

A South African CSO's Consultative Workshop on The Post-2015 Development Agenda

Friday 12th December 2014, Pretoria

Executive Summary

On Friday the 12th of December, SALO brought together various civil society formations based in South Africa to share views and perspectives on the Post-2015 Development Agenda process. The objective of this workshop was four fold, namely:

1. To increase awareness on the different CSO advocacy campaigns on Post-2015, especially around gender, peace and security, climate change and food security;
2. To identify overlaps and how this can be used to strengthen advocacy in areas of mutual concern;
3. To deepen understanding on how peace and security concerns are captured in other post-2015 advocacy campaigns; and
4. To share strategies for influencing South Africa's position on the Post-2015 in line with common CSO priorities.

The workshop was addressed by the representative of the Department of Social Development, Mr Zane Dangor. The Department of Social Development is the Post-2015 focal ministry for the South African government. The panel thus presented a range of interests: the government's perspective, different interest groups' activities and also local and regional efforts in the Post-2015 processes. The platform sought to stimulate the South African civil society's entrance into the Post-2015 dialogue to create an authentically African narrative with a human face. A significant outcome of this workshop was the stronger consensus on the relevance of peace and security in the Post-2015 development agenda. While at the beginning government and civil society were somewhat critical of each other's role, the workshop proved that continuous dialogue can serve to demystify certain assumption. By the end of day, though divergent views still existed, parties were more conscious of common positions and the need for joint advocacy at national, regional and global levels. This report provides a summary of the discussion.

Summary of Presentations

Preliminaries

Dr Mawowa welcomed the participants to the workshop and stated the objectives of the workshop. He underscored the overarching theme of the Post-2015 process: 'leave no-one behind'. SALO's specific contribution in the third focal area concerned the multi-stakeholder conversation urgently needed in South Africa to create awareness of positions, to enhance the South African agenda and to support future global and regional development priorities. Dr Mawowa asked participants to consider whether civil society was engaged in the Post-2015 process and how a stronger South African voice could be built.



Dr Bhekinkosi Moyo, the director of Southern Africa Trust (SAT), spoke on behalf of the Trust as the main sponsor for the event. He explained SAT's role of promoting grassroots voices in spaces such as the Post-2015 Development Framework discussion. Dr Moyo observed that compared to the Millennium Development Goals, the current process is far more inclusive for civil society. The inclusive approach, he argued, has brought new issues into the Post-2015 process for consideration, in particular creating space for marginalised groups and the possibility of a governance framework with a human rights orientation. While the Post-2015 Developmental Agenda echoed the Millennium Development Goals' (MDGs) quest to end poverty, there is now an important

emphasis on sustainability.

He said,

... and I think if we looked at it from that perspective (inclusivity), we will be able to take decisions today that are going to make sense for the coming generation. In other words, we should be building as well as planting trees with shade. We might not necessarily sit under them ourselves, but we are doing it for the future generations.

Looking ahead, Dr Moyo pointed to the need to invest in the fulfilment of MDGs and how the Open Working Group Report on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is such an important basis for negotiations. Civil society plays an important role in interpreting the document and facilitating civic engagement. Dr Moyo appreciated a further difference between the MDG's and SDG's: in contrast to the proclaimed universality of the MDGs, issues in the Post-2015 Agenda are viewed as context specific. The refreshed human rights orientation highlights issues for governance and its all-encompassing role to promote the goals presented in the agenda. Dr Moyo concluded with a request that civil society make their voices heard in the national platform on financing questions arising in the Post-2015 Developmental Agenda, in order to participate effectively in the upcoming forums of 2015.

First Panel

Ms Litlhare Rabele, of the Human Rights Institute of South Africa, addressing women's issues in the Post-2015 process, started by noting that 2015, the African Union's (AU) 'Year of Empowerment of Women', is the year for gender equality. She explained the relationship between peace and security and gender equality in the context of the right to safe environment. This right asserted the role of women into decision-making and leadership. Despite successes in South Africa, the right is still limited in respect of women's entrance into mediation and negotiation processes. According to Ms Rabele, the commitment of the SADC Gender Protocol to include 50% of women in legislatures by 2015 would assist the peace and security goal in addressing the wide-spread gender-based violence. She observed that the



current lack of activity in the legislatures to deal with this kind of violence is a worrying reality. Acknowledging government's achievements in support for gender equality, Ms Rabele reiterated the importance of civil society's contribution towards this objective. She ended by noting that poor statistics and mechanisms for monitoring inhibited the success of women's rights in South Africa.



After Ms Rabele, **Mr Zane Dangor**, Special Advisor to the Minister of Social Development gave his key note address. He summed up the Post-2015 Developmental Agenda process and provided context for the inclusion of the peace and security goal. Mr Dangor reflected on the peace and security mandate of the UN Security Council and how this is complemented by the Bretton Woods Institutions. Power in the global arena is an issue because even though the concept of sovereignty allows states to be equal, the UNSC and the vetoing powers are a clear example of the domination of certain powers in peace and security as well as the power struggles between these states. The UN is in this way an undemocratic institution which explains concerns raised by developing countries on the peace and security goal and

the alleged securitisation of development. He cited the example of the International Criminal Court to illustrate why developing countries are hesitant around the peace and security goal as it could infringe upon the sovereignty of a state. Nevertheless, the Non-Aligned Movement provides an alternative space for the discussion of SDG issues.

Mr Dangor highlighted the complexity of negotiations in the UN and the difficulty in finding consensus. Thus the adoption of SDGs will be dependent upon the strength of the consensus formed during the Post-2015 processes. He expressed South Africa's view that the 17 proposed SDGs should be adopted and not be tampered with. According to Mr Dangor, a crude dichotomy that has emerged from the political negotiations has been the separation of 'rights' from 'development'. As a consequence, states such as South Africa and many Latin American countries are forced to struggle with the tension resulting from this separation. He said,

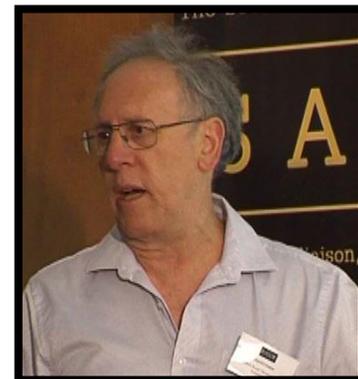
Now, for a country like South Africa, all of these rights are important. It's not an 'either-or', it's 'and'. We believe that civil and political rights are important and we believe that economic rights are equally important.

In the light of the political complexity Mr Dangor encouraged civil society to adopt a multi-issue based advocacy method. He lamented the consensus-building dialogue of the United Nations, noting that the lowest common denominator is chosen and thus many issues that South Africa puts forward fall away. As a result, the global statement is partisan and negatively affects the development of the global South. Mr Dangor noted the UN Secretary-General's Synthesis Report's endorsement of the Open Working Group's (OWG) outcome document, a position that South Africa supports given the high level of participation by member states in the OWG process. His observation was that the following issues, among others, are likely to remain contentious: women's reproductive and related rights; the language of universal access especially within the African Union and other developing countries; and the reform of global financial infrastructure.

Ms Nokuthula Mjwara, of the Gay and Lesbian Network, gave some accounts of the challenges faced by the gay and lesbian community in South Africa. Among these is the lack of conversation in the country on hate crimes, particularly on those committed towards homosexual people. She continued by pointing to social stigma and its devastating impact upon the gay and lesbian community as well as to the systematic failures affecting their access to justice. Ms Mjwara provoked thought by the audience in her concluding request that it consider whether the concept of 'tolerance' truly allowed for the expression of all human rights.



Mr David Cooper, from LIMA Rural Development, described the work of LIMA on rural development issues, with its special focus on food security and land reform. He demonstrated a severe inequality in South Africa with a statistical comparison between the land owned by commercial farmers, state-owned land, land for conservation and the little that is left for communal use. The statistics trumped the national view that South Africa is food secure, he said, because the large areas of land owned by commercial farmers are capital intensive and rapidly mechanising, resulting in labour losses. Even though the South African government encourages small-holder farms to alleviate the pressure, the domination of the national markets prevents success. He argued that emphasis should be placed on the local economic market to change the situation. Mr Cooper also felt urban food production is critical to move towards food independence as is the case in countries such as Cuba.



Ms Delphine Serumaga, Centre of Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR), looked into the synergies of civil society in the Post-2015 Agenda and her experience of how to strengthen the African voice at the international level from a civil society point of view. They had managed, in collaboration with other civil society organisations, to produce a multi-issue based position paper. She used her organisations example, and those of SALO and others, to indicate that African voices are not as disjointed as that may seem. Ms Serumaga felt that civil society organisations are not keeping track of each other, nor are they often enough using the correct channels in their advocacy. CSVR, she said, therefore seeks to address these problems and to put a concrete African

contextual understanding upon the table for international negotiation. They intend to promote a new language that is in accord with the reality on the ground and they aspire to have a strategy to maintain the language approach. Ms Serumaga called for civil societies to come together to discuss their priorities and invited NGO's to join their collaboration.

Mr Masiwa Rusare, from the African Monitor, gave a regional perspective on the Post-2015 process and described African Monitor's experience of it. African Monitor coordinates the Africa CSO Working Group on Post-2015, a coalition of Africa CSOs for the high level engagement on the Post-2015 Development Agenda. Mr Rusare lamented that the African narrative is seriously under-resourced. In their engagement in New York, African Monitor observed that African capitals were remote from New York despite the delegations' need to represent their people. He noted that since the Common African Programme (CAP) stems from the Africa Agenda 2063, the Post-2015 Developmental Agenda's relevance to the African Union will only be effective to the extent it reflects Africa Agenda 2063.



Mr Rusare called on civil society to work with the Africa CSO Working Group to ensure the connection with African states is strengthened to streamline the Post-2015 process into Agenda 2063. In order for civil society to do this, he argued, they need to be aware at a country level of who the state and regional negotiators are and which issues are prioritised on a country level. Also, civil society needs to be cautious of the politics of the process and understand that the UN is a facilitator of the interactions of member-states and the global civil society in order to contribute effectively. He explained how the Africa Monitor is seeking to develop indicators for a transformative agenda that will address inequality in its various dimensions. Such a process, he suggested, requires a distinctively African agenda. Mr Rusare commended the UN Synthesis Report for promoting a participatory approach.

He concluded by calling for an ambitious Post-2015 Agenda saying,

...and to move past a poverty agenda, we don't want this Post-2015 Agenda to just be about poverty or just an MDG-Plus. We want it to be transformational, that means putting transformation in place at the centre of these processes; issues that I can maybe call the economic goals; transforming economic production and consumption as well as issues of economic growth.



Mr Richard Smith, a SALO Board Member, spoke about Goal Sixteen as an entry point into the Post-2015 process for the debate on peace and security. The goal reads to *'promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, to provide access to justice for all, and to build effective, accountable and inclusive Institutions.'* According to Mr Smith the implementation of the Goal Sixteen suggests that what is essential to promoting peaceful and inclusive societies will be the strengthening of national institutions and ensuring that there is the promotion and enforcement of non-discriminatory laws and policies. The goal illustrates how the strong connection between justice and effective as well as accountable institutions makes for peaceful societies. It therefore moves

the global debate from the 'securitisation of development' to the 'humanisation of security'. Mr Smith raised a concern about high level work using a lot of jargon that feeds into policy-type discussions, thus creating a disjuncture with civil society. Taking from SALO's experience, he observed.

I think probably the closest that we as SALO can get, in trying to close that gap, lies in the understanding of the concept of human security, and it's because of that ability, of human security to speak to a society in which people are free from fear, are free from want, and in which their needs are being addressed, that the understanding of the link between peace and development becomes so much clearer.

Addressing the UN Synthesis Report, Mr Smith believes it still promotes the idea of a transformative agenda through the need for a paradigm shift in thinking. In terms of the global balance of power, he noted that the international arena is at a critical point where is acutely aware of the partiality within the agenda of development. Mr Smith pointed out that there is a serious global crisis of legitimacy at the moment. The Post-2015 Development Agenda thus offers an opportunity to have an open, clear debate about the current state of global affairs, and it allows for refreshing perspectives on development and the common but differentiated responsibilities of different nations. Within this context, Mr Smith argued that civil society should engage in a holistic manner to pursue the success of such a global agenda and should consider cooperative partnerships with governments where opportunities exist.

Contributions from the Floor



The first contributor was **Ambassador Welile Nhlapo** who commented on the need to centralise national institutions and strengthen capacity through the Post-2015 process in order to have independent African states capable of realising the agenda. Another contributor was concerned about the lack of rehabilitation facilities for victims of gender-based violence in South Africa and called on civil society organisations to assist. One participant was critical of global super powers and questioned the consensus-building premise of the Post-2015 process in the light of the CIA report that had emerged condoning torture. Other issues raised from the floor included the state of food security in South Africa; small-holder farming; living and working conditions of farm workers; the role of traditional leaders and rural economies; skills development and socio-economic transformation.

Responses from the Panel

Among the many points in the responses from the panellists, Mr Smith appreciated the mention of the CIA report as an example of the crisis of legitimacy in the global arena, and **Mr Zane Dangor** called for a radical ideological shift to take place on the continent around inclusiveness and sovereignty.

Conclusion

Ms Isabella Matambanadzo, a SALO Board Member, gave concluding remarks by noting the following:

- The Post-2015 Development Agenda is unfolding in the context of religious extremism that has affected a shift in global politics. The human rights agenda has thus been subsumed by the agenda of divinity and theology. Civil society must consider the impact this has on issues such as women and LGBTI rights in the global agenda and reclaim a liberation theology.
- Africa's security interest is not in pursuing a peace and security goal for the sake of the global North but rather for the refugees and damaged people living on the continent due to military societies.
- Civil society has changed. It has diminished resources, not only in terms of budgets but also in intellectual clout and capacity, ideological appreciation and mind-set issues; in addition, laws of the region are increasingly cutting back on freedom of association and assembly. As a result, international NGO's rather than grassroots and community-based institutions are setting the agenda.
- Against the reality of the youth bulge in Africa, civil society's and in particular young thinkers' access in the Post-2015 Development Agenda is impeded.
- As well as weak states, the problem in the continent is weak regional institutions making them unable to respond to challenges.
- The legacies of race and racism on the continent portray unresolved debates that will affect the development agenda, especially issues arising from land reform and land distribution.
- The world has shifted significantly since the creation of the Non-Aligned Movement states; there is also the growth of China's influence in Africa. International relations therefore does not only include the North-South divide but an East divide too.
- Civil society needs to discuss the notion of solidarity in Africa in the Twenty-First Century and in the context of this Development Agenda, and whether South Africa is playing a role that is authentically African or is serving only South African interests.



The analysis and recommendations included in this Policy Dialogue Report do not necessarily reflect the view of SALO or any of the donors or conference participants, but rather draw upon the major strands of discussion put forward at the event. Participants neither reviewed nor approved this document. The contents of the report are the sole responsibility of SALO, and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the donors who provided financial assistance for this Policy Dialogue Session.

About the Southern African Liaison Office:

The Southern African Liaison Office (SALO) is a South African-based not-for-profit civil society organisation which, through advocacy, dialogue, policy consensus and in-depth research and analysis, influences the current thinking and debates on foreign policy especially regarding African crises and conflicts.

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