the poorest and most marginalised in society.*

Principle #7: Transparency and accountability: *decisions, commitments and responsibilities around SDGs have to be clearly defined, as well as specific accountability tools. This has to include a requirement to make information on finances, progress and results publicly available.*

Principle #8: Coordination and coherence: *work around SDGs needs the involvement of different institutions and organizations at national and international level. The process needs to ensure there is enough coordination to harmonize policies and activities in order to reduce duplication and build on synergies.*

Principle #9: Equity: *the work towards the achievement of SDGs has to deliver in a way that ensures an equal distribution of wealth, resources, rights, etc. both within countries and between countries and among present and future generations.*

Principle #10: Alignment with MDG review and post-2015 process: *The SDG process must be incorporated into the MDG review process, and then integrated into the post-2015 development framework, enabling a more comprehensive assessment of expectations and ambitions, providing an inclusive and transparent basis upon which a sound political outcome on a post-2015 framework depends.*

3. COMMITMENTS

We, the people commit to participate actively in the development of such framework making sure that it:

- *addresses the root causes of poverty and environmental degradation.*
- *promotes human rights, social justice and equity in a way that empowers people, promotes gender equality and recognises the rights of indigenous peoples.*
- *takes proactive action towards poverty eradication and environmental protection by focusing on the three pillars of sustainable development in an integrated way.*
- *builds on the lessons learned from the Millennium Development Goals and ensures an effective convergence between the different processes (avoiding duplication).*
- *guarantees effective governance arrangements that ensures adequate and meaningful participation of civil society, especially of the poorest groups in SDGs' framework design and implementation.*
- *guarantees transparency and accountability of governments, intergovernmental institutions and other development actors by putting in place clear accountability policies and mechanisms.*

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4. ACTION PLAN

The action plan is designed to ensure an agreement at Rio+20 is achieved, but avoids rushing the process in order to simply achieve a concrete outcome. A rushed process which is not fully informed and consultative will only result in an inadequate framework which repeats the shortcomings of Agenda 21 and the MDGs.

Short Term (2012-2015)

- *June 2012: Foster an International Agreement at Rio+20 on the process to integrate SDGs into a post-2015 framework, which all member states will sign and commit to. Establishing SDGs before 2016 could divert focus away from the financing and implementation of efforts on the current MDGs before they expire in 2015. This was explicitly addressed by the GSP Report which calls for the international community to continue and intensify efforts around achievement of the MDGs.*
- *June 2012 – 2015: The UN General Assembly must assign a High Level Task Force to establish the principles and themes which would characterise SDGs, and how they could be integrated into the post-2015 framework. It will ensure convergence of the current three-track process, where the UN MDGs Review process, work on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, and now SDGs are each attempting to address what are essentially the same issues but failing to pool expertise, information and resources.*

Long Term (2016-2030)

- *All member states undertake pathways to implement the SDGs at the national level, and at the local level through the public and private sector participation. The SDGs are implemented with the aim to achieve targets by 2030, as recommended by the GSP Report.*

5. SIGNITARIES

We, civil society organizations, pledge to honour the agreed principles, commitments and action plans:

1. *Name, Country Organization, Address, website, Email,*