



The future agenda for development cooperation: voices of Dutch society

Contribution prepared for the High Level Panel on the Post 2015 development agenda - March 2013

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Introduction

This document presents the first findings of consultations on the Post-2015 development agenda that have taken place within Dutch society. The document focuses on youth representatives, private development initiatives, the (African) diaspora and the wider public. In addition, the document includes the main findings of a consultation with civil society organizations, organized by Partos and EEN. The main aim is to draw general conclusions based on the various debates.

In the months of February and March 2013, several consultations took place in the Netherlands which focused on the future UN framework for development cooperation after the Millennium Development Goals have come to an end: the so-called Post-2015 UN development agenda. These consultations were organized by knowledge institutions, civil society organizations and the private sector. The main findings will be submitted to the UN High Level Panel by the respective organizers.

One of the core tasks of NCDO (a Dutch expertise and advisory centre for citizenship and international cooperation) is to facilitate and broaden the debate on development cooperation in the Netherlands. NCDO therefore supported several discussions and consultations on the 'Post-2015 agenda' in order to provide a platform for those voices within the Dutch society that are often more fragmented and less organized. These voices deserve a platform, as the associated groups play a valuable role in development cooperation or provide a valuable additional perspective. Moreover, if various groups are to be involved in the implementation of a future framework, it is also important to involve them in the discussions about the formulation of this framework.

The consultations with youth representatives, private development initiatives and the (African) diaspora were organized by, and for, the specific groups with the support of NCDO. The approach chosen was to support and build on the ideas and initiatives that had already been formulated. In addition, a short survey was carried out among Dutch citizens to ask for their views on the Post-2015 agenda. Furthermore, the multi-media platform OneWorld (which is also part of NCDO) organized the ongoing blog series '2015: The Future We Want', to which a wide range of actors contribute, including experts in the field of development cooperation and sustainability, journalists, representatives of the diasporas, internet experts and (young) entrepreneurs. The document also includes a summary of the main findings of a consultation with civil society organizations, organized by Partos and EEN with the support of NCDO. Partos and EEN will send their complete report separately to the UN High Level Panel.

Overview of the main contributions to the Post-2015 agenda in the Netherlands

A. The results of the following consultations will be forwarded separately to the UN High Level Panel

The formulation of building blocks for the future of development cooperation organized by the Society for International Development (SID Netherlands), Institute for Social Studies (ISS), the entrepreneurial development bank (FMO) and NCDO. The building blocks can be found at: <http://sid-nl.org/activiteiten/the-future-of-international-cooperation/>

- The consultation with Dutch civil society organizations working in international cooperation, organized by Partos and EEN and supported by NCDO.
- Several thematic consultations organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- The private sector consultation organized by Unilever (part of consultations with the private sector in other countries of the world).
- The Netherlands organized and hosted the UN thematic consultation on water.

B. Focus of this document: consultations and discussions within Dutch society

Focus group	Organization	Methods	First Results
Youth representatives Working groups on the UN and 'Young & Sustainable'	Dutch Youth Council (NJR)	Working group sessions and plenary feedback , 14 th March 2013 (appr. 30 participants)	Section 1
Private development initiatives	MyWorld (Platform for private development initiatives of Dutch citizens supported by NCDO, Wilde Ganzen, Cordaid, Oxfam Novib)	Online discussion at MyWorld (20 participants) & My World live event 16 th March 2013 (appr. 200 participants)	Section 2
African Diaspora	Representatives of the African diaspora in The Netherlands	A short survey among invitees was carried out (appr. 20 participants) in preparation for a meeting 20 th March 2013 (appr. 70 participants)	Section 3
Broad public	OneWorld (NCDO)	Online blog '2015: The Future We Want' (60 participants so far)	Section 4
Dutch citizens (public opinion)	NCDO	Short representative survey executed by TNS NIPO at the request of NCDO January 2013 (1523 respondents)	Section 5
Dutch civil society organizations working in international cooperation	Partos and EEN (Partos is the Dutch association of NGOs working in international cooperation. EEN is an initiative of the Dutch Platform Millennium Goals)	Consultation 19 th February 2013, with feedback session. (appr. 50 participants)	Section 6 (Summary of report prepared by Partos and EEN)

Key issues for the outline of the Post-2015 framework

Below the key issues on the outlines of the Post-2015 framework are summarized. These were deemed relevant in all the consultations and online discussions within civil society (see the annex for more information on the separate consultations).

- Most consultations showed that participants were **supportive of formulating a new framework**. Participants in various discussions emphasized the importance of formulating clear goals and indicators.
- In nearly all the debates and online discussions people emphasized that the future framework should **be a framework for all countries** (including higher-income countries, middle-income countries and lower-income countries). The framework should, however, provide **space for diversity** and take into account the specific challenges of different countries.
- The **responsibility of the higher-income countries** to achieve the future goals was mentioned as a central issue in nearly all the discussions. In particular, a **stronger focus on policy coherence** for development was emphasized, referring to the need to 'look beyond ODA' and to focus on broader policies that affect development in other countries. An increased focus on **(fair) trade** was particularly mentioned as being important.
- In nearly all consultations, participants expressed the opinion that **different actors** – international institutions, governments, private sectors, civil society organizations as well as citizens- should contribute to achieving the future goals. Governments were generally perceived as crucial actors, in particular as enablers and facilitators.
- **Increasing transparency** about the progress of the new goals was mentioned in most debates as an important issue. This includes transparency towards **citizens**.
- In several discussions and consultations participants asked attention for the (current) MDGs, which have not yet been completed.

The variety of different views on the most important themes

Since different groups participated in the consultations and discussions, there was also a variety of themes mentioned as needing more support in the future framework (see the sections 1 to 6 for more information).

- **Youth representatives** placed a strong emphasis on themes related to sustainability. Also education, fair trade and peace and security were mentioned as crucial issues.
- **Private development initiatives** emphasized the importance of education, sustainability, food security and fair trade.
- **The African diaspora in the Netherlands** placed a strong emphasis on trade and the interdependencies between the Western world and Africa. Several other themes were mentioned but no clear conclusions can be drawn based on the first consultation.
- In the **contributions to the OneWorld blog ‘2015: The Future we want’** two themes in particular have been addressed so far: fair trade and sustainability.
- **Dutch citizens** particularly mention the following themes as important to focus on in the future framework: food security, health, education and peace and security.
- **Dutch civil society organizations** emphasize the importance of goals concerning human rights, health (including specifically sexual and reproductive health and rights), education, environmental sustainability, food security, gender equality and capacity building. Equity and equality were mentioned as key issues.

Summary themes

Focus groups	Key themes
Youth representatives	sustainability, education, fair trade, peace and security
Private initiatives	education, sustainability, food security, fair trade
African Diaspora	(fair) trade, ...
OneWorld blogs	fair trade, sustainability
Public opinion	food security, health, education, peace and security
Civil society organizations	human rights, health, education, sustainability, food security, gender equality, capacity building.

1 Youth representatives

This contribution was made by the Dutch Youth Council (NJR) on the basis of a consultation with feedback sessions with the youth representatives of two commissions: 'United Nations' and 'Jong & Duurzaam' (Young & Sustainable). In total 30 representatives participated in the consultation.

Recommendations related to themes

- Shift to a **Circular Economic System** to replace the outdated linear economic model, which results in many negative effects on humans and on the environment. Maximizing the re-use of products and materials can limit the destruction of resources.
- **Good Quality Education** for all, whereby besides primary education secondary and higher education receive a more prominent role.
- **Equality** whereby everyone shares equally in prosperity, and where good health care, sanitation, water and food security form the basis.
- A safe environment for everyone by creating **Peace & Security** worldwide as a condition for the achievement of the future Post-2015 agenda.
- **Fair Trade** where everyone receives a fair price for their products and 'fair *trade* goods' become 'fair *chain* goods'.
- Creating a **Sustainable Environment** by stopping damage to the environment, actively taking climate change into account, and realizing sustainable urbanization in a society that is run completely on sustainable energy.

Process Recommendations

- **A Critical and Transparent Reflection** on the current development goals, since not achieving these goals is unacceptable. Quantity versus quality, and numbers versus percentages of goals reached should be extensively discussed.
- **Universal Goals** that apply to all countries, with a **Specific Approach** for each country for implementing the new agenda.
- **Government Responsibility** through active participation in, and direction of the Post-2015 agenda.
- **Business Firms Responsibility** to perform and to provide resources for the Post-2015 agenda.
- **Provision of Handles and Tools** for citizens and youth, for the general and specific implementation of the goals for broad participation and shared responsibility.

2 Private Development Initiatives

This overview is based on 1) an online discussion on the Post-2015 agenda which was moderated on the MyWorld online platform for Dutch private development initiatives. Approximately 20 people participated actively in the online discussion. 2) A special event for these initiatives (16th March). Nearly 200 people voted at the event on the most important themes for the Post-2015 agenda. Furthermore, people participated by reacting to questions about the Post-2015 agenda.

Key issues for the Post-2015 agenda

- **Education** was mentioned as the most important theme, followed by **sustainability, food security, fair trade and drinking water and sanitation**. The new agenda should also include goals on employment (economic development), human rights and peace and security. Finally, participants mentioned that MDG 1 'ending extreme poverty and hunger' should be reincorporated into the Post-2015 agenda.

Design and implementation of the Post-2015 framework

According to the Dutch private development initiatives, the following issues should guide a new global framework:

- **Principles of inclusive participation**. The participation of both men and women was mentioned as an important issue. Furthermore attention should be paid to vulnerable groups in societies, such as the disabled, homosexuals, landless people and the lower social classes. Private development initiatives can make an important contribution in these areas as they are able to reach the most vulnerable groups. This is particularly relevant at a time when Western governments are pulling out.
- Private development initiatives see **governments and civil society organizations as important facilitators** for reaching the goals in the Post-2015 agenda. However, they feel that more use could be made of the knowledge obtained by private initiatives because they have gained experience with working on a small scale at the local level.
- The framework should focus more on **role of the Western world** (e.g. on the consumption and production of goods) and also on a **coherent approach** in order to eradicate the structural causes of poverty. Furthermore, attention should be paid to the planetary boundaries of the Earth.
- Lastly, the framework agenda should have **universal goals** that apply to all countries, but should have a **specific approach for different geographical areas** (with respect for cultural, social and economic differences).

3 African diaspora in the Netherlands

This annex presents the first results of a consultation amongst representatives of the African diaspora about the future of development cooperation. A short survey on the Post-2015 agenda was carried out among invitees in preparation for a debate on the 20th March 2013. The discussion was the kick-off for a longer trajectory in which representatives of the African diaspora will discuss and document perspectives about the future of development cooperation. Participants in the discussion emphasized the diversity of Africa, which also limits the possibilities of formulating a common vision. The following key issues emerged from the survey and the first discussion.

Key issues:

- The African diaspora placed a strong focus on **the interdependencies between the Western world and Africa**. In particular, the role of the Western world in relation to **trade** was mentioned, such as overcoming unfair Western trade barriers and subsidies to support Dutch enterprises. An important subject mentioned was **raw materials**, as many of these materials are found in Africa and the Western world depends extensively on these materials for its future development. Moreover, as Africa is forced to sell these raw materials at a low price, without being able to process them into products, the continent does not benefit from them.
- The building **up and strengthening of institutions and civil society** was mentioned as a crucial aspect for stimulating development in African countries. This is also related to governance and education.
- The new agenda on development cooperation should involve **all groups, including diasporas**.
- Diasporas could be involved at different scale levels as they have specific knowledge and can build on their networks. They can function as a bridge between their countries of origin and their current home countries in the areas of knowledge transfer and policy making. Several members maintain strong ties with African countries (not only their home countries), by visiting these countries and through the internet. Their commitment goes beyond the contribution through remittances and small scale initiatives (contacts with governments, knowledge about raw materials were mentioned as examples).

4 OneWorld Blog

2015: The future we want
Online debate oneworld.nl

The OneWorld blog includes a broad range of society's views, including those of experts in the field of development cooperation and sustainability, journalists, representatives of the diasporas, internet experts and (young) entrepreneurs. Readers discuss the blogs on Facebook and Twitter. So far over sixty people have written a blog and the debate will continue for (at least) another two months.

Key issues:

- Many participants feel there should be a **shift in focus from development aid to fair trade based on equality between countries and with a keen eye for social and humanitarian issues.**
- Several participants have doubts about the success of the previous goals and about the extent to which the MDGs have contributed to the decrease of poverty.
- The **role of the Western world** is an important issue in the discussions; the focus has been too much on the poor countries. In the current framework only MDG 8 focuses on the role of the Western world and fair trade. Moreover, it is stressed that many countries did not commit themselves to the financial agreements for achieving the MDGs.
- **Internet and social media**, such as twitter, crowdfunding and open data are mentioned as important possibilities for connecting people worldwide and involving a broad range of actors. Internet is also mentioned as a means for making development more **transparent.**
- In addition, emphasis is put on the **planetary boundaries. Fossil energy and raw materials** are being depleted. This requires a different definition of welfare and the introduction of a **circular economy** to provide for everyone's needs. International institutions and governments need to provide the necessary conditions, for instance a different tax system (mentioned by one blogger as an example).
- To conclude, too much is discussed solely within the development sector. **Processes, money streams and policies should be clear and transparent**, so that citizens are informed about how money is spent.

5 Survey among Dutch citizens

These figures are based on a large-scale quantitative survey that was performed in January 2013 by TNS NIPO at the request of NCDO. In total, 1523 respondents filled in a short online questionnaire, including four questions on the Post-2015 agenda. This sample represents Dutch society as a whole in terms of gender, age, educational level, region, household size and voting behaviour.

What should the post-2015 agenda look like according to Dutch citizens?

- The large majority (70%) of the Dutch citizens thinks that it is necessary to formulate a new agenda in order to combat global poverty when the MDG's expire in 2015.
- According to those who are convinced of the need for a new agenda, key points of the Post-2015 framework should be **food security, health, education and peace and violence**. The new agenda should also include goals on human rights and water.
- On the other hand, broader topics such as gender equality, the protection of nature and climate change are perceived as less relevant. For example, only 3% mentions 'sustainability' as one of the two goals that must certainly be included in the new agenda in order to combat global poverty.

Which actors should define the Post-2015 agenda?

- With regard to the design and the implementation of the Post-2015 agenda, the Dutch place high levels of trust on **non-governmental organisations and international organizations such as the UN and the EU**. Not only is it essential for almost half of the population that these two parties are involved in the formulation of the content, they should also take the lead in the eventual implementation of this new agenda.
- This underlines the rather "traditional" view of the Dutch on new global arrangements for eradicating poverty. This "traditional" view is not only reflected in terms of the specific issues that should be on the agenda, but also regarding the organizations who should be involved in the setting and implementation of the Post-2015 agenda.

6 Dutch civil society organizations working with international cooperation

Partos and EEN will present a separate report to the UN High Level Panel based on the consultation of a wide range of Dutch civil society organizations working in international cooperation. A summary of the main findings of this consultation, which was supported by NCDO, are listed below:

- The need to address **policy coherence** was stressed as a key issue in this consultation. This applies to the coherence between individual goals, and to cross-cutting issues. It was mentioned that governments of higher income countries must be held accountable for the coherence of their broader policies, including for example trade policy.
- Furthermore the need to develop **one framework with a keen eye for differentiation** was mentioned as relevant. This applies to a differentiation of goals in terms of target groups, phases of development, country/region and other relevant differentiators, as well as a differentiation between goals and prerequisites, the latter being the assumptions underlying the goals. Examples of such prerequisites are (collective and individual) human rights, planetary boundaries, good governance, or the position of women and girls. Special attention should be paid to fragile states.
- A **multi-actor approach** was also mentioned as important, stressing that government, civil society and the private sector should be able to fully play their roles as actors in their own right. In the end, the responsibility to agree on and achieve the new goals lies with national governments; the UN Member States.
- **Equity and equality** were referred to as a basic principles for the framework as these are not only relevant from a moral perspective, but also necessary for an effective realization of goals. A rights-based approach to development was widely supported among civil society organizations working in development cooperation.
- Dutch civil society organizations emphasize the importance of goals concerning **human rights, health** (including specifically sexual and reproductive health and rights), **education, environmental sustainability, food security, gender equality and capacity building**.
- There was general consensus that the new framework should combine the realms of the **MDGs and the SDGs**. Moreover, the need to base the new framework on a common vision of the future of our planet and the importance of **building on existing treaties** was emphasized.
- There is a need for **innovative financial means and structures** to help finance the efforts to reach the new goals.

The full report can be found here: https://partos.nl/webfm_send/65659.