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Benchmarks for a truly universal Post-2015 Agenda for Sustainable Development¹

1. Introduction

“Post-2015” is the *flavor of the day*; it is currently right in the centre of the development discourse. The United Nations, governments, civil society organizations, researchers, and even business people are currently discussing what will come after the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

But the Post-2015 Agenda can be and must be much more than just an updated list of MDGs.

On the one hand, this process offers the opportunity to correct the errors and omissions of the MDG approach – an approach that has reduced the development discourse to the eradication of extreme poverty and the provision of basic social services in poor countries.

While - without doubt - these issues are extremely important, the MDG approach failed to address adequately the environmental dimension of development, the structural flaws of the global economic and financial system, and the responsibilities of the global North.

On the other hand, the Post-2015 process offers the opportunity to respond to changing global realities – be it the shift in geopolitical and economic power relations with the rise of the BRICS countries, or urgent global problems, such as accelerating global warming, growing inequalities, or the expansion of the global shadow financial system.

Conventional development concepts and their related goals and strategies do not provide adequate answers to these changing conditions and global problems.

Debates on the Post-2015 Agenda, however, offer the opportunity to reconsider the whole notion of development in light of these new realities. They offer us a chance to overcome old and often enduring paternalistic approaches toward development policy. And they offer the opportunity to challenge the idea that development is a phenomenon that occurs only in countries of the Southern hemisphere while we in the North are already

¹ The edited version of the lecture will be published in the journal „Regions & Cohesion“ (<http://www.risc.lu/content/en/journal-regions-cohesion>).

“developed”. In fact, a future development agenda focusing only on poor countries and not on the rich ones would be completely inadequate.

That is why we need a truly universal Post-2015 Agenda, and not just an updated set of MDGs. But what does universality mean?

Universal means an agenda that address the rights and responsibilities of all actors in society, including transnational corporations and high net-worth individuals on the one hand, and the most marginalized and impoverished groups on the other hand.

But universal also means an agenda that defines the goals, responsibilities and commitments of all countries in the world, not only those of the the so-called developing countries. In order to overcome poverty, inequality and environmental degradation, the Post-2015 Agenda must become an “Agenda for the Rich”. Furthermore, if the Post-2015 goals are truly to be “*universal in their application*”² they must be relevant for all countries in the world, including the rich.

But, the Post-2015 Agenda should be far more than a list of goals, and I emphasize: it would be a mistake to reduce the conversation about the agenda only to a conversation about goals.

According to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, the Post-2015 Agenda should have four building blocks:³

- a far-reaching vision with a compelling narrative;
- a set of concise goals and targets;
- a global partnership for development to mobilize means of implementation; and
- a participatory review, monitoring and accountability framework.

For the remaining time of my lecture it would be more than sufficient to concentrate on just one of these four building blocks.

What I would like to do instead is to highlight just three fundamental, and potentially most controversial aspects that are related to the first three building blocks.

First, I ask the following: What does a truly universal agenda mean for the concept of “development”? Do we have “*to reset the narrative of development as sustainable, equitable and human rights-based development*”, as Sakiko Fukuda-Parr suggests?⁴ Or do we have to go even further? Should the Post-2015 Agenda be a Post-Development Agenda?

² Cf. UN Doc. A/69/201, para. 70.

³ Cf. UN Doc. A/69/201, para. 68.

⁴ Cf. Fukuda-Parr (2012), p.11.

Second, what does a truly universal Post-2015 Agenda mean for the definition of goals and targets? What will be development goals and targets for the rich?

And finally, what does a truly universal Post-2015 Agenda mean for the means of implementation? What does it mean for the future of aid? Should the Post-2015 Agenda be a Post-ODA Agenda?

2. Rethinking the narrative of development

Allow me to address my first question: Do we have to rethink the whole narrative of development?

It was on the 4th of December 1948 that the UN General Assembly adopted for the first time a resolution with the title: “economic development of under-developed countries.”⁵ A few weeks later, on the 20th of January 1949, US-President Harry S. Truman made his historic Inaugural Address, in which he announced a

*“(...) bold new program for making the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas.”*⁶

This statement marks the beginning of the era of development, or, as the Mexican writer and activist Gustavo Esteva put it, “*the invention of underdevelopment.*”⁷

Since this time the countries of the world have been categorized as being either developed or underdeveloped, or in current terms developing. This division of the world was based on modernization theory and its idea of a more or less linear development trajectory where progress is primarily defined by the speed of economic growth.

But, this approach has turned a blind eye to environmental, gender and human rights aspects; it has confused the growth of GDP with progress in society; and it has regarded poverty as a primarily technical challenge in which categories of inequality and social justice are neglected.

Hence, many scientists and development politicians have, for very good reasons, criticized this approach and demanded alternatives. Already in 1975, the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation published the ground-breaking report “What now: Another Development.” It argues that the concept of development cannot be reduced to raising economic growth. Instead it states:

“Development is a whole; it is an integral, value-loaded, cultural process; it

⁵ Cf. UN GA Res. 198(III) of 4 December 1948.

⁶ Cf. Truman's Inaugural Address, January 20, 1949 (www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/50yr_archive/inagural20jan1949.htm).

⁷ Cf. Esteva in Sachs (Ed.)(2007), p. 6.

encompasses the natural environment, social relations, education, production, consumption and well-being. The plurality of roads to development answers to the specificity of cultural or natural situations; no universal formula exists.”⁸

In the following years, the broader concept of sustainable development attempted to capture the ideas of plurality and comprehensiveness. In 1992, the year of the Rio-Conference on Environment and Development, ecologist Wolfgang Sachs declared:

“The last 40 years can be called the age of development. This epoch is coming to an end. (...) The idea of development stands like a ruin in the intellectual landscape. (...) The time is ripe to write its obituary.”⁹

But obviously, Sachs was too optimistic. There is life in the old dog yet.

More than two decades and several economic, financial and environmental crises later, the dominant discourse of economists and politicians still equates development with the growth of GDP.

Last year, the report of the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda presented growth as a *sine qua non* condition for poverty eradication and sustainable development. It noted that

“continuing on current growth trends, about 5% of people will be in extreme poverty by 2030.”

And it adds that

“with slightly faster growth and attention to ensuring that no one is left behind we can eradicate extreme poverty altogether.”¹⁰

This suggests that poverty eradication and sustainable development can be achieved with the good old faithful model, in which wealth is supposed to trickle down to the poorest segments of society as a result of faster growth, and this without any reference to the need for redistributive policies and the limits of the global ecosystem (or in the words of Rockström and his colleagues the *Planetary Boundaries*).¹¹

It all depends on unleashing private capital and a stronger corporate sector as the engine of growth.

The proposal of the Open Working Group for a new set of SDGs again reflects the absolute belief in GDP growth. In their report from August 2014, Governments defined as one of the proposed targets (8.1) to:

⁸ Cf. Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation (1975), p. 7.

⁹ Cf. Sachs (Ed.)(2007), p. 1.

¹⁰ Cf. High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the post-2015 Development Agenda (2013) p. 32.

¹¹ Cf. Rockström et al. (2009).

“Sustain per capita economic growth in accordance with national circumstances and, in particular, at least 7 per cent gross domestic product growth per annum in the least developed countries.”¹²

This formulation is like a relapse into the first UN Development Strategy of the 1960s and its belief in growth-based catch-up modernization.

What do we need instead?

Within the epistemic community of development theorists there is a lot of debate around the notion of “Post-development”.¹³ Shouldn’t we do away with the whole notion of development, when it seems to be so intrinsically tied to the growth paradigm?

I have a lot of sympathy with this school of thinking. But I tend to follow the Dag-Hammarskjöld Report from 1975 on “another development” and propose to redefine instead of replace the term.

“We are all in need of a redefinition of our goals, or new development strategies, or new lifestyles, including more modest patterns of consumption among the rich.”¹⁴

What sounds like my own conclusion is in actual fact part of the Cocoyoc Declaration from October 1974. Exactly 40 years ago, social and natural scientists and economists from all over the world came together to discuss in an integrated manner the environmental and social aspects of development.

It seems that we have not made a lot of intellectual progress since then.

We are still in need of a redefinition of development and the Post-2015 Development Agenda, with its claim of being a universal agenda, offers an excellent opportunity to discuss what that new definition might be.

As a start we should no longer regard development as a process, which takes place only in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Nor should we regard development as a linear process from starting point A to target point B. As the *buen vivir* philosophy of the indigenous peoples in the Andes region emphasizes, the idea of a good life in harmony with nature is a process that never ends. It is constantly renewing and reproducing itself.

If we regard (sustainable) development as a normative concept, we could define it as processes of economic, social, cultural and political transformation in all countries of the world, with the ultimate objective to fulfil all human rights without transgressing planetary boundaries at the global level and a sustainable ecological footprint at the national and even individual level.

¹² Cf. UN Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (2014), goal 8.1.

¹³ Cf. Rist (2014) and Ziai (2014).

¹⁴ Quoted from: www.unep.org/Geo/geo3/english/045.htm

Redefining development in this way implies that all countries in the world should be regarded as developing countries, particularly those rich countries, like the US, Germany or Finland, who live beyond their means.

This brings me to my second question: What does a truly universal Post-2015 Agenda mean for the definition of goals and targets? And in particular, what would be specific targets for the rich?

3. Towards targets for the rich

If you followed the Post-2015 discussions in New York in the last 12 months, you may have got the impression that the whole agenda is about goals, or, more precisely, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

These discussions took place in the Open Working Group of the UN General Assembly on SDGs. It took this working group more than 50 days of discussion and negotiation to come to a consensus. The result has been a list of 17 goals and 169 targets.

These goals and targets cover each of the three dimensions of sustainable development, and in addition address hot topics such as the means of implementation and the rule of law.¹⁵

However the consensus rests on shaky ground. In addition to the report of the Open Working Group the UN will publish a separate document that lists all reservations member states have toward any of the goals or targets proposed.

The Vatican and Sudan (among others) are opposing the target on reproductive rights; Russia the goal to promote peaceful societies; and Japan the stand-alone goal on climate change.

Moreover, the consensus of the Open Working Group does not yet reflect the consensus of the UN as a whole. The UN General Assembly welcomed the report of the Open Working Group and decided that it *“shall be the main basis for integrating sustainable development goals into the post-2015 development agenda.”*¹⁶ But at the same time the General Assembly recognized *“that other inputs will also be considered”* in the negotiations leading up to the Post-2015 Summit. The final decision on the SDGs will be taken by the Heads of State and Government in New York in September next year.

Nevertheless, putting all of this aside, the current consensus is remarkable. It goes far beyond the narrow scope of the MDGs.

The proposed list of SDGs contains a broad but very diverse mix of goals and targets.

Some are highly ambitious, like goal 1 to *“end poverty in all its forms everywhere.”* It not only includes the target to eradicate extreme income poverty by 2030, but also the target:

*“by 2030, to reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions.”*¹⁷

¹⁵ Cf. UN Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (2014).

¹⁶ Cf. UN Doc. A/RES/68/309 of 12 September 2014.

¹⁷ Cf. UN Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (2014), goal 1.2.

If taken seriously this target could be quite challenging even for some of the world's richest countries, like the US or Germany.

Other targets proposed by the Open Working Group are very petty and superficial, like the target to “*develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels*” (16.6) or the target to “*enhance policy coherence for sustainable development*” (17.14).

Many of the proposed targets are not SMART in the sense that they are neither **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ssignable, **R**ealistic nor **T**ime-bound.

Some people such as Jeffrey Sachs argue that the list of 17 goals is too long, not easy to communicate and should therefore be narrowed down to ten goals or less.¹⁸ Frankly I don't see a valid reason for this.

Take, by way of comparison, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. When it was drafted in 1947 and 1948, can you imagine someone proposing to reduce its 30 articles to ten in order to make it more concise and easier to communicate? Do you think the Universal Declaration of Human Rights would have more political weight if it were shorter?

The key issue is not the *number* of goals but their *substance*.

Do they make a real difference?

Are they sufficiently ambitious and are they an adequate reflection of global challenges?

Will they trigger policy changes?

Or do they only reproduce the agreed language of the past, recycle old commitments and maintain the status quo?

The SDGs can make a difference if they are truly universal, and if they are not only goals for the poor but define specific targets and responsibilities for rich countries.

To repeat what I said earlier: What we need are common goals but differentiated targets.

But what do I mean by differentiated and specific targets for the rich?

I distinguish between three different types of targets:

First, targets that are universal and therefore create obligations on which all governments must deliver – including rich country governments. Examples include the target I have already mentioned to reduce at least by half the proportion of people living in poverty in all its dimensions; or the target to provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, notably by expanding public transport (target 11.2).

A second type of target are those that require domestic policy changes in order to reduce negative external effects at the global level – kinds of *do-no-*

¹⁸ Cf. www.scidev.net/global/mdgs/feature/jeffrey-sachs-sdgs-big-science.html.

harm-targets in other words. Examples could include the reduction of countries' ecological footprints and the reduction of per capita greenhouse gas emissions (both of these targets are not yet part of the proposed SDG list).

The third type of target zeroes in on the international duties and responsibilities of rich countries. They include, above all, ensuring that the necessary institutional, regulatory and financial means are available to implement the Post-2015 Agenda.

Most of the 169 targets proposed by the Open Working Group can be allocated to one of these three categories.

Let me highlight just two specific goals, which are particularly relevant from a "targets for the rich" perspective: The goal to ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns (proposed goal 12), and the goal to reduce inequality within and among countries (goal 10).

Sustainable consumption and production patterns

The High Level Panel on the Post-2015 Agenda wrote in its report last year that:

*"the MDGs fell short (...) by not addressing the need to promote sustainable patterns of consumption and production."*¹⁹

I fully agree with this assessment, and I also agree that the adoption of SDGs on consumption and production in a world of limited resources is a prerequisite for sustainable development. Therefore, it is good news that the Open Working Group is recommending a stand-alone goal on this issue.

Already three years ago, Mohan Munasinghe, former Vice-Chairman of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) introduced the idea of Millennium Consumption Goals (MCG).²⁰ He argued that the richest 20 percent of the world's population consume over 80 percent of global output, or 60 times more than the poorest 20 percent. Therefore, the main responsibility to prevent or reduce resource use, emissions and waste should fall on this richest 20 per cent.

But an SDG on consumption and production patterns must not only address overconsumption and unsustainable lifestyles. It must also address the production patterns of corporations and the kinds of products they create.

Corporations are responsible for the exploitation of natural resources and the environmental damage that this can bring about;

¹⁹ Cf. High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the post-2015 Development Agenda (2013), Executive Summary.

²⁰ Cf. Munasinghe (2011).

they are responsible for the design and marketing of products that are unsustainable;

they are responsible for respecting – or violating – human rights within their sphere of influence;

and they are responsible for putting pressure on governments and the UN to avoid stricter regulation.

Last year Margaret Chan, the Director-General of the World Health Organization, was here in Helsinki and delivered a remarkable speech. In fact, never before I have heard such a frank statement coming from a top-ranking UN official. So please allow me to quote her:

“Efforts to prevent noncommunicable diseases go against the business interests of powerful economic operators. In my view, this is one of the biggest challenges facing health promotion.

(...) it is not just Big Tobacco anymore. Public health must also contend with Big Food, Big Soda, and Big Alcohol. All of these industries fear regulation, and protect themselves by using the same tactics.

Research has documented these tactics well. They include front groups, lobbies, promises of self-regulation, lawsuits, and industry-funded research that confuses the evidence and keeps the public in doubt.

Tactics also include gifts, grants, and contributions to worthy causes that cast these industries as respectable corporate citizens in the eyes of politicians and the public. They include arguments that place the responsibility for harm to health on individuals, and portray government actions as interference in personal liberties and free choice.

This is formidable opposition. Market power readily translates into political power. Few governments prioritize health over big business. (...) This is not a failure of individual will-power. This is a failure of political will to take on big business.”²¹

Global Policy Forum recently published a series of papers, which fully confirm Margaret Chan’s findings.²²

Therefore, we cannot leave the responsibility to change consumption and production patterns solely in the hands of individual consumers and producers. Governments have to play a key role in setting the right policy incentives, or, first of all, correcting wrong incentives.

In addition, governments should introduce effective international regulation for transnational corporations and prevent corporate actors from unduly influencing global policy making, for instance around the Post-2015 Agenda.²³

²¹ Cf. Chan (2013).

²² Cf. www.globalpolicy.org/corporate-influence.html.

²³ Cf. Pingeot (2014).

To do so, they should adopt clear mandatory guidelines and policies for their relationship with corporations as well as establishing comprehensive transparency and conflict of interest policies.

Margaret Chan expressed very clearly that the belief in corporate self-regulation is misleading and wishful thinking.

Inequality

The same is true when it comes to the goal to reduce inequality.

Ryszard Kapuscinski once wrote:

"The biggest contradiction in a growing world is that, while experiencing a period of development and progress, the latter yields inequality. The greater the progress, the wider the inequality."

And indeed, Thomas Piketty just recently demonstrated in his book *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*, capital owners have been getting richer much faster than the rest of us.²⁴

In the last decades, the gap between rich and poor in many countries of the world has grown, with the notable exception of some Latin American countries with proactive social policies, like Bolivia, Brazil and Uruguay.²⁵

Moreover, income disparities between countries have increased significantly. Branko Milanovic, former lead economist in the World Bank's research department, estimated that the world income Gini coefficient has been constantly increasing over the past 200 years from around 0.43 in the early 19th century to 0.71 in the first decade of the 21st century.²⁶

I therefore very much welcome that the Open Working Group included in the list of SDGs the goal to reduce inequality not only within but also among countries.

With this decision, governments have acknowledged that inequality is a severe problem that requires political responses at the domestic and international levels.

However, as the only measurable target under this goal, the Open Working Group recommends:

*"by 2030 progressively achieve and sustain income growth of the bottom 40% of the population at a rate higher than the national average."*²⁷

This target is much too cautious, and may lead to the wrong policy recommendations.

²⁴ Cf. Piketty (2014).

²⁵ Cf. Lopez-Calva/Lustig (2010).

²⁶ Cf. Milanovic (2009). Only in the last few years has this trend seemed to have reversed due to the strong economic growth of countries like China.

²⁷ Cf. UN Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (2014), Target 10.1.

It makes the reduction of inequality dependent on steady economic growth; it refrains from referring to the need to redistribute income and wealth; and it does not make any mention of the income of the rich (particularly the “one percent”).

In further discussions about targets on inequality governments should take into account the interesting idea of the so-called Palma ratio. Alex Cobham and Andy Sumner introduced this measure in 2013 based on the work of economist Gabriel Palma.²⁸

The Palma ratio is an alternative measure of income concentration and inequality. It is the ratio of the income share of the top 10 percent to that of the bottom 40 percent of the population.

The advantage of this ratio is that it looks at both sides of the coin: at poverty on the one side and wealth on the other. This could and should lead to different policy recommendations than those elicited by the prevailing one-dimensional view on poverty.

In contrast, recent voices have been arguing that we must realize that inequality is not about the rich, it is about the poor.²⁹ This view completely ignores the political economy of poverty and the need for redistribution as a desirable political option.

My response to this is a simple poem by Bertolt Brecht:

Rich man, poor man faced each other in a van.

Said the poor man with a switch:

*“Were I not poor,
you wouldn’t be rich.”*

(Bertolt Brecht, *Alfabet* 1934)

I still believe in the power of public policy in general, and the potential of fiscal policy as an instrument of redistribution in particular.

This brings me to the third and final part of my lecture, and probably the most crucial topic in the Post-2015 negotiations: The debate around the means of implementation.

²⁸ Cf. Cobham/Sumner (2013).

²⁹ Cf. Melamed (2014).

4. Means of implementation

Goals without means are meaningless.

It would be easy for governments to agree on goals - even more so as they will not be legally binding.

Who would be against ending poverty and hunger everywhere (though I still think that we should not wait until 2030)?

Who would be against healthy lives and quality education for all?

Who would oppose the goal of ensuring affordable drinking water for all?

Many of these goals are already codified human rights anyway.

It is far more difficult to translate the goals into policies, to agree on the ways to reach the goals, and in particular to allocate responsibilities for providing the necessary means of implementation.

One of the fundamental design faults of the MDG approach was that it defined very specifically goals 1-7 and very vaguely, in goal 8, the means to achieve them.

The G77 learned its lessons from this experience and insisted on having means of implementation listed under each of the SDGs as well as specifically under goal 17 on the global partnership for sustainable development.

The result has been a list, sometimes repetitive, of 62 targets³⁰ that describe the means of implementation. Most of these targets are not numerical and when they are specific (such as the 0.7 target for ODA) they are not time-bound.

Basically, the list does not contain any new commitments but just summarizes ones that already exist.

In my view this is not enough.

What we need is a much more ambitious Post-2015 Action Agenda.

Governments and the UN are calling it a new or renewed global partnership. My friends and I in the Reflection Group are calling it a "Program for Structural Transformation."³¹ This program should define the financial, regulatory and institutional measures to realize the SDGs. And it should address the structural obstacles and political barriers that prevented the realization of many development goals so far.

If I were to talk about all the important elements of a Post-2015 Action Agenda, my lecture would become longer than Fidel Castro's 4 ½ hours speech before the UN General Assembly in 1960, the longest ever given there.

³⁰ 19 of them under goal 17 and 43 under the other 16 goals.

³¹ Cf. Civil Society Reflection Group on Global Development Perspectives (2013).

It is therefore in all of our interests for me to just highlight two issues: the need for Sustainable Development Budgets and the future of ODA.

Towards Sustainable Development Budgets

Fiscal policy will be a key instrument for governments seeking to implement the SDGs.

Governments can generally approach the issue from both the revenue (tax policy) and the expenditure (budget policy) angle.

A pro-active tax policy includes, for example, the taxation of the extraction and consumption of non-renewable resources, and forms of progressive taxation that are sensitive to the poor's welfare (e.g. by taxing consumption of luxuries).

On the expenditure side, governments should take measures to initiate the redistribution of income and wealth, and to trigger ecological steering effects. This can include cash transfers to needy families, child benefits, and the phasing out of ineffective or even harmful subsidies.

If priorities are properly defined, budget policies can become a powerful instrument to reduce social inequality, eliminate discrimination, and promote the transition to sustainable patterns of production and consumption.

Realizing any set of SDGs will only be possible if governments undertake the necessary adjustments in their tax and budget policies.

In other words, they have to formulate Sustainable Development Budgets in order to implement Sustainable Development Goals.

This requires eco-social fiscal reforms at the national level. But it also requires strengthened tax cooperation at the global level.

In the last few years, international cooperation in tax matters has intensified. But this takes place mainly within the OECD and the G20. Countries who are not members of these clubs are either excluded or only invited for consultations. What we need is a universal intergovernmental body on tax cooperation under the roof of the UN.

So far, the UN's work has centered around the UN Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters. This is far from being sufficient.

In order to strengthen international tax cooperation and to combat tax evasion and harmful tax avoidance, I propose a global Tax Cooperation Forum at the UN. It should promote dialogue and cooperation on issues linked to tax and fiscal policies and lead to the establishment of an

Intergovernmental Commission on Tax Cooperation - or even better an International Tax Organization.³²

Rethinking ODA

Even with a strengthened system of public finance, in many countries the maximum available resources will not suffice to implement the Post-2015 Agenda. External funding will therefore still be required.

The current system of financial transfers is still based on the concept of aid (official development assistance – ODA). Despite all attempts to increase ‘ownership’ and ‘aid effectiveness’, this system is characterized by paternalistic relationships between rich donors and poor recipients. This relationship has not changed just by calling donors now “providers” and recipients now “partners”.

The financial flows are still often unpredictable, volatile, tied to products and services from donors and subject to conditionalities.

Allow me one further and final quote:

“(...) the whole concept of Aid is wrong. I am saying it is not right that the vast majority of the world's people should be forced into the position of beggars, without dignity. In One World, as in One State, when I am rich because you are poor, and I am poor because you are rich, the transfer of wealth from the rich to the poor is a matter of right; it is not an appropriate matter for charity.”³³

This was said by Julius Nyerere, then President of Tanzania, in 1975 - and it is still valid.

Governments have to go beyond the concept of aid and establish a new normative framework of burden-sharing between rich and poor countries based on the solidarity principle – for example, in the form of a universal fiscal equalization scheme.

Models for such a type of compensation or equalization scheme already exist on the national and regional level. In Germany, for example, regional inequalities are to be compensated for by a system of financial income adjustment between the federal states.

In the European Union cohesion and economic equalization are supported financially by a compensatory structural policy.

A similar approach is now needed at the global level.

³² The Zedillo Panel proposed already in 2001 that the international community should consider the potential benefits of an International Tax Organization, cf. High-level Panel on Financing for Development (2001), p.9.

³³ Cf. Nyerere (1975).

With the Post-2015 Agenda we need to change our perspective and move away from an aid-based approach to a rights-based approach of development finance – just as Julius Nyerere asked us to do 40 years ago.

5. Conclusion

Let me come to the end and to summarize:

A truly universal Post-2015 Agenda will require us

- to redefine the whole concept of development;
- to adopt sustainable development goals and targets for the rich;
- to translate sustainable development goals into sustainable development budgets; and finally
- to create a new system of financial burden-sharing beyond ODA.

These are enormous tasks – and I am not naïve. The narrative of development and the fundamental understanding of progress in societies will not and should not be changed top down by decisions of politicians and diplomats in New York.

This requires fundamental shifts in the power relations between social groups at national and international level. And it requires what the Reflection Group on Global Development Perspectives already called for in 2011: A fundamental change of mindset, by, *inter alia*, restoring public rights over corporate privileges.

The German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer once formulated the idea, that all truth passes through three stages. First, it is ridiculed. Second, it is violently opposed. And third, it is accepted as being self-evident.³⁴

With some of our ideas we are probably still between stages 1 and 2.

But we are making progress. And the Post-2015 Agenda and the process leading up to it offer the chance to make more.

³⁴ Cf. Arthur Schopenhauer (1859): Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung. Vorrede zur ersten Auflage. Leipzig, F. A. Brockhaus.

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