International Cooperation in the 21st Century: Partnerships for Delivering the Post-2015 Agenda

27–28 May 2014
Introduction

The Centre on Global Health Security at Chatham House, in association with the Overseas Development Institute and the Korea International Cooperation Agency, with financial support from the Rockefeller Foundation, hosted an international conference on 27–28 May 2014 on 'International Cooperation in the 21st Century: Partnerships for Delivering the Post-2015 Agenda'.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) expire in 2015 and the UN system is now in the process of negotiating a new set of goals that will drive action on sustainable development. Agreeing the goals is a challenge in itself, but harder still will be securing the necessary commitments from governments and other actors – commitments largely absent from the MDGs.

Action will be needed from a wide range of actors, and new partnership models between governments, businesses and international organizations are essential to deliver the goals, particularly in marshalling the financial resources required. The post-2015 agenda must also take account of the massive global changes that have occurred since the MDGs were formulated, including rapid growth in emerging economies, rising global inequality, continued environmental degradation and intensifying competition for resources.

The purpose of the conference was to:

- Analyse key global economic, social and environmental issues and their implications for the post-2015 agenda;
- Review the emerging post-2015 agenda and identify areas where further action is required;
- Consider the issues around mobilizing the resources necessary to achieve post-2015 goals;
- Improve understanding of the role of partnerships in achieving new goals, through an in-depth look at the health and energy sectors;
- Consider what other issues could affect the ability to obtain agreement on new goals and the resources to achieve them.

Session One: The State of the World: Implications for the Post-2015 Agenda

In identifying the right actors and securing commitments to appropriate action, the post-2015 agenda must take account of the massive global changes that have occurred since the MDGs were formulated. These include, for example, the social and economic impact of transformative technologies, the coupling of rapid growth and sharply rising inequalities in many low- and middle-income countries, continued environmental degradation, the impact of conflict on many countries, and migration pressures. This session explored key changes to the global order since 2000 and their implications for the post-2015 agenda.

Chair: David Heymann – Head and Senior Fellow, Centre on Global Health Security, Chatham House

Keynote: Amina Mohammed – Special Adviser on Post 2015 Development, UN Secretariat

Panel:

Winnie Byanyima – Executive Director, Oxfam International
Miguel Veiga-Pestana – VP Global External Affairs and Media Relations, Unilever
Alex Evans – Senior Fellow, Center on International Cooperation, New York University; Associate Fellow, Chatham House
**Amina Mohammed** noted the huge expectations around the post-2015 development agenda, along with the complexities and challenges involved in formulating a sustainable development agenda. These complexities meant there was no magic bullet, but a myriad of different solutions that needed to be integrated and a large number of different partners who needed to make a contribution in order to find joint solutions. Economic power was shifting away from OECD countries, and new relationships between north and south needed to be developed. There were new players on the scene, requiring new partnerships. Furthermore, the contribution business could make needed to be defined. But there was significant pushback from some governments and NGOs about industry’s role, and a difficulty in finding a common language. Moreover, the north/south dynamic has been replaced by a universal one. These new realities needed to be absorbed and reflected.

One difficulty was how to come out of the development silo and integrate concepts of sustainability, universality and the transformative agenda. This included how to address financing needs going beyond ODA, and what needed to be done in other sectors such as trade, technology transfer and tax reform. Reaching agreement presented a huge political challenge. There was a need to find the incentives for political leaders to do something transformative, but right now the leadership was not there; it needed to be addressed in capital cities rather than in New York. The challenge for the conference was to work out how to do this; although it was going to be an uphill struggle, the task was doable. A development agenda, a set of goals and a financing framework that was responsive to the challenges and complexities of the world today were needed by September 2015.

**Winnie Byanyima** said that for Oxfam the post-2015 framework must address the twin challenges of eradicating extreme economic inequality and ensuring climate-resilient development. The MDGs had encouraged progress but now there was a crisis in multilateralism – in trade and climate negotiations as well as in relation to action on situations such as that in Syria. The focus should be on fighting inequality, including gender inequality, and the poverty indicator should be a more ambitious $2 per day. Climate change, along with food and water security, must be included as part of the framework, otherwise all the gains made in fighting poverty would be threatened. It should be included as a complement to the ongoing climate negotiations because it was important to link addressing climate change to poverty reduction and to provide impetus to those negotiations. Finally it was important to address the issues of financing, tax evasion and corruption, encapsulated in progressive politics and inclusive governance.

**Miguel Viega-Pestana** noted that there was a progressive business community that recognized the need to build more sustainable and equitable business models that were aligned with the goals and values of the post-2015 agenda. This was also in the interests of business. Unilever, for example, had calculated that climate change cost it $450 million in 2013. It would necessitate major changes in the supply chains for many of its products. Many products also required water use, so access to that resource was critical to Unilever’s business. That was why business needed to engage with the debate about sustainable development goals (SDGs) – it was critical to business success and business could play a part in offering solutions. Unilever had set itself 50 time-bound targets to achieve by 2020, including addressing issues to do with youth and employment, and setting up 5.5 million new start-up businesses. Partnerships were critical on a small scale and working across sectors, as Unilever was doing in respect of deforestation. And there was a need to build up transformational partnerships that were global in scale, such as the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) initiative, although there were challenges in making business collaboration in such initiatives more accountable and transparent. The SUN initiative incorporated a number of measures (e.g. scorecards to measure progress) to meet such challenges but there was a general need to produce further models that encouraged companies to be more transparent about their role and the measurement of their contribution.
Alex Evans noted the contrast between the time when the MDGs were formulated — a period of economic optimism and political support for an enhanced focus on development — and the current, very different context. The OECD countries were still suffering from the effects of the financial crisis and public support for global agendas was waning, as well as for multilateralism. The emerging economies, such as China, were also in a phase of economic transition. There was a vacuum in global political leadership — the G8 and G20 were moribund and multilateral processes were increasingly ineffective and sparking north/south acrimony. Yet in spite of these adverse headwinds, the proposed post-2015 framework was far more ambitious than the MDGs. Nevertheless this was the correct approach. The sustainable development agenda, initiated at Rio in 1992, had yet to be fulfilled. A set of ambitious targets was needed — the harder part was to put in place mechanisms that would visibly make them happen and avoid bringing the process by which they were reached into disrepute.

In the question-and-answer session the importance of several factors was stressed:

- Developing a concrete accountability framework and a focus on the means of implementation and financing necessary to attain goals and targets;
- Combating poor governance and corruption;
- Supporting the mobilization of domestic resources;
- Involving people, civil society and parliaments in the post-2015 agenda;
- The need for Europe to be less introspective and show more leadership and engagement with the sustainable development agenda;
- The need for a plan to reform the multilateral system.

Session Two: Mobilizing Resources for the Post-2015 Agenda: From Whom and How?

A key question for the post-2015 framework will be who is to deliver the resources needed to implement the new goals, how they will do so and under what type of commitment. Topics for this session included how the resources to meet economic, social and environmental goals can be raised; how the burden of international actions should be shared and whether resource-mobilization targets should be assigned to governments to meet particular goals.

**Chair:** Claire Melamed — Head of the Growth, Poverty and Inequality Programme, Overseas Development Institute

**Keynote:** Young-mok Kim — President, Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA)

**Panel:**

- **Charles Abugre** — Africa Regional Director, UN Millennium Campaign
- **John-Arne Rottingen** — Director of the Division of Infectious Disease Control, Norwegian Institute of Public Health; Oslo University; Harvard University; Associate Fellow, Chatham House
- **Hildegard Lingnau** — Senior Counsellor, Director’s Office in the Development Cooperation Directorate (DCD), Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
- **Charles Anderson** — Head of UNEP Finance Initiative.

Young-mok Kim emphasized that although Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) was a small part of overall flows to developing countries, it was an important foundation for other flows. There was an important role for emerging donors too. But mobilizing private finance was also critical — for instance to bring back to life the stillborn Global Climate Change Fund. To mobilize resources it was necessary to
raise awareness, to improve recipient capacity, form public–private partnerships and address the issues of conflict and natural disaster prevention. KOICA was working hard to increase Korea’s ODA and to maximize its impact through the creative use of human resources and partnerships.

Charles Anderson said that while increasing ODA was important, it was a drop in the ocean compared with the financing needs related to creating a green economy – trillions of dollars a year were required to do this. Therefore policies to mobilize this huge investment from the private sector were required. Apart from these resources a key issue was how to improve the technical capacity in developing countries to spend this money effectively.

John-Arne Røttingen noted that, while many of the interventions to date had been quite gloomy about the challenges, the world had never been richer or healthier. Moreover, at least in the health sector, there was a convergence of issues between low- and high-income countries – for instance in the move towards universal health coverage which was relevant in the United States as much as in African countries. The focus of the post-2015 agenda should be domestic issues and domestic resources, but supplemented by international support. This should include financial and technical support, and creating an enabling policy environment.

Charles Abugre emphasized the large resource needs in Africa to meet development needs. The starting point should be domestic resource mobilization, but international measures were required to address capital flight and tax avoidance. Furthermore, not all foreign investment contributed to the sustainable development agenda – international cooperation was required to make it work for development.

Hildegard Lingnau noted that the OECD would be producing a major report on ‘Mobilizing Resources for Sustainable Development’ for discussion at a senior-level meeting in October. She also emphasized the need to merge the different agendas, including on trade and climate change, tax and technology transfer. ODA needed to be integrated with the mobilization of other flows.

In further discussion the following points were raised:

- Current regulatory tightening in the financial sector was inimical to investments in longer-term assets necessary for a green and inclusive economy – the global regulatory regime needed to be revised to support the necessary long-term investments.
- There was a need for tax harmonization and greater transparency to discourage tax avoidance strategies.
- Reducing fossil fuel subsidies and appropriate pricing of carbon were important.
- ODA need to be integrated or made coherent, as well as the finance required, including from the private sector, to address climate change.
- ODA needed to be used more effectively to stimulate other flows of finance without undermining the 0.7% ODA target.
- More funding should be funnelled into global public goods.
- Defining measurable and comparable targets that would encourage accountability was important. The agenda, unlike the MDGs, needed a ‘how’ as well as a ‘what’.

Session Three: Getting Results from Post-2015: Focus on Energy

Energy is at the centre of the nexus between development and environmental sustainability, and a key challenge for the post-2015 framework will be breaking the correlation between economic growth and environmental degradation while delivering goals on reduction of energy poverty. This session considered how targets on energy can create incentives for progress; how to ensure compatibility with social,
environmental and economic considerations; how to translate a global goal into appropriate national policies and regulations; and how finance can be mobilized.

Chair: Antony Froggatt – Senior Research Fellow, Chatham House

Panel:

Shobhakar Dhakal – Associate Professor, Asian Institute of Technology
Samir Saran – Senior Fellow and Vice President, Observer Research Foundation, India
Thomas Johansson – Professor Emeritus, International Institute for Industrial Environmental Economics
Lisa Emberson – Director, Stockholm Environment Institute at York University

Thomas Johansson noted that energy, and energy efficiency, was central to all aspects of development and had a critical interface with sustainable development objectives such as health or climate change.

Shobhakar Dhakal focused on the relationship between urbanization, energy efficiency and climate change. By 2050, 70% of the global population would be urban. Improving energy use in cities was therefore critical.

Lisa Emberson identified the threats from energy use. Climate change and air pollution were central. Food security could be substantially enhanced by reducing air pollutants. But biofuel production could also increase. Thus energy measures needed to be considered intersectorally.

Samir Saran emphasized the need to consider access, affordability and sustainability alongside energy efficiency and conservation. In India 57% of low-income groups had no access to electricity and two-thirds depend on fire for cooking. Use of electricity was highly correlated with income and educational levels. Moreover tariff levels for industrial use in India were high – competitiveness had to be a key factor. Development needs dictated that India invest in more, and more efficient, energy infrastructure – including coal and gas. Without that development goals could not be achieved. And attracting adequate financing for such large investments was problematic.

In discussion the following points were raised:

- Partnerships were required at multiple levels to deliver energy goals.
- Massive urbanization necessitated a focus on improving energy efficiency in cities.
- Political commitment to addressing energy issues and climate change continued to be lacking.
- The financing requirements were huge but investors lacked the incentive and the tools to make the needed investments. New financing models were required.
- Governments alone could not do the job but they were important in providing appropriate incentive structures to guide investment towards greener energy.
- Both top-down and bottom-up approaches were necessary.

Session Four: Getting Results from Post-2015: Focus on Health

This session considered how universal health coverage should be positioned in the post-2015; how social, economic and environmental determinants of health could be incorporated; and how to translate a global goal into national policies and programmes.

Chair: Robert Marten – Senior Program Associate, Rockefeller Foundation

Panel:

Mark Suzman – President, Global Policy and Advocacy, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
Suerie Moon - Research Director and Co-Chair, Forum on Global Governance for Health, Harvard Global Health Institute; Harvard School of Public Health
David Evans – Director, Department of Health Systems Financing, World Health Organization
Suwit Wibulpolprasert – Senior Adviser, International Health Policy Program Foundation, Thailand

Anders Nordström saw three ways of proceeding in setting health goals for the post-2015 agenda. One option was the MDG model with specific health targets; these were easy to understand and could gain political traction. A second was an integrated package of health services including promoting access to services as a component. A third was a broader concept of promoting health going beyond the health sector – for instance, addressing the health aspects of energy, climate change, education, food, or water and sanitation. Reductions achieved in child mortality were the result of efforts in several sectors other than health services. Addressing the risk factors contributing to the growing epidemic of non-communicable diseases in low- and middle-income countries reinforced the need for this multi-sectoral approach. Healthy people needed a healthy planet. The goal of healthy life expectancy could capture the contributions of all sectors to health, not just that of the health sector, and was also politically attractive. Universal health coverage was very important but was a means to an end – namely improved health. Financial protection was important because of the high proportion of people paying from their own pockets for health care. And as countries grew richer overall, international resources were withdrawn; so the financial protection for the poor needed to come from domestic resources. The emerging agenda on health from the various panels, such as the Open Working Group, seemed reasonably consistent with this broader multi-sectoral approach to improving health.

Mark Suzman emphasized the extent to which the MDGs had acted as a key motivator for improved health outcomes. They were a success in part because they were easy to understand and to measure – a key criterion for the Gates Foundation. The danger was that the more sophisticated approaches now being discussed might make more sense to specialists, but would lose the energy and mobilizing power behind the MDGs. Similarly, while the Gates Foundation supported the concept of universal health coverage, its definition was imprecise and difficult to measure, and it was a means to an end rather than an overarching health goal. The important point was to set goals capable of mobilizing politicians, the media and civil society behind easily understood targets.

Suerie Moon discussed the importance of the economic and political determinants of health. For instance, the successes in treating HIV/AIDS depended on changes in intellectual property norms that had facilitated access to cheap generic drugs. But attempts to reduce tobacco smoking could be hampered by investment treaties that allowed companies to challenge actions taken by governments. Thus investment rules could adversely affect measures to promote better health or, indeed, a better environment. Another example was tax regimes where investment decisions, such as the proposed takeover of AstraZeneca by Pfizer, could be motivated by tax considerations rather than those of industrial efficiency or enhanced innovation. Harmful tax competition needed to be addressed to improve revenue-raising possibilities and avoid the perverse decision-making it encouraged. Incorporating these economic and political considerations which have an impact on health certainly needed a broad approach within the sustainable development goals but might also require action outside the post-2015 process. A key question was how to raise the political impetus around these considerations – to move them from 'low politics' to 'high politics'.

Suwit Wibulpolprasert expressed some concerns about the direction of the post-2015 debate on health goals. She said that, in essence, all the proposed SDGs were health goals in one way or another. Yet
if there were 250 targets as suggested, no one was likely to read or commit to them. The world and health problems had changed substantially; notably, issues around non-communicable diseases and ageing were superseding those concerning infectious diseases, the principal target of the MDGs. The MDGs meant very little in Thailand because the focus was on the integrated delivery of health care rather than tackling specific diseases or conditions. Yet it would not mean much to Thailand if universal health coverage did not feature post-2015. The debate would be improved if it talked of meaningful goals and targets for global health development, not just post-2015.

David Evans contended that asking people directly what they wanted in the post-2015 agenda would have resulted in fewer and more basic targets—employment, education, protection from crime and violence, water and sanitation, and health care—all the things that contributed most directly to good health. Good and affordable health care was important, partly because of the peace of mind that it secured. People were therefore concerned that the whole system should contribute to long, healthy lives free from disability and based on good-quality, affordable health services.

In discussion the following points were raised:

- The ‘My World’ surveys conducted by the UNDP suggested that there was a good measure of agreement across the globe about seven things that were important to people—education, health, honest and responsive government, better jobs, water, food and protection from crime and violence.
- Public–private partnerships were not self-evidently a ‘good thing’—some, like the GAVI Alliance, were good and some were just cosmetic arrangements. One person thought none were good. Success required shared commitments to measurable outcomes.
- As well as asking what role the private sector should play in achieving post-2015 goals, a corollary question ought to be what role it should not play if the goals were to be achieved—and what role governments should play in both encouraging and discouraging them in certain behaviour.
- In most public–private partnerships, such as GAVI or the Global Fund, the overwhelming share of funding was from governments—corporations had provided minimal direct funding in most cases while benefiting from the expenditures of the partnerships on their goods and services.
- Businesses should earn money by doing what was good for health not selling unhealthy food and drinks and tobacco.
- More work was required to develop better measures of healthy life expectancy if it was to be a goal that would both mobilize political support and be measurable.
- The importance of addressing mental health was stressed.

Session Five: The Global Partnership to Deliver Post-2015: Making it Count

Action is needed from a wide variety of actors, and innovative partnerships between governments, businesses, international organizations, civil society, local authorities and research institutes will be essential. This session considered what partnerships are needed; how partnerships between different actors could be forged; and what the respective roles of national governments, multilateral institutions and other agencies should be.

Chair: Alex Evans – Senior Fellow, Center on International Cooperation, New York University; Associate Fellow, Chatham House

Panel:

David Hallam – UK Envoy on Post 2015, Department for International Development, UK
Alex Evans noted that MDG 8 on global partnerships for development had been a mixed bag. The panel needed to discuss what could be done better in the post-2015 context.

Csaba Korosi hoped the Open Working Group would come up with an inspiring set of goals supported by actionable targets applicable in different national circumstances, accompanied by a usable means of implementation. The negotiations were at a very difficult stage—he was working for success but the possibility of complete failure existed.

David Hallam said that the global partnerships needed to cover the ‘what’ and the ‘how’ in a world that was now very different from 2000. Finance would be important and, in that, aid would be less important than domestic resources and private flows. Not all partnerships should be mediated by the UN—variable geometry was required. The agenda should be less about what rich countries could do for poor ones, and focus more on what developing countries could do in partnership with the private sector, philanthropy, civil society and citizens. This would be very different from the MDGs.

Peter Bakker noted that the private sector accounted for 70% of GDP in the world but collaboration between the public and private sectors was hampered by a lack of trust. Trust was easy to lose and needed to be built as a result of actions, not words. It was important that the SDG agenda was framed in a way that made sense to business and should include indicators for business that could be reported on and monitored. Then business could feel ownership of the agenda and part of the solution.

Debapriya Bhattacharya noted the lack of clarity about the concept of partnerships and the means of implementation, and said this was related to the poor design and implementation of MDG8. Was global partnership a stand-alone objective or was it something that should be cross-cutting as part of the means of implementation? Then there was lack of clarity about how the different non-governmental actors were to be integrated and mobilized. Finally there were issues beyond aid and finance. These included trade, and the role of multilateral agreements outside the WTO; addressing the international tax agenda; financial stability; technology transfer; and climate change. The non-money part might be more important than the money part. And an effective accountability mechanism, for governments and others, was essential.

Kitty van der Heijden thought that common but differentiated responsibilities needed a different approach to the MDGs, in which seven goals were about what the south should do and one about how the north should contribute. In particular, there needed to be a focus on how actions by the north in terms of sustainable consumption and production could benefit the south. At the same time it was not enough to say that developing countries just had the right to develop and that was the end of it. There needed to be an idea of the global commons and global responsibilities for them. Differentiation meant tailoring actions to the needs of countries at very different stages of development, from LDCs to BRICS, while respecting their sovereignty.

Paul Ladd emphasized also the importance of accountability—for the performance of governments on behalf of citizens and also the accountability of other actors. He suggested that, say, 15 governments could set an example by committing themselves to such accountability arrangements as part of the post-2015 agreement. He also agreed that private-sector participation was important but noted that it was currently confined to the 0.5% of progressive businesses.
In discussion the following points were made:

- Corporate social responsibility as an add-on to the core business had had its day. Leading businesses, with a new generation of CEOs, were now integrating sustainability into their core business and working out ways to scale up their actions on sustainability – an example being Unilever’s Sustainable Living Plan.
- It was very worrying that climate change might not form a part of the SDGs.
- Governments had an important role to play in ensuring that incentives for businesses to do the right thing were aligned with their responsibilities to their shareholders, for example by pricing carbon. Businesses should be encouraged to maximize the return not just on financial capital but also on natural and social capital.
- There was a lack of leadership from the world’s largest economies in galvanizing effective global partnerships.
- New partnerships had to be forged, including in relation to effective development cooperation, and different from those of the 1960s and 1970s.
- The concerns of emerging and middle-income economies also had to be addressed and ways found to incorporate them in global partnerships. It was often not clear what these countries did want.
- The involvement of local government and decentralized actions behind a universal agenda was important.
- It was important to look beyond the short-term horizons of most governments and to provide a long-term accountability framework to hold all actors to account.
- The means of implementation needed to be defined for each country according to its circumstances but there were also global actions and agreements where means of implementation needed to be defined.

Session Six: Where Do We Go Now? Key Issues for Completing the Post-2015 Agenda

In this session a high-level panel considered the main points of the conference and gave their views on the implications for the post-2015 framework, as well as approaches to influencing the process.

Chair: Kevin Watkins – Executive Director, Overseas Development Institute

Keynote: Takehiro Kagawa – Director-General for Global Issues, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan

Panel:

Mark Suzman – President, Global Policy and Advocacy, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
Justin Forsyth – Chief Executive, Save the Children
Martin Khor – Executive Director, South Centre
Camilla Toulmin – Director, International Institute for Environment and Development
Roberto Jaguaribe – Ambassador of Brazil to the UK

Takehiro Kagawa focussed on the new development and environmental challenges that had to be addressed – growing inequalities, middle-income countries, climate change and environmental degradation, political and economic instability and terrorism. It was necessary to pursue inclusiveness (including for the old and the vulnerable), sustainability (both economic and social and environmental) and resilience (to economic, political and natural shocks). Human security, based on people-centred approach, was also critical. The broad framework under discussion for post-2015 was acceptable, but the number of goals and indicators – while no doubt exceeding those in the MDGs – needed to be
manageable. To ensure on the ground implementation the post-2015 framework should be clear-cut, easy to communicate and specific enough for real action.

**Justin Forsyth** noted, on the basis of his experience in Ethiopia, the huge difference the MDGs had made at local level. They had galvanized progress globally and locally, and provided a mechanism for civil society to hold governments accountable and for governments to organize their efforts. The new framework was very much needed to finish the job done by the MDGs – it should be ambitious and encompass also the new agendas of sustainability, governance and conflict. Nevertheless it should be more focused. Setting 10 goals would be better than 300 or even 17. Inequality had also to be addressed. But the political momentum, with few exceptions, seemed to be lacking, and he asked how civil society could instil that momentum. The world was in danger of sleep-walking into a series of lowest-common-denominator agreements in the absence of hundreds of millions of people demanding political action.

**Robert Jaguaribe** noted that the progress made in middle-income countries, such as China, India and Brazil, was in itself a major contribution to global goals. But the major industrialized countries had an important role to play in making further contributions.

**Camilla Toulmin** said that there had been progress in bringing together the poverty and sustainability agendas but there was still not enough focus on how the fundamental drivers of production and consumption could be made consistent with building and renewing social and natural capital. The danger was that, whatever the carefully crafted SDGs, the global economy would still be moving in an unsustainable direction. Governments needed to do much more to ensure that the incentive and regulatory framework encouraged the private sector in the direction of sustainability, a key part of which would be pricing carbon.

**Martin Khor** noted that the MDGs were basically an anti-poverty agenda, in part correcting the cuts in social expenditures arising from structural adjustment, and helped drive large increases in aid expenditures. Economic growth, industrialization and jobs were key goals for developing countries and should be also inclusive and environmentally friendly – there was a need to strengthen the environmental pillar. In that light, limiting the number of goals to 10 might unduly restrict one or other of the economic, social and environmental pillars. In addition there were agendas that went beyond the SDGs. The financial system was far from being fixed, unacceptable business practices continued and the antibiotics crisis could be more serious than climate change. Dealing with these issues might require a rather different approach from that of the SDGs.

**Mark Suzman** questioned in what areas normative goal-setting in the UN was helpful. In some areas, such as growth and jobs, he believed they were superfluous because these were the substance of national political debate in any case. A shorter, rather than larger, set of goals was useful as a means of prioritization. In particular, the weakness of the environmental goals in the MDGs required addressing. While these issues also needed to be dealt with through existing forums, such as the UNFCCC, the SDGs had to take account of the damage already being wrought by climate change – for instance, by researching more water-efficient crop varieties.

The discussion included the following points:

- The absence of real political leadership – G20 countries seemed preoccupied with their own problems and issues and the G8 was discredited and now much more inward-looking.
- Not all the issues that hold back sustainable development can be addressed through goals and targets. Corporate and trade issues that fundamentally affected development needed to be addressed in a different way.
- A key issue was how to translate goals and targets agreed in the UN to national level, to regions, to cities and to local government.
• The MDGs were supposed to have three planks including trade and technology transfer. The Doha round was a failure and technology transfer was not [being?] addressed, so it became an agenda around aid. In the SDGs there had to be more concentration on mobilizing sources of financing other than aid.

• The importance of coherence was emphasized – between the growth, poverty and sustainability objectives and between the different arms of government charged with delivering on development, trade and the environment.

• There was a problem of governance in both north and south – economic and political elites seemed to care little about very poor. So the poor were not represented in negotiations.

In conclusion, Kevin Watkins said it was right to be ambitious and to frame the objectives around human solidarity and social justice, rather than charity. What was started with the MDGs needed to be completed, but the next step, such as addressing the needs of the most marginalized people on the planet was always more difficult and more costly. Inequality was an issue that resonated in both rich and poor countries. That was why universal goals, applicable in all countries, were necessary. The absence of political will was much lamented, but in reality countries like Brazil, in unpropitious circumstances, had managed to generate support for programmes such as Bolsa Familia. The absence of political will reflected a failure to generate it through building coalitions that would make a difference. It was everyone’s responsibility to create coalitions in their own organizations – in the NGO and research communities and in the UN system – to address these issues.