



CARE International Detailed Comments on the Report of the High Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post- 2015 Development Agenda June 2013

INTRODUCTION

CARE International welcomes the report of the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda (HLP) and, particularly, the move from reducing to **ending extreme poverty by 2030, in the context of sustainable development**, and the ambition represented in the five transformative shifts and goals proposed. It is also laudable that the Panel clearly calls for **a single post-2015 sustainable development agenda** that would bring together separate on-going processes on development, sustainable development and climate change. This single agenda is, as the report states, 'the smart thing, the right thing and the necessary thing to do'.

The report gives attention to critical issues that CARE International has identified as central to our work in fighting poverty and injustice in more than 80 countries during the last six decades. Our experience shows the importance of achieving **gender equality and women's empowerment**, not only as a fundamental human right, but also to help lift entire families, communities and societies out of poverty and hunger. We have also witnessed the impact of **conflict** in the communities that we work with and how it affects their development prospects. We thus also welcome the inclusion of these issues in the Panel's proposals for the new post-2015 development framework as well as its focus on the core **human rights principles** of accountability, participation, transparency and non-discrimination. For all the positive aspects of the report, we also identified shortcomings that need to be addressed in the further work ahead, most notably, to **tackle inequality** in a more comprehensive manner, including income inequality; to put in place the necessary **implementation mechanisms** and make specific commitments to translate the Panel's ideas into actual and effective progress to those suffering from poverty and exclusion; and to develop a clear **monitoring and accountability system** at all levels that allows us to track progress and take corrective measures. Specific comments on recommendations of the HLP report that need to be maintained in the next steps of the process and issues that need to be strengthened in CARE's areas of work are provided below.

GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

CARE International particularly **welcomes** the recognition of the need to **have gender equality and women's empowerment as a central pillar of the post-2015 framework**, as reflected in the recommendation to have **a stand-alone goal focused on gender equality** (*Goal 2: Empower Girls and Women and Achieve Gender Equality*) and the recognition of women's and girls' rights as **a cross-cutting issue** that should be addressed across all sectors. CARE especially welcomes the strong call to **address violence against women and girls** as this is a pervasive violation of human rights which also affects prospects of development for whole communities and societies, and the illustrative targets around eliminating gender-based violence (GBV) and child marriage. We also support the recommendation for data disaggregation by gender, age, location and other social factors, to address the needs and rights of the poorest women and girls; and the promotion of women's rights in areas such as property, financial inclusion and sexual and reproductive health. Any progress towards the goal of ending poverty by 2030 rests on an increased commitment to tackle the perverse effects of gender discrimination head on.

However, CARE would like to see more emphasis given to addressing and tracking change in the **underlying causes of gender inequality and discrimination**. While the Panel rightly highlights the importance of promoting women's equality under the law, we know that reducing gender-based violence, child marriage and other aspects of gender inequality requires more than legal equality. Many countries now have laws recognizing women's rights and equality but gaps persist due to

unchanged social norms and power imbalances, including at household level. As such, Target 2d (*Eliminate discrimination against women in political, economic, and public life*) should also recognize the importance of addressing gender discrimination in the social sphere.

Moving forward, it is critical to focus on **the transformative changes** required at all levels to tackle the drivers of gender inequality. CARE's experience suggests that unless there is a real effort to address three critical domains of change, i.e. personal agency, relationships and social structures (both in terms of social norms and legal frameworks), there can be no sustainable progress on gender equality. Among other things, this requires a focus on tackling and measuring change in household-level relations and divisions of labour (including unpaid care work) that limit women's and girls' full enjoyment of rights and opportunities. It also requires engaging men and boys as allies in shifting inequitable social structures, attitudes and practices. Also critical is a focus on promoting women's protection and participation in decision-making in conflict and post-conflict settings.

Finally, it is important that a stronger emphasis be given to **gender mainstreaming** throughout the document. While the call for disaggregating data is a good step, more must be done under the illustrative goals and targets to identify the specific needs and vulnerabilities of women and girls. For example gender analysis should be highlighted as a key component of programming across all sectors to ensure interventions are responding to gender relations and the different vulnerabilities and capacities of women, men, boys and girls.

SEXUAL, REPRODUCTIVE AND MATERNAL HEALTH

CARE welcomes the HLP's recognition of **sexual and reproductive health** as a fundamental **human right** and critical development issue, in line with the 1994 Cairo Programme of Action, which placed women's empowerment and reproductive rights at the centre of development. In our work around the world, we have seen that the low status of women and girls and persistent gender inequality are closely associated with women's inability to exercise their sexual and reproductive rights. As we move forward, it is critical that this language and the specific goal on universal access to reproductive health be maintained.

In addition, CARE is pleased that the HLP has identified health as a core and interrelated piece of the development puzzle, both being impacted by and impacting other development issues. As the report notes, in the area of health, significant action is still needed to finish the work begun under the current Millennium Development Goal (MDG) framework and that the new framework must build on these efforts. This is particularly true for MDG 5 (dramatically reducing maternal mortality and achieving universal access to reproductive health services), where progress remains insufficient and inequitable and continues to lag behind other MDGs. We welcome the attention the report gives not only to the coverage of health services, but also to ensuring the quality of services and access to their delivery. Any measurement framework must take into account all of these factors. In addition, the establishment of strong accountability mechanisms, particularly at the local level, is essential to ensuring the coverage, quality and equity of health services, particularly for women and marginalized populations.

We know that improving **sexual, reproductive and maternal health (SRMH)**— in both development and emergency settings — is **central to gender equality** and the reduction of poverty and social injustice. More emphasis is needed on the important role of SRMH in **emergencies** given that natural disasters and conflict threaten to undermine any progress made in this area, with women's vulnerability often intensifying in crisis environments.

HUNGER AND FOOD SECURITY

CARE welcomes the call to being the '*first generation in human history to end hunger and ensure that every person achieves a basic standard of wellbeing*' and we agree that '*there can be no excuses*'. In order to end hunger we would like to see bolder language under Target 5a, '*end hunger and protect the right of everyone to have access to sufficient, safe, affordable, and nutritious food*' whereby all actors are committed to the realisation and fulfilment of the right to adequate, safe, affordable and nutritious food. While we accept that the protection of rights has a legal definition, rights are inalienable and must not only be protected through legal frameworks but fulfilled in order to have a

real impact on people's lives and well-being. Also, further attention should be paid to **severe acute malnutrition** and stunting.

The HLP states that '*moving to large-scale sustainable agriculture [...] is the great challenge that we face*'. While increasing yields sustainably is certainly a priority, it is yet to be determined the best way to achieve this. For instance large-scale, industrialized agriculture might not go in hand with sustainability. CARE's experience in **smallholder agriculture and conservation agriculture** tells us that there are food and nutrition security benefits through alternatives to large or intensive farming, particularly where women smallholders are actively engaged¹.

In addition, while both Targets 5c and 5d are welcome, there is still fine-tuning to be made in the current language or lack thereof. For Target 5c we would like to point out that while access to irrigation is clearly important, irrigation comes in many forms and some are neither desirable nor effective so this needs to be reflected in a more balanced target. For Target 5d, there should be due consideration to **livestock keepers and pastoralists**, so CARE calls for inclusion of this livelihood group in the new framework— particularly given their role as custodians of vast natural resource bases and ecosystems. Livestock represents the asset base and often exclusive income of many food-insecure communities and on a macro level represents hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of trade to developing world economies.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

It is encouraging to see climate change mentioned prominently in the report and the emphasis on sustainable development. The fact that the environment and development agendas have been closely aligned is also a step forward. The report rightly recognizes that poverty cannot be eradicated, and the wellbeing of people cannot be secured, without addressing the extreme pressures on the environment and the natural systems that support human life. Development needs to take into account planetary boundaries, ensuring that ecosystem services and biodiversity are secured and natural resources managed in a sustainable way². More specifically, CARE International welcomes that the following issues are highlighted in the report: the mounting **scientific evidence** about the direct threat of climate change; the stresses of our **unsustainable systems of production and consumption** that have led to major deforestation, water scarcity, food waste and high carbon emissions; the increased frequency and severity of **extreme weather events** such as drought, floods, storms and other natural disasters; and, lastly, that the **poorest are suffering first and worst** from climate change

Although it touches on recent climate science, the serious and worsening effects of climate change and the threat of climate impacts to the world's poorest, the report doesn't provide the tangible and effective global solutions we so urgently need to address the climate challenge, especially in the context of current trajectories leading to an average warming of 4 degrees. CARE would like to see the following key needs recognised much more strongly in the further development of the goals and targets proposed in the report: massively scaled-up support for **climate change adaptation, helping the poorest cope** with the effects of a climate-damaged world; new mechanisms and sources for generating additional **climate finance**; support for a **global greenhouse gas mitigation reduction goal**; mechanisms to **deal with the inevitable loss and damage** that is already resulting from climate change impacts; ensure urgent and rapid **emissions reductions** to address sustainable development; improved support for **building people's resilience** to climate change; greater recognition that the **historical responsibility for causing climate change** lies with developed countries in the global north, not developing countries in the global south; and far better consideration of the issue of **climate justice** – the fact that the world's poor have done the least to cause climate change but are also suffering its worst impacts.

¹ This learning is backed by research (see the International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development, UK Hunger Alliance/ODI).

² See the Sustainable Development Solutions Network's report: An Action Agenda for Sustainable Development

COUNTRIES IN CONFLICT

CARE strongly supports the Panel's call for *'a fundamental shift to recognise peace and good governance as core elements of well-being, not an optional extra'*. War and conflict have seen nearly all fragile states fail to reach a single MDG, preventing development and trapping people in a state of fear and insecurity. By 2015, the report notes, *'more than 50% of the total population in extreme poverty will reside in places affected by conflict and chronic violence.'* The call for explicit governance and peace goals (*Goals 10 and 11*) is therefore bold and welcome, as is the focus on achieving these by building accessible, accountable and professional institutions of law and order, and increasing public participation in decision-making.

The goal on peace builds on the earlier gender equality commitment to tackle and prevent all forms of sexual and gender-based violence. Nevertheless a **stronger recognition of the role of women** in preventing and resolving conflict in line with UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and related resolutions is disappointingly missing from the language of the targets in any of the goals. For women's rights and needs to be addressed, and for long-term peace and stability to be achieved, **women** must be **more involved** in decision-making, peace negotiations, and engaged in wider political processes. Equally, the **security and justice** sector reforms cited could and should be more explicit in identifying how they will be more accessible to women specifically, rather than being more inclusive in general.

INCLUSIVE GROWTH AND FINANCIAL INCLUSION

Extreme poverty is a gross abuse of human rights and has no place in our increasingly affluent world. CARE welcomes the focus of the Panel on ending extreme poverty but more needs to be done to implement this vision. In addition to the points raised above, CARE International would like to see the implementation of a global safety net of a minimum US\$1.25 per person per day. With countries from Ethiopia to Brazil and South Africa successfully implementing such schemes, they should become a priority for governments and donors. The Brookings Institute has estimated that raising everyone currently in extreme poverty to this minimum level would cost around US\$66 billion a year. Further, due consideration is also recommended to the need to raising the poverty line above US\$1.25 per person per day and addressing the soaring income inequality to ensure that all people in all places can live in dignity, fulfilling their human rights and achieving acceptable standards of wellbeing.

CARE also welcomes the emphasis placed on the role that a variety of key actors including the private sector plays in achieving more sustainable growth and it rightly distinguishes the different roles of big business and Small and Medium Enterprises, in particular the statement that there is an emerging model of doing business that *'goes well beyond corporate social responsibility'* – and that *'addresses the needs of poor consumers, promotes labour rights and sustainable practices and stays competitive by conserving land, water and energy'*. Despite the above, CARE believes that the report does not provide enough detail on **how incentives could be created** to help do this, or emphasise enough the **long-term business case for more inclusive models**.

CARE welcomes the report's willingness to hold companies accountable for their negative impacts in developing countries and emphasis on the need to improve companies' *'integrated reporting'* on their social and environmental impacts and suggestion that all large companies should adopt this approach by 2030. However the report remains vague on **which existing standards companies should adopt** – and does not include this ambition as a target in the draft Goal 8 and on how to **re-invigorate the reform of international trade and taxation rules and the global financial system**.

The report is strong on the importance of improving poor people's (especially poor women's) access to financial services both as a means to grow businesses and to raise the income of individuals. *'When people have the means to save and invest or get insurance, they can raise their incomes by at least 20%'*. CARE International particularly welcomes the fact that two of the draft goals have included access to finance as indicators (*2c: Ensure equal right of women to own and inherit property, sign a contract, register a business and open a bank account; and 8c: Strengthen productive capacity by providing universal access to financial services and infrastructure such as transportation and ICT*).

Drawing from our programming, we strongly believe that savings-led microfinance is an appropriate first step towards financial inclusion for the poorest and most vulnerable people. To meet the HLP's

ambition of ‘*Universal access*’ and the transformative shift that ‘*no one is left behind*’, **financial literacy** must also be part of any targets on financial inclusion. This will ensure more equitable and responsible coverage. Increased access to literacy should also be complimented by the promotion of client protection principles or a code of conduct.³

PARTICIPATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Our programmes have demonstrated that focusing on the core human rights principles of accountability, participation, transparency and non-discrimination ensure that interventions address the extreme inequity that exists between and within countries, and helps to address the underlying drivers of poverty, including the needed attention to women's and girls' rights and thus agree that they should be core to the new framework.

More specifically, CARE welcomes the report's emphasis on the importance of citizen participation, responsive governance and the principles of transparency and accountability, which lays a good foundation for the upcoming negotiations and identifies the roles and responsibilities of all parts of society in meeting these goals. Nevertheless, a main limitation of the report is that it **does not make specific recommendations on the monitoring and accountability mechanisms that will be needed at national and global levels**. Further work in this regard is thus needed in the next steps of the process, going beyond the proposed “data revolution” since data monitoring does not always reflect accountability.

Lastly, CARE also welcomes the Panel's recognition of the **key role of civil society and people living in poverty** in the implementation of the framework, as well as the need for developed countries to fulfil their commitments on aid and take necessary action on areas like trade and technology. Engaging civil society and communities – as partners in monitoring commitments, in supporting women and the broader community to better understand their rights, including in the above areas – must be a core part of the accountability framework.

Next steps

CARE believes that one of the main challenges will be to ensure that the recommendations of the Panel are not watered down during the negotiation process. **CARE International thus recommends:**

- Governments to use the HLP report as a reference point, maintaining the positive elements and addressing the weaknesses identified in these recommendations, as they embark in the design of the new framework that will guide sustainable development after 2015;
- the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals to use and build on the HLP report in its discussions;
- member states to agree on an outcome document at the High-Level Event to be held on 25th September 2013, that includes:
 - a strong commitment to close remaining implementation gaps to fulfil the MDGs by 2015;
 - a clear vision and roadmap for the negotiation of the new framework from September 2013 to 2015 that brings together the on-going discussions on the Post-2015 Development Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals process into a single framework.

We will work closely with partners to build on the proposals of the Panel and contribute to this process over the next two years.

³ Such as that suggested by the Smart Campaign <http://www.smartcampaign.org/>

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Founded in 1945, CARE is a leading humanitarian organization fighting global poverty and providing lifesaving assistance in emergencies. CARE places special focus on working alongside poor girls and women because, equipped with the proper resources, they have the power to help lift whole families and entire communities out of poverty.

Last year, CARE worked in 84 countries around the world to assist more than 122 million people improve basic health and education, fight hunger, increase access to clean water and sanitation, expand economic opportunity, confront climate change, and recover from disasters. To learn more, visit www.care-international.org