

Press conference dated 4th June 2013, jointly by EquityBD and VOICE

Does the UN HLP Report on Post 2015 Development Agenda
ensure Transformation of Economies?

Lofty Goal, Empty Bowl!

Recognize Historical Responsibility First

1. Background

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) announced in 2000 and targeted to halve the poverty have only two years to fulfill the commitments by 2015. Discussions have taken place around the globe among governments, United Nations and civil society organizations to measure out the achievements so far. Many raised concerns and put critical arguments on the approach though some achievements on the goals and targets have been achieved by the nation states. Review of the MDGs has already indicated the failures of the commitments of the millennium goals and targets. Meantime, United Nations and the global leadership have reiterated commitments to carry forward in post 2015 and expressed concerns on how to ensure sustainable development goals as a universal process. UN Secretary General (UNSG) has appointed 27 world eminent persons in a high level panel (HLP) where UK Prime Minister David Cameron, Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, and Indonesian President Dr. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono act as co-chairs.

The HLP have had extensive discussion all over the world, as they explain "In all, we heard voices and reviewed recommendations for goals and targets from over 5000 civil society organizations- ranging from grassroots organizations to global alliances-working in about 120 countries across every major region of the world. We also consulted the chief executive officers of 250 companies in 30 countries, with annual revenue exceeding \$ 8 trillion, academics from developed and developing countries, international and local NGOs and civil society movements, and parliamentarians." Consultations also have been organized by civil society organizations around the world while civil society, grassroots organizations and voices of marginalized and communities have been counted and put forward to the HLP to consider. Civil society organizations have also organized Forum during the official HLP meetings engaging wide range of stakeholders including the HLP members and exchange opinion on the post 2015 development framework.

HLP report titled " A New Global Partnership: Eradicate Poverty and Transform Economies through Sustainable Development" has been published and circulated on 30th June 2013 and discussion have been going on to provide feedback to consider further post 2015 development framework.

2. Major recommendations of the report

Explaining the inferences, HLP wrote " The evidence leaves much room for judgment on what goals would be most transformative, and relevant to the most countries, But based on the criteria above, we have narrowed down the illustrative list to 12 goals, and 54 targets, the achievement of which would dramatically improve the condition of people and the planet by 2030."

The report stated that "the goals are deliberately divided into categories corresponding to the specific transformative shifts described earlier and they must interact to provide results. Following 12 goals are suggested : (i) end poverty, (ii) empower girls and women and achieve gender equality, (iii) provide quality education and lifelong learning; (iv) ensure healthy lives; (v) ensure food security and good nutrition; (vi) achieve universal access to water and sanitation; (vii) secure sustainable energy; (viii) create jobs, sustainable livelihood and equitable growth; (ix) manage natural resource asset sustainability; (x) ensure good governance and effective institutions; (xi) ensure stable and peaceful societies; and (xii) create a global enabling environment and catalyze long term finance."

In respect of strategies as HLP report mentioned " if these goals and their accompanying targets were pursued they would drive the five key transformations, (i) leave no one behind, (ii) transform economics, (iii) implement sustainable development, (iv) build effective institutions and (v) forge a new global partnership." And as cross cutting issues the report analyzed (i) Peace, (ii) Inequality, (iii) Climate change, (iv) Cities, (v) Young people, (vi) Girls and Women, and (vii) Sustainable consumption and production patterns.

3. Striking balance and taking position

Un denying the fact that so called notion of free market, private finance in development, role of state etc have some roles in existing development paradigm. The HLP report has overlooked these structural factors. There are experiential questions and those must be needed to take into consideration further. These are following;

- (a) The HLP report doesn't clarify fully how the sustained growth and sustainable development will take place in post 2015 period. Rather a

conflicting idea spreads in the report around the issues of open market economy. The report doesn't assert whether post 2015 development framework will be further extension of a free market that creates income inequality and widen rich and poor divide or a regulated market which facilitates development i.e. growth with equality and redistribution of wealth and job creation in the least developed countries;

- (b) The HLP report has emphasized on private financing in development; but there are hardly any interests from private sector to finance in development with standardized accountable mechanism. Moreover, private sector triumphs for profit, not for development. So private finance dependence mechanism for post development agenda is questionable and puts huge doubt among the actors on the ground. We believe that development assistance from developed countries should be from public finance and the unfinished business must be carried forward in post 2015.

4. Our concern, unresolved issues

We observe, there are unresolved contentious issues that have not been addressed in the HLP report as follows:

- (a) **Developed countries have to recognize their historical responsibility first:** There are historical evidences that underdevelopment in least developed and some developing countries have some basic reasons. Most of those countries were colonized and their resources have been exploited that fueled industrial development in most of the developed countries. Now a day, climate catastrophe has been putting devastations in the LDCs and developing countries. And because of high level of carbon emission in developed countries climate change vulnerability have been increased and people are being put in the worst condition in life and livelihood. So, at first, the developed countries has to recognize these ecological and carbon debt. Developed countries must have to take these historical responsibilities and compensate for the damage they did to the LDCs and developing countries.
- (b) **LDCs and developed countries need democratic policy space in International Financial Institutions**

(IFIs) and at UN : Policy space for LDCs and developing countries must get the policy space in the international financial institutions like World Bank and International Monetary Fund etc.,. And a strong reform is needed to get the democratic space in the decision making process which we suggest, must be based on "one country one vote" not based on monetary portfolio. There should be also a fair representation from LDC and developing countries in the UN Security Council. The result of the policy decisions in most cases especially yielding from the IFIs is not pro poor and pro development for the people of the developing countries. The HLP must recognize this democratic policy space and ask for the strong reform in this regard.

- (c) **Drop all debts and no to debt creating instrument for LDCs in the name of development assistance:** Most of the least developing countries have been entrapped into debt problems. Most of their revenue has to spend for debt servicing either to the developed countries or to the IFIs. In respect of climate financing, developed countries have continuously been imposing debt creating loan instrument through IFIs, which in fact, doubles the burden. The HLP report completely ignored this. We strongly urge to the HLP to recommend to stop debt creating instrumental measures for the least developing countries and to provide development assistance as grant and compensation must be paid as their part of historical responsibilities.
- (d) **Need to hold back the arm race and army expenditure:** The HLP report has mentioned about peace and security. They have illustrated four sub-goals in this regard. Goal no. 11 states to: ensure stable and peaceful societies. Arm race, arm business and army expenditure have been increasing in nature which is the major threat for peace and security. Invested money in this regard could be diverted for poverty eradication and development. There is nothing in the HLP report to reduce the arms business that provokes conflicts in the many States. We hope that the HLP and UN SG will take this into their concern and formulate new goal in respect to hold back arm race and army expenditure.

We, Equitybd and VOICE hereby put our comments and recommendations to be considered by the HLP and to accommodate these recommendations in the post 2015 development framework.



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