

The Beyond 2015 Swedish Steering Group's Response

Zero draft of the outcome document for the UN Summit to adopt the Post-2015 Development Agenda

The Beyond 2015 Swedish Steering Group welcomes the zero draft of the post-2015 outcome document prepared by the co-facilitators of the post-2015 intergovernmental negotiations. This draft is an important step on the way of developing a transformative and universal agenda for sustainable development in all its dimensions and the full realisation of human rights for all.

General

We welcome that the strong ambition and overall **clarity on the interlinkages** and the need for true integration between the challenges the agenda sets out to tackle. The first paragraph of the preamble summarises this ambition nicely, and so does para. 14 of the declaration, which refers to “*a set of integrated and invisible goals*”. However, we find the list of 9 examples in the preamble to be rather unhelpful in creating a sense of interlinkages. We further regret that the language in the declaration of the draft **remains non-committal**. If the declaration aims to inspire a transformative change, it must be clearly underlined that Member States are truly committing to taking action to achieve this transformative change and to go beyond words to actions. We are concerned that the **zero draft has omitted references to key UN declarations and outcomes of major conferences**, despite these being included in the Open Working Group proposal. We ask that member states include the full para. 6 from the OWG proposal, which clearly refers to the commitments in the outcomes of all major UN conferences and summits in the economic, social and environmental fields.

We are pleased to see the clear references to **tackling inequalities** and to ‘**leaving no one behind**’, as mentioned in para. 4 of the introduction, with special references to those most vulnerable (para 21.). We recommend that member states support any references made to ‘leaving no one behind’ and reducing inequalities. We also support that the OWG list **the 17 proposed sustainable development goals** remains intact, as we would otherwise risk important and already agreed commitments to fall of the agenda. The document however fails to answer the question on when each target will be considered met. We ask for a clarification on this.

Human Rights

The draft declaration includes some welcomed references to human rights, including the reference in para. 11 of the declaration, which states that the Agenda is guided by the full respect for international law and is grounded in the Universal Declaration of Human rights and other international instruments such as the Declaration on the Right to Development. However, the draft leaves a lot to ask when it comes to expressing a commitment to a human rights based approach and the full realisation of all human rights and use of human rights instruments across the agenda. It does not explicitly mention other human rights treaties and obligations, including the nine core human rights treaties and their optional protocols. Nor does the draft **reaffirm the universality, indivisibility and interdependence and interrelatedness of all human rights**. We urge member states to address this and to **make a clear commitment to existing human rights duties as an essential and non-negotiable framework** for delivering an inclusive, action-oriented and accountable Agenda

Participation

We welcome the consultations with stakeholders and the efforts that have been made so far to listen to the voices of concerns of the poorest and most vulnerable in the negotiations on post-2015. This is recognized in the draft in para. 5 and 43 of the draft. We are concerned on

the other hand that the zero draft does not adequately commit to ensure that the implementation and follow-up of the Agenda is done in a participatory and meaningful way with **the participation of all people, particularly the poorest and most vulnerable**. Further, the declaration lacks any reference to **the pivotal role of civil society participation** and the fact that civil society will be instrumental for the realization of many of the goals and targets. We expect member states to explicitly recognize and make reference the role of civil society as a key actor and to make commitments **to protect and create an enabling environment for civil society**. This would support target 17.17 as proposed by the OWG, which encourages effective civil society partnerships.

The document makes no references to **people's participation in the implementation** of the Agenda. We find that this must be changed to the opposite since the success of the Agenda will depend, to a large extent on the continued engagement of all people, especially in holding states accountable for their commitments and human rights obligations.

Gender equality

We regret to see that the opening paragraph of the zero draft **expressed a weak commitment in relation to achieving gender equality, the realisation of the human rights and empowerment of women and girls**, as well as their health and well-being, including through addressing social, economic, and legal barriers thereto.

The zero draft only weakly refers to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in paragraph 18, and does not reflect the vision of the targets under Goal 5 of the Open Working Group proposal, such as in relation to equal rights and opportunities to decision making, leadership, and economic resources. The draft also falls short in pointing to **women's and girls' health, including sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights and the elimination of harmful practices** as key areas for achieving transformative change in relation to gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment, as well as in relation to the SDGs overall. We therefore ask that member states make sure to strengthen these areas in the outcome document, **particularly by committing to a structurally and legally enabling environment for the realisation of the human rights and empowerment of women and girls and gender equality**.

Sustainability

The zero draft in general communicates **the need for a new approach and the integrated character of today's global challenges** fairly well. We welcome the references to "heal and secure our planet". There is a risk still that the integrative approach is lost, as in the opening sentence of para. 3 of the introduction creates an imbalance by isolating poverty eradication as the greatest global challenge. This is a regression from the path-breaking work of the OWG and on-going intergovernmental **negotiations which recognizes that the major global challenges we face today are interlinked**. Sustainable development cannot be achieved without eradicating poverty and poverty will never be eradicated in a world plagued by increasing environmental crises and inequality. The rest of para. 3 is a more appropriate description of the transformative Agenda before us. The **mutual supportive character of the dimensions of sustainability could be better delineated**, so that environment does not appear as an add-on to other activities.

Climate

It is essential that the Agenda **recognizes climate change as one of our world's biggest challenges** and a major impediment for poverty eradication and sustainable development. The Agenda needs to address the potential effects that climate change has in relation to goals on poverty, health, gender, water and inequality. We regret to see that the outcome document does not take this aspect fully into account. We want to see a recognition of the fact that the effects of climate change are increasingly visible around the world, **hitting**

those living in poverty and vulnerability the hardest, who at the same time have contributed the least to it. We welcome the reference to climate change (p.12) as one of the challenges facing “our world today”. We also welcome the stand alone paragraph on climate change (p27). Yet, we regret that the outcome document fails to properly address the historic responsibility for climate change that lies with some countries, and thus failing to make clear reference to the **principle of common but differentiated responsibility** (CBDR). While the new Agenda is universal, responsibility to tackle climate change differs between countries.

While we welcome para. 27 on climate change, the paragraph lacks substance, and is less ambitious than both the OWG report and the UN Secretary General’s Synthesis report. The para calls for emission reductions but does not include references to the 1.5/2 °C target. We ask that member states make a clear reference to this target.

Universality

We welcome that the zero draft clarifies the universality of the Agenda. We particularly support para 14 of the declaration and the strong sentence on *“universal goals which transcend the traditional North/South divide and involve the entire world, rich and poor alike”*. However, we would like to see **a further clarification of the implications of a universal agenda**, which would include the clarification that all countries are expected both to work towards improvement on all goal areas in their own national contexts, as well as richer countries obligation to assist less developed countries to make progress. It will be extremely detrimental if the agenda allows member states to ‘cherry pick’ which parts it will implement. We hope that member states are willing to demonstrate how they are ready to respond to the principle of universality by suggesting concrete actions and timeframes domestically and internationally.

Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development

As the post-2015 agenda is universal, the concept of Policy Coherence for Development is important and should be broadened to policy coherence that does no harm to human and sustainable development. Unfortunately, the importance of policy coherence for sustainable development as an enabler is missing from the declaration and is only expressed as a target for systemic issues under SDG 17 (17.14). We wish to see **a strong call for policy coherence at all levels and by all governments**, which implies a commitment to make sure that no other policies and actions undermine the realisation of the agenda. **PCD can potentially address the critical global accountability gap more than any other policy instrument** by stressing that all decision-making processes by all actors – must be responsive to the needs and aspirations of the world’s poorest and most marginalized and must ‘do no harm’ to their human rights, environment and development perspective.

Follow-up and review

We cannot stress enough **the importance of clear commitments to accountability** and transparent mechanisms to hold governments and other key actors to account for the commitments made in the Agenda. It is therefore with concern that we note that the term ‘accountability’ only appears once, in para 38 under follow-up and review. We are also concerned that the zero draft focuses too much on the voluntary nature of the follow-up and review by using ‘could’ rather than ‘should’ or ‘are expected to’, which undermines the transformative and ambitious agenda. We would like to **see clear references to existing UN and human rights accountability processes, such as the National Human Rights Institutions and the Universal Periodic Review**. To strengthen accountability, we also wish to see clear references to civil society participation in follow-up and review at the global, regional and national levels to ensure transparency and review of member states’

achievements. We therefore welcome the guiding principle on participation (3c) in the review section of the draft.

We warmly welcome the commitment to *'quality disaggregated data will be needed to help the measurement of progress. We agree to intensify efforts to strengthen national statistical capacities in developing countries, particularly least developed countries'*, as stated in para39 under follow-up and review. However, we also want to stress **the importance of a clear commitment to engaging other actors, including civil society, in the creation and collection of data.** The role of third parties in data production and monitoring needs to be more strongly affirmed. The data revolution can only be realized if all actors participate.

A UN fit for purpose

The zero draft does not present any guidelines or **commitments for a UN system which is fit for purpose.** We believe that the outcome document needs to recognize the important role of the UN system and the need for it to adapt in order to be ready to play its important role for the successful realization of the Agenda. Therefore, **we would like to see an additional chapter on: Strengthening the United Nations and getting the UN fit for purpose.** This was included in the Millennium Declaration Chapter in chapter "VIII. Strengthening the United Nations", para 29-32.

The Beyond 2015 Swedish Steering Group is coordinated by CONCORD Sweden and is constituted by the following organisations:

Diakonia, Forum Syd, LSU, MyRight, Plan Sweden, PRO Global, RFSU, PMU Interlife, RFSU (The Swedish Association of Sexuality Education, Rädda Barnen, The Church of Sweden, Swedish Mission Council, The Swedish Society for Nature Conservation, Union to Union, United Nations Association of Sweden, WaterAid Sweden, and WWF Sweden.