

Outcome Document of the CSOs Monrovia Consultation for the Post 2015 Development Agenda

On the occasion of the High-Level Panel's meeting in Monrovia, Liberia during January 30-February 1, 2013, we the members of global, regional and national civil society welcome the commitment of the HLP and of the host government to outreach and engagement with civil society organisations. Building on the previous CSO engagement with HLP processes, as well as a number of regional and national consultations on the post-2015 development framework, CSOs have met in Liberia to discuss our perspectives on and approaches to the HLP meeting's theme of 'national building blocks for sustained prosperity – economic transformation'.

Context

We are deeply concerned about the continuing harsh environment for sustained prosperity, inclusive economic growth and social transformation. This includes the following:

- Continuing economic uncertainties and turbulence caused, especially for poor people and the middle classes, by the triple crisis – finance, energy, food – of 2008 onwards. The underpinnings of this crisis in a hyper-financialised, and poorly regulated model of economic growth have not yet been effectively addressed, and continue to wreak havoc in people's lives;
- Under this model, global and national inequalities are persistent and widening, including among a number of the economies that are experiencing the fastest economic growth. The evidence on inequality increasingly suggests that, far from growth being a rising tide lifting all boats, the poor are floundering whether in terms of income, wealth or nutritional status;
- From the beginnings of structural adjustment programs in Africa and Latin America in the 1980s through multiple intervening financial crises into the current crisis, the neoliberal model has imposed excessive fiscal discipline on borrowing countries resulting in cutbacks in public spending in areas such as health, education, water, sanitation and programs for social protection, as well as leading to poorly regulated privatisation and public-private partnerships. Not only have poor people suffered as a consequence, but accountability has been weak;
- The growing phenomenon of jobless growth and the fact that even where jobs are created, workers often suffer from low wages /earnings, insecurity, unhealthy working conditions, abuse and violence, means that the fruits of economic growth are not translated effectively into the well-being of people or opportunities for the future;
- The continuing risks and vulnerabilities resulting from climate change and the fact that much of the economic growth that is currently occurring, for example in Africa, has been concentrated in extractive industries, is resource-depleting, environmentally destructive, and unsustainable. The phenomenon of the 'resource curse' and the siphoning away of the

returns from such growth mean that its benefits do not reach ordinary people. It also often jeopardises access to resources and traditional livelihoods of the poorest and most vulnerable.

- Persistent and new conflicts continue to stifle economic potential, intensify and entrench poverty and suffering, increase the numbers of internally displaced persons and refugees, and raise levels of violence against women, children and young people.

Cross-cutting Approaches

We demand from political leaders and governments that you move urgently to tame and regulate the hubris of financial markets and unsustainable growth, generating thereby greater national policy space and more resources for human development, and keeping socially disruptive inequalities from getting worse.

Alternative economic models and approaches exist that combine growth with human development and human rights in ways that are environmentally sustainable. These models are more participatory, can draw on new financing mechanisms, and build on the energy, dynamism and creativity of those who are traditionally marginalised and oppressed. What is needed is the political will among global and national leaders and decision-makers to adopt such approaches and make them central to the Post 2015 development agenda.

As civil society organizations working with communities and people at multiple levels, we bear testimony to the fact that unsustainable and dis-equalising approaches to economic growth place the greatest burdens on people who have the least resources and capacities to cope with the consequences.

Harsh economic conditions interact with long-standing social inequalities, biases and discrimination, as well as with key aspects of population dynamics such as migration, urbanisation and changing age structures (towards larger numbers of young people in some cases and many older people in others) to determine who is most severely affected. This includes children, girls and women, subordinated and oppressed castes and racial / ethnic groups, indigenous or disabled people, people living with HIV, sexual minorities, migrants and sex-workers, as well as widows, and older people. The existing social and economic inequalities faced by these groups as well as by pastoralists, small-scale farmers and informal traders are being intensified by current growth models. It is these people whose capabilities need to be supported. Their human rights, including their economic, social, cultural, sexual and reproductive rights need to be protected, promoted and fulfilled.

We urge the HLP to promote inclusive and sustainable growth and human development, underpinned by a rights-based approach that strengthens citizenship, participation and empowerment, and guarantees decent employment and universal social protection.

We call on the HLP to become champions for increases in pro-poor and gender-responsive budgets for human development and human rights; to support making governments, multilateral and bilateral agencies **accountable** through well-resourced and effective

institutions for participatory monitoring and evaluation; and to promote the implementation of existing conventions and protocols on the rights of people.

We call on the HLP to support increased resources to build people's **capabilities** through quality education, skills development and training, access to finances and information, and health including sexual and reproductive health especially of adolescents; to insist on the collection of **disaggregated data including by age and sex** to strengthen the implementation of laws, policies and programs; to ensure strengthened **infrastructure and technology** for improved production, communication and exchange among people, better access to markets and innovation and access to all social services; to ensure that the challenge of rising **violence against girls and women**, especially sexual violence, is prioritised and addressed; and to recognise through strengthened policies and programs the central role of **women's unpaid work** in caring for people and supporting human development.

Empowering People to Become Agents of Change

We call on the HLP to address the following specific needs of particular groups:

- the causes of structural poverty among **children** in various contexts; good governance and accountability around child rights and protection; and enabling children to participate in economic transformation through initiatives that promote quality education for girls and boys, health care, sexual health, information, adequate nutrition, and services for children including those with disabilities or HIV, and protection of children from all forms of violence and exploitation including early and forced marriage;
- realize the potential of the demographic dividend through comprehensive **youth** policies that include provision of more and better education, support for young people to obtain decent and well-paid jobs, access to finance and knowledge to become innovators and entrepreneurs, as well as the ability of all young people, especially adolescents to obtain comprehensive sexuality education, and sexual and reproductive health services, and to empower and resource girls to prevent teenage pregnancies and violence, and provide sensitisation and training for boys to promote gender equality and prevent violence;
- the achievement of gender equality, the protection of **women's** human rights including sexual and reproductive rights and support for women's empowerment are critical to the success of the entire post 2015 development agenda; the post 2015 development agenda should include a reinforced stand-alone gender equality goal and expanded gender targets and indicators across the entire framework. Failure to do so would reverse the gains of the last 20 years;
- full and equal participation of people with **disabilities** and older people in all stages of the economic process including decision making, to strengthen focus on disability as a cross-cutting theme across all the goals including through the collection of accurate and comprehensive data, prevent and redress the effects of discrimination and exclusion, and ensure access to services for effective participation in economic and social transformation; and to pay special attention to girls and women with disabilities and the needs and rights of widows;

- support **local farmers and small agricultural producers** to produce affordable food for all through access to improved marketing, technology and credit; to ensure that agricultural and trade policies in high income countries do not militate against agricultural production in low and middle income countries; to prevent the loss of land to local farmers through land grabbing and secure their rights to land; to protect farmers' intellectual property in seeds and local agricultural varieties; to strengthen farmers' cooperatives for production and marketing; to particularly address the problems that women farmers have in securing land rights, accessing credit, technology and labour; and to urgently address the need to mitigate the impact of climate change on agricultural production;
- reform labour laws and policies to ensure full and decent employment for all and that all **workers** including disabled workers obtain a living wage, and support for freedom of association, collective bargaining and social dialogue for decent work; to urgently address the human rights of women workers to equal wages, maternity leave, child care, safe and decent working conditions including clean toilets, private spaces for breast-feeding, adequate rest breaks, the prevention of practices such as virginity tests, and protection from sexual violence in the workplace;
- small producers in the **informal sector** particularly called for fair trade and support for access to technology, credit and knowledge.

We strongly believe that the Post-2015 Development Agenda should be based on a vision of socio-economic transformation and a strategy that will have at its core a commitment to protect and promote the human rights of people, to build their economic capabilities, and thereby to harness their potential and to recognise them as key contributors to development.

We call upon the HLP to ensure that the post-2015 development framework increases financial resources and policy space for human development and human rights, and creates incentives, institutions and processes in which people and civil society organisations can participate effectively to design, implement and monitor economic and social trends, funding, policies and programs. This will be essential to building a truly inclusive and sustainable development agenda.