



## Local governments and the **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs)**

### LOCALIZING THE POST-2015 AGENDA

**As the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are coming to an end in 2015, the UN started a worldwide consultation on the development of a new set of goals to be achieved in 2030. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will look at the issues insufficiently addressed through the MDGs and more challenges ahead. Local governments, which will play a pivotal role in the attainment of the new goals, are trying to be closely involved at all stages of the agenda setting. This infosheet gives a short outline on the process, content and links with the Local Government Capacity Programme (LGCP).**

**LGCP 2012-2016 aims to increase the capacity of local governments and local government associations to deliver on key public services as also targeted in the SDGs.** (see Figure 1)

#### Introduction

Since the adoption of the Millennium Declaration in 2000, eight Millennium Development Goals (MDG's) were the world's shared goals for poverty alleviation. The MDG's overall target date is 2015. Although not all goals will be achieved, progress reports clearly show that joining efforts around a common global agenda has been most effective.<sup>1</sup>

Based on the lessons learnt from the MDG's and new challenges ahead, the UN started in 2010 to build a road towards a "post-2015 development agenda". The first UN report on this subject - *Realizing the Future We Want for All* - recommended that new goals should apply to all countries, and be based on the fundamental principles of human rights, equality, and sustainability.

*"Sustainability calls for a decent standard of living for everyone without compromising the needs of future generations."*<sup>2</sup>

At the Rio+20 Earth Summit in 2012 it was decided to establish an intergovernmental 'Open Working Group' with the mandate to develop a set of *Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's)*.<sup>3</sup>

*New goals that should be "action-oriented, concise and easy to communicate, limited in number, aspirational, global in nature and universally applicable to all countries while taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities."*

When agreed upon by the UN member states at the 70<sup>th</sup> General Assembly in September 2015, the SDG's will form the global reference framework for international development cooperation and the monitoring of progress till 2030.

1 <http://mdgs.un.org>

2 [www.un.org/en/development](http://www.un.org/en/development)

3 The outcomes of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) in June 2012, a report entitled "The Future We Want."

## Worldwide Consultations

Were the Millennium Development Goals elaborated in a rather top-down manner, the post-2015 agenda is built upon an inspiring worldwide, multi-stakeholder consultation process. Building blocks are provided by a High Level Panel of Eminent Persons, among which the president of UCLG<sup>4</sup>, mayor Kadir Tobas, worldwide consultations and contributions from global networks of scientists and representatives of the private sector.

A first round of consultation during 2012-2013 was merely an huge inventory of 'what', on which issues and areas should be included. Consultations were undertaken along the key dimensions identified for an integrated transformative change:

- . inclusive social development;
- . inclusive economic development;
- . environmental sustainability; and
- . peace and security

In the second round in 2014, the focus shifted to 'how', to the means of implementation. Dialogues were organized around six main areas of discussion:

- . Localizing the Post-2015 Development Agenda
- . Helping to strengthen capacities and institutions
- . Participatory monitoring, existing and new forms of accountability
- . Partnerships with civil society and other actors
- . Partnerships with the private sector
- . Culture and development

And a third and parallel consultation round was dedicated to key questions regarding financing mechanisms to enhance implementation.

## Contours of the New Framework

As a result a set of 17 tentative goals with corresponding targets were presented at the 69<sup>th</sup> UN Assembly in September 2014. The present the basis of the final negotiations with member states till the final agreement in 2015.

(see Figure 2 with preliminary SDGs).

Thereafter, UN Secretary General, Mr Ban Ki-Moon, integrated all input in a synthesis report entitled 'The road to dignity by 2030: ending poverty, transforming all lives and protecting the planet'. This forms the basis of the final negotiations with member states till the final agreement in 2015.

## Localizing post-2015

The important role of local and regional governments is underlined in various contributions. As for example the report of the High-Level Panel states<sup>5</sup>:

*"Local authorities form a vital bridge between national governments, communities and citizens and will have a critical role in a new global partnership."*

*"Local authorities have a critical role in setting priorities, executing plans, monitoring results and engaging with local firms and communities."*

On the initiative of the president of UCLG, local and regional government leaders and their global organizations have gathered in a Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments for Post-2015 Agenda towards Habitat III (GTF 2016). Their aim is to build a joint strategy to contribute to the international policy making debates within the framework of the Post 2015 agenda, Rio+20 follow-up and towards Habitat III<sup>6</sup>.

An important result of GTF2016's lobby trajectory is the inclusion of SDG 11: *"Make Cities and Human Settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable."*

GTF2016 also played a prominent role in the dialogue process on Localizing the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

*"The term 'Localization' refers to the process of defining, implementing and monitoring strategies at the local level for achieving global, national and subnational sustainable development targets."*

[Source: report on localizing post 2015 agenda (2014)]

The outcomes of these dialogues underline the main challenges for implementing the SDGs at local level:

- . Informing and involving local stakeholders
- . Decentralization, subsidiarity and good governance
- . Territorial and urban planning
- . Transparency and accountability
- . Leadership and capacity building
- . Financing territorial and urban development



4 United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) is the global network of cities, local and regional governments.

5 The Report of the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons, p. 10 (UN, 2013)

6 Habitat III refers to the 3th United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development which will take place in 2016.

**Fig. 1 LGCP > SDGs – result chain**



**Fig. 2 (proposed) SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs)**



Source: Open Working Group proposal for Sustainable Development Goals as presented at the UN General Assembly in September 2014 (see <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgsproposal.html>)

## Monitoring progress

One of the lessons drawn from the MDGs is that the measurement of progress needs to be improved. The High Level Panel called for data revolution which will support an accountability revolution.

The presented 17 Sustainable Development Goals are accompanied by 169 targets and will be further elaborated through indicators focused on measurable outcomes. The purpose of SDG indicators is twofold<sup>7</sup>:

- 1) *"an indicator should be a management tool, to help countries [and local and regional governments] develop implementation and monitoring strategies for achieving the SDGs and to monitor progress.*
- 2) *an indicator is a report card, to measure progress towards achieving a target and ensure the accountability of governments and other stakeholders for achieving the SDGs."*

The coming year, much effort will be invested in developing metrics to monitor SDG performance in an effective way.

## LGCP & SDGs

VNG (International) and her sister organizations are taking part in the above described process as active members of the UCLG and the Capacity and Institution Building Working Group which are part of the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Authorities (GTF2016).

The Local Government Capacity Programme (LGCP 2012-2016) aims to increase the capacity of local governments and local government associations to deliver on key public services. The central themes are:

- . food security,
- . water management,
- . the safety of citizens and legal order, and
- . the sexual and reproductive health and rights of citizens.

Themes that can easily be recognized in the proposed set of SDGs.

Moreover, LGCP's overall aim of strengthening the capacity of local governments in order to enhance sustainable local economic development can also be related to SDG 11 (sustainable cities and settlements), SDG 16 (building strong institutions) and SDG 17 (fostering global partnerships).

VNG International, in close collaboration with its partners, is publishing a series of cases from the LGCP to illustrate how increased capacity of local governments contributes to achieving the projected sustainable development goals.

## More Information

Informative sites on the content and the localization of the post-2015 development agenda:

The official UN site with the latest news on the content and progress regarding the post-2015 agenda: [www.sustainabledevelopment.un.org](http://www.sustainabledevelopment.un.org)



The inviting digital platform entitled on which everybody can join global conversations follow the outcome: [www.worldwewant2015.org](http://www.worldwewant2015.org)



The site of the Global Taskforce 2016 which provides all the information on the position and role of local governments regarding the post-2015 agenda: [www.gtf2016.org/](http://www.gtf2016.org/)

And for who wants to know the results regarding de MDGs, see: [www.mdgs.un.org](http://www.mdgs.un.org)

<sup>7</sup> draft report of SDSN 'Indicators and a monitoring framework for Sustainable Development Goals, July 2014.