



8 December 2015

Draft Input Paper

Democratic and Equitable Development for Everyone – The 2030 Agenda

Progressive Alliance Forum, 14 December 2015, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic

In September, the world's heads of state and governments signed off the new "2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" in New York. This agenda is a global development roadmap which combines the poverty, development and environmental agendas. The 17 sustainable development goals (SDG) are universal and apply to all states as of now, including developing countries, emerging and industrialised states.

In addition to the three traditional areas of economic development, social inclusion, and ecological sustainability, the SDGs also encompass governance and questions of security as a fourth pillar of sustainable development. Thus, the objectives of the 2030 Agenda are aimed well beyond the development policies with which we are familiar, both in terms of their content and their aspirations for political change.

The political discussions relating to the 2030 Agenda have only just begun. Many of the necessary changes to which the states have committed, in the form of the Sustainable Development Goals, are directed against the established order, which is supported by powerful interests. Yet, changing these will create new winners and losers – and very possibly based on a different pattern to the one with which we have become familiar over the past few decades. A global energy transformation will displace market shares, close markets and change ownership structures. Tackling the issue of inequality will shake the very foundations of finance capitalism, and the enforcement of labour laws will shift the power balance in favour of the employees and the unions, whose rights have been marginalised for many years.

The world has not been stood on its head through the discussions about the sustainability goals, but, for progressive parties, unions, and civic organisations, the 2030 Agenda will provide important starting points, in the coming years, from which to take up an oppositional stance against the prevailing negative global climate and to fight for an equitable and democratic development.



2030 Agenda: Inclusive and Sustainable Growth

- Because of the dramatic worsening of inequality both within individual countries and between states, but also as a result of social movements and protests in many countries, the question of social equality is once again back at the centre of social discussions. Inequality is one of the main causes of conflict. Therefore, the question as to whether globalisation will continue to increase the wealth of the rich (societies) will be less decisive for the constitution of the world and the various states than whether or not it will prove possible to reduce social, economic and environmental disparities. Even "2014 Global Risks" report, based on the World Economic Forum's summit in Davos, assumes that the strong income differential will become one of the biggest risks in the coming decade.
- In concrete terms, serious inequality in income and wealth distribution has direct economic, social and political consequences. Major long-term inequality is detrimental to economic prosperity, but is also directly causally linked to a plethora of social aberrations. Inequality locks in social opportunity and power relations, thereby hindering social and intergenerational mobility and making it more difficult to combat poverty. It endangers civic peace and political stability, and undermines democracy in the longer term.
- Several approaches are necessary to combat inequality:
 1. Changing primary distribution through the introduction of minimum wages, collective agreements and the formalisation of employment relationships.
 2. Direct state-led redistribution measures, such as an efficient taxation policy, transfer systems etc.
 3. Indirect approaches to combating inequality like the promotion of a public health service, public education and meaningful work.
 4. International action such as clamping down on tax evasion and tax havens.
- Full employment and decent work for everybody are keys to social and economic development. The creation of jobs and better working conditions enables people, and therefore communities and states, to pull themselves out of poverty and to improve their economic situations. In this context, it is to be expected that the question of decent work will become the centre of attention over the coming years. Given the existence of



some 400 million working poor, who are living in extreme poverty despite being employed, the high proportion of informal employment relationships, especially in countries in the southern hemisphere, the three quarters of the world's population who have no social support network, and the systemic flouting of employee and trade union rights, all progressive, social democratic and socialist parties around the world must make the creation of "decent jobs" central to their cause. In this area too, in line with the universal 2030 Agenda, changes in both the industrialised nations and the developing countries need to interlock, not just in certain points but across the board. This includes, for example, the extension of corporate responsibility and binding accountability and transparency obligations for companies throughout the supply chain; the creation of basic social protections and the introduction of living wages in order to institutionalise social human rights on a material basis throughout the world; support for the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in its struggle to enforce the core labour standards; and a reorganisation of the public procurement system as well as putting an end to wage dumping.

- In addition to the eradication of poverty, the success of the 2030 Agenda will also be discernible, above all, in the successful implementation of the sustainable business operations goal. Decoupling growth and prosperity from resource consumption, the generation of waste and greenhouse gas emissions lies at the heart of the necessary structural transformation – in every country.
- The scope of this decoupling must take account of the finite nature of the Earth's systems, which means respecting the planetary limits. What is required is a complete decoupling of production and consumption and the concomitant environmental impact, i.e. a real reduction in our ongoing resource consumption and pollution of the environment. A mere "relative decoupling" that, whilst resulting in increased "environmental efficiency" (i.e. resource, material or energy efficiency), also results in increased production and a concomitant increase in resource consumption and environmental pollution, even if it is at a lower rate than before, will not suffice as a means of escaping the growth dilemma in the longer term. As a first step, there will have to be ambitious, i.e. absolute decoupling targets set for the advanced industrialised nations. For emerging markets and developing countries it would be possible to agree a series of stepped relative decoupling targets depending on the current state of development.



2030 Agenda: Building Inclusive and Democratic Societies

- The organisation of an economic system such as this, and the associated transitions, would require the existence of a global society that is in constant dialogue. The quality of democracy, governance and politics will be decisive in terms of developmental success. Concrete experiences with the implementation of the MDGs have shown that good governance makes a difference – "it's politics, stupid!". Good governance is the missing link when it comes to meeting many developmental targets. Weak institutions, despotism, poor administration, corruption, and strictly controlled civil societies all tend to hinder development and endanger the stability of states and entire regions. The histories of failed states are linked by a common thread of state institutions discredited as a result of autocratic rule, neo-patriarchal structures, inadequate capacities, and corruption. The issue of governance and the practice of government, i.e. the development of stable, efficient, inclusive and democratic structures at all political levels (local, national, regional, and global), will be one of the key challenges over the coming years. To a great extent, the success or failure of the other core objectives of the global 2030 Agenda will be decided by our success in mastering this challenge.
- For many people, who do not wish to accept social injustice, corruption and a lack of opportunity, there is no chance to participate either at the community or political levels. The institutions in many states are no longer upholding their side of the social contract, and politicians and the business community are shielding themselves from the anxieties, demands, and needs of ordinary people to discuss their issues. In a very real sense, democratic government is more than just a supporting framework for development. For broad swathes of the population democracy represents their aspirations for greater political freedoms and real participation. The MYWorld Survey has shown that, all around the world, people view an "honest and responsive government" as a top priority (in third place just behind education and training, and healthcare).
- The transformation invoked in the 2030 Agenda requires supportive organizations. Very few existing institutions (either in the south or the north) will be able to shoulder these transformations in their current forms. Therefore, good governance also means continuing to create new institutions, overhauling existing institutions, and developing innovations. For many states, the de facto requirement is for a new social contract, albeit



one that needs to be rooted more in the minds of the citizenry than set out on paper. Thus, the creation of new democratic institutions in all social spheres represents a central challenge.

- In order to bring about democratic governance, it will also be necessary to create democratic institutions in those areas in which democracy is tangible. These need to begin with those spheres of life which are of immediate relevance to the people. This means that democratic principles and good governance should not be restricted to the political arena in the narrowest sense. What this also means, quite specifically, is that good governance should not peter out at the gates to the factories, barracks, schools and universities. Thus, at the heart of many areas of conflict is the relationship between capitalism and democracy. This is one of the areas in most need of political reform in all four corners of the globe.

For a Progressive 2030 Agenda

The core agenda of progressive, social democratic and socialist forces around the world includes "the fight against inequality", the "creation of inclusive growth", and "the construction of democratic societies". There are many objectives set out in the 2030 Agenda, to which all states have committed, which correspond to our own agenda:

- Securing a high-quality, inclusive and equitable standard of education and training, and promoting opportunities for life-long learning for everybody (Goal 4).
- Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls (Goal 5).
- Securing universal access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy (Goal 7)
- The promotion of continuous, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, productive full employment, and decent jobs for everyone (Goal 8).
- The reduction of inter-state inequalities (Goal 10).
- Securing sustainable methods of production and consumption (Goal 11).
- The promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies for a sustainable development, including universal access to legal resources and the creation of effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels (Goal 16).
- The consolidation of the means of implementation and reinvigoration of the global partnership for sustainable development (Goal 17).



It is now up to us, the world's progressive, social democratic and socialist forces, to ensure that our governments implement the objectives of the Agenda as part of their national strategies. What we want are democratic and inclusive societies.