

**Convergence Assembly  
World Social Forum 2015, Tunis, March 27**

**Post-2015 Agenda: what development, for whom and why?**

**REPORT**

The Convergence Assembly on the post-2015 development agenda held in Tunis aimed to bring together social movements and civil society organizations wishing to share their perspectives on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) framework currently under negotiation at the United Nations. More than 30 organizations from all continents attended the Assembly to inform one another, share analyses on positions that should be defended, identify false solutions and risks and propose joint actions to move toward greater convergence.

The year 2015 will be crucial to define the future of the international sustainable development agenda. The orientations and means of implementation that will be adopted at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Financing for Development (FFD) Conference in Addis Abeba in July and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that will be launched in September by the United Nations will have significant impacts on populations. They will also lay the foundations for the COP21 negotiations on climate change in December in Paris. Civil society participation and monitoring in these processes is essential to make sure the peoples have a say in the development agenda to build just and sustainable economies and societies that live in harmony with the environment and in the respect of future generations and planetary boundaries.

**WE REAFFIRM THAT:**

The civil society organizations, global campaigns, social movements and human rights defenders gathered today, reaffirm that:

1. The **human rights framework** must be at the basis of the SDGs, which must be considered as universal goals applying both to the South and to the richest countries.
2. There is a clear contradiction between the pursuit of goals for the sustainability and well-being of all and the **international free trade agreements** that destroy the basis for their realisation and take away sovereignty to allow people to decide their own development. The richest countries need to reconsider through the Policy Coherence for Development perspective how they answer the human rights imperative in the world and within their borders.
3. We need a **strong political agenda**, not a technocratic one, where the will and commitments are clear and legally binding.
4. We will have a **common agenda of mobilisation and alerts** and work to connect with the other mobilisations which have convened at the World Social Forum in Tunis, 2015.

## **A systemic, transformational change is needed**

The SDGs call for a paradigm shift. The MDGs were mainly about donor countries telling the others what they needed to do, addressing the symptoms of poverty without challenging its root causes. The SDGs framework goes further with recognizing the core problem of inequalities and putting forth a universal framework in which countries of the North are required to change their unsustainable production and consumption patterns. The goals have real policy implications for, among other important transformations, tackling inequalities, fighting tax evasion and reaffirm the right to social security and essential social services.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Financing for Development (FfD) Conference in Addis-Abeba in July will address the question of how to make the financial system work for sustainable development. A wide range of issues pointing too at transformative changes are to be addressed, such as regulation of the financial sector, external debt and tax international justice.

But the SDGs promises still lack any means of implementation or a credible mechanism for monitoring and accountability. Should the corporate interpretation of the sustainable development agenda prevail, the new development framework is likely to fall short of fostering a significant shift away from the high-carbon, high-inequality and crisis prone current global system. How are we to ensure that the post-2015 framework meets the needs of people and planet rather than favoring the 1% and that the most transformative aspects of the post-2015 agenda will be fully implemented?

## **Increased participation and accountability**

The paradigm of participation has changed and the SDGs process has involved meaningful civil society participation. Nonetheless, space for CSO participation is currently shrinking now that we have reached the most decisive stages of the process, in part due to a growing involvement of corporate actors. It is crucial to maintain effective spaces for civil society participation at all stages of the post-2015 process, including the goals' final adoption, implementation and monitoring. To this aim, there need to be stronger and institutionalized civil society participation mechanisms to hold the states accountable. Sustainable development cannot go without participatory democracy: United Nations agencies and states need to open up the process as much as possible and to operate with more transparency so that all countries and their peoples, in particular in least developed countries (LDC), have a say in the negotiations.

## **Building, strengthening and connecting alternatives**

The *buen vivir* or living well framework challenges us to rethink how we envision development and to find new ways of relating to each other and with nature. Besides the necessity of denouncing the shortcomings of the global agenda, there is need to pursue our work to build alternatives. Across the world, social movements, social solidarity economy actors, women's and food sovereignty movements, trade unions, human rights defenders and civil society organizations already are implementing concrete solutions that need to be scaled up, and are organizing themselves to build fair and sustainable economies and societies that live in harmony with the environment and in the respect of planetary boundaries.

The proposals of agroecology movements, communities fighting for protecting the commons, and community-based social solidarity economy (SSE) initiatives, among others, carry great potential for generating decent and resilient jobs and sustainable

livelihoods and securing universal access to fundamental rights. The sustainable development agenda needs to draw on these transformational processes, echo and support their proposals. Ensuring that financing is directed towards local initiatives and SSE organizations as actors of sustainable development, and recognize social and solidarity finance (SSF) as a means for innovative financing for development should also be part of the revised Financing for Development (FfD) agenda.

These proposals shift the development paradigm away from an aid-oriented approach and are conducted not *for*, but *with* and *by* the communities and local populations. Moving toward greater convergence also means fostering the solidarity of our struggles, including the struggle for our rights to the essential resources for life notably land and natural resources such as water

### **Highlighting the contradictions of the global trade and financial agenda**

There is a clear contradiction between the pursuit of sustainability and well-being of all and the promotion of public private partnerships (PPPs) and new trade agreements such as the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), and the Trade in Services Agreement (TiSA). We take a strong stance against these renewed attempts at deepening the process of neoliberal globalization through lifting financial and trade regulations and constraining the states' capacity to legislate. These agreements destroy the basis for the realisation of SDGs and take away from peoples the sovereignty to decide their own development.

Avoiding the capture of the post-2015 development agenda by the corporations is key to achieving sustainable development. A human rights-based approach and a legally binding framework on transnational corporations' human rights obligations are necessary to make possible a truly sustainable development that leaves no one behind and respect peoples. A holistic and binding human rights-based approach is also necessary to ensure that the SDGs don't enter into contradiction one with another, and that citizens are provided tools for holding accountable the corporations.

The sustainable development agenda won't succeed if the economic and financial landscape is not altered to make it consistent with the goals of economic, ecological and social justice. Recognizing inequality and the overconcentration of wealth as major global problems means dealing with the richest through proper redistribution and changing harmful trade and tax policies. Likewise, it implies to shift away from the 'too big to fail' and 'too big to jail' stance and to recognize for financial institutions obligations to work in a way that is consistent with sustainability.

### **PROPOSALS FOR JOINT ACTIONS**

We will have a common agenda of mobilisation and alerts and work to connect with the other mobilisations which have convened at the World Social Forum in Tunis, 2015. Among the courses for joint actions that have been proposed during the Assembly:

- Proposal from the [Spanish Alliance against Poverty](#) to create an **International Panel against Poverty and Inequality** body with a similar role than the one played by the IPCC in the climate change area. This Panel can play a crucial role counterbalancing the corporate power that shapes the development agenda and making visible civil society alternatives. You can [give your support](#) to the *Madrid Declaration on the creation of an International Panel for Poverty and*

*Inequality Eradication*. For more information, [watch the videos](#) (in Spanish) on the proposal and contact [info@2015ymas.org](mailto:info@2015ymas.org).

- Increase the **communications between the networks** and share information and analyzes with the list of organizations that attended the WSF Convergence Assembly. Implement an alerts system within the group and ensure that information also flows from below and community-based groups to advocacy groups, while connecting with the areas of knowledge in the process.
- Join the **informal “morning after” conversation** which started to gather thoughts and explore strategies for next steps after 2015 – contact: [hanna.hansson@civicus.org](mailto:hanna.hansson@civicus.org)
- Use the mailing list of participants of this Assembly to **propose further joint actions** and work with increased convergence.

**Link to webcast of the Assembly – WSF website:**

<http://opensfm.net/projects/extensionfsm2015/comex15-asc-agenda-post2015>

## **ORGANIZATIONS THAT ATTENDED THE ASSEMBLY**

AQOCI, ATTAC, Beyond 2015, CAFOD, Center for Economic and Social Rights, CIDSE, Coalition Eau, CODE-NGO, Concord, DEEEP, DKA Austria, Economistas sin fronteras, Egyptian Center for Economic and Social Rights, Enda Tiers-Monde, Fédération syndicale unitaire, Finnish Peace Committee, France Libertés, IBON International, IDEA – Irish Development Education Association, IFP, INFID Indonesia, IRD France, Global Call to Action against Poverty, LAPAS, LDC Watch, NGO Federation of Nepal, PIANGO - Pacific Islands Association of NGOs, Plataforma 2015 y más, Powerline, RIPESS-Intercontinental Network for the Promotion of Social Solidarity Economy, RAESS, RENAPESS, REMESS, Sightsavers, Social Watch, Visions of the Left

## **REPORTS AND REFERENCES**

- **Beyond 2015:** [www.beyond2015.org](http://www.beyond2015.org)  
A global civil society campaign pushing for a strong and legitimate successor framework to the Millennium Development Goals. Beyond 2015 brings together more than [1000 Civil Society Organisations](#) in over 130 countries around the world.
- **Campaign for Peoples' Goals** (<http://peoplesgoals.org>)  
[The Post-2015 Corporate Development Agenda: Expanding Corporate Power in the Name of Sustainable Development](#), Paul Quintos, IBON International and Campaign for Peoples' Goals
- **Center for Economic and Social Rights:** [cesr.org](http://cesr.org)  
[Publications and resources](#) on post-2015 SDGs  
Advocacy publication [“Who Will Be Accountable? Human Rights and the Post-2015 Development Agenda”](#).  
Report [‘Post-2015 Fiscal Revolution’](#) on the need to integrate human rights standards into the design of fiscal policy at both the national and international levels
- **CONCORD**  
[“Destination Addis Ababa: the European Union's Responsibilities at the Third Financing for Development Conference”](#) paper, February 2015  
[Spotlight on EU Policy Coherence for Development](#) report, April 2015

- **Enda Tiers-Monde:** [endatiersmonde.org/instit/](http://endatiersmonde.org/instit/)  
Article '[Understanding "post 2015" process and make the SDGs a reality](#)'
- **Global Call to Action against Poverty (GCAP)**  
[15 Solutions for 2015](#) – a Broad-Based People's Campaign against Poverty, Inequalities and Climate Change  
[Johannesburg Call to Action \(2013\) and Montevideo Declaration \(2007\)](#)  
"The World we Want ", GCAP annual report 2011
- **Global Policy Watch:** [www.globalpolicywatch.org](http://www.globalpolicywatch.org) – Promoting accountability and transparency in the Post-2015 and Financing for Development Process, a joint initiative of [Social Watch](#) and [Global Policy Forum](#).  
Subscribe [here](#) to Global Policy Watch newsletter
- **LDC Watch:** [www ldcwatch.org](http://www ldcwatch.org)  
[Statement at the Stakeholder Preparatory Forum for the Post-2015 Development Agenda](#), Agenda Negotiations, 16 January 2015, UN, New York. [Position paper: Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda - Keeping LDCs at Centre Stage](#).
- **Our World Is Not For Sale:** [www.ourworldisnotforsale.org](http://www.ourworldisnotforsale.org)  
[Read the document](#) 'Some Changes that Must be Made to Global Trade Rules to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the post-2015 Development Agenda'
- **RIPESS – Intercontinental Network for the Promotion of Social Solidarity Economy** ([www.ripess.org](http://www.ripess.org)): [Social Solidarity Economy Recommendations](#) on Post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals, 2014
- **UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Social and Solidarity Economy (TFSSE)** ([unsse.org](http://unsse.org)).  
Position paper released in July 2014: [Social and Solidarity Economy and the Challenge of Sustainable Development](#) on the potential of social solidarity economy in the post-2015 development agenda. Available in [English](#), [Spanish](#), [Portuguese](#) (French soon available)