While the Millennium Declaration should remain the basis to drive future actions in development, options for any future agenda should recognise both the strengths and limitations of the MDG framework.

A: The MDGs: benefits and limitations

1. To what extent has the MDG framework influenced policies in the country/ies or sectors you work in/with?

The MDGs have had an impact on policies in many developing countries, as well as on the policies and programmes of donors such as the EU. Among donors in particular, the MDGs have been used as an overarching framework for development cooperation and responding to poverty. Working towards achieving the MDGs has been an important part of donors’ development cooperation policy and practice. The influence that the MDGs have had on policies in the development cooperation sector in general has, in turn, had an impact on the disability and development sector.

Persons with disabilities have not been explicitly included in the MDG framework, whether in the Goals themselves or in the associated targets and indicators. The race to achieve the MDGs, which many donors have embraced wholeheartedly, has left little space for other sectors and for vulnerable and marginalized groups who are included only implicitly in the framework.

Because the MDGs have not explicitly mentioned persons with disabilities, the MDG framework has required the disability sector to approach development policy in a number of ways. By highlighting the way that disability intersects with the MDGs, some awareness has been raised in certain sectors of the importance of including people in development policies and programmes. For example, UNESCO in its Global Monitoring Report on Education for All estimates that one third of out of school children have a disability, and so the goal of universal primary education will not be achieved unless children with disabilities are included. Secondly, through the signing and ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) by many countries, including the European Union, disability has been recognized as a development and rights based issue, and the convention legally requires governments to act. Besides the legal obligations for key areas covered in the MDGs (education, health, poverty alleviation, etc.) the UNCRPD is the first UN Convention that carries a stand-alone paragraph on international co-operation.
2. **To what extent has the MDG framework been beneficial for the poor in the country/ies or sectors in/with which you work?**

The MDG framework does not explicitly mention persons with disabilities at any stage or level. Persons with disabilities were not included in the design stage of the MDGs, and as such have been marginalized throughout the implementation of MDG-driven processes despite the fact that in order to achieve any of the MDGs, persons with disabilities need to be included. The World Report on Disability, carried out by the UN, estimates suggest that 15% of the global population lives with a disability, and many countries have made commitments to engage in inclusive development through their signing and ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), yet disability has had very little visibility in the mainstream development conversation.

Persons with disabilities in poor countries are disproportionately higher exposed to poverty than their non-disabled peers. The exclusion of persons with disabilities from many MDG initiatives therefore has a detrimental effect on the some of the poorest people. As disability is both a cause and a consequence of poverty, this is disturbing. As many of the MDGs use aggregates to measure their success, progress towards achieving them can be made without focusing on the poorest people, but rather focusing on making improvements where they are easier, excluding populations that are harder to reach or who are at the bottom of the poverty scale, including persons with disabilities. Progress towards achieving the MDGs overall does not necessarily translate into progress for persons with disabilities. Progress can be made without changing the situation of the poorest and most vulnerable groups in a country. National progress on MDG targets can sometimes even mask worsening conditions for the poorest or those with disabilities.

As such, the MDG framework could be said to have had a minimal or even negative effect on persons with disabilities in low income countries, by widening the socio-economic gap as a consequence of their exclusion from development programmes.

3. **What features and elements of the MDG framework have been particularly valuable in the fight against poverty?**

The MDG framework has galvanized donor governments in making commitments on Official Development Assistance and has led to greater awareness of development issues among policy makers and the public. This has enabled civil society to attempt to hold governments to account for their commitments, and given a platform from which to lobby. However, because the MDGs did not explicitly mention disability, it has not been a strong framework for the sector.

4. **What features and elements of the MDG framework have been problematic, in your view?**
Persons with disabilities were not included from the start of the MDG process. This has meant they were invisible in development processes design and implementation. Yet, the UN estimates that 15% of the world population lives with a disability. Furthermore, about 80% of those are living in developing countries, and multiple barriers lead to their social and economic exclusion and, consequently, they’re facing higher poverty rates and experiencing more inequalities. Achieving the MDGs has been impossible without including the most vulnerable demographics, such as persons with disabilities.

Each of the 8 Goals can be seen failing to address issues faced by persons with disabilities in developing countries:

**GOAL 1: ERADICATE EXTREME POVERTY & HUNGER** – The exclusion of persons with disabilities from MDG processes maintains the barriers keeping persons with disabilities from realizing their socio-economic participation. Poverty is the main cause of impairments, half of which could be prevented.

**GOAL 2: ACHIEVE UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION** – Children with disabilities are the least likely to receive education in most countries. This goal will not be achieved unless children with disabilities are included in approaches to increase school enrollment rates.

**GOAL 3: PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER WOMEN** – Effective responses to the “multiple discrimination” faced by women and girls with disabilities are still lacking, as shown by the UN Thematic Study on violence against women and girls with disabilities.

**GOAL 4: REDUCE CHILD MORTALITY** – Children with disabilities continue to be “allowed” to die solely based on the discriminatory attitudes to their disability; malnutrition is a main cause for impairments, which frequently lead to disability.

**GOAL 5: IMPROVE MATERNAL HEALTH** – Assumed to lead “asexual” lives, women with disabilities are the least likely to receive reproductive health care services.

**GOAL 6: COMBAT HIV/AIDS, MALARIA AND OTHER DISEASES** – HIV/AIDS prevalence in mothers of children with disabilities is twice as high as in other groups.

**GOAL 7: ENSURE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY** – Persons with disabilities, as the poorest of the poor are the least equipped to deal with the challenges of climate change and are also rarely considered in planning emergency relief programs.

**GOAL 8: DEVELOP A GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR DEVELOPMENT** – Due to the lack of reference to excluded groups, such as persons with disabilities, the birth of a global partnership for development is unlikely to happen has hardly happened. If a global partnership means the sharing of responsibility among all partners and
stakeholders, it cannot be created as long as it won't adopt a participatory and holistic approach

5. In your view, what are the main gaps, if any, in the MDG framework?

The focus on low-income countries, while relevant in the early days of the MDGs, does not follow the shift of the global distribution of poverty: indeed, 72% of the world's poorest people now live in Middle-Income Countries (MICs), which bear the brunt of malnutrition, disease and mortality.

The focus on percentages as a measure of progress for the MDGs (and the use of regional means) tends to overlook the situation of the poorest people, including persons with a disability.

The current understanding and definition of poverty, progress and development should be revised beyond income, consumption and wealth.

The framework also fails to acknowledge the fact that disability is both a cause and a consequence of poverty, and international policymakers and stakeholders have not yet recognized and prioritized this issue within international development efforts such as the MDGs.

The lack of basing the MDG framework on a rights based approach is an important gap for the disability sector and other socially excluded groups.
A post-2015 framework has the potential to play a catalytic role in addressing important development and other global challenges and could help to fulfill individuals' rights and needs. It could also foster a new approach to equitable access to, and protection of, global public goods.

B. Feasibility of a future framework

6. In your view, in what way, if at all, could a future framework have an impact at global level in terms of global governance, consensus building, cooperation, etc.?

Any new global framework will be measured against its real impact on people's lives and whether it succeeded in addressing the main concerns expressed by people across the globe. Consequently, it has to be built as a fully inclusive process, providing space for people and institutions to dialogue and eventually to agree on actions. This dialogue process has to ensure full participation of everyone, making all efforts to open it up for those who are often voiceless. Persons with disabilities and other minority groups should therefore be enabled to play a key role in the formulation and implementation of the new development framework. Such a participatory process at global level would constitute a major innovation which would also have a positive impact on its subsequent implementation. This could pave the way to a new global partnership for development that truly addresses rights and needs of citizens and promotes principles of mutual accountability and responsibility.

7. To what extent is a global development framework approach necessary or useful to improve accountability with regard to poverty reduction policies in developing countries?

A global development framework is very useful when progress is required to be measured accurately in order to assess development. Hence defining relevant goals and targets is a very important part of the process.

Accountability mechanisms established at global level are useful when applied also at national and sub-national level, and when including systems to improve accountability vis-à-vis the citizens; participation – especially of people living in poverty and socially excluded groups – is essential and a requirement of the CRPD [article 4(3)], which the EU and 118 countries have ratified.

8. What could be the advantages and disadvantages of a global development framework for your organisation/sector, including how you work effectively with your partners?

Depending on the design and implementation process for a global development framework, it could prove beneficial for the disability sector. An inclusive participatory
process and a focus on inequality and on the poorest and most marginalized populations, including persons with disabilities, could have a strong galvanizing effect for the disability sector and could help address the rights of persons with disabilities – and other excluded population groups - in all countries.

However, inclusion must start in the design phase of the global development framework already. Existing physical, social, attitudinal and communication barriers need to be removed in design, implementation and monitoring of a global development framework.

An inclusive international development framework will increase the effectiveness of our work with our partners – governments and civil society – as mainstream development will become much more accessible for and inclusive of persons with disabilities. In this context it is essential to include disability-specific indicators to measure progress and data collection systems carrying disaggregated data on disability.
Any future framework should be designed in such a way as to recognise that political, economic, social and environmental challenges are linked and need to be addressed at the global level, requiring all countries to take on responsibilities, irrespective of their level of development. At the same time it must not overlook national challenges as well as individual issues, including the special needs of the poorest.

9. In your view, what should be the primary purpose of a future framework?

The primary purpose of any future framework would be to tackle causes as well as effects of poverty, most notably high inequalities, be it global or intra-country. High levels of inequalities and injustice inhibit growth, discourage institutional development towards government accountability and undermine civic and social life, leading to conflict and the undermining of human rights.

This framework should always be underpinned by disability-inclusive development that adopts a human rights-based approach in line with the principles of empowerment, equality, non-discrimination, participation and accountability with a focus on the poorest, most marginalized groups, such as persons with disabilities.

10. In your view, should its scope be global, relevant for all countries?

The framework’s scope should definitely be global, as poverty, as well as inequality affects all countries, rich or poor. The best proof of this is the prevalence of poverty in middle- and even high-income countries at the moment. However, international cooperation will remain the key priority in the context of a post-2015 framework; the focus of the framework should remain developing countries and particularly those with the poorest and most marginalized populations.

In the specific context of the disability sector, we have noted an apparent relationship between disability and poverty. As disability can be considered universal and relevant to all populations across all countries, as well as being both a cause and a consequence of poverty, an inclusive development framework must also be global in nature.

11. To what extent should a future framework focus on the poorest and most fragile countries, or also address development objectives relevant in other countries?

Fragile countries are generally the most off-track for the MDGs and are difficult environments in which to achieve development objectives and poverty reduction. They will therefore require specific attention in any future framework. However, the majority of the world’s poor live in Middle-Income Countries and it will be important for a future framework to also focus on the challenges faced by the poorest.
populations of these countries. There should be no one-size-fits-all approach to
different countries. It will be important for a future framework to address development
objectives in all countries, adapted to the national context, and with a focus on the
poorest and most marginalized populations in each country, particularly persons with
disabilities.

12. How could a new development agenda involve new actors, including the
private sector and emerging donors?

The principles of a new development agenda (human rights based, non-
discrimination, empowerment, participation, accountability, etc.) to fight poverty,
inequalities and injustice should be accepted by all actors as a basis for their
engagement in international co-operation.

13. How could a future framework support improved policy coherence for
development (PCD), at global, EU and country levels?

In the current debate on the post 2015 agenda, many actors - including Light For The
World - are pleading for a comprehensive framework that goes beyond the traditional
definition of development. This means that the future framework should tackle
questions related to e.g. social justice, inequalities, human rights, climate change,
natural and man-made disasters. In the context of such a comprehensive approach, it
will be critical to ensure coherence between the various areas. The concept of PCD
offers the greatest potential in this respect, as it will allow not only for coherent
policies, but also for keeping a focus on the developmental outcomes. The future
framework needs to include an obligation for international institutions and
governments to evaluate any policy and legislation in other areas than development
on their effects on the implementation of the development framework, to ensure that
investments into the implementation of the development framework are not
contradicted and development effectiveness is undermined. This is a precondition for
making the post 2015 agenda a success.

14. How could a new framework improve development financing?

Although it is widely acknowledged that the post 2015 agenda should not be driven
by the question of financing, it is obvious that without adequate funding its objectives
won't be met. A convincing inclusive development framework is the basis for states to
scale up their development aid to internationally agreed target of 0,7 % of the GNI.
The post 2015 process also offers an excellent opportunity to work on an
international agreement on new and innovative means of financing for development
such as a financial transaction tax. Addressing inequalities and pro-poor budgeting
should be prioritized in developing budget plans. The capital flight in tax havens and
– also legal – measures to avoid taxation need to be addressed. Furthermore, in the
discussions how to resource the post 2015 development objectives, all stakeholders
should be guided by long-term thinking rather than considering the current context of
crisis as the predominant paradigm. This is due to the duration of the post 2015 development framework that is supposed to be in place for 10 to 15 years.
When designing the framework, an important consideration will be to strike a balance between ambition, comprehensiveness, achievability and accountability.

**D. The potential shape of a future agenda**

15. What do you consider to be the "top 3" most important features or elements which should be included in or ensured by any future development agenda?

- Human Rights-based framework with a focus on socially excluded groups, such as persons with disabilities
- Focus on inequalities and lack of social justice, including support for analysis and collection of disaggregated data, including on disability
- Ensure meaningful participation, accessibility and inclusion, especially of poor, marginalized and socially excluded population groups

16. What do you consider to be the "top 3" features or elements which must be avoided in any future development agenda?

- The priority setting of the new development agenda should be based on the lessons learned from the current MDG process. From our point of view, it should not:
  - Be a top-down process that largely ignores/or does not include voices of citizens in developing countries, especially representatives of the most marginalised groups of the population such as persons with disabilities.
  - Become a weak and indecisive framework, that can be interpreted in many ways and accordingly looses relevance.
  - Repeat the exclusion of human rights as an over-arching issue, as in the case of the MDGs.

17. Should it be based on goals, targets and indicators? If any, should goals have an outcome or sector focus? Please give reasons for your answer.

- The new development framework should be based on goals, addressing the basic social development sectors such as education, health and employment with a rights-based perspective. Inequalities and social injustice should be explicitly addressed for each of the goals in the targets and indicators framework.

- Evidence shows, that for people living in poverty the access to education, health and employment has the biggest impact on their development, also changing their status and supporting their social inclusion in communities as well as their political participation. As some population groups – such as persons with disabilities - face
long-term stigmatization, discrimination and social exclusion, it is important in the framework to pay specific attention to them to avoid them being left out and to stimulate the removal of existing barriers. The targets-and indicators-framework offers respective opportunities.

18. How should implementation of the new framework be resourced?

Donor governments must scale up their ODA to 0,7 % of the GNI. In addition, domestic budget plans should follow a pro-poor budgeting approach. The strengthening of tax systems, a fight on tax havens and a new regulatory framework on taxation (minimizing the opportunities to avoid taxes, especially of investors in developing countries) would also contribute to scaling up resources for implementing the new development framework. The introduction of social protection systems, with a focus on poor and excluded groups, has the potential to lift up the effectiveness of development financing.