



Summary:

Swiss position on a framework for sustainable development post-2015

The Swiss position on the post-2015 development agenda was approved by the Federal Council on 25 June 2014 within the framework of the decision on Swiss priorities for the 69th session of the UN General Assembly

1. Background

For more than a decade, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have been the dominant development paradigm and organising framework. They have substantially contributed to focusing development cooperation efforts, strengthening the accountability requirement and mobilising global support. In view of the 2015 expiry date, and to ensure a follow-up framework post-2015, the MDG Summit Meeting of 2010 requested UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to initiate the necessary steps and launch a consultative process.

Parallel to this process a mandate for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was approved at the Rio+20 Conference on Sustainable Development in June 2012. The Open Working Group on SDGs (OWG) established for this purpose will submit a report with proposals for SDGs to the UN General Assembly by September 2014.

2. A new global framework for sustainable development post-2015

At the Special Event on the MDGs and the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda held in September 2013 during the 68th session of the UN General Assembly, the international community agreed to converge the MDG follow-up framework and the SDGs. Post-2015, poverty eradication and sustainable development are to be addressed in an overarching framework with common priorities and objectives. The new framework for sustainable development post-2015 is to be adopted at a summit meeting of heads of state and government in September 2015.

3. Key elements of the new framework

Switzerland supports efforts towards a comprehensive global framework for sustainable development post-2015. Switzerland advocates that the overarching objective of this framework should be to achieve sustainable development and eradicate extreme poverty in all its forms while respecting planetary boundaries, fostering peace and inclusive societies and meeting human rights obligations.

Principles

Switzerland is of the view that the general framework and its individual objectives should be based on the following principles:

- 1) *Human rights*: a new transformative agenda for sustainable development must include and make strong reference to human rights, including economic, social and cultural rights as well as civil and political rights.
- 2) *Respect for planetary boundaries*: the new agenda and its practical implementation must respect natural limitations, the carrying capacity of ecosystems and planetary boundaries.
- 3) *Social inclusion and justice*: the overall framework must be based on the underlying principle of eliminating the structural causes of inequality and their manifestation in the exclusion of women, youth, children and all disadvantaged groups.
- 4) *Universality*: the challenges of sustainable development are universal in nature. Consequently every country must contribute to the achievement of the global goals according to its capacity and national circumstances.

- 5) *Policy coherence*: in the context of a comprehensive framework it is essential that all relevant policies, for example policies on trade, the financial sector, agriculture, health and education, be coherent and geared to achieving sustainable development.

Attributes of a future goals framework

The new framework must be universally applicable. Goals must consequently be applicable for all countries and at the same time allow for differentiated approaches and/or country-specific adaptation. Switzerland advocates the rigorous integration of all three dimensions of sustainable development (economic, social and environmental) in the new goals framework, both at the level of the framework as well as that of individual goals. In addition, peace, inclusive societies and the rule of law should be recognised as preconditions for sustainable development. The goals must take into account inter-linkages that exist between different thematic areas and avoid a conflict of objectives.

The elaboration of a future goals framework must be based on MDG results and an analysis of lessons learned, the Millennium Declaration, the Rio+20 outcome document, internationally agreed environmental goals and other relevant agreements as well as sound scientific principles. The goals should be action-oriented, time-bound, limited in number (8 to 12 if possible), easy to communicate and measurable through clear targets and indicators.

4. Key thematic areas and the Swiss position

Switzerland has taken a position on 16 thematic areas in the consultations for a post-2015 development agenda. The thematic areas are elaborated in the Swiss position and discussed in detail in the relevant working papers (www.post2015.ch).

1. *Eradication of extreme poverty*
A stand-alone goal on poverty is required to address absolute and relative poverty, reduce inequality and decrease the vulnerability of poor population groups.
2. *Food security and nutrition for all through sustainable agrifood systems*
A stand-alone goal in this area must include the following elements: access to food; healthy nutrition; sustainability of all food systems; strengthening of smallholders and reduction in food losses and waste.
3. *Water security for all*
A water goal must address the following areas: water supply; sanitation and hygiene; water resources management; wastewater management and water quality; resilience to water-related disasters.
4. *Ensuring universal access to sustainable energy*
An energy goal should include the following key elements: universal access to modern energy services; doubling the share of renewable energies; doubling the rate of improvement in energy efficiency and strengthening national energy policies.
5. *Ensuring equitable, inclusive and quality education and life-long learning for all*
A specific goal on education should ensure access to primary education, the quality of education, equal opportunities and life-long learning.
6. *Maximising health for all in all life stages*
A health goal must address the unfinished business of the health MDGs and include further elements (e.g. non-communicable diseases). It should address access to quality health services as well as sexual and reproductive health and rights.
7. *Employment and decent work for all, sustainable and green growth*
A goal on employment should cover the implementation of the ILO's international labour standards and agendas, social security systems and the fostering of employment opportunities. Sustainable and green growth can be combined with this goal or formulated as a stand-alone goal to facilitate a sound and stable economic environment and a green economy.
8. *Sustainable consumption and production (including chemicals and waste)*
Issues relating to sustainable development should be addressed in the following areas: patterns of consumption and production; public procurement; corporate social responsibility; sustainability reporting; consumer information; chemicals and waste management.

9. *Governance – for more transparent, accessible and accountable institutions*
Switzerland attaches importance to the following institutional factors: strong, corruption-free local governments; high standards of transparency and accountability; effective management of public finances and policy coherence for sustainable development.
10. *Gender equality, rights of women and empowerment of women and girls*
Gender equality must be included as a stand-alone goal and as a transversal approach within the goals framework. Key elements of the stand-alone goal are: equality of economic opportunities; elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls, equal participation in political decision-making.
11. *Sustainable peace and inclusive societies*
A stand-alone goal should address the following areas: personal security; reducing the number of victims of violence and conflict; access to justice and conflict management as well as strengthening resilience to internal and external shocks.
12. *Disaster risk reduction*
Specific targets for disaster risk reduction should be integrated through a transversal approach in all relevant goals (e.g. water, infrastructure, food security and sustainable agriculture, education, biodiversity, energy, health).
13. *Population dynamics / migration and development*
The following specific targets should be integrated in the relevant goal areas: ensuring safe and regular migration; reducing the economic and social costs of migration and facilitating contributions to development by migrants.
14. *Biodiversity (including forests)*
Biodiversity and forests should be formulated as a stand-alone goal taking account of the Strategic Plan for Biological Diversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi biodiversity targets. Concrete targets should be integrated in all relevant SDGs.
15. *Sustainable cities and infrastructure*
Future targets should address the areas of urban and infrastructure planning (including land use, access to sustainable and safe transportation), urban administration (knowledge and capacity building) and sustainable infrastructure financing.
16. *Climate change*
The prominent integration of climate-relevant targets in other goals of the post-2015 development agenda should contribute to achieving low-emission development and climate-resilient economies and societies.

Switzerland is actively engaged in this process, particularly in individual thematic areas that reflect the conclusions of its national consultations, specific Swiss expertise, profile and comparative advantages at the international level. Switzerland advocates stand-alone goals in the following thematic areas: i) water security for all; ii) maximising health for all at all stages of life; iii) gender equality, rights of women and empowerment of women and girls; iv) sustainable peace and inclusive societies.

Switzerland is also focusing its efforts on ensuring the integration of the following thematic areas (as stand-alone goals or in a transversal manner): i) disaster risk reduction; ii) sustainable consumption and production; iii) promoting the economic and social benefits of migration.

With regard to the conceptualisation of the new framework, Switzerland explicitly advocates that future goals must adequately reflect and integrate all three dimensions of sustainable development.

5. Implementation and impact

The new framework will bring about a paradigm shift in international cooperation given its emphasis on universality and the balanced integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development. The contents of previous global frameworks as well as their implementation and financing will be significantly broadened to include new thematic areas, instruments and actors.

A new global partnership for sustainable development

Cooperation between governmental and non-governmental actors will play an important role in implementing ambitious, global goals. Rules, policies and responsibilities must be defined within the

framework of a new global partnership for sustainable development so as to make available the means of implementation, create an enabling environment at the international level and ensure accountability and monitoring of the achievement of goals.

Means of implementation and the creation of an enabling international environment

The creation of an enabling international environment involves several important elements, such as elaborating coherent sectoral policies at the national and international level, the development, transfer and dissemination of environmentally sound and resource-efficient technologies, capacity building and expansion as well as a rule-based, open and non-discriminatory multilateral trading system. One significant instrument for implementing the new framework will also be the availability of financing for sustainable development. Apart from official development assistance (ODA), which continues to be critical, especially for the poorest countries, additional resources and financing channels must be integrated. These include domestic resource mobilisation, innovative financing instruments and private financial resources, such as direct investments in sustainable development, remittances by migrants and funds from foundations and philanthropic donors.

Metrics and monitoring

To ensure implementation of the post-2015 development agenda, a universal mechanism for periodic review, accountability and reporting on the achievement of goals should be established under the new High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. Effective monitoring would also necessitate further improvements in the data for measuring sustainable development and strengthening national capacities in this area.

6. Significance for Switzerland

Given the universal character of the new goals, Switzerland will contribute to their implementation both under its domestic and foreign policies. Apart from providing assistance to less developed countries, Switzerland will also adopt measures at the national level for implementing the framework and achieving the global goals. The Sustainable Development Strategy 2016-2019 of the Federal Council, for example, will therefore define specific national goals for implementation in Switzerland based on the new framework.

7. International and national negotiation process

International process: Switzerland has been actively involved in the international process from the outset (2012). In the global thematic consultations it assumed co-leadership in the areas of water and population dynamics. In the Open Working Group on SDGs (OWG) that is elaborating proposals for goals and targets for submission to the UN General Assembly, Switzerland shares one of 30 seats with France and Germany and was able to actively incorporate its concerns and priorities in the preparatory process. Switzerland's commitment to this process, culminating in the adoption of the new goals framework in September 2015, will continue, especially in the intergovernmental negotiations to take place 2015.

National process: a task force headed by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and involving the active participation of 16 federal offices was established to elaborate the Swiss position and coordinate the national process. Several broad-based national consultations have been held since the autumn of 2012 and inputs from civil society, the private sector, academia and policymakers were incorporated.