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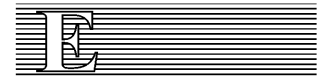
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**Note for the High Level Panel Discussion on  
“Articulating a Post-2015 MDG Agenda”**



## I. Overview

1. In September 2000, the United Nations Millennium Summit endorsed the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in what was called the Millennium Declaration. More than 180 countries signed this declaration. The main objective of the Millennium Summit was to set quantifiable and time-bound global development goals to end human suffering from hunger, destitution and diseases, mainly in developing countries. Since their inception, the MDGs have been embedded in several international and regional initiatives and have had a huge influence on policy discourse throughout the developing world. The MDGs, which comprise eight goals, 18 targets and 48 indicators, are the culmination of several international efforts and initiatives to mobilize resources for development from the mid-1990s.<sup>1</sup>

2. The MDGs date back to 1961 when the United Nations Development Decade was launched. Owing to the lack of an international development strategy at the time, the United Nations General Assembly called on economically advanced economies to give 1 per cent of their combined national incomes as Official Development Assistance (ODA) to developing nations. Following the 25<sup>th</sup> session of the General Assembly in 1970, economically advanced countries committed to increasing ODA to a net amount of 0.7 per cent of their Gross National Product. In the eighties, structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) began to dominate development thinking and policy-making. Once they came under scrutiny, the development community sought for alternatives. The next few decades saw the emergence of the African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programmes for Socioeconomic Recovery and Transformation (AAF-SAP), and later, the International Development Goals (IDGs), which were the immediate precursor to the MDGs, birthed in 1996 at the 34<sup>th</sup> High-Level meeting of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD/DAC).

3. Three years to the fast approaching 2015 deadline, there has been a concerted effort to accelerate MDG achievement and rigorously assess and take stock of the successes and failures of the current goals, in an attempt to shape and develop an inclusive and holistic post-2015 agenda. The question is not about having a set of international development goals post-2015, but rather, what the proposed framework will consist of. Indeed, should the MDGs be retained in their current configuration with an extension of the deadline? Should they be reformulated or altogether replaced by an alternative agenda? Which alternative is likely to have the greatest impact on poverty eradication in Africa?

4. In order to articulate Africa's position on the post-2015 agenda, ECA commissioned papers on the three alternatives as well as a paper on the likely implications of the post 2015 agenda for NEPAD. In addition, ECA initiated consultations to capture member States' perspectives on the issue. In collaboration with the African Union Commission (AUC) and the United Nations Development Programme's Regional Bureau for Africa (UNDP/RBA), ECA convened a workshop from 15 to 16 November 2011 in Accra. It was attended by 47 representatives from 19 African countries<sup>2</sup> representing government, civil society and

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<sup>1</sup> The most notable are: the Launching of the UN Development Decade, UN 1961, 25<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly, 1970, Copenhagen UN World Summit for Social Development, 1995; Fourth UN Conference on Women, Beijing, 1995, UN International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 1994, UN Conference on Environment and Development, Rio, 1992, The Millennium Declaration, 2000.

<sup>2</sup> Burkina Faso, Benin, Botswana, Burundi, Cameroon, Canada, Cote d'Ivoire Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Morocco Nigeria, Sierra Leone, South Africa, the Gambia, Togo, Uganda and Zimbabwe.

academia. Alongside this event, ECA administered an electronic survey on the post-2015 agenda which, to date, has been completed by 112 representatives from civil society and non-governmental organizations, research institutions and ministries for planning, finance and economic development. The representatives are from 32 African countries.

5. Drawing on the outcome document of the regional workshop and the findings of the survey and commissioned papers, this paper provides: (a) an assessment of the MDGs to date by reviewing their positive contributions and challenges; (b) alternative proposals for improvement; and (c) suggestions for the post-2015 agenda. The paper concludes by identifying the emerging African position.

## **II. Assessment of the Millennium Development Goals**

### **A. MDG positive contributions**

#### **The MDGs have focused attention on the poor**

6. Without a doubt, the MDGs have made significant contributions to the social and economic development of countries across the globe. Indeed, these multi-dimensional and target-oriented goals are said to be “the first global development vision that combines a global political endorsement with a clear focus on, and means to engage directly with, the world’s poor people” (UNDP, 2003). The goals have had unprecedented success in galvanizing international support and awareness, not only from governments and inter-governmental bodies, but also from civil society, the private sector, charities, foundations, the media and academia about focusing on a common set of goals that seek to enhance human capabilities (Vandemoortele, 2009; Moss, 2010; Secretary-General Report on the Progress of the MDGs, 2011). Further, the MDG framework has helped raise global consciousness about the multiple dimensions of poverty and made the complexity of the development process more insightful to policymakers and the public at large (Secretary-General Report on the Progress of the MDGs, 17). Global campaigns such as “Make Poverty History,” “End Poverty 2015,” and others also contributed to enhancing MDG exposure around the world (Melamed and Scott, 2011: 1). Since the adoption of the MDGs, developing countries have prioritized poverty reduction more, embedded the MDGs into their respective national Poverty Reduction Strategies and implemented MDG-focused policies (Polard et al., 2010, [www.giz.de/](http://www.giz.de/)).

#### **The MDGs have been associated with increased funding**

7. Secondly, while a causal relationship has not been definitively established, there is growing consensus that MDGs have improved and increased the targeting and flow of aid and other investments in development (Waage, Banerji et al, 2010; Moss, 2010; Bourguignon F, Benassy-Quere A et al., 2008). From 1992 to 1997, total aid plummeted by more than 20 per cent. At the time of the September 2000 United Nations Summit when the MDGs were adopted, total aid was around \$60 billion per year. However, by 2005, aid had doubled to roughly \$120 billion per year, and has remained at this level ever since (Moss, 2010: 218). Before the Millennium Declaration, ODA was at 0.22 per cent of DAC countries’ Gross National Income (GNI), whereas by 2006, it had increased to \$104.4 billion, or 0.31 per cent of DAC countries’ GNI (Bourguignon et al, 2008: 18). While this increase in ODA cannot perhaps be fully attributed to the MDGs, there is still no doubt, that they played an instrumental role in targeting the flow of aid.

8. Also, OECD figures from 2000 to 2006 show that total development assistance for health more than doubled from \$6.8 billion to \$16.7 billion. Indeed, the World Bank's 2010 Global Monitoring Report indicates a significant increase in development financing over the last decade, particularly in response to health-related issues. For example, from 2001 to 2005, aid commitments to HIV/AIDS programmes rose by nearly 30 per cent (\$4.75 billion), fuelled by the establishment of the Global Fund and philanthropic efforts of the Clinton Foundation, the Bill and Mellinda Gates Foundation (World Bank, 2010: 62). The United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS relief (PEPFAR) and UNITAID are examples of other financial mechanisms inspired by the MDGs. In 2008, public and private entities allocated \$15.8 billion for global HIV/AIDS programmes, with \$6.7 billion of it from bilateral and European Union contributions. Pledges to the Global Fund rose from \$2.5 billion in 2007 to \$3.0 billion in 2008, before declining to \$2.6 billion in 2009 as a result of the 2008-2009 recession. The United States PEPFAR programme increased its contributions from \$4.5 billion in 2007 to \$6.2 billion in 2008 and has subsequently increased its annual budgets. The 2010 fiscal year allocation is just shy of \$7 billion, suggesting that United States support is continuing (World Bank, 2010: 62).

### **The MDGs have ensured greater focus on results**

9. As a third contribution, the MDGs successfully focused the international community on measurable outcomes, creating a shift in practice to tracking progress on intended targets rather than merely calculating inputs (Moss, 2010: 218). In other words, with specified targets, the MDGs allow countries to track and report on specific indicators, therefore emphasizing the importance of data collection and analysis: "...the MDGs have stimulated an improvement in monitoring development programmes through data collection and analysis: Once the MDGs gained currency, a cascade of statistical and analytical work got underway" (Waage, Banerji et al, 2010: 6). This not only influences countries to adopt better data monitoring, evaluation and reporting systems, but also allows governments to create social and economic development policies that better reflect the reality of their countries.

## **B. MDG Challenges**

### **The MDGs have been misinterpreted**

10. A first criticism of the MDGs is that "... while they were initially intended as global aspirations, they quickly became actual targets for countries" (Moss, 2010: 218). Consequently, they are wrongly expected to be achieved individually (by countries), as opposed to globally. The MDGs have been "over-abstracted," "over-generalized," "over-simplified" and altogether misinterpreted as global one-size-fits-all targets, and also perceived as yardsticks against which countries' performance have been judged and measured. In fact, "the MDG agenda has overlooked differences in initial conditions and capacities of countries and as such, by using a uniform set of targets, could unfairly judge efforts made by countries that started in more disadvantaged positions" (Report of the Secretary-General on the Progress of the MDGs, 2011: 19). It is for this reason that some (Vandemoortele, 2009; Hailu, D and R. Tsukada, 2011, Bourguignon et al, 2008; Moss. 2010) maintain that South Asian and sub-Saharan African countries in particular, were not only initially set up to fail (Clemens et al., 2007; Easterly, 2009), but "still lag behind" in achieving the MDGs, further reinforcing the perception of Afro-pessimism among critics. "Given the vast disparity of starting points,

and the diversity of country capabilities, using a universal measuring stick seems not just simplistic, but absurd,” (Moss, 2010: 219). Poorer countries that started from a higher poverty rate and a wider poverty gap are likely to take longer and/or require more effort to cross the poverty line (World Bank: 2010, 26). Especially because “...high initial poverty incidence slows progress against poverty at any given growth rate,” (Ibid 2010: 22) some (Hailu and Tsukakada, 2011) now advocate for a more comprehensive method of assessing country performance. Rather than monitoring *levels* of indicators and how “on or off track” the MDG countries are, they propose a new *rate of progress* methodology which evaluates the *commitment* of countries, as measured by their *effort* to accelerate MDG progress.

### **The MDGs often lack ownership and leadership**

11. In addition, the MDGs are often criticized for lacking clear ownership and leadership at both the national and international levels, as well as not assigning accountability to any one institution, party, or country. The MDGs were conceived as a top-down approach and as such, developing countries’ involvement in the initial development of its framework was minimal and consequently national ownership has been weak. Although many low-income countries have linked their national strategies and PRSPs to the MDGs, their focus has often been found to be selective at best, suggesting that this compliance could be for mere “political correctness.” It is perhaps in this context, that the outcome of the 2005 Global Mid-Term Review of the MDGs urged low-income countries to develop MDG-consistent poverty reduction strategies and national development plans that more closely align national priorities to the international goals. Although this has not fully rectified ownership and accountability concerns, it did help accelerate progress towards the MDGs after 2005. Furthermore, at the international level, the fragmented and contested nature of institutional ownership over health-related MDGs for example, has complicated overall coordination and leadership. “Within United Nations agencies, ownership of maternal health is split, causing ambiguity in leadership for MDG 5. Within WHO, maternal health is split between *Making Pregnancy Safer*, the *Human Reproduction Programme*, and the Department for Child and Adolescent Health. Among agencies with funds for implementation, both UNICEF and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) have a role” (Waage, Banerji et al, 2010: 12-13).

### **The MDGs are limited in scope**

12. Critics of the MDGs caution that the goals either limit the scope of, or altogether, omit several important issues deemed indispensable for the enhancement of human development (German Watch, 2010). These include: the protection of human rights, gender equality, peace, security, disarmament, environmental sustainability and climate change, (Vandemoortele, 2009; Report of the Secretary-General on the Progress of the MDGs, 2011).

### **The MDGs do not take inter-sectoral synergies into account**

13. Another criticism is that the MDGs are sector-specific and thus too narrow to realize synergies among sectors. “The MDGs were not a plan derived bottom-up from a broad, inter-sectoral conceptualization of development and prioritization of development needs, although superficially, they might seem to have been” (Waage, Banerji et al, 2010: 5).

### **The MDGs have had a disproportionate focus on the social sector**

14. The MDGs have had a disproportionate focus on social indicators and de-emphasized the productive sector. This has created a disconnect between achievement of outcomes and the sustainability of such achievements. In the absence of growth and strengthened productive capacities, the observed positive social outcomes are unlikely to be fiscally sustainable. For instance, the positive performance on HIV/AIDS indicators has been successful largely because of the availability of Global funds. These gains are likely to be reversed in the absence of such resources.

### **The MDGs are weak on issues of quality**

15. Additionally, the MDGs are criticized for being too focused on quantity rather than quality. In terms of education in Africa for example, emphasis is often placed on increasing primary enrolment rates, while the overall quality of education remains a challenge (ECA et al, 2011).

### **The MDGs have promoted dependency**

16. It is also said that the MDGs promote a “money-metric” and “donor-centric” view of development (Vandemoortele, 2009) because until recently, the development discourse overemphasized donor-funding, thus creating foreign aid-dependent countries and reinforcing an imbalanced partnership between recipient and donor countries.

### **Lack of data is a constraint to monitoring MDG performance**

17. An important obstacle to monitoring MDG performance in Africa has been the lack of timely and reliable high-quality data, as well as efficient monitoring and evaluation systems both of which have limited the ability of countries to assess the impact of interventions so as to inform future policies (ECA et al., 2011).

### **The MDGs have neglected issues of inequality**

18. The MDGs are silent on issues of equity in access to social services. The emphasis on national aggregates in performance has shifted attention from critical issues such as spatial (e.g., rural versus urban), vertical (high-income versus low-income groups) and horizontal (differences in access to socio-economic services across cultural/ethnic groups) inequality, manifested in part, by disparities in access to social services. Undoubtedly, this development can be partly attributed to data constraints that make it difficult to track inequality. On the other hand, one can argue that the absence of targets to capture the distributional dimensions of the MDGs has absolved statistics institutions from strengthening data on indicators of inequality.

## **III. Alternative proposals for improvement**

19. A review of available literature and ongoing discussions on the subject suggest three main options for the post-2015 agenda. This subsection of the paper will present each case, providing justifications for why the international community should: (a) retain the MDGs in

their current configuration; (b) reformulate the MDGs to take account of some of the criticisms, or (c) develop an alternative agenda altogether. Subsequently, the paper will take a closer look at suggestions for the post 2015 agenda, highlighting the emerging consensus, among African member States, on the preferred option for Africa.

**A. The case for retaining the MDGs in their current configuration**

20. The case for retaining the MDGs in their current configuration hinges on the argument that the timeframe for implementation was too short. Although the MDGs were introduced in the year 2000, it took eight years to design and fine-tune the current “final” set up of goals. Over this period, the MDGs have been improved and tested. Today, they are known globally; and many, if not all countries, are striving to mainstream the goals in their national development strategies. Over the last decade, numerous international discussions and meetings and over 10 world summits have tabled the MDGs. Indeed, there is significant political momentum around the MDGs which unifies global efforts to eradicate poverty, and achieve the human development goals. In light of the sheer time it has taken to finalize the current framework, and the significant political momentum the MDGs garner today, advocates for the status quo maintain that the 2015 MDG deadline should be extended to give developing countries more time to achieve the goals, (Gohou, 2012). According to this school of thought, developing countries have not been given sufficient time or resources for implementation; therefore reformulating the MDGs, or developing an alternative agenda would both be premature and ill-advised.

21. Moreover, bearing in mind that the very existence and livelihoods of the world’s poorest, and most vulnerable are at stake, the international community cannot afford to invest more time and resources in designing another framework, neither can it afford to experiment with a completely different development agenda. Economic development requires effective and sustained policies as well as adequate time for implementation. Despite great variation in performance across MDGs and across countries, African countries have made significant progress in achieving them. While the overall progress made is too slow for the continent to achieve all the MDGs, countries will fare better with additional time and resources.

**B. The case for reformulating the MDGs**

22. While the MDGs have had several weaknesses, they have also had enough successes to warrant their continuation. Nevertheless, given that the current global context for development differs markedly from that of the 1990s when the MDGs were negotiated, any post-2015 development agenda should reformulate or customize the MDGs to robustly address the new complex challenges that have come to the fore since the beginning of the new millennium, (Ohiorhenuan, 2011). Proponents for reformulating the MDGs argue that it would be most beneficial, post-2015, to adopt an “MDG-Plus” approach, whereby the MDGs are restructured, eliminating overlaps and thus creating space for salient issues that were omitted in the original set of goals (Vandermoortele, 2009,). Simply extending the 2015 deadline would be an implicit acceptance of failure. On the other hand, total abandonment of the MDGs would hinder progress and prevent the development community from building on achievements made so far.



23. The global development context in Africa has undeniably evolved in recent years. Africans continue to suffer from the impacts of the global financial and food crises. The continent is also increasingly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and variability. As a result of continued high population growth, Africa will be subject to increased population stresses in the future. In fact, by 2020, the continent's population will likely exceed 1 billion, perhaps even reaching 1.4 billion by 2035. Consequently, roughly half the population will be under the age of 24 (UN-DESA, 2007), accentuating the scale of the youthful population that will be joining the labour force. High economic growth rates registered in many African countries have unfortunately not had a commensurate effect on employment creation. The post-2015 agenda must therefore be revised to focus on creating institutional mechanisms that will foster inclusive and equitable growth and improve the living conditions of the majority of the population, including through decent employment creation.

### **C. The case for developing an alternative framework**

24. Proponents for an alternative framework argue that the focus on development outcomes is misplaced particularly for development countries. In contrast, they propose a framework that is largely process oriented and driven by a transformative agenda (Yaw Nyarko, 2011). They maintain that economic development requires new ideas and new enterprises, facilitated by a developmental State and anchored by economic revolutions that generate economic transformation. Environments conducive to the implementation of viable ideas need to be created. Education and markets are a key part of the idea formation and implementation processes. While the MDGs aim to reduce global poverty, their focus is primarily on outcomes (human development indicators such as education and health) and not on processes (increasing the sophistication and complexity of developing countries' economies including through transformation of their economies). Ostensibly, the current global framework has failed to create the required economic revolutions which are generated by new ideas and experiments in key sectors that are necessary to enable Africa to maximize its full potential. For this reason, a new set of development goals that specifically target structural transformation of developing country economies, should be developed post 2015.

25. In the educational sector for example, a skewed concentration on primary education, limited access to higher education and poor skills development across the continent have contributed to weak human capital development, which in turn, has hindered economic transformation across Africa. Similarly, lack of adequate economic infrastructure and agricultural markets where new ideas for products can be tested, and where consistency in the standards of measurement can be ensured in the agricultural sector are additional issues of concern. In the energy sector, electricity needed for all new ideas to be operationalized is unreliable. This threatens the creation of economic revolutions. Africa lacks adequate financial markets and institutions that will screen new ideas and mitigate risk. Moreover, poorly developed infrastructure, and nascent regional integration in Africa continue to hinder the opening up of markets and stifles the creation of economic revolutions. Poverty reduction cannot be achieved without rural transformation. With approximately 75 per cent of the African population living on less than \$1 a day residing in rural areas (World Bank, 2002), poverty in Africa remains primarily a rural phenomenon. Approximately 70 per cent of Africans depend on the rural sector for their livelihoods. The rural poor are unable to meet basic food and other needs due to the continuous poor performance of the agriculture sector. Africa needs to lift over 400 million people out of poverty while employing the additional 215

million young men and women expected to join the labour force over the next decade. Indeed, the development of rural communities has a direct and beneficial effect on the overall economic development of Africa (Ewang, 2009).

26. An alternative framework should thus focus on: (a) transforming the structure of the economies of developing countries; (b) developing internal economic institutions to facilitate and sustain structural transformation; (c) strengthening the capacities of developing countries for greater reliance on domestic resources and revenue; and (d) developing local, cross-border and international markets, and formal and entrepreneurial skills. The key elements of the alternative approach can be summarized as follows:

1. *Human capital development:* Support human capital development, higher education and skills development through tertiary education; private universities; local content programmes to enhance local skills acquisition and sophistication of local production; brain circulation and transfer of skills from abroad via trans-nationals (Africans who have recently migrated).
2. *Agricultural markets:* Encourage the development of sophisticated agricultural markets.
3. *Financial markets:* Encourage development of financial markets to help with screening of new ideas and with risk mitigation.
4. *Energy Markets:* Enable the development of deep and sophisticated energy markets.
5. *Cross-border and regional markets:* Enhance the development of markets across Africa through appropriate infrastructure development.
6. *International partners:* The focus of development partners should be primarily on investments in sub-Saharan Africa, particularly infrastructure development.

27. What distinguishes the proposed alternative agenda from the existing MDGs is the relative emphasis on intermediate rather than final outcomes and focus on enablers of development as opposed to development objectives per se. In this sense, the alternative approach is more prescriptive than the MDGs, which merely highlight selected targets but leave the mechanisms and strategies for their achievement to the policymaker.

28. Which of the three aforementioned options should shape Africa's position on the post-2015 agenda? Which alternative is likely to yield maximum poverty reduction, and improve the livelihoods of Africa's poor? The deliberations on the strengths and weaknesses of the MDGs during the regional workshop in Accra, as well as outcomes of the ECA/AUC/UNDP-administered survey strongly point to the adoption of an "MDG-plus agenda" for Africa, post 2015.

## IV. Findings of the Consultations

29. Below, is an overview of what African member States envisage for the post-2015 development agenda based on the ECA electronic survey and consensus statement resulting from the ECA/AUC/UNDP regional workshop on the post-2015 development agenda.

### A. The electronic survey

30. An ECA-administered electronic survey of 112 stakeholders (representatives from government, civil society organizations, research institutions and academia) from 32 African countries, distributed across the five subregions of the continent yielded the following perspectives on the post-2015 development agenda:

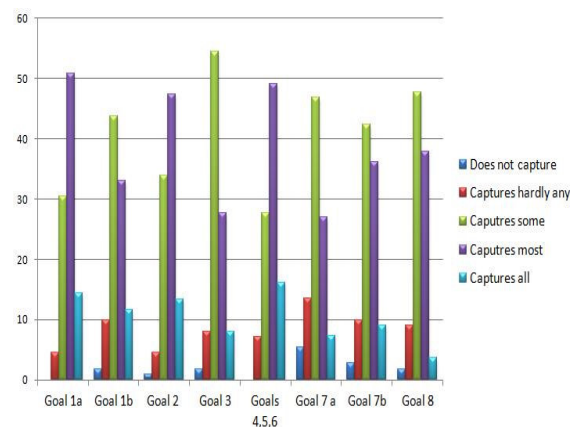
#### The MDGs remain relevant to member States

31. The overwhelming majority of survey respondents agree that the MDG areas: (a) are important development priorities for their countries; (b) reflect “most/all” or “some” of the development priorities of their respective countries; and (c) should feature in the post-2015 agenda.

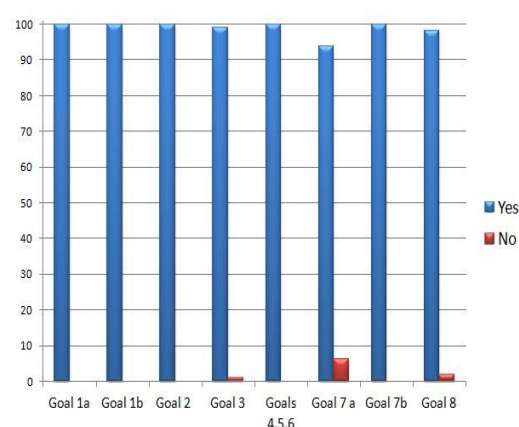
#### The MDGs only reflect a subset of development priorities

32. Notwithstanding the perceived relevance of the MDGs, a significant proportion of survey respondents identified other broad development areas that the current MDGs neglect and made suggestions for improvement. As shown in the chart below, as currently configured, MDG 7 and MDG 3 do not adequately capture the development priorities and concerns of member States.

To what extent do the MDGs capture countries’ post-2015 priorities and concerns?



Should the MDG areas be part of the 2015 agenda?



3

<sup>3</sup> Goal 1a- Poverty and inequality, 1b-Employment and decent work, 2- Education and skills training, 3- Population and Gender, 4,5,6- Health and Nutrition, 7a- Urbanization and Migration, 7b- Environment and Climate change, 8- Trade and Aid.

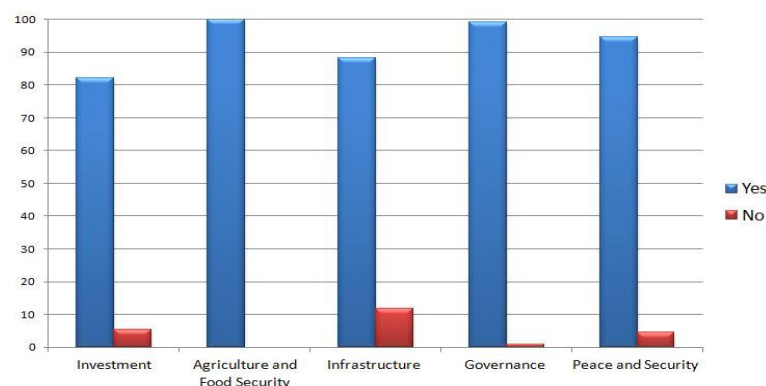
### Suggestions for reformulating the MDGs

33. Regarding Goal 1, survey respondents reported that there was insufficient focus on inclusive growth and job creation. With respect to education (Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education) they decried the exclusive focus on primary education and called for greater emphasis on post-primary education. In addition, they argued that education indicators must focus on education outcomes and not only on enrolments. Regarding gender (Goal 3: promote gender equality and empower women) they urged that indicators of women's empowerment must extend beyond women's representation in parliament to include representation in local government, as well as issues of sexual and gender-based violence, sexual division of labour, access to finance, and early marriage. Also, the Goal did not effectively take into account the issue of early pregnancy and its implications for population growth and high dependency rates (percentage of young and old to the total work-age population). With respect to health (Goals 4-6) a key criticism was the neglect of the health status of the aged, non communicable diseases and mental health issues. On the environment (Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability), respondents observed that despite the relative importance of rural-urban migration, internal displacement and climate change, those issues were not captured in the MDGs. For instance, there were no specific indicators and targets for climate change adaptation or the financing of adaptation programmes. Moreover, there were no indicators to measure the gender, health and poverty dimensions of climate change. With respect to international partnerships (Goal 8), survey respondents argued that post-2015 should focus on trade (at both the global and intra-African levels) rather than aid.

### Suggested priorities for the post-2015 agenda

34. In response, respondents proposed that post-2015, the development agenda should specifically target urbanization and migration, trade and aid, investment (foreign and domestic), infrastructure development, agriculture and food security, governance, peace and security, skills development, regional integration and intra-continental trade barriers, climate change, economic growth and employment creation. The design of the new agenda should be more participatory, provide guidelines for funding mechanisms, and measure results both in terms of the quantity and quality of service delivery. The chart below shows a summary of suggested new policy areas for inclusion in the post-2015 agenda.

### Suggested new areas for the post-2015 agenda



## **B. Outcomes of the regional consultation**

35. Similar to survey respondents, the consensus that emerged from the regional consultation was that the MDGs should be amended post-2015, because as currently constituted, they: (a) have limited focus on economic growth and transformation; (b) do not sufficiently emphasize the role of domestic resource mobilization in Africa's development agenda; (c) tend to neglect issues relating to the quality of service delivery; (d) are silent on inequality including spatial and horizontal inequality; and (e) disproportionately focus on outcomes with limited consideration of the enablers of development, thereby excluding the role of factors such as infrastructure and peace and security in facilitating socio-economic advancement.

36. In response to these issues, participants stressed the need for the post-2015 development agenda to reflect an appropriate balance of development outcomes and enablers. Enablers include: (a) institutional capacity development; (b) domestic resource mobilization; (c) participation and ownership at the community, local and global level; (d) social inclusiveness and equality; (e) governance and leadership; (f) peace and security; (g) regional integration and trade; (h) infrastructure development; and (i) global cooperation and partnerships. In addition to the enablers, participants urged that the post-2015 development agenda should focus on the following development outcomes: (i) economic transformation; (ii) education and technology; and (iii) human development.

## **Suggestions for a post-2015 development agenda**

37. Thus, consultations with African member States so far suggest that amending the MDGs is the preferred option for the continent. Drawing on the findings of the commissioned papers and outcomes of ECA consultations with a wide variety of stakeholders in Africa, this section makes specific proposals for the post-2015 agenda.

38. As indicated above, a multitude of suggestions have been tabled for inclusion in the post-2015 agenda. Consequently, there is legitimate concern about overloading the development agenda. It is important to remember that the simplistic and concise nature of the MDGs contributed in part to their successful branding, and subsequent implementation efforts. Given that no development framework can be conceived as a comprehensive expression of the complexity of human development, it is advised that the goals and targets should be kept to a minimum, post-2015 (Vandemoortele, 2009). It will therefore be necessary to minimize overlap across goals and to select MDG areas that are likely to have the greatest multiplier effect on advancing socio-economic development in developing countries. In addition, it will be important, moving forward, to maintain a balance between development outcomes and enablers to provide broad guidance to countries on how the outcomes may be achieved.

39. An analysis of the above consultations highlight the following as key emerging enablers of development: (a) participation, ownership and accountability at the community, national and regional level; (b) capacity development; (c) global coordination and partnerships; (d) domestic resource mobilization and investment; (e) peace and security; (f) governance; and (g) infrastructure development. These should serve as the basic preconditions for successful implementation of the post-2015 agenda. It is however debatable whether

specific targets should be established for all the enablers. Nevertheless, there is sufficient data to develop and monitor indicators for infrastructure, domestic resource mobilization and some governance variables. This should be encouraged.

40. In addition to tracking enablers, a reformulation of MDG outcomes is required to take into account emerging issues, priorities and aspirations. Based on the ECA Africa region-wide consultations so far, the table provides a synthesis of the key development priorities that should be reflected in the post-2015 development agenda.

**Table 1: Synthesis of priorities for the post-2015 development agenda – An African perspective**

<i>Goals</i>	<i>Measures</i>
<b>Promote transformation and sustainable growth</b>	Prioritize employment creation Promote rural development Promote value addition of primary commodities and resources Ensure food security Promote and expand trade, markets and regional integration and investment Prioritize sustainability and support green economy initiatives
<b>Promote education and technological innovation</b>	Strengthen quality and access to basic and tertiary education Invest in secondary, tertiary and vocational education Promote technology transfer Invest in research and development
<b>Promote human development</b>	Promote gender parity/empowerment of women in all spheres of endeavour Protect human rights and ensure justice and equality Promote access to social protection Promote maternal and child health Support and empower the elderly and disabled Prioritize disaster risk reduction and climate adaptation initiatives

41. An important obstacle to monitoring MDG performance in Africa has been the lack of timely and reliable high-quality data, as well as efficient monitoring and evaluation systems which have limited countries' abilities to assess the impact of interventions. Post-2015, investments in data collection, analysis and dissemination will need to be scaled-up to ensure effective monitoring of MDG performance.

## **V. CONCLUSION**

42. As the international development community evaluates the contributions of the MDGs and begins to define a post-2015 global framework, Africa too must articulate its common position. While the MDGs have led to significant socio-economic improvements across the African continent, poverty remains rampant, and much more needs to be done. Discussions regarding a post-2015 agenda currently revolve around the case for retaining the MDGs in their current configuration, reformulating and developing an alternative framework.

43. Judging from feedback received from African member States through the regional workshop in Accra, and the ECA/AUC/UNDP-administered survey on the post-2015 agenda, this paper maintains that it would be in Africa's interest to reformulate the MDGs, post 2015, to reflect current and emerging challenges. Such a framework must comprise a judicious mix of development enablers and outcomes.

44. In summary, the post-2015 development agenda should include all policy areas currently addressed by the MDGs. These, however, should be amended to take into account elements of emerging challenges. In addition, two new policy areas should drive the post-2015 agenda: (a) agriculture, food security and rural development; and (b) economic transformation of economies of developing countries.

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