

**Breakfast Dialogue on the Follow-up to Rio+20
and the Post-2015 Development Agenda**

Topic: Poverty

14 November 2012

**Fourth of a Breakfast Series by the Bahá'í International Community
and International Movement ATD Fourth World**

- 08:30 **Arrival of Participants & Breakfast**
- 08:40 **Welcome and Introductions**
Mr. Ming Hwee Chong
Representative
Bahá'í International Community
- 08:45 **Opening Remarks**
H.E. Mr. Manjeev Singh Puri Ambassador
Deputy Permanent Representative
Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations

Mr. Danny Burns
Team Leader, Participation, Power and Social Change Team
Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex
- 09:00 **Open Discussion**
Moderated by Ms. Cristina Diez Sagüillo
Main Representative to the UN
International Movement ATD Fourth World
- 09:50 **Information Sharing**
All participants encouraged to share upcoming related plans and activities
- 09:55 **Closing**

Note: Informal notes will be taken and shared. Comments made by participants will not be attributed to the speaker.

**Informal Notes of the Breakfast Dialogue 14 November 2012
on the Follow-up to Rio+20 and the Post-2015 Development Agenda**

Topic: Poverty

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 poverty. The following are a few highlights of the comments made during this discussion:

- To understand poverty, one must speak directly with the people living in poverty. Many development interventions fail because of the disconnect between the experience of people in situations of poverty and the evidence around which policy is constructed.
- The MDGs represented the minimum that the global community could agree on.
- MDGs didn't engage with the poorest people. They have reached people living in poverty who are 'just managing' and have focused on low-hanging fruit. What would a development system look like if it started with the very poorest? What would the infrastructure for that kind of development look like?
- The lives of people living in poverty are highly complex, and these complexities are not well understood. Analyses tend to focus on issues of power and politics but miss many other dimensions. How do we build a development program that can address these complexities?
- We need to build learning processes into development systems, ones that involve asking questions, analyzing data and incorporating comprehensive participatory engagement. This kind of engagement is more important than any particular goal.
- Over the last 20 years, millions of people have been lifted out of poverty in South Asia. Developing countries fought for the references to poverty eradication to be included in the Rio+20 outcome document. Yet, 900 million people will be living in extreme poverty in 2015.
- Reaching the poorest should be the principal focus of the development agenda. Recall that 70-80% of the people in situation of poverty now live in middle-income countries.
- The Post-2015 development agenda should be inclusive, sustainable and growth-oriented.
- Peace and stability is needed for the implementation the development goals.
- We need to cooperate to reach these goals, but even within a collaborative framework, countries need to be given the space to develop their own policies. The UN cannot be prescriptive; it can only provide a framework. Countries need to proceed in their own way.
- Poverty eradication and sustainable development are part of *one* agenda.
- Challenges: the biggest killers of infants living in poverty are diarrhea and pneumonia, inequalities between small and larger farmers are growing, agricultural production is falling, weather patterns are becoming erratic, and electricity is expensive. Other challenges include multi-dimensionality of poverty, youth bulge, corruption, lack of property rights.
- Successful interventions include electricity, irrigation in rural areas, roads, change to agriculture and availability of water. In addition to basic infrastructure, development has been driven by girls' education, good governance (especially in terms of service delivery) and the opening up of trade (although this has at times heightened the rural/urban divide and led to inequality.)
- Interventions have to be targeted; sustained growth is not enough.
- Human rights have to be central to economic development. Women's and girls' rights have not been raised in this discussion. Women represent 70% of those living in poverty.
- We must analyze power relations and the structures by which people are kept in poverty.
- We cannot rush the process of developing a Post-2015 policy framework. We need time to get it right.

¹ Permanent Missions represented: Canada, India, Japan, Malawi, Singapore, Sri Lanka, and United Kingdom. UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs represented by: Division for Social Policy and Development, Division for Sustainable Development, and Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination. Civil society organizations represented: Amnesty International, Bahá'í International Community, Center for Economic and Social Rights, CIVICUS, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 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 Sub-Committee for the Eradication of Poverty, and Plan International.

- The decision-making process around the P-2015 development agenda has not been inclusive. Major Groups' level of access to information has decreased since Rio+20. There is no funding for Major Groups.

The following questions raised by participants could serve to stimulate future discussions:

- Without dictating national policies, how will the Post-2015 development agenda lead to structural transformation?
- How will we achieve progress for the poorest of the poor if development priorities are still defined in terms of narrow national interests?
- What is an enabling environment for countries to prosper and grow?
- People in situations of poverty have been fed and clothed, but what about their future?
- How can people living in poverty participate meaningfully in decisions that affect their lives?
(Recommendations: implementation of social protection floors, implementation of guiding principles on extreme poverty and human rights.)

The following related activities were shared:

- Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung- have organized a day of informal discussions entitled: "Toward A New Generation of Development Goals", Monday November 26 2012, 9:30 am – 5:40 pm, United Nations, New York, NLB Conference Room 1. This is co-sponsored by the Club de Madrid, Ford Foundation and the UN Missions of Mexico, France and Peru.