

UN POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

PSI Executive Board Briefing – June 2015

Background:

The current model of development based on market fundamentalism with its emphasis on export-led growth has failed to deliver sustainable growth and social progress in the developing world, emerging countries, or the industrialised world. Unregulated capitalism is ecologically destructive and unsustainable, and calls for a fundamental alternative system of global production that is humane and socially responsible. PSI condemns the global trend towards the privatisation of public services due to which millions of people have been deprived of their fundamental human rights, and reaffirms that the provision of universally accessible quality public services contributes to the reduction of poverty and inequality and the expansion of decent work and enhances social integration and cohesion.

One of the main outcomes of the Rio+20 Conference was the agreement by member States to launch a process to develop a set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which will build upon the Millennium Development Goals and converge with the Post-2015 Development Agenda. It was decided to establish an “inclusive and transparent intergovernmental process open to all stakeholders” with a view to developing global sustainable development goals to be agreed by the General Assembly (UNGA). The goals should address in a balanced way all three dimensions of sustainable development and be coherent with and integrated into the UN development agenda beyond 2015. This process should be finalized by September 2015.

Discussion:

PSI works in coalition with EI, ITUC, civil society partners, the ILO and others to influence the inter-governmental negotiations related to the SDGs and the Post-2015 Development Agenda. There is broad recognition that a major failure of the MDG framework was its indifference to inequality. Its successor global development framework cannot fail to address it. Global economic growth in the last two decades has yielded benefits that are grossly unevenly shared through an unprecedented widening of income inequality. Wage inequality explains a big part of income inequality, because the share of wages in total income declined over the last two decades in 70% of countries with data, despite an increase in employment rates globally. That is because most jobs created in the last two to three decades are short-term, part-time, temporary, casual or informal, and largely precarious. To address and redress income inequality, the Post-2015 Development Agenda must, above all, focus on employment, well-being and security. This means that it must also address gender inequity in the labour market and must address social policies. This requires policy and laws to protect all workers, whether in the informal or the formal economy, and to ensure compliance, instead of impunity, of anti-discrimination and minimum wage legislation as well as core labour standards. In addition, gender sensitive policies that take account of the constraints and the discrimination faced by women must be designed and implemented.

The Post-2015 Development Agenda must encompass objectives for labour including freedom of association, collective bargaining and minimum wages, which play crucial roles in reducing income inequality. Globalisation, but also trade agreements and massive tax evasion by multinational companies and others, have undermined the ability of states to implement public policies that increase the income of low-income groups, because of international legal constraints and decreased government revenues. To address economic and social inequality effectively, the Post-2015 Development Agenda must provide an earmarked policy space for governments and social partners to define and then implement efficient policies for employment and for social transfer – at the same time as carving out public services from trade agreements. But inequality cannot be addressed through economic and labour policies alone. The Post-2015 Agenda must include a goal on the implementation of social protection floors to truly reverse growing inequality and strive to achieve equity; targets must be established for the basic social security guarantees that include universal access to public health care.

PSI, EI and ITUC have participated in practically all civil society hearings of the Open Working Group in 2014 and in 2015 in the inter-governmental negotiations on SDGs. We have also contributed to joint comments

on the numerous drafts of the documents discussed at the UN, lobbied regional groups and governments, and built coalitions with other civil society organizations. At present, PSI's strategy is to focus on the inclusion of the human right to water, access to water and sanitation, universal access to public healthcare, education, tax justice, decent work, social protection floors and to denounce PPPs as a viable policy option for the financing of development and global partnerships. Whereas the SDGs will be presented at the General Assembly in September 2015, indicators will be discussed until 2016.

PSI endeavours to engage affiliates pro-actively in these processes. Informing affiliates of the on-going discussions and making sure that we reach out to all possible partners and supporters is a priority for PSI while this agenda is being developed.

[Public Services International](#) is a global trade union federation representing 20 million working women and men who deliver vital public services in 150 countries. PSI champions human rights, advocates for social justice and promotes universal access to quality public services. PSI works with the United Nations system and in partnership with labour, civil society and other organisations.