

**Informal Notes of the Breakfast Dialogue on the Follow-up to Rio+20
and the Post-2015 Development Agenda, 26 March 2013**

Human Rights at the Core of the Three Dimensions of Sustainable Development

Organized by the Bahá'í International Community and International Movement ATD Fourth World

A diverse group of stakeholders¹ convened to informally discuss key issues on the topic of human rights in the forthcoming development agenda. The following are highlights of the comments made during this discussion:

- There has been great difficulty in bringing human rights perspectives to the development agendas of the UN.
- Human rights were mentioned in the preamble of the Millennium Declaration but remained peripheral to the goals themselves.
- Progress in human rights has been made at conceptual and operational level but still encounters resistance at the political level. We are concerned that there is a disjunction at political, operational and implementation levels.
- Five human rights principles are neglected under the current framework: universality, indivisibility, equality, appropriate financing, and accountability.
- Two examples of why human rights have not been incorporated in implementation: 1.) A fear of mixing the development agenda and human rights agenda, and 2.) Political hesitation towards creating more legally binding obligations.
- Unfortunately, there is still resistance to implementing human rights ideas into development. From where does this resistance stem?
- Recently published synthesis reports from national consultations highlight human rights as one of four of the most recurrent themes in the post-2015 discussions. Consultations present human rights as a non-negotiable aspect of implementation in the new agenda.
- UNICEF and other studies show that inequalities have widened though national averages for the realization of MDG targets have risen, and MDGs have been reached. A commitment to making progress across all sectors in development instead of rising national averages is necessary if we are to accomplish the MDGs and sustain the job to its completion.
- It is vital that the human rights approach to development acts as a tool to improve the lives of more people. We must be more sophisticated in our analysis: instead of targeting merely higher averages, we need to bring this approach to all different sectors in hopes of impacting the most vulnerable. This will close the gap of inequality.
- To integrate human rights is to recognize that they are the standard to which development agendas must adhere.
- Measurement of human rights can be highly political but should not be a barrier to implementation.
- Many still operate in silos. Effectiveness will require us to work with others from different disciplines.

¹ Permanent Missions represented: Belgium, Bolivia, Finland, France, Germany, India, Japan, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Mexico, Pakistan, Peru, Singapore, Switzerland and United Kingdom. UN agencies represented: Development Policy and Analysis Division (DESA), Division for Sustainable Development (DESA), UNICEF and UN Women. Civil society organizations represented: Amnesty International, Bahá'í International Community, Center for Economic and Social Rights, Franciscans International, Good Shepherd International Justice Peace Office, International Movement ATD Fourth World, International Presentation Association, National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States, NGO Committee on Human Rights, What Moves You?, Women's Environmental and Development Organization, World Federalist Movement-Institute for Global Policy, World Vision International and UN Foundation.

- It's not about how we define policies, but instead how we implement and the participation of the people of interest.
- Progressive implementation of the human rights agenda, in terms of resources, needs to be increased. A few possibilities for this to move forward: attention to indigenous peoples rights, accessibility, addressing fear of conditionality
- In terms of the sustainable development agenda, the necessary points of attention should focus on the concept of equality, vulnerable groups, and people-centered approaches to human rights. We must find creative ways to make this happen.
- Emphasizing equality of rights will be a huge step forward for making the link between sustainable development and human rights perspectives.
- Human rights cannot be seen as an optional add-on. The new set of development goals must be rooted in a framework that reinforces commitments that have already been made on international human rights standards. Of course, these standards must be progressively realized – but more operationalization must be given higher priority.
- Financial assistance must buttress our next set of goals. The new framework must impose monetary commitments on wealthy states.
- Establishing zero-based goals, with obligations being to eliminate not reduce, is the best way to approach human rights.
- How do we convince states to global accountability: who watches the watchdogs? We have a weak structure of global governance at international level; we need more effective and creative (peer) review mechanisms.
- We can't have sustainable development without human rights.

Questions posed:

- Is it enough to just mention human rights in the pre-ambular parts of our outcome documents and resolutions?
- How do we convince member states that are reluctant of the benefits to this approach?
- How do we shift human rights from 'preamble' to 'operation' for better implementation?
- How do we encourage holistic approaches which require interdisciplinary approaches?
- How do we make these more operational in the agenda? Can we mainstream them in the development field too?
- What are the practical elements for implementation of human rights agreements? What would they look like?
- What are the notions of state sovereignty implicated in this approach and how can they be addressed?
- How does international community reflect the clear, growing consensus on human rights?

The following announcements were made:

- In the coming weeks, the France in coordination with Costa Rica, UNDP and UNEP will be hosting a briefing for Member States on the outcome of the High Level Meeting in Costa Rica on the Global Thematic Consultation on Environmental Sustainability.
- The next breakfast dialogue will take place in mid-April at the Bahá'í International Community's United Nations Office and address the topic of *Gender Equality as an Essential Prerequisite for Sustainable Development*.