
Advancing Regional Recommendations from Europe and North America on the Post-2015 Development Agenda

A Consultation with Civil Society

Conducted by the UN Non-Governmental Liaison Service (UN-NGLS)
for the UN Secretary-General, the General Assembly,
and the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals

Background Document for the Regional Ministerial Consultation

"Monitoring and Accountability for the Post-2015 Development Agenda -
The Regional Dimension"

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Introduction

The United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service (UN-NGLS) launched a consultation on 31 May 2013 to gather critical analysis from civil society on the UN post-2015 development agenda, using as a basis four post-2015 reports that were submitted to the UN Secretary-General between March and June 2013.¹ This initiative was conducted in partnership with the Post-2015 Development Planning Team of the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, and with support from the UN Foundation, Rockefeller Brothers Fund and the Ford Foundation. The findings of the consultation serve as official input to the UN intergovernmental process for defining the post-2015 development agenda.

The consultation report, [Advancing Regional Recommendations on the Post-2015 Development Agenda](#), presented recommendations from regional civil society networks to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly, Heads of State and Government attending the General Assembly Special Event on the Millennium Development Goals, and the [Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals \(OWG on SDGs\)](#). This report also formed the basis of a [day of dialogue](#) between civil society and UN Member States on 22 September 2013 regarding regional recommendations toward the post-2015 development agenda.

Through quotations and summaries of the discussions and written submissions, this report provides a detailed account of regional civil society perspectives on barriers to sustainable development and recommendations for overcoming them. It focuses on alternative proposals to those presented in the four reports under review. NGLS synthesized the findings according to four main objectives for the post-2015 development agenda, which surfaced through clear convergence of priorities identified by regional civil society networks:

- Rebalance power relations for justice
- Fulfill human rights and overcome exclusion
- Ensure equitable distribution and safe use of natural resources
- Establish participatory governance, accountability and transparency

Section I of this report – Regional Convergences – presents a summary of the principal civil society recommendations for achieving each of these four objectives, representing expert analysis received from all regions during the consultation. Sections II-VI provide detailed reports of the findings from each region, organized according to the four main objectives that were identified.

Section II	Asia and the Pacific
Section III	Latin America and the Caribbean
Section IV	Europe and North America
Section V	Africa
Section VI	Arab States

Each of these sections serves as a stand-alone synthesis of a region's contributions. There are many similarities in the content across them. This overlap demonstrates significant convergence of critical priorities identified by civil society in all regions, and therefore presents a powerful demand for attention and action during design and implementation of the post-2015 development agenda. UN-NGLS emphasizes that although convergences have been identified through this exercise, a comprehensive reading of the full report reveals many unique

¹ These four reports were:

- a) [UN Secretary-General's High-level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda](#)
- b) [Sustainable Development Solutions Network \(SDSN\)](#)
- c) [UN Global Compact \(UNGC\)](#)
- d) [UN Development Group \(UNDG\): The Global Conversation Begins](#)

insights and important proposals. UN-NGLS also conducted extensive research to provide links to valuable supplementary reading on subjects that are raised. Therefore, this report is best read on an electronic device.

In this background document, UN-NGLS provides the relevant excerpts from the global consultation report to serve as a supporting material for the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Ministerial Consultation on “Monitoring and Accountability for the Post-2015 Development Agenda – The Regional Dimension,” taking place on 15-16 September 2014 at the Palais des Nations in Geneva, Switzerland.

From the global consultation report, this background document reproduces:

- I. The Executive Summary, “Regional Convergences,” which presents a brief summary of the principal recommendations emanating from all regions (pp. 5-7)
- II. Summary recommendations from the report’s section on Participatory Governance, Accountability and Transparency (pp. 8-10)
- III. The Europe and North America Regional Report of the consultation (pp. 11-39)

Annex I: A listing of all regional civil society networks that participated in the global consultation (pp. 40-42)

Annex II: The methodology and links to all information resources that were used for the full report (pp. 43-44)

Regional Convergences

Civil society networks and social movements from every world region have provided remarkably similar accounts of economic, social and environmental crises, including extreme inequalities, extensive human rights violations, and rampant natural resource exploitation that are overwhelming the world's ecosystems. The case for radical transformation is irrefutable. Within this consultation report, civil society analysts identify what is causing these problems, and share evidence-based solutions. It is clear that the obstacles to achieving sustainable development are not technical; they are political. The United Nations post-2015 development discussions provide a timely opportunity to mobilize leadership and support for fundamental change to ensure justice, equality, equity, and sustainability.

The recommendations received from regional civil society networks via this consultation convey strategies for achieving development and sustainability in tandem. The analysis has been organized according to four main objectives that surfaced from the inputs received:

- Rebalance power relations for justice
- Fulfill human rights and overcome exclusion
- Ensure equitable distribution and safe use of natural resources
- Establish participatory governance, accountability and transparency

Contributors raised fundamental concerns around power relations in a variety of contexts, identifying that imbalances of power have eroded justice and integrity in societies across all regions of the world. All of the economic, social, environmental and governance objectives discussed by civil society networks relate to rebalancing power in some sense, as well as to addressing historic and ongoing injustices. Civil society networks most fervently underscored the need to **rebalance power relations for justice** in terms of transforming economies – in particular, to re-orient economic governance and policies at all levels toward the fulfillment of human rights and the multiple dimensions of human well-being.

Civil society networks identified that blanket policy prescriptions, such as indiscriminate financial and trade liberalization, deregulation and privatization, export- and foreign investment-led growth, and a reduced role of the State, have led to tremendous concentration of wealth and power, exacerbated inequalities, and increased poverty. A truly transformative post-2015 development agenda must therefore promote the diversification of national economies towards more localized, employment-intensive forms of production and consumption, and away from resource-intensive means. The agenda must also embed strong redistributive and inclusive policies, including universal access to essential public services and a reversal of the widespread pattern of stagnating or declining wages and incomes affecting the majority of the world's population. The regional networks presented a wealth of successful experiences to align economic activities with the imperatives of decent employment and environmental regeneration. However, many obstacles and systemic risks inherent to the current international trade, investment and financial architecture stand in the way of implementing this transformative agenda and must be overcome. Participants also emphasized the need for demilitarization and the redirection of significant amounts of military funding to sustainable development programmes.

Participants firmly asserted that the post-2015 development agenda must adopt a human rights-based approach to ensure that policies benefit the most vulnerable and marginalized people, and foster equity and equality. The post-2015 agenda must call on UN Member States to **fulfill human rights and overcome exclusion**, including by taking steps to the maximum of available resources to progressively achieve the full

realization of rights,² and by respecting the principle of non-regression. Civil society networks urged for a strengthened role of the State in respecting, protecting and fulfilling the full gamut of economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights for all people. Contributors proposed approaches to ensure that the rights to education, universal health care – including sexual and reproductive health, decent work, and social protection are fulfilled, and that the rights of marginalized groups including women, Indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people, ethnic groups and migrants are no longer violated.

In numerous countries, the extractive, energy and agriculture industries are committing widespread human rights violations, particularly through land and water grabs, but also through civil and political rights violations. The exploitative practices of these industries have caused a significant amount of environmental and social stress, and have been responsible for extensive and disproportionate harm to Indigenous peoples. The Convention on Biological Diversity warns that human impacts, such as pollution and deforestation, risk pushing ecosystems past tipping points. Climate change is an urgent global environmental challenge that threatens to severely undermine development efforts. Civil society networks insisted that the post-2015 development agenda must promote policies to **ensure equitable distribution and safe use of natural resources**. Such policies must move beyond pursuing resource efficiency to asserting resource sufficiency, participants argued, adding that constraints imposed by environmental limitations make discussions about redistribution and fair shares in terms of natural resources unavoidable. Civil society networks recommended several models for sustainable consumption and production, including the circular economy, the social and solidarity economy, the sharing economy, and biomimicry. It follows that transformation of the energy industry is essential, and all nations must aggressively shift away from the use of fossil fuels and nuclear energy – which both carry tremendous economic, environmental and social liabilities – and advance toward truly clean, renewable, and equitably distributed power generation. Harmful subsidies to dangerous energy industries must be eliminated and re-directed to renewable energy and other sustainable development priorities.

To achieve sustainable agriculture, small-holder farmers, who feed a majority of the world's people, must be supported through the model of food sovereignty. Organic and agro-ecological practices must be promoted, and staple food production should be oriented to serve local consumption needs before export markets. A powerful call for climate justice was issued from participants in Africa, who maintained that the scale of climate finance is insufficient to meet necessary levels of action, and that although adaptation finance is the priority for Africa, the significant majority of available funding is for mitigation. Developed countries must live up to their commitments to provide new and additional, adequate and predictable financing to developing countries, free of any harmful conditionalities, in accordance with the principles of common but differentiated responsibilities and polluter pays.

As failure to deliver on commitments is a pervasive problem in sustainable development, the post-2015 development agenda must **establish participatory governance, accountability and transparency**, which are compelled by internationally agreed human rights, including the rights to participate in public affairs, access to information, and access to justice and administration. The post-2015 agenda should employ human rights accountability mechanisms, such as the Universal Periodic Review of the Human Rights Council, and seek to strengthen them.

Accountability in the post-2015 agenda will remain meaningless if strong means of implementation are not established. The private sector cannot be expected to play a leading role in managing the major structural shifts required to realize development goals equitably and sustainably. Democratically defined public policies

² As agreed in the [International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights](#).

must steer public and private initiatives to meet sustainable development objectives. Civil society networks strongly criticized the prevailing tendency in the post-2015 discussions to rely on voluntary initiatives with the corporate sector and public-private partnerships, which can lead to many abuses. Credible partnership initiatives with the corporate sector should be subject to binding accountability mechanisms. The UN [Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights: Implementing the United Nations “Protect, Respect and Remedy” Framework](#) should be supplemented with binding enforcement measures, including legislation, court adjudication and penalties for violations.

Participants identified that a substantial amount of global policy-making is occurring in unaccountable groupings such as the G8 and G20, and that the post-2015 development agenda should direct States to re-conceptualize and democratize the global policy architecture, especially in the areas of trade, finance and macroeconomic policy. Participants called on the UN to subject the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to oversight, and support regional efforts toward self-defined development. The policies and programmes of international financial institutions should be made compatible with the extra-territorial human rights obligations of Member States, defined in the [Maastricht Principles on Extraterritorial Obligations in the area of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights](#).

The post-2015 agenda itself must be defined, implemented and monitored through fully participatory processes in which all voices are heard. Civil society contributors emphasized that the onus is on decision-makers to build the capacity of people to participate. People affected by policies should not be considered followers of a debate; they should be empowered to help lead agendas, and ensure accountability for commitments. Monitoring processes must incorporate qualitative measures of progress, such as the Gross National Happiness Index developed by the Kingdom of Bhutan, or Genuine Progress Indicators, and data must be disaggregated by gender, age, geographical location, rural/urban location, income, educational background and other relevant indicators. It is critical to approach development holistically, and evaluate it comprehensively, to ensure that efforts are continually advancing justice, equality, equity, and sustainability.

Summary of Recommendations on Participatory Governance, Accountability and Transparency

Meaningful implementation of any post-2015 agenda requires a strong framework for participatory governance, accountability and transparency. Such a framework must be firmly anchored in existing international human rights agreements and instruments. Human rights standards and norms provide a comprehensive framework to guide policy and to assess impacts and monitor progress.

In a globalized interdependent world, the obligation to respect, protect and fulfill all human rights requires not only the democratization and reform of national governance structures, but also of global governance bodies, especially those dealing with economic and financial affairs.

Accountability in the post-2015 agenda will remain meaningless unless strong means of implementation are put in place. The private sector cannot be expected to play a leading role in managing the major structural shifts required to realize development goals equitably and sustainably. Democratically defined public policies must steer public and private initiatives to meet sustainable development objectives. Credible partnership initiatives with the private sector should be subject to binding accountability mechanisms.

The tools for monitoring and evaluating progress should involve a holistic set of indicators that measure the multiple dimensions of human wellbeing, not just quantitatively, but also qualitatively. Monitoring and evaluation must include a focus on structural barriers affecting diverse groups.

On these various fronts, Member States should agree to:

1. Integrate strong human rights accountability mechanisms

- a) Integrate and commit to strengthening the human rights framework of inter-governmental processes and mechanisms for monitoring and accountability, including the [Universal Periodic Review \(UPR\)](#) of the UN Human Rights Council and mechanisms under human rights conventions;
- b) In accordance with the [International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights](#), “take steps” (including legislative, judicial, administrative, financial, educational, and social measures) “to the maximum of available resources,” to progressively achieve the full realization of economic, social and cultural rights,³ and to monitor and report on progress and objectively justify any backsliding;
- c) Ratify the full spectrum of human rights treaties and their optional complaint procedures, withdraw the reservations that impede their implementation, and commit to the comprehensive, timely and regular submission of reports.

2. Promote Participatory and Transparent Governance Structures

- a) Fully respect and ensure the freedoms of expression, association and assembly;
- b) Adopt strong systems to fight corruption, ensure transparency and promote equal opportunities;

³ Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, [general comment No. 3](#) (1990) on the nature of State parties obligations (concerning the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights), paras. 3–7.

- c) Promote measures to ensure that accountability of elected governments is not limited to election periods, but is on-going, and striving for “participatory democratic governance”;
- d) Adopt measures to increase transparency in the financing of electoral campaigns, including through caps on contributions from the private sector and individuals;
- e) Increase women’s participation in decision-making;
- f) Recognize civil society as a key partner in identifying issues, informing policies and achieving goals; and in monitoring and evaluating implementation, by mainstreaming participatory processes at various levels of policy-making, including the provision of access to information;
- g) Ensure full transparency of public budgets and public procurement; and enable civil society to participate in the budget process;
- h) Adopt mechanisms and allocate resources to ensure that civil society, including associations of vulnerable and marginalized people, have the capacity to engage meaningfully in decision-making processes;
- i) Implement [Principle 10](#) of the 1992 Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, which recognizes the rights to access to information, public participation and justice in environmental matters; promote the development of regional agreements to realize these rights, such as the UN Economic Commission for Europe’s [Aarhus Convention](#) on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters;
- j) Ensure meaningful civil society participation in the negotiations of the post-2015 agenda, including by the [Civil Society Mechanism](#) (CSM) of the FAO Committee on World Food Security (CFS), which involves a sophisticated system of balanced civil society representation: non-governmental representatives engage on par with governments in draft negotiations while voting rights are reserved for governments.

3. More Democratic, Accountable and Transparent Global Economic Governance

- a) Increase the voice and leverage of people and governments from developing countries, especially Least Developed Countries, in institutions of global governance – particularly the Bretton Woods institutions and the WTO;
- b) Ensure that the policies and programmes of international financial institutions are compatible with the international human rights obligations of Member States, including by applying the [Maastricht Principles on Extraterritorial Obligations of States in the Area of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights](#); agree to meaningful indicators in the post-2015 agenda that can address extra-territoriality and hold States and industries to account;
- c) Make all documents pertaining to multilateral, regional and bilateral trade negotiations, as well as those pertaining to negotiations with international financial institutions, publically available and in a timely fashion;
- d) Strengthen the United Nations’ legitimate role in holding various international bodies accountable for their policies and actions.

4. Binding Corporate Accountability and Transparency

- a) Supplement the UN [Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights: Implementing the United Nations “Protect, Respect and Remedy” Framework](#) (adopted by the UN Human Rights Council and the General Assembly in 2011) with binding enforcement measures, including legislation, court adjudication, and penalties for violations;
- b) Require enterprises to release publicly any information regarded as “confidential business information” that is relevant to determining market share and defining inter-firm arrangements, such as strategic alliances and joint ventures;

- c) Agree internationally to require country-by-country reporting by transnational corporations of their financial performance for each country of operation or trading presence;
- d) Require the labelling of products from enterprises with a track record of human rights violations and/or of causing serious damage to the environment.

5. Holistic Approaches to Monitor and Evaluate Progress

- a) Recognize that US\$1.25 a day is not a reliable or meaningful measure of poverty, nor is Gross Domestic Product (GDP) a credible measure of progress;
- b) Agree that many goals and targets should be tailored to local conditions and needs, and should be identified through national participatory processes, with global goals and targets as a reference point;
- c) Provide the resources required for governments of developing countries, especially Least Developed Countries, to develop the capacity to gather and manage data and targets;
- d) Develop targets and indicators that are disaggregated by income groups, gender, youth, ethnicity and other marginalized or vulnerable groups, including indicators that point to structural barriers of access to essential services;
- e) Adopt the [Human Rights Indicators](#) developed by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR);
- f) Develop qualitative targets and indicators that measure the multiple dimensions of human wellbeing, such as the Kingdom of Bhutan's [Gross National Happiness Index](#);
- g) Develop targets and related measures on the extent to which economic policies are damaging to local communities including migrants, fisherfolk, forest and Indigenous peoples, pastoralists, and other marginalized communities;
- h) Develop targets and indicators for the promotion of short distribution circuits aimed at promoting self-sustaining local circuits of production, trade and consumption, as well as targets to increase the percentage of public purchases from small producers and local actors of the social and solidarity economy.

EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA

REGIONAL REPORT

UN-NGLS Post-2015 Civil Society Consultation
for the UN Secretary-General, UN General Assembly, and the
Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals

I. Rebalance Power Relations for Justice

European and North American civil society networks echoed the calls in the Post-2015 High-level Panel (HLP) and Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) reports for structural transformation, and emphasized the major responsibilities that their governments have to correct long-standing structural and systemic issues, including what they described as a flawed trade and financial system that favours the global movement of goods, services and finance, often at the expense of preserving and revitalizing the socio-economic fabric of local communities and societies. Participants stressed that these systemic imbalances are central drivers of inequality, poverty, and environmental degradation, and as such, must be forcefully addressed by the post-2015 agenda. Contributors proposed alternative economic approaches that observe human rights and give rise to social and environmental well-being. Civil society networks contributed perspectives on:

- A. The need for holistic development approaches within an integrated agenda
- B. Addressing systemic obstacles to sustainability
- C. Alternative economic approaches that align jobs and sustainability

A. The Need for Holistic Development Approaches Within an Integrated Agenda

Civil society networks conveyed that the post-2015 reports to the Secretary-General included several strategic elements that should be carried forward in the post-2015 development agenda, but that overall, the proposed approaches are not comprehensive enough, and do not tackle critical structural issues. Global Policy Forum (GPF) suggested that:

The HLP and SDSN reports identify the need for a structural transformation, but they fail to follow up and to come to comprehensive policy recommendations and policy goals. They talk about the need for a universal agenda, an integrated agenda, but the policy descriptions and the proposed goals reflect the traditional concept of goals for the poor countries of the South. We need an integrated agenda that looks also at the problems of the so-called industrialized countries.... When aiming for a really holistic approach to development, this future set of what we call 'Universal Sustainability Goals (USGs)' must go beyond poverty and environmental goals and must include, for instance, the economic and financial systems, and goals with regard to peace, disarmament and demilitarization, even though it may be politically difficult.

The concept of Universal Sustainability Goals was developed by the Civil Society Reflection Group on Global Development Perspectives,⁴ of which GPF is a member, and includes six dimensions in an integrated manner: dignity and human rights for all; equity, equality and justice; respect for nature and planetary boundaries; peace through disarmament, demilitarization and non-violent dispute settlement; fair economic and financial systems; and democratic and participatory decision-making structures.

Participants emphasized the need for the post-2015 framework to include not only goals, but also address root causes of perverse patterns such as unsustainable production and consumption, rising inequality, impoverishment, social exclusion, environmental degradation and conflict. Young people are particularly concerned “whether any of these initiatives will have any lasting impact, or actually be sustainable, if they don’t directly address the fundamental issues of inequality,” emphasized USA Cooperative Youth Council. “Youth are not necessarily just interested in talking about sanitation or clean water; they also want to talk about the underlying inequalities, or larger systemic issues.” “Focusing the international discourse mainly around goals is dangerous, since it is also necessary to target the obstacles, the constraints and the political barriers with regard to the post-2015 framework and the implementation of any future sustainability goals,” GPF argued. Likewise, the Northern Alliance for Sustainability (ANPED) insisted on the importance of “policy coherence⁵ for sustainable development, which means focusing more on the barriers and blockers of sustainable development instead of only promoting it.”

B. Addressing Systemic Obstacles to Sustainability

European and North American civil society networks were concerned that many of their governments have a primary responsibility for addressing systemic obstacles to sustainability, but have so far failed to take decisive action on a number of fronts, and in many cases, have promoted policies that are exacerbating problems. Of particular concern is the way in which governments have handled the global economic crisis. Civil society networks criticized the use of austerity measures and promoted several public financing measures to alleviate debt while also supporting sustainable development objectives. Participants also called for measures to reduce corporate concentration of power and influence, and discussed strategies for rebalancing the trade and investment architecture.

Alternatives to Austerity: New Financial Mechanisms

According to many participants, the austerity policies⁶ pursued in a particularly brutal fashion in Europe exemplify a failed economic paradigm that includes the doctrine of transferring responsibilities of the State to the private sector. Civil society networks noted that the HLP and SDSN reports, within an overall call for “structural transformation,” emphasized an expanded role for the corporate sector in development. Participants said this approach has many flaws and proposed alternatives.

The European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) described the major negative impacts that substantial public budget cuts in many parts of Europe are having on jobs and public services, including healthcare, education and culture, as well as [development cooperation](#) budgets. They also undermine “the ability of the European Union and its Member States to shift towards a greener and more sustainable low-carbon economy.” Natural

⁴ Civil Society Reflection Group on Global Development Perspectives, “[Towards a Framework of Universal Sustainability Goals as Part of a Post-2015 Agenda](#).” (2013).

⁵ “Policy coherence means different policy communities working together in ways that result in more powerful tools and products for all concerned. It means looking for synergies and complementarities and filling gaps among different policy areas so as to meet common and shared objectives.” Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, “[Policy Framework for Policy Coherence in Development – Working Paper No. 1](#),” (2012), p. 3.

⁶ <http://lexicon.ft.com/Term?term=austerity-measure>

Capitalism Solutions described the prevailing paradigm as one in which “corporate profits are subsidized, losses are socialized, the commons are privatized, and the ‘too-big-to-fail’ are bailed out.” It noted that the financial crash of 2008 and its aftermath caused US\$50 trillion⁷ and 80 million jobs⁸ globally “to evaporate.” While living standards continue to decrease for many people, with record high unemployment in a number of developed countries and workers facing wage cuts, as Natural Capitalism Solutions observed, corporate profits continue to grow, with the bankers responsible for the crisis continuing to receive large bonuses. Arguing that the systemic risks leading to the crisis have not been adequately addressed, Natural Capitalism Solutions warned: “a collapse-prone world is a bad platform for development policy.”

GPF asserted that the power of “too big to fail” institutions must be reigned in through enforceable national and international regulations that would sanction them as “too big to allow”: financial institutions must be prevented from becoming so large that they pose systemic risks if they go bankrupt, and financial markets must be reorganized in the interest of people in both the global North and South.

Civil society networks discussed measures to end the current socialization of the cost of corporate malpractices and to generate resources to finance jobs in carbon-reducing sectors domestically, as well as to fund sustainable development goals globally. Natural Capitalism Solutions called for policies that would enable “bankrupt communities around the world to escape the crushing debt that stifles efforts to build prosperity.” Referring to the subprime mortgage crisis in the United States that sparked the global financial crisis and subsequent recession that began in 2008, Natural Capitalism Solutions suggested that “it would have been far better to pay people at risk of defaulting on their mortgages to enable them to pay the banks and stay in their homes, than to bail out the banks, and then allow them to hoard the resulting cash.”

Participants did not accept arguments favouring austerity on grounds that governments are over-indebted and face the sanctions of financial markets if they do not put their public finances in order. They argued that debts can be reduced and public finances increased through measures such as an international financial transactions tax (currently planned amongst 11 EU Member States), progressive taxation on corporations and wealthy individuals – and preventing tax evasion through international agreements involving country-by-country reporting of corporate earnings, automatic exchange of information on bank holdings and the eventual abolition of tax havens. Many participants also urged governments to eliminate subsidies to socially and environmentally harmful industries, and to redirect the more than one trillion US dollars spent on them⁹ towards sustainable development objectives, as discussed further in section III.

The financial crisis also triggered governments to shift discussions on international financing for sustainable development away from overseas development assistance (ODA) toward greater domestic resource mobilization and private sources. InterAction identified that this is inherently dangerous because it is “letting governments off the hook without a clear sense of how financing will be available, or coordinated, or measured.” InterAction added that there is a tendency “to leap to foreign direct investment (FDI) as a proxy for ODA, as if all transfers of resources were inherently good.” While acknowledging that some value chains are aligning to provide some social good, InterAction warned, “The problem is that there aren’t clear established norms [to assess] what is working and what the return is on the social side.” These issues will become all the more complex as the question of financing sustainable development goals (SDGs) interfaces with the negotiations on climate finance, InterAction highlighted.

⁷ Bloomberg, “[Global Financial Assets Lost \\$50 Trillion Last Year, ADB Says.](#)” (9 March 2009).

⁸ International Labour Organization, “[World of Work Report 2011.](#)”

⁹ <http://priceofoil.org/2012/06/13/1-trillion-in-global-fossil-fuel-subsidies-the-urgent-need-for-transparency/>.

For GPF, “the post-2015 agenda must come to a new global system of financial burden-sharing beyond ODA.” Citing that the HLP and SDSN reports mainly refer to the 0.7% target and to aid-based development financial transfers, GPF advocated an alternative approach:

Instead, we must come to a rights-based approach of financial transfers. There must be a new mandatory system, a fiscal equalization scheme, or a compensation scheme, to pay off climate debt or other forms of debt... A future development agenda, which is holistic, must go beyond the traditional division of the world between developed and developing countries and must go beyond this traditional concept of ODA. It must find new forms of financial transfers, which imply the commitment and the obligation of the rich countries to pay more to the poor countries than they do now.

On the resource allocation side of the equation, InterAction called for “budget transparency, the publishing of budgets, the ability of local civil society to engage in a budget process and the degree to which those budgets focus on different populations.” GPF suggested that a key challenge that must be addressed in the post-2015 discussions, particularly by the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing, is aligning public budgets with sustainability. “SDGs only make sense when they are reflected in sustainable development budgets,” GPF asserted.

Addressing Corporate Concentration of Power

A number of participants emphasized the need to address what they described as the excessive concentration of power and influence of major multinational corporations. Taking agribusiness firms as an example, ETC Group referred to a report it had just produced “[Putting the Cartel before the Horse](#)” which asserts that 6 transnational corporations control well over 50% in every sector of agricultural inputs at the global scale—ranging from plant breeding and commercial seeds to agro-chemical sales. “Most economists still would argue that when you get above 50% for 6 companies you end up in a cartel environment, and secondly, of more concern, you actually reduce the level of innovation among companies. We can’t afford to be in that situation.”

ETC Group argues that these global cartel arrangements make national competition policy insufficient and called on the United Nations to create a platform for dialogue on these and related issues, such as intellectual property rights, which it described as “perhaps the most powerful form of subsidy when it comes to creating corporate concentration and reducing innovation....”

Participants were equally concerned by the degree to which concentration of corporate power is distorting democratic policy-making. Referring to “powers and interests against sustainability,” ANPED argued that sustainability is “not a technical problem, it’s a political problem.” GPF mentioned that Goldman Sachs has been lobbying against the financial transactions tax in the European Union and that other major businesses are trying to resist country-by-country reporting¹⁰ required by US legislation, not only by lobbying but also through lawsuits. Canadian Center for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) warned that engaging the corporate sector cannot just be about incentives and voluntary initiatives: the post-2015 discussions must include the need “to take harsh measures vis-à-vis entrenched interests – tobacco, big pharmaceuticals, fossil fuel industries, and extractive industries – which are highly mobilized and determined to protect their own profit-oriented business model.” The “problem of the business lobby” must be addressed as part of the post-2015 discussions, many participants insisted.

¹⁰ <http://www.publishwhatyoupay.org/about/advocacy/country-country-reporting>

Rebalancing the Trade and Investment Architecture

As in other regions, European and North American civil society networks stressed the need to rebalance the trade and investment architecture on a number of fronts.

CCPA welcomed the SDSN report's proposed target to reform international trade and investment rules to ensure they are consistent with sustainable development goals, but warned that the various free trade agreements that European and North American countries are parties to, or in the process of negotiating, "are moving in the opposite direction." Participants discussed the many restrictions that current international trade and investment agreements impose on the ability of governments to regulate FDI in the public interest without facing the risk of very expensive lawsuits in international arbitration panels, which tend to side with the rights of investors. (These restrictions are explained in more detail in the Latin America, Asia and Arab regional reports for this consultation.)

CCPA remarked that the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) "is attempting to create an alternative dialogue around those excessive mechanisms" and that a number of countries are leading the way on re-establishing State regulatory authority: "Australia has renounced investor-State dispute settlements in many of its agreements. Simultaneously, South Africa is reviewing all its bilateral investment treaties that were signed in the post-apartheid era," while a number of Latin American countries "are revoking some of these treaties and attempting to develop alternative sets of rules that are more deferential to State authority." As part of the post-2015 development agenda, these agreements must be reviewed to ensure that they do not act as an obstacle to meeting sustainable development goals.

Participants also discussed how indiscriminate trade liberalization and free trade agreements exacerbate inequalities and undermine livelihoods. Social-Ecological Fund NGF, based in Kazakhstan, observed that regional trade integration among countries of the former Soviet Bloc and other trading partners in Eurasia have mostly benefitted the larger economies, and have increased economic asymmetries among countries. Economies with weaker productive capacities, especially those relying on natural resource extraction, are unable to compete with economically more advanced trading partners. Fair Trade Federation observed that the "widespread dumping of corn crops in Mexico," resulting from the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), "has led to artificially depressed prices, leaving Mexican farmers without markets."

The undermining of development objectives by trade and investment agreements is an example of a lack of policy coherence, participants said. CONCORD pointed out that at the level of the European Union, "there is a legal obligation for policy coherence for development.... At a very minimum, EU policies should not undermine the EU's development objectives."

According to Fair Trade Federation, "the primary problem with these agreements is that they do not give power to local communities or producers." Therefore, many small producers in the South have turned to fair trade certification schemes, which cut through many intermediaries and provide them with fair incomes and security through price guarantees. Fair Trade Federation describes the fair trade movement in the following terms: "We have envisioned fair trade as an alternative system of trade that overturns traditional power structures, and in doing so seeks to eradicate poverty at the very local level.... It was a movement that at the grassroots level was about small buyers from the global North forming relationships with small producers from the global South, usually artisans and farmers, in order to sell their products in developed markets. Fair trade works within global trade, but at the same time, seeks to create real alternatives where trade is based on people and relationships rather than on products and profit."

The fair trade movement is part of the wider social and solidarity economy movement discussed in the section below. It prioritizes more localized forms of trade with much shorter supply chains than in more conventional trade. Fair Trade Federation added in this regard: “Most of the success in poverty alleviation, in terms of trade, happens at the local level, when producers can own their production and as much of the supply chain as possible, and where the latter is as short as possible. This is where trade becomes transformative.”

C. Alternative Economic Approaches that Align Jobs and Sustainability

The HLP and SDSN reports emphasize the need for economic structural transformation to meet the imperative of sustainability. They also repeatedly indicate that economic growth is essential to development. Participants found these two assertions to be incongruent. GPF expressed concern that “structural transformation” could end up meaning “more or less doing business as usual, but in a more eco-efficient way, which is not sufficient.” CONCORD remarked: “The HLP report focuses on the need for fast growth of the traditional sort, but at the same time it talks about the need for a rapid economic transformation in the face of limited resources, and the two don’t really tally.” Many participants echoed the view expressed by CONCORD that growth should not be an aim in itself; the objective should be the realization of all human rights and all aspects of human well-being.

Natural Capitalism Solutions quoted John Fullerton who argues that the growth imperative “is fundamentally misaligned with the finite boundaries of the biosphere,” and asserts that the global economy must evolve to “align itself with this scientific reality,” and “address other critical challenges, most notably the grotesquely inequitable distribution of wealth, intractable poverty in much of the world, and chronic unemployment.” Natural Capitalism Solutions advocated for the models of regenerative economics and finance, which are described in John Fullerton’s paper, [“A Summary Call to Regenerative Capitalism.”](#)

Many participants emphasized that a holistic understanding will benefit development far more than pitting economic, social and environmental concerns against each other. This often occurs with the subject of jobs. “Growth” is often used as a proxy for “job creation,” despite the fact that the two do not always correlate, and then a false dilemma is framed between job creation and environmental protection. Natural Capitalism Solutions suggested that “jobs have become the currency of politics worldwide, but the typical prescription of growth at any cost turns out not to be best way to create durable, well-paying jobs.”

An example of this was presented by the International Organization of Industrial, Artisanal and Service Producer Cooperatives (CICOPA) North America: In the State of Wisconsin, which underwent a process of environmental deregulation in recent years, a mining company is proposing a 22-mile long mountain-top removal project near the shores of Lake Superior. “It’s being billed as a job creator, but it is not about jobs,” insisted CICOPA, because in fact, the project would eliminate existing jobs in the local food system, as well as the green energy and ecotourism sectors, which are growth sectors of the local region’s economy. US Solidarity Economy Network (US-SEN) added, “It is all well and good to say that we need to create jobs... but an underlying question is missing: what *kind* of jobs?” It is necessary to ground jobs in the local community and democratize the workplace through approaches such as cooperative ownership, asserted US-SEN, because “often, as corporations get larger, they lose their rootedness in the community and pull up stakes to chase the lowest costs of production in the world.”

Several participating networks are part of a worldwide “movement of movements” that is increasingly being referred to as the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE). It encompasses a broad and diverse range of initiatives that undertake economic activities to create decent jobs and livelihoods, but at the same time seek to meet social and/or environmental objectives. It builds on the long history of community economic development, including the worldwide cooperative movement, which arose in response to the rampant exploitation of

workers in the mid-to-late period of the industrial revolution. Cooperative members are workers, customers and/or local residents that collectively own and manage economic activities. Some SSE actors emphasize the “social economy,”¹¹ (more focused on the internal democratic management and ownership of social enterprises, such as cooperatives) and others emphasize the “solidarity economy” (cooperative and collective forms of economic management and ownership that extend to the whole community and beyond). US-SEN explained, “Social economy is a sector of enterprises, and solidarity economy is about a whole systemic view of looking at all the economic sectors of production, distribution, exchange, finance, consumption and the role of governance.”

US-SEN explained that the term “solidarity economy”¹² emerged approximately 10 years ago, and solidarity economy organizations and networks now exist in Latin America, most European countries, Africa, Asia, and Canada. US-SEN described the solidarity economy movement as broad and diverse, encompassing for example: the cooperative movement (worker, producer, consumer, housing and financial cooperatives); local exchange systems and complementary currencies; collectively-owned social enterprises and self-provisioning; social investment funds; worker-controlled pension funds; fair trade; solidarity finance; the “reclaim the commons” movement and the sharing economy; community land trusts, the cities in transition movement; community supported agriculture; permaculture and ecological production; and community development finance and financial institutions, such as credit unions, community loan funds, community development banks, and participatory budgeting processes.

Solidarity Economy actors often distinguish themselves from both the public and private “capitalist” sectors of the economy. They are highly diverse but are grounded in common visions that US-SEN describes as: “solidarity and cooperation, rather than the pursuit of narrow, individual self-interest,” and promotion of “economic democracy, alternative models of local economic governance, equity and sustainability rather than the unfettered rule of the market.”

The cooperative economy has a 200 year track record; it is one of the flagship movements of SSE, explained CICOPA. Participants gave a number of examples of how a cooperative approach can transform communities. CICOPA referred to the thriving Province Gipuzkoa in the Basque region of Spain where the [Mondragon Cooperative Corporation](#) (MCC) is located. Its core values are cooperation, participation, social responsibility, and innovation. From its modest beginnings in the 1940s, MCC now encompasses 140 cooperative enterprises and employs over 83,000 workers and educates 9,000 students. CICOPA added: “Here, poverty and health are not significant issues. Why? Because workers own the means of production, own the capital, direct the capital and make the social investments. Democracy is so extraordinarily embedded in their culture that solutions to their immediate problems are dealt with not from some edict from above, but through the intelligence of the hive....” It was noted that Mondragon is an important model of the cooperative solidarity economy that has been woven into the local economic fabric. The social and economic foundation it has established “defied Spain’s slump,” contributed US-SEN, citing a 2012 news article.¹³

Idle No More gave a number of examples of how SSE initiatives can help marginalized Indigenous people find jobs in Canada. For instance, the Neechi Food Cooperative, which trains and employs local Indigenous people, “works with the local socio-economic circumstances of the inner city, using locally produced goods and services and reinvesting profits locally.” It presents the case for a “community economic development planning process geared towards developing a convergent, self-reliant local economy based upon community economic

¹¹ [Definition of social economy.](#)

¹² [Definition of solidarity economy.](#)

¹³ BBC News Europe, “[Basque Co-operative Mondragon Defies Spain Slump](#),” (13 August 2012)

development principles: maximizing income retention, strengthening and promoting economic linkages and maximizing community employment.”¹⁴

US-SEN mentioned the importance of “community development finance” and related support, which is provided by independent organizations to those unable to access mainstream finance, such as businesses in disadvantaged areas, financially excluded individuals and SSE enterprises.

Many participants said that in order to scale-up and/or replicate SSE experiences, national and local authorities should develop enabling policy, institutional and legal frameworks for social and solidarity enterprises, and provide access to grant funding and low/no-cost capital, which can be accepted with the expectation of local control. It was noted that with a few exceptions, such as the Province of Quebec in Canada, experience with SSE is much more advanced in Latin America, and in parts of Europe, than in North America. According to CICOPA, South America is the “powerhouse” and the North is the “poor cousin” with regard to the cooperative economy. In Uruguay, Brazil and Argentina “they have State and government support, written into their laws, including laws about financing. They have organized capital itself in funds, grants, and other financing mechanisms to develop their enterprises and strengthen the movement.” Meanwhile, “in the US we struggle with reaching a wider policy level.... There is no national enabling legislation for worker cooperatives, and few states have it either.” The role of the State in supporting SSE is also more advanced in Europe, where in France, for example, the current government established a sub-ministry on social and solidarity economy under the Ministry of Finance, with notably the objective of developing enabling legal frameworks and financing mechanisms tailored to the needs and conditions of SSE actors.

CICOPA mentioned the [Blueprint for a Cooperative Decade](#) promoted by the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA), which represents 1 billion cooperative members worldwide. Building on the 2012 [UN International Year of Co-operatives](#), the Blueprint strategy puts forward a worldwide campaign toward 2020 “to take the cooperative way of doing business to a new level.” Among its strategic objectives are to “position cooperatives as builders of sustainability;” “ensure supportive legal frameworks for cooperative growth;” and “secure reliable cooperative capital while guaranteeing member control.”

Having met sustainability objectives locally and in some cases, regionally, participants from these movements said that bringing SSE activities to scale should be a core transformative priority of the post-2015 agenda. Integrating SSE in the post-2015 discussions would provide political leverage to help bring it to a more systemic level. The role of not only national governments and local authorities, but also regional and international development partners was seen as fundamental to creating well-resourced, enabling environments for SSE initiatives to flourish, and to integrating SSE frameworks in the strategic planning processes of national and local sustainable development efforts. The importance of political leverage for the expansion of SSE was also reflected in the other regional consultations where SSE was profiled as a more sustainable and inclusive economic model (Latin America and the Caribbean, and Africa).

II. Fulfill Human Rights and Overcome Exclusion

Consultation contributors from North America and Europe, including Center for Economic and Social Rights (CESR), Center for Reproductive Rights (CRR), Coalition for Sexual and Bodily Rights in Muslim Societies, CONCORD, and US Human Rights Network underscored the need for the post-2015 agenda to align itself with

¹⁴ Idle No More submitted written input by Pricilla Setee, Professor of Native Studies at University of Saskatchewan, Canada, whose work includes research on social economies in Indigenous communities.

the broader human rights framework that already exists, fully reflecting fundamental human rights principles of universality, indivisibility, equality and non-discrimination. It should also be based on principles of progressive realization and non-regression of human rights, and should ensure full and meaningful participation. Further, as CESR identified, the post-2015 agenda must “underline that States have binding obligations under international human rights law to ensure their bilateral and multilateral policies contribute to, or at least do not harm, the realization of human rights beyond their borders.” Center for Reproductive Rights suggested that the human rights framework could serve as a tool to provide clarity on the expectations and obligations of States with regard to the outcomes of the post-2015 process. CONCORD’s vision of these outcomes is a just, equitable and sustainable world in which every person can realize their human rights, fulfill their potential and live free from poverty.

CESR identified, “Under their human rights treaty commitments, States are already obliged to aim for universal access to at least a basic level of social rights, to dismantle discrimination, to achieve substantive equality (beyond mere formal equality of treatment, which may include positive measures or affirmative action for excluded and marginalized groups), and to ensure the availability, accessibility, affordability, acceptability, adaptability and quality of services.”¹⁵ The post-2015 development framework must reinforce the duty of States to use the maximum of their available resources to realize these rights progressively for all, CESR argued. This requires moving away from “an outdated vision of market/business-led development,” and recognizing that economic, social and cultural rights are as fundamental as civil and political rights. While the HLP report proposes a stand-alone goal on governance, CESR cautions that it does little to recognize the role of human rights mechanisms in strengthening the fabric of accountable governance, which is fundamental to putting in place the right institutions and effective incentives to translate commitments into lived realities. For Global Policy Forum, internationally codified rights and obligations, along with ecological boundaries, are “by their very essence, absolute goals – universally valid and not time-bound,” and their achievement requires “tackling and overcoming structural obstacles and barriers.”

Civil society networks advocated for a strengthened role of the State in ensuring the basic rights of its citizens; they also called for the respect, protection, promotion and fulfillment of all human rights of marginalized groups including women, Indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people. A recurring thread throughout the consultation was acknowledgement that public participation at the community level is critical to addressing many of these challenges – including job creation, combating discrimination and gender-based violence. Civil society networks advanced proposals regarding:

- A. Ensuring the Rights to Decent Work, Healthcare and Education
- B. Overcoming Discrimination and Exclusion

A. Ensuring the Rights to Decent Work, Healthcare and Education

Consultation contributors pointed to specific areas that needed priority attention in the new framework in order to ensure basic rights for all.

The Right to Decent Work

The Council of Canadians, Social-Ecological Fund NGF and US Human Rights Network pointed to the erosion of [decent work](#) as a growing threat to workers’ rights. The insistence on “flexibly regulated labour markets” in the Post-2015 High-level Panel report was problematic for CESR, who suggested that this was an open invitation

¹⁵ Center for Economic and Social Rights, “[Who Will Be Accountable? Human Rights and the Post-2015 Development Agenda.](#)” (2013) p. 62.

“for further weakening of under-protected labour rights.” Pointing to the widespread role that rising income inequality has played in causing economic instability and impeding progress on extreme poverty, CESR expressed dissatisfaction that the Panel’s report argues against including commitments to reduce income inequality. As a counter measure, Global Policy Forum advocated for the strengthening of State employment policy, including the establishment of a social protection floor, in recognition of government responsibility to ensure the human rights of their populations.

Civil society networks pointed to particular situations where the role of the corporate sector was linked to the degradation of basic human rights, including the right to security of person and dignity, the right to a standard of living adequate for health and well-being, and the right to assemble.

Citing the deaths of more than 1,100 workers in a recent factory fire in Bangladesh, Worker Rights Consortium identified that “the main reason why workers die in Bangladesh is because brands and retailers put pressure on their contract factories to produce at the lowest prices; the only way this is possible is by ignoring the rights and safety of workers.” Therefore, binding and enforceable agreements between global corporations and labour unions are essential “to compel those global corporations to make changes in the way they operate their supply chains if we want to see improvements for workers,” argued Worker Rights Consortium. This organization pointed to the recently agreed [Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh as a model binding agreement between labour unions, non-governmental organizations, and the apparel industry. The importance of binding obligations for corporations will be discussed further in section IV.](#)

Social-Ecological Fund NGF pointed to the difficult situation of labour unions and the lack of social protection for workers in the Caspian region and northern part of Kazakhstan, particularly in extractive businesses run by foreign corporations. Insufficient initiatives for decent work or minimum living standards have exacerbated the situation, creating an unstable environment, tension and shadow economic activities that are difficult to regulate.

US Human Rights Network asserted that there is a significant number of workers in the US – primarily people of colour, single women, and women with families – who are living in poverty because they do not earn enough; this is linked to both the lack of good jobs and decreased collective bargaining in the US over the past 18 months as states are increasingly passing legislation to curtail collective bargaining. “These efforts are primarily being driven by the corporate sector, which creates concern regarding their role in determining or informing regulation, while undermining the role of governments in regulating their activities,” US Human Rights Network stressed. The burden of unemployment is borne disproportionately by and is increasing among African-Americans, Native Americans, Latinos, people with disabilities, and youths of colour, and is linked to discrimination. “While the unemployment rate for the general population is about 7%, it’s almost double for African-Americans ... for black youth it’s roughly 40% ... for Native Americans it’s about 14% or 15%. Studies show that discrimination is one of the key factors that explains why people of colour are not getting access to decent work.”

Part of the solution, US Solidarity Economy Network (US-SEN) made the case, is pursuing social and solidarity economy approaches for jobs, as described in section I, including through worker cooperatives: “We can do better if we think about democratizing the workplace and grounding it in the local community.” What is needed, US-SEN added, is legislation and public financing to encourage the development of such initiatives, as well as funding support for training and technical assistance.

Guaranteeing Universal Healthcare – A Rights-Based Approach

Action for Global Health (AfGH) and EuroNGOs welcomed Goal 5 in the report of the Sustainable Development Solutions Network, “Achieve health and well-being at all ages,” including universal health coverage at every stage of life – seen as an essential measure to address inequalities and to realize the overarching goal of health for all. To make this more inclusive, AfGH underscored the need to define universal access to primary healthcare as *all* necessary services – not only basic services; “this target must make the *quality* of healthcare services explicit.” In order to protect the most vulnerable and marginalized, universal health coverage must include a target on financial risk protection, AfGH stressed.

Positioning health within the post-2015 framework, AfGH recommended the inclusion of other targets on social determinants of health, including gender equality, education, and water and sanitation, as well as State-provided incentives for healthy behaviour. The new agenda must also complete “the unfinished business of the unmet MDGs” – reaffirming the fight against HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria, while adapting to new health challenges and addressing non-communicable diseases, AfGH asserted.

EuroNGOs welcomed the High-level Panel’s target 4.d on ensuring universal sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), and recommended reinforcing the language to read “ensuring universal sexual and reproductive health and rights *is to ensure access to services, respect, protection, and fulfillment of these rights.*” These include access to contraception, education and counseling, safe abortion services, safe delivery services and pre- and post-natal care, prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS. AfGH indicated that access to public health services must be ensured for vulnerable groups, such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people, as well as often criminalized groups such as sex workers, in order to ensure the right to health for all. “What needs to be added is how health systems can be strengthened and what role communities can play in making the health services accessible for hard to reach populations,” AfGH urged.

The Right to Education

Consultation contributors made reference to the importance of quality education and lifelong learning as a fundamental right and as a means of eradicating poverty, providing better lives and opportunities for children and adults worldwide. Building on the High-level Panel’s goal 3 “Provide Quality Education and Lifelong Learning” and its four targets, Basic Education Coalition made specific recommendations, calling for disaggregated data for children with disabilities (ensuring that such data is reliable, features criteria that are observable, measureable and understandable to teachers and families and can be linked to educational and other relevant services); and for children and youth in conflict and/or emergencies who face enormous challenges in accessing and receiving a quality basic education. “A varying portion of the estimated 59 million children not attending primary school, some estimated 28.5 million children, are in conflict-affected countries – where civil or national strife, current or past, has reduced or eliminated schooling options. Twenty million out-of-school adolescents were living in countries affected by conflict in 2011, of which 11 million are female,” Basic Education Coalition stressed. Establishing appropriate techniques for measurement, use of new tools, such as mobile technology and software, and institutional commitment to transparency for measurement will require both resources and political will.

EuroNGOs supported the SDSN report’s call for adequately trained teachers and its identification of secondary education as a key driver for equality; however, this civil society network cited the need for more emphasis on the importance of secondary education as an enabling factor for youth to continue on to tertiary education or training to access decent work and fulfill their true potential. EuroNGOs recommended the inclusion of comprehensive sexuality education.

For Basic Education Coalition, national standards should be reflected in the design and implementation of national education plans along with specific indicators on the ratios of students to teachers (trained to national standards), and students to textbooks. Countries should also track “the percentage of teachers trained or certified; teachers trained with specific academic and gender awareness skills; adequate supply of textbooks, equipment, and other learning materials according to national norms; availability of sanitation and toilet facilities for boys and girls; and the extent of conflict- and violence-free environments for students en route to and within schools, among other things,” Basic Education Coalition stressed.

B. Overcoming Discrimination and Exclusion

The new agenda must imperatively address inequalities, tackle the causes of exclusion and rule out any form of discrimination, EuroNGOs and GPF asserted. Achieving equality, according to CESR, requires a self-standing goal, and inequality should be explicitly integrated across all other goals – in particular through enhanced data collection and disaggregation, equality benchmarking, and equality monitoring for each.¹⁶ For CONCORD a specific goal on inequality must address “the gross disparities that characterize our society.” Of concern to AFGH was the SDSN report’s focus on getting countries to shift from low to middle-income status, which neglects the inequality that exists in middle-income countries and “places too much emphasis on a measure of progress based on economic growth rather than improvements to the lives of the whole population.”

It is critical to focus support for people that face intersecting inequalities based on gender, age, class, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, and (dis)abilities, GPF advocated, with particular attention to those who have been systematically, historically and continually excluded. Centre for Reproductive Rights stated, “In terms of addressing those inequalities, one of the key issues is public participation of groups that aren’t receiving the services that they need because of these kinds of historical inequalities.” EuroNGOs contributed that the work to overcome inequalities must begin with an accurate assessment of the reality of lives around the world, and therefore data must be disaggregated by gender, age, geographical location, rural/urban location income, educational background and other relevant indicators to ensure no one is left behind.

US Human Rights Network indicated that they are trying to engage civil society to use the [International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination \(ICERD\)](#) as a tool to connect development work with human rights instruments: “When countries are reviewed on their compliance with human rights treaties, they often don’t mention the development goals. This might be something that civil society and groups could promote more.” US Human Rights Network further stressed that it would be useful if the new development agenda explicitly mentions the ICERD reviews as a tool for accountability, making a clear link to existing enforcement mechanisms for human rights at the UN.

Gender Equality and Women’s Rights

According to CESR, gender equality in the HLP’s report is still framed in a reductive and instrumental way, and the proposed targets “dimly reflect” the range of measures States are already obliged to take to ensure the equal enjoyment of human rights by women, people with disabilities, Indigenous people and others facing systemic discrimination. CONCORD drew attention to the progressive realization of human rights and the obligations that States’ have under international human rights law to fulfil these, including the [Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women](#).

¹⁶ Center for Economic and Social Rights, [“Who Will Be Accountable? Human Rights and the Post-2015 Development Agenda”](#) (2013) p. 72.

EuroNGOs indicated that gender discrimination must be recognized as a root cause of poverty and one of the underlying factors that hinder development. “Mentioning gender only in terms of avoiding discrimination is not enough. We recommend inserting references to the need to work on the role of men, and to concretely address social norms, such as proposed by UN Women’s transformative stand-alone goal on achieving gender equality, women’s rights and women’s empowerment.” EuroNGOs further stressed that gender equality “should appear in one form or another in every goal,” commending the SDSN report for making linkages to lack of access to secondary education and sexual and reproductive health services as being clear drivers of gender inequality. EuroNGOs expressed concern that the Global Compact report had placed the emphasis more on women and their families, rather than on “equity as being beneficial to women themselves.”

Social-Ecological Fund NGF provided specific examples for why increased attention is needed on women’s rights and gender equality in the post-Soviet region, asserting that “women are not well-protected by the law in terms of jobs, social protection of family, professional development and self-sufficiency”; they are often the first to suffer the impact of laws and regulations designed to address the economic crisis and government deficits, including the recent adoption of a law raising the age of retirement for women from 58 to 63.

The Rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) People

It is important that the post-2015 agenda names the discrimination, violence and marginalization that Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) people experience, and promotes their equal rights, Action for Global Health stressed. Center of Concern referred to the Vienna+20 Civil Society Declaration of June 2013, which acknowledges that human rights are based on personal dignity, including the development of one’s identity without discrimination: “This includes the right to develop one’s own sexual and gender identity and the right to form a family.” In addition, in this declaration, civil society demands that States are asked to protect such freedoms against dogmatic fundamentalism that suppresses and discriminates against people because of their sexual orientation and gender identity; and that they can freely develop and exercise it under the protection of the law.

Jer’s Vision, an organization working with youth to address homophobia and transphobia, called on organizations that commit to environmental sustainability or social justice practices to be inclusive of people of diverse sexual orientation and gender identity, and to promote their rights. Pointing to Canada’s passing of laws to protect the rights of LGBT people, Jer’s Vision acknowledged the role of the church in bringing about positive change: “What has been helpful in causing policy and systemic changes within police forces, institutions, schools, communities and community organizations is that Canada’s Anglican church has become gay friendly and several of its dioceses now permit gay marriage. This has had a strong impact in addressing homophobic and gender-based violence in our country.” Coalition for Sexual and Bodily Rights in Muslim Societies pointed to progress made in several countries in the European Union, where nine countries have legalized same-sex marriage, and three more are considering same-sex marriage bills: Finland, Luxembourg and Scotland.

Indigenous Peoples’ Rights

Idle No More,¹⁷ an Indigenous peoples’ mass movement, indicated that the dominant socio-economic system marginalizes and fails Indigenous peoples who face tremendous development challenges, including low life expectancy rates, inadequate housing, and unemployment. In addition, rural and remote Indigenous peoples experience difficulties with bureaucracies and societies that do not understand the need to hunt, trap, fish or

¹⁷ Idle No More submitted written input by Priscilla Settee, Professor of Native Studies at University of Saskatchewan, Canada.

otherwise harvest from the environment for sustenance: “Recreational harvest by the non-native population is often considered more important than Indigenous harvest.”

Collectivity is central to Indigenous being, and communities were traditionally governed by principles and laws that emanate from deep respect for all of life – vital when considering community development and establishment of public policy, Idle No More stressed. The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples outlines the minimal standards of development that Indigenous peoples have requested, the organization emphasized, indicating that Indigenous communities are demanding equal and transparent partnership processes and a halt to destructive economic development practices in their communities: “We need a new model of development that utilizes the talents of entire communities for the liberation and benefit of entire communities, ones that embrace the Indigenous principles of *wakotawin* [deep respect for all life] and *miywichitowin* [establishing good relations with humankind, the animal world and nature],” and underpinned by values of mutual respect and dignity.

The Rights of People Living with Disabilities

CESR referred to a recent global survey that suggests that more than one billion individuals experience disability, with attendant impact on health, educational achievement, economic opportunities and poverty.¹⁸ The post-2015 development negotiations should therefore imperatively engage with this issue, building on the normative framework which the [Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#) provides. Thus far, the Convention has been [ratified](#) by 134 States, not including the United States, and its Optional Protocol has garnered 77 ratifications.

Center for Reproductive Rights (CRR) drew attention to the disability rights movement, indicating that it has made tremendous strides over the past decade through a set of means, including problem recognition and dialogue, that could be beneficial in discussions on the post-2015 agenda: “One of those is, first, recognition from governments that there’s a problem that exists, that there is inequality that needs to be addressed.” This recognition leads to other processes, including forums in which different groups are brought together to talk about the issues, inequalities and ways to address them. “When groups come together, even if they have conflicts they are often able to work them out to come together to form a common message and bond. That’s what we saw with disability rights groups from all people with intellectual disabilities, people from the blind community, all sorts of different issues but they were able to come together with one voice once these forums started getting opened up for their engagement in those issues and their self-advocacy on those issues,” CRR explained.

III. Ensure Equitable Distribution and Safe Use of Natural Resources

It is essential for the post-2015 development agenda to ensure “ecological integrity”¹⁹ in order to ensure human well-being, identified Natural Capitalism Solutions. “This basic principle of sustainability ought to be embedded at every level, and be the touchstone from which all of the goals flow.” The agenda must fundamentally re-orient natural resource management, asserted Social-Ecological Fund NGF: “The way that the world has been developing since the industrial revolution cannot continue in the post-2015 period.”

¹⁸ WHO and World Bank, *World Report on Disability 2011* (Geneva, 2011).

¹⁹ “Ecological integrity is the abundance and diversity of organisms at all levels, and the ecological patterns, processes, and structural attributes responsible for that biological diversity and for ecosystem resilience.” Coast Information Team, 2004. http://www.sfu.ca/haida-ebm/ecological_integrity/.

Natural Capitalism Solutions referred to two reports which irrefutably establish that the current course of human activity is unsustainable: [Planetary Boundaries: Exploring the Safe Operating Space for Humanity](#), by an interdisciplinary group of 28 internationally renowned scientists, and [Global Biodiversity Outlook 3](#), the most recent global status report from the UN Convention on Biological Diversity.

The Planetary Boundaries report identified [nine interdependent boundaries](#) in order to estimate the “safe space for human development.” It warns, “Transgressing one or more planetary boundaries may be deleterious or even catastrophic due to the risk of crossing thresholds that will trigger non-linear, abrupt environmental change within continental- to planetary-scale systems.” The contributing scientists quantified human impacts in seven of the nine areas, and determined that three boundaries have already been transgressed: biodiversity loss (the current rate of species loss will result in “functional collapses”); the global nitrogen cycle (excessive synthetic fertilizer use in agriculture is polluting land, water and air); and climate change (CO₂ concentration in the atmosphere has exceeded 350ppm). In addition, human impacts are challenging the planetary boundaries for freshwater use, land-system change, ocean acidification, and the phosphate cycle.

The Convention on Biological Diversity’s [Third Global Biodiversity Outlook](#) report similarly states: “There is a high risk of dramatic biodiversity loss and accompanying degradation of a broad range of ecosystem services if ecosystems are pushed beyond certain thresholds or tipping points.”²⁰ Conclusions within this report parallel those of the Planetary Boundaries report:

- Ecosystems are already showing negative impacts under current levels of climate change, [resulting from] an increase of 0.74°C in global mean surface temperature relative to pre-industrial levels, which is modest compared to future projected changes (2.4-6.4 °C by 2100 without aggressive mitigation actions). (page 56)
- The Amazon forest, due to the interaction of deforestation, fire and climate change, could undergo a widespread dieback, with parts of the forest moving into a self-perpetuating cycle of more frequent fires and intense droughts, leading to a shift to savanna-like vegetation. (page 10)
- The build-up of phosphates and nitrates from agricultural fertilizers and sewage effluent can shift freshwater lakes and other inland water ecosystems into a long-term, algae-dominated (eutrophic) state. (page 10)
- The combined impacts of ocean acidification, warmer sea temperatures, and other human-induced stresses make tropical coral reef ecosystems vulnerable to collapse. (page 11)

Consequences of these scenarios include decline in fishery and agriculture yields, loss of habitat and biodiversity, and damage caused by extreme weather. The report emphasized that although “ultimately all societies and communities would suffer,” the most vulnerable people will be impacted earliest and hardest. With regard to climate change, this is particularly unjust because, as Natural Capitalism Solutions pointed out, “the 50 least developed countries contribute less than 1% of global carbon emissions.”²¹

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD),²² the International Energy Agency (IEA),²³ and the World Bank²⁴ have all recently warned that without urgent, aggressive implementation of

²⁰ The Convention on Biological Diversity defines tipping points as “points at which ecosystems shift to alternative, less productive states from which it may be difficult or impossible to recover.” For a fuller explanation of tipping points and their importance, see Leadley, P., et al., “Biodiversity Scenarios: Projections of 21st century change in biodiversity and associated ecosystem services.” Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity. (2010) p. 12. <http://www.cbd.int/doc/publications/cbd-ts-50-en.pdf>.

²¹ Natural Capitalism Solutions cited the Global Humanitarian Forum [Human Impact Report](#) (2009) for this statistic. This finding is supported by annual data for carbon dioxide emissions per country available from the UN Statistics Division at: <http://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/SeriesDetail.aspx?srid=749&crd=>.

²² [The OECD Environmental Outlook to 2050: Key Findings on Climate Change](#), November 2012.

²³ International Energy Agency, “[Redrawing the Energy Climate Map](#),” June 2013.

²⁴ The World Bank, “[Turn Down the Heat: Why a 4°C Warmer World Must Be Avoided](#),” November 2012.

robust climate protection, global warming will certainly exceed two degrees Celsius,²⁵ and will be on a trajectory to increase by six degrees Celsius by 2100, which “has catastrophic implications,” according to IEA Chief Economist, Fatih Birol.²⁶ “Climate change threatens to undermine the delivery and success of any future global development framework,” CONCORD stressed.

Participants identified that major industrial transformation is needed to confront the ecological crises driven by human activities. “Such incumbent industries as fossil fuels, nuclear power generation, toxic manufacturing, and others that have received most of the historic subsidies and are driving the collapse of natural systems must be replaced,” asserted Natural Capitalism Solutions. Participants provided recommendations for:

- A. Transforming the energy industry
- B. Strengthening small-holder farming through food sovereignty
- C. Achieving sustainable consumption and production

A. Transforming the Energy Industry

Fossil Fuel Extraction and Use Must Be Dramatically Curtailed

350.org pointed to a [report](#) by the Carbon Tracker Initiative, a group of financial and environmental analysts, which establishes that the total carbon potential of fossil fuel reserves owned by private and public companies and governments are equivalent to 2,795 gigatonnes of CO₂ (GtCO₂) – 65% coal, 22% oil and 13% gas. The report also concludes: “Research by the Potsdam Institute calculates that to reduce the chance of exceeding 2°C warming to 20%, the global carbon budget for 2000-2050 is 886 GtCO₂. Minus emissions from the first decade of this century, this leaves a budget of 565 GtCO₂ for the remaining 40 years to 2050,” and therefore, only 20% of the total reserves can be safely burned.²⁷

However, as 350.org and Natural Capitalism Solutions pointed out, these reserves are massive financial assets, which is why the companies and governments that control them actively resist climate change mitigation efforts. Indeed, the United States and Canada are expanding fossil fuel drilling, mining, fracking and related infrastructure. 350.org and the Council of Canadians highlighted a current regional debate over a permit for the Keystone XL pipeline to transfer tar sands bitumen from Canada and the northern United States to the coast of the Gulf of Mexico. US President Barack Obama stated that the pipeline will only be built “if it does not significantly exacerbate the problem of carbon pollution.”²⁸ 350.org argued that it is clear the pipeline will contribute to an increase in carbon emissions, as it will help to enable the tar sands industry to double its production,²⁹ and in carrying 830,000 barrels per day, it will add between 935 million and 1.2 billion metric tons of carbon pollution to the atmosphere over 50 years.³⁰

Although the stranding of fossil fuel assets may be unfathomable to the industries that control them, the alternative, Natural Capitalism Solutions pointed out, “will be devastating environmental and economic dislocations from failing to make the transition,” costing up to 20% of global GDP per year, as identified in the

²⁵ “Global warming of 1°C relative to 1880 - 1920 mean temperature (i.e., 0.75°C above the 1951 - 1980 temperature or 0.3°C above the 5 - year running mean temperature in 2000), if maintained for long, is already close to or into the ‘dangerous’ zone. The suggestion that 2°C global warming may be a ‘safe’ target is extremely unwise based on critical evidence accumulated over the past three decades.” From: James Hansen, et al. “[The Case for Young People and Nature: A Path to a Healthy, Natural, Prosperous Future](#),” p. 7.

²⁶ <http://www.iea.org/publications/worldenergyoutlook/pressmedia/quotes/7/>.

²⁷ Carbon Tracker Initiative, [Unburnable Carbon – Are the World’s Financial Markets Carrying a Carbon Bubble?](#), 2011.

²⁸ President Barack Obama, [Speech at Georgetown University announcing US climate change policy](#), 25 June 2013.

²⁹ <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/06/05/canada-oil-forecast-idUSL1N0EH11K20130605>

³⁰ http://docs.nrdc.org/energy/files/ene_13072301b.pdf

Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change.³¹ 350.org highlighted that two investment analysis firms, Impax Asset Management and MSCI, have found that stockholder portfolios that do not contain fossil fuel energy producers are already outperforming those that do. Natural Capitalism Solutions cited a 2013 [survey](#) that found “more than half of fund managers surveyed had sold or avoided making investments because of concerns over climate change.”

The looming question is: how should the transition away from fossil fuels use be accomplished?

Debunking Propaganda About Nuclear Power

Participants including Global Policy Forum, Social-Ecological Fund NGF, Natural Capitalism Solutions, ETC Group, and Nuclear Information Resource Service were adamant that the answer is not the expansion of nuclear power, because when the full production cycle of this industry is factored – from uranium mining to waste management – it is evident that this technology also carries massive environmental and financial liabilities, and cannot actually contribute meaningfully to mitigating climate change. Nuclear Information Resource Service took note of the SDSN report’s inclusion of nuclear power in a listing of sources of “almost CO2-free electricity generation,” as well as an HLP report reference to the “US-India Partnership to Advance Clean Energy,” which does not identify that a large portion of that agreement is US support of nuclear power expansion in India. Claims that nuclear power is “clean” or “almost CO2-free” energy are unfounded propaganda, Nuclear Information Resource Service asserted.

While atomic reactors themselves are not major emitters of greenhouse gases, the full nuclear power fuel chain produces significant greenhouse emissions. Besides reactor operation, the fuel chain includes uranium mining, milling, processing, enrichment, fuel fabrication, and long-term radioactive waste storage. At each of these steps, construction and operation of nuclear facilities results in greenhouse gas emissions, which in sum approach those of natural gas – and are far higher than emissions from renewable energy sources, not to mention emissions-free energy efficiency technologies.

Conceding that emissions equivalent to natural gas are an improvement over those of burning coal and oil, Nuclear Information Resource Service added that nuclear power is still unable to benefit the climate, and is wholly unsustainable because:

Major studies (from MIT, Commission on Energy Policy, and International Atomic Energy Agency) agree that about 1,500-2,000 large new atomic reactors would have to be built for nuclear power to make any meaningful dent in greenhouse emissions. Construction of 1,500 new reactors would cost trillions of dollars and take decades, and could only be accomplished with massive public subsidies because private companies and banks consider it a high-risk investment. Operation of 1,500 reactors would trigger expansion of uranium mining, which is highly contaminating to land and water, and disproportionately impacts Indigenous peoples. Uranium reserves would run out in just a few decades and force mining of lower-grade uranium, which would lead to higher greenhouse emissions. Thousands of tons of plutonium would be produced by the nuclear reactors, posing untenable nuclear proliferation threats. Numerous massive storage facilities would be needed that could isolate more than a million tons of high-level radioactive waste from the environment for 240,000 years (the hazardous life of Plutonium-239). Nuclear waste storage has been under study in the US for more than 30 years, and its development is at a standstill due to the identification of insurmountable scientific flaws with proposed sites and political deadlock. The odds of identifying numerous new scientifically-defensible and publicly-acceptable waste dumps are slim. “Reprocessing” of nuclear fuel is a dangerous myth—this is failed technology that actually increases the volume of waste, while exacerbating nuclear proliferation risks due to the extraction of plutonium.

³¹ The Stern Review, http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/sternreview_index.htm

Natural Capitalism Solutions added that nuclear power is “the most expensive possible answer to de-carbonizing the world at twenty-five cents/kWh compared to energy efficiency at half a cent/kWh.” Further, as Nuclear Information Resource Service identified, subsidizing nuclear power over more inexpensive energy options that could be deployed faster, including systemic energy efficiency, “will result in an enormous ‘opportunity cost’ as timely attainment of climate goals becomes less viable.”

Nuclear power also has social costs. As Social-Ecological Fund NGF and Nuclear Information Resource Service explained, poor and marginalized communities are disproportionately targeted and harmed by nuclear industry operations. “Communities that have less economic development, less power, less ability to call the shots for themselves, and very often, where some corporate entity has already bought off the decision-making process, have been consistently targeted for uranium mines and nuclear waste dumps,” Nuclear Information Resource Service elaborated. “In 22 years we have assisted 29 Native American tribes to stop nuclear waste dumps on their land, which were promoted to them as the only form of economic development offered by the federal government – the dominant society seeking to export their waste to these sovereign nations.”

Although the health effects of low level exposure to ionizing radiation are downplayed by the industry and governments, Nuclear Information Resource Service pointed to a 2006 US National Academy of Sciences report on “Health Risks from Exposure to Low Levels of Ionizing Radiation” which concluded that “the preponderance of information indicates that there will be some risk, even at low doses,” and there is a linear relationship between dose and cancer incidence.³² This report also showed that for adults exposed to low level ionizing radiation, women experienced 60% higher cancer incidence than men, and boys and girls exposed while under 5 years of age experienced five and ten times the rate of the cancer incidence, respectively, as compared to adults exposed to the same low-level dose.³³

Added to these stark realities are the dangerous consequences of major nuclear power plant accidents, such as Chernobyl and the ongoing Fukushima Daiichi catastrophe – a situation which has been progressively deteriorating rather than stabilizing over the past two years, according to a group of 17 internationally renowned nuclear scientists and industry analysts that submitted a [letter](#) to this consultation. This group calls on the UN Secretary-General, various UN agencies, and governments to act upon a number of urgent recommendations regarding the Fukushima Daiichi disaster to ensure the protection of public health and safety, including that Japan must work with international organizations to put a worldwide engineering group in charge of resolving the situation.

In light of the Fukushima disaster, Nuclear Information Resource Service noted that in the United States, nuclear industry financial liability for an accident is capped at approximately US\$12 billion by the Price Anderson Nuclear Indemnity Act. In 2011, Bank of America/Merrill Lynch estimated that the compensation claims for the ongoing Fukushima Daiichi nuclear catastrophe in Japan would top US\$130 billion.³⁴ The letter from 17 leading nuclear scientists and industry analysts now calls on the Japanese Government “to admit financial responsibility in excess of \$500B USD.”

³² National Academy of Sciences, [Health Risks from Exposure to Low Levels of Ionizing Radiation: Biological Effects of Ionizing Radiation VII – Phase 2, Executive Summary](#) (2006), p. 10.

See also Nuclear Information Resource Service, “[No Such Thing as a Safe Dose of Radiation](#)” (2006).

³³ Nuclear Information and Resource Service, “[Atomic Radiation is More Harmful to Women](#)” (2013), which presents findings from the National Academy of Sciences report, “[Health Risks from Exposure to Low Levels of Ionizing Radiation: Biological Effects of Ionizing Radiation VII – Phase 2](#),” (2006).

³⁴ <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/03/31/us-tepco-compensation-idUSTRE72U06920110331>

A Carbon-Free, Nuclear-Free Energy Sector is Possible

Nuclear Information Resource Service pointed to a project by the Institute for Energy and Environmental Research: [Carbon-Free and Nuclear-Free: A Roadmap for US Energy Policy](#), which argues that a reliable and secure, carbon-free energy sector can be created without nuclear power through greatly increased energy efficiency, solar, wind, and biofuels from crops that can be grown on marginal lands or in water. This will require substantial investment, but as Natural Capitalism Solutions identified, “Globally, subsidies to the fossil fuel industry top US\$550 billion every year,³⁵ and are at least 12 times any subsidies given to energy efficiency and renewable energy,”³⁶ and all nuclear power projects have depended on massive subsidies, including loan guarantees and tax credits, and other incentives. Both industries also receive “hidden subsidies” as they externalize social and environmental costs – such as waste management and global warming – that societies bear for them.³⁷ If subsidies were structured to meet a basic set of goals around human wellbeing and intact ecosystems, societies would begin to overcome the profound challenges driven by fossil fuel and nuclear energy, Natural Capitalism Solutions explained. “So in a sense, we’re just being bad capitalists,” the organization concluded.

In addition to revision of subsidies, participants including 350.org, Global Policy Forum and European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) advocated for the implementation of a carbon tax. 350.org “supports aggressive policies that put a substantial price on carbon pollution and share the revenues with ratepayers.” Feed-in Tariffs (FiTs) and net metering policy are also essential according to civil society networks. Natural Capitalism Solutions explained that Germany’s FiTs have “unleashed that country’s renewable energy industry, created jobs and underpinned prosperity”:

In their first four years, FiTs created almost 500,000 new jobs and cut the unit cost of solar panels enough that they will reach grid parity (costing the same as grid electricity) by 2013.³⁸ The programme added only two to three Euros per month to electricity bills in Germany, roughly US\$50 to customers’ electricity bills each year, for a total of €8.6 billion. Deutsche Bank found that far from costing the economy, the savings outstripped the total cost of payments made by households. Had customers bought electricity from conventional coal generation, Germans would have paid an additional €9.4 billion.³⁹ Renewable energy and energy efficiency deliver 10 times the jobs created per dollar invested as fossil fuel or nuclear plants.⁴⁰

More than half of Germany’s renewable energy generation is owned, not by utilities, but by farmers and citizens,⁴¹ added Natural Capitalism Solutions, highlighting that the German town Wildpoldsried is 100% renewably powered, producing 321% more energy than it uses, and selling the excess for \$5.7 million each year.⁴²

In the US, despite receiving significantly lower finance and policy support as compared to the fossil fuel industry, renewable energy production trends are positive, reported 350.org: “Last year, the US installed a record 3,313 MW of photovoltaic solar. The US solar industry grew 34% from 2011 to 2012, from US\$8.6 billion

³⁵ [“Energy Subsidies: Getting the Prices Right,”](#) International Energy Agency, 2010.

³⁶ Morales, Alex, [“Fossil Fuel Subsidies Are 12 Times Support for Renewables, Study Shows,”](#) Bloomberg, 29 July 2010.

³⁷ Nuclear Information and Resource Service, [“Externalized Costs and False Subsidies Associated with Nuclear Power.”](#)

³⁸ Roney, J Matthew, [“Solar Cell Production Climbs to Another Record in 2009,”](#) Earth Policy Institute, September 2010.

³⁹ Deutsche Bank, [“Paying for Renewable Energy: TLC at the Right Price - Achieving Scale through Efficient Policy Design,”](#) 2009.

⁴⁰ Daniel Kammen, et al, [“Putting Renewables to Work: How Many Jobs Can the Clean Energy Industry Generate?”](#) 2004.

⁴¹ Wind Works, [Citizen Power Conference](#), (2010).

⁴² Biocycle, [“German Village Achieves Energy Independence...And then Some,”](#) (August 2011).

to US\$11.5 billion, respectively, according to GTM Research.⁴³ Wind power generation crested at 60,000 MW in 2012 and is poised to expand in 2013.”⁴⁴

Nuclear Information Resource Service anticipates a vast expansion of decentralized energy generation of various sizes, located close to, and often at, the point of use, in both expanding and developed economies. Nuclear Information Resource Service cited a study by the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy, which states that the US economy is “about 14% energy efficient, with the other 86% wasted.”⁴⁵ Decentralized energy production reduces waste, as it enables appropriately scaled, site-specific resource use (solar, wind, or hydro according to potential), and decreases transmission and distribution distances, reducing significant line losses, Nuclear Information Resource Service explained. In addition, people are less wasteful when they produce the power locally, because they are more aware of the systems that use it. Nuclear Information Resource Service referred to remarks by the CEO of NRG Energy, one of the largest power generating companies in the US, who acknowledged that the electricity grid will become increasingly irrelevant as customers move toward decentralized homegrown green energy.⁴⁶

The post-2015 development agenda must prioritize continued expansion of truly clean energy sources, particularly solar and wind power, and promote distributed power generation, participants emphasized.

European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) underscored that transformation of any sector requires a “just transition” for workers. “We take climate change and planetary boundaries seriously, but we want to follow the paths that are the most equitable, the most fair in terms of social impact. The transition will only be supported by citizens if public authorities provide answers and concrete solutions to all workers. It’s important to think in terms of a path, and to find a bridge between the existing economies and the ones we want to create.”

As part of the path-finding for transformation, significant capacity for technology assessment is essential at national, regional, and international levels, argued ETC Group. With regard to international capacity for technology assessment, ETC Group called for the UN Center for Science and Technology for Development to be strengthened, and for the UN Centre on Transnational Corporations to be reinstated. “Without such capacity, we will be walking blind into the future with no ability to tell which of the so-called ‘clean technologies’ really are clean, and which are not.”

B. Strengthening Small-Holder Farming Through Food Sovereignty

The energy and agriculture industries are intertwined. The agriculture industry is now both a consumer and a producer of energy resources. As Idle No More⁴⁷ explained, just as fossil fuel and nuclear energy practices damage basic life sustaining resources for many communities – particularly Indigenous peoples – so do the unsustainable practices of large-scale agriculture.

Idle No More and ETC Group conveyed that industrial agriculture causes extensive harm to natural habitats and biodiversity, including by clear-cutting forests and contaminating land, water and atmosphere. Large-scale

⁴³ <http://www.seia.org/research-resources/us-solar-market-insight>

⁴⁴ http://www.windpoweringamerica.gov/wind_installed_capacity.asp

⁴⁵ American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy, “[The Long-Term Energy Efficiency Potential: What the Evidence Suggests](#),” (2012), p. 2.

⁴⁶ Bloomberg Businessweek, “[Why the U.S. Power Grid’s Days are Numbered](#),” (22 August, 2013)

⁴⁷ Idle No More is a mass movement of indigenous peoples in North America that has inspired international solidarity. Written contributions to the consultation on behalf of Idle No More were provided by Priscilla Settee, Professor of Native Studies at University of Saskatchewan, Canada, who has done extensive research on Indigenous Foods and Food Sovereignty, among other subjects.

agriculture is heavily dependent on fossil fuels, including for transport, heating and cooling, equipment operation, and the synthesis of pesticides and artificial nitrogen fertilizer. Synthetic nitrogen fertilizer is a dangerous pollutant; it degrades soil, creates dead zones in lakes and oceans, contaminates drinking water, and releases nitrogen oxides – greenhouse gases that contribute to global warming, smog and acid rain. Its overuse has resulted in the transgression of the planetary boundary for the global nitrogen cycle.⁴⁸ Increasingly, industrial agriculture is using genetically modified crops that are designed to resist agrochemicals, which has led to increased use of herbicides due to the spread of resistant weeds, and thereby increased soil and water pollution. Many other concerns about the use of genetically modified crops exist, and ETC Group pointed to the report, “[GMO Myths and Truths: An Evidence-Based Examination of the Claims Made for the Safety and Efficacy of Genetically Modified Crops](#),” by Earth Open Source. Six countries in the European Union currently apply safeguard clauses on the cultivation of genetically modified organisms: Austria, France, Greece, Hungary, Germany and Luxembourg.⁴⁹

In addition, Idle No More and ETC Group underscored that industrial agriculture for biofuel production drives land grabs – violating human rights – and deforestation, which exacerbates global warming. In light of evidence that biofuel production from food crops is driving up prices of staple foods and adding greenhouse gas emissions to the atmosphere equivalent to the burning of fossil fuels, the European Parliament recently voted to cap European Union use of such biofuels for transport at 6% in 2020.⁵⁰

Idle No More stressed that industrial forms of agriculture, which are embraced by “food security” initiatives, undermine small farmers. But, “the world’s 3 billion or so Indigenous and peasant producers – rural and urban, fishers and pastoralists – not only feed a majority of the world’s people and most of the world’s malnourished, but they also create and conserve most of the world’s biodiversity and are humanity’s best defense against climate change,” identified ETC Group. Therefore, the post-2015 development agenda must promote and support small-holder farming, according to several participants, by integrating the model of “food sovereignty.”

The concept of food sovereignty was defined by the Via Campesina movement in 1996, and incorporates six principles: food as a basic human right; agrarian reform; protecting natural resources; reorganizing food trade; ending the globalization of hunger; social peace; and democratic control.⁵¹ Idle No More explained that Indigenous people’s food systems exemplify food sovereignty: “In our many communities of origin, biological diversity lends itself well to a tremendous abundance of traditional foods, and Indigenous peoples throughout Canada, as well as other regions of the world, have developed distinct cultures based on traditional harvesting strategies and practices including: hunting, fishing, gathering and cultivating culturally important plants, animals and fungi in their respective traditional territories. This is in contrast to the highly mechanistic, linear food production, distribution, and consumption model applied in the industrialized food system.”

Industrialized agriculture is taking food production out of the hands of communities, including through land grabs; communities also lose access to arable land and water due to resource grabs by the energy and extractive industries. Thus, Idle No More conveyed, for Indigenous peoples, food sovereignty is inextricably linked to “historic claims to the hunting, fishing and gathering grounds in their respective traditional territories.” In accordance with the right to free, prior and informed consent, which is enshrined in the [Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) and other international agreements, Indigenous peoples have the right “to approve or disapprove any incursions on their land especially as it affects food sovereignty,”

⁴⁸ Rockström, J., et al. “[Planetary Boundaries: Exploring the Safe Space for Humanity](#),” (2009)

⁴⁹ http://ec.europa.eu/food/plant/gmo/safeguards/index_en.htm

⁵⁰ Reuters, “[Food price fears push EU lawmakers to put a lid on biofuels growth](#),” (11 September 2013).

⁵¹ The six principles of food sovereignty as defined by Via Campesina are described in detail in [this document](#).

asserted Idle No More. “This includes oil exploration, forest clear-cuts, dams, mining, road development, bombing test sites and other colonial practices that strike at the heart of food’s sacred nature and reduces Indigenous capacity to gather culturally appropriate foods.” Idle No More described that despite national and international guarantees of these rights, “in our own lands we have been charged and jailed for practicing traditions and challenging life destroying forces.”

In line with Indigenous people’s food systems, ETC Group advocated that agriculture should adopt “what farmers’ organizations would call wide-tech” approaches, which involve evaluating the “ecological context where a farm is operating” and designing solutions – including appropriate technologies – that can work sustainably with the ecosystems involved. Natural Capitalism Solutions added that the UN Food and Agriculture Organization has recognized the value of organic and agro-ecological approaches to sustainable agriculture, and now has an [Organic Agriculture Programme](#). Civil society networks urged the post-2015 development agenda to promote these practices.

C. Achieving Sustainable Consumption and Production

Civil society networks appreciated the HLP and SDSN reports’ recognition that business-as-usual cannot continue in light of accelerating ecological crises, and their associated calls for more sustainable production and consumption patterns. However, questions arose regarding how the reports’ promotion of economic growth as the key driver of development can be reconciled with sustainable consumption and production. Canadian Center For Policy Alternatives noted the SDSN report’s recommendation that living standards and economic growth must be decoupled⁵² from unsustainable resource use and pollution. This recommendation did not go quite far enough though, according to Canadian Center For Policy Alternatives, because it is necessary to specify that for economic growth to be sustainable, it must be “intensive growth, which means using a fixed set of resources defined by planetary boundaries with greater efficiency.”

CONCORD identified that the European Union has introduced new policies and regulations around resource efficiency. However, “using things more efficiently doesn’t necessarily reduce the demand or the amount of consumption, because the consumption can still grow,” explained this civil society network. Therefore, post-2015 development strategies must “go beyond resource efficiency to resource sufficiency,” advocated CONCORD and the Northern Alliance for Sustainability (ANPED). Recognizing that this is a politically difficult subject, particularly for high income and growing middle-income countries because it has implications for lifestyles, CONCORD invoked that “in a world of planetary boundaries, we will need to think about redistribution and fair shares in terms of access to resources.” In other words, as Global Policy Forum articulated, the concept of planetary boundaries has to be reconciled with economic, social, and cultural rights, and particularly women’s and children’s rights. CONCORD noted that the HLP, SDSN and Global Compact reports shied away from making necessary recommendations to reduce unsustainable consumption levels in developed countries.

“Transforming the US\$70 trillion global economy is the real challenge for the post-2015 development goals,” acknowledged Natural Capitalism Solutions. “Convincing money managers, central bankers, and conventional economists that alternatives to their Wall Street world are a more plausible version of the future will need a

⁵² The SDSN report defines “decoupling” as follows: “Decoupling means a drop in primary resource use and pollution as economic growth proceeds. It is achieved through a combination of new technologies (e.g. photovoltaic electricity and wind power substituting for fossil fuels), investments in energy efficiency (e.g. reduced losses on the power grid, improved insulation for homes), the dematerialization of production (e.g. the shift from vinyl albums to online music and from books to e---books), and proper economic incentives for individuals, businesses, and governments. Resource efficiency (more output per unit of resource input) is a necessary but not sufficient condition.” p. 39.

very powerful story, indeed.” Natural Capitalism Solutions argued that this story is emerging from alternatives, including: [impact investing](#), [the circular economy](#), [the sharing economy](#), [slow money](#), [complementary currencies](#), [the cooperative movement](#), [economic democracy](#), and [local stock exchanges](#). Citing the [Third Millennium Economy](#) project, Natural Capitalism Solutions pointed out that as ecological challenges become crises, incumbent industries will become more willing to consider alternative proposals.

Natural Capitalism Solutions pointed to the report [Towards the Circular Economy](#), which argues that “a subset of the EU manufacturing sector could realize net materials cost savings worth up to US\$630 billion per year towards 2025” by transitioning to a circular economy, “an industrial system that is restorative or regenerative by intention and design.” The report elaborates that the circular economy “replaces the ‘end-of- life’ concept with restoration, shifts towards the use of renewable energy, eliminates the use of toxic chemicals, which impair reuse, and aims for the elimination of waste through the superior design of materials, products, systems, and, within this, business models.”⁵³ Natural Capitalism Solutions asserted that the circular economy must be a foundational element of the post-2015 development agenda.

ANPED and Social-Ecological Fund NGF said that a key to achieving sustainable consumption patterns is changing mindsets, which begins with education, but extends to social and economic innovation – organizing society differently. US-SEN highlighted the growth of the “sharing economy” in many countries: systems that enable shared access to goods, services, data and talent, thereby reducing consumption. US-SEN also highlighted the importance of localizing the economy, which shortens the supply chain, thereby reducing the carbon footprint of production. Localized economy can also foster responsible stewardship, US-SEN added, as producers have a stake in the welfare of the local social and natural environment, but this requires more than localization – the economies must ground themselves in principles of solidarity, participatory democracy, equity and sustainability. Since not everything can be produced locally, US-SEN acknowledged, fair trade and ethical consumption can help to ensure that workers and the environment are respected elsewhere. Public purchasing can support responsible consumption and local production. ANPED advocated for expansion and improvement of public transportation, and the establishment of energy standards for products, accompanied by phase-out regulations to ban products that do not meet the standards (along the lines of incandescent light bulb bans that many countries have implemented).

To ensure natural resources are not over-consumed, US Solidarity Economy Network and Global Policy Forum pointed to models for “caring for the commons” such as common-pool resource management, in which a community or village democratically manages its local resources, ensuring sustainability, as well as equitable use and distribution of benefits. Participants were strongly opposed to the commodification of the commons, through measures such as Payment for Ecosystems Services, which cannot deliver on conservation because it ignores the complexity of ecosystem functions and subjects nature to market pressures. Global Policy Forum advocated that the post-2015 development framework should include targets to protect the global commons.

It must become the norm to factor environmental and social costs into decision-making, CONCORD emphasized. Natural Capitalism Solutions identified that the corporate sector is picking this up, and that organizations such as the [Global Reporting Initiative](#), the [International Integrated Reporting Committee](#), and the [Sustainability Accounting Standards Board](#) are integrating sustainability considerations into normal financial accounting. Natural Capitalism Solutions explained that companies can capture the economic advantages of sustainability by:

- 1) Eliminating waste and implementing more efficient use of resources;

⁵³ Ellen MacArthur Foundation, [“Towards the Circular Economy,”](#) (2012), p. 3.

- 2) Redesigning industrial processes and the delivery of products and services to do business as nature does, using such approaches as [biomimicry](#), [cradle to cradle](#), and the [circular economy](#);
- 3) Managing all institutions to be regenerative of human and natural capital, implementing the concept of [ecological economics](#).

Many business schools are now teaching these principles, continued Natural Capitalism Solutions, and many corporate leaders are implementing them, realizing that sustainable practices are better for business: more than 48 studies show that the companies leading in sustainable practices are financially outperforming their less responsible competitors.⁵⁴ Therefore, Natural Capitalism Solutions argued, “prioritizing sustainability will strengthen, not inhibit economies.”⁵⁵ The post-2015 agenda must reinforce the arc of this transition, and orient all development efforts toward full respect for ecological sustainability.

IV. Establish Participatory Governance, Accountability and Transparency

In line with civil society networks from other regions, participants from Europe and North America asserted that existing international human rights agreements compel participatory governance, accountability and transparency for all stages of policy-making and implementation, in accordance with access rights: the rights to direct participation in government and public affairs, access to information, and access to justice and administration. Consultation participants noted that the HLP, SDSN and Global Compact reports all include goals for “good governance,” along with targets related to increasing participation, accountability and transparency. However, contributors argued that each of these reports failed to recommend what is most needed to ensure the attainment of those objectives: a rights-based approach for the post-2015 development agenda, and robust accountability mechanisms. Indeed, several civil society networks contended that some of the prevailing recommendations in the three reports would actually undermine participation, accountability and transparency in sustainable development processes. Of particular concern was the reports’ heavy promotion of public-private partnerships and voluntary initiatives, without associated proposals for strong accountability mechanisms. Civil society networks insist on robust accountability in the post-2015 agenda, and maintain that a rights-based approach is essential to enable it.

European and North American participants presented perspectives on:

- A. Employing human rights accountability mechanisms in the post-2015 agenda
- B. The risks of over-emphasizing public-private partnerships
- C. The need for binding corporate obligations instead of voluntary initiatives
- D. Transparency for budgets, business practices and trade agreements
- E. Observance of participation rights

A. Employing human rights accountability mechanisms in the post-2015 agenda

Participants identified that lack of accountability has hampered achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). As Center for Economic and Social Rights (CESR) identified, accountable governance is fundamental to ensuring delivery on commitments. To “strengthen the fabric of accountable governance,” it is critical to employ human rights accountability mechanisms, advised CESR. Center for Reproductive Rights

⁵⁴ Natural Capitalism Solutions, [Sustainability Pays](#), (2012).

⁵⁵ Ram Nidumolu, C.K. Prahalad, M.R. Rangaswami, [Why Sustainability is Now the Key Driver of Innovation](#), Harvard Business Review, Reprint R0909E, (September 2009).

agreed, explaining that human rights institutions have proven effective in clarifying State obligations with respect to protecting and fulfilling human rights, and in holding States accountable for those commitments.

“The collectively agreed norms that human rights standards articulate provide a foundation for performance standards that all States should be expected to implement,” asserted CESR. In accordance with the [International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights](#), CESR elaborated, “the obligation of conduct requires that States ‘take steps’ (including legislative, judicial, administrative, financial, educational and social measures) ‘within the maximum extent of available resources’ with a view to achieving the full realization of economic, social and cultural rights,⁵⁶ and to monitor and report on progress and to objectively justify any backsliding.”

To meet human rights accountability obligations, CESR continued, States must show that their policy commitments, processes and efforts comply with substantive and procedural human rights principles at all stages (planning, budgeting, implementation, monitoring and evaluation). CESR illustrated how States can demonstrate this:

- Policy commitments include: whether the State has ratified relevant international human rights treaties without reservations and established a domestic legal framework that gives effect to them; whether policy statements and strategy documents refer to human rights standards and principles; and whether States apply these standards.
- Policy-making and implementation processes must observe the rights of access to information, to participation in public affairs, and to the freedoms of expression, assembly and association.
- Regarding policy efforts, States must ensure that policies are designed and implemented to meet the human rights criteria of availability, accessibility, acceptability (including affordability) and quality (AAAQ). Indicators for measuring policy efforts should address financing, public expenditures, planning, coordination and human resources policies for the given sector.⁵⁷

Center for Reproductive Rights explained that the accountability for policy and implementation is ultimately achieved through the expertise of existing political and legal human rights institutions at the international level, and at national and local levels through courts, independent ombudspersons and political monitoring bodies. CESR added that administrative and social mechanisms, as well as systems to ensure the quality of services, are also critical for ensuring accountability at the national and local levels. With regard to the international level, CESR outlined some ways in which human rights mechanisms strengthen accountability: UN and regional monitoring bodies “require States to justify their development performance in the light of human rights principles, such as progressive realization and non-discrimination; scrutinize whether adequate national mechanisms of redress exist; issue recommendations for strengthening domestic accountability, and offer forums for raising and negotiating grievances.”⁵⁸ US Human Rights Network added that stakeholders, including individual citizens, can use the enforcement mechanisms of the UN [Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination](#) (CERD) for accountability. This body of independent experts monitors implementation of the [Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination](#) by its State parties, through a reporting procedure, an early-warning procedure, and the examination of inter-state and individual complaints.

⁵⁶ Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, [general comment No. 3](#) (1990) on the nature of State parties obligations (concerning the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights), paras. 3–7.

⁵⁷ Center for Economic and Social Rights and the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, “[Who Will Be Accountable? Human Rights and the Post-2015 Development Agenda](#),” (2013), p. 34.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, p. 32.

The post-2015 agenda should not only integrate human rights accountability mechanisms, but also should strive to improve their effectiveness, advocated CESR and Center for Reproductive Rights. It should direct States to “ratify the full spectrum of human rights treaties and their optional complaint procedures, withdraw the reservations that impede their implementation, and commit to the comprehensive, timely and regular submission of reports,”⁵⁹ emphasized CESR. Center for Reproductive Rights stipulated that the post-2015 agenda should “contain obligations to strengthen international mechanisms for monitoring human rights, such as UN treaty monitoring bodies, UN special procedures, like the Special Rapporteurs, and human rights-based intergovernmental processes.” CESR identified that States must ensure that all people can access national accountability mechanisms, including information and assistance regarding legal and other remedies.

Recognizing that new post-2015 accountability mechanisms will be proposed, CESR highlighted that the post-2015 agenda should avoid unnecessary duplication of existing international human rights accountability mechanisms, and, “Any new global review mechanism for post-2015 development commitments should explicitly refer to international human rights treaty standards, and should ensure rigorous independent review, effective civil society participation and high-level political accountability.”⁶⁰

B. The Risks of Overemphasizing Public-Private Partnerships

Several participants were critical of the HLP, SDSN and Global Compact reports’ perspectives on implementation for the post-2015 agenda. According to Global Policy Forum, these reports did not adequately address the need for structural reform of fiscal and regulatory policies, and instead exhibited a “partnerships euphoria” through repeated advocacy that post-2015 development objectives will be delivered by public-private partnerships or multi-stakeholder partnerships. “These proposals build on the notion that governments will not be able to solve global problems by themselves,” expressed Global Policy Forum. “Collaboration projects including business representatives and sometimes civil society organizations are seen as pragmatic, solution-oriented, flexible, efficient and unbureaucratic – all attributes frequently lacking in purely intergovernmental projects and processes,” the organization elaborated. “The basic problem is that the assessments of the advantages of global partnerships are for the most part not based on empirical research and a thorough power and interest analysis of the actors involved.”

European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) argued, “If the discussions regarding the public-private partnerships are purely framed in terms of quantitative financial needs, it will lead to a business-driven policy framework.” If part of the money for a partnership project must be provided by the private sector, ETUC explained, “then you have to create what technocrats call enabling environments, which means a policy framework that at the end of the day appeals to those that are expected to provide the money.” According to ETUC, “This always leads to commodification, privatization, and land grabbing etc. Of course there are financial needs that must be met, but we also have to stress in the debate the need to defend accountability, democratic control of natural resources, and the role of public services.”

Global Policy Forum further contended that because the HLP, SDSN and Global Compact reports extensively promote partnerships as well as growth-oriented development strategies, “the relationship between public institutions and the private sector becomes embedded in the logic of the proposed agenda.” Global Policy Forum extrapolated, “Taking into account the current patterns of economic and political power, following these recommendations could lead to the weakening of public institutions, the further strengthening of

⁵⁹ *Ibid*, p. 71.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, p. 72.

business actors and the political marginalization of other social actors in the post-2015 agenda.”

Global Policy Forum presented a detailed assessment of “risks and side-effects” of multi-stakeholder partnerships that the organization asserted “must be considered in any careful analysis of the approach”:

1. Growing influence of the business sector in the political discourse and agenda-setting: Critics fear that partnership initiatives allow transnational corporations and their interest groups growing influence over agenda setting and political decision-making by governments.
2. Risks to reputation, choosing the wrong partner: It is particularly problematic for the UN to collaborate with partners whose activities contravene the UN Charter and UN norms and standards. This is especially true of partnerships with those transnational corporations accused of violating environmental, social or human rights standards.
3. Distorting competition and the pretense of representativeness: Project-related public private partnerships between international organizations and individual companies in particular, are generally exclusive. These partnerships can distort competition, because they provide the corporations involved with an image advantage, and also support those involved in opening up markets and help them gain access to governments. The selection of partners is also problematic in many multi-stakeholder initiatives. Often, the initiator of a partnerships rather than respective stakeholder groups nominates representatives to the partnership bodies.
4. Proliferation of partnership initiatives and fragmentation of global governance: The explosive growth in partnerships can lead to isolated solutions, which are poorly coordinated, contributes to the institutional weakening of the United Nations and its specialized agencies, and hinders comprehensive development strategies.
5. Unstable financing – a threat to the sufficient provision of public goods: The provision of public goods becomes increasingly privatized, it will become dependent on voluntary and ultimately unpredictable channels of financing through benevolent individuals or private philanthropic foundations.
6. Dubious complementarity – governments escape responsibility: Instead of considering partnership initiatives as complementary to inter-governmental processes, they are often promoted as replacements of intergovernmental agreements.
7. Selectivity in partnerships – governance gaps remain: Partnerships only develop selectively and concentrate on problems in which technical solutions lead to relatively quick wins (vaccination programs, promoting renewable energy systems). Long-term structural problems such as building up a health system or overcoming gender inequality are only peripherally touched.
8. Trends toward elite models of global governance – weakening of representative democracy: Inasmuch as partnerships give all participating actors equal rights, the special political and legal position occupied legitimately by public bodies (governments and parliaments) is sidelined.

Social-Ecological Fund NGF added that in the post-Soviet region, due to a “high level of corruption in the region,” public-private partnerships “are counterproductive to transparency and accountability.”

“It’s important to bring the State back into the debate and to stress the role of governments and public authorities,” asserted ETUC. “And nowadays, this is often missing in the discussion.”

C. The Need for Binding Corporate Obligations Instead of Voluntary Initiatives

“We have seen one factory disaster after another, fires and building collapses, which have killed in the last several years more than 1,500 workers in Bangladesh and Pakistan,” Workers Rights Consortium (WRC) decried; this in spite of the voluntary corporate responsibility programmes operated by individual apparel brands and retailers. While these initiatives have served as the primary mechanism to address severe labour rights problems in global manufacturing supply chains for over the past 15 years, WRC stressed that the model has failed due to their voluntary nature and lack of accountability and enforceability mechanisms; non-transparent inspection processes; and increasing pressure by brands and retailers to produce at the lowest

prices. WRC further suggested that “with the absence of regulations by the Bangladeshi government, factories have an overwhelming incentive to ignore workplace safety and have the knowledge that they can do so with impunity vis-à-vis the local regulatory context.” WRC underscored the need to push for binding and enforceable agreements between global corporations and labour unions, and highlighted the recently signed [Accord on Fire and Safety in Bangladesh](#) – the first legally binding agreement between international labour organizations, non-governmental organizations, and retailers engaged in the apparel industry – which seeks to maintain minimum safety standards. While this agreement serves as a positive model, it is not enough, emphasized WRC: “These private agreements are only a substitute for what we really should have, which is effective regulation of corporate behaviour by governments.”

However, the HLP, SDSN and Global Compact reports promoted voluntary approaches, without robust accountability mechanisms, as participants including Canadian Center for Policy Alternatives, CESR, CONCORD, and Global Policy Forum highlighted. “The [HLP] report suggests integrated social and environmental reporting for large businesses, but argues for a voluntary ‘comply or explain’ regime under which companies would either report or explain why they are not reporting,” CESR identified. “To be effective, any integrated reporting regime must be mandatory for all large companies.” CONCORD echoed, “If the private sector is seen as a key actor in the delivery of the post 2015 framework, mechanisms will have to be in place for reporting and transparency which go beyond voluntary initiatives towards corporate accountability.” This network continued, “It will be important to avoid the mistakes made in Johannesburg at the World Summit on Sustainable Development where partnerships were established and recognized as delivery mechanisms by the UN, but no formal monitoring or evaluation took place.” With regard to corporate accountability, CESR invoked the value of a rights-based approach for the post-2015 framework: “Human rights norms are unequivocal in requiring that governments set up systems which guarantee the private sector respect human rights universally.” Robust corporate accountability mechanisms are particularly important because, as Canadian Center for Policy Alternatives underscored, entrenched corporate interests “are highly mobilized and determined to protect their own profit-oriented business model.”

CONCORD and Global Policy Forum drew attention to the value of country-by-country reporting – “the breakdown of a company’s financial performance for each country of operation or trading presence,”⁶¹ and the mandatory transparency requirements associated with this disclosure. CONCORD and Global Policy Forum highlighted that the EU and US require country-by-country reporting from extractive industries, to curtail tax avoidance and the exploitation of natural resources. These civil society contributors advocated for the requirement of such disclosure to be expanded to other industries.

Global Policy Forum also raised that that post-2015 agenda discussions on binding norms for transnational corporations have so far focused on the “[Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights: Implementing the United Nations 'Protect, Respect and Remedy' Framework](#),”⁶² as a “first step.” However, Global Policy Forum stressed that these principles are not as strong as the [Draft Norms on Business and Human Rights](#) that fed into them. In GPF’s view, the draft norms should be used as a model “to reach more binding and regulatory rules for transnational corporations in the post-2015 context.”

D. Transparency for Budgets, Business Practices and Trade Agreements

CESR expressed appreciation for the HLP report assertion that “we need a transparency revolution, so citizens can see exactly where and how taxes, aid and revenues from extractive industries are spent,” but called for the post-2015 agenda to outline additional fiscal policy areas that need greater transparency (as well as public

⁶¹ <http://www.publishwhatyoupay.org/about/advocacy/country-country-reporting>.

⁶² The Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights were endorsed by the Human Rights Council in resolution [A/HRC/RES/17/4](#) (6 July 2011).

participation), such as budgeting and procurement. InterAction also stated that budget transparency is critical, and should involve “the publishing of budgets, the ability of local civil society to engage in a budget process, and the degree to which those budgets focus on different populations.” InterAction recognized that this is domestic issue, but advocated for the post-2015 agenda to promote adherence to transparency norms for this arena.

ETC Group identified that industrial information must be much more open and accessible, because it is critical for understanding markets – and controls within them, as well as corporate concentration. According to ETC Group, what is now referred to as “confidential business information” used to be known in decades past as “restrictive business practices,” because it was recognized that corporate cartels often form through joint venture arrangements and cross-licensing of intellectual property. “Appropriate government agencies should individually examine all intellectual property, know-how and joint venture arrangements to eliminate restrictive business practices,” asserted ETC Group. “Enterprises should be required to make publicly available any information previously regarded as ‘confidential business information’ that is relevant to determining market share and defining inter-firm arrangements such as strategic alliances and joint ventures.”⁶³

Canadian Center for Policy Alternatives emphasized the need to address “a complete lack of transparency” in bilateral and regional free trade agreements such as the transpacific partnership, and the various bilateral agreements. These trade agreements “are basically locking in the business as usual path and preempting alternative approaches,” warned Canadian Center for Policy Alternatives. “As we confront the growing problems of inequality and the environmental crisis, it’s important that these agreements become far more deferential to national government regulation and to other instruments of international law, which are more weakly enforced than the whole trade and investment treaty regime.”

E. Observance of Participation Rights

Many civil society networks emphasized the need for the post-2015 development agenda to be defined, implemented and monitored through fully participatory processes in which all voices are heard. Natural Capitalism Solutions asserted that governments, businesses, and civil society should all have legitimate seats at decision-making tables. The post-2015 development agenda should “require and facilitate public participation, including that of independent CSOs through shadow reporting and other monitoring and evaluation mechanisms,” asserted Center for Reproductive Rights. Further, the post-2015 agenda should call for active support of civil society participation in all development processes, including through education and capacity-building, advocated US Human Rights Network.

CESR suggested several mechanisms to assess the adequacy of participation in processes: indicators that measure the range and number of participatory forums; the public’s awareness of them; the regularity of consultation; attendance rates; the social composition of those who attend; the extent to which recommendations made by participants are considered and acted upon by the authorities; and perceptions of satisfaction among the stakeholders and the public.

“The ability to express one’s views and grievances peacefully, freely and without fear is a fundamental human right, an imperative for effective development processes, and central to most people’s conceptions of a dignified life,” invoked CESR. “The freedoms of expression, association and assembly, and the freedom from fear, are as essential as freedom from want and are interconnected in practice.” Full and meaningful participation is central to the effectiveness and legitimacy of development efforts, CESR asserted.

⁶³ ETC Group, [“Putting the Cartel Before the Horse,”](#) (2013), pp. 31-32.

ANNEX I: List of Consultation Participants from All Regions

[350.org](#) (Europe/North America)
[Action for Global Health](#) (Europe/North America)
[Africa Civil Society Platform on Principled Partnership - ACP](#) (Africa)
[Africa Trade Network](#) (Africa)
[Africa Youth Empowerment Initiative](#) (Africa)
[African Civil Society Network on Water and Sanitation - ANEW](#) (Africa)
[African Women Development and Communication Network - FEMNET / African Women's Steering Committee on Post 2015](#) (Africa)
[African Youth Economic Forum - AYEF](#) (Africa)
[Agency for Cooperation and Research in Development - ACORD](#) (Africa)
[Alianza por la Biodiversidad en América Latina; ETC Group](#) (Latin America)
[Anti Corruption and Integrity Network ACINET - Non Governmental Group](#) (Arab States)
Arab Network for Democratic Elections - ANDE (Arab States)
[Arab NGO Network for Development - ANND](#) (Arab States)
[Articulación Regional Feminista](#) (Latin America)
Asia Dalit Rights Platform (Asia Pacific)
[Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact - AIPP](#) (Asia Pacific)
[Asia-Pacific CSOs@UNEP](#) (Asia Pacific)
[Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development - APWLD](#) (Asia Pacific)
[Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education - ASPBAE](#) (Asia Pacific)
[Asian Development Alliance](#) (Asia Pacific)
[Asian Farmers Association for Sustainable Rural Development](#) (Asia Pacific)
[Asian Peasant Coalition on Participatory Governance](#) (Asia Pacific)
[Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women - ARROW](#) (Asia and Pacific)
[Asociación Latinoamericana de Educación Radiofónica - ALER](#) (Latin America)
[Association of Development Agencies - ADA](#) (Caribbean)
Bahrain Network (Arab States)
[Basic Education Coalition](#) (Europe/North America)
[Campaign for People's Goals for Sustainable Development](#) (Asia and Pacific)
[Campaña Latinoamericana por el Derecho a la Educación - CLADE](#) (Latin America)
[Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives](#) (Europe/North America)
Caribbean Civil Society Coalition on Population and Development (Caribbean)
[Caribbean Policy Development Centre - CPDC](#) (Caribbean)
[Caribbean Youth Environment Network - CYEN](#) (Caribbean)
[CatchAFyah Caribbean Feminist Network](#) (Caribbean)
[Center for Economic and Social Rights - CESR](#) (Europe/North America)
[Center for Reproductive Rights](#) (Europe/North America)
[Center of Concern](#) (Europe/North America)
[Centre du Commerce International pour le Développement - CECIDE](#) (Africa)
[Centre for African Development Solutions - CADS](#) (Africa)
Coalición de los pueblos por la soberanía alimentaria - PCFS (Latin America)
Coalición LGBTTI de la Organización de Estados Americanos (Latin America)
[Coalición Mundial por los Bosques](#) (Latin America)
[Coalition for Sexual and Bodily Rights](#) (Europe/North America)
[CONCORD](#) (Europe/North America)
Confederación Sindical de las Américas (Latin America)

[Consejo de Educación de Adultos de América Latina - CEAAL](#) (Latin America)
[Consejo de Educación Popular de America Latina y el Caribe](#) (Latin America)
[Consejo Internacional de Educación de Personas Adultas - ICAE](#) (Latin America)
[Coordinación de ONG y Cooperativas - CONGCOOP](#) (Latin America)
Coordination des ONG africaines des droits de l'homme et du développement - CONGAF (Africa)
[Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era - DAWN - Latin America](#) (Latin America)
[Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era - DAWN - Pacific](#) (Asia Pacific)
[Egyptian Center for Economic and Social Rights](#) (Arab States)
[Espace Associative](#) (Arab States)
[ETC Group](#) (Europe/North America)
[EuroNGOs -The European NGOs for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, Population and Development](#)
(Europe/North America)
[European Trade Union Confederation - ETUC](#) (Europe/North America)
Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales – FLACSO (Latin America)
[Fair Trade Federation](#) (Europe/North America)
[Femmes Africa Solidarité](#) (Africa)
Gender, Economic and Ecological Justice - GEEJ, Latin America (Latin America)
Gender, Economic and Ecological Justice - GEEJ, Pacific (Asia and Pacific)
[Global Environment Facility NGO Network - Central Africa and Federation of Environmental and Ecological
Diversity for Agricultural Revampment and Human Rights - FEEDAR & HR](#) (Africa)
[Global Policy Forum](#) (Europe/North America)
[Housing and Land Rights Network Habitat International Coalition](#) (Arab States)
[Human Rights Information and Training Center](#) (Arab States)
[ICCA Consortium; Kalpavriksh](#) (Asia and Pacific)
[Idle No More](#) (Europe/North America)
[Iniciativa Construyendo Puentes](#) (Latin America)
[InterAction](#) (Europe/North America)
[Intercontinental Network for the Promotion of the Social Solidarity Economy - RIPESS](#) (Latin America)
[International Woman's Rights Action Watch Asia Pacific - IWRAP](#) (Asia and Pacific)
[Ipas](#) (Latin America)
[Jer's Vision](#) (Europe/North America)
Latin America and Caribbean Regional Advisory Group to UN Women (Latin America)
[LDC Watch](#) (Asia and Pacific)
[Lebanese Physically Handicapped Union - LPHU](#) (Arab States)
Mesa de Articulación de Asociaciones Nacionales y Redes de ONGs de América Latina y el Caribe (Latin
America)
[National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights - NCDHR](#) (Asia Pacific)
[National Civic Forum](#) (Arab States)
[Natural Capitalism Solutions](#) (Europe/North America)
[Northern Alliance for Sustainability - ANPED](#) (Europe/North America)
[Nuclear Information and Resource Service](#) (Europe/North America)
[Office Africain pour le développement et la coopération - OFADEC](#) (Africa)
[Organisation of African Youth](#) (Africa)
[Pacific Disabilities Forum](#) (Asia and Pacific)
[Pacific Student Association](#) (Asia and Pacific)
[Pacific Youth Council](#) (Asia and Pacific)
[Palestinian NGO Network](#) (Arab States)
[Pan African Climate Justice Alliance -PACJA](#) (Africa)

[Panel de la Jeunesse Africaine](#) (Africa)
[Peoples' Health Movement](#) (Asia and Pacific)
[Peoples' Sustainability Treaties](#) (Asia and Pacific)
[Plataforma Interamericana de Derechos Humanos, Democracia y Desarrollo - PIDHDD](#) (Latin America)
[Presentation Novitiate for Africa](#) (Africa)
[Realising Sexual and Reproductive Justice - RESURJ](#) (Asia and Pacific)
[Red de Mujeres afrolatinoamericanas, Afrocaribeñas y de la Diáspora](#) (Latin America)
[Réseau Africain de l'Economie Sociale et Solidaire - RAESS](#) (Africa)
[Réseau des Plates-formes nationales d'ONG d'Afrique de l'Ouest et du Centre - REPAOC](#) (Africa)
Reseau Mauritanien Pour l'Action Sociale (Arab States)
Río+Vos; Asociación Nueva Vida (Latin America)
[Secretariat of the African Decade of Persons with Disabilities](#) (Africa)
[Social Watch](#) (Latin America)
[Social-Ecological Fund NGF / EcoForum NGO Network of Kazakhstan](#) (Europe/North America)
[South Asia Women's Network - SWAN](#) (Asia and Pacific)
[South Asian Alliance for Poverty Eradication - SAAPE](#) (Asia and Pacific)
[South Asian Campaign for Gender Equality - SACGE](#) (Asia and Pacific)
[South Asian Network of Gender Activists and Trainers - SANGAT](#) (Asia and Pacific)
[Southern and Eastern African Trade Information and Negotiations Institute - SEATINI](#) (Africa)
[TEBTEBBA](#) (Asia and Pacific)
[The Council of Canadians](#) (Europe/North America)
[The International Organisation of Industrial, Artisanal and Service Producers Cooperatives - CICOPA](#)
(Europe/North America)
[Third World Network - South Asia](#) (Asia and Pacific)
[Third World Network - Africa](#) (Africa)
Tunisian Platform for Economic and Social Rights (Arab States)
[U.S. Solidarity Network - SEN](#) (Europe/North America)
[US Human Rights Network](#) (Europe/North America)
[USA Cooperative Youth Council](#) (Europe/North America)
[Worker Rights Consortium](#) (Europe/North America)

ANNEX II: Methodology and Information Resources

Methodology

The consultation process for the full report from all regions involved two components, each conducted in four languages: Arabic, English, French, and Spanish.

- 1) Civil society was invited to contribute to an open online review of four post-2015 reports that were submitted to the Secretary-General between March and June 2013:
 - a) [High-level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda](#)
 - b) [UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network \(SDSN\)](#)
 - c) [UN Global Compact \(UNGC\)](#)
 - d) [UN Development Group \(UNDG\): The Global Conversation Begins](#)

This exercise was conducted at www.worldwewant2015.org/NGLSconsultation from 31 May - 12 July. UN-NGLS provided numerous resources in the four languages listed above to inform civil society about issues relevant to the consultation, including a [guidance note](#). More than 800 responses were received through the web site and email. All responses submitted online are still accessible from the site. The synthesis of this component will be published in the subsequent report.

- 2) Fourteen teleconferences were conducted with regional and sub-regional civil society networks that are based in Asia, the Pacific, Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa, Europe, North America, and the Arab States. All networks that participated focus a substantial portion of their work on the region in which they are based. The objective of these teleconferences was to deepen substantive engagement with civil society organizations at the regional level and to enable a more comprehensive and balanced range of perspectives to be heard at the United Nations, thereby widening and decentralizing the debates about the post-2015 development agenda. Civil society networks were invited to provide analysis of the four post-2015 reports listed above during these calls, but the dialogues extended outside of that frame as participants also discussed sustainable development policy in a broader sense. A total of 100 regional civil society networks participated in these teleconferences, and many of them sent supplementary written contributions. An additional 20 regional civil society networks that were unable to join a call submitted written input. The 120 regional civil society networks and social movements that contributed to this consultation collectively collaborate with over 3,000 national and community-based organizations. These networks cover issues including development, trade and finance, human rights, peace, environment and climate justice, agriculture, energy, workers' rights, women's rights, sexuality, health including sexual and reproductive health and rights, education, youth empowerment, the rights of people living with disabilities, Indigenous peoples' rights, the rights of migrants, discrimination based on race/caste/ethnicity, and social and solidarity economy.

The full report of regional civil society recommendations draws on transcripts of the teleconferences, as well as written contributions received from regional networks via the consultation web page and email. The transcripts were gently edited to remove extraneous words, and to group each participant's remarks together, although they had originally occurred

at various points during the discussion. These edited transcripts were shared with all call participants before the report writing process began, to provide participants with the opportunity to adjust and/or amend their input. The Arabic, Spanish and French transcripts were then translated into English.

Please click on the links below to access the source material for this consultation.

Asia and the Pacific

[Asia and Pacific Teleconferences Transcript and Email Submissions](#) – 3 calls

[Asia and Pacific Online Submissions](#)

Latin America and the Caribbean

[Latin America Teleconferences Transcript and Email Submissions \(Spanish\)](#) – 4 calls

[Latin America Teleconferences Transcript \(English Translation\)](#)

[Caribbean Teleconference Transcript and Email Submissions](#) – 1 call

[Latin American and the Caribbean Online Submissions](#)

Europe and North America

[Europe and North America Transcript and Email Submissions](#) – 3 calls

[Europe and North America Online Submissions](#)

Africa

[Africa French Teleconference Transcript](#) – 1 call

[Africa French Teleconference Transcript \(English Translation\)](#)

[Africa English Teleconference Transcript](#) – 1 call

[Africa Online Submissions](#)

Arab States

[Arab States Teleconference Transcript](#) – 1 call