

A GLOBAL DASHBOARD for the new POST 2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

A proposal from the Governments of Colombia and Guatemala

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There is an emerging consensus that the new post-2015 development agenda should be relevant to, and actionable by, all countries. The new agenda should be universal. There is also growing consensus that such an agenda needs to provide modalities for reflecting the differences between countries given the wide range of circumstances and priorities along the development spectrum.

Many have proposed the adoption of a set of global sustainable development goals (SDGs) that would be underpinned by targets and indicators adopted at the national level. There is wide agreement that, within some general international agreed guidelines, the specific targets and indicators need to be appropriated at the national level, and adapted to national realities and priorities.

Inevitably, questions arise regarding how this approach would actually work in practice. A far-ranging and possibly disparate cohort of targets and indicators would be difficult to aggregate and compare at regional and global levels, making it difficult for the international community to rally around them, as was the case with the MDGs. Similarly, opportunities for capacity building, exchange of lessons, and cooperation could be limited or constrained.

To resolve this potential dilemma, the concept of a **dashboard** provides a possible way forward. The dashboard would be a discrete set of targets and indicators associated to each agreed Goal that reflects key areas for development around which there is broad consensus. This is how it could work:

- At the international level, Member States - with inputs from a wide range of stakeholders through the extensive participatory Post 2015 process now underway - will define a set of SDGs that reflect priority areas for development.
- For each Goal, there would be agreement at the international level, on a limited set of targets with their corresponding indicators. These targets would seek to capture basic deliverables across the range of development needs. A good example would be a target on food waste, which would include indicators focusing both on production and on consumption. Countries would determine which targets and indicators are relevant for their peculiar situation.
- In addition to these common targets and indicators, countries would also be able to develop other targets and indicators that reflect specific priority issues at national and sub-national level. These would not be part of the global dashboard, but would complement it in each country.
- Consideration could also be given to including targets such as:
 - The MDG targets that are relevant to each Goal
 - Cross-cutting and/or inter-linked targets that are relevant to more than one Goal

The benefits of such an approach are many:

- Issues that are common to many countries would be reflected in the same targets and indicators, thus providing a good basis for cooperation, capacity building, exchange of experiences, and overall support from all sources
- Issues related to management of global commons issues (for example migratory fish stocks) would be, cumulatively, more appropriately addressed
- Regional and global comparability and aggregation would be possible
- Overall, the new framework would be more coherent between the global, regional, and national levels
- The option of adding other national-level goals would ensure that the totality of priority issues for each country would be included

Concerns have been expressed that such an approach could foment a race to the bottom or limited engagement. This is unlikely for the following reasons:

- Firstly, we should recall that when metrics work and are perceived to be useful, countries use them. GDP and MDGs are both voluntary yet countries and the international system uses them extensively.
- Secondly, in an age increasingly defined by the reach and scope of communications technologies and social media, it is unlikely that any country will opt out of the new development framework, or render its participation irrelevant by focusing on targets that have already been met.

Rather, the new metrics - if we are able to get the framework right - will spur a race to the top. A race in which governments must take a lead, but one in which all stakeholders will have a key and decisive role.

The proposal is therefore for Member States, as a first step, to agree to the concept of a global Dashboard as a part of the SDG framework. This would then provide a key component for the architecture of the new framework. Work by many bodies and groups such as the OWG SDG, the TST, and the UNTT as well as by UN agencies and other stakeholders, could then contribute to the elaboration of this Dashboard as the Post 2015 process gets underway.