

URGENT NEED FOR AN ALTERNATIVE INTERNATIONAL AGENDA FOR CHANGE ***(Beyond 2015)***

INTRODUCTION

What could be a post-MDG agenda?

Option1: The simple extension of the deadline of the same/current MDG agenda? Option2: An improved 'MDG agenda' with a little bit more of the same (few new goals, new technical indicators, etc)? Or, Option3: something radically/structurally new and different?

I believe that before answering this question, we need to seriously look at what could/might/should be a real alternative international agenda. We know that the two first options are the easiest and quicker to put in place.

An International Agenda for Development is supposed to lead to **“positive changes in the life of people at local level”**.

I/ WHAT IS THE BASIS / PRE-CONDITIONS FOR CHANGE?

Two key elements:

1. The basis and root for change are the millions of local communities, groups of citizens, civil society organizations' (CSO) initiatives that stand / mobilize / fight / engage to:
 - o Improve their lives
 - o Solve concrete problems
 - o Claim and defend their rights

This is what CSO call a “people-centered agenda”, a “people-centered approach”.

The good news is that it is happening everywhere, from the people and communities themselves!

Even in the worst situations (i.e. remote areas, countries in conflict, or/and in situations of economic poverty and discrimination) it is happening! Local initiatives are TAKING PLACE EVERYWHERE = this is a positive factor! This is THE main condition for change! This is true for any developing or developed country.

Unfortunately the national and international institutions today don't talk about it.

Institutions don't build their strategies from those people-led initiatives!

2. The second condition for sustainable changes is the existence of an enabling environment that boosts / supports / incentives initiatives & capabilities at local level, and from local to international.

What does it mean concretely?

- o Political space for citizens/ CSO
- o Legal frameworks that incentive / protect local participation & initiatives
- o Adequate and timely human, technical & finance resources that are available to people and actors.
Meaning “demand driven” resources, not like “Aid” today which is mainly “offer driven”!
- o Learning processes, dissemination of success-stories, ‘multiplication’ effect, change of scale and exchanges of experiences among actors and regions.

Those are two pre-conditions for change in societies!

The first is happening everywhere, so let look at the second one which is supposed to / **should be the main responsibility of governments, institutions, local authorities and legislators.**

II/ WHAT DOES “CREATING AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR PEOPLE” REQUEST?

Creating an enabling environment for people is a complex issue but implies at least two pre-conditions:

- 1) “Creating an enabling environment for people” requires a radical change of mindset / mentality within institutions & politicians regarding their roles & responsibilities

We need “Institutions & politicians” that STOP saying to people what to do, but “institutions & politicians” that provide enabling environment to people => major paradigm shift for elites, experts and ‘technicians’.

The approach must consist in starting by looking at people and communities as actors more “knowledgeable” than “ourselves”... *“People know more than me”*... *“What can I do to ease, to enable, to boost what people do?”*... → We need an HUMBLE APPROACH from institutions and from the political leadership!

CHALLENGE: Today, politicians / States / institutions / international community / academy / experts / and the “Aid industry” overall are part of the problem... not part of the solution as we mainly believe. This is ironic and represents one of the biggest taboos of the international agenda today!

2) “Creating an enabling environment for people” requires to change / adapt / challenge the rules of the game (here I’m not meaning the rules of the international governance), but the rules and values of the “living together” from local to global:

Today RULES are not explicitly set to pursue the “common interest”, the “global goods” and to ensure and guarantee Rights of people and nature. Today’s rules have been set up under the wrong few assumptions:

- Consuming more goods and services make lives of people better and happier,
- Economic growth is the only way to create / secure jobs → Jobs / employment are the main “conditions” for “political stability” (the latest might be true).
- Technical and scientific innovations alone will allow the economic system to overcome the scarcely / limits of natural resources.
- Free markets alone will “correct” negative effects of any kind, and for-profit private sector must not be regulated.

Those paradigms are still running almost all national and international institutions, political parties and private sectors strategies, policies and agendas everywhere around the world.

At the core of the new rules we need:

- The achievement of “Common interest” (*“Intérêt Général”*) and global goods
- Enforceable Human and Environmental Rights
- Shared responsibilities among all actors, and vis-à-vis the next generations
- Participation of people, active citizenship and local initiatives
- Solidarity and Justice

Of course it is a MAJOR CHALLENGE for the donor community and national institutions to admit that changes are not only needed “elsewhere”, “over-there”, “oversea”, but also and perhaps firstly, “here”, in our “own minds”, “in our institutions” and “own practices”...

This shift must be at the core of any alternative international agenda!

III/ WHAT COULD BE AN ALTERNATIVE INTERNATIONAL AGENDA?

(See 2nd Chart – ANNEX1)

FIVE MAIN ELEMENTS FOR THIS NEW AGENDA:

- 1- A new international agenda/framework which is “people oriented” and consists in boosting local communities’ initiatives and promoting and defending the rights of women, men and nature all over the world.
- 2- We are not talking anymore about an Agenda for developing countries ONLY (but for ALL the international community). For all countries members of the United Nations!
- 3- A new International framework for human and environment rights (H&ER) who is enforceable while acknowledging national contexts and history... The important element here is a clear & formal commitment from all States (international community) to a process that enforces all H&ER with periodic national review. Meaning an international agreement / framework and a progressive and negotiated

implementation at NATIONAL LEVEL (over 10 to 15 years' plans) – see specific box on “national level” – ANNEX2. There is no need to develop new Rights in the very short term... All those rights already exist in the United Nations (UN) system / international community (Protocols/Conventions/Declarations). There is a NEED for Governments and Nations to ratified and applied them... This is the GOAL = to incentive, push, pressure each country to engage in a process of ratification of all those rights but respecting differentiated paths... **The political ambition should be similar to what happened 60 years ago around the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.**

- 4- This strong Human & Environment Rights' framework should be reinforced by three key pillars / approaches:
 - a. Organisation of Jobs, labor markets, rural employment & decent work
 - b. The fight against inequalities, re-distribution of wealth and 'truly' sustainable development
 - c. Adequate, predictable and sustainable finance resources mobilized from domestic to international levels to implement this framework
- 5- This new agenda breaks / overcomes the boxes and categories of the current agenda (development, environment, human rights, etc.) in which we (CSO as well) are enclosed / trapped. These categories do not reflect the reality of people lives... **By the way, such a new approach will/would automatically ends with “traditional donors” approaches on “priority sectors” (set from donor offices) or “development models”... With this approach, there is no need for a specific “DEVELOPMENT AGENDA” anymore. It seems to be the right time to stop the “Aid industry wrong approaches” as it has been set up for decades now!**

IV/ CONCLUSIONS

1-The advantage of this new agenda – framework is that donors' work will become much “easier”... and efficient!

National governments & donors' work will consist mainly in:

- supporting the creation of an enabling environment for people initiatives,
- supporting & building their capabilities and capacities,
- promoting and defending the rights of women, men and nature
- providing timely & adequate resources to support their initiatives, letting people, CSO & communities leading and doing,
- And finally, donors, institutions working on education, as well as CSO will have to significantly increase (quality & quantity) the advocacy, watchdog, campaigning & global education' work to improving (everywhere) citizens' understanding of the complex issues of the current international arena and to reinforcing their capacities to control decision makers, while strengthening active citizenship and the sense of responsibilities of each and all partners and actors from local to global.

2-This new approach should also quickly lead to “results” & impact!

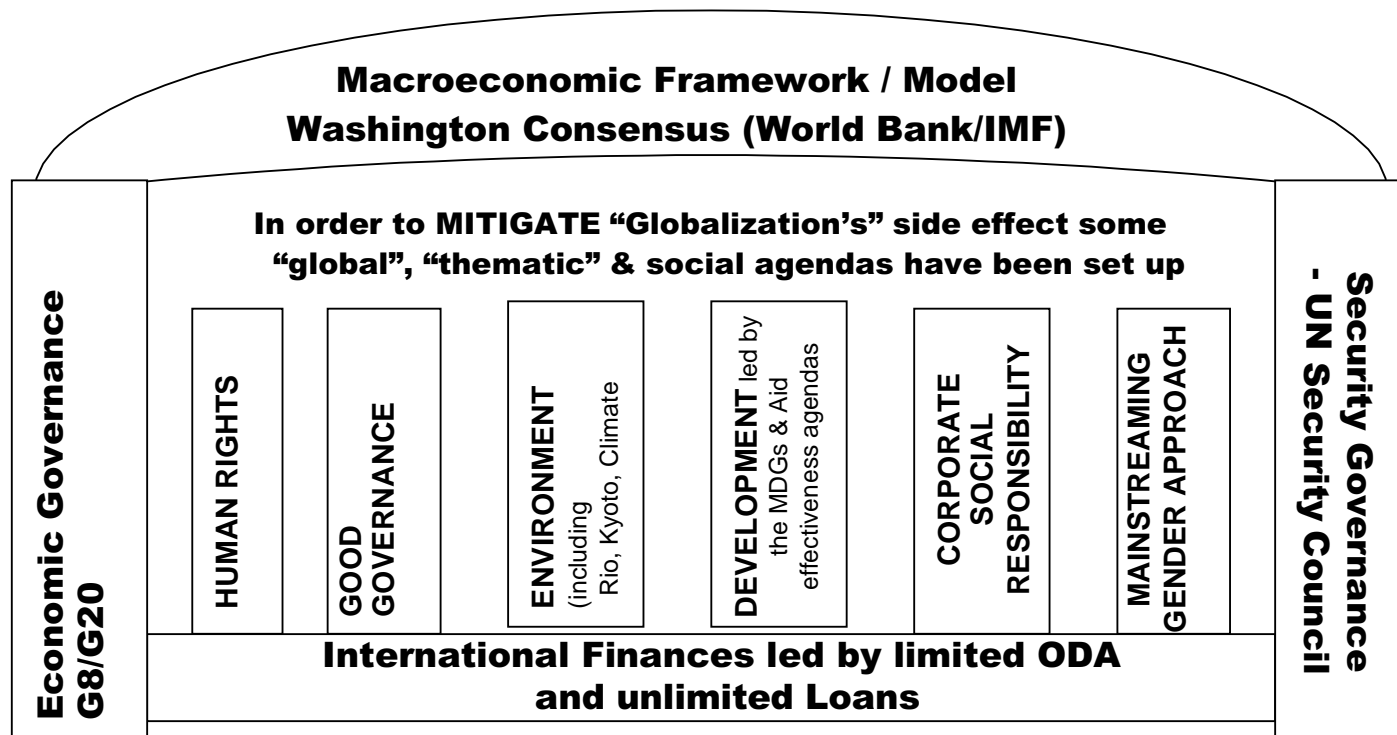
This is exactly what the “for-profit private sector” has been doing for the last 60 years so successfully: requesting, pushing and lobbying from local to global to get an “enabling environment” for business!! Business sector has been claiming for rules, tools, resources that make their “lives” easier... Private sector did not expect States, Institutions or the International Community to tell them what to do in the markets, or within their firms and fabrics (especially at local level). Business actors asked for an enabling environment and for “rules of the game” that boost private sectors initiatives and 'for-profit' outcomes... This is how business, worldwide - from local to global, has been and is still so efficient in setting the rules and reaching its objectives!

This is now the time for people & citizens to set the rules!

This is now the time for politicians, institutions & States to deliver on people demands and initiatives!

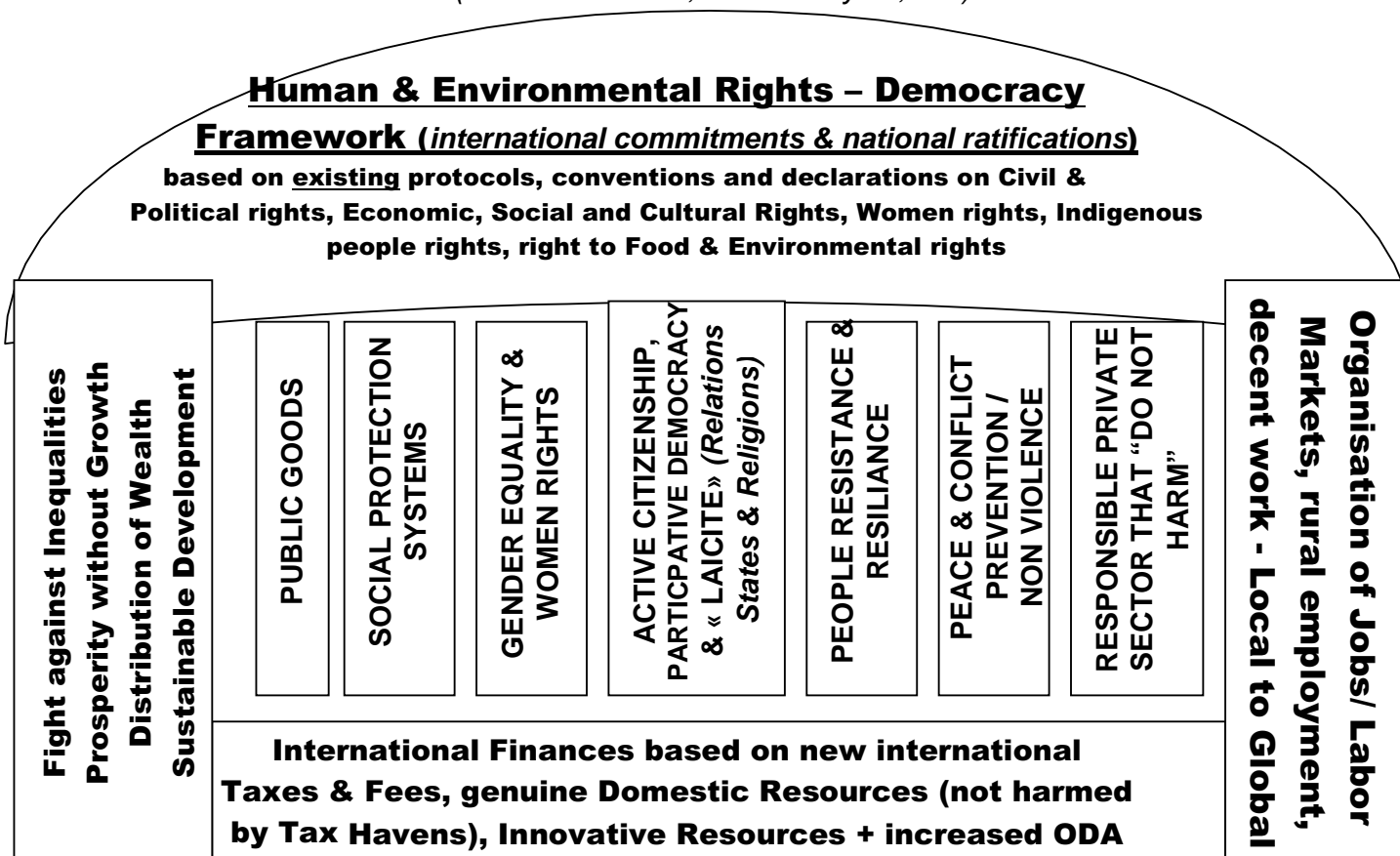
From an INTERNATIONAL AGENDATODAY...

(Set during the 80s & early 90s and responding to XIX and XX century paradigms)



...To an INTERNATIONAL AGENDA for the XXI Century

(Post 2015/MDGs, Post Rio/Kyoto, etc.)



ANNEX2

WHAT THIS ALTERNATIVE AGENDA WOULD MEAN AT NATIONAL LEVEL?

Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) / National Development Strategies resulted to be wrong approaches: top down approach to people, framed by the International Community and elaborated by central governments and experts.

An Alternative National Agenda (for each country member of the United Nations) should be built around 3 pillars/strategies. *Each country should report to the UN on advancement on a periodic basis:*

- A Human & Environment Rights (H&ER) framework based on political negotiation and binding/evolving commitments. Each country establishes an inclusive/evolving road map for H&ER Framework
- Clear commitments, to build the conditions, the mechanisms and an institutional framework that guarantee, promote and boost people ownership / active citizenship / participation, while establishing / setting an Enabling Environment for change, for local initiatives, for people to claim their rights.
- Mobilization of adequate, sustainable and timely resources from domestic to international levels.

This NEW international & national approaches will challenge the current relations & the roles that politicians, States & institutions used to play vis-à-vis society and people (power shift).

This means:

- more power / legitimacy to secure / defend / promote “common interest” and “global goods”
- more capacity to adapt / develop new “rules of the game”
- more “humble” / “services delivery” / bottom up approach / facilitation role / by Institutions and political leadership
- Increased “transparency” and “control” by citizens