



Brussels, 27.2.2013  
COM(2013) 92 final

**COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN  
PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL  
COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS**

**A DECENT LIFE FOR ALL:**

**Ending poverty and giving the world a sustainable future**

**COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN  
PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL  
COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS**

**A DECENT LIFE FOR ALL:**

**Ending poverty and giving the world a sustainable future**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

Two of the most pressing challenges facing the world are eradicating poverty and ensuring that prosperity and well-being are sustainable. Around 1.3 billion people still live in extreme income poverty and the human development needs of many more are still not met. Two-thirds of the services provided by nature – including fertile land, clean water and air – are in decline and climate change and biodiversity loss are close to the limits beyond which there are irreversible effects on human society and the natural environment.

These challenges are universal and inter-related and need to be addressed together by all countries. It is not sufficient to address the challenges separately – a unified policy framework is needed. Such an overarching policy framework is needed to mark out a path from poverty towards prosperity and well-being, for all people and all countries, with progress remaining within planetary boundaries. It should also be closely related to issues relating to governance, human rights and peace and security issues, which are enabling conditions for progress. It is estimated that 1.5 billion people are living in countries experiencing significant political conflict, armed violence, insecurity or fragility.

In autumn 2013, a UN special event will take stock of the efforts made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), discuss ways to accelerate progress until 2015 and start exchanging on what could follow after the MDG target year of 2015. In addition, the commitments made at the Rio+20 Conference in June 2012 need to be implemented, including through actions towards an inclusive green economy. Furthermore, it will be necessary to build further on this progress through the Open Working Group that was established in Rio. All of these inputs will provide input for the development of a post-2015 overarching framework.

This Communication proposes a common EU approach to these issues. To do this, it first identifies the main global challenges and opportunities. It then turns to evaluate the success of global poverty eradication agenda and the experience of the MDGs, as well as outlining some of the key steps towards sustainable development as agreed in Rio+20, and outlining key actions. It then describes the challenges and elements for a future framework that can be drawn from the experience of the MDGs and the work stemming from Rio+20, in particular the elaboration of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and indicates how these can be brought together within relevant UN processes.

Based on these considerations, it proposes principles for an overarching framework for post-2015 which would provide a coherent and comprehensive response to the universal challenges of poverty eradication and sustainable development in its three dimensions, thereby ensuring a Decent Life for All by 2030.

## 2. NEW GLOBAL CONTEXT, NEW CHALLENGES, NEW OPPORTUNITIES

The world has undergone enormous change over recent years, including major shifts in the global economic and political balance, increased global trade, climate change and depletion of natural resources, technological change, economic and financial crises, increased consumption and price volatility of food and energy consumption, population changes and migration, violence and armed conflict and natural and man-made disasters, and increased inequalities. New actors, including private and other non-governmental players, have arisen in the global arena.

While developed and emerging economies account for most of global GDP, the latter have now become the key drivers of global growth and already have a significant impact on the world economy. Trends suggest that the balance is expected to shift further; by 2025, global economic growth should predominantly be generated in emerging economies, with six countries expected to collectively account for more than half of all global growth.

Unemployment remains a worldwide challenge. Some 200 million people are out of a job, among them 75 million young people. Rates of female participation in the labour market often remain low, while social services remain limited. Furthermore, some 621 million young people worldwide are not in school or training, not employed and not looking for work, risking a permanent exclusion from the labour market. Undeclared work and the fundamentals for decent work, including rights at work and social dialogue, are problems in many countries. Most poor people in developing countries are engaged in small-scale farming or are self-employed. Many poor people in these countries are working in unsafe conditions and without the protection of their basic rights. Only 20% of the world population has access to adequate social protection.

At the same time, inequalities within countries have increased in most parts of the world. The majority of the poor now live in middle income countries, in spite of their fast growth. Achieving poverty eradication in such countries appears to be one of the major challenges. However, longer term projections indicate that by 2050 the locus of poverty might again be concentrated in the poorest and most fragile countries.

More than 1.5 billion people live in countries affected by violent conflict. Violence destroys lives and livelihoods and often affects women and people in vulnerable situations, such as children and people with disabilities. The gap between fragile, violence-affected countries and other developing countries is widening. In April 2011, no low-income fragile or conflict-affected country had achieved a single MDG and few are expected to meet any of the targets by 2015. Poor governance, including a lack of democracy, rule of law and respect for human rights, is currently hampering efforts towards poverty eradication and sustainable development.

In addition, there is overwhelming scientific evidence and consensus that the unsustainable use of the natural resources is one of the greatest long term threats to humankind. The effects of environmental degradation and climate change are already being felt and threaten to undo much of the progress already made in eradicating poverty, and so do natural disasters. We are not on track to keep temperature increases within 2°C above the temperature in pre-industrial times, the threshold beyond which there is a much higher risk that catastrophic impacts on natural resources will occur, posing risks to agriculture, food and water supplies and the development gains of recent years. At the global level, the challenge will be to adapt and to mitigate impacts, including through the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

Already today, climate change, depletion of natural resources and ecosystem degradation are having a significant impact on livelihoods, for example through the increased number and

intensity of natural disasters and the depletion of natural capital and infrastructure. Since 1992, natural disasters have caused €750 billion of damage and killed 1.3 million people. The effects of unsustainable patterns of current economic development are still largely determined by developed countries and increasingly by emerging economies, while poorer countries are disproportionately impacted and have the least resources to cope with negative effects<sup>1</sup>. These countries are also often particularly dependent on natural resources, in particular for sectors such as agriculture, forestry, energy and tourism, which aggravates their vulnerability to degradation and depletion.

Development and growth contribute to human prosperity and well-being, but also to environmental challenges, such as resource depletion and pollution, which are likely to become more acute over time. These negative effects are mostly determined by the 5.7 billion people that *do not* live in extreme income poverty, which leads to a significant increase in global demand and consumption, putting additional strain on natural resources. Progress towards an inclusive green economy through sustainable consumption and production patterns and resource efficiency, including in particular low emission energy systems, is therefore essential.

In order to satisfy increasing demand, it is estimated that global agricultural production in 2050 will have to increase by 60% over 2005 levels, putting increasing pressure on already-scarce natural resources, in particular land, forests, water and oceans. At the same time, there are indications that up to half of global food production is wasted. Given urbanisation and population growth, water use is projected to increase by 50% by 2025, by which time roughly 5.5 billion people – two thirds of the projected global population – will live in areas facing moderate to severe water stress.

Looking ahead, these challenges must be viewed in the context of demographic trends: it is projected that the world population will reach more than 9 billion by 2050, with the population of sub-Saharan Africa set to more than double. Together, Africa and Asia will represent nearly 80% of the world's population by 2050. The increase in the world's median age is expected to affect developing countries most, with consequences for health services and pensions, as well as tax revenues.

It is in this context that the follow up to Rio+20 and the MDG review special event take place. We need to keep in mind that the challenges are interrelated and require a coherent and comprehensive response, supportive also of other international processes, such as climate and biodiversity negotiations.

### **3. BUILDING ON THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE MDGs AND RIO+20**

#### **3.1. Taking stock of MDG achievements**

The EU remains committed to doing its utmost to help achieve the MDGs by 2015, in line with its policy framework as set out in the Agenda for Change<sup>2</sup> and the European Consensus on Development<sup>3</sup>.

The MDGs embody a fundamental global agreement to end poverty and to further human development. They have in the last decade proven to be a valuable tool to raise public

---

<sup>1</sup> Least Developed Countries comprise more than 880 million people (about 12 per cent of world population) but account for less than 2 % of world GDP.

<sup>2</sup> COM(2011) 637 final

<sup>3</sup> 2006/C 46/01

awareness, increase political will and mobilise resources to eradicate poverty. Impressive progress has been made:

- According to the World Bank, the share of people living on less than USD 1.25 a day (2005 prices) fell from 43% in 1990 to 22% in 2008. It is likely that the target to halve the proportion of people living in extreme poverty was reached in 2010.
- The target to halve the proportion of the population without access to safe drinking water was achieved globally in 2010 – between 1990 and 2010 over two billion people gained access.
- Globally, primary school enrolment has increased to an average of 89%, with girls now almost as likely to be enrolled as boys.
- Children are significantly less likely to die of disease or malnutrition.
- Global HIV infections continue to decline and access to anti-retroviral drugs has expanded widely.

The global partnership for development has complemented national efforts towards the MDGs. Since 2000, annual global Official Development Assistance (ODA) has increased by nearly 70%, to EUR 96 billion, and the share of ODA going to Least Developed Countries (LDCs) has more than doubled. The EU and its Member States collectively are the largest donor, providing an annual EUR 53 billion in ODA (2011), or more than half of global ODA. In parallel, the implementation of the aid and development effectiveness principles and targets has contributed to greater ODA impact. The phenomenal growth in trade has been a major factor in progress: between 2000 and 2009 developing country exports rose by 80%, compared to 40% for the world as a whole. The EU is the biggest trading partner for developing countries and has led the way in granting duty-free and quota-free access to all LDC products, under the Everything But Arms initiative. Furthermore, EU-funded research, such as through the European and Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership, has also contributed to the achievement of the MDGs.

Challenges to the achievement of the MDGs however remain, with sub-Saharan Africa in particular lagging behind. Globally, 1.3 billion people still live in extreme income poverty. More than 850 million people do not have enough to eat. About 61 million children are still out of school. Women continue to be the subject of discrimination and confront severe health risks, in particular to maternal health and their sexual and reproductive health and rights. Violence affects one third of all women in their lifetime and undermines efforts to reach any MDG. An estimated 2.5 billion people are without access to decent sanitation facilities and 780 million people still lack access to clean and safe drinking water. 7 million people living with HIV/AIDS still do not have access to treatment. The world is still far from reaching the target of full and productive employment and decent work for all. Only 20% of the world's population has access to adequate social protection. Unsustainable use and management of the Earth's limited resources puts at risk the lives and well-being of future generations.

In addition, success is unevenly distributed not only between countries – in particular with a striking lack of progress towards the MDGs in fragile and conflict affected states – but also *within* countries - including those that already have the means to provide better lives and futures for their population.

Yet the overall picture, especially in view of technological advances and economic progress achieved by many emerging and developing countries since the MDGs were developed, shows that elimination not just reduction of poverty in a single generation is within reach.

### **3.2. Main Rio+20 outcomes and commitments**

The Rio+20 Conference confirmed a common global vision for an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable future for the planet and for present and future generations and underlined that many challenges remain to be addressed. Rio+20 recognised the green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication as an important pathway for achieving sustainable development, set in motion a process to develop universal sustainable development goals (SDGs) and agreed to take action towards sustainable development. These actions will also help inform the process of developing SDGs and will, in the longer term, also contribute to their realisation. Rio+20 also agreed to reform the institutional framework for sustainable development, to set in place a structure that can deliver the follow-up to the Conference and to work further on means of implementation. It is important that the EU now implements promptly the commitments taken at Rio, actively engages in these processes and takes the necessary action both within the EU and internationally.

### **3.3. Implementation: Actions at EU and international level**

The EU will continue to pursue the sustainable development, including by implementing Rio+20 commitments through a range of overarching policies, in particular through its overarching strategy for smart, inclusive and sustainable growth - Europe 2020. This covers, inter alia, resource efficiency, low carbon economy, research and innovation, employment, social inclusion and youth. The implementation and regular review of the Europe 2020 Strategy, which builds on the integrative approach initiated by the EU Strategy for Sustainable Development, should contribute to greater coherence, mainstreaming and integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development in EU policies at large. Sustainable development objectives will be made operational through a range of key policies under preparation, including the reform of the Common Agricultural and the Common Fisheries Policies, the forthcoming 7th Environmental Action Programme, the Innovation Union, Horizon 2020 and the Social Investment Package.

The EU has consistently provided development cooperation in order to contribute to the full implementation of the MDGs. Through its external action and notably the implementation of the Agenda for Change, the EU will continue facilitating progress towards the MDGs and sustainable development in developing countries, with a specific focus on the least developed and the ones most in need. At the same time, a number of actions need to be carried out in order to contribute to the implementation of Rio+20 commitments.

The main current EU activities to implement Rio+20 are brought together in Annex I.

### **3.4. Institutional framework for sustainable development and means of implementation**

Rio+20 started a process to reinforce the institutional framework for sustainable development, including strengthening the role of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) and ECOSOC. A major decision was to establish a High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on sustainable development, which will replace the UN Commission on Sustainable Development. The HLPF will follow up and review progress in the implementation of the outcomes of Rio+20 and is also mandated to strengthen the science-policy interface, which will be crucial for the implementation of SDGs. It should be directly linked to ECOSOC, currently under reform, and work at a higher political level (UNGA) at regular intervals. These linkages provide an opportunity to enhance coherence with the on-going work on the review of the MDGs and discussions on development post-2015.

Another important outcome of Rio+20 was the decision to strengthen and upgrade the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and, in particular, the decision on universal membership for its Governing Council. This has now been confirmed by the decision on new institutional arrangements for UNEP at its recent Governing Council. The decision to establish a UN Environment Assembly is an important step forward, consistent with the EU's ambition to transform it in the longer term into a UN agency. The EU will take an active role in implementing this revised institutional framework. Ensuring the appropriate participation of the EU in both the HLPF and the reformed UNEP will be a priority.

Rio+20 also decided to promote clean and environmentally-sound technologies and to establish an intergovernmental expert committee to prepare options for a sustainable development financing strategy. The committee needs to ensure coherence and coordination and avoid duplication of efforts as regards the financing for development process. The EU will participate in this process in line with the overall approach to financing and other means of implementation, as indicated below.

### **3.5. Public Consultation**

A number of public consultations and dialogues have been held by the Commission on future perspectives of poverty eradication and sustainable development. These consultations have helped guide a number of aspects of proposals contained in this Communication. An overview of these consultations is outlined in Annex II. The Commission will continue active dialogue on all these issues with all stakeholders and civil society.

## **4. INTEGRATING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY ERADICATION IN A POST-2015 OVERARCHING FRAMEWORK**

At international level and at the UN, much of the work on poverty eradication and sustainable development has been carried out in separate strands within different communities – one stemming from the Millennium Declaration and the other from the series of UN summits on sustainable development. In reality, these two strands have always had common elements; for example, the MDGs address environmental issues through MDG7 and sustainable development has always placed poverty eradication as a priority objective.

In order to effectively address the challenges of poverty eradication and sustainable development, as a major and interlinked global challenge, the review of MDGs and the work on elaborating SDGs need to be brought together towards one overarching framework with common priority challenges and objectives, so as to ensure a decent life for all by 2030 and give the world a sustainable future beyond it.

In autumn 2013, a UN special event will take stock of the efforts made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), discuss ways to accelerate progress before 2015 and exchange views on what could follow after the MDG target year of 2015. The first session, in September 2013, of the High Level Political Forum established by the Rio+20 Conference will in addition look at the follow-up to the commitments made at Rio+20 in June 2012. It will also be necessary to progress through the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that were established in Rio. All of these inputs will provide the framework for the agreement of a Post-2015 Overarching Framework.

In order to further elaborate thinking on goals, the EU will continue its open dialogue with all relevant stakeholders. This will contribute to the EU's active input into the work of the Open Working Group on SDGs, which will make recommendations for action to the UN General Assembly.

This section describes the lessons learnt from the MDG review and the work on the elaboration of SDGs and the kinds of priority elements that emerge from both of these. Then it indicates briefly in practical terms how these can be brought together within relevant UN processes. Then, based on this, some of the key principles of an overarching framework are brought together in the final section.

#### **4.1. Priority elements for the overarching framework**

Drawing on MDG experience and the work stemming from Rio+20 on sustainable development and considering current trends, the EU considers that a number of challenges can be identified for the post-2015 overarching framework.

There is a fundamental link between global environmental sustainability and poverty eradication. It will not be possible to eliminate poverty and ensure a decent life for all without, at the same time, addressing global environmental sustainability, and the other way around. Climate change, natural disasters, biodiversity loss and the degradation of oceans, freshwater sources, land and soil have a particularly negative impact on the world's poorest populations. To be able to act on these issues, the overarching framework needs to act as a catalyst for good governance, transparency, social cohesion and the empowerment of women, in all countries and internationally, all of which are essential for sustainable development and the eradication of poverty.

As agreed in the Rio+20 outcome document, goals for sustainable development (SDGs) should be universally applicable to all countries, while taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities, should incorporate the three dimensions of sustainable development and should be action-oriented, concise and easy to communicate and limited in number. The EU proposals made in the run-up to Rio+20, indicated that they should also focus on resources which represent public goods and basic "pillars of life," such as energy, water, food security, oceans, sustainable consumption and production, as well as social inclusion and decent work. At the same time, goals should also be coherent with existing international agreements, such as goals and targets on climate change and biodiversity, as well as social protection floors.

They should address the three overarching objectives of sustainable development: poverty eradication, changing unsustainable consumption and production patterns and protecting and managing the natural resource base of economic and social development.

Post-2015 goals would need to span into the future and aim at laying the drivers to achieve a sustainable future: with a shared vision for 2050, goals and targets should aim at the timescale of 2030.

Given that the framework should have both poverty eradication and sustainable development as its overall objectives, the priority challenges need to address both perspectives drawing from the above. Based on this reasoning, the framework could be constructed around a number of main elements: ensuring basic living standards; promoting the drivers for inclusive and sustainable growth as well as ensuring sustainable management of natural resources; while promoting equality, equity and justice; and peace and security. In addition, whilst the challenge of addressing planetary environmental boundaries will require an integrated response that will impact on all these elements, and will have to be addressed in some of them, it will also require specific action in its own right. It can therefore also be seen as an additional cross-cutting ingredient of an integrated post-2015 overarching framework.

##### **4.1.1. Basic living standards**

The MDGs have provided a framework for human development, setting targets such as minimum income, freedom from hunger, full and productive employment and decent work for



all, access to primary education, basic health outcomes, access to water and sanitation, all of which form the very basis of a decent life.

We need to finish the unfinished business of the current MDGs, filling gaps and learning the lessons. For example, we need to address broader issues of education and health and include social protection. Aggregate averages have hidden national inequalities caused by extreme poverty, geographic location or marginalisation. We must move from purely quantitative goals to address quality, for example in education and health. There must be a floor under which no man, woman or child should fall by the very latest in 2030: standards by which every citizen should be able to hold her or his government to account. We should aim at empowering people to lift themselves out of poverty. Goals to stimulate action to deliver key standards in education, nutrition, clean water and air will help eradicate hunger and improve food security, health and well-being. Goals should also stimulate action to deliver productive employment and decent work for all, including youth, women and people with disabilities, depending on countries' levels of development. Unlike the existing MDGs, they should apply to every country and not only be a global target without individual country responsibilities. Each country has the responsibility to ensure progress towards internationally agreed goals.

#### ***4.1.2. Drivers for inclusive and sustainable growth***

The Commission's public consultation, as well as experience by countries that have succeeded in pulling themselves out of poverty, demonstrate the vital role played by key drivers for inclusive and sustainable growth, in particular in providing essential human development services and creating growth and decent jobs. Structural transformation should be sought by all countries in all stages of development, to allow for market-friendly, open economies that promote inclusive and sustainable growth, improve productive capacities, promote private sector development, investment and wealth creation, promote the transition towards the inclusive green economy and ensure that the benefits are widely shared. Goals would help stimulate opportunities for more inclusive and sustainable growth, supported by indicators looking beyond GDP. Many countries would be able to use these to focus on social cohesion as well as more sustainable agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture, to deliver better nutrition, overcoming water scarcity and avoiding food waste. Others would deliver more resource efficient production, economising on water and reducing and recycling waste. A goal of moving towards sustainable, resilient cities would deliver improvements in air quality, water, energy, accessible infrastructure, housing and transport, leading to solutions that link with employment, health, economic development and also address climate change adaptation and disaster prevention and preparedness. Other important drivers include sustainable energy, science and technology, telecommunications services, financial services and infrastructure, for example facilitating access to markets, as well as migration and mobility. All these aspects require an enabling and stable environment for business, entrepreneurship, innovation and productive employment to thrive.

While economic transformation is necessary, it is also a huge challenge: billions in new investment will be needed<sup>4</sup>. However, experience in countries that have made huge strides in providing these services to their citizens and recent global initiatives – such as Sustainable Energy for All and Scaling Up Nutrition – have demonstrated that such an approach can provide promising results, catalysing rapid growth and investment.

---

<sup>4</sup> For example, the International Energy Agency estimates that to provide sustainable energy services to all by 2030, approximately an additional EUR 30 billion per year will need to be invested above the business-as-usual scenario. The FAO estimates that more than USD 50 billion per year of additional public expenditure on agriculture and safety nets would be needed to reach a world free of hunger in 2025.

### **4.1.3. Sustainable management of natural resources**

Sustainable management and use of natural resources is essential to support economic growth and employment, in particular in primary production sectors like agriculture, fisheries and forestry or services sectors such as tourism. 70% of the world's poor live in rural areas and depend directly on biodiversity and eco-system services for their survival and well-being, making them more vulnerable to scarcity and climate risks. Good stewardship of natural resources, based on transparency, accountability and good governance, is essential for poverty eradication and developing sustainably towards an inclusive green economy. Action is needed to promote corporate sustainability reporting, which will encourage a broad range of businesses to engage in responsible practices. Goals to move towards a land degradation-neutral world would contribute to economic growth, biodiversity protection, sustainable forest management, climate change mitigation and adaptation and food security, while improving soil quality, reducing erosion, building resilience to natural hazards and halting land take. Given the global importance of oceans, protecting and restoring the health of oceans and marine ecosystems for sustainable livelihoods goals should apply universally, helping deliver sustainable fish stocks also with a view to food security, as well as reducing significant hazards such as marine litter. To address these challenges, each country should steer a path to the sustainable management of their natural resources and establish open and transparent governance structures, to ensure that resources are used in a manner that benefits their citizens in an equitable and sustainable way.

This requires each country to ensure that resources are used in an environmentally responsible manner and, with respect to resources such as land, forests, rivers and oceans, so that they will also benefit future generations. Equally, exploitation of finite resources, such as minerals and groundwater, must be done in an inclusive and responsible manner that guarantees maximum societal benefit, in terms of the way that they are commercialised, the rate of their depletion and the use of the income generated. Phasing out subsidies for use of finite resources, such as fossil fuels, is a cost-efficient key contribution, promoting resource efficiency. States should also enhance their cooperation to manage shared resources, such as fish stocks and marine biodiversity, in areas beyond national jurisdiction.

It will also be necessary to adopt an integrated perspective, in order to ensure that solutions to resource constraints in one area do not place additional constraints on another. The future agenda should commit all countries to manage and use their natural resources sustainably over the coming decades, including such issues as transparency, maximisation of income, protection of tenure, resilience<sup>5</sup>, including to natural disasters, and environmental protection. The global community needs to stand together in these efforts. In particular, private and public companies must be accountable and adhere to high standards of transparency and good governance. A low carbon and resource efficient economy will also require actions and training for the specific skill sets that will be needed.

### **4.1.4. Equality, equity and justice**

The objectives of human well-being and dignity for all are enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Millennium Declaration, which also explicitly recognise the links between human rights, good governance and sustainable development. This, as well as the commitment to common fundamental values, was reaffirmed at the MDG Summit of 2010 and the Rio+20 Conference in 2012.

---

<sup>5</sup> COM(2012)586: The EU Approach to Resilience: Learning from Food Security Crises

The importance of justice and equity, human rights, democracy and other aspects of good governance goes far beyond their impact on progress towards development targets on income, education, health and other basic needs. They are also important in their own right, in all countries. The recent movements in North Africa and the Middle East showed the importance of inclusive political systems, justice and jobs, particularly for young people, and highlighted that progress on the MDGs is essential but not sufficient. Governance will remain a global challenge for the years ahead.

It is important that the new post-2015 overarching framework captures these issues. The role of women is particularly important in unlocking the drive for sustainable development and all forms of barriers to equal participation need to be removed. The framework should put particular emphasis on moving towards a rights-based approach to development, on reducing inequalities, as well as on the promotion and protection of women's and girls' rights and gender equality, transparency and the fight against corruption. It should also capture the fundamental issues related to equity. To meet this challenge, goals and targets should stimulate action needed to ensure increasing coverage by a basic set of social guarantees and improve their implementation.

#### **4.1.5. *Peace and security***

Where there is physical insecurity, high levels of inequality, governance challenges and little or no institutional capacity, it is extremely difficult to make sustainable progress on the key MDG benchmarks such as poverty, health, education or sanitation. It is therefore essential to address the root causes of such conditions and take action to prevent them from arising.

This agenda goes beyond fragile states, however, since many other countries also struggle with issues relating to insecurity and violence. Trafficking, transnational terrorism, criminal networks and gang violence are undermining the security of citizens and reducing the prospects for a decent life, with women and children particularly affected.

Addressing peace and security issues in the context of the post-2015 overarching framework should use as a starting point the work already done between some fragile states and the OECD countries, the EU, the UN and Development Banks at Busan in November 2011. This should build on the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States that laid out an agreed set of Peace-building and State building Goals (PSG).

## **5. TOWARDS A POST-2015 OVERARCHING FRAMEWORK**

### **5.1. Bringing the strands together to respond to future challenges**

Poverty eradication and ensuring that prosperity and well-being are sustainable remain the most pressing challenges for the future. To be tackled successfully, they must be tackled together, within a new overarching framework that is universal and directly relevant to all countries, while recognising that different countries are affected to varying degrees and that their responses and contribution to global goals will vary. Even though many will continue to rise above the level of extreme poverty, a strong poverty focus is needed to make this irreversible. Unsustainable patterns of current economic development, impacting the environment and the natural resource base, are still determined to a large extent by developed countries, and increasingly by emerging economies, while least developed countries also feel the impacts. Social exclusion and inequality, unemployment, precarious employment and lack of social protection also have a direct bearing on poverty and sustainable development.

The Millennium Declaration, which remains relevant, should guide work on developing the future framework. Building on the follow up to Rio+20, the MDG review and other relevant international processes, the future overarching framework should set out the path for

eradicating poverty and towards achieving prosperity and well-being for all, by focusing on the main drivers for inclusive and sustainable growth, within planetary boundaries. This framework should therefore bring together the three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social, environmental. It should include responsibilities for all countries.

The underlying objective of this new overarching framework should aspire to provide for every person, by 2030, "A Decent Life for All." This should address simultaneously the need for poverty eradication and the universal vision of sustainable development needed to ensure prosperity for current and future generations.

The above sections outlined how the interrelated processes at the UN level should deliver ingredients for a common overarching framework that are needed if the objective of a Decent Life for All is to be met. The final outcome should be based on the results of constructive interactions with all stakeholders and among international partners. However, the EU believes there are a number of already- identifiable general principles that should be commonly acceptable.

## **5.2. Principles for a post-2015 overarching framework**

The Commission proposes that the EU pursues the following principles in its discussions on the post-2015 framework:

### **5.2.1. Scope**

The framework should be universal in aspiration and coverage, with goals for all countries, applying to all of humanity, focused on the eradication of poverty in all its dimensions, wherever it is found, and promoting prosperity and well-being for all people, within planetary boundaries.

- The framework should integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development - economic, social, environmental - taking into account the lessons learnt from the review of MDGs and building on the work for elaborating the SDGs, aiming at poverty eradication and sustainable development. Goals should constitute a floor to living standards under which no person should fall, by 2030 at the very latest, and guide progress towards prosperity and well-being, within planetary boundaries.
- It should recognise that poverty, prosperity and well-being cannot just be seen from a financial perspective, but are multidimensional and reflect the ability of people to grow and develop.
- The framework should cover, in an integrated fashion:
  - basic human development (based on updated existing MDGs and also reflecting issues such as social protection),
  - drivers for sustainable and inclusive growth and development that are necessary for structural transformation of the economy, needed to ensure the creation of productive capacities and employment and the transition to an inclusive green economy capable of addressing climate challenges, and
  - the sustainable management of natural resources .
- The framework should also address justice, equality and equity, capturing issues relating to human rights, democracy and the rule of law, as well as the empowerment of women and gender equality, which are vital for inclusive and sustainable development, as well as important values in their own right. It should also address peace and security, building on the existing work on Peace Building and State Building Goals.

### **5.2.2. *Nature and number of goals***

- Goals should be limited in number and apply universally to all countries, but should have targets respecting different contexts. In order to ensure ownership and relevance, the goals should be tailored and made operational at the national level. Special consideration should be given to the needs of fragile states.
- Goals should be elaborated in a way that takes into account the scientific and research evidence base and related targets and indicators should be measurable.

### **5.2.3. *Transparency, implementation and accountability***

- The responsibility for achieving the desired outcomes is first and foremost national. The mobilisation of all resources is needed, domestic and international, private and public. Financing and other means of implementation should be addressed in a comprehensive and integrated manner, given that the potential sources for implementing various global goals are the same.
- The framework should be developed and implemented in close partnership with civil society stakeholders, including the private sector.
- A time frame should be set to start acting at all levels in order to achieve the goals. This could have a vision towards 2050 with goals and targets for 2030.
- The framework should be based on the individual responsibility of countries to take action, coupled with partnership between all countries and stakeholders. Goals should provide incentives for cooperation and partnerships among governments, civil society, including the private sector, and the global community at large. All countries should contribute their fair share towards reaching the goals. Goals should also induce stronger accountability.
- The development of the framework should be accompanied by efforts to enhance coherence at the institutional level.
- To allow good monitoring of progress, the statistical base should be strengthened.

### **5.2.4. *Coherence***

- The framework should be coherent with existing internationally-agreed goals and targets, such as on climate change, biodiversity, disaster risk reduction, and social protection floors.

## **5.3. *Implementing the framework: country ownership and accountability***

The responsibility for implementing the future framework lies within each country itself, involving all relevant stakeholders, including social partners. The main drivers for development are first and foremost domestic, notably including democratic governance, the rule of law, stable political institutions, sound policies, transparency of public finances and the fight against fraud and corruption. Domestic resource mobilisation, legal and fiscal regulations and institutions supporting the development of the private sector, investment, decent job creation and export competitiveness are essential to make the ambition achievable for all countries. In this context, domestic reforms are crucial to make economic growth sustainable and make it work effectively for poverty eradication, decreased inequalities and improved well-being for all. This is true for all countries, at all levels of development.

Nevertheless, the EU recognises that some countries will continue to need support, including development assistance. In this context, more efficient and effective methods of investing development aid are emerging, ensuring that aid acts as a catalyst for development, leveraging investment, including through innovative financial sources, instruments and mechanisms, such as blending. This updated approach was adopted in the EU's "Agenda for Change."

South-South cooperation can make substantial contributions to shaping global development outcomes. The principles of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, agreed at the Busan High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in 2011, should be applied universally.

Beyond aid, Policy Coherence for Development plays a major role in eliminating poverty and achieving sustainable development. Strong consideration of the role of these policies should therefore be given due place in the future framework. For example, in many developing countries, the income available from trade has greatly increased and can be used to fight poverty. This trend is set to continue in many developing countries and is especially important in sub-Saharan Africa.

To be achievable, the overarching framework should be accompanied by an effort to ensure that *all* resources are mobilised and harnessed effectively, alongside a commitment by all countries to pursue a comprehensive approach to these resources and coherent and appropriate policies. Goals and targets will contribute to stimulating private sector investment. All countries should report on progress towards achieving future goals in an open and transparent manner.

The EU should promote a comprehensive and integrated approach to the means of implementation including financing issues at the global level. At present, financing discussions related to climate, biodiversity, development and sustainable development are taking place in different fora, even though the potential financing sources are the same. There is a strong need to ensure coherence and coordination and avoid a duplication of efforts with regard to the financing for development process. In mid-2013, the Commission plans to present a Communication proposing an integrated EU approach to financing and other means of implementation related to the various global processes.

## **6. NEXT STEPS**

The EU needs to engage fully in the forthcoming international processes with coherent and coordinated inputs at the UN and in other relevant fora.

In this respect, the adoption of this Communication should be followed by a debate with Council and Parliament during the spring of 2013 for the development of a common EU approach for the next stages of the ongoing processes, which should:

- ensure a comprehensive follow up to Rio+20 and guide the EU position at the UN Open Working Group (OWG) on SDGs, which will report regularly to the UNGA; and
- contribute to the preparation of the UN General Assembly Special Event on the MDGs in autumn 2013, including the report of the Secretary-General and the UN High Level Panel on post-2015, as well as the first meeting of the HLPF.

The EU should support moving towards a post-2015 overarching framework. Discussion on the basis of the orientations set out above should make it possible for the EU to come to a common position on how the SDGs and the MDG review processes should best be converged and integrated into a single process to better deliver such a comprehensive framework. In this respect, the EU should also actively seek a constructive dialogue with all partners and stakeholders, in order to build common ground, including through political dialogues with third countries.

## ANNEX I

### Main current and forthcoming actions in the EU and internationally that contribute to the implementation of Rio+20

Area	EU	International
<b>Water and sanitation</b>	Improve water efficiency and quality through EU Water Blueprint	In line with the Agenda for Change and international commitments, promote improved access to drinking water and sanitation facilities, improved water quality and reduced pollution; as well as facilitation of political dialogue for shared water resources and implementation of water activities for economic and sustainable growth
<b>Energy, climate</b>	<p>Improve efficiency and share of renewables and reduce greenhouse gases through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- climate and energy package and low carbon roadmap for 2050</li> <li>- 2030 climate and energy policy</li> <li>- energy efficiency directive</li> <li>- ongoing legislative proposals on emissions from cars and vans, as well as fluorinated GHG reduction</li> </ul>	<p>Promote international climate action through the Durban Platform and UNFCCC</p> <p>International Partnership on Mitigation, and the International Cooperative Initiatives (ICIs)</p> <p>IRENA: global deployment of renewable energy</p> <p>GEEREF: Global Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Fund</p> <p>Global climate change alliance (GCCA)</p> <p>Sustainable Energy for All Initiative (SE4ALL)</p> <p>ACP-EU Energy Facility and the Africa-EU Renewable Energy Cooperation Programme (RECP)</p>
<b>Biodiversity, forests, land</b>	<p>EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020, work on biodiversity valuation and ecosystem services</p> <p>Forest Action Plan; review of Forestry Strategy</p> <p>Preparation Land as Resource Communication</p> <p>Digital Observatory for Protected Areas as a component of the Global Earth Observation System of System of Systems (GEOSS)</p>	<p>CBD Strategic Plan and the 20 Aichi Targets</p> <p>Support the Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) and Wealth Accounting and Valuation of Ecosystem Services (WAVES)</p> <p>Implement the Environment and Natural Resources Thematic Programme (ENRTP)</p> <p>Expand and implement Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade initiative (FLEGT) and contribution to UN-REDD+</p> <p>Possibility of protocol under UNCCD, declaring the EU as an Affected Party</p> <p>Global Soil Partnership (with FAO)</p> <p>Compilation of a New World Atlas of Desertification with UNEP</p>

<b>Oceans</b>	<p>Marine Strategy Framework; Integrated Maritime Policy, Marine Litter and Plastic Waste</p> <p>Common Fisheries Policy: maximum sustainable yield, science based management plans, discards.</p> <p>Observation and modelling of marine and coastal ecosystems</p>	<p>Regional sea conventions</p> <p>UNCLOS Implementing agreement for the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction</p> <p>Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing</p> <p>Follow up to Honolulu commitment on marine litter</p>
<b>Waste, chemicals</b>	<p>Resource Efficiency roadmap and EU waste legislation, REACH implementation</p>	<p>Diffusion of international waste policies (WEEE, RoHs)</p> <p>Implement Basel, Stockholm and Rotterdam Conventions, and SAICM (Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management)</p>
<b>Food, nutrition, agriculture</b>	<p>Preparation of Communication on Sustainable Food</p> <p>Implement Markets in Financial Instruments (MIFID) and Market Abuse Directive (MAD)</p> <p>Proposals on the reform of the Common Agriculture Policy, including promoting sustainable agricultural production, addressing production capacity and climate change.</p> <p>The European Innovation Partnership "Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability"</p> <p>Organic food labelling</p>	<p>Contribution to the Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS)</p> <p>Implementation of the Monitoring Agricultural Resources (MARS) and GEO-GLAM (Earth Observation)</p> <p>Implementation of Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Land, Fisheries and Forests</p> <p>EU Food Security Thematic Programme Instrument (FSTP);</p> <p>Implement forthcoming EU Implementation plan Boosting food and nutrition security through EU action: implementing our commitments</p> <p>Preparation of Communication on Nutrition</p> <p>Preparation of Action Plan on Resilience</p> <p>Scaling-up Nutrition (SUN) Movement; New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition</p> <p>Implementation of the Food Assistance Convention</p>
<b>Taxes, subsidies</b>	<p>Implement relevant actions from Resource Efficiency Roadmap</p>	<p>Follow up on subsidy reform through G20</p>
<b>Clean industry and life cycle accounting</b>	<p>Implement EU 2020 Industrial policy: clean technology, bio economy</p> <p>Preparation of Communication on Single Market for Green Products</p> <p>European Life Cycle Database</p>	<p>International Life-Cycle Data (ILCD) Network</p>



<p><b>Sustainable consumption and production and Green public procurement</b></p>	<p>Revised Procurement Directive, including GPP</p> <p>Adopt the European Accessibility Act</p>	<p>Contribution to UNEP Sustainable Public Procurement Initiative</p> <p>Contribution to the implementation of the 10 Year Framework Programme on Sustainable Consumption and Production</p>
<p><b>Resilience</b></p>		<p>Implement the Communication the EU approach to resilience: Learning from Food Crises on Resilience, and forthcoming Action Plan.</p> <p>Implement the SHARE and AGIR initiatives.</p> <p>Promotion of resilience in international fora and as theme in partnerships with organisations such as FAO, IFAD and WFP, UNISDR, the World Bank, and civil society organisations</p>
<p><b>Disaster risk management</b></p>	<p>Implement EU disaster prevention framework</p> <p>Integration of disaster risk management (prevention preparedness, response) and disaster risk assessment in EU and MS planning</p> <p>European Flood Awareness System, European Drought Observatory</p> <p>Promote disaster proofing in EU funding instruments</p>	<p>Implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action and elaboration of a follow-up framework for disaster risk reduction after 2015</p> <p>Focus on main priorities outlined in the EUs disaster risk reduction implementation plan</p> <p>Support international initiatives such as the World Bank-managed global facility for disaster risk reduction (GFDRR)</p>
<p><b>Cities, tourism, transport</b></p>	<p>Enhance sustainability of EU cities as part of the 7th EAP</p> <p>Implement actions to promote sustainable and accessible tourism</p> <p>EU Road Safety, Clean Fuels Directive, promotion of affordable, sustainable transport</p>	<p>Promote sustainable, resilient and accessible cities</p>
<p><b>Full and productive employment and decent work</b></p>	<p>Europe 2020: Employment Guidelines, Joint Employment Reports, National Reform Programmes, Youth Employment package, Employment and Social Developments in Europe Review</p>	<p>Promote international labour standards, through international organisations (in particular the ILO) in the EU's bilateral relations, as well as through development and trade policies</p> <p>Follow-up to the 2012 International Labour Conference Resolution and G20 youth employment strategy</p> <p>Implementation of the thematic programme Investing in People Synergies with relevant EU thematic programmes, such as Non State Actors</p>

		in Development, Migration and Asylum and Democratisation and Human Rights
<b>Social protection, social inclusion and eradicating poverty</b>	<p>Promote the reduction of poverty, social exclusion and more effective social policies through Europe 2020</p> <p>Assist Member States in structural reforms through the Social Investment Package</p> <p>The European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion: A European framework for social and territorial cohesion</p> <p>The European Disability Strategy 2010-2020</p>	<p>Promote social protection including Social Protection Floors (SPFs) and implement recommendations adopted by the ILO in line with the plans and policies of partner countries;</p> <p>Continue to support social protection, including SPFs where relevant in bilateral relations with partner countries, at international fora (ILO, OECD, G20 and ASEM) and in development cooperation.</p> <p>Implement actions of the Communication on Social Protection in European Union Development Cooperation</p> <p>Mainstreaming of the rights of the child and indigenous peoples' rights, social inclusion and the rights of persons with disabilities in EU development policies</p> <p>Implement the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities</p>
<b>Corporate Social Responsibility</b>	Implement Actions on Corporate Social Responsibility	Contribute to international CSR guidance documents for business and SMEs (incl. ILO, OECD) and to UN guidelines
<b>Health</b>	<p>EU Health Strategy</p> <p>European Health Indicators</p> <p>Communication on Combating HIV/AIDS in the European Union and neighbouring countries</p>	<p>Implement Communication on the EU Role in Global Health</p> <p>Strengthening of health systems, improved health security and policy coherence through geographic instruments and thematic programmes for better health outcomes and reduced health inequalities.</p> <p>Support to the Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria, the GAVI Alliance and the Global Programme to Enhance Reproductive Health Commodity Security</p> <p>European Observatory on Health Systems</p> <p>Develop wellbeing indicators as part of the Health2020 strategy</p>
<b>Education</b>	<p>Strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training</p> <p>Education and training in the implementation of the Europe 2020 strategy.</p>	<p>Promote quality education for all through the Commission's geographic and thematic programmes</p> <p>Implementation of the Commission's international co-operation programmes</p>

	European cooperation on schools for the 21st century	in higher education and training Support global initiatives, such as Global Partnership for Education and policy dialogues such as Association for the Development of Education in Africa
<b>Gender equality and women's empowerment</b>	Mainstreaming of gender equality and women's rights through the EU Gender Action Plan 2010-2015 Follow up to Beijing Platform for Action	Mainstream gender equality and the empowerment of women in EU development policies; implement the 2010-2015 EU Gender Action Plan in development cooperation; contribution to the UN programme increasing accountability on financing for gender equality Implement actions for women's economic empowerment through the Investment in People programme Implement Actions in the Communication Social Protection in European Union Development Cooperation
<b>Justice, Human Rights, fundamental freedoms, democracy, good governance and the rule of law</b>	EU Charter on Fundamental Rights Implement the Aarhus Convention	Implement actions set out in the Communications on: EU Support for Sustainable Change in Transition Societies; Increase the impact of EU Development Policy and the EU Strategic Framework and Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy Implement the EU DCI programme Non-state Actors and Local Authorities in Development Promote application of Aarhus in financial institutions, development cooperation, trade agreements
<b>Science, technology, research and innovation</b>	Implementation of Horizon 2020 providing <b>research support</b> in areas such as water, energy, agriculture, transport, environment, social sciences. <b>Sustainable development will be an overarching objective of Horizon 2020 with at least 60% of total budget relating to this theme.</b> Implement EU 2020 Innovation Union and Eco-innovation Action Plan	Enhance EU international cooperation in research and innovation. Contribute to the Global Earth Observation System of System of Systems (GEOSS) Research under the Food Security Thematic Programme (2011-2013) and the Africa-EU Partnership
<b>Statistics</b>	Further development of indicators on GDP and beyond, advice on statistics for overarching framework.	Cooperate with international organisations and third countries, under the lead of the UNSC, to improve measurement of progress and ensure comparability

<b>Trade</b>		Negotiate and implement provisions on trade and sustainable development in trade agreements; promote elimination of tariffs and non-tariff barriers on environmental goods and services at all levels  Continue to support “Everything But Arms” initiative  Provide continued support to Aid for Trade
--------------	--	---

## **ANNEX II**

### **Public Consultation**

The Commission held a public consultation<sup>6</sup> in the summer of 2012. Around 120 organisations and individuals from public authorities and civil society, including the private sector and academia, contributed. The consultation revealed a consensus that the MDGs have rallied many and different actors behind the same development objectives and that the MDGs have been valuable in raising public awareness, increasing political will and mobilising resources to eradicate poverty, as well as being powerful monitoring tools.

Looking forward, some common views on future priorities emerged:

- Focus on poverty within a wider and more comprehensive and sustainable vision of development;
- Integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development (economic, social and environmental);
- Ensure that the process of developing the post-2015 framework is inclusive, with strong involvement from poor countries and civil society;
- Design a universal framework, relevant for all countries and with responsibilities for all;
- Foster the drivers for economic growth and job creation including by engaging with the private sector;
- Improve development financing and policy coherence for development.

Furthermore, the Commission launched a public consultation<sup>7</sup> in October 2012 on Rio+20 follow up. The EESC supported feedback through a series of structured dialogues. Over 125 responses to the public consultation were received from individuals, public authorities, businesses and business associations, NGOs, trade unions and consumer protection groups. Based on this, a number of suggestions have been taken into account. A large number of replies highlighted issues related to the inclusive green economy, in particular pointing to the need for indicators beyond GDP, while others pointed out the need for a favourable trade environment, eliminating environmentally harmful subsidies and environmental taxes.

The areas for possible SDGs mentioned by respondents included resource and energy efficiency, waste and chemicals, biodiversity, sustainable consumption and production, water and sanitation, protection of oceans and fisheries, sustainable transport, sustainable agriculture, gender equality, poverty eradication, climate change and adaptation, health and food security. Respondents also underlined the importance of clear and long-term targets on making use of exiting targets and agreements. On the relationship between SDGs and MDGs, there was consensus that one post-2015 development framework should be created that would cover both.

An outreach exercise was also carried out through EU Delegations in third countries. More than 50 responses were received from countries. Most countries indicated the need for a coherent and coordinated way of bringing together the MDGs and SDGs.

Related consultations include those which took place on the Resource Efficiency roadmap and the consultation on the 7<sup>th</sup> Environmental Action Programme. The Commission has widely engaged with civil society, including by undertaking a public consultation prior to Rio+20, and civil society also made important inputs during the conference itself.

---

<sup>6</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/how/public-consultations/towards\\_post-2015-development-framework\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/how/public-consultations/towards_post-2015-development-framework_en.htm)

<sup>7</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/consultations/rio20\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/consultations/rio20_en.htm)