



Review of the Commission Communication on a framework for global development after 2015

Summary

In this opinion, the Committee discusses Commission Communication COM (2013) 92, A decent life for all: Ending poverty and giving the world a sustainable future. The document was adopted by the Commission on 27 February and arrived at the Swedish Parliament (*Riksdagen*) on 28 February 2013. Following a decision by the Speaker in consultation with the group leaders, the Communication was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs on 15 March for a review.

The aim of the Communication is to propose the EU's input for the forthcoming negotiations at the UN on global development after 2015 in the form of a common EU framework. The Commission proposes a number of principles for the scope of the framework; the nature and number of goals; transparency, implementation and accountability; and coherence. It is stressed *inter alia* that the framework should aim to eradicate poverty in all of its dimensions where it still exists, and promote prosperity and well-being for all people worldwide. The three dimensions of sustainable development – economic, social, and environmental – should be integrated. The targets should also set a minimum living standard that all people should have attained by 2030 at the latest, and provide a path towards prosperity and well-being within the framework of the Earth's resources. The proposed time frame is a vision for 2050 with targets and objectives for 2030.

The Committee largely agrees with the stance taken by the Commission, and considers that the Communication is a good basis for future discussions. It is important for the EU to agree on a number of principles before the global debate on the post-2015 development agenda. The EU has a key role to play, as the world's largest aid donor and trading partner. The Committee shares the Commission's view that the future global development agenda should apply to all countries and have poverty eradication and sustainable development as its main goals. The Committee feels that the agenda should continue to build on the MDGs but be adapted

to the changed environment, and have a greater focus on quality and connections between different goals. The Committee also emphasises that the post-2015 development agenda should give due consideration to the responsibility that all countries have to contribute to sustainable development. With regard to the significance of coherence for sustainable global development, the weight of the EU as an aid donor and the commitments that the EU has made, the Committee considers that the EU should push for development coherence as a key issue within the framework of a new global development agenda.

The Committee considers that the Commission has identified a number of important principles for the scope of the agenda in its Communication, but chooses in this review to place a particular focus on issues concerning the environment and climate, democracy and human rights and the promotion of equality and the role of women in development. The Committee considers these to be basic prerequisites for stimulating the driving forces for development.

The Committee proposes that this opinion be placed on file.

The opinion contains a dissenting opinion (Sweden Democrats).

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Committee proposal for a parliamentary decision

Commission Communication on a framework for global development after 2015

The Swedish Parliament (*Riksdagen*) hereby places the opinion on file.

Stockholm, 25 April 2013.

On behalf of the Committee

Sofia Arkelsten

The following members have taken part in the decision: Sofia Arkelsten (Moderates), Urban Ahlin (Social Democrats), Christian Holm (Moderates), Mats Johansson (Moderates), Carin Runeson (Social Democrats), Ismail Kamil (Liberal Party), Olle Thorell (Social Democrats), Christer Winbäck (Liberal Party), Bodil Ceballos (Greens), Désirée Pethrus (Christian Democrats), Hans Linde (Left), Ulrik Nilsson (Moderates), Désirée Liljevall (Social Democrats), Peter Jeppsson (Social Democrats), Björn Söder (Sweden Democrats) and Abir Al-Sahlani (Centre Party).

Account of the item

The item and its preparation

In this opinion, the Committee discusses Commission Communication COM (2013) 92, A decent life for all: Ending poverty and giving the world a sustainable future. The document was adopted by the Commission on 27 February and arrived at the Swedish Parliament (*Riksdagen*) on 28 February 2013. The Swedish version of the document arrived on 4 March. Following a decision by the Speaker in consultation with the group leaders, the Communication was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs on 15 March for a review.

On 21 March, the Committee had a discussion about the Communication with Gunilla Carlsson, Minister for International Development Cooperation (record 2012/13:25). The Communication will be the subject of a discussion at a meeting of EU international development ministers (FAC) on 28 May. Prior to this meeting, the Minister for International Development Cooperation will provide the Committee on Foreign Affairs with information about the Communication in a presentation on 23 May. It is planned that the Committee on European Union Affairs will be consulted prior to the meeting, on 24 May.

The Committee on Development (DEVE) of the European Parliament is working on the compilation of a report entitled The Millennium Development Goals - defining the post-2015 framework. On 22 January, the European Parliament held a hearing about the MDGs and the post-2015 process.

On 12 April, an explanatory memorandum (2012/13:FPM 83) concerning the Communication arrived at the Swedish Parliament, and it was reported to the Chamber on 17 April.

Background

The UN held its millennium summit in New York on 6-8 September 2000. At the time, the meeting was the largest assembly of world leaders ever, and aimed to define an agenda for global development. Heads of state and government agreed on the Millennium Declaration at the meeting. The Declaration stipulates that global development requires a global approach and that efforts to combat poverty and promote education, health, peace, security, the environment, human rights and democracy are interconnected. Eight specific measures, known as the Millennium

Development Goals (hereinafter *MDGs*) were established in order to achieve the intended aims of the Millennium Declaration. These include:

- Halving poverty and hunger by 2015;
- Ensuring that all children go to primary school by 2015;
- Increasing equality and reinforcing the position of women;
- Reducing child mortality by two thirds by 2015;
- Reducing maternal mortality by three quarters by 2015;
- Halting the spread of HIV/AIDS, TB, malaria and other diseases by 2015;
- Ensuring environmentally sustainable development by 2015;
- Increasing global cooperation through increased aid, fair trading rules and alleviated debt burdens in developing countries.

The time limit for achieving the goals was set at 2015, and a number of subsidiary goals and indicators were linked to the goals. These have subsequently been followed up continuously by the UN. All countries are required to report on how they are progressing towards the goals.

Work is ongoing to define new post-2015 global development goals. In late July 2012, the Secretary-General of the UN, Ban Ki-moon, appointed a High-Level Panel to assess the work on the MDGs to date, to discuss the results achieved, and to make recommendations for work on a new post-2015 development agenda. The Panel's work will culminate in a report that will be discussed at a high-level meeting within the framework of the UN in autumn 2013. The Secretary-General has also appointed a UN System Task Team. The Team comprises representatives of various UN bodies and international organisations and should be a cohesive expression of the process within the UN, but it should also consult Member States, civil society, researchers and private players. The Secretary-General has also appointed a special adviser on post-2015 development planning. These processes will be complemented by eleven global thematic consultations as well as national consultations in more than 60 countries, which will be managed by the UN development group.

At the same time as the new global development goals are being outlined, work is ongoing to follow up on the UN conference on sustainable development, Rio+20. The conference was held in Rio de Janeiro on 20-22 June 2012. Following extensive negotiations, the Member States of the UN agreed on a final document containing *inter alia* a decision on a ten-year framework for sustainable consumption and production and establishing the 'green economy' as an international concept. It was also agreed that the countries of the world should develop global Sustainable

Development Goals (SDGs) within a short space of time, and within the framework of an open working group under the auspices of the UN General Assembly. The group's first meeting was held in New York on 14-15 March 2013. A high-level political forum was also established during Rio+20, and it will hold its first meeting in September 2013.

The EU has committed itself to achieving the MDGs, including through the European Consensus on Development.¹ This document stipulates that the primary and overarching objective of EU development cooperation is the eradication of poverty in the context of sustainable development, including pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In 2010, the Commission adopted a twelve-point action plan to contribute to achieving the MDGs. On 14 May 2012, the EU's international development ministers adopted the conclusions of *Increasing the impact of EU Development Policy: an Agenda for Change*. The conclusions reinforce the goal of poverty eradication.

The EU's environment ministers adopted Council Conclusions on 11 October 2011 and 9 March 2012, prior to Rio+20. On 1-2 March 2012, the European Council also adopted conclusions containing the overarching priorities for action by the EU. Prior to the meeting, the EU emphasised *inter alia* that democracy, human rights and equality are essential for achieving sustainable development. The Conclusions also stressed the importance of continued development cooperation and recalled the EU's commitment to achieving the common development goals laid down in the 2005 Council Conclusions by 2015. These goals are described in detail in Committee Report 2011/12:UU2. The environment ministers also adopted follow-up conclusions to Rio+20 on 25 October 2012. The conclusions confirm the EU's engagement with the commitment from the conference and discuss the follow-up within the EU and at international level. It also emphasises that the EU is firmly resolved to participate constructively in the process of developing global sustainable development goals and that this should be done in harmony with the work being done to establish a post-2015 development agenda.

The Swedish Parliament has continuously followed the progress of the work being done to achieve the MDGs and the preparatory work prior to Rio+20. With regard to the MDGs, the Committee has described the situation in relation to achieving the goals, as well as the Government's work on this, both in the annual reports on the international development budget and in several reports on global development policy. The Committee had a discussion with the Minister for International Development

¹ 2006/C46/01.

Cooperation on 20 May 2010 concerning the EU's position prior to the UN high-level meeting on the MDGs in New York on 20-22 September that year. The discussion was based on Commission Communication COM(2010) 159, which was a twelve-point action plan in support of the Millennium Development Goals. Two members of the Committee on Foreign Affairs were members of the official Swedish delegation to the high-level meeting in New York.

With regard to the Rio+20 conference, the Committee discussed the preparatory work prior to the conference in Report 2011/12:UU12, entitled *International sustainable development*. The Committee was given information concerning the preparatory work prior to Rio+20 by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs on several occasions in spring 2012. On 28 March, the Minister for International Development Cooperation provided the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Committee on Environment and Agriculture with information concerning ecological sustainability and environmentally-friendly growth prior to Rio+20. On 27 March, the Minister for International Development Cooperation, Gunilla Carlsson, provided the Committee on Foreign Affairs with information concerning sustainable development prior to Rio+20. On 10 May, the Committee was given information by the Minister for International Development Cooperation prior to the FAC on 14 May, where the EU's position on Rio+20 was discussed. On 12 June 2012, the Committee was given information by Hanna Hellquist, Secretary of State, concerning ecological sustainability and environmentally-friendly growth prior to Rio+20. Two members of the Committee were members of the official Swedish delegation to Rio+20, along with members of the Committee on Finance and the Committee on Environment and Agriculture.

Main content of the Communication

In its Communication, the Commission states that two of the most pressing challenges facing the world are eradicating poverty and ensuring that prosperity and well-being are sustainable. In order to effectively address these challenges, the Commission considers that the review of MDGs, the process of defining new post-2015 global development goals and the work on elaborating SDGs to implement the commitments from the Rio+20 conference in June 2012 need to be brought together towards one overarching framework with common priority challenges and objectives. This should be done so as to ensure, as the Commission puts it, a decent life for all by 2030 and give the world a sustainable future beyond it.

The aim of the Communication is to propose the EU's input for the forthcoming negotiations at the UN on global development after 2015 in the form of a common EU framework. The Commission proposes a number of principles for the scope of the framework; the nature and number of goals; transparency, implementation and accountability; and coherence. It is stressed *inter alia* that the framework should aim to eradicate poverty in all of its dimensions where it still exists, and promote prosperity and well-being for all people worldwide. The three dimensions of sustainable development – economic, social, and environmental – should be integrated. The targets should also set a minimum living standard that all people should have attained by 2030 at the latest, and provide a path towards prosperity and well-being within the framework of the Earth's resources. The proposed time frame is a vision for 2050 with targets and objectives for 2030.

According to the Commission, the framework should cover the following areas:

- Basic human development;
- Drivers for inclusive and sustainable growth and development;
- Sustainable management of natural resources;
- Equality, equity and justice and questions relating to human rights, democracy and the principle of the rule of law, and self-determination and equality for women;
- Peace and security.

The Commission also considers that the 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.

The Commission also emphasises country ownership and accountability and that the mobilisation of all resources is needed, domestic and international, private and public. The framework should be developed and implemented in close partnership with civil society stakeholders, including the private sector. With regard to coherence, the Commission stresses that the goals should be coherent with existing internationally-agreed goals and targets, such as on climate change, biodiversity, disaster risk reduction, and social protection floors.

The Swedish Government's memorandum

In its memorandum, the Swedish Government welcomes the Commission Communication and its vision for eradicating poverty and giving the world a sustainable future. The Government endorses the Commission's proposals for integrating sustainable development and poverty eradication into an overarching post-2015 framework with a vision extending until 2050. The Government, like the Commission, considers that the review of MDGs and the future sustainable development goals (SDGs) together should result in a set of universal goals for global sustainable development and poverty eradication.

The Swedish Government also concurs with the Commission's proposal to agree some guiding principles for adoption of the future framework, and supports the principles proposed as the EU's basis for negotiations without specifying any objectives. The Government will work for an overarching framework where poverty eradication and sustainable development (economic, social and environmental) are key and are expressed in a set of universal goals with the individual at the centre. The goals should act as drivers for inclusive and sustainable development. The Government shares the Commission's view that poverty is multidimensional and cannot just be seen from a financial perspective. Among other things, the Government raises some questions in its memorandum in relation to democracy, human rights and governance, the role of women, and war-torn countries and failed states. The Government also stresses the importance of national accountability, financial matters and broad partnership.

Review by the Committee

Commission Communication on a framework for global development after 2015

Committee proposal in brief

The Committee proposes that the Swedish Parliament place the report on file. Please see the dissenting opinion (Sweden Democrats).

The Committee notes that there are just over two years to go until 2015, the time limit set by world leaders for achieving the MDGs. The Committee has previously described the situation for many of the MDGs, *inter alia* in Reports 2012/13:UU2 and 2012/13:UU12. As the Commission states in its Communication, the goals have proven to be valuable in raising public awareness, increasing political will and mobilising resources to eradicate poverty. The UN Secretary-General submits an annual report to the General Assembly concerning achievement of the MDGs. The Committee notes that the most recent report, from August 2012¹, points out that three of the subsidiary goals are deemed to have been achieved already: halving extreme poverty, improving access to clean water, and creating better living conditions in slum areas. The report also highlights improvements with regard to children's school attendance, opportunities for girls to go to school, maternal and child mortality, maternal care, and the treatment and spread of HIV and malaria.

On the whole, however, the Committee considers that progress is unevenly distributed, both between and within countries, and that development has stagnated in some areas. Growth in India and China above all has helped to reduce the poverty figures globally, whereas progress has often been the least in the poorest and most marginalised groups, and in failed states and war-torn countries. The Committee would therefore like to emphasise that, in parallel with the adoption of a new global development agenda, efforts to achieve the MDGs by 2015 must continue with undiminished strength. The development achieved to date shows that it is entirely possible to eradicate poverty within a single generation.

The world has experienced great changes since the adoption of the Millennium Declaration in 2000. In its Communication, the Commission emphasises major shifts in the global economic and political balance, increased global trade, climate change and depletion of natural resources,

¹ Accelerating progress towards the Millennium Development Goals: options for sustained and inclusive growth and issues for advancing the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015.

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. There have also been major changes in the appearance of international development cooperation, what resources are available and which players are active. The Committee is of the view that these factors should be regarded as the background for a new global development agenda after 2015.

In its Communication, the Commission proposes a framework comprising a number of principles that should guide the EU position in the international discussions on a post-2015 global development agenda. These principles, which are described under the heading 'Main content of the Communication', concern matters such as the scope of the framework, accountability, financing, partnership and coherence. The Committee largely agrees with the stance proposed by the Commission, and considers that the Communication is a good basis for future discussions. It is important for the EU to agree on a number of principles before the global debate on the post-2015 development agenda. The EU has a key role to play, as the world's largest aid donor and trading partner.

The Committee shares the Commission's view that the future global development agenda should apply to all countries and have poverty eradication and sustainable development as its main goals. The Committee feels that the agenda should continue to build on the MDGs but be adapted to the changed environment and have a greater focus on quality and connections between different goals. The Commission Communication is based on principles adopted as part of the international development cooperation laid down in the EU Agenda for Change and at the high-level meeting on aid effectiveness in Busan in November 2011, in which a member of the Committee participated. The Committee considers that it is important to highlight these principles, which place the focus on results, ownership, partnership for development, transparency and shared responsibility. The Committee, like the Commission, recognises the importance of adapting the objectives to national conditions and operating them at the national level, despite the fact that they should apply to all countries. This will increase opportunities for local ownership and accountability.

The Committee, like the Commission, is of the view that special consideration should be given to war-torn countries and failed states. 1.5 billion people live in war-torn countries or failed states that have not achieved any of the MDGs. Armed conflict undermines opportunities for development, and freedom from violence in all its forms must therefore be a

component of the new development agenda. In this context, the Committee would like to stress that the threat of an uncontrolled spread of small arms and light weapons must be taken extremely seriously, and that uncontrolled cross-border trade in weapons requires particular attention.

The post-2015 development agenda should give due consideration to the responsibility that all countries have to contribute to sustainable development. Analysing the development perspective when making political decisions in various areas is crucial for identifying solutions to global challenges and contributing to development in poor countries and for poor people. Sweden's global development policy, which dates from 2003, was established *inter alia* to meet the challenges identified in the Millennium Declaration. The Committee considers that EU policies on, for example, agriculture, fisheries, trade and the environment affect developing countries to a great extent, and that Sweden has long been engaged in active work on the EU's Policy Coherence for Development (PCD). According to Article 208 of the Treaty of Lisbon, the Union shall take account of the objectives of development cooperation in the policies that it implements which are likely to affect developing countries. The commitments to working for consistency and coherence are also laid down in the EU Agenda for Change, and the EU has adopted a work programme on PCD for 2010-2013. With regard to the significance of questions relating to coherence for sustainable global development, the weight of the EU as an aid donor and the commitments that the EU has made, the Committee considers that the EU should push for development coherence as a key issue within the framework of a new global development agenda.

The Committee would also like to highlight the link between achieving the MDGs and development funding, and notes that the Commission writes in its Communication that the mobilisation of all resources is needed, domestic and international, private and public. There is still an enormous need for financing in order to achieve the existing MDGs. The Committee is of the view that questions of financing will also play a significant role in the post-2015 development agenda, and notes that contributions from the EU and its Member States to official development assistance fell between 2011 and 2012. If not all EU Member States meet their individual targets, the Union will not achieve the overall aid target for 2015, i.e. 0.7 % Official Development Assistance (ODA) of GNP for EU15 and 0.33 % ODA of GNP for EU12. The Committee would therefore like to highlight the fact that the EU and its Member States must honour the commitments that they have made concerning development funding.

Holding broad consultations in advance is key in order for the new global development agenda to have the greatest possible legitimacy. The

Committee therefore considers it positive that the Commission Communication was preceded by several public consultations. The technical conditions now exist for creating a participatory process for defining new global development goals, and the Committee welcomes the fact that the UN has adopted such an approach through the involvement of civil society and the general public in many ways. It is particularly important that developing countries are allowed to have their say in the process. The Committee also welcomes the fact that the Swedish Government, together with the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), has initiated broad dialogue in Sweden concerning the post-2015 global development agenda.

With regard to the scope of the framework, the Commission proposes the areas of basic human development and living standards, drivers for sustainable economic growth and development, sustainable management of natural resources, justice, equality, equity, democracy, the principle of the rule of law and human rights, and peace and security. The Committee takes a positive view of the fact that the Commission takes a multidimensional view of poverty in its Communication, and that the framework integrates the three dimensions of sustainable development, namely social, economic and environmental sustainability. It is welcomed that the Commission analyses the driving forces behind long-term sustainable development and growth. The Committee considers that the Commission has identified a number of important principles for the scope of the agenda in its Communication, but chooses below to place a particular focus on issues concerning the environment and climate, democracy and human rights and the promotion of equality and the role of women in development. The Committee considers these to be basic prerequisites for stimulating the driving forces for development.

The Committee agrees with the Commission that there is a fundamental link between global environmental sustainability and poverty eradication. Environmental changes and climate change have the greatest impact on people living in poverty. Poor people living in slum areas, rural areas or remote areas may be particularly vulnerable, and women and children are often hardest hit. In order to ensure globally sustainable development, it is therefore necessary to tackle the effects and negative environmental impact of climate change. On this point, the Committee would like to stress the importance of not simply identifying drivers without actually ensuring that measures are adopted that tackle climate issues in the long term. The Commission raises questions concerning the sustainable management of natural resources as one of the areas that should be covered by the framework. The Committee also considers it important that the framework should incorporate other long-term climate measures that must

be adopted in order to achieve sustainable development. The Committee, like the Commission, is of the view that these challenges cannot be tackled separately, and it supports the intention to integrate follow-up of Rio+20 into the post-2015 global development agenda.

The Committee would like to emphasise that promoting democracy, human rights, the rule of law and good governance is a necessary prerequisite for poverty eradication and sustainable development. Transparent, democratic government institutions are a key element of this. These questions must therefore occupy a prominent position in the EU framework so that they may subsequently be reflected in the post-2015 global development agenda. The Committee welcomes the fact that the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) has engaged in the process to define new global development goals. Among other things, the IPU has participated in discussions with the UN High-Level Panel concerning the importance of democratic government. The Committee is of the view that the IPU has great expertise in promoting democracy and the key role of parliaments in democracy and accountability, which should be included in the process.

The Committee notes that the majority of people living in extreme poverty in the world are women and girls. There is a strong link between equality and poverty, and poverty tends to reinforce sexual discrimination and unequal relations between the sexes. In order for work on eradicating poverty to be effective, women must therefore be able to take part in decision-making, participate in the economy and be able to support themselves, have access to education and enjoy good health. This also involves changing attitudes in society towards equality and working to ensure that women and girls are regarded as instigators of change and driving forces in society. The Committee is of the view that the EU should push for equality and the rights of women within the framework of the post-2015 global development agenda based on the perspective of individual rights, and that these questions must therefore occupy a prominent position in the EU's common framework. The Committee considers that the EU should strive to ensure that equality and the rights of women are both included as a separate goal and also permeate the other goals and areas of the post-2015 global development agenda.

The Committee notes that the right to self-determination in respect of one's own body, sexuality and reproduction is a fundamental right for all people. Despite some progress since the adoption of the Millennium Declaration in 2000, maternal mortality remains high in developing countries and remains a major barrier to equality. Sweden has led the international thematic consultations in the area of health, in conjunction with the World Health Organisation (WHO), Unicef and Botswana. The

Committee welcomes the fact that the final report stipulates that questions concerning sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) must be included in the future agenda and that the goal of reducing maternal and child mortality must be even more ambitious than previously. The Committee notes that SRHR and questions concerning the right to contraception and abortions continue to be regarded as controversial issues in some parts of the world. This also applies to questions concerning the rights of homosexual, bisexual and transgender people. Sweden is actively pushing for SRHR issues, among other things within the framework of the High-Level Panel, and the Committee is of the view that the EU should also give the same priority to these issues. The Committee considers that the EU will have considerable added value in the international debate on the post-2015 global development agenda by raising the issue of SRHR. Reinforcing SRHR should therefore be incorporated clearly into the EU framework before the forthcoming international discussions at the UN.

The Committee proposes that the opinion be placed on file.

Dissenting opinion

Commission Communication on a framework for global development after 2015 (Sweden Democrats)

Björn Söder (Sweden Democrats) hereby states as follows:

With regard to the work in the area of SRHR, we are of the opinion that it is important to ensure that a nuanced image of abortion is raised. It is important not to ignore the ethical problems involved with the operation. It is worth noting that there has, in the past, been influence by individual lobbying organisations and we feel that this creates insufficient credibility in the dialogue relating to questions on sexual and reproductive health, since these questions are politically sensitive in many countries. When engaging in dialogue with other countries concerning the question of abortion, the question should be examined from several aspects, and there should be greater respect for, and awareness of, the ethical dilemma posed by abortion in many countries.

ANNEX

List of documents reviewed

Commission Communication COM(2013) 92, A decent life for all: Ending poverty and giving the world a sustainable future.