The Post-2015 Agenda:
POLICY**PAPER**

World Vision

GETTING INTENTIONAL:
Cross-sector partnerships, business and the post-2015 development agenda

Even under the best-case scenario of all the MDGs being fulfilled, the task of eradicating extreme poverty will remain unfinished after 2015:

- **The most vulnerable**, those who so far have been left behind, still need to be reached.

- **This will be possible only by taking new approaches**, not by continuing to do what we have always done.

- **Cross-sector partnerships** have huge potential to deliver the innovation needed.

- **Specific targets** for cross-sector partnerships in the post-2015 framework will be essential to realising this potential.

June 2014

POLICY**PAPER**

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World Vision is a Christian relief, development and advocacy organisation dedicated to working with children, families and communities to overcome poverty and injustice.

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List of governments, companies, organisations and networks interviewed for this study

World Vision would like to thank the following * *for their generous and insightful inputs to this research study.*

Accenture Development Partnerships

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BHP Billiton

Business Call to Action

FSG

GBCHealth

Global Development – Advising the Leaders

Government of Bangladesh

Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Government of the Netherlands

Government of the Republic of Indonesia

Government of the Republic of Ireland

Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone

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GSMA

MDG Health Alliance

Merck for Mothers

Natural Resources Defense Council

Novartis International AG

Pfizer

PSI

Qualcomm

Royal DSM

Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Business Network

The Partnering Initiative

UN Foundation

UNICEF

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

United Nations, Executive Office of the Secretary-General

United Nations Global Compact

Unilever

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Unless otherwise stated, the recommendations made throughout this paper are World Vision's and do not necessarily represent the views of the individuals or organisations interviewed (as listed above).

Abbreviations and acronyms

CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
EWEC	Every Woman Every Child
GMSIP	Global Multi-Stakeholder Issue Platform
GRI	Global Reporting Initiative
HLP	(The UN Secretary-General's) High-Level Panel (of eminent persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda)
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MNC	Multi-National Company
MS	Multi-Stakeholder
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OWG	Open Working Group (of the UN General Assembly on Sustainable Development Goals)
PMNCH	Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound
SMEs	Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises
SUN	Scaling Up Nutrition
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

Executive summary

Despite global progress in the last 15 years, the task of eradicating extreme poverty is far from finished: the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) only aimed to *halve* world poverty. The post-2015 agenda must, therefore, not only build on the MDGs, but also go much further and finish the job.

World Vision, amongst many others, is calling for zero-based goals in the next development agenda, including the elimination of preventable maternal, newborn and child deaths and of hunger. This means that the most vulnerable (especially children), who have been left behind in the MDG era, will need to be reached. This will not be possible simply by doing more of what we are already doing: new and innovative approaches are needed. Cross-sector partnerships – between government, business and civil society – are one of the primary modalities through which it is hoped that such innovation will be created and delivered.

World Vision believes it is vital that the post-2015 process give sufficient consideration to, and make provision for, *how* the new thematic goals will be achieved. This includes getting intentional about realising the potential of cross-sector partnerships by adopting targets in the post-2015 framework that specifically encourage and support their use. To support this proposal, World Vision has undertaken a qualitative research study to explore **how targets for cross-sector partnerships could be captured and articulated in the post-2015 framework.**

This study consisted of over 30 interviews with key informants from government, business, civil society and the United Nations (UN). This policy paper includes not only the main feedback from the interviews, but also World Vision's own reflections and recommendations for the post-2015 framework.

A key finding was that all the interviewees, regardless of whether they were from business, government, or civil society, wanted to see cross-sector partnerships recognised and encouraged in the post-2015 framework. The large majority of interviewees felt that the framework should include specific *targets* related to cross-sector partnerships, and there was strong agreement that these targets should focus on the *enabling environment* required for cross-sector partnerships to flourish. Based on the interview findings, as well as World Vision's own experience, World Vision recommends that the post-2015 framework include the following three targets (which collectively provide a foundation for such an enabling environment).

Recommended targets

T1 Particularly in developing countries, by 2020, a single, government-led, multi-stakeholder platform covering all of the new post-2015 goals is in place enabling the establishment and execution of cross-sector partnerships in support of the government's development priorities.

T2 By 2020, accountability mechanisms are in place for all cross-sector partnerships.

T3 A global, multi-stakeholder issue platform is in place by 2017 for each of the new post-2015 goals, to convene diverse stakeholders and to support alignment with (and link to) national-level platforms.

World Vision recommends that these targets be mainstreamed under each of the thematic goals (i.e. the successors to MDGs 1–7), so that a stronger link is made between the desired outcomes and the means for achieving them. Further, the targets should also be documented under any Global Partnership/Means of Implementation goal. World Vision will be submitting all the recommendations in this paper to the post-2015 process and calling on Member States to support them.

This paper is part of a short series by World Vision on the subject of business and post-2015. The second paper[1] in the series explores in more detail the use of cross-sector partnerships to reach the most vulnerable, including the particular challenges of Fragile States.

1. Introduction

Despite global progress in the last 15 years, poverty persists, with millions of children continuing to die from preventable causes and others failing to reach their potential. Rising levels of inequality, both within and between countries, is highlighting the egregious consequences of poverty more and more starkly. The post-2015 development agenda must not only build on the MDGs, but also go much further, and finish the job.

World Vision believes it is vital that the post-2015 process gives sufficient consideration to and makes provision for *how* the new thematic goals will be achieved. To be successful, the post-2015 framework will need a much more substantive 'how' component than that afforded by MDG 8.[2] A business-as-usual approach is insufficient and will not deliver the kind of development gains that are essential to reaching zero targets in areas like ending preventable maternal, newborn and child deaths and eliminating hunger.

Cross-sector partnerships[3] – between government, business and civil society (and including the UN and multilaterals) – have been much referenced[4] in the post-2015 discussions to date as a component of the 'how' – the critical 'Means of Implementation' of the next development agenda including in the UN Open Working Group's draft of goals and targets released on 2 June 2014.[5] Within cross-sector partnerships, partners will typically leverage their respective core knowledge, skills, resources and assets in such a way as to create solutions which none of the partners could have developed on its own. For example, governments might provide technical, policy and regulatory expertise; businesses their product and/or service development, delivery competencies, and value chains; and civil society organisations (CSOs) their understanding of, relationship with and last-mile access to local communities.[6] Whilst there have been a number of helpful contributions[7] made on the current experiences of cross-sector partnerships, it is World Vision's view that the important potential offered by the scaling up of cross-sector partnerships in reaching the most vulnerable (especially children) will not be realised unless it is now underpinned by a strong set of *targets* in the post-2015 framework.

Although business is increasingly viewed, by itself and others, as a development actor (in addition to its critical role as an economic actor), it is still a relative newcomer to this space. As such, whilst this paper touches on the role, contribution and responsibilities of all three partners (government, civil society and business) within cross-sector partnerships, its main focus is on the issues raised by business's participation. For meeting the needs of the most vulnerable, perhaps of most interest is

the potential innovation that business can bring to address hitherto seemingly intractable challenges. Cross-sector partnerships are one of the primary modalities through which such innovation is expected to be created and delivered.

(Note that the word partnership *in this paper, unless otherwise stated, refers to cross-sector partnerships. It does not mean the Global Partnership: rather, cross-sector partnerships are one of the 'Means of Implementation' within the Global Partnership.)*

> **Royal DSM and World Vision partnership**
>
> Royal DSM, the global life and materials science company, and World Vision are working together to achieve lasting progress in global health and development by improving the nutritional status of mothers and children. By 2016, the DSM–World Vision partnership aims to contribute to the reduction of the 165 million children under 5 across the globe who are stunted. The collaboration sees both organisations jointly leverage their expertise, resources and reach in order to address undernutrition – the root cause of stunting and one-third of preventable child deaths.
>
> The flagship of the partnership is the Miller's Pride project in Dar es Salaam which includes close collaboration with the Tanzanian government. This project focuses on fortifying maize flour with essential micronutrients. In addition to the fortification, DSM and World Vision are working with the millers to build business expertise, improve food safety and increase markets and profits for the millers.

World Vision believes that business[8] will be an essential contributor to the effort to achieve a sustainable end to poverty. Business's impact, both good and bad, on the international development space is multi-faceted and wide reaching. At its simplest, a healthy and responsible business sector is critically important to the economic development of states, increasing the national resource base and the potential to improve the well-being of citizens. These benefits can be very quickly eroded, however, if companies do not fulfil their basic societal responsibilities, which World Vision believes include the following:

- ensure that their operations and investments 'do no harm' in a country. This includes the need for careful mitigation of the particular risks associated with interventions in fragile contexts
- comply with international standards and voluntary codes of good practice (as well as with legislation)
- respect universal human rights (regardless of country context), including those of the child

- take responsibility for practice within their supply chains, including addressing child labour issues
- provide employment and skills development for the local workforce
- make full and proper payments of taxes, and not employ tax-avoidance measures
- continuously earn their 'social license to operate' and not buy it or take it
- commit to transparency and anti-corruption practices
- take a 'sustainability' view of their operations and investments in a country, including proper reporting.

If all the above were consistently fulfilled by all companies, then this in itself would result in a substantial positive impact on the ills of poverty and injustice. Of course, companies often make a broader contribution on international development issues. Philanthropy and corporate social responsibility (CSR) in a variety of modalities are now commonplace in business, as increasingly is a sustainability focus on core business operations. Leading companies are also engaging with concepts such as 'shared value'[9] (where economic value is created in a way that also creates value for wider society) and establishing a track record in newer areas such as inclusive, sustainable business models and aligning these activities with their core business. World Vision welcomes all these positive contributions from business, assuming that they are delivered in such a way that they support the full realisation of human rights. World Vision also encourages companies to use their influence to advocate, where necessary, for pro-poor government policies and practices – as well as acting as role models in their own behaviour.

Whilst all of the above aspects of business's impact on the international development landscape are important, this paper focuses on cross-sector partnerships. In response to the suggestion above that the post-2015 framework needs to include a strong set of *targets* on cross-sector partnerships (and as part of an ongoing engagement with the post-2015 process), World Vision has conducted a qualitative research study seeking to develop recommendations on the following question: **How should targets for cross-sector partnerships be captured and articulated in the post-2015 framework?**

'Cross-sector partnerships should play a greater role in the coming years in helping us to deal with various problems related to child and maternal health. It will not be possible again to work on a single-sector basis if we are to achieve success in promoting child and maternal health.'

– Interviewee from Government of the Republic of Indonesia

This paper is part of a short series by World Vision on the subject of business and the post-2015 development agenda.[10] The second paper in the series[11] explores in more detail the use of cross-sector partnerships to reach the most vulnerable, including the particular challenges of Fragile States.

Please note that, unless otherwise stated, the recommendations made throughout this paper are World Vision's and do not necessarily represent the views of the individuals or organisations interviewed for this study.

Friendship, Rwanda © 2014 Jon Warren/World Vision

1.1 Methodology

The study consisted of over 30 initial interviews with key informants from government, business, civil society and the UN; a list of the organisations that participated is provided at the start of this paper. The interviews were semi-structured, meaning that flexibility was applied to the question set dependent on the flow and focus of each discussion. The interviews (most of them held during March 2014) were conducted by World Vision staff; each one was typically an hour in length, and the large majority of them were conducted over the phone.

The findings from the initial interviews were first published in a discussion paper,[12] after which consultations were held to test the proposed recommendations. This phase included an additional four interviews and a consultation event on12 June 2014 in New York (hosted by the UN Foundation) at which 15 organisations including missions, businesses, civil society organisations and UN agencies provided comments on the discussion paper.

To provide a focus for the interviews, and some coherence across them, the study was placed in the context of the Health & Nutrition space, with interviewees being selected, in part, because of their organisation's involvement in that sector. However, it is felt that the large majority of the following findings and proposals are equally relevant across most development sectors and issues.

This policy paper includes not only feedback from the interviews and the later consultations but also World Vision's own reflections, based on both the data generated by the study and its own experience as a development actor. Specifically, the paper puts forward a number of recommendations for the post-2015 framework that World Vision will be submitting to the post-2015 process and calling on Member States to support.

2. Including targets on cross-sector partnerships in the post-2015 framework

Regardless of whether they were from business, government or civil society, all the interviewees wanted to see cross-sector partnerships recognised and encouraged in the post-2015 framework. (Interviewees recognised that adopting a cross-sector partnership approach, whilst often appropriate, is not always the right answer, but they felt that encouragement to shift away from single-sector solutions as a default setting is needed.)

The large majority of interviewees felt that the framework should include *specific targets* related to cross-sector partnerships:

- in order to reflect the importance of cross-sector partnerships as an implementation approach (on the basis that no one sector alone can solve the majority of issues being addressed)

- as a corrective response to the lack of focus on structure and systems for implementation in the MDGs; and/or

- to underline the role of business as a partner in development; interviewees from business, in particular, were keen for companies not to be regarded solely as implementers or contractors (or cash cows) for pre-generated solutions. (A partner has rights and responsibilities within a partnership at all phases of the process from co-creation of solutions through full implementation.)

> 'The private sector is often called to contribute to an approach on which it had no say. This is difficult. Business needs to be given a voice in the process of designing the approach. This will enable substantive involvement.'
>
> – Interviewee from GBCHealth

The remainder of the interviewees suggested that, instead of targets, cross-sector partnerships should be referenced in the narrative of the post-2015 framework, potentially in a set of high-level implementation principles. This approach was preferred either because it was felt that actual targets should be reserved for outcomes and not process, or because targets were perceived as too prescriptive and it was thought that context should drive the choice of implementation approach.

As to the *content* of targets on cross-sector partnerships, there was a universal rejection amongst those interviewed of any options that focused on quantifiers, such as the 'numbers of partnerships' or 'resources raised through partnerships'. Instead, there was *strong* agreement that targets should be created (and included in the framework) that focus on the **enabling environment** required for cross-sector partnerships to flourish.

'Success [of partnerships] depends to a large extent on creating an environment in which collaboration can thrive.'[13]

Discussions with interviewees then focused on exploring what specific elements would be critical for such an 'enabling environment' – particularly at the country level. Based on the findings of these interviews, as well as World Vision's own experience, **World Vision recommends that the post-2015 framework include the following three targets related to cross-sector partnerships**:

T1   Particularly in developing countries, by 2020, a single, government-led, multi-stakeholder platform covering all of the new post-2015 goals is in place enabling the establishment and execution of cross-sector partnerships in support of the government's development priorities.

T2   By 2020, accountability mechanisms are in place for all cross-sector partnerships.

T3   A global, multi-stakeholder issue platform is in place by 2017 for each of the new post-2015 goals to convene diverse stakeholders and to support alignment with (and link to) national-level platforms.

Collectively, these targets provide a foundation for an *enabling environment* for cross-sector partnerships. Each target is explored in detail below.

> 'Whatever goals … are agreed upon,
> equally as important will be the structures that
> enable their full implementation and accountability.'[14]

2.1   National level

T1 Particularly in developing countries,[15] by 2020, a single, government-led, multi-stakeholder platform covering all of the new post-2015 goals is in place enabling the establishment and execution of cross-sector partnerships in support of the government's development priorities.

It is governments that are the primary duty bearers for their country's development, and they must take leadership and ownership of it,[16,17,18] particularly on matters of public policy (it is important that undue influence is not exerted, from other actors, in this area). World Vision suggests that the most fundamental requirement for successful cross-sector partnerships is that they form part of a coherent whole *within an overall, government-led, national development plan* – and not form a series of one-off, unrelated projects. T1 (above) reflects both this and the agreement from interviewees

that multi-sector collaborations should be embedded in development planning at the country level.

A number of interviewees observed that governments often struggle with internal coordination, i.e. between government ministries, and that this lack of coordination internally makes it very hard for external stakeholders to know how and where to engage. Many interviewees welcomed World Vision's suggestion that a clear entry point be established, primarily in developing countries, for engagement with government on all the new post-2015 goals.

> 'We can spend a lot of time trying to figure out who to talk to in a government about partnering – a clear focal point for engagement would be very helpful.'
>
> – Interviewee from Pfizer

World Vision proposes that this 'focal point' take the form of a clearly identified single, action-oriented, multi-stakeholder platform, covering all the new post-2015 goals, with an objective to coordinate development actors[19] and encourage and support cross-sector partnerships (where appropriate) – and, overall, to provide and promote the enabling environment needed for cross-sector partnerships at the national level.[20] Such a 'central' platform will require investment (see the section below on Financial and Technical Assistance), but this will be offset by efficiencies that will accrue from the platform as part of creating an effective 'pipeline'[21] of innovative partnerships.

Importantly, it is proposed that this platform be led by government based on its development plan and priorities. The convening role could be played by government or contracted to a trusted third party (e.g. the UN) by government depending on, amongst other factors, the state's capacity to carry out this function effectively.

> 'Governments should have the responsibility to convene companies around their national development priorities.'
>
> – Interviewee from Merck for Mothers

Recommendations were gathered from the interviewees regarding the characteristics and functions of such national platforms:

- a single, clear entry point, convening a diverse set of stakeholders, including government departments, business and civil society, to come together to develop a shared understanding of government's national development priorities

- a collaborative space in which to map interests and resources of all actors against the national development priorities, with a view to

generating and assessing solutions and approaches, and where appropriate catalysing cross-sector partnerships[22]

- action oriented (not a 'talk shop') and results focused

- in contexts where there are few or no existing platforms, the national MS platform described above could, for example, support separate clusters for each of the new post-2015 goals (one cluster per goal), allowing organisations to focus their attention tightly on the appropriate goals (of interest to them) whilst still having to navigate through only one platform (see Figure 1 on page 18).

- strong coordination of development actors would be the minimum function to be delivered by a platform; other services to support cross-sector partnerships could also be delivered by/through the platform – for example, partnership brokering,[23] an accountability function, needs/market analysis, risk analysis, due-diligence processes, sharing best practice[24] and capacity building of partnerships and organisations to be fit-for-purpose to partner.[25]

It is important to note that 'one size will not fit all' in the design of these national platforms and their linkages to cover all the post-2015 goals. Context is critical.

Firstly, World Vision strongly recommends that T1 is met by building on structures and systems that are already in place. So, a key consideration for the design process would be the current eco-system, i.e. the existing platforms and networks in-country. Some countries will already have a number of these different platforms and networks, but some may focus on just a single issue, some are for business participants only, some are focused solely on donor coordination, and so on. In these contexts it is suggested that consideration be given to retooling one of these existing platforms to become the 'central' or 'lead' national multi-stakeholder platform referred to in T1. In such an instance, rather than housing all the proposed goal-focused clusters within the platform (as suggested above), this new, re-tooled platform would build effective linkages to other, relevant, existing platforms.

The second main contextual consideration is capacity. The capacity of a government to deliver on T1 is likely to vary considerably from country to country. Whilst the government should, World Vision believes, always be the *lead* actor in these proposed (T1) platforms, the design process should consider whether or not the government has the necessary capacity to act as convenor for the platform or whether this role would be performed more effectively by a third party (e.g. the UN). Also in relation to capacity, the design should determine the right attributes for an *inaugural* platform for that country, with a forward plan to add functionality to the platform over time (and with the benefit of experience) as capacity and resources allow. Note that the sections below on 'Financial and Technical Assistance' and T3 address the need for capacity-building support both from donor countries and at the global level. It is recognised that context and capacity are

particularly acute for Fragile States: fragile contexts are explored further in the second paper in this series.[26]

World Vision also recognises that a number of platforms not dissimilar to the concept being described in T1 are currently being piloted.[27] The relevant learnings from these programmes should be incorporated into a set of guidance notes as an input to the in-country design process suggested above.

In terms of leadership and the ability to generate and sustain momentum, experience from the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) movement (see text box) suggests that having such platforms positioned as presidential or prime-ministerial decrees can be an important contributing factor in a platform's success.[28]

Scaling Up Nutrition national multi-stakeholder platforms

Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) is a global movement of fifty governments and donors, civil society organisations, multilaterals, private sector and other actors. The aim of the movement is to catalyse and scale up current efforts to improve nutrition, particularly for pregnant women and children under two, who are the most vulnerable to undernutrition. All SUN countries have either already established a national multi-stakeholder platform or are in the process of doing so. In addition to government ministries, many of these platforms include civil society organisations, UN agencies, and donors. Some also include the private sector and academia. There is much that is being learned regarding the effectiveness of these platforms from this growing body of experience.

As the single entry point, the national platform offers the potential to catalyse industry-wide partnerships and initiatives as well as brokering discrete cross-sector partnerships. World Vision therefore proposes that, in terms of business involvement in the national platforms, small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), possibly through industry associations and/or UN Global Compact Local Networks, should be included, as far as possible – as well as a wide representation of national and multi-national companies (particularly in critical industries). In developing countries, SMEs play a key role in achieving inclusive economic growth and job creation[29] and so should be targeted as a key stakeholder group.

As a further building block to developing an enabling environment, several interviewees also wanted to see governments putting in place both incentives (financial and non-financial) and disincentives (including regulation) to help align business practice and investment with national development priorities and policy – e.g. so as to promote inclusive and sustainable business and encourage involvement in cross-sector partnerships.[30]

T2 By 2020, accountability mechanisms are in place for all cross-sector partnerships.

World Vision recognises that power imbalances,[31] vested interests, and conflicts of interest can and do exist between organisations in cross-sector partnerships. And a key concern raised by interviewees was the need for effective accountability mechanisms around partnerships. Accountability regarding cross-sector partnerships was also a consistent theme at the Joint Event of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council (April 2014) titled 'The Role of Partnerships in the Implementation of the Post-2015 Development Agenda'. And partnerships have been criticised recently in some quarters[32,33] with regard to transparency, accountability and governance.

A key driver for improving accountability is the need to address the current low level of trust among different sectors of society[34] (keenly felt, for example, in the nutrition sector). Corruption linked to government-business relations, for example, is a key area of concern. Low trust constrains the uptake of cross-sector partnerships. When trust is low, risks (e.g. related to reputation and performance) are perceived to be higher, and organisations are less likely to collaborate. Companies tend to avoid investing in countries where governments have a poor accountability record. Where the marketplace is not effectively regulated, responsible companies may be undercut by less scrupulous ones. When companies have a poor accountability track record, CSOs and governments are less keen to partner with them.

Three modalities of accountability emerged from the interviews as being critical for cross-sector partnerships to flourish:

  i.   the internal accountability *within* a cross-sector partnership (i.e. between partners)

  ii.   the external accountability *of* the cross-sector partnership, to citizens, donors and other stakeholders

  iii. the individual accountability of each partner.

Requirements for good internal accountability include the need for strong management and reporting mechanisms to be built into the partnership's operating model. Even before this, however, is a need for strong processes for *selecting* partners. For example, World Vision recommends that all governments have due-diligence procedures in place to assess whether and how to engage with specific companies – there is perhaps a (supporting) role in this for governments of the countries in which a company is based. Due diligence should include, amongst other things, consideration of the following: conflict of interest (which can arise for organisations from any societal sector);[35] social responsibility of value chains, e.g. with regard to child labour;[36] adherence to the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights,[37] and application of the Child Rights and Business Principles.[38]

External accountability must include tracking and reporting on the impact of, and return on, public resources invested; it would be good practice, also, to have established criteria for assessing proposed government investments in cross-sector partnerships. As an example, RightingFinance recently suggested: 'Fiscal resources should only be applied to support the private sector in instances where it can be demonstrated concretely that a) such allocation will advance certain rights, b) this is a more effective use of such resources than through public investment, c) mechanisms exist for the transparent and public participation of those affected by the use of those resources and d) performance in meeting the promised targets will be evaluated and monitored periodically, with lack of compliance credibly giving rise to a withdrawal of the fiscal support.'[39] The usual principles and checks on additionality of funding (whether public or private) should also be applied.

As noted above, in addition to the need for effective accountability measures for cross-sector partnerships themselves, interviewees were also clear that the accountability of the partners – government, business and civil society organisations (and potentially including the UN and multilaterals) – as independent actors is also a significant factor affecting the overall accountability of a partnership. There is plenty of scope for all development actors to improve their individual accountability.[40,41] Indeed, World Vision believes that improved accountability mechanisms spanning from local to global levels are essential to the success of the new development agenda.[42]

In the first instance, governments themselves must meet the highest standards of accountability. Social accountability mechanisms that can equip government and citizens to work constructively together are a critical component for improving performance on essential services.[43] World Vision is currently supporting more than 300 programmes in 34 countries to implement the Citizen Voice and Action approach to social accountability. The tools in this approach include scorecards, social audits, and public expenditure tracking along with interface meetings (between government and communities) to encourage dialogue and debate. Together, these interventions serve to strengthen the accountability relationship between governments and their citizens.

Integrated sustainability reporting on social, environment and financial impact was identified by interviewees as being a basic, critical component of business accountability. There was also a call from some interviewees (from across all three sectors) for governments to make sustainability reporting mandatory for companies above a certain market capitalisation.[44,45]

Governments must also enforce business adherence to universal principles on labour, environment, anticorruption and human rights, as articulated in international agreements including the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights[46,47] and the UN Global Compact's ten principles.[48] Not all companies operate ethically or act to minimise their negative impacts, much less advance positive impacts. 'Government must ... continue its essential role to set standards and create regulation that will encourage and reward responsible, pro-society business and prevent irresponsible business from

benefitting at the expense of society.'[49] The role of government extends well beyond creating a positive, enabling environment for business (and cross-sector partnerships), not least to its responsibility to protect human rights.

Clearly, CSOs can play a key role in ensuring that citizens, especially the poor and marginalised, are well informed and have a voice, so that private-sector and/or public-sector actors are held to account.[50] 'Multi-stakeholder partnerships have operated at their best, particularly from an accountability standpoint, when NGO partners have been at the heart of them' (interviewee from the National Resources Defense Council). However, to ensure CSOs have the continued legitimacy necessary to play this role, they have to continuously improve their own approaches to accountability. In 2008, a group of leading international NGOs (INGOs) initiated a partnership with the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) – widely recognised as a leader in sustainability reporting for the corporate sector – to develop a comparable standard of accountability reporting (the GRI NGO Sector Supplement) for NGOs. In addition to annual reporting, the INGO Accountability Charter requires review by an independent panel of experts – with reports and feedback in the public domain – and also has a complaints mechanism. World Vision reports under this framework.[51] Initiatives such as these not only help to build the accountability performance of CSOs but also, where frameworks are leveraged cross-sector (as in this case), a common understanding of key accountability drivers and issues can be built.

Finally, notwithstanding all of the above, it is important to note that interviewees also made the point that accountability mechanisms for cross-sector partnerships need to be proportionate. If the cost of meeting accountability requirements rises too high – and this could be the case for organisations from any sector – then potentially beneficial collaborations will fail to materialise.

World Vision–sponsored child enjoying the water from a newly installed well,
Cambodia ©2011 Jerry Galea/World Vision

Financial and Technical Assistance

The responsibilities associated with effective and transparent achievement of T1 and T2 (above) lie primarily with developing countries. It is also clear that new investment – either from repurposing of existing funds or, more likely, new funding – would be needed for T1 and T2 to be met. There is, therefore, a complementary responsibility for donor countries (including developing countries through South-South cooperation) to commit to the provision of financial and technical assistance to developing country governments to enable T1 and T2 to be achieved.

World Vision recommends that financial support from donors take the form of 'seed funding' to cover (a proportion) of the initial investment *only*, and that from the outset, countries with a national platform develop a sustainable funding model such that over a specified amount of time their platform is self-funded. For example, this could be achieved through a combination of host government funds and fees contributed by 'users' of the platform – with different rates for different actors. Such a multi-stakeholder funding model would seem appropriate for a multi-stakeholder platform, where those who share the benefits from the efficiencies that the platform is intended to bring, also share the investment and ongoing costs. South-South learning should be leveraged wherever possible, especially in terms of technical support for platform design and management.

2.2 Global level

T3 *A global, multi-stakeholder issue platform is in place by 2017 for each of the new post-2015 goals, to convene diverse stakeholders and to support alignment with (and link to) national-level platforms.*

Just as at the national level, so at the global level, discussions with interviewees revealed strong support for World Vision's proposal of multi-stakeholder platforms. At the global level this would mean a global, multi-stakeholder issue platform (GMSIP) for *each* goal. Identifying a clear, single entry point for each goal in this way, at the global level, was viewed by most interviewees as potentially very valuable. Such platforms could provide not only a central element of the post-2015 implementation architecture, but also a possible way forward from the current complexity at the global level, where multiple partnerships and initiatives (on the MDGs) all compete for attention.

Interviewees favoured a 'light touch' platform at the global level, with strong linkages to the national multi-stakeholder platforms and goal clusters proposed under T1 above. These linkages would enable organisations to identify more easily potential partners at country level.[52] The following

summary of proposed key attributes and functions of these GMSIPs reflects the common suggestions and preferences that came up in the interviews:

- one clear entry point, for all actors, for each goal

- action- and outcome-focused and not simply a platform for dialogue (though it was recognised that dialogue is an important part of the overall process)

- strong links to national multi-stakeholder platforms and through to their relevant goal cluster (T1 above)

- a central repository of design, capacity building and technical support (particularly for poorer and more fragile countries)

- a strong networking and convening role with regard to other global partnerships/initiatives (e.g. those that might rollover from the MDGs) relating to the goal in question

- coordination of the creation of a global approach to achieving the goal, including identifying opportunities for contributions from different sectors of society (including business and civil society organisations)

- supporting (understanding and delivering on) the needs of the related national platforms

- provision of awareness-raising, advocacy and learning functions (including South–South)

- a strong equity lens on reporting to ensure global resources are focused on the most vulnerable

- sufficient donor funding to cover the core costs of the platform and ensure effective operation

- a SMART commitments registry and associated accountability mechanism (built in at the front end rather than after commitments have been made), overseen by an ombudsman who provides independent validation – a key missing component under MDG partnership structures.

The high resource flows through existing global platforms and partnership structures have given rise to concerns regarding their transparency and accountability. In general, global multi-stakeholder partnerships are perceived by some to lack strong accountability with respect to commitments made by partners, which in turn can give rise to 'free rider' problems where organisations get the public relations credit whether they deliver or not. Hence the suggestion above for each GMSIP to include in its governance an ombudsman function that can provide independent validation related to commitments and accountability. Each GMSIP will need a backbone organisation[53] (e.g. secretariat) for effective delivery of the functions indicated above.

Figure 1 illustrates the GMSIP concept proposed by T3 and the links between the national (T1) and global platforms.

Global Goals

Goal 1 Goal 2 Goal 3 Goal 4 Goal 5 etc

Related GP → Lead GMSIP for Goal 3 ← Related GP

Related GP → ← Related GP

Country A National MS Platform including Goal Clusters

Country B National MS Platform including Goal Clusters

Country C National MS Platform including Goal Clusters

etc

Goal 1 Cluster | Goal 2 Cluster | Goal 3 Cluster

Country B National MS Platform including Goal Clusters

Goal 4 Cluster | Goal 5 Cluster

Key

GMSIP – Global Multi-Stakeholder Issue Platform

GP – Global Partnership/Initiative

Goal(s) – refers to the new 'post-2015' goal(s)
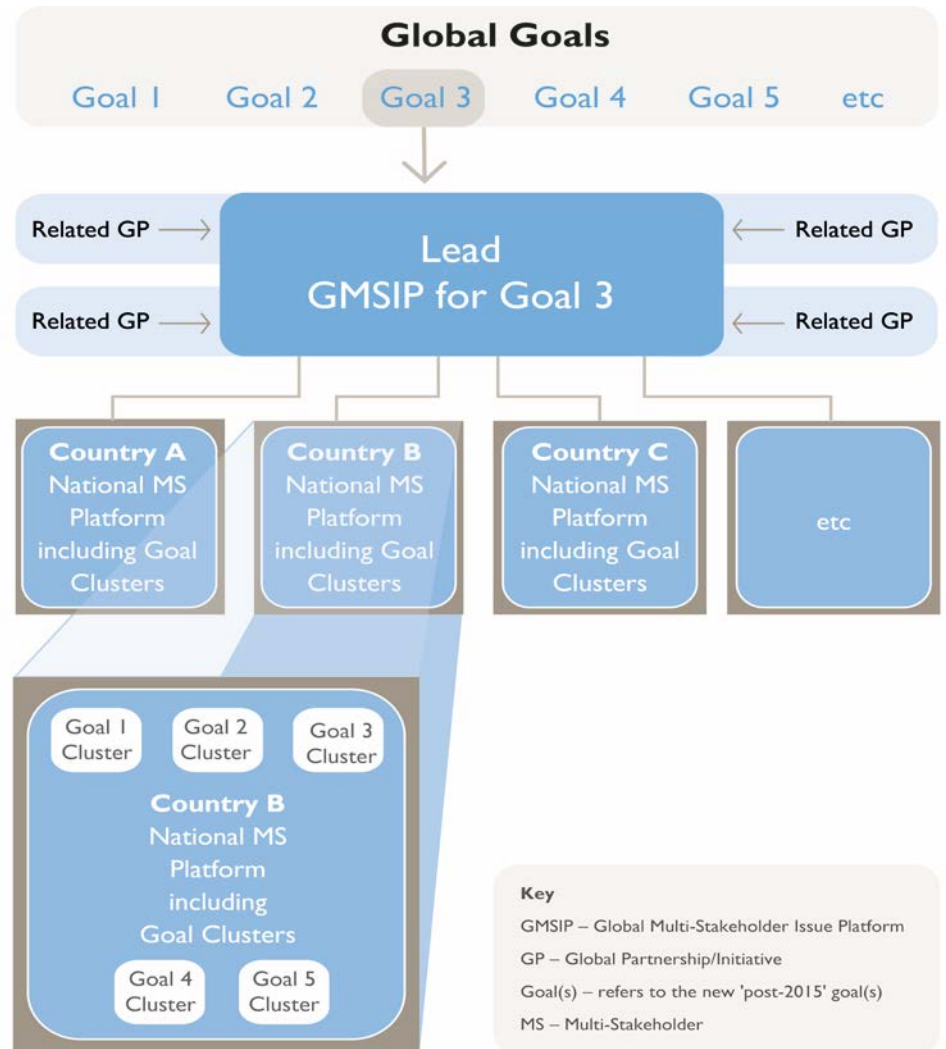
MS – Multi-Stakeholder

Figure 1. Illustration of the linkages between lead Global Multi-Stakeholder Issue Platform and associated national multi-stakeholder platforms: Example for Goal 3

At a high level, this concept proposed in T3 is not new. The idea of global partnerships aligned with the new post-2015 goals has been suggested by the OWG 9 Report[54] and High Level Panel (HLP) Report,[55] amongst others.[56,57] The Natural Resource Defence Council, identifying the need for more emphasis on implementation architecture, has also fleshed out ideas along these lines.[58] And a recent Stanford Social Innovation paper, 'Shaping Global

Partnerships for a Post-2015 World',[59] proposed backbone architecture for such partnerships.

Interviewees pointed to a number of partnerships at the global level (including SUN, PMNCH, EWEC, Global Fund, GAVI Alliance, Sustainable Energy for All, Global Partnership for Education and Grow Africa) as potentially interesting models (albeit each rather different) to review for applicable learnings for the recommended set of GMSIPs. Questions that could be explored as part of such a review include:

- How effective are these existing global partnerships?
- Could some of the existing global partnerships be selected for the relevant new goals and, with some re-engineering, act as the lead GMSIPs, or would wholly new GMSIPs need to be created?
- Could an initiative such as these proposed GMSIPs provide a (welcome) impetus for consolidation?
- Could the UN convene one or more GMSIP?

Reflecting on the interview feedback and proposed targets above, we see some striking similarities between the issues and solutions discussed and the themes that have emerged out of the work on effective development cooperation – *per* the 'Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness',[60] the 'Accra Agenda for Action',[61] and the 'Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation'.[62] This is not surprising, but it is perhaps encouraging that globally recognised (and widely endorsed) principles already exist that could provide a strong foundation for the work that needs to be done to create effective environments for cross-sector partnerships. Specifically, there are clear links in the discussion and proposed recommendations above with the following principles (*i–iv* from 'Busan' and *v–vi* from 'Paris'):

i. *Ownership of development priorities by developing countries*

ii. *Focus on results*

iii. *Inclusive development partnerships*

iv. *Transparency and accountability to each other*

v. *Alignment of 'donor' support with developing countries' priorities*

vi. *Harmonisation of 'donors'' actions to avoid duplication and complexity.*

3. Locating targets for cross-sector partnerships in the post-2015 framework

Having developed the targets, T1–3 (above), the question arises of where they should be located within the post-2015 framework. This was discussed with the interviewees, and support was split approximately equally between the two options discussed:

    i.   Targets are clustered in a stand-alone MDG 8–type goal

    ii.   Targets are integrated into each of the thematic goals.

Those in favour of the first option felt that locating the targets in a stand-alone goal would focus attention on cross-sector partnerships and, as long as the stand-alone goal was positioned as cross cutting, this should ensure cross-sector partnerships received the necessary attention across all the thematic goals. Preference for the second approach was prompted, in part, by concerns that because the 'global partnership for development has fallen short of expectations',[63] any new, similar goal would struggle to achieve credibility and traction. The 'integration' option was also favoured on the basis that targets could then be tailored, if needed, to suit the particular requirements of each of the thematic goals.

> 'To achieve most impact, each goal should have a component on cross-sector partnerships. It's not a question of if, but how.'
>
> – Interviewee from Global Development – Advising the Leaders

World Vision recommends that the targets above be mainstreamed under each of the thematic goals (i.e. the successors to MDGs 1–7), so that a stronger link is made between the desired outcomes and the means for achieving them. These targets should *also* be documented under any Global Partnership/Means of Implementation goal.

It is an important reflection that targets (such as these) around multi-stakeholder issues will always be sub-optimal whilst they are constrained by a current international architecture that is purely inter-governmental. The OECD and UNDP 2014 progress report on Busan-related processes, 'Making Development Co-operation More Effective', observed: 'Inclusiveness – the "core" of the Busan Partnership agreement – is translating into stronger recognition and engagement of non-state development actors in national systems and accountability processes.

Nonetheless, the development co-operation architecture is still skewed towards a government-centred, North-South perspective.'[64] World Vision suggests that the post-2015 process is a prime example of this 'skew'.

Whilst the narrative acknowledges that both civil society and business are important (indeed, necessary) partners for achieving the next generation of goals, the process for agreeing and committing to the post-2015 goals is still entirely inter-governmental. If, as most commentators now assert, sustainable development requires the full and effective contribution of all sectors, we have to ask for how much longer inter-governmental processes can deliver what is needed.

4. Recommendations

In summary, World Vision is recommending the following related to business, cross-sector partnerships and the post-2015 development agenda:

World Vision recommendations for the post-2015 framework

- That the following be included as targets in the post-2015 framework:
  - o Particularly in developing countries, by 2020, a single, government-led, multi-stakeholder platform covering all of the new post-2015 goals is in place enabling the establishment and execution of cross-sector partnerships in support of the government's development priorities.
  - o By 2020, accountability mechanisms are in place for all cross-sector partnerships.
  - o A global, multi-stakeholder issue platform is in place by 2017 for each of the new post-2015 goals, to convene diverse stakeholders and to support alignment with (and link to) national-level platforms.

- That the targets above be mainstreamed under each of the thematic goals (i.e. the successors to MDGs 1–7) so that a stronger link is made between the desired outcomes and the means for achieving them. These targets should also be documented under any Global Partnership/Means of Implementation goal.

- That countries with a national platform and associated accountability mechanisms develop a sustainable funding model to cover their ongoing costs based on contributions from the multiple stakeholders that benefit from their presence.

Additional World Vision recommendations relating to business and cross-sector partnerships

- That governments ensure their processes recognise business and civil society as partners in development and include them in the co-creation of development solutions

- That governments work with business and civil society to determine how cross-sector partnerships might be used to meet the specific needs of the most vulnerable. (This could be established as a specific initiative under one of the existing multilateral mechanisms on partnerships.)

- That investment be made in the continuous improvement of accountability procedures, including:

  o   the use of social accountability tools to strengthen government–citizen accountability

  o   government enforcement of requirements on businesses to respect universal principles on labour, environment, anti-corruption and human rights – as articulated in international agreements, including the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights

  o   consideration of mandatory sustainability reporting for companies above a certain market capitalisation.

Community based child-care centre, Malawi © 2003 Jon Warren/World Vision

Appendix

Additional areas of discussion on engaging and aligning business with the post-2015 framework

As a supplement to the core interview, given that the post-2015 framework will be an inter-governmental agreement, the question of how to engage formally and enable the collective effort of business was explored with interviewees. Interviewees were asked for their feedback on two ideas:

i. **Provision and publication of an on-line sign-up pledge for businesses to indicate their support for the post-2015 framework**

   At a minimum, this sign-up could be a simple vote of support, from business CEOs, for the post-2015 framework at the time that it is launched (similar mechanisms for other stakeholders, including citizens, could also be put in place). This would not serve as the ongoing mechanism for commitments and accountability, but more specific pledges *could* be added to the initial sign-up, e.g. a commitment to invest and report in line with the new post-2015 goals. Those interviewees in support of this idea felt it could signal the importance of the diverse range of stakeholders required to work on these issues – as opposed to Member States on their own – especially if it was opened up to all non-signatories, including citizens. Such an exercise could build on, and extend, the approach of World We Want,[65] the global on-line conversation hosted by civil society and the UN through which more than two million people have shared their views. Those interviewees who didn't support the idea were concerned that it might encourage a philanthropic view of the role of business. Nevertheless, World Vision suggests that this idea is worthy of further investigation.

ii. **A separate set of goals for business (rearticulating the new post-2015 goals in language which would resonate more readily with the business community), to which business would sign up**

   This idea received only weak support from interviewees. There was some attraction in the idea of goals that would be understood more readily within the business community. The overriding concern, however, was that 'sending' business to its own set of goals was more likely to entrench siloed thinking and mistrust between societal sectors rather than fostering better cross-sector understanding and collaboration. Separate goals might also undermine the primacy of the inter-governmental post-2015 agreement. On balance, then, World Vision does not recommend creating a separate set of goals for business. Rather, World Vision proposes that the necessary in-depth analysis of business contribution (across all modes of engagement) should take place in the lead GMSIP for each goal at the global level (see proposed T3 above), and for this also to be contextualised within the goal clusters as part of the national multi-stakeholder platforms (see proposed T1 above).[66]

Endnotes

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[2] The UN System Task Team has acknowledged criticisms that MDG 8 was not well-defined: 'The links between MDG 8 and MDGs 1–7 are not very explicit, the targets of MDG 8 are not explicit and do not capture all of the actions that countries need to undertake.' UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda (March 2012), 'New Partnerships to Implement a Post-2015 Development Agenda. Discussion Note.'

[3] For the purposes of this study, we are using the following working definition (from The Partnering Initiative): 'A cross-sector or multi-stakeholder partnership is an ongoing working relationship between organisations combining their resources and competencies and sharing risks towards achieving agreed objectives whilst each achieving their own individual objectives.'

[4] From a business perspective, for example, see The Business and Industry Major Group (2014), 'The Business and Industry's Vision and Priorities for the Sustainable Development Goals,' Major Group Position Paper (March). <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/getWSDoc.php?id=4132>

[5] It is encouraging to note that this draft of the OWG, which was released after the completion of the initial interviews for this study, proposes a target in support of 'broad based multi-stakeholder partnerships' (Target 17.6) and a target which recognises that accountability needs to encompass multi-stakeholder initiatives and partnerships (Target 17.43). However, as per the recommendations in this paper, World Vision does not believe this is sufficient. UN Open Working Group (2014), 'Introduction and Proposed Goals and Targets on Sustainable Development for the Post-2015 Development Agenda' (2 June). <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/4044140602workingdocument.pdf>

[6] For more on cross-sector partnerships with business, see Business Action for Africa, Harvard Kennedy School CSR Initiative and The Partnering Initiative (2013), 'A New Global Partnership with Business: Building a Post-2015 Development Framework to Achieve Sustainable Prosperity in Africa'. <http://www.hks.harvard.edu/m-rcbg/CSRI/CSRI_BAA_TPI_New_Global_Partnership_With_Business_Sept2013.pdf>.

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[8] Note that this study focuses primarily on the role of 'big business': multi-nationals and large national companies.

[9] Michael E. Porter and Mark R. Kramer (2011), 'Creating Shared Value: How to Reinvent Capitalism – and Unleash a Wave of Innovation and Growth', *Harvard Business Review* (January/February 2011).

[10] See also World Vision International (2013), 'Business – A Vital Contributor to the Post-2015 Agenda'. <http://www.wvi.org/justice-children/publication/post-2015-policy-brief-7-private-sector>

[11] World Vision International (2014), 'Reaching the Unreached'.

[12] World Vision International (2014), 'Getting Intentional: Cross-Sector Partnerships, Business and the Post-2015 Development Agenda', Post-2015 Agenda Discussion Paper. <http://www.wvi.org/united-nations-and-global-engagement/publication/getting-intentional-cross-sector-partnerships>

[13] Unilever (2013), 'Private Sector Outreach, A Summary of Unilever's Programme of Private Sector Outreach on the Post-2015 Development Agenda'. <http://www.unilever.com/images/Private_Sector_Outreach_Report_May_2013_tcm13-357923.pdf>

[14] Natural Resources Defense Council (2014), Architecture for a New Global Partnership for Sustainable Development. <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/1178A%20New%20Architecture%20for%20a%20New%20Global%20Partnership.pdf>

[15] The convention/descriptor *developing* is adopted in this report as it is still in common usage. World Vision recognises, however, the attendant complexity and increasing redundancy of the term.

[16] UN (2013), 'A New Global Partnership: Eradicate Poverty and Transform Economies through Sustainable Development', The Report of the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda. <http://www.un.org/sg/management/pdf/HLP_P2015_Report.pdf>

[17] UN General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council (2014), Concept Note: Joint Event of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council 'The Role of Partnerships in the Implementation of the Post-2015 Development Agenda', 9–10 April. <http://www.un.org/en/ga/president/68/pdf/sts/Concept_Note_Role_of_Partnerships.pdf>

[18] OECD (2014), 'Effective Development Co-Operation: an Important Enabler in a Post-2015 Global Development Framework', OECD Post-2015 Reflections, Element 10, Paper1. http://www.oecd.org/dac/FINAL%20POST-2015%20Effective%20Development%20Co-operation.pdf

[19] UN (2013), 'A New Global Partnership', refers to 30 official development partners on average in a country, illustrating the need for coordination, especially when multiple additional stakeholders are included. See also UN Open Working Group (2014), 'Focus Areas of the Sustainable Development Goals'. <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/focussdgs.html>

[20] Note that this recommendation refers to a platform focused only on cross-sector partnerships – as that is the focus of this study – but such a platform could possibly go beyond this and provide a single entry point for *all* national action on the new goals.

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[25] Business Action for Africa, Harvard Kennedy School CSR Initiative and The Partnering Initiative (2013), 'A New Global Partnership with Business'.

[26] World Vision International (2014), 'Reaching the Unreached'.

[27] See, for example, the Business Hubs Initiative referenced in Mexico High Level Meeting Communiqué (2014), First High-Level Meeting of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation: Building Towards an Inclusive Post-2015 Development Agenda'. < http://effectivecooperation.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/FinalConsensusMexicoHLMCommunique.pdf>

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[29] Unilever (2013), 'Private Sector Outreach'.

[30] UN TST Issues Brief (2013), 'Means of Implementation: Global Partnership for Achieving Sustainable Development'. <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/2079Issues%20Brief%20Means%20of%20Implementation%20Final_TST_141013.pdf>

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[35] For example, as stated by Marc Van Ameringen at the 9–10 April 2014 Joint Event of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council titled 'The Role of Partnerships in the Implementation of the Post-2015 Development Agenda'.

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<http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/GuidingPrinciplesBusinessHR_EN.pdf>

[38] Unicef, UN Global Compact and Save the Children (2012), 'Children's Rights and Business Principles'.
<http://www.unicef.org/csr/css/PRINCIPLES_23_02_12_FINAL_FOR_PRINTER.pdf>

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[40] Sustainable Development Solutions Network (2013, 'An Action Agenda for Sustainable Development, Report for the UN Secretary General'. <http://unsdsn.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/An-Action-Agenda-for-Sustainable-Development.pdf>

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