

## 24<sup>th</sup> Informal Working Breakfast on the Post-2015 Development Agenda “Communicating the Post-2015 Agenda: Mobilizing all segments of society”

Hosted by the Bahá'í International Community and the International Movement ATD Fourth World  
24 March 2015

A diverse group of stakeholders<sup>1</sup> attended a working breakfast to discuss key issues related to the communication of the Post-2015 sustainable development agenda. The following are highlights of the discussion:

- Journalists say that history is not just the story of what happened, but a particular story told through the eyes of those who selected specific facts; it has a subjective element.
- Key messages associated with P-2015 are: *Leave no one behind*, *The future we want*, *The road to dignity by 2030*, *no target is considered met unless met for all economic and social groups*. Two key themes emerge: inclusivity and dignity.
- The Secretary-General's “6 essential elements” and the “Four Ps” are a good approach.
- The ownership of this process is in the hands of the general public—the recipients of all of the goals and targets. The private sector and philanthropic community should understand their roles and responsibilities in this process. Role of the private sector must go beyond a public relations exercise.
- We need to ask ourselves: Is each country able to participate in our discussions about the goals? Is the language clear across different cultures? Do we share understanding of the core values?
- MDGs recognized as most successful anti-poverty campaign in history. Setting targets works. Goals must be SMART: specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound. Yet, in parts of the world populations still don't know what MDGs are or have experienced them as a failure.
- The P-2015 agenda is broader and more ambitious than the MDGs (new areas: rule of law, governance, institutions, gender equality, and inequalities). Generally, the UN is trying to protect and preserve something. In the case of P-2015 agenda, it is trying to create something new—this represents a new dynamic at the UN.
- The world is different than it was in 2000. One third of humanity has access to internet; there are 6 billion cell phones. This has fundamentally changed how information is shared. Today, we can measure much more accurately how information is shared.
- We need to touch the minds and hearts through all tools at our disposal, including through the arts, through storytelling. How do we communicate in an inspiring way? The UN needs to convey hope and aspiration. People need to believe in the concepts.
- National ownership is very important—this is the most important vehicle to move the agenda forward. Political leaders must be aware of the SDGs and must know how to communicate them.
- We must not impose the agenda but rather try to establish a dialogue. This requires an understanding of the challenges that must be overcome.
- A lack of trust in institutions exists, leading people to ask why a new agenda when governments have not delivered on existing commitments. If governments have failed to deliver on promises that were binding on them, why should people think that they will deliver on an aspirational non-binding agenda? It is imperative to build trust.

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<sup>1</sup> Permanent Missions: Canada, Denmark, Ireland, Japan, Republic of Korea, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Montenegro, New Zealand, Peru, United Kingdom. Representatives from UN: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Department of Public Information, Secretary-General's Climate Change Support Team, UN Development Programme. Non-governmental organizations: Amnesty International, Bahá'í International Community, International Movement ATD Fourth World, International Presentation Association, Loretto Community, National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States, Quaker United Nations Office, Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary, Save the Children, Soroptimist International, SOS Children's Villages International, UNANIMA International, World Federation for Mental Health, World Vision International.

- Do we just want people to be aware of the SDGs or is there another level of engagement we want from populations? We need to be specific about audiences and determine who is best able to reach various audiences.
- Grassroots and civil society organizations are in a position to create conditions for populations to hold governments accountable.
- Note that none of the invited media persons came to this meeting. They are not yet interested in the SDG process and do not think there is a story to tell.
- We have to consider how difficult it is to convey information in some parts of the world; the IT networks do not exist and participation is not feasible. How realistic is it to call for the participation of children and youth when they are not even heard in their own families and communities? How can we create a bottom-up process? For example, how do we practically reach children? We must develop child-appropriate messages.
- Language is a major issue: we must focus on translation into many different languages. How do we move from national to sub-national level?
- We must recognize the powerful role of youth. (Note recent meeting in Paris about global citizenship education. Youth made it clear that they want to generate their own results rather than be on the receiving end of decisions made by older generation.)
- Three major conferences are coming up and need to be part of the communication: Conference on Financing for Development, UNFCCC Conference, and the SDG Summit.
- On its 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the UN is looking forward and unfolding a new development paradigm. The Panel on Peace Operations is conducting a review. For the UN to remain relevant and be taken seriously, successes of its efforts must be seen. This requires effective communication and global dialogue around its long-term development processes.