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RAISING THE LEVEL OF AMBITION

JUSTICE, DEMOCRACY AND DIVERSITY IN THE POST 2015 FRAMEWORK

A POSITION FROM THE ITALIAN CIVIL SOCIETY

GLOBAL EQUITY AT THE CORE OF POST-2015 AGENDA

The definition of the global framework that will inform the policy debate in the next few years is coming now to a turning point. The process leading to the UNGA in September 2015 will still see some important milestones, with the Italian led European semester and the EXPO in Milan. Italy has a crucial responsibility in facilitating the process that will lead the European Union to speak with one voice in the post-2015 debate: the new framework will have to be **universal**, and based on the **human rights**, opening a perspective for a balanced, equitable and **sustainable development**.

The level of the current debate so far shows interesting opportunities, but, as the outcome of the OWG clearly shows, there is now the need of giving a boost: the new Sustainable Development Goals should go well beyond the MDG framework as well as the latest proposals so far. In spite of important elements that are now being discussed, an overcomplex articulation of goals and sub-goals - shaped under the visible influence of the of the so-called 'silo effect' and consistent with a relatively traditional view of economic development - risk to narrow down the scope for an endeavor that should motivate the effort of the whole humanity in the next 15 years.

A much more slower than expected and claimed success in poverty eradication, suggests to us that additional attention should be paid to the kind of perspective. It is known that the statistics on which the MDG poverty target is assessed suffer heavily of the bias brought in by specific countries and by the baseline originally set. The inadequacy of the USD 1,25 parameter (now once again taken as the key indicator in the Goal 1 in the last OWG elaboration) is also demonstrated by the fact that hunger has been reduced far less than poverty; which leads to the paradoxical conclusion of recognizing that some people are no longer poor but they still starve. We experience that the disconnect between economic trends on one side and people and the planet on the other hand is much larger than 15 years ago; but we still fall short in fully integrating the acknowledgment of the bio-physical limits of the earth in our policies; and we still fail in bringing in a coherent view of what is needed to promote a minimum level of social rights for all the inhabitants of the planet. Inequalities are increasing in all domains (economic, social, political, environmental) and are challenging the social foundations of our nations: for the first time in modern history, there is one common concern which is shared by the poor and marginalized as well as struggling middle classes across the entire globe. The current state of the world and the arising of multiple sources of violence and war suggest the need for a far sharper reflection on peace and conflict: not only promoted in terms of 'security' or absence of open and violent confrontation, but in terms of a new culture of peace, respectful of the rights and the dignity of everybody.

The Post 2015 Agenda will not be the silver bullet to resolve all the world's problems. But it offers a critical opportunity to advance the search for a set of values, norms, policies and agencies that can inform and inspire our emerging global citizenship. Beside the importance of setting shared and well thought goals, we should pay the right attention to the **process** as much as in the actual outcomes. We might not be able to embody all our

aspirations in its final format. But the test of its relevance – and the legitimacy of all institutions behind it – will be its capacity to advance the bridging of the gap between our economies and the people and the planet.

PROMOTING EQUITABLE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Equity and environmental sustainability

GCAP Italy considers that **addressing all dimensions of sustainable development** is crucial: without taking into account global environmental change as the base for SDGs, even poverty eradication will become impossible. The concept of planetary boundaries and ecological carrying capacity are critical for the whole framework and not only one individual goal area in the SDGs. Governments and all development actors need to develop a far better understanding of how fully integrating in practice equity and environmental sustainability dimensions. The focus should be firmly kept on economic inclusion and equity within the planetary boundaries and the carrying capacity of our ecosystem services, promoted through the economic empowerment of the most vulnerable and marginalized social groups. **Policy coherence** for sustainable development is an important tool to promote within the new framework and where the EU can share its experience of applying this principle in its own policy-making.

Italy (and EU) should support all dimensions of sustainable development integrated in a balanced way, promoting alternative measures of development which include **social and natural capital**. It should also promote the **full integration of social and environmental costs** and an ambitious target to achieve absolute **decoupling of economic activity from environmental degradation**. **Low carbon development pathways** should be proposed, not just in infrastructure and production but also in trade, investment and financial systems. For the EU and other industrialized countries, **sustainable consumption** has to include ways to reduce consumption and to reduce our **overall footprint** on the planet. The EU should propose ambitious targets at the international level which are technologically and economically feasible today, starting with **at least at doubling of the share of renewables in global energy mix and tripling the annual rate of energy efficiency improvement by 2030** compared to today. **Climate change** should be addressed in specific importance, as the greatest challenge that humanity will face in the next future, and as a cross-cutting issue, understanding how climate change will undermine the achievement of any proposed goals in all sectors. These may be linked, for example, to mitigation, to resilience, to adaptation, to disaster risk reduction, or to promoting low carbon development alternatives. We underline the necessity of including social or economic targets approaching **ecosystems and biodiversity**, demonstrating the clear interlinkages: for example, equitable access to natural resources and participation in decision making over their use and management. The mainstreaming of **ecosystems and biodiversity values in national and local planning** and development processes is essential for sustainable development.

Participation, accountability, social inclusion

First of all, we contend that in order to effectively pursue a shared and just path for improving the livelihood of each and every human being, a much larger participation and public debate is needed, as well as formal mechanisms to allow all voices to contribute to the setting of the priorities to be pursued through public policies. Relying on government level exchanges will provide an important dimension of legitimacy, but may miss the opportunity of including all voices. The **rule of law**, in the sense of a framework of transparent rules that are applicable to all individuals, communities and social groups is not an end by itself but only the mean for ensuring that **human rights** are respected and enforced for the benefit of everybody, including those whose voices are often marginalized in local and transnational political and social processes: women, children, ethno-linguistic minority groups, migrants, other minorities. Gender equity, and the importance of promoting the empowerment and participation of women at all levels represents a key area of concern both as a priority area of action and as a cross-cutting issue. Improving the **accountability**, widening up the debate beyond the intergovernmental

instances where it currently takes place, allowing the **participation** of all social groups/stakeholders, and helping the governments themselves in making a stronger and more representative mediation of the different needs and priorities, represents in our view the **stronger imperative at multilateral and regional level**, as a way of promoting progressively wider consensus on global issues: in this phase of elaboration of the future framework, but also and more importantly, in establishing mechanisms for monitoring and reviewing the targets and the qualities of the processes led at local level. The new agenda should reaffirm the centrality of **citizenship** as the cornerstone of governance at all levels, building on existing **social capital** and on various forms of citizens' **association**, as the only way of building up sustainably **peaceful societies** for a more **just** world, where the **dignity** of each human being is defended and promoted.

Food and food systems

Food and food systems are at the core of all the societies. And all the peoples, communities, individuals, should be given the power and the knowledge of establishing what and how should be produced, transformed, traded and consumed when satisfying, above all, basic subsistence needs. Evidence shows that **hunger is the result of injustice, not scarcity**: we therefore strongly contend that policies only based on the increment of production and productivities will be largely ineffective in reducing deprivation, if not put in a framework of rights and food sovereignty. We urge the international community to an unambiguous affirmation of the **right to food and nutrition**, the recognition of adequate diet as the stepping stone of healthy lives, and an understanding of food as being the expression of values, cultures and social relations. The right to food and nutrition is hampered by **economic, social and political inequalities** as well as by existing **power imbalances**: hence, the need to ensure proper regulations, transparency and accountability of powerful economic actors, such as transnational corporations.

Unbalanced food systems threaten the environment and compress the rights of the people, forcing them to migrate. These challenges can only be met by prioritizing local economies, agro-ecological methods of production, and a **smallholder family farming** model of production and distribution; a conception of global food system as being built of **local food systems** which are centered on **sovereignty, agro-biodiversity**, local knowledge, and local value chains; a fair global food system governance, able to bridle the devastating impact of unjust trade practices and regulations, and of financial speculation; a definition of agricultural productivity that fully incorporates the ecological, social and political dimensions of production and embodies the sustainable livelihoods of families and communities; regional/national social protection systems that is able to ensure that the growing food demand of the of rural and urban dwellers is met. Special attention should be paid to those countries with the highest number of undernourished people most of whom are children, by promoting large-scale nutrition programs. This can be done by encouraging policy environment and interventions that positively can change nutritional behaviors and attitudes. In this, ensuring policy coherence at all levels is a key.

The role of private sector

The discussion on the role of the private/business sector in the development agenda should be firmly linked to proper diagnostic and analysis, avoiding the risk of a mish-mash of different considerations and anecdotic celebratory evidence of success, fostered perhaps by the expectation for accessing freshly generated resources. An appropriate reflection on this issue, including an articulated consideration of the different issues arising in connection to the role played by local, international and transnational companies, is essential if we want to redirect the current drivers of growth in a developmental direction. Among the different issues to focus on, key elements arise in the area of **the re-orientation of the business model towards greater social inclusion and responsibility**, environmental sustainability and transparency/accountability. It is only in this context that the "creation of enabling environment business" makes sense from a development point of view: in absence of such reorientation, it reinforces the current unsustainable business (if not predatory) practices. A further reflection is also needed on **the provision of public services** by the private sector. It may be true that the private sector might be more efficient and maybe effective in the provision of some public services. However, these services remain

“public” in nature and their provision should therefore be guided by careful analysis of the differential impact of social groups and spatial realities. It should not correspond to the abdication of responsibility by the public sector nor to charging the private sector with mandates it does not have. Furthermore, “private” provision might increasingly include different forms of not-profit agency, which are too little contemplated in the current discussion though increasingly important in several areas of the planet. Lastly, attention should be paid to the broader role of the private sector **in the provision of (global) public goods**. There is increasing recognition that the provision of public goods might be better served by partnerships between different forms of agencies and the increasing role of the private sector might therefore make sense in this context. However, clear rules of the engagement are necessary such as mandatory guidelines for the relations with corporations, clear provisions on conflict of interest and disclosure policies, transparency on funding by the corporate sector, among others.

The private sector will have an important role to play in delivering sustainable development in the new framework, but corresponding accountability measures should be in place and requirements to adhere to international goals and standards in the field of environment, labour and human rights.

Migration and development

Migration is an issue of overwhelming importance, and shows many linkages with several domains such as decent work and social protection issues, health and education rights, participation and empowerment needs, including specific protection needs of vulnerable groups like children, women, divided families on the move from violence, trafficking and exploitation that they often experience during migration. All this suggest that migration and human mobility related issues should be tightly integrated within SDGs. A lively debate has brought to the elaboration of the civil society “Stockholm Agenda” on migrant and migration-related goals and targets in post-2015 global and national development agendas. Specific targets have been proposed on facilitating **mobility and inclusion, portability of skills and benefits**, reduction of cost on **remittances and recruitment, end policies and practices that criminalize and detain migrants based upon their migration status**, increase **participation and contribution** of migrants in **public policy planning and implementation**.

But, until now, migration and human mobility have been poorly inserted in SDGs and in EU positions, being a hot topic of conflicts among nation-states. More multilateralism and open regionalism should be promoted for overcoming **different interests and perceptions** between governments and public opinions, between public and private actors, spurring collaboration and protection systems in countries of destination, transit and origin. Italy has a key role in pushing EU to the forefront of the international debate on migration in SDGs, and in assuming a pro-active stance for enhancing migration in a human development perspective and finance appropriate structures that provide vulnerable groups with opportunities to flourish. Its geopolitical role in the Mediterranean and specifically on sensitive migration routes should motivate its commitment in promoting regional mobility and international protection regimes aimed at facilitating the movement of the people, adequately **addressing the specific needs of vulnerable groups on the move** across international borders, their inclusion and protection, and **their effective contribution to human development in destination and origin countries**.

OUR CLAIMS

We feel that renewed commitments are strongly needed in order to bring about a shared and mobilizing perspective for the post-2015 framework, based the above mentioned elements to inform the policy perspective in all domains. Particularly, we call for a firm commitment by the Italian government to operating at European and global level to include these concerns in the debate.

We feel that the following four issues require a timely and comprehensive response:

- Which position will be promoted by Italy in developing a joint European Union position for the post-2015 framework, where the promotion of the rule of law is firmly connected to the universal and inclusive respect of the human rights? What mechanisms of participation and accountability will be established in

order to ensure that all voices are heard in the setting of local targets, in reviewing those targets, in monitoring the qualities of the processes?

- What kind of priorities will be promoted by the Italian government consistently with the principle of policy coherence, particularly during the next round of negotiation about climate that will have their critical point in Lima?
- Will Italy and EU reconsider their negative vote against the “Elaboration of an international legally binding instrument on Transnational Corporations and other Business Enterprises with respect to Human Rights”, adopted by the United Nations Human Rights Council (HRC) on the 26th June 2014?
- What kind of commitment will have Italy and the EU in affirming and widening the presence of the issue of migration and development in the upcoming post-2015 framework in a open human development perspective? Define and enforce a real common EU policy on mobility-migration and international protection in the framework of the new SDGs, aimed at facilitating the movement and inclusion of people seeking a better life and able to participate and contribute to human development in destination and origin countries. An effective transnational cooperation must be based on the best interest of vulnerable groups and include an appropriate response to the their needs across international borders in order to protect them from abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence. In the meantime, Italian Cooperation must elaborate new guidelines and include new actions dedicated to migration and development issues in the 2015-2018 programming.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE POST 2015 FRAMEWORK

The attention of the Italian civil society networks coordinated by GCAP in the current debate is focused of the Italy-led EU semester, at the end of which a common position of the EU on the B2015 is expected. Such a position will build on the communication ‘A decent life for all: from vision to collective action’, but will also take into account the most recent developments, and more particularly the final outcome of the OWG. Although some European government have publicly expressed their satisfaction with the latter, and that many important elements are reflected therein, a much more courageous approach is needed in order to avoid a ‘slightly-better-than-usual’ approach that seem to lead the current debate. We feel it is absolutely necessary to keep away from a low level mediation dictated more by the ‘fear of the vacuum’ than by an original and forward looking vision for the future of the humanity and the planet. We need to focus on transformational, structural change addressing the root causes of the main global challenges we face today, going beyond the purely rhetoric use of strong ‘transformative’ terms in the official documents.

We therefore urge the Italian government to incorporate the concerns expressed in the document ‘Red Line the EU must adhere to in Negotiating the Post-2015 Framework’ (CONCORD/Beyond 2015). More specifically, we recommend the following points to be reflected in positions promoted during the forthcoming UNGA, an in the future consolidated EU position on post-2015:

- a) Inequality should stand as a priority area in the future internationally agreed framework, including a clear reference to intra- and inter-state inequality; and to the horizontal as well as vertical dimensions of inequality. Gender inequality and women and girls empowerment should be kept as a priority area. These concern should be addressed based on appropriately disaggregated statistical data.
- b) The attention to vulnerable groups should be pervasive and strictly related to all areas of intervention, including children, women, divided families on the move from violence, trafficking and exploitation, elderly, disabled people, ethnic and social minorities.
- c) The emphasis on the increase of the share of renewables in global energy mix and the improvement of the rate of energy efficiency improvement should be reinforced. Climate change should be addressed in specific importance and as a cross-cutting issue with its linkage to strategies of mitigation, resilience, adaptation, disaster risk reduction.

- d) The approach to food should be widened from production, productivity and efficiency to a wider and more realistic approach tackling the food/resources access inequality dimension. A clear support should be given to sustainable, local, small scale, family farming.
- e) Migration and human mobility related issue cannot be absent from the future framework. We are extremely concerned by the very weak attention that was paid to the issue so far, and we strongly state that it cannot be ignored further.
- f) Poverty and well-being (as a policy objective) should more clearly defined in multidimensional terms; the international debate has clearly highlighted the need of going beyond GDP based indicators, Italy and EU should promote the adoption of a renewed set of indicators which include social and natural capital, and whereby social and environmental costs are fully accounted for, building up the ground for complete decoupling of economic activity and environmental degradation
- g) A further move away from the 'growth-at-all-costs' vision should be promoted, by connecting it more firmly to multidimensional ways of looking at poverty and well-being. Growth should always be treated in connection to the constraints of the planet boundaries and to the need of contributing to the creation of decent jobs.
- h) The focus on human rights, rule of law, and peace did not bring to a consensus within the OWG. These elements should however be firmly kept within the agenda for the future post-2015 framework. Peace and conflict related concerns should be strengthened in the direction of a fuller consideration of a whole range of opportunities to prevent and transform open and violent conflict including, among others: the promotion of dialogue instances and policy spaces, the adoption of non-violent conflict resolution instruments, the monitoring and reduction of military expenses and arms trade.
- i) Reference to the different actors of development is welcomed; a clear connection should however be stated between the contribution of the private sector and the need of looking at it through the lenses of human rights.
- j) A much larger attention than in previous documents should be devoted to identification of the means of implementation, both in financial and non financial terms.
- k) EU should help reaching a wide consensus for including some 'global partnership' issues in the post-2015 framework. The approach to market should always put at the forefront the respect of the basic human and social rights, and highlight the importance of the local and regional dimension of trade.
- l) Financial markets have to be specifically considered in the framework, in order to avoid the degeneration due to unregulated financial movements and speculations and their impact, particularly in terms of unsustainable volatility on food and energy commodities markets.
- m) The whole post-2015 framework identification and monitoring should find deep root in a renewed concept of citizenship, participation and accountability, where the participation of different stakeholders and not only of the governments is considered a cornerstone of the whole exercise. This should include the identification of the main elements for promoting policy dialogue spaces at national level as a way of capturing the qualities of the process of change and not only its quantitative aspects.
- n) Appropriate, rigorous and independent accountability mechanisms and institutional architecture should be put in place in order to make all the above recommendations real and concrete.