

Towards a Post-2015 Development Agenda: Comparative Analysis of Proposed Goal Frameworks

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PART 1: SYNTHESIS ANALYSIS

The *Independent Research Forum on a Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda* (IRF2015)—a collaboration of twelve leading sustainable development institutes from across the globe—responds to the need for independent, rigorous and timely analysis to inform the evolution of the post-2015 development agenda and the concurrent intergovernmental process on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agreed to at Rio+20. IRF2015 partners envision a post-2015 development agenda that is universal in scope, takes an integrated approach to the economic, social and environmental dimensions of global development challenges, and can lead to more sustainable and equitable development outcomes for all.

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This paper compares proposed goal frameworks from four reports that aim to help shape the global dialogue on the post-2015 development agenda.

- High Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda
- Sustainable Development Solutions Network
- UN Global Compact
- Center for International Governance Innovation and Korea Development Institute

Each report proposes a full set of goals, draws on a multi-stage consultative process, and responds specifically to the post-2015 and post Rio+20 context. The analysis aims to: (i) assess major similarities, differences and gaps in each framework's approach; (ii) identify areas of common ground and shared ambition; and (iii) highlight key issues for further analysis and debate. See Boxes 1-4 for a snapshot of each of the four reports.

Part 1: Synthesis Analysis compares the four proposed frameworks as a whole in terms of:

- The conceptual framework underpinning each proposal
- Major similarities and differences in their approach to defining a goal framework
- How the proposals address the cross-cutting issues of inequality, resilience and sustainable production and consumption
- Some key questions to consider going forward

Part 2: Goal Area Analysis examines how the frameworks address each of ten goal areas likely to feature in the post-2015 agenda:

- Education
- Energy
- Environmental Sustainability
- Food Security
- Gender
- Governance
- Health
- Income Poverty and Income Inequality
- Sustainable and Inclusive Economic Growth
- Water

Box 1. High Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda

Overview	<p><i>A New Global Partnership: Eradicate Poverty and Transform Economies Through Sustainable Development</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High Level Panel co-chaired by heads of state of Indonesia, Liberia, and the United Kingdom, with 24 members from government (past and present), civil society and the private sector and supported by a Secretariat. • Convened by the UN Secretary-General to prepare recommendations for the post-2015 development agenda, taking into account both the Millennium Declaration and the Outcome Document of Rio+20. • Held 6 meetings over a period of 9 months including consultations with civil society, and informed by a series of regional, national and global thematic consultations organized by the UN System and member states, and contributions from academia, civil society and the private sector.
Scope	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A single universal sustainable development agenda building on the MDGs and the Rio+20 process
Organizing Principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leave no one behind • Put sustainable development at the core • Transform economies for inclusive growth • Build peace and effective, open and accountable public institutions • Forge a new global partnership
Goals	<p>The post-2015 agenda should feature a limited number of high-priority universal goals backed by global and nationally-adapted targets and indicators (disaggregated). Proposes 12 “illustrative” goals and 51 targets:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. End poverty 2. Empower girls and women and achieve gender equality 3. Provide quality education and lifelong learning 4. Ensure healthy lives 5. Ensure food security and good nutrition 6. Achieve universal access to water and sanitation 7. Secure sustainable energy 8. Create jobs, sustainable livelihoods, and equitable growth 9. Manage natural resource assets sustainably 10. Ensure good governance and effective institutions 11. Ensure stable and peaceful societies 12. Create a global enabling environment and catalyze long-term finance

Box 2. Sustainable Development Solutions Network

Overview	<p><i>An Action Agenda for Sustainable Development</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) launched by the UN Secretary-General to “mobilize global scientific and technological knowledge on the challenge of sustainable development.” • Conducted extensive worldwide consultations on “the key issues of sustainable development” and “what an integrated, concise, science-based, and action-oriented agenda for the world might look like” through its Leadership Council and network of 12 expert Thematic Groups. • The report summarizes the main conclusions from these consultations, including input from a two-week public consultation on earlier draft.
Scope	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A single universal post-2015 agenda that provides a global framework for cooperation to address the economic, social, environmental and governance dimensions of sustainable development.
Organizing Principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Right to development for every country • Human rights and social inclusion • Convergence of living standards across countries • Shared responsibilities and opportunities in advancing sustainable development
Goals	<p>A framework of universal (applying to all countries based on national circumstances) and interconnected goals that “finish the job” of the MDGs and put all countries on a sustainable development path. Proposes 10 “sustainable development goals” with 30 targets:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. End extreme poverty including hunger 2. Achieve development within planetary boundaries 3. Ensure effective learning for all children and youth for life and livelihood 4. Achieve gender equality, social inclusion, and human rights for all 5. Achieve health and wellbeing at all ages 6. Improve agriculture systems and raise rural prosperity 7. Empower inclusive, productive and resilient cities 8. Curb human-induced climate change and ensure sustainable energy 9. Secure ecosystem services and biodiversity, and ensure good management of water and other natural resources 10. Transform governance for sustainable development

Box 3. UN Global Compact

Overview	<p><i>Corporate Sustainability and the United Nations Post-2015 Development Agenda</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • United Nations Global Compact (UNGC) is the world's largest corporate responsibility initiative with over 7,500 business signatories in 145 countries, including 101 Local Networks. • At the request of the UN Secretary-General, UNGC conducted a global outreach and consultation process to assess the views of business leaders on global sustainability issues, the post-2015 development agenda, and the role of business. • UNGC's local networks held 43 consultations with attendees from 500 corporate partners, solicited input from its LEAD leadership platform, and incorporated views from the 1,712 respondents to its most recent annual member survey.
Scope	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A single universal agenda
Organizing Principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The poverty apex – ending extreme poverty and extending prosperity to the majority of the world's people • Human needs and capacities – accelerating progress in the core MDG areas of education, health and equality for women and girls • Resource triad – access to sustainable water and sanitation, energy, and agriculture and food to meet human needs, sustain growth and address climate change • Enabling environment – good governance, peace and stability, and more modern and greener infrastructure
Goals	<p>Proposes 10 “global sustainable development goals” and 49 targets:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. End poverty and increase prosperity via inclusive economic growth 2. Quality education for all 3. Achieve women and girls' empowerment 4. Universal health coverage 5. Good nutrition for all through sustainable food and agricultural systems 6. Water and sanitation for all 7. Sustainable energy for all 8. Build peaceful and stable societies 9. Modernize infrastructure and technology 10. Good governance and realization of human rights

Box 4. Center for International Governance Innovation/Korea Development Institute

Overview	<p><i>The Millennium Development Goals and Post-2015: Squaring the Circle</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A consortium of eight institutions led by the Center for International Governance Innovation (CIGI) and the Korea Development Institute (KDI) convened a group of over 50 experts on development and governance through a series of four conferences and five regional meetings from 2011 to early 2013. • Purpose was “to gather advice from a broad range of voices on what should succeed the MDGs in 2015.” • The group examined how each candidate goal might be measured at the indicator level, and so its final proposal includes.
Scope	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A single universal agenda
Organizing Principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essential individual endowments • Collective human capital • Enabling environments and institutions
Goals	<p>Universal “one-world goals” applicable to all countries should drive the post-2015 agenda. Global targets and indicators should be locally adapted to ensure country ownership and development effectiveness.</p> <p>Proposes 10 goals with a menu of 90 potential indicators (but targets not included):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inclusive growth for dignified livelihoods and adequate standards of living 2. Sufficient food and water for active living 3. Appropriate education and skills for full participation in society 4. Good health for physical, mental and social well-being 5. Gender equality for enabling women and men to participate and benefit equally in society 6. Connectivity for access to energy, transportation, and communications 7. Good governance and rule of law for citizen participation and personal and community security 8. Sustainable management of the biosphere for people and planet to thrive together 9. Resilient communities for reduced disaster impact from natural and man-made hazards 10. Equitable rules for the governance of global institutions and cooperative partnerships

Conceptual Framework

What are the key principles and assumptions underpinning each proposal?

The conceptual framework underpinning each of the proposed goal frameworks provides insight on underlying assumptions about how change occurs and what kind of change is desirable, on how each framework prioritizes and organizes issues, and where differences between frameworks are stylistic or of a more fundamental nature. Table 1 summarizes the basic organizing principles for each proposal.

Table 1. Organizing principles of goal frameworks

HLP	SDSN	UNGC	CIGI
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leave no one behind • Put sustainable development at the core • Transform economies for inclusive growth • Build peace and effective, open and accountable public institutions • Forge a new global partnership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Right to development for every country • Human rights and social inclusion • Convergence of living standards across countries • Shared opportunities and responsibilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The poverty apex • Human needs and capacities • Resource triad • Enabling environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essential individual endowments • Collective human capital • Enabling environments and institutions

High Level Panel Report

The HLP report positions itself as uniting the MDG agenda with a more transformational sustainable development agenda. The HLP puts forward five transformations that a global goal framework should advance, leading with “leave no one behind” through a commitment to eradicating poverty and to social justice. The remaining four priorities elaborate on what the panel believes would be needed to make this vision a reality - putting sustainable development at the core, ensuring inclusive growth, effective and fair institutions, and a new global partnership.

The report’s framing and selection of targets emphasize the importance of economic incentives, entrepreneurship, and a fair system of global trade in expanding people’s opportunities and improving livelihoods. Other enablers include targets to phase out fossil fuel subsidies, provide secure rights to land and property, and regulatory reforms for “stable, long-term private foreign investment.” It places similar weight on measurement and valuation as incentives for behavior change. This is evident in the approach to inequality – where the report emphasizes disaggregated data collection – and

environmental sustainability – where it includes a target for companies and governments to measure and report on economic, environmental and social accounts. Under this proposal, improved governance and well-aligned incentives are seen as essential conditions for achieving a more equitable and sustainable world.

SDSN

SDSN’s framework aims to put countries on a “sustainable development path” based on four inter-related concepts: (i) right to development (that all *countries* have a right to develop); (ii) human rights and social inclusion (that all *individuals* must have equal opportunities; (iii) convergence (that gaps between rich and poor will gradually lessen); and (iv) shared responsibilities and opportunities (that all countries have a role to play). SDSN is careful to place equal emphasis on four aspects of sustainable development – economic development, social inclusion, environmental sustainability, and good governance – and presents poverty eradication in this context. Using the concept of planetary boundaries, it emphasizes the importance of climate and natural resource-related challenges that threaten progress on meeting human needs.

The structure of SDSN’s goals, targets, and narrative demonstrate a deep belief in the interconnected nature of both the problems faced by this generation and the possible solutions. It notes that goals must be “pursued in combination, rather than individually or one at a time,” and maps each of its goals to all four aspects of sustainable development. SDSN asserts that a central reason for current challenges is “the failure of global cooperation around a framework for sustainable development and inadequate national policy frameworks.” Its targets point to solutions at the national and international level, in some cases through new multilateral approaches. Several of its targets are framed at the level of the country rather than the individual. Similar to HLP, it also emphasizes measurement and valuation as a mechanism for change, suggests that countries report on their contribution to planetary boundaries and that countries “require individuals, businesses and governments to pay the social cost of pollution.”

UNGC

UNGC calls for a “concentrated attack on poverty.” Unlike other proposals, UNGC explicitly reflects a business perspective and sees a two-way relationship between business and the development agenda, whereby global progress on each goal area can help to support the private sector at all levels and where business itself can play an integral role in driving change for each.

The proposal approaches issues in terms of their contribution to business success and a productive workforce. On each, it lays out a role for the private sector to have an impact. These roles fall into two primary categories: (1) ensuring sustainability in operations (do no harm); and (2) developing products, services, and ways of doing business that directly contribute to sustainable development.

CIGI

Though completed after, the Bellagio goal-setting process began prior to Rio+20, and appears to aim for

more direct continuity with MDGs while incorporating the lessons learned since their inception, the themes from the Rio+20 process, and responding to new challenges. It labels growth as the “most important factor in reducing poverty, dealing with social exclusion, rising inequality... and social protection issues.” It urges that the agenda should be “comprehensive and holistic” following from Amartya Sen’s “Development as Freedom.” It also aligns goals with priorities identified in the World Bank’s report “Voices of the Poor,” that identified employment, better connections to the world, reduced threats of violence, and an end to humiliation and disrespect as top priorities of the poor.

Above all, CIGI emphasizes the importance of an easy-to-understand framework with concrete and measurable indicators as a key to success. CIGI’s choice to recommend indicators rather than targets is meant to reflect an emphasis on outcomes rather than process; leaving the pathway to success to be defined.

Summary observations

The four proposals take a more *holistic view of development* than did the MDGs. They respond to common critiques that the MDGs were too narrow in scope and did not adequately address the enabling conditions that underpin development. As such, each proposal carves out space to address some combination of governance, rule of law, and human rights.

Whether explicitly spelled out in the narrative or in how proposed goals are organized, each proposal recognizes to varying degrees *interlinkages between goal areas*, reflecting both the multidimensional nature of poverty at the individual level and the inherent connections between a healthy environment, economic and social opportunity, and human well-being.

On the question of *how change happens*, the frameworks offer mostly implicit indications rather than explicit ones. The HLP provides the most direct indication of the path forward toward reaching some of its targets, several of which point to particular actions national governments could take: a target for covering the poor with social protection systems, for phasing out inefficient fuel subsidies, and for free and universal legal identity. Despite much left undefined, a few takeaways emerge:

- All proposals emphasize improved *data collection and monitoring* as key mechanisms for making the goal framework successful – an indication of the faith placed in the power of measurement, monitoring, and reporting both to gauge impact but also to drive change.
- All proposals see a continued and important role for the *international multilateral system* for providing global public goods and setting fair rules for the global economy.
- Proposals also envision an increasingly important role for *the private sector* in contributing to inclusive growth and employment, and as a driver of innovation to meet environmental and other challenges.

Goal Framework

What are major similarities and differences across the proposed goal frameworks?

Grounding in the MDGs: All proposals are strongly linked to the core areas of the MDGs – income poverty, hunger, health, education, gender, and the global partnership are featured in each framework, though some of the original goals have been fused or split and new issues have been added. CIGI may come closest to the original MDG categories, while SDSN reorganizes topics considerably.

Greater focus on human well-being and shared prosperity: While eradication of extreme poverty remains a core objective, the proposals recognize the multi-dimensional nature of poverty and the need to go beyond addressing poverty's symptoms to tackling its root causes. Further, the proposals to varying degrees reflect a broader concern with improving human well-being and achieving shared prosperity, notably the HLP and SDSN.

Recognition of new challenges: Proposals recognize significant shifts in the location of poverty, structure of the global economy, rising inequality, and growing environmental degradation and natural resource scarcity that pose new challenges for any global efforts toward sustainable development.

Universality: All proposals call for a global agenda where goals or targets could be adapted to country contexts. While the majority of goals and targets within each framework would be most relevant for low income countries, each includes in addition several targets or goal areas with wider application. These include goals related to energy, the global partnership for development, health problems that afflict developed countries (such as obesity and certain non-communicable diseases), and need for protecting and restoring ecosystems. SDSN's goal on planetary boundaries may go the furthest of all the proposals in aiming to encourage sustainable choices by governments across the globe.

Solution orientation: Proposals vary have different appetites for proposing how progress can and should be made toward their goals. At one end, a number of the HLP targets suggest particular policies related to social protection, subsidies, and the provision of certain rights. At the other, CIGI avoids this by suggesting only indicators that measure results and are not tied to how the results were achieved.

Linkages: Although all proposals recognize that goal areas are necessarily interlinked, the degree to which this is evident in their approach varies. Approaches on any given issue range from mainstreaming, to a single isolated goal, or to something in between. For example, SDSN maps each goal to all four elements of sustainable development, with relatively few goals aimed at a single sector alone (health and education perhaps standing out). By contrast, CIGI places the vast majority of environment-related concerns under a single goal.

Can a common set of *baseline goals* be identified?

Table 2 summarizes goals that are common to a greater or lesser degree across the four proposed goal frameworks. While much remains to be resolved about the shape and scope of a new set of global development goals, the leading proposals to date share a number of key goals that could form a starting point for building agreement on a shared agenda.

Table 2. Goals common to the four proposed goal frameworks

All four	Three of four	At least one
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Income poverty and jobs Education Health Food security Governance and rule of law Global partnership for development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender Water Energy Environmental sustainability (forests, ecosystems, biodiversity) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cities Infrastructure Resilience Peace and stability

Goal areas appearing in all four proposals

Six goals appear in some form in all four proposals. The first five comprise the core of the MDGs, reflecting the commitment of all proposals to continued progress on the MDG agenda. Food security was also contained in the MDGs as part of the first goal on hunger, but all proposals have now given it increased emphasis. The sixth, governance, is recognized as a critical enabling factor for success that was missing from the MDGs.

- *Income poverty and jobs*: whether one goal or two, income poverty and the need to provide quality employment runs across all goal proposals.
- *Education*: all proposals include a dedicated goal for education, though with an emphasis on learning outcomes, not enrollment alone.
- *Health*: all proposals aim to improve health outcomes, eliminate common infectious diseases, and now to tackle new challenges such as non-communicable diseases.
- *Food security*: all proposals have taken the MDG's call to reduce hunger a step further, and have put forward goals to address dimensions of the food system beyond caloric intake.
- *Global partnership for development*: while recognizing that the face of development assistance has changed dramatically, all proposals see a strong role for a global partnership, expanded to include business and other private financial flows.
- *Governance and rule of law*: although the framing varies, all proposals call for fair and effective institutions to underpin progress on human well-being.

Goal areas appearing in three of the four proposals

Gender is included as a distinct goal in three of the proposals, while in the SDSN framework it is combined with an overall goal for social inclusion and human rights. Water, energy and ‘environmental sustainability’ appear in all four proposals, but are addressed differently in each through a combination of dedicated goals, mainstreaming or both, underscoring their cross-cutting nature.

- *Gender*: the only exception is SDSN, which includes gender as part of a goal on human rights and social inclusion more broadly.
- *Water*: SDSN includes water as part of other environment and health-related goals. CIGI includes it with a goal on food security, but addresses it there only in terms of its health impacts.
- *Energy*: CIGI includes energy as part of its environmental sustainability goal. The remaining three proposals include a dedicated goal closely tied to the Sustainable Energy for All initiative.
- *Environmental sustainability (forests, ecosystems, biodiversity)*: approaches to environmental sustainability range from complete mainstreaming (UNGC) to a single dedicated goal (CIGI) to a combination of both (SDSN and HLP).

Additional goals

The remaining goal areas relate either to the built environment or to elements of human security. Resilience cuts across both of these areas, particularly with regard to natural disasters. Each proposal includes at least one of the four below.

- *Cities*: SDSN includes a goal for cities and one aimed at rural economies and agriculture. Other frameworks address cities indirectly through infrastructure or mention global trends toward urbanization as important.
- *Infrastructure*: CIGI and UNGC both include dedicated goals for connectivity or infrastructure provision including transportation, energy, and ICT infrastructure.
- *Resilience*: One proposal includes resilience at the goal level, with others choosing instead to mainstream it or address at the target level.
- *Peace and stability*: HLP and UNGC each include goals related to peaceful, conflict-free societies.

Cross-Cutting Issues

How do the proposals approach select cross-cutting issues viewed as critical to the global development agenda

A number of critical elements of the post-2015 development agenda may not emerge as goals or may not easily “fit” as goals due to their crosscutting nature. Nevertheless, they will likely form an important part of a successful framework.

Inequality

Growing inequalities worldwide have received increased attention as a possible focus for the post-2015 development agenda. Many civil society organizations have called for a goal aimed squarely at reducing inequality. None of the four proposals include a stand-alone goal on inequality, though all call for growth to be inclusive and equitable and note that reducing inequalities will be key to success in a universal agenda. The proposals address inequalities through a combination of: (i) targets to measure income inequality; (ii) disaggregation of data to make sure that progress toward any goal is equally shared; and (iii) goals for human rights or governance that are meant to help level the playing field.

Some proposals view inequalities as part of universality – since by definition a universal agenda must apply to everyone thereby bringing all out of poverty and reducing inequality. SDSN takes this slightly further by incorporating convergence of living standards across countries as part of its framework.

Resilience

The ability to withstand shocks in an increasingly volatile world is recognized in each proposal as an important aspect of poverty eradication that lasts: those leaving poverty must be able to recover from the unexpected. CIGI is the only proposal to include a stand-alone goal for “resilient communities” to weather both man-made and natural disasters. HLP presents resilience under its first goal to “end poverty,” where it includes a target for social protection systems and one to “build resilience and reduce deaths from natural disasters.” SDSN addresses resilience separately in rural and urban contexts, referring to both disaster resilience in building standards and to climate resilient farming systems. UNGC does not make direct mention.

Sustainable consumption and production

Sustainable consumption and production (SCP) is defined as “the use of services and related products, which respond to basic needs and bring a better quality of life while minimizing the use of natural resources and toxic materials as well as the emissions of waste and pollutants over the life cycle of the service or product so as not to jeopardize the needs of future generations.”¹ The RIO+20 outcome

¹ 1994 Oslo Declaration

document presented SCP as one of three critical components of a sustainable development agenda.² The current proposals do not include SCP by name within their goals or targets. However, SDSN uses its goal on development within planetary boundaries to address these issues. By nature, development that is within planetary boundaries will also include sustainable levels of production and consumption. To the extent that other frameworks include SCP, it is to note the importance of technological innovations, new sustainable methods of production for goods and services, or the need to reduce food loss and waste. These examples primarily consider the production side, with relatively little mention of a need to shift consumption patterns or how that might occur.

Key Questions Moving Forward

- *To what degree should goals, targets, and indicators point toward specific actions to be taken?* How can the goal framework more explicitly identify and advance solutions while leaving adequate flexibility?
- *How to achieve a more integrated framework that links the economic, social and environmental dimensions of poverty eradication and sustainable development within and across goals?*
- *How should the post-2015 agenda address sustainable production and consumption?* As noted above, this is both a critical part of sustainable development, yet also an issue receiving relatively little direct attention in the goal proposals.
- *How should the post-2015 agenda address growing urbanization as a development driver?* When the MDGs were agreed to, the proportion of the poor who lived in cities compared to rural areas was drastically different. Now that more than half the world's population lives in cities, should the goal framework explicitly address this change?
- *How should the post-2015 agenda address population dynamics as a development driver?* The goal proposals by and large touch on population only through support for family planning. They do not include mention of what role migration patterns can play for individuals and societies to improve well-being. Is this an area that the post-2015 development agenda should consider?
- *To what extent does achieving the post-2015 agenda require a true transformation in economic structures?* Though not represented here, proposals such as the People's Goals from IBON and goals from Beyond 2015 assert that a more dramatic shift in global economic and power dynamics is needed to achieve the agenda. What might this look like?

² The Future We Want

<http://www.uncsd2012.org/content/documents/727The%20Future%20We%20Want%2019%20June%201230pm.pdf>

- *How should the post-2015 agenda address climate change as a development driver?* The post-2015 development agenda is scheduled to culminate in a global agreement on the eve of a Conference of Parties where a global framework for emissions reductions is also scheduled to be agreed. What is the appropriate relationship between these two vital multilateral processes?
- *How can the private sector (and other new development actors) best contribute to delivering on agreed goals?* UNGC goes furthest in spelling this out and all proposals recognize an increasingly the critical role that the private sector plays in foreign direct investment, and the catalytic role it can play in changing investment patterns and even social norms. How can this potential impact be brought to bear on post-2015?