



# Review and Monitoring of the Post-2015 Agenda

06 May 2015 – Berlin, Germany

*Civil society and think tank representatives from around the globe as well as representatives of governments met in Berlin on May 6, 2015 to discuss prospects for a review of the Post-2015 Agenda and goals for sustainable development. The consultation was chaired by Alexander Carius, Director of adelphi, and held under the Chatham House Rule. Participants agreed that monitoring and reporting are crucial parts of this policy learning process and that a multi-level review process needs to be designed to that purpose. Such a review process should be voluntary and supportive, but most importantly led by national states, which requires transparency and participation in order to increase ownership and accountability. The review mechanism should also be a platform for partnership and stakeholder engagement.*

### **Review elements of Post-2015 Agenda**

While there is a broad consensus that the governing structures emerging from the Post-2015 Agenda should encompass a review system in order to ensure its credibility, the principles underlying such a system as well as details of its implementation still need to be agreed on. Making use of the momentum of the United Nations (UN) Summit in September 2015 will be crucial to define the framework of a multi-level review for the coming 15 years at the national, regional and international level, especially at the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF). As UN Member States will commit towards the goals and targets of the Post-2015 Agenda, the outcome document should specify the main principles and core elements of the follow-up and review system. Further provisions of a review process could be discussed and decided on along with the implementation process of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It should be a learning process lead by examples, feeding good practices that will emerge over the next 15 years into stepwise refinement and substantiation of the review.

The review should be a solutions-based tool that aims to support UN member states in evaluating

where they stand in the process towards achieving the goals of the Post-2015 Agenda, in particular the SDGs. The key principles are that the review should be multi-level, supportive and voluntary, and demonstrate a culture of universal participation. The review should aim inter alia at the accountability of governments to their citizens. It should make achievements visible and include an analytical element on constraints or even causes of failures, thereby ensuring trust in the success of the Post-2015 Agenda. Germany will keep up its efforts to encourage further conceptual work with representatives from other UN Member States and organisations as well as civil society on basic elements of an efficient and effective review until September 2015.

### **Elements of a multi-level HLPF review**

Proposals for a review foresee a strong role of the national level playing a central role initially, translating global targets into national targets and developing an implementation strategy. Countries' capacities need to be strengthened at the national level in order to enable data collection and setting up a review process. Parliaments and National

Councils for Sustainable Development could play an important role in developing national targets and strategies and in generating national reports. Beyond that, local civil society and other stakeholders have to play a crucial role in this process to increase ownership, transparency and accountability. Participants suggested that the global HLPF review provisions should explicitly ask countries to involve societal groups at the national level.

National reports could be aggregated within a peer review mechanism at the regional level. As many SDGs have a transboundary dimension, issues such as resource use, production and supply chains should be dealt with at this regional reporting level. Nuances will have to be found to allow for differentiated approaches at the regional level. Existing peer review mechanisms concerning national sustainable development targets and indicators, such as the Environmental Performance Review carried out by OECD or UNECE, could be linked to this new comprehensive SDG review in order to achieve coherence and avoid duplication.

At the global level, experiences with international reporting mechanisms (Commission on Sustainable Development reviews, Annual Ministerial Review and Universal Periodic Review) suggest to the Post-2015 process that a robust mandate, sufficient time and secretariat support as well as the meaningful participation of local civil society are crucial for an effective review.

The HLPF review should also provide a platform for partnerships and voluntary business initiatives. Participants agreed that involving the private sector in

the review process is important and criteria for this should be defined. Such a process, however, would have to be lean and rely to a considerable extent on self-reporting. Voluntary commitments could be a framework encouraging ambitious target-setting. A well-designed review mechanism could help to engage and support frontrunners trying to make a difference on the ground.

### Way forward

Critical elements regarding implementation and practicability of a multi-level review process include incentives, resources and capacities for both UN Member States and individuals. Providing for these incentives, capacities and resources to monitor and review progress may also increase ownership of the Post-2015 Agenda, in particular the SDGs.

There was a broad consensus among participants that UN Member States need to agree on a strong HLPF and on the basic principles of a review to follow up on the Post-2015 Agenda and the SDGs for their successful implementation. There should be space for the process to evolve over time. A collective effort will be necessary to demonstrate the benefits of such a review mechanism, to further work on the incentives for broad participation and to support countries conceptualising the process at the national level.

The German delegation made a commitment to feed these ideas into the further intergovernmental negotiations on the topic of follow-up and review of the Post-2015 Agenda in New York in May 2015.

### Further reading:

Beisheim, Marianne 2015: Reviewing the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals and Partnerships. A proposal for Multi-level Review at the High-Level Political Forum. Berlin: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik.

Halle, Mark; Adil Najam and Robert Wolfe 2014: Building an Effective Review Mechanism: Lessons for the HLPF. Winnipeg: The International Institute for Sustainable Development.

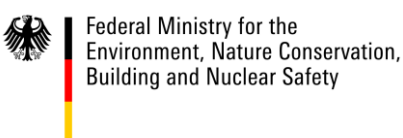
United Nations 2014: The Road to Dignity by 2030: Ending Poverty, Transforming All Lives and Protecting the Planet. Synthesis Report of the Secretary-General on the Post-2015 Agenda. New York: United Nations.

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