



THE PRESIDENT
OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

29 June 2015

Excellency,

I have the honour to transmit herewith, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 69/244, a Summary of the key messages and proposals from the Informal interactive hearings with Non-governmental Organizations, Civil Society Organizations, Major Groups and the Private Sector on the post-2015 development agenda, which I convened on 26-27 May 2015.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sam K. Kutesa', written in a cursive style.

Sam K. Kutesa

To All Permanent Representatives and
Permanent Observers to the United Nations
New York

Informal interactive hearings with representatives of Non-governmental organizations, Civil society, Major groups and the Private sector on the Post-2015 Development Agenda

**United Nations Headquarters, New York
26-27 May 2015**

President's Summary

In accordance with General Assembly resolution 69/244, the President of the General Assembly convened informal interactive hearings with representatives of non-governmental organizations, civil society, major groups, and the private sector on 26-27 May 2015. The hearings comprised an opening segment, four interactive roundtables, and a closing segment. The interactive roundtable discussions included panelists and respondents from Member State and stakeholders. The following is a summary of the key messages and proposals from the hearings.

Opening Segment

Speakers underscored the need to ensure that the post-2015 development agenda being formulated reflects a people-centred approach with the eradication of poverty, improving livelihoods for all and the achievement of sustainable development in its social, economic and environmental dimensions as its core objectives. It was stressed that securing the necessary resources - finances, technology development and transfer as well as capacity building will be critical for effective implementation. Robust, inclusive, participatory and effective follow-up and review mechanisms that engage various stakeholders at all levels will also be essential to track progress.

It was noted that a close relationship exists between development and human rights challenges. Some speakers called for a rights-based approach to sustainable development in order to break silos in policy-making. As an integrated framework, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will also be critical for addressing inequalities and for promoting peaceful and stable societies, democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

Civil society, non-governmental organizations and other relevant stakeholders should make their contributions and input for decision-making to urgently address sustainable development challenges. Governments were encouraged to commit to time-bound implementation of the new development agenda and to tackle inequalities, including through the collection of disaggregated data.

It was stressed that enhancing accountability at the national level by ensuring inclusive assessment of progress, reviewing progress beyond national borders and learning from policies that will be successful for implementation of the SDGs in other countries and following-up at the regional and global levels under the guidance of the UN will also be critical.

Speakers noted that other priorities should include advancing gender equality and empowerment of women, ending violence against women in all its forms, designing integrated sustainable development policies and mechanisms, collecting data, developing statistical capacity, and ensuring appropriate social protection floors. It was further stressed that the vulnerable such as children and youth, indigenous peoples, migrants, older persons and persons with disabilities are not left behind by the new agenda. Coherence should be ensured between the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda and follow-up to the outcomes of other international conferences such as the Third Conference on Financing for Development, Least Developed Countries (LDCS), Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs), Small Island Developing States (SIDS), among others.

The private sector also has a crucial role to play in achieving the SDGs, through its contribution to economic growth and providing decent jobs that will lift people out of poverty. Governments should create an enabling environment for businesses by setting priorities in-line with the SDGs and fostering partnerships, while businesses should be more accountable and enhance their reporting.

It was noted that new approaches to philanthropy are also needed to harness synergies and resources for implementation of the new agenda, and examples of successful initiative in the sectors of health, education and agriculture were cited. The UN and governments were encouraged to partner with philanthropy in order to improve accountability.

Roundtable discussion 1: Theme: Declaration

1. Panelists underscored that the Summit declaration should be short and visionary; inspire political leadership; reaffirm the Rio+20 principles; and underscore poverty eradication and the achievement of sustainable development as the overarching objective of the post-2015 development agenda. It should also highlight interlinkages among all dimensions of sustainable development. It should be a means to communicate the agenda to all audiences, help build ownership and stress the need for concerted efforts to meet challenges. In this way, the declaration can set the stage for a universal, holistic and transformative approach.

2. Member State respondents emphasized that the declaration should articulate the commitment to leave no one behind, improving livelihoods for all people, and emphasize universal human rights, rule of law, good governance, social equality, inclusiveness at all levels. It should stress the importance of enduring partnership between governments and stakeholders, environmental protection and preserving the Planet. The declaration should include a strong and forward-looking statement on the need to achieve gender equality and to empower women, supporting children and the youth, among other key priorities.

3. The declaration should reinforce the commitment to delivering economic and social benefits in order to create a world without poverty, in harmony with nature, with sustainable consumption and production patterns, a world based on equity, shared responsibility and prosperity.

4. Stakeholder respondents added that the declaration should address the role of effective, responsive and transparent institutions in fostering the kind of coherent policies that are necessary for inclusive growth and job creation and, and highlight the constructive role partnerships can play.

5. The declaration should highlight the universal nature of the agenda, take note of the different levels of development and recognize the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDR).

Roundtable Discussion 2: Theme: Sustainable Development Goals, Targets and Indicators

1. It was stressed that the SDGs should build on the foundation laid by Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), ensure no regression, and emphasize the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development. They should be strongly underpinned by existing universal human rights, and represent a new social contract with governments collaborating with civil society and other relevant stakeholders.

2. There should be greater efforts to realize the right to water and sanitation, health and well-being, among others, and Member States should align national indicators with global norms, standards and aspirations, and adapt global indicators to national development plans and strategies.

3. It was noted that development of a good indicators framework will be essential for keeping the ambition high and tracking progress during implementation of the SDGs. Broad citizen participation would ensure that the presence of disaggregated data would account for the vulnerable and marginalized.

4. National indicators should reflect countries' respective national capacities. National focal points and implementation committees should oversee implementation of the SDGs, and national processes should identify indicators that will stimulate inclusive growth and job creation. Civil society, partnerships at the grassroots, and stakeholders in every country should participate in the process on developing indicators. The next step toward implementation should be both a technical process to develop indicators involving statisticians, and a political process generating a new global partnership.

5. Stakeholder respondents added that disaggregated data by sex and age, disability, among other variables, should inform policy making. The UN system should incorporate ageing in their work and publish their findings for governments.

6. The importance of ensuring that adequate means of implementation for the new agenda are embedded in the outcome of the September 2015 summit was underscored. The notion of mutual accountability between governments and stakeholders was highlighted in the context of mobilizing means of implementation.

7. There should be emphasis on citizen ownership, including localization of the agenda, but governments will need to continue playing a role in disseminating information; ensuring crucial political buy-in; scaling up good examples of multi-stakeholder collaboration; and supporting the development of statistical capacity.

Roundtable discussion 3: Theme: Means of Implementation and Global Partnership for Sustainable Development

1. Panelists underlined the importance of ensuring that the intergovernmental negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda and the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD) are complementary and coherent. It will be crucial to identify how increased financial resources from all sources can complement each other to address the new agenda, what structural reforms and capacities will be needed, and what mechanisms will ensure civil society and multi stakeholder participation. Some said that the outcome should also provide a platform for sharing experiences and seeking alternative funding streams. It should address capacity building, women's empowerment, youth inclusion, political rights, and partnerships driving innovation. The High-level Political Forum (HLPF) is a good starting point for creating participatory space for review and follow-up of implementation.

2. Tax reform and increased domestic resource mobilization can boost capacities of governments to deliver basic social services and help reduce inequality. Greater efforts are required to combat corruption, improve transparency and free up resources for development.

Panelists underscored that the FfD process and the UN system in general should support countries' efforts to combat tax evasion and illicit financial flows, going beyond the action plan proposed by the OECD. Panelists proposed strengthening of the existing UN Committee on tax matters, or the establishment of a new intergovernmental committee.

3. The scientific community can also play a role in the implementation of the SDGs, as a neutral, objective and universal stakeholder. It should provide a solid foundation for policy making, promote accountability and transparency, show the impact of unsustainable patterns, and identify ways to improve the environment and quality of life. The scientific and technological community should work in an integrated and trans-disciplinary manner with global partners to identify critical issues and support decision making with solutions based on sound evidence. Governments should help scale up science activities, capacity building and innovation, especially in low-resource environments, and encourage stronger collaboration with the scientific and technological community.

4. Member State respondents noted that the private sector was vast and differentiated in size, scope and actions, and that successful businesses should promote social inclusion and achievement of the SDGs. Many CEOs noted that business should have a leading role in achieving sustainable development, but acknowledged that current efforts were not enough. Business should contribute resources and know-how. Engagement should not be limited to corporate social responsibility, but should extend to the sustainable growth, elimination of harmful practices, decent job creation, and technology transfer, among other areas.

5. A renewed Global Partnership for development is essential for mobilization of means of implementation from all sources as well as unlocking the resources and capacity of the private sector for sustainable development.

6. It was noted that international public finance, especially ODA, will be critical for developing countries, particularly the LDCs. It was further noted that challenges in financing the SDGs would have to be addressed, and that fulfilling ODA commitments would be critical to support LDCs. The private sector has financial resources much greater than traditional ODA and philanthropy. Both governments and stakeholders must think of ways to use resources from across sectors, including those held by insurance companies, banks, capital markets, wealth funds and other institutional investors. The transfer of technology is fundamentally linked to capacity building; however discussions should not be derailed by the issue of intellectual property rights.

7. It was noted that enhancing governments' partnerships with civil society and other relevant stakeholders would also be key to promoting rule of law, and fostering peaceful, stable and equitable societies.

Public participation can contribute to effectiveness of both review mechanisms at all levels and to the application of cross-cutting plans and strategies.

8. Stakeholder respondents highlighted the importance of localizing the SDGs, taking a bottom-up approach and having accountable governance at all levels. Strengthened local governments can raise revenue for sustainable development, invest in infrastructure, and build capacity for implementation. The role of media and academia will also be crucial in capacity building and raising awareness.

9. Some speakers said that implementation should be based on three pillars: empowering women, mobilizing everyone, and strengthening local democracy through the establishment of community-led accountability mechanisms. It was noted that fiscal decentralization is key in promoting partnerships with the private sector and strengthening local governance.

10. Ensuring that multi-national corporations pay their taxes, combating tax evasion, and illicit financial flows should be given priority. The strengthening of public-private partnerships and leveraging of blended finance mechanisms can generate additional resources for sustainable development, but the risks should be analyzed and addressed.

11. Promoting financial inclusion, financial literacy and involvement of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) will be crucial in efforts towards achieving the SDGs. There should also be greater focus on non-financial means, such as enabling policies, especially at the early phases of implementation.

Roundtable discussion 4: Theme: Monitoring, review and follow-up

1. Panelists noted that robust and effective monitoring, review and follow-up mechanisms are critical for the successful implementation of the new development agenda. The follow-up and review framework should be voluntary, state-led, flexible, transparent, and should build on existing mechanisms as much as possible, engage all stakeholders, and operate vertically as well as horizontally.

2. It was proposed that stakeholders could perform their own progress assessments at regional and global levels. Such diverse participation would help generate awareness and communicate the SDGs to the public. It was also recognized that data collection and analysis will pose a significant challenge for monitoring the post-2015 agenda.

3. Member State respondents underscored that a strengthened independent statistical capacity would also be crucial, as it would help civil society stakeholders to hold governments accountable. Data systems will not be useful, however, if not presented in a valid and simple way.

It was noted that building coherent systems relies on accessible and understandable data, and partnerships with the government will ensure access at various levels. Open-source technology will help focus on engaging people.

4. Member State respondents said that the follow-up and review process should account for the diversity of national approaches. The definition of accountability, it was noted, varied among actors. Some speakers said that it was important to allow governments to decide what to share with the international community. There cannot be a prescriptive one-size-fits-all solution.

5. Systematic interaction between governments and stakeholders at the national level, with the participation of local communities was emphasized. Effective social dialogue can stimulate inclusive growth and strengthen accountability and ownership. Some speakers noted that the post-2015 agenda should ultimately help make more effective use of development cooperation at all levels, and involve parliaments and national assemblies in a proactive follow-up.

6. Stakeholder respondents added that an inclusive and participatory follow-up and review process would demonstrate that the international community had learned from the experience of the MDGs. Furthermore, to meet the ambitions of the new agenda, it would be essential to demonstrate that the SDGs are in line with international human rights norms and labour standards.

7. The High-level Political Forum (HLPF) on sustainable development was widely recognized as the main platform for follow-up and review at the global level. Other international development institutions will focus on specific goals and targets at the global level. Stakeholder engagement will be important, and all actors must be accountable for their contributions. Regional reviews should be under the purview of UN Regional Commissions and prioritize regional solutions. It will be vital to develop mechanisms to track national progress in achieving the SDGs. National reports should be supplemented by stakeholder reports, independent reports by the UN system, and analysis by multi-stakeholder partners and the private sector.
