



International Labour Office

Response to the EC Consultation Paper

Towards a post-2015 development framework

Introduction

The ILO Office welcomes this consultation on the post-MDG framework initiated by the European Commission and appreciates the consultation paper prepared for it.

The ILO Office shares the concern that important elements such as decent jobs, equity and social protection, governance and human rights are not sufficiently reflected in the current MDG framework and that rising inequalities both, between and within countries constitute a cause for concern to be addressed by the post-2015 development framework.

The ILO Office has contributed and will continue to contribute to the UN work on a post-2015 global development framework. The ILO Office is participating¹ in the on-going process of the UN activities of reviewing the current MDG framework by, for instance, being engaged in several of the nine global thematic consultations as well as in other global, regional and national consultations. The ILO has a clear, transparent, inclusive “roadmap” on the MDG review that enables on all levels, on global, as well as on national level to mobilize the whole scope of tripartite constituency, reaching out particularly to inform and involve employers’ and workers’ organisations.

In November 2012 the ILO Governing Body (ILO GB) will discuss Decent Work in relation to the post 2015 development agenda and the International Labour Conference (ILC) in June 2013 will hold a general discussion on sustainable development, decent work and green jobs. These statutory events with the ILO constituents, involving also the EU through its EU coordination and representation within ILO GB and ILC, will provide the opportunity to craft a set of core ILO messages underlining the implications of decent work for the economic, social and environmental dimensions of development, in a responsible way reflecting on the consequences of the crisis with special effect on development activities and MDGs, including proposals for action under the forthcoming global framework. The results of this ILO process will be duly fed into the post-MDG discussions.

¹ UN Task Team on the Post 2015 Development Agenda, ILO Office staff contributed to several Thematic Think Pieces on Employment, Social Protection and Macroeconomic Stability & Inclusive Growth to the UN Secretariat preparations:

http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/Think%20Pieces/5_employment.pdf

http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/Think%20Pieces/16_social_protection.pdf

http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/Think%20Pieces/12_macroconomics.pdf

For the ILO it is **key that Decent Work**², with its **four strategic objectives** (employment, social protection, fundamental rights and principles at work and social dialogue) that are inseparable, interrelated and mutually supportive become part of the future development framework.

Part A of the consultation paper and questions: The MDGs: benefits and limitations

Over the past decade, the MDGs have provided a major global framework for concerted development action and it is generally recognised that forging a global consensus on ending poverty is one of the main MDG achievements. The MDG framework strengthened advocacy for global poverty alleviation and human development, mobilized public support and improved coordination of assistance as it introduced a format of simple goals and targets that helped monitoring and accountability.

On the other hand, MDG goals and targets have been criticized by many for oversimplifying the development agenda, contributing to distracting attention from pressing development priorities such as a fair globalization, equality, human rights, the major macro-economic shifts and employment. Although the MDGs were built on principles embodied in the Millennium Declaration and agreed by all Member States, the process for setting the goals and targets was top-down, with no participation of recipients nor wider debate with stakeholders. This was sharply criticised by social partners and other parts of civil society as well.

Employment and decent work were among the “missing dimensions” that are most often quoted by the critics, a surprising neglect given that employment creation is a sustainable means to fight poverty. Under the existing MDGs a target on “Achieving, full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people” and a set of related indicators were added as an afterthought under MDG 1 - Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger, the target was not quantified and it was dealt with primarily as an aspirational goal, with limited effects on policy formulation. They were added as a target under goal 1 after the 2005 review. The ILO Office considers it essentially important to make decent work a core objective in the new development framework.

Part B: Feasibility of a future framework

Accelerating MDG progress in view of 2015 is a top priority of the UN, hence it is now recognized that this requires efforts to achieve stable, equitable and inclusive economic growth. It is useful to have a global framework, but at the same time it should take into national and regional priorities and needs and take into account international standards. To strengthen the feasibility of a future framework, **the key stakeholders, notably social partners, should be included in the process of national and regional adaptation of the framework, ensuring the responsible ownership over the measures to be taken and the sustainability of the results achieved.**

Part C: The potential scope of a future agenda

In the long aftermath of the global financial and economic crisis, **employment and social protection have become priority concerns in rich and poor countries.** This new emphasis is broadening the scope of the international development agenda, beyond the

² For more information on the Decent Work Agenda

<http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/decent-work-agenda/lang--en/index.htm>

focus of the last decade on the reduction of extreme poverty and humanitarian assistance for the poorest. The crisis is proving that although people can be lifted out of poverty through aid, they remain vulnerable and their livelihoods precarious unless there are wider conditions for inclusive, equitable and sustainable growth, decent employment and development.

This new broader emphasis should also be reflected in the new development framework. **The Decent Work Agenda through its four inseparable, interrelated and mutually supportive pillars offers a comprehensive framework supporting this much needed shift from an exclusive focus on extreme poverty to a broader view of inclusion, equity and sustainability.**

In this regard we welcome the recent EC Communication on Social Protection in European Development Cooperation. As an integral part of EU development policy, we acknowledge that strengthening social protection policies can facilitate an inclusive and sustainable development by creating decent jobs, increasing equity as a crucial element of protection against poverty and vulnerability.

We hope at the same time that the EU development cooperation will also cover **in practice** social dialogue and fundamental rights and principles at work. The ILO Office and social partners have provided input to on-going work at the level of EC services but this has to be put into practice.

We also acknowledge the EC's emphasis that any future framework should be designed in such a way as to recognise the inter-linkages between the economic, social, political and environmental challenges and the need for these challenges to be addressed at the global, regional, national and sub-national level.

Furthermore, the ILO Office believes it is crucial that the future post-MDG framework is coherent with the future Sustainable Development Goals which are also currently being defined. It is deemed important that the two valuable processes reinforce each other in a coherent manner enabling to reach synergy of goals, efforts, means and resources.

Part D: The potential shape of a future agenda

The Decent Work Agenda is central to a future agenda in light of the continuing economic, financial and jobs crisis which is characterised by high unemployment particularly for youth.

The relevance of decent work to address the present economic, social and environmental challenges has also been recognised in the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development 2012 (Rio+20) last June where multiple references to full and productive employment and decent work have been made. It also encouraged global initiatives on youth employment and social protection.

The ILO Office is currently working on developing further indicators on decent work which could be a useful contribution should it be decided that the new global framework will include such targets and indicators. The ILO Office is ready to cooperate with the EC in this regard to provide technical input on decent work related issues.

With regards to funding of a new global development framework ILO believes it is important that apart from traditional governmental sources new innovative solutions, incentives would be mobilised reflecting the appropriate active participation of all stakeholders concerned, both globally and nationally. To share experience in this regard

gained in working methods like public private partnerships with the private sector would be most useful in which ILO is ready to offer its expertise and experience such on the Better Work Programme³. Achievements of the south-south cooperation should be acknowledged and encouraged.

Conclusions

The ILO Office considers that decent work and its four pillars not only provide people with income, freedom, dignity and hope, but decent work presents them with a way out of poverty representing a most valuable asset of development.

The ILO Office encourages EC to work to ensure that decent work is placed at the heart of a post 2015 development agenda and offers full cooperation to the EC in this regard.

³For more information see <http://www.betterwork.org/EN/Pages/newhome.aspx>