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BACKGROUND PAPER 1

From Solidarity to Universality

How global interdependence impacts the post-2015 development agenda

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1. Introduction: The Call for a Universal Post-2015 Development Agenda

At Rio+20, and subsequently at the September 2013 Special Session on the MDGs, governments agreed that the post-2015 development framework should be universal.[1] Universality can be understood in a number of ways. This paper aims to 'unpack' how universality—and the related principle of differentiation—impacts the post-2015 development agenda. While the MDGs are a **global framework**, they do not comprise a **universal agenda**. Of the eight MDGs, only one is directed at high-income countries, with the other seven focusing on developing country action to reduce poverty. As evidenced in the MDG 2013 status report, we still have a long way to go in achieving the MDGs.[2]

Goals are by definition **forward looking**. The challenge is making them **future-fit**. Much has changed since the turn of the century when the MDGs were devised. The triple shock of food, finance and fuel, population growth, the emergence of a global middle class, migration and growing urbanization are among the major trends that are accelerating the scale, speed and complexity of global change and giving rise to new global challenges. These include vulnerabilities arising from trade and economic globalization; rising inequalities between regions, countries and people;[3] the spread of new communicable diseases and increases in non-communicable diseases related to lifestyle choices; and unprecedented degradation of the natural environment.[4] An added layer of complexity is the growing **international interconnectedness** of energy, water and food systems through global supply chains, which brings greater **risk of synchronous failures** across these systems as pressures rise from the demands of a growing population with increasing purchasing power. These systemic changes have the potential to inflict huge **human development costs** across the globe, with poor and vulnerable groups the hardest hit. Additionally, evidence is mounting that climate change increasingly will threaten development gains in many regions and among vulnerable communities, and will demand new approaches to risk management that defy business-as-usual approaches.

Managing these complexities calls for a new sustainable development agenda, as countries increasingly will be unable to determine their future—economic or otherwise—in isolation. This interconnectedness and interdependence makes multilateral solutions and collective action more necessary than ever. This is why universality must be at the core of the post-2015 development agenda.[5]

2. Defining Universality in the Context of the Post-2015 Development Agenda

Before reflecting on the integration of universality in the post-2015 development agenda (the **"how"**), greater conceptual clarity is needed on what universality means in the context of global development goals (the **"what"**).

As a starting point, universality in its most far reaching form is a rights-based concept based on a common standard, as reflected in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: *"(…) **common standard** of achievement for **all peoples and all nations**, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, (…) shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their **universal** and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction."*[6]

Universality as a common standard implies that there are minimum global norms that **all** countries should meet. There is, in other words, no scope for differentiation. However, with respect to poverty and inequality, universality needs to be understood as a global norm that is applicable to all, but requiring different policy actions depending on the national development context.

## Universality as a global norm ("Applicable to All")

Poverty remains one of the world's greatest collective challenges, and poverty eradication is a global norm. As poverty occurs globally, addressing poverty and inequality is **relevant** everywhere ("Applicable to All"), and a truly universal development agenda cannot be confined to low-income countries. While the Least Developed Countries by definition face the greatest development challenges,[7] the majority (73%) of the extreme poor of the world now live in middle-income countries,[8] and there are signs of increasing poverty in high-income countries.[9] However, the nature and extent of poverty and inequality will differ significantly across low, middle and high-income countries—with vastly different policy implications depending on where a country is in its development pathway. Hence, *universality* **must be considered together with the complementary notion of** *differentiation*.

> *Example*: Achieving the right to food in developing countries is mostly about too little nutritional value and too few calories (malnutrition), whereas in parts of the western world and emerging economies achieving food security is often about too little nutritional value but too many calories (obesity). At the same time, food insecurity at household level is also a rising problem in high-income economies, often related to unemployment and low or declining incomes.

This leads to the question of how to operationalize universality as a global norm, but with differentiation, within the post-2015 development framework. Four dimensions of universality are proposed that reflect the spectrum of policy choices to achieve development goals at different scales of action and across different issues. These four dimensions of universality can be grouped into two broad categories:

1) **Universality as shared humanity** – building on the MDGs, requiring developing countries to implement national policy frameworks to eradicate extreme poverty, and developed countries to provide adequate support in line with development effectiveness principles and practices;

2) **Universality as shared destiny** – reflecting a more complex, integrated world and requiring political commitment and action by *all* countries in the economic, social and environmental policy domains, in line with the principle of differentiation.

While these concepts are not mutually exclusive—and in many respects are mutually reinforcing—they do imply **different policy actions by different countries**, as depicted in the figure below.
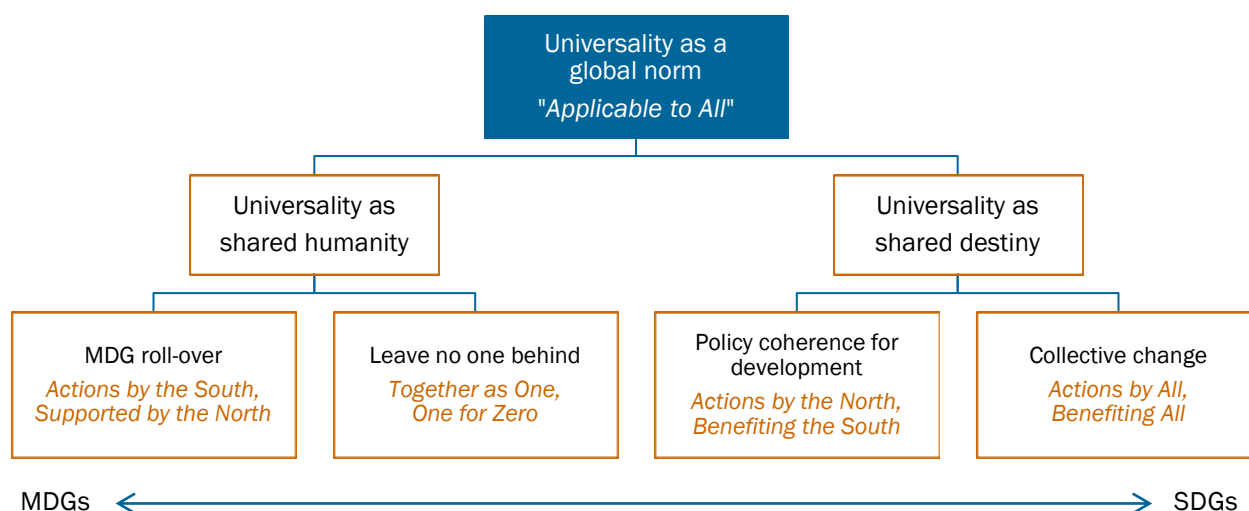
Universality as shared humanity

The Millennium Declaration, which underpins the MDGs, states: *"We reaffirm our commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, which have proved timeless and **universal**."* It is thus clear that a normative concept guided the development of the MDGs. However, what sets this concept apart from the normative concept of universality are its operational implications.

■ **MDG roll-over ("Actions by the South, Supported by the North")**

While the values underpinning the MDGs may be universal, the corresponding **action agenda** contained in the MDGs clearly is not. The MDGs are based on the premise that it is developing countries that must take action based on principles of national ownership and sovereignty. Universality—in a much narrower sense—is only reflected in MDG 8 in the form of a global partnership with high-income countries. Some countries advocate for a roll-over of the MDGs since there is still a lot of **'unfinished business'** in achieving these goals, especially in the LDCs. The goal framework determines a universal minimum norm**,** but **differentiation** of action is required depending on countries' specific circumstances.

■ **Leave no one behind ("Together as One, One for Zero")**

Others advocate taking the MDG agenda to a higher level of **ambition**. Goals in the period 2015-2030 should **eradicate** rather than reduce income poverty, hunger and all other forms of extreme poverty. In the context of the post-2015 development agenda, universality is equated with 'getting to zero' and **'leaving no one behind.'** Getting to zero will require bold priority setting in developing countries, and effective and coherent national policies. Policies will differ according to local circumstances, but questions remain whether **differentiation** should include differentiated targets. LDCs haven't yet achieved the MDGs, and their ability to 'get to zero' by 2030 is questioned.

> *Example:* Universal access to clean water and sanitation, universal access to modern energy, adequate and nutritious food for all, universal access to health services, and no-one living on less than $1.25 a day, would all be goals or targets that fulfill this meaning of universality.

In both cases, delivering on the 'shared humanity' concept of universality is **primarily a national level concern**, tasking governments with provision of universal access to key goods and services as means for the well-being of their people. Countries in a position to do so should play a supporting role by contributing to the necessary means of implementation.

Universality as shared destiny for all

Rio+20 clearly established that a mere continuation of the MDGs will not suffice to eradicate poverty. Despite economic growth, inequalities are increasing.[10] These inequalities must be addressed, not only for ethical and moral reasons, but also because widening disparities have become an obstacle to growth.[11] Environmental degradation has reached alarming levels,[12] and the world has changed significantly since 2000, becoming more **complex**, more **interconnected** and more **interlinked**. As a result, our shared destiny to achieve greater prosperity faces both greater **risks** and greater **opportunities**. Global challenges such as economic shocks and environmental degradation will impede, or even reverse national efforts to improve human development. Rio+20 suggested the new development agenda should be universal and truly integrate the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, recognizing the holistic nature and integrity of the sustainable development concept. Whereas the MDGs focused largely on the social dimension, a more robust post-2015 agenda could generate the conditions

for deep, structural economic transformation and shifts in behavior needed to deliver **irreversible poverty eradication** and provide for the rising expectations of an emerging global middle class.

Universality as shared destiny for all builds on the previous concept of shared humanity, but expands it in two crucial ways by: (1) taking an integrated approach to the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development as its starting point; and (2) expanding the action agenda to include high(er)-income countries in all policy domains.

- ■ Policy coherence for development ("Actions by the North, Benefiting the South")

The MDGs are predominantly a **social agenda** aimed at reducing the most blatant forms of human deprivation. The corresponding action agenda is largely focused on national actions by developing countries. High-income countries have a (largely financial) supporting role. There are few if any concrete, time-bound agreed actions for high-income countries in other policy domains that impact on the ability of a developing country to reduce poverty. Policy coherence for development (PCD) is required both to eliminate the (sometimes unintended) impacts on poverty in developing countries resulting from actions in other policy domains in developed countries—such as trade, resource extraction, subsidies, finance, environment, technology transfer—and to explicitly strive for synergies to achieve an agenda based on shared values and shared responsibilities.[13] Poverty eradication cannot be achieved without actions in these domains, taking the policy engagement of high(er)-income countries well beyond providing aid. This PCD definition of universality builds on the 'shared humanity' concept, but expands it to take into account new and emerging economic and environmental challenges and risks. **Dealing with the externalities** of national policies in the developed (and emerging) countries is at the heart of this concept.

> *Example*: Agricultural subsidies and (non) tariff barriers in one country, whilst valid in their own right, can reduce export opportunities for other countries, and consequently also reduce their opportunities for economic growth and poverty reduction.

- ■ Global collective action ("Actions by All, Benefiting All")

Central to this concept is **globalization.** Across a range of global issues—for example, capital flows, information technology, diseases, disaster risk reduction, migration—the world has become more interconnected than ever before. As a result, countries are less able to determine their economic, social and environmental future in isolation. Poverty eradication at the national level is impossible without addressing global issues and their interlinkages.

It is recognized that all of mankind, our shared humanity, is at risk unless **global growth** takes place within **planetary boundaries.** Growth is needed to alleviate income poverty and create jobs, yet should not take place at the expense of the natural capital that underpins growth. The growing middle class is a sign of success in terms of poverty eradication—yet a growing global middle class also consumes a disproportionate share not only of carbon space, but also of water, land, energy and other resources.[14] Scarcity of these essential natural resources, in combination with current and future demand and environmental externalities, threatens to reduce or undo the results of national policies geared towards eliminating poverty. The **destiny of mankind** in a world of limited resources is inextricably linked.[15]

No country can be exempted from addressing these global challenges. While **developed economies** are expected to lead by example, planetary boundaries will increasingly necessitate action by all countries, based on the principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities (CBDR-RC). In addition to the high-income countries, **emerging economies** also have to take action, as their

collective future resource demands and GHG emissions will increasingly impinge on the ability of low-income countries to grow out of poverty.[16]

> *Example*: Global economic transformation to a low-carbon, sustainable resource use society is needed to ensure irreversible poverty eradication at the national level. Crop yields in a country will be impacted by global dynamics such as hydro-climatic changes that increase temperatures and cause droughts, floods, weather-related disasters, and salt water intrusion.

The '**shared destiny**' concept is best exemplified by the High Level Panel: "*In today's world, we see that no country, however powerful or rich, can sustain its prosperity without working in partnership to find integrated solutions*".[17] **Failure to act threatens everyone's well-being, in developing and developed countries alike**.

3. Applying a Universality Lens to the Post-2015 Development Agenda

The UN membership has decided to aim for a universal post-2015 development agenda. The question is **not "if"**, **but "how"** to do it. In principle, universality can be integrated within a goal framework as part of an overarching **narrative** and across **goals, targets and indicators**. Similar to the Millennium Declaration in 2000, the narrative is likely to take the normative concept of universality as its point of departure. Given that the focus of the OWG SDG discussion now is on the goal framework, this paper does not elaborate on the narrative.[18]

Rio+20 declared that goals need to be: "*action oriented, concise and easy to communicate, limited in number, aspirational, global in nature and universally applicable to all countries, while taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities*."[19] This language indicates that **goals** need to have **global relevance**, which speaks to the normative concept of universality, while recognizing the need for differentiation.

At the same time, it is clear from para 250 of the Rio+20 Outcome Document that **differentiation** can best happen at the level of **targets** and **indicators**: "*We recognize that progress towards the achievement of the goals needs to be assessed and accompanied by targets and indicators, while taking into account different national circumstances, capacities and levels of development*."[20] This agreed typology can be captured in the following table showing the Triple A 'division of labor' between goals, targets and indicators.

	Primary objective	What it does
Goal	Aspirational	Inspires politicians, parliaments, public, private sector, and press to act
Target	Action	Indicates action required to achieve the aspiration
Indicator	Accountability for results	Assesses progress

Based on the table above, both targets and indicators are the most suitable level to operationalize universality. Considering the costs and capacity required to collect statistical data, especially in developing countries, it is important to focus on a limited number of goals, with a manageable number of transformational targets and related indicators. The policy action identified as part of each target must

constitute a "must have," guided by evidence of impact on the poor if appropriate action is not taken. For illustrative purposes, an exercise is carried out below applying a universality lens to three prospective post-2015 goal areas—education, food security and global partnership—which have been included in many suggestions for possible goals. The focus will be on the **paradigm shift** towards a "shared destiny" concept of universality.

Mainstreaming universality in a possible goal on education

MDG 2 sets out to achieve universal primary education. The target under this goal thus already incorporates the 'getting to zero' dimension of universality. While great progress has been made, the world is not on track to meet this goal. Many, if not all, reports have suggested the need for a successor goal on education, albeit with different wording and targets that include pre-school, secondary, vocational and university education.[21] However, the required policy action may vary, related to the realities on the ground. The need for **differentiation** to local circumstances, which existed at the time the MDGs were devised, is still relevant: the extent of the challenge to 'get to zero' is vastly different across countries and within countries. Poverty is a key factor keeping children out of school, but gender and place of residence also matter. In Ethiopia, Haiti and Yemen, 88% of the poorest young women have not completed primary school, while nearly all rich urban males in the same countries have.[22]

A *universal* education goal may have implications from the perspective of global relevance, as illiteracy also remains a persistent problem in developed countries. According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), one in five young people in Europe had poor literacy skills in 2009 and an estimated 160 million adults in OECD countries were functionally illiterate in 2009. This means that they do not have the skills needed to function in today's environment.[23] In an increasingly complex, knowledge-based society, the prosperity of countries is related to their human capital. Literacy is important thus not only for personal development, but also for positive social and economic outcomes. There is growing recognition that education needs to deliver the needed skills for **life-long productive lives**. Literacy is not enough in a competitive world to ensure access to decent jobs and to the underpinnings of well-being. An educated workforce in a globalized world is, moreover, increasingly a **national asset** that can change the **comparative advantage** of a country in the international labor and industrial markets—witness the rise of call centers as levers of progress in many countries. Smart politicians will want to ensure their (future) workforce is educated to meet the economic demands of tomorrow, and may take educational policies in the surrounding countries as a point of reference when developing their own national policies.

However, education policies in other countries are unlikely to have a major **impact on the ability** of a developing country to achieve their own national education goals. Reaching the national goals on primary, secondary, tertiary or vocational education in a country is by-and-large confined to the national policy machinery. In other words, spill-over effects and feedback loops in this policy domain exist, but they are relatively small. The goal is still highly relevant for shared humanity dimension of poverty eradication in developing countries, and has a link to the shared destiny dimension, but does not require a major change in its approach from the latter perspective.

Mainstreaming universality in a possible goal on food security

MDG1 has a key target on halving the proportion of people who suffer from hunger. Progress towards this objective is measured with two indicators: the prevalence of underweight children under five years of age and the proportion of population below minimum level of dietary energy consumption. In the context of the post-2015 discussions, various new action agendas are formulated: apart from 'getting to zero',

Rio+20 introduced a broader concept of food security, nutrition and sustainable agriculture[24] and the targets suggested in various reports reflect this broader scope.[25]

Significant progress towards ending hunger has been made, reducing malnutrition and the associated health problems (stunting, child mortality). The target of halving the percentage of people suffering from hunger by 2015 appears to be within reach.[26] Yet **progress has been uneven** and today almost 870 million people, or one in eight persons worldwide, still go to bed hungry and two billion people suffer from micro nutrient deficiencies.[27] 'Getting to zero' remains an enormous challenge, particularly in LDCs and fragile states. The shared humanity dimension will continue to require differentiated national policy responses related to the extent of the challenge at the national level.

National policies on agriculture, social protection, education and gender, among others, have a huge bearing on whether hunger can be eradicated. Yet the **global nature** of our food systems requires a global approach to finding solutions. External shocks such as price volatility, trade rules and agricultural subsidies, pressures on land and water through international supply chains, land grabbing, climate change are beyond the purview, let alone control, of national policy makers. As a reflection of more global supply chains, food self-sufficiency is declining, not just in developing countries, but also in some high-income countries.[28] Ensuring universal food security thus requires action, and collaboration, beyond the national (agricultural) policy domain. It requires both policy coherence for development and global collective action.

Food security is not just an issue in developing countries, it has global relevance. Food security and combating malnutrition is also highly relevant in **high-income countries**, where dietary patterns have not only resulted in a high ecological footprint, but also in 1.4 billion adults being overweight,[29] a consequence of both increased purchasing power and of poverty. Rising unemployment in these countries is putting more people at risk of undernourishment. The USDA reported that 14.5 percent of American households were food insecure at least some time during 2010.[30] At the same time, 904 million people in developing countries are now classed as overweight or above, up from 250 million in 1980. This compares to 557 million in high-income countries.[31]

More integrated planning and **greater cross-system coherence** across the global food security agenda are needed.[32] As the TST briefing on food security spells out: "*This new landscape has profound implications across national boundaries, underlining the need for holistic, innovative, and collaborative solutions, policies, and strategies. There is need for a universal agenda, but also for country and context- specific strategies.*" This highlights the importance of the shared destiny dimension.

Recent research shows that **production** needs to increase significantly to feed more than 9 billion people in 2050: the world faces a 69 percent gap between crop calories produced in 2006 and those most likely required in 2050.[33] But agriculture, as the dominant driver of tropical deforestation, is also a major source of GHG emissions, and accounts for about 70 percent of all the freshwater withdrawn from rivers, lakes, and aquifers. Achieving increases in production without consideration of **environmental externalities** would put our shared destiny in jeopardy.

According to the World Resources Report (WRR), an important part of the solution is to close the food gap by reducing growth in food consumption in ways that advance or safeguard human well-being. Through supply chains, local pressures on the environment and ecosystems are directly linked to the **consumption patterns** in economies elsewhere, in particular high income and emerging economies. Continued high population growth, migration and urbanization, the emerging middle class and shifting dietary patterns towards animal protein rich diets all put a higher strain on land, water and other natural resources. If the world's wealthy consumed less **meat** and other resource intensive foods, the **food gap** would narrow. However, because the rich outcompete the poor when food supplies fall short of demand, the world's poor

would most acutely feel the consequences of any gap between supply and demand. Cutting **food losses and waste** in half by 2050 would reduce the global food gap by roughly 20 percent.[34] Additional stress on land and water is caused by the increased **non-food demand for biomass** – which is mainly for **energy** production. While climate change will pose a significant threat to agricultural yields, agriculture is also directly and indirectly responsible for approximately 24 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions in 2010.[35] The above points to the need for greater policy coherence, related to sustainable consumption and production, agricultural, energy and trade policies, as well as global collective agreement and action to regulate carbon space.

Global dynamics beyond national control have a significant impact on a country's ability to achieve food security, in particular **volatile prices** in agricultural commodities.[36] This requires a **universal multilateral trading system** that is rules-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable, and includes reducing or phasing out trade-distorting subsidies[37] and environmentally harmful subsidies such as those on agricultural goods, fisheries and fossil fuels.[38] These issues related to mankind's shared destiny could also be either included under a Food Security Goal, or under a possible Partnership Goal.

Mainstreaming universality in a possible Global Partnership Goal

MDG 8 on a global partnership for development is based on the Millennium Declaration[39] and covers a range of issues for developed country action in recognition of global interdependence.[40] Both action and accountability under MDG 8 has fallen short of developing country expectations. While preferential trade rules for developing countries, in particular LDCs, ensure duty-free access to developed countries reached 80 per cent and 83 per cent of their exports in 2011 respectively, the stalemate in the Doha Trade Round continued for much of the period under consideration. Preferential treatment for LDCs slowly eroded as the average tariffs paid by other developing countries also declined.[41]

The role of developed economies in achieving the MDGs has largely been confined to providing Official Development Assistance (**ODA**), which increased up to 2010 but has **declined** since.[42] Meanwhile, a marked shift in ODA allocations is taking place. In 2012, bilateral net ODA to LDCs fell by 13 per cent in real terms to about $26 billion. For the countries that experience the largest MDG gaps and poverty levels, the recent DAC survey reveals a significant reduction in programmed aid, amounting to nearly half a billion dollars.[43] At the same time, many middle income countries now have access to a much more diverse range of sources of finance, including foreign direct investment, portfolio equity, commercial debt, remittances, and domestic resource mobilization.[44]

Providing adequate financial support, including through preferential trade measures, will remain important. But simultaneously stimulating growth, eliminating poverty and inequalities, and staying within planetary boundaries requires more than that—it demands *policy* 'buy-in' from developed, emerging and developing economies alike. It also needs **multi-stakeholder** collaboration for implementation (private sector, local authorities, civil society) beyond governments to be effective. Not only are countries in isolation less able than before to determine their future, but with global supply chains, communicable diseases, social media, and growing urbanization, other actors will have a crucial role to play.

An inclusive Global Partnership Goal could well embody such ambitions, and could articulate an action agenda to address the global interdependencies for instance in trade, finance and other means of implementation, and address the global public goods dimensions of inequity, peace and security, migration and climate change. It is thus potentially the cornerstone of a set of goals contributing to a truly **universal, transformative, people-centred and planet-sensitive** development agenda, as suggested targets reflect.[45]

Developed countries will continue to have a responsibility to keep the promises they have made to provide **ODA**, which is crucial particularly to many LDCs, and new and additional resources to combat climate change. But beyond providing financial resources, putting sustainability of our collective economic, human and natural capital at the core requires decoupling global economic growth from resource use, emissions growth and pollution. Increased **transparency** and a **transformative economic agenda** are required, an agenda all must be part of to be successful at the global level. A new Global Partnership Goal would most clearly spell out the change from "Actions by the South, Financed by the North" to "Actions by the North, Benefiting the South" (policy coherence) and the need for Global Collective Action. It could include targets and indicators related to market access, phasing out agricultural subsidies and other environmentally harmful subsidies, reform of the financial system (including tackling illicit flows and tax evasion, innovative financial flows), labor migration, climate change and new ways of measuring progress in global development at the national level (beyond GDP growth) and at the corporate level (beyond profit). A recent study shows that potential benefits from cross-border flows of people, goods and money can significantly improve global welfare and should thus be part of the post-2015 development framework.[46] Considering their economic and ecological 'weight' on the global scales now and by the time the post-2015 development framework will draw to an end in 2030, **upper-middle income countries** have a key part to play in this action agenda too.

In times of economic crisis, this may not be perceived as an attractive agenda from a political point of view. As a stand-alone goal, this goal risks to be similarly isolated, and potentially ineffective as MDG 8, unless it is combined with a clear, concrete action agenda articulated at the level of SMART targets and indicators, and a commensurate global accountability framework that currently is absent.

4. Summary

Universality can be understood as a normative, rights-based concept that is **applicable to all**. The following operational concepts of universality, which are not mutually exclusive and often mutually reinforcing, were reviewed:

- Universality in the context of the MDGs – the vision of **shared humanity** which tasks developing countries to develop effective, efficient and coherent policy frameworks to reduce or eradicate poverty, and developed countries to provide adequate support;

- Universality as a **shared destiny**, which takes into account a more complex, integrated world and requires policy buy-in from all, in particular also developed, countries in the economic, social and environmental policy domains.

The impact of universality on three potential goals -education, food security and global partnership- was markedly different. While all take the normative concept of universality as their starting point, the extent to which global collective action or developed countries policy buy-in is a prerequisite for success varies significantly. **Education** remained closed to a 'business as usual' approach – as globalization and the spill-over impact of policies in other countries have (relatively speaking) little impact on a country's ability to deliver national education action plans. **Food security** is a policy domain where impact from beyond national borders is significant in many respects. Achieving food security at global level without addressing SCP, environmentally harmful subsidies, ecosystem degradation and climate change is almost inconceivable. While in all cases, nationally appropriate policy actions must provide the foundation for success, global partnerships and collaboration are becoming increasingly essential building blocks towards achieving all goals within a future framework. The **Global Partnership Goal** exemplifies the shared destiny of mankind.

The following table illustrates the impact of universality on the three goal areas examined:

	Universality as global norm	Universality as shared humanity	Universality as shared destiny
Education	X	XXX	X
Food security	X	XX	XXX
Partnership	XX	X	XXX

To achieve this goal[47]:   X = relevant but not crucial   XX = necessary but not sufficient   XXX = conditio sine qua non

5. Conclusion

Rio+20 called for goals that are universal in nature, recognizing that in a globalized world with growing interdependence and resource constraints, individual UN Member States will not be able to deliver conditions for long-term **collective well-being** that transcend the current juncture of **growing inequalities** at all levels unless all countries work together. The post-2015 development framework requires a transformation of the development mindset—truly integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development, and recognizing the interdependencies between developed and developing countries, as well as the changing political, economic, social and environmental dynamics of emerging economies. All countries must play their part.

But universality does not imply uniformity. Universality implies that no country can achieve the post-2015 development goals in isolation. Collaboration between people, countries, regions and continents is required to deliver irreversible poverty eradication. Putting universality at the core of the post-2015 development framework is key to address the **free rider problem** and necessary to ensure a **fair sharing of the costs and benefits** of addressing today's global challenges. It is also fundamental if the future the UN membership is aiming for is one of convergence, that is, one where all countries, all peoples, are on trajectories to share similar levels of well-being within the carrying capacity of the planet. Only a truly universal development agenda has the potential to deliver what is needed: a dignified life, free from want and fear for all mankind, including future generations.

Endnotes

[1] There is a slight difference in language. In Rio+20: "Global in nature and universally applicable to all countries while taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities." whereas in the Outcome Document of the Special Session on MDGs: " a single framework and set of Goals – universal in nature and applicable to all countries, while taking account of differing national circumstances and respecting national policies and priorities."

[2] Millennium Development Goals Report 2013.

[3] 'Crisis squeezes income and puts pressure on inequality and poverty, New Results from the OECD Income Distribution Database', OECD, May 2013. See also 'Global Risks 2014, Ninth Edition', Insight Report, World Economic Forum 2014 which identifies rising inequality is one of the biggest threats to the global world now.

[4] See Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, GEO-5 and the 5th assessment report of the IPCC.

[5] The paper focuses on the role of governments, while recognizing the crucial role of the private sector, civil society organizations, local governments and the public at large in implementing an ambitious and future-fit global development agenda.

[6] Preambular paragraph 8, Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

[7] See among others: 'Transforming Global Development, An LDC Perspective on the Post 2015 Agenda', Least Developed Countries Independent Expert Group, Issue Paper IIED, January 2014.

[8] 'Progress, Prospects and Lessons from the MDGs', Rippin, N. (Background Research Paper for the Report of the High Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, 2013).

[9] There is a risk this may lead to a focus on Middle Income Countries, where numerically most poor live now. A future-fit development framework should take into account changing poverty dynamics. By 2030, when the post 2015 development agenda ends, it is predicted that the majority of poor will live in LDC as a result of higher economic growth combined with lower population growth in MICs.

[10] This is a particularly stark reality in LDCs. Between 2006 and 2012, gross national income in LDCs nearly doubled, while human assets indices barely changed. Growth is not translating into development benefits. See 'Transforming Global Development, An LDC Perspective on the Post 2015 Agenda', Least Developed Countries Independent Expert Group, Issue Paper IIED, January 2014

[11] 'A wholesale approach to policymaking is the key to tackling inequality: Poor and rich countries alike must recognise that inequality goes beyond income, encompassing health, education and more', Angel Gurria, Poverty Matters Blog, The Guardian, 18 September 2013.

[12] 'Global Environmental Outlook 5', UNEP, June 2012

[13] See also: Commitment to Development Index, Centre for Global Development - http://international.cgdev.org

[14] "Recent food and energy crises, and high prices for many commodities, point to a world where increasing resource scarcity is the norm. In environmental "hot spots," the harm that is coming if we don't halt current trends will be irreversible. Of the 24 most important ways the poor depend on natural resources, 15 are in serious decline, including: more than 40 per cent of global fisheries that have crashed or are overfished; loss of 130 million hectares of forests in the last decade; loss of 20 percent of mangrove forests since 1980; threats to 75 per cent of the world's coral reefs, mostly in small island developing states where dependence on reefs is high". High Level Panel Report, page 16.

[15] As GEO-5 report points out: as human pressures on the Earth System accelerate, several critical global, regional and local thresholds are close or have been exceeded. Once these have been passed, abrupt and possibly irreversible changes to the life-support functions of the planet are likely to occur, with significant adverse implications for human well-being. 'Global Environmental Outlook 5', UNEP, June 2012.

[16] Conversely, interconnnectedness also implies that policies in developing countries can negatively impact the developed world. For example, poverty may induce migration to more affluent societies, communicable diseases could lead to global health crisis as weak health institutions in developing countries are unable to contain its spread, and security problems may undermine supply chains on which production depends. Whilst relevant, this issue is not discussed in great length in this paper.

[17] High Level panel Report, page 15.

[18] In this paper, the term 'Goal Framework' is defined as the set of goals, targets and indicators.

[19] Para 247, 'The Future we Want', Outcome Document of Rio+20, A/RES/66/288.

[20] Para 250, 'The Future we Want', Outcome Document of Rio+20, A/RES/66/288.

[21] Suggested targets in HLP and SDSN include, among others: Enhance the …% the proportion of children receiving pre-school education; Ensure all children are able to access and complete quality primary education; Ensure every child, regardless of circumstance, has access to lower secondary education and increase the proportion of adolescents who achieve recognised and measurable learning outcomes to x%; Increase the number of young and adult women and men with the skills, including technical and vocational, needed for work by x%.

[22] The Millennium Development Goals Report 2013

[23] Data released by UNESCO Institute for Statistics on the International Literacy Day, 8 September 2013. See: http://www.unesco.org/new/en/media-services/single-view/news/literacy_for_all_remains_an_elusive_goal_new_unesco_data_shows/#.UuDehk01jIU

[24] Para's 108-118 from The Future We Want.

[25] Targets suggested by HLP and SDSN include, among others: Eradicate the number of people living on less than $1.25 a day to zero; Eradicate hunger and protect the right of everyone to have access to sufficient, safe, affordable, and nutritious food; Increase by x% the share of women and men, communities, and businesses with secure rights to land, property, and other assets; Reduce stunting by x%, wasting by y%, and anemia by z% for all children under 5; Increase agricultural productivity by x%, with a focus on sustainably increasing smallholder yields and access to irrigation; Reduce postharvest loss and food waste by x%; Align calorie intake and nutrition, including per capita consumption of animal protein, to recommended daily levels; Adopt low carbon sustainable agricultural practices which optimize productivity and reduce land-use change, minimizing resource inputs from fossil, non-renewable or chemical origin.

[26] Millennium Development Goals Report 2013, UN.

[27] TST Issues Brief to OWG SDG on Food Security and Nutrition, http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/1804tstissuesfood.pdf

[28] For example, Africa's food self-sufficiency is lower today than it was throughout the entire study period 1961-2007. See: 'Historical trends of food self-sufficiency in Africa', Yibo Luan, Xuefeng Cui, Marion Ferrat in Food Security, June 2013, Volume 5, Issue 3, pp 393-405. UK's food self-sufficiency has steadily declined over the past three decades. In 2010, the UK produced just 52 per cent of the food consumed, and had a self-sufficiency ratio of 60 per cent. In 1984, the UK's self-sufficiency ratio was 78 per cent. See: 'Shocks and Disruptions, The Relationship between Food Security and National Security', George Grant, The Henry Jackson Society, 2012.

[29] 'Obesity and Overweight', WHO Factsheet No. 311, 2012.

[30] 'Household Food Security in the United States in 2010.' Coleman-Jensen, A., Nord, M., Andrews, M., Carlson, S. (2011). United States Department of Agriculture.

[31] 'Future Diets, Implications for Agriculture and Food Prices', S. Keats and S. Wiggins, ODI, January 2013.

[32] 'Food Security for a Planet under Pressure, Transition towards Sustainability: interconnected challenges and solutions', Planet under Pressure, Rio+20 Policy Brief # 2. See also 'A vision for attaining food security' by Alison Misselhorn, Pramod Aggarwal, Polly Ericksen, Peter Gregory, Leo Horn-Phathanothai, John Ingram and Keith Wiebe. Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability 2012, 4:7–17.

[33] All data in this paragraph drawn from 'Creating a Sustainable Food Future, Interim Findings', World Resources Report 2013-2014, December 2013.

[34] An issue highlighted in Rio+20, see para 110 of The Future We Want.

[35] IPCC 5th Assessment Report.

[36] A topic of much discussion in Rio+20, see para's 116 and 117 of The Future We Want.

[37] The Future we Want, see para's 118, 281.

[38] The Future we Want, para 225.

[39] Text from the Millennium Declaration: "*(…) nations and peoples have become increasingly interconnected and interdependent*" (para 3) and continues with "*For while globalization offers great opportunities, at present its benefits are very unevenly shared, while its costs are unevenly distributed. We recognize that developing countries and countries with economies in transition face special difficulties in responding to this central challenge. Thus, only through broad and sustained efforts to create a shared future, based upon our common humanity in all its diversity, can globalization be made fully inclusive and equitable. These efforts must include policies and measures, at the global level, which correspond to the needs of developing countries and economies in transition and are formulated and implemented with their effective participation.*" (para 5) A/RES/55/2.

[40] Targets under MDG 8: 1. Develop further an open, rules-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system; 2. Address the special needs of least developed countries, landlocked countries and small island developing states; 3. Deal comprehensively with developing countries' debt; 4. In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable, essential drugs in developing countries; 5. In cooperation with the private sector, make available benefits of new technologies, especially ICTs. Source: Fact Sheet on MDG 8, www.un.org/millenniumgoals. See also Millennium Development Goals Report 2013, UN.

[41] Millennium Development Goals Report 2013, UN.

[42] While aid rose throughout the MDG period through 2010, it has since fallen, with aid to LDCs declining by about 12.8% compared to a 4% fall in ODA as a whole. The DAC *Survey* suggests that this shift in aid away from the poorest countries and Africa, and towards middle-income countries, will continue, with a greater share of aid being offered in the form of soft loans rather than grants. See MDG Report 2013.

[43] 'Outlook on Aid, Survey on Donors' Forward Spending Plans 2013-2016', DAC, OECD, 2013.

[44] See this blog: http://cic.nyu.edu/blog/global-development/financing-post-2015-agenda

[45] Targets suggested by HLP and SDSN include, among others: Support an open, fair and development-friendly trading system, substantially reducing trade-distorting measures, including agricultural subsidies, while improving market access of developing country products; Implement reforms to ensure stability of the global financial system and encourage stable, long-term private foreign investment; Hold the increase in global average temperature below 2° C above pre-industrial levels, in line with international agreements; Developed countries that have not done so to make concrete efforts towards the target of 0.7% of gross national product (GNP) as official development assistance to developing countries and 0.15 to 0.20% of GNP of developed countries to least developed countries; other countries should move toward voluntary targets for complementary financial assistance; Rules for international trade, finance, taxation, business accounting, and intellectual property are reformed to be consistent with and support achieving the SDGs; Reduce illicit flows and tax evasion and increase stolen-asset recovery by $x; Promote collaboration on and access to science, technology, innovation, and development data.

[46] See Pedro Martins, Jonathan Glennie and Shakira Mustapha: "Game changers: global policy priorities for the post-2015 agenda", ODI, October 2013.

[47] This brief table is for illustrative purposes only. It does not highlight nuances and interrelationships (such as the fact that these dimensions cannot be fully separated, and are often mutually reinforcing).