



**CENTER FOR ECONOMIC
AND SOCIAL RIGHTS**



FORUM

Visions and Voices for Human Rights

Integrating human rights into the post-2015 agenda

Conference Room 7, New Lawn Building, United Nations, New York,
24th September 2013, 6.30-8.30pm

CONCEPT NOTE

As the deadline approaches for achieving the Millennium Development Goals, governments and non-governmental actors are intensifying efforts to channel their visions and ideas for a post-2015 development agenda.

As affirmed in the Rio+20 Outcome Document, and most recently in the Secretary General's report to the General Assembly, the new framework of development goals and targets must be grounded in universally-applicable human rights standards. In the course of worldwide consultations over the last year, a resounding call has emerged from civil society for a transformative vision of sustainable development that has as its goal the realization of all human rights for all the world's people. Numerous proposals have been put forward for how human rights principles and standards can be reflected operationally in any new set of commitments. In particular, these have focused on how new goals and targets can more effectively promote equality, reinforce the indivisibility of all human rights, and strengthen transparency and accountability of all actors within, above and beyond the state. Work has also advanced on promoting the generation and use of maximum available resources for sustainable development, and on defining human rights-sensitive metrics for assessing progress.

The existing framework of international human rights standards, which states have already committed to upholding, can provide an integrated, holistic, cohesive and transformative framework for the Post-2015 development agenda. These include the right to development, set out in the 1986 United Nations Declaration on the Right to Development adopted by the General Assembly more than 25 years ago. The right to development encompasses the civil, political, economic, social and cultural dimensions of human rights and addresses both the national and international dimensions of development. It includes the principles of solidarity, international cooperation, transparency, equality, participation, accountability and non-discrimination which should be applied at both the national and international levels.

Given our world's increasing globalization and interdependence, as well as the global challenges and multiple interrelated crises we face, national development efforts must be supported by the international community through collaborative efforts and arrangements based on global solidarity, common but differentiated responsibility and mutual accountability. The right to development requires the international community to create an enabling global environment free of structural impediments where developing countries have opportunities for active participation and meaningful international economic activities. Despite the central importance of the right to development and other human rights standards in framing and informing a new development agenda, discussions to date have addressed human rights only rhetorically, and have touched very lightly on the right to development.

The recognition in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that freedom from fear and freedom from want are inseparable holds as true today as it did in 1948 when the Declaration was adopted. Development and human rights are mutually reinforced when individuals and communities can exercise their rights to freedom of expression, information and association in order to ensure more effective delivery of development projects. Prioritizing the universal fulfillment of essential levels of economic and social rights – such as housing, food, water, sanitation, education, health and social security – whilst focusing on the most disadvantaged when planning programs and allocating resources is a human rights obligation of States as well as a critical step to ensure that development leaves nobody behind. Addressing discrimination in all its interrelated forms is crucial to remedying the inequality blind-spots in the current MDG framework. Without true gender equality women and girls will continue to face insurmountable barriers to access the services and resources necessary to lift them out of poverty.

In September 2013, The UN Secretary General will present his report on implementation of MDGs and post-2015 to the UN General Assembly. A special event will take place to review progress of the MDGs and determine the process for agreeing the post-2015 agenda. This is an opportune time to reflect on the central importance of human rights, including the right to development, in framing a new sustainable development agenda.

The interactive forum organized by IBON International, the Center for Economic and Social Rights (CESR) and Amnesty International, in partnership with the Permanent Missions of Argentina and Finland to the United Nations and the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights (OHCHR), will bring together civil society organizations working in different contexts to discuss their visions and proposals for a renewed development agenda that serves to realize the full range of human rights, including the right to development. The format is intended to allow for the active participation of the many civil society organizations who have registered for the event, as well as member states and others attending.

Speakers will include:

Celestine Akpobari, Ogoni Solidarity Forum

Radhika Balakrishnan, Center for Women's Global Leadership

Savio Carvalho, Amnesty International

Paul Quintos, IBON International

Ignacio Saiz, CESR

Anne Sipiläinen, Under Secretary of State for Development Policy, Finland and [TBC]

Organizers:

[IBON International](#), a division of IBON Foundation, Inc. is an NGO that responds to international demand to provide support in research and education to people's movements and grassroots empowerment and advocacy and links these to international initiatives and networks. IBON International initiates and implements international programs, develops and hosts international networks, initiates and participates in international advocacy campaigns, and establishes regional and country offices where necessary and appropriate. IBON has a strong board, committed and capable staff and broad networks. It has managed grants from public and private sources and has since established its credibility and institutional capacity in the last three decades.

The [Center for Economic and Social Rights \(CESR\)](#) was established in 1993 to work for the recognition and enforcement of these rights as a powerful tool for social justice. CESR advocates for changes to economic, social and development policy at the international and national levels so as to ensure these comply with international human rights standards. CESR serves as a member of the Executive Committee of Beyond 2015, a global civil society campaign advocating for a strong and legitimate successor framework to the MDGs. It has also worked closely with OHCHR on proposals for strengthening accountability under the post-2015 framework. CESR's Board also consists of leading figures in the human rights and development communities.

[Amnesty International](#) is a global movement of more than 3 million supporters, members and activists in over 150 countries and territories who campaign to end grave abuses of human rights. Our vision is for every person to enjoy all the rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights standards. We are independent of any government, political ideology, economic interest or religion, and are funded mainly by our membership and public donations. As part of our Demand Dignity campaign, we work together with people living in poverty, local partners and networks on issues such as maternal health and sexual reproductive rights, ending forced evictions and improving the situation and access to services of slum residents, corporate accountability and making rights law.