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Follow up on efforts made towards achieving the MDGs

Caritas Internationalis is one of the largest faith based INGO in the world with 164 national members, characterized by permanent presence, capillarity, a focus on walking with the people victims of poverty.

In 2000, there were high spirits in the community of nations to challenge poverty as a scandal at the time of entering the 3rd millennium.

13 years later, the spirits have gone down and we are far from reaching those targets. MDG8 has been largely forgotten. If some progress has been made, it remains very limited for large crowds of people, whether in low income or in middle income countries. We cannot be satisfied with this.

Our members say that the MDGs were necessary but that for many reasons mainly due to the top down process which was adopted, they have failed to reach the poorest, they may even have marginalized them more in certain cases. A concrete effect of the will to reach some targets has been to put the focus on those easily reachable, the top of the basket. After all, the goal is to reduce poverty only by 50%.

We don't agree with this. We have to target zero poverty, as every human being has the same right to live a dignified life.

What we want is a human rights based approach, a new social contract by which the poorest and most excluded will be brought back in the centre, the focus of everyone's attention to make their rights become a reality. If they become the centre of attention, then we can hope that all policies established and promoted will succeed in bringing a better life for all.

We say this out of experience.

2 of our members, Cafod/Caritas E&W, and Trocaire/Caritas Ireland have produced two reports based on contributions from the poor in 10 countries around the globe which have been published today. Named "Setting the Post 2015 development Compass: voices from the ground" (<http://www.cafod.org.uk/content/view/line/11042>), and "My rights beyond 2015: making the Post 2015 framework accountable to the world's poor". I invite you to read them. They give a lot of insights and recommendations.

From our global reflections I would like to share 5 of our cornerstones centered on the process more than on the content:

1. **The participation and empowerment of people in poverty must be central to decision-making on, implementation and follow-up of the Post-2015 development framework.**
2. The right to participate is fundamental to a **human rights-based approach to development**. Such an approach obliges States, within the framework of existing legally codified commitments, to guarantee all human rights for every person under their national and extraterritorial jurisdiction, without regard to age, status, sex, race, ethnic or religious background.
3. The Post-2015 framework should ensure that all people be **empowered** to act as **agents of their own development** and have the right, space and capacity to hold decision-makers and implementers **accountable for their actions**. To that end, participation should be reinforced by accountability mechanisms that include qualitative data sourced through participatory research and that facilitate effective access to justice.
4. The promotion and empowerment of **women and girls** is of particular importance since significant numbers currently are marginalized in many respects, despite the fact that they are essential actors in promoting and achieving development. Supporting formal and informal education programs for the poor is key.
5. Informed participation requires an institutional environment that enables participation of civil society, including **faith-based organizations**, and especially of those organizations/groups that work with and represent the poorest and most marginalized.

Caritas organizations reaffirm their commitment to advocate for open participatory processes at all levels, to ensure that people and communities are effectively consulted, as well as for really accessible monitoring channels, due reporting and means of recourse for accountability.

We have two years to prepare for a future without the scandal of extreme poverty. Let us not lose this opportunity to make a real change for the lives of all.

Michel ROY
Secretary General