



Re-thinking sustainable development: the quest for a “transformational” global agenda in 2015



*Annual Parliamentary Hearing
United Nations Headquarters
ECOSOC Chamber, Secretariat Building
14-15 November 2013*

Programme

Session I	Nov. 14	9:30 am – 1:30 pm
Official opening: the post-2015 development process		9: 30 – 10:00
<i>Welcome remarks from the leadership: UN and IPU</i>	<p>H.E. Mr. John Ashe, President of the General Assembly</p> <p>H. E. Mr. Néstor Osorio, President of the UN Economic and Social Council</p> <p>Hon. Abdelwahad Radi, President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union</p>	
A new economic model for sustainable development: the path toward well-being		10:00 – 1:30
<p><i>All panels will follow an interview format with no formal presentations being made. After a first round of discussion with the panel, the moderator will open the floor to questions from the audience.</i></p> <p><i>Background:</i></p> <p><i>The Quito Communiqué (128th IPU Assembly)</i></p> <p><i>Harmony with Nature (Report of the United Nations Secretary General)</i></p> <p><i>Prosperity without Growth (Tim Jackson, University of Surrey)</i></p> <p><i>A New Global Partnership: Eradicate Poverty and Transform Economies through Sustainable Development (High Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda--May 2013)</i></p>	<p>While defeating poverty must remain the key objective of the new development framework post-2015, the urgent sustainability challenges of our time will also need to be addressed and with the deep involvement of both developed and developing countries. This is why the United Nations is working toward a new set of universal Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The world as a whole is on the wrong course: vital ecosystems are suffering potentially irreparable damage; inequalities are growing; and economies are more prone to crisis. The much hoped for “decoupling” of economic development from environmental degradation has proven elusive.</p> <p>At the United Nations as the IPU, there is a growing recognition today of the need for sustainable development policies to be more explicitly focused on <i>human well-being</i>, taking into account differences of condition and opportunity between men and women. Recent debates on “harmony with nature”, on the need to measure progress in terms other than Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and on the green economy, among other things, point us in a new direction. Yet, for most policy-makers, particularly in developed countries, these approaches fundamentally remain predicated on a model of continuously rising levels of consumption to keep the economic engine working.</p> <p>In truth, more human happiness and satisfaction need not require ever increasing levels of consumption. Efforts to “green” the economy by increasing overall efficiency may not succeed unless the very notion of growth is thought anew – not just in material terms, but in terms of more free time, more education, better health, a healthy environment and other such social outcomes. In developing countries, where material growth is an urgent necessity, the same consumerist model is informing economic thinking, setting the stage for new challenges to come. How could a new economy for well-being be designed to stay within the earth’s carrying capacity? What steps would be required at the policy</p>	

	level to move in that direction? And how should this awareness be reflected in the future SDGs?
	Keynote speech: The Growth Dilemma <i>Professor Tim Jackson, author of Prosperity without Growth</i>
	Leading questions
	What is the relationship between economic growth and well-being, and how does it differ between developed and developing countries?
	How should consumption and production patterns be transformed to support well-being in both developed and developing countries?
	What policies are needed for a smooth transition toward a low growth economy that would increase well-being for all, men and women alike?
	What effective measurements of well-being exist, or could be developed, to track progress through the new SDGs?
	Interviewees
	Ambassador Macharia Kamau, Permanent Representative of Kenya to the United Nations, Co-Chair of the Open Working Group of the General Assembly on the Sustainable Development Goals
	Ambassador Ib Petersen, Permanent Representative of Denmark to the United Nations
	Hon. Ximena Del Rocio Peña Pacheco, Member Committee on the Economic and Tax Regime, National Assembly, Ecuador
	Hon. Petra Bayr, Chair of the sub-Committee on Development Cooperation, National Council of Austria
	Prof. Tim Jackson, University of Surrey
	Moderator: Andrew Revkin, journalist and author

Session II	Nov. 14	3:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.
Gender as a linchpin of development: how to frame a new goal?		
<p><i>Background:</i></p> <p><i>A Transformative Stand-alone Goal on Achieving Gender Equality, Women's rights and Women's empowerment: Imperatives and Key Components (UN Women, June 2013</i></p> <p><i>A New Global Partnership: Eradicate Poverty and Transform Economies through Sustainable Development (High Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda--May 2013)); see Goal 2, pp. 34-35</i></p> <p><i>Gender Equality, Women's Rights and Women's</i></p>	<p>The debate over the role of gender equality in the post-2015 Development Agenda illustrates the opportunities for truly transformative change.</p> <p>Gender equality is good not only for women but for society as a whole. In the same vein, mainstreaming gender throughout the entire development agenda is necessary to unlock issues, such as poverty reduction, economic development, and effective governance.</p> <p>The gender-related goals of the MDGs, primarily in the areas of education and health, did not tackle the structural causes of gender inequality, such as violence against women, unpaid care work, limited control over assets and property, and unequal participation in private and public decision-making. Similarly, progress in other MDGs did not necessarily lead to gender equality, women's rights and women's empowerment as the three inter-related dimensions of this issue. As many have argued women's lives can only be improved if discrimination against women is eliminated by transforming gender relations.</p> <p>What were the lessons learned? Mainstreaming gender in the future sustainable development goals should be</p>	

<p><i>Priorities: Recommendations for the proposed Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Post-2015 Development Agenda (Women's Major Group)</i></p>	<p>more than rhetoric. Analyses, baselines and objectives should be rethought taking into account the similar or diverging challenges, potentials and aspirations of men and women. Clear gender targets should also be identified. Only then will sustainable development goals truly embody a transformational agenda.</p> <p>A most important lesson is that a more coherent approach that addresses the causes of gender inequality is required in order to realize long-held international commitments to improve women's lives around the world – and not just in developing countries. From the landmark Beijing Declaration of 1995 and Platform for Action to last year's Rio+20 Conference, gender has occupied a central role in the global agenda of sustainable development, yet progress lags behind.</p> <p>Taking stock of all of this, the High-level Panel on the post-2015 Development Agenda recommended a stand-alone goal with expanded targets, as well as mainstreaming a gender perspective in all other goals. UN Women is calling for a comprehensive stand-alone goal that would go well beyond the original MDGs and that commit national governments to proactive policies to break down the underlying structures of discrimination. A comprehensive stand-alone goal with a variety of targets and indicators will ensure robust monitoring of progress and accountability for outcomes that directly benefit women. What should a comprehensive stand-alone goal consist of?</p> <p><i>Leading questions</i></p> <p>What are the synergies between gender equality and Sustainable Development?</p> <p>How to ensure that gender is mainstreamed throughout the SDGs?</p> <p>What should be some of the targets of a stand-alone goal?</p> <p>What can parliaments and parliamentarians do to support a stand-alone goal that is truly transformational?</p> <p><i>Interviewees</i></p> <p>Ambassador Gréta Gunnarsdóttir, Permanent Representative of Iceland to the United Nations</p> <p>Ambassador George Wilfred Talbot, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Guyana to the United Nations</p> <p>Hon. Gabriela Montaña, President of the Senate, Bolivia</p> <p>Hon. Farkunda Zahra Naderi, Commission on Women's Affairs, House of Representatives, Afghanistan</p> <p>Mr. John Hendra, Assistant Secretary-General, Deputy Executive Director for Policy and Programme, UN Women</p> <p><i>Moderator:</i> Michelle Goldberg, journalist, <i>The Nation</i></p>
<p>Reception (MPs and Ambassadors only) 6 p.m. – 8 p.m. <i>IPU Office, Uganda House, 336 East 45th Street (10th floor)</i></p>	

Session III	Nov. 15	10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
'Democratic governance' for sustainable development: what place among the new goals?		
<p><i>Background:</i></p> <p><i>A New Global Partnership: Eradicate Poverty and Transform Economies through Sustainable Development (High Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda--May 2013); see Goal 10, pp. 50-51</i></p> <p><i>IPU submission to the High Level Panel (Monrovia, Liberia, January 2013)</i></p> <p><i>Survey of parliamentarians on democratic governance (128th IPU Assembly, Quito, Ecuador, April 2013)</i></p> <p><i>My World online survey (United Nations Millennium Campaign)</i></p>	<p>Democratic governance hinges on the key principles of participation, transparency and accountability, and on effective systems to put them into practice.</p> <p>Democratic governance is an <i>end</i> in itself. The right of participation is not a bonus but an entitlement and an inherent dimension of well-being. Even amidst plenty, human development would be incomplete if people - men and women - are left voiceless or excluded. What is said or done on behalf of the people at all levels of government and of public administrations must be open to scrutiny so that people can trust their institutions to work for the common good.</p> <p>Democratic governance is also a means to achieve sustainable development because who decides and how decisions are carried out can dramatically alter the outcome. For example, women's disadvantage in virtually all spheres of life owes much to the fact that in most places decision-making remains dominated by men. Indeed, in this new age of inequality, in which power and wealth are concentrated in fewer and fewer hands, deep governance reforms in both public and private sectors will be required to effect change in virtually all three pillars of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental.</p> <p>Early this year, the UN Secretary General's High Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda recommended that a stand-alone governance goal (Goal 10) was required to complete the new set of SDGs and help advance the entire development agenda. The IPU completely supports this view. Yet there remains considerable resistance among decision-makers to include strong governance commitments in the new framework, and the very nature of those commitments remains a matter of heated debate. What is the concern, and how can it be addressed effectively and fairly?</p>	
<i>Keynote speech: The politics of "democratic governance"</i>		
Ms. Gunilla Carlsson, fmr. Member of the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, fmr. Minister of Development Cooperation (Sweden)		
<i>Leading questions</i>		
What are some of the most important governance challenges in developed and developing countries?		
How do the key principles of democratic governance - participation, transparency and accountability – support sustainable development?		
How can parliaments help to ensure that these principles are put into practice?		
What interrelationship exists between national and international issues of governance?		
How can consensus be built around the inclusion of democratic governance in the global agenda?		
<i>Interviewees</i>		
H. E. Jan Eliasson, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations		
Ambassador Paul Seger, Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the United Nations		
Ambassador Eduardo Ulibarri, Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to the United Nations		

	Hon. Anne Makinda, Speaker of the National Assembly, United Republic of Tanzania
	Senator Aitzaz Ahsan, Pakistan
	Ms. Gunilla Carlsson, fmr. Member of the High Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, fmr. Minister of Development Cooperation (Sweden)
	<i>Moderator:</i> Nermeen Shaikh, broadcast news producer and co-host, Democracy Now!

Session IV		Nov. 15	2:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.
Parliaments and the new post-2015 agenda: getting ready for implementation			2:30 – 5:00
<p><i>Background:</i></p> <p><i>A life of dignity for all: accelerating progress towards the Millennium Development Goals and advancing the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015 (Report of the UN Secretary-General)</i></p> <p><i>Review of the institutional structure and processes related to the MDGs in the Parliament of Nigeria - IPU case (October 2012)</i></p> <p>Note: An evaluation form will be distributed during this session. Participants are invited to fill out the form and leave it on their desk for IPU staff to collect.</p>	<p>Early involvement of parliaments in helping formulate international agendas such as the one that will emerge in 2015 can help support political buy-in at the country level. But an even greater role for parliaments will come at the stage of implementation to help secure positive outcomes by promoting debate and by holding governments to account. At the country level, parliaments have primary responsibility for legislation, including the budget bill, without which no global commitment could ever turn into action.</p> <p>Still, and as the experience of the MDGs shows, parliamentary follow up to the new Sustainable Development Goals is not automatic and presents with its own challenges. At the institutional level, one problem is that many parliaments are not fully equipped for a coordinated and coherent policy review. Creating specialized SDGs committees or caucuses, as some parliaments have done for the MDGs, is an option but one that does not entirely guarantee success unless the set-up (mandate, composition, authority, capacities etc.) is well thought out. Channels of citizens' engagement with such structures and with the policy process in general will also need to be improved.</p> <p>Another issue has to do with the making and monitoring of national sustainable development strategies. This process often bypasses parliament or has weak accountability mechanisms. Indeed, though national strategies for sustainable development are more and more common, they often fall short of global commitments, do not have measurable goals, and do not involve all stakeholders through proper consultations.</p> <p>Global reporting on the implementation of national sustainable development strategies is also a process to which parliaments can and should contribute in the spirit of transparency and accountability. New mechanisms within ECOSOC as well as a new High-Level Political Forum on sustainable development, as a "hybrid" body of both the General Assembly and ECOSOC, will play a key role in this respect. How can parliaments situate themselves in this new architecture, and how can they improve on those national processes where they already have a strong mandate?</p>		
	<i>Leading questions</i>		
	How can the policy-making process better integrate the three pillars of sustainable development into a single coherent approach?		
	How can the design and monitoring of sustainable development strategies be improved?		
	How can political will for strong action on sustainable development be		

	strengthened and maintained over time?	
	Building on the lessons of MDG implementation, how can parliaments contribute to global monitoring and accountability of the new development agenda and attendant SDGs?	
	<i>Interviewees</i>	
	Ambassador Martin Sajdik, Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations and Vice President of the Economic and Social Council	
	Mr. Olav Kjørven, Assistant Secretary-General and Director of Bureau for Development Policy, UNDP	
	Hon. Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, Speaker of Parliament, Bangladesh	
	Senator Fauzaya Talhaoui, Chair of the Working Group on Development Cooperation and the post-2015 Goals, Senate of Belgium	
	Hon. Alhassan Ado Garba, Member of Parliament, Nigeria, Chair of the Committee on MDGs and Chair of the African Network of Parliamentarians on the MDGs	
	<i>Moderator:</i> Anders B. Johnsson, Secretary General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union	
Closing statements		5:00 – 5:30
<i>Hon. Abdelwahad Radi, President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union</i>		