



Sufia, with women working as day labourers, help to raise the ground beneath her home to cope with rising seas and high tides, Char Atra, Shariatpur district, Bangladesh (2009). © Dan Chung / Oxfam GB

MAKING IT HAPPEN

Oxfam's proposals for the post-2015 framework

In 2015, the world has a historic opportunity to set ambitious goals to end poverty and protect the planet. As the era of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) comes to an end, two major injustices continue to undermine the efforts of millions of people to escape poverty and hunger: inequality and climate change. The post-2015 framework that succeeds the MDGs must address these twin challenges through stand-alone goals to eradicate extreme economic inequality and ensure climate-resilient and sustainable low-carbon development, as well as in targets throughout the framework that address both. This paper puts forwards Oxfam's proposals for what new goals and targets should be included and how they can be designed to bring about lasting change.

SUMMARY

Oxfam's vision is of a world in which every human being can enjoy their human rights and live free from the injustices of poverty, inequality, and suffering, on a planet that has the natural resources to sustain them.

This report represents an attempt to reflect that vision in a new framework of development goals after the current Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) come to an end in 2015.

In the 15 years since the MDGs were launched the world has seen the fastest reduction in poverty in human history. The proportion of people living on less than \$1.25 a day has fallen by more than half, lifting half a billion out of poverty. In sub-Saharan Africa, 41 per cent fewer mothers die in childbirth now than they did two decades ago. Deaths of children under five have been drastically reduced in Rwanda, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Niger, and Ethiopia. Efforts to combat diseases are paying off: globally, there has been a 25 per cent decrease in deaths due to malaria.¹

These changes were not primarily a result of the creation of the MDGs.² The progress in lifting people out of extreme poverty was driven above all by national governments and political processes in Beijing, New Delhi, and elsewhere, rather than in the corridors of the United Nations. But the Millennium Declaration and the MDGs were a statement of intent for the world; a tool used by progressive governments and civil society in rich and poor countries alike to push for and obtain significant increases in international aid, and by civil society in many poor countries to hold their governments to account and demand progress, in the best cases by encouraging a race to the top among neighbouring nations.³

Multilateralism is at a crossroads – following years of stalemate at the World Trade Organization, stilted progress towards a global climate deal, and the limited response of the G20 to tackling tax avoidance and the crisis in Syria. The post-2015 framework offers a chance next year to make a new statement of intent, a new rallying cry for the world. A consensus is emerging, across governments and civil society alike,⁴ around the principles the new framework must incorporate: upholding human rights, substantive equality both in opportunities and results, universality, sustainability, and shared responsibilities in accordance with respective capabilities.

For Oxfam, in addition to these principles, the new framework must prioritize and catalyze action in two areas that the MDG framework did not adequately address: inequality and climate change.

By concentrating wealth and power in the hands of the few, inequality robs the poorest people of even the minimal support they need to improve their lives, and means that, increasingly, their voices go unheard. Gender-based discrimination continues to deny women and girls their fundamental rights and the fair chance to realize their full potential.

At the same time, through its devastating impact on crops and livelihoods, climate change is harming poor people's efforts to feed their families and overcome poverty, and could undo the progress made in tackling poverty over the last decade.

The UN Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals,⁵ the Secretary General's 2013 report on the MDGs and post-2015,⁶ and the UN High Level Panel report⁷ have all advocated the need to 'leave no-one behind' through inclusive growth, gender equality, and reaching those most marginalized. But we need to be more courageous – and explicitly embody a redistributive agenda of wealth and power that fights inequality through clear goals and targets dedicated to reducing it – to eradicate extreme economic inequality, eradicate extreme poverty, achieve gender equality and realize women's rights, and achieve universal health coverage and education.

And while there is widespread agreement that the new framework must support sustainable development, that support must be translated into a bolder agenda through dedicated goals on climate change and food and hunger, as well as integrating targets on climate throughout the framework. These measures will help prioritize the need to keep global warming below 1.5°C, and to address inequalities in access to resources, while living within our planetary boundaries.⁸

Because both inequality and climate change will worsen the harm that conflict and disasters are already inflicting on millions of people, the framework should also include a goal to reduce global risks to sustainable development.

Oxfam is proposing two further 'enabling goals' as a way of ensuring the framework is fully financed and to enable all other goals are met. First, revenue can be raised through tackling tax evasion and avoidance and through progressive and sustainable domestic taxation systems. In parallel, cracking down on corruption and pressing for progressive politics and inclusive governance will ensure that political decisions are taken to distribute power and resources in ways that empower poor and marginalized people. Both are fundamental to the success of the other goals.

We therefore propose the following 11 goals be included in the new framework:

Building more equal societies

Goal 1: Eradicate extreme economic inequality

Goal 2: Eradicate extreme poverty

Goal 3: Achieve gender equality and realize women's human rights

Goal 4: Ensure universal health coverage

Goal 5: Ensure universal, free, quality education and lifelong learning

Building resilience in a warming world

Goal 6: Ensure climate-resilient and sustainable low carbon development consistent with limiting global warming to 1.5°C

Goal 7: Eradicate hunger and ensure the right to food for all

Goal 8: Ensure universal and sustainable access to water and sanitation

Goal 9: Reduce global risks to sustainable development

Enabling the framework

Goal 10: Ensure political equality through inclusive governance

Goal 11: Financing the framework

As with the MDGs, agreement at global level is simply the first step towards achieving the necessary transformative action. This paper concludes by outlining how Oxfam believes the framework can be designed to bring about lasting change, by creating the accountability mechanisms and support for civil society that will drive action at the national level, and establishing a clear framework for the roles of governments, business, and civil society.

If we succeed, 2015 could mark an historic turning point for the world. The agreement of a bold new framework in September 2015, together with agreement at the UN climate talks in Paris later that year, could provide the impetus for a transition to a more equal world, without the scourge of poverty and climate change and transforming millions of lives.

NOTES

All URLs last accessed May 2014.

- 1 Oxfam (2013) 'MDGs Summit: Inequality massively undermining progress on poverty goals', Media Brief, Oxfam: NY www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/oxfam-mdgs-media-brief-en-23sept2013.pdf
- 2 D. Green, S. Hale, and M. Lockwood (2012) 'How Can A Post-2015 Agreement Drive Real Change?', Oxford: Oxfam, www.oxfam.org/en/policy/how-can-post-2015-agreement-drive-real-change
- 3 In Zambia, exposure to neighbouring country MDG data invoked a sense of competition, strengthening the arguments of advocates. A. Evans (2012) 'Lessons from the Effective Promotion of Safe Motherhood in Zambia', LSE, <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/africaatlse/files/2012/10/Lessons-from-the-effective-promotion-of-safe-motherhood-in-Zambia-Alice-Evans-Working-Paper.pdf>
- 4 This consensus is evident in the following: UN Open Working Group (2014) 'Focus Areas', New York: UN, <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/3276focusareas.pdf>; UN Secretary General (2013) 'A life of dignity for all: Accelerating progress towards the Millennium Development Goals and advancing the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015', New York: UN, <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/A%20Life%20of%20Dignity%20for%20All.pdf>; United Nations (2013) 'A New Global Partnership: Eradicate Poverty And Transform Economies Through Sustainable Development – The Report of the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda', New York: UN, http://www.un.org/sg/management/pdf/HLP_P2015_Report.pdf; and submissions by the Beyond 2015 coalition, www.beyond2015.org/document/vision
- 5 UN Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/owg.html>
- 6 UN Secretary-General (2013) op. cit.
- 7 United Nations (2013) op. cit.
- 8 K. Raworth (2012) 'A Safe and Just Space for Humanity: Can we live within the doughnut?', Oxford: Oxfam, www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/dp-a-safe-and-just-space-for-humanity-130212-en.pdf

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For further information on the issues raised in this paper please e-mail advocacy@oxfaminternational.org

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