ABOUT PLAN INTERNATIONAL

Plan is one of the world’s largest children’s development organisations, with more than 70 years of experience in the field. In 2011, we reached more than 56.5 million children in 50 developing countries across Asia, Africa and Latin America. We are independent, with no religious, political or government affiliation.

Plan strives to achieve lasting improvements in the quality of life of deprived children in developing countries, through a process that unites people across cultures and adds meaning and value to their lives, by:

• enabling deprived children, their families and their communities to meet their basic needs and to increase their ability to participate in, and benefit from, their societies
• building relationships to increase understanding and unity among people of different cultures and countries
• promoting the rights and interests of the world’s children.

We operate in 69 countries, which include 50 developing countries (including Myanmar and South Sudan, added this year).

Plan is an active member of Beyond 2015, and we support the consultation submission of the European Task Force. This submission complements the input from Beyond 2015 in the areas in which Plan can add more specific insight based on our programme experience.
A. THE MDGs: BENEFITS AND LIMITATIONS

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

The MDGs helped to raise global awareness to poverty, the importance of education, gender inequality, children’s health and that investing in children is key for future generations. They have contributed to considerable reductions in income poverty, to reductions in child mortality, and increased primary school enrolment in countries where Plan is working.

In addition, the MDGs stimulated political dialogue at the global level on key priorities for sustainable development. They mobilized the public and political interest in and dialogue on the benefits and limitations of the goals between all kind of actors.

They have put the fight against poverty on top of the global development agenda, in consequence also enshrined in the Lisbon Treaty. However, the structural causes of poverty, such as gender inequality and poor governance were not addressed. Advancing this and other goals have been uneven at national level. The joint ODI & Millennium Campaign report from 2010 states that “the rate of progress in reducing poverty, and increasing access to basic health, education, water, and other essential services is unparalleled in many countries’ histories.

However, the MDGs with other EU and international agreements, such as the MDG Action plan, initiative and contracts, allowed for concrete goals to take governments into account. In consequence, national initiatives were set up in line with the MDGs. As another result, some EU but also developing countries have translated some of these global goals into nationally applicable targets and policy making: For example in Kenya, the Government launched a child survival and development strategy in 2009 that aims to reduce inequalities in the health care services. The framework also led to extensive data collection for the global MDG goals on different indicators, which helped to evaluate different country’s situations, as a tool for accountability.

MDG’s have played a strong role in putting access to primary education and participation of girls in primary education on the political agenda of both national governments and international aid donors (bilateral and multilateral). As a result, since 2000, overall enrolment and especially enrolment of girls in primary education has increased greatly. The number of out-of-school children dropped from 106 in 1999 to 61 million in 2009.

2. To what extent has the MDG framework been beneficial for the poor in the country/ies or sectors in/with which you work?

The MDGs helped to improve lives of millions of people but nevertheless, this progress has been uneven. While in Eastern Asia, especially China, poverty has been reduced significantly, other regions such as Sub-Saharan Africa lag behind. The most vulnerable groups, the poorest of the poor and less privileged, such as women and children (and girls in particular) have not been reached effectively.

However, the MDGs have been beneficial as a ‘global norm’ to mobilize resources and as incentive structure, based on results management to hold global leaders to account on delivery of poverty reduction and human development against MDG benchmarks.

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

The MDG framework has put children and women on the global agenda. Several MDGs are child-centered such as MDG 2 and MDG 4. When it comes to sustainable poverty reduction, investing in women and children and in particular in girls is crucial. The specific emphasis of the MDG framework on poverty also contributed to the fact that ‘poverty eradication’ was included into the Lisbon Treaty.

The MDG framework also acknowledged the important role that the education and health sectors play as the foundation for development, with 4 of the 8 MDGs directly targeting health and education. Investing in education in particular has proven not only to be a key driver for economic development, but has a proven transformational impact on other areas as well, including health, gender equality, discrimination, equity, sustainable development, and disaster preparedness to name a few.

Between 1999 and 2008, school enrolment increased by 18 percentage points in sub-Saharan Africa, and by 11 and 8 percentage points in Southern Asia and Northern Africa, respectively. Girls school enrolment increased more than boys enrolment. MDG’s played a major role in the prioritisation of educational enrolment (esp. of girls) by national governments and aid donors.

4. What features and elements of the MDG framework have been problematic, in your view?

Overall, the MDG framework missed core principles of human rights and equity and did not look enough at the root causes of poverty. The focus is on surviving, not thriving, not equity, missing the focus on the ‘hard to reach’, including children.

The MDG framework needed to focus political attention on key areas but are therefore compromises to achieve few goals. They didn’t adequately translate the fundamental objectives contained in the Millennium Declaration, such as peace and security, human rights, democracy and good governance and the protection of the most vulnerable. The key dimension of sustainable development, the rights-based approach, is missing.

In addition, gender equality is not adequately mainstreamed across the targets as well as the importance of completion of nine years of quality education is missing as a key enabler for children as generations to come for overcoming poverty.

Also, strong focus on school enrolment has led to lack of attention to quality of education, learning outcomes and preventing drop-out. In some countries, strong focus on access, and large influx of new students (often by abolishing school fees), has led to problems in the education budgets. This has had an effect on teacher and education quality (not enough schools, untrained or badly trained contract teachers, badly paid teachers, lack of teaching materials, etc). Where a lot of over age children have entered school because of UPE programs, quality suffers even more. Another gap is transition to and enrolment in and completion of post-primary education. This is still a huge challenge, especially for girls. Children’s educational careers should not end with primary education.

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In relation to MDG 4 reducing child mortality, opportunities were missed to include a more integral approach to early childhood development, including the physical, emotional, cognitive and social dimension.

In addition, the MDG framework did not take into account disasters and conflicts. Many countries which advanced on MDG targets following large scale disasters were derailed on their MDG progress.

Furthermore, the development of the MDGs was also not a participatory process, but rather a negotiation between national governments. Experience has shown us that the realization of these goals, which happens at the country level, requires involvement of communities and citizens, both in terms of implementation of policies, and monitoring government progress toward these commitments. A new framework will need to be participatory and people-centered to be effective.

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

One of the aims of the MDG framework was to safeguard the core values of the Millennium Declaration from 2000: freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, respect for nature and shared responsibility. These values were well promoted through the MDG framework but not translated into concrete commitments.

In addition, gender equality was not truly mainstreamed across the different indicators and the most vulnerable children have not been reached with the current MDG framework.

The MDG framework also lacks a cross-sectoral approach and risk management as a cross cutting priority.
B. FEASIBILITY OF A FUTURE FRAMEWORK

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

To have an impact at the global level, a post 2015 framework would need to take into account the changing global power balances at political and economic level. Since the MDGs were agreed, the distribution of power, poverty and inequality across the world has shifted dramatically, and inequality has deepened significantly.

Also, as a result of the global economic crisis many governments have become more pragmatic to global development issues and in consequence did budget cuts to development. On the other hand emerging donors including China, India, Brazil Russia and the Middle East countries meanwhile play an increasingly important role in international development, develop infrastructures in developing countries but often fail to address the root causes of poverty. It is important to develop specific objectives for role of governments, donors, private sector and civil society.

A new global development framework would need to bear that in mind and keep space for the evolving priorities of the global community with strategic and aligned partnerships between all actors (MDG 8). It would need to be responsive to learning outcomes and able to achieve the transformation necessary in today’s world to eliminate the root causes of poverty, while not losing the mobilization potential.

Principles of accountability, participation, universality, gender equality and non-discrimination should be explicitly recognized for their central relevance to the practical policies and strategies by which development goals are pursued.

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

There is a need for a global development framework with process oriented targets which capture participatory governance, empowerment, inclusion, protection of ecosystems and intergenerational justice.

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

In principle, we support the broadening of the agenda of the MDG framework to include other key areas, such as sustainable development, and to take a global approach.

The risk for our work is that the emphasis on the cornerstone issues of education and health are diminished in a new framework, and with it the strong support for children’s issues that were part of the existing framework. We need to ensure that a new framework does not become a Christmas tree of issues but that the focus on poverty reduction, equity, and human rights ensures that gender equality and child rights remain at the center of the framework, and that the transformative nature of basic education and health is acknowledged.
C. THE POTENTIAL SCOPE OF A FUTURE FRAMEWORK

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

The main objective of a new framework should be to eradicate poverty in a world where everyone can realize their rights. This implies a rights-based approach which tackles the root causes of poverty, and defines development beyond economic developing, for the well-being of citizens.

Furthermore a future framework should promote progress on drivers of sustainable development such as gender equality, inclusion, intergenerational justice, accountability, conflict sensitivity, environmental sustainability and resilience.

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

Yes, a new global development framework would again need to be universal, rights-based, and people-centered. The framework is being developed against a backdrop of economic crisis and climate change. Using an equity lens in developing targets to reduce poverty in this difficult context provides an opportunity to “universalize” the new development agenda by addressing inequities within all countries.

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

Of course a global framework with the objective of eradicating poverty and realizing human rights will need to focus in particular on the poorest and most fragile states, however a truly global framework cannot ignore the 75% of the world’s poor that live in middle-income countries. A people-centered framework will have take into account more than just GDP when considering its priorities but also other measures of well-being such as the Human Development Index and Gini Coefficient.

In almost all countries – least developed, middle income and developed countries alike – there are significant groups of society, including girls, which are left out formal education, not safe from violence and abuse, and do not have equal opportunities. A specific focus on gender equality across the new framework, with gender-sensitive indicators will be one of the most significant measures of improvement in well-being.

Furthermore a future framework needs to address the unique challenges fragile states are facing given the repercussions on conflict such as migration, Human rights and Child rights abuses on bordering countries and Humanitarian assistance – thus most relevant to have a future framework contextualized to regional needs and priorities.

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

As young people make up the majority of the world’s population, the development of a new framework should consult children and adolescents and involve them in a meaningful way. (UN Convention on the Rights of the Child). This could be done through Child Rights Organisations which are working together with children and have experience in consulting them.
The role of the private sector will be central to the tackling of one of the key challenges this framework will need to address, youth unemployment. Creating opportunities for the nearly 200 million young people out of work, an number growing by the millions, is necessary if poverty eradication goals are to be achieved. Here there is an important role for the private sector in highlighting what skills are needed, and linking with governments to ensure that these are the skills that they are investing in.

However, when involving these “new” actors in the development policy, clear measures should be taken concerning the responsibilities of the variety of stakeholders acting at different levels of the process by systematically defining processes and areas of cooperation for non-state actor participation.

Emerging donors such as Brazil, China, India, and others, will also be crucial leaders in the post-MDG process. The human rights based approach will be a critical point, as this approach will also be key to their own internal challenges of balancing growth and environmental sustainability; vulnerabilities to adverse trends such as climate change; and rising geopolitical roles, regionally and globally.4

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

The principle of Policy Coherence for Development (PCD) must be placed at very heart of the post-2015 development agenda. PCD will be absolutely fundamental to the success of the future framework, especially given the shifting nature of poverty, the links between and impact of all policy areas on the achievement of development objective and the decline in ODA. As recently stressed by the UN System Task Force in their report on post-2015, “to realize the future we want for all, a high degree of policy coherence at the global, regional, national and sub-national levels will be required”.5

Since the current MDG framework was adopted, globalisation has advanced to a stage where it is no longer sensible or possible for political leaders to ignore the global impact of domestic policy. Nowhere is this as evident as in the field of development cooperation. The ongoing economic, hunger and climate crises clearly demonstrate how devastating the consequences are of both regulatory policies and the production and consumption patterns of the world’s richest countries on the poorest. The negative effects of a policy generally hit the most marginalised people on the planet hardest despite their holding no responsibility for the decisions that led to the crises. PCD potentially addresses this critical global “accountability gap” more than any other policy instrument by stressing that all decision-making processes – both in the North and South - must be responsive to the needs and aspirations of the world’s poorest people and must ‘do no harm’ to their human rights and development perspectives. The EU’s legal obligation under the Lisbon Treaty to ensure that all policies take account of development objectives makes for an interesting model, even if further work is needed on implementation.

The ‘shared responsibility’ in the current MDG framework has in practice led to diffuse responsibility, allowing different actors to continuously avoid accountability, while targeting other actors for a lack of progress. The new post-2015 framework must ensure a relationship based on genuine mutual accountability which also encompasses the impact of rich countries’ policies in areas such trade, agriculture, energy, tax and financial regulation etc. In this sense, PCD reinforces the spirit of the Millennium Declaration which underlines political leaders’ “collective

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5 Realizing the Future We Want for All, UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda Report to the Secretary-General, June 2012
responsibility to uphold the principles of human dignity, equality and equity at the global level”. In this context, it is important to stress that while the major barrier for PCD is the failure of developed countries to redress harmful policies, the concept requires developing countries also to be consistent domestically with development objectives - for instance, in ensuring that economic growth leads to poverty reduction and is environmentally sustainable.

The importance of policy coherence to human rights commitments and sustainability should not be underestimated. Just as human rights conventions confer legal obligations on states to implement their provisions, so international law requires international organisations to interpret their mandates, as far as possible, in harmony with the mandates of other international organisations, and in line with the ultimate goals they have in common. They should all, irrespective of differences in economic power and influence, apply their mandates in practice in ways that do not place their members in contradiction with obligations which they have also undertaken in other international instruments and treaties. Despite these legal requirements policy and practice more often than not fail to cohere with international law.

Policy Coherence (PCD) is fundamental to the success of a new development framework. As emphasized in the UN System Task Force report on post 2015, “to realize the future we want for all, a high degree of policy coherence at the global, regional, national and sub-national levels will be required”.

Note: Plan supports the Beyond 2015 position

14. How could a new framework improve development financing?

The next global development framework should build on the aid effectiveness principles decided in Busan end of 2011 as well as on the Monterrey Consensus on Financing for Development and the subsequent Doha Declaration on Financing for Development. The Monterrey Consensus clearly states: “In the increasingly globalizing interdependent world economy, a holistic approach to the interconnected national, international and systemic challenges of financing for development – sustainable, gender-sensitive, people-centred development – in all parts of the globe is essential. Such an approach must open up opportunities for all and help to ensure that resources are created and used effectively and that strong accountable institutions are established at all levels. To that end, collective and coherent action is needed in each interrelated area of our agenda, involving all stakeholders in active partnership.”

a. Ownership and Participation
All too often, ownership is narrowly interpreted as ‘government’ ownership driven by Ministries of Finance. CSOs, parliamentarians and academia would need to be more involved in policy decision-making. In many cases, CSOs are not even aware of the major policy processes and mechanisms that have been put in place to enable their participation.

b. Donor coordination and alignment
Donors have their own particular, and often conflicting, method of aid delivery, monitoring and evaluation framework and timeframe. The result is often chaotic and expensive for the intended beneficiaries, with Ministries being overwhelmed by the weight of administration required to manage donor relationships and meet donor requirements. More efforts are needed to address these challenges through improved donor coordination and stronger alignment.

c. Mutual Accountability
The principle of mutual accountability was set up in the Paris declaration on aid effectiveness to rebalance the unilateral ways of donors holding recipient countries accountable for the implementation of aid. It has been shown
that holding all stakeholders accountable in the implementation of mutual commitments is key to improve development results. It is important to hold accountable development partners to fulfill their promises in terms of aid financing made at the Monterrey Conference on financing for development in 2002 by 2015.

d. Managing for Results

Results-based financing programmes have the potential to ensure that aid brings better results, but their success depends heavily on program design and implementation. It is important to identify results indicators that reflect the specific needs, rights and social realities of intended beneficiaries.

Note: Plan supports the AfGH position

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D. THE POTENTIAL SHAPE OF A FUTURE FRAMEWORK

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

Overall, the new global development framework should focus on the most marginalized people in society, with special focus on women and children. It is essential that it is based on a Human Rights based approach and transformative targets, which promote women’s and children’s (particularly girls) strategic interests leading to long-term transformation in their control over their own lives instead of purely meeting their immediate practical needs. Further, the new development framework must be participatory, inclusive of all stakeholders and at the same time be tailored to national and regional realities.

a. Gender equality should be central to the post 2015 framework

Women make up an estimated 2/3 of the world’s people living in extreme poverty. Gender inequality holds back progress on other development outcomes, it causes poverty and vulnerability. Gender disparities leave poor women and girls disproportionately vulnerable to violence and poverty. Plan therefore believes that gender equality should be at the heart of the new development architecture, with priority to reaching the poorest and most marginalized, women and girls. A new framework should ensure the best outcomes for girls and women.

Plan proposes a twofold way forward: a) There is the need for a dedicated goal on gender equality as an important development and human rights goal in itself. A separate goal, highlighting the particular situation of girls, would focus on key barriers and better mobilize resources. B) Gender also needs to be mainstreamed across targets and indicators, which means that women and girls are specifically considered in the post 2015 framework with gender sensitive targets and indicators and sex-disaggregated data included under each goal.

Both, the dedicated goal and mainstreaming of gender equality would significantly help that not only the elimination of specific gender gaps is addressed and monitored but that the next development agenda “transforms the structural factors that underpin the widespread persistence of gender inequalities, gender-based violence, discrimination and unequal development progress between women and men, girls and boys.” (UN System Task Team report). Gender equality reduces poverty and vulnerability and contributes to pro-poor growth. Without specifically addressing the causes of gender inequality, women’s and girls’ poverty will persist.

b. Broaden the new global development agenda from access to primary education to the successful transition to, and completion of, quality secondary education

Gender gaps in girls’ enrolment in primary education have closed in almost all countries. However, research shows that girls are missing out disproportionally to boys in getting quality education. MDG 2 currently only focuses on achieving universal access to primary education and gender parity, while there is increasing recognition that girls are still being left behind. In the new development framework there would be the need to turn the attention to both secondary education and the quality of learning. The completion of quality basic education (9 years of education, including primary and lower secondary education), particular for girls, is crucial for sustainable poverty reduction.

Why? Millions of adolescent girls are not successfully transitioning to a quality, lower secondary education. Poverty, discrimination and violence are the major barriers that prevent girls from realizing their right to education. Universal access to, and completion of, at least nine years of quality education is fundamental to enabling girls to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge which are the foundation for further schooling and to enable them to fulfil their
potential to transform their lives, and break the cycle of poverty for generations to come. Quality post primary education for children and in particular for girls is key for sustainable development.

In sum, the post MDG framework should maintain a strong priority on education as a goal that clearly takes an equity approach and includes gender equality indicators, both quantitative and qualitative, that moves beyond primary education to include at least 9 years for all, emphasizes quality of learning in addition to enrolment and access and ensures the participation of children and youth in the development of any post-2015 framework.

c. Child Protection

It is important that the post 2015 MDG framework puts the issue of protection of children from all forms of violence on the agenda. It has been proven that violence against women, children and girls in particular is one of the most universal barriers to women and children realizing their rights and well-being.

Much of the focus in this area at the international level has been in the context of inter-state and intra-state violence. A new framework needs to look at conflict through the full spectrum from international and national, down to the community and the individual to ensure women and children can live free from fear in all the spheres of their lives, in school, at home, and in their community. Plan recommends to specifically include indicators on gender-based violence in schools into the new global development agenda.

Why? Widespread violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation that children face is hindering progress against the current MDGs, and the sustainable social and economic development of countries.

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

a. Avoid North-South divisions

Wide national ownership and commitments and broad participation will be key when developing the new global framework. Least developed, low and middle-income should be supported in playing an active part in the discussion.

b. Avoid quantitative measurements alone

It is crucial that the next development framework offers an appropriate mix of quantitative and qualitative measurements. GDP shouldn’t be the sole indicator of the well-being of a nation, but a new framework should move toward a basket of indicators, such as the Gender-related Development Index (GDI) and the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM), as well as HDI and Gini coefficient, focusing on the impact on people’s lives and living conditions. Particular attention should be paid to transformative indicators which have the power to impact across all targets, such as basic education for girls.

c. Avoid too broad and general goals

This would devaluate the validity and usefulness of the framework and it would not lead to better funded and more effective policies. The current framework taught us that real success can only be achieved when global targets are adapted to local contexts and needs. That said the principles of the framework must be respected in the development of national level indicators, the risk being that countries making the argument feel they can disregard gender equality indicators, for example, in their national context.

17. Should it be based on goals, targets and indicators? If any, should goals have an outcome or sector focus? Please give reasons for your answer.
In terms of their international recognition, the MDGs have achieved a great success, and this momentum should not be lost. The new framework should define global goals which apply to developing countries as to industrialized countries, a roadmap which is responsive to upcoming global changes and challenges.

New goals would need to be more adapted to the global development agenda but also differentiated to the sub-level, have an outcome as well as a sector focus. Indicators should be both qualitative and quantitative indicators are crucial to develop implementation strategies and establish measurement of progress, which support accountability. Transformative targets, like basic education for girls, which reach across different areas will also be essential to this broadened framework. Targets would need to be measurable and realistic but not creating a one-size-fits-all situation, which ignores countries disparities. A new framework would need targets and indicators for accountability, and process led indicators for inclusion, accountability, gender equality and sustainability.

Overall, gender equality should be mainstreamed across all targets. Further, Plan believes that human rights principles should be used to define goals and targets.

However, the process of developing the new development framework is as important as the framework itself: It needs to be a participative process, which involves governments, civil society, private sector and most important the poorest and most marginalized and vulnerable such as women and children. Based on this bottom up approach, commonly framed sustainable development objectives can be developed relevant to all countries and people.

The Istanbul Principles for CSO Development Effectiveness (2011) and Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (2012) provide a useful guidance for empowering the roles of CSOs in setting people-centred development that brings sustainable and transparent results for all.

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

First of all it is important to ensure fair and equitable distribution of aid and revenues. Coordination at the international level is fundamental so that neither a country nor a sector become orphan. This coordination could then reduce the risk to create gaps for certain issues.

Resources for this next global framework will have to include efforts from all, but with a fair application of the principle of common-but-differentiated responsibility. It implies a redistribution of wealth and resources. Specific policy interventions are required to combat both extreme poverty and fair redistribution of resources if inequality is to be reduced. Different additional financing mechanisms can help to fulfil the need.