



ISLAMIC RELIEF WORLDWIDE AND THE POST 2015 PROCESS

MAKING ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVES HEARD

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have strengthened international action on global poverty through a focus on time bound targets.

MDG 1, Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger, has met its target of halving the number of people living on less than \$1.25 a day.

MDG 2, Achieve Universal Education, has achieved the milestone of global parity in primary education between girls and boys (97 girls enrolled per 100 boys in 2010—up from 91 girls per 100 boys in 1999).

MDG 7, Ensure environmental Sustainability, has secured access to safe drinking water for an extra 2 billion people (75% to 87% globally).



MDG IMPACT ON POVERTY ALLEVIATION

In addition to the aforementioned achievements, some MDGs, like MDG 4, Reduce Child Mortality, and MDG 6, Combat HIV and other infectious diseases, have also helped galvanise strategic partnerships between public and private financing that have made a substantial impact on global health. 5.5 million child deaths were averted through immunizations between 2000 – 2011 through the efforts of the Global Alliance Vaccination Initiative (GAVI), which brought together UN agencies, pharmaceutical companies, international financing institutions and private donors. Similarly the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria has delivered antiretroviral therapy for 6.5 million people in 2010 alone, and has seen HIV infections decreasing by more than 50% in 25 countries over the last few years.

As with any ambitious projects, there have been successes and failures. MDG 3, Empowering Women and Girls, has made a measurable impact, due to a narrow focus on education. The targets under MDG 3, however, failed to address the economic and social drivers of discrimination, such as limited control over assets and property, violence against women, and unequal participation in private and public decision-making. The interlinking nature of women's inequality was not sufficiently addressed in the MDG framework. Consequently, MDG 5, Improving Maternal Health, which is both a driver and consequence of gender inequality, did not perform well. MDG 8, Building a Partnership for Global Development, did little to protect the fall in overseas development aid during the financial crisis and has failed to promote more inclusive international finance mechanisms.

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE POST 2015 PROCESS

Building on the legacy of the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which sought to mobilize the global community around poverty alleviation, the Post 2015 process is designed to address the underlying causes of poverty. Unlike the MDGs, the upcoming Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) recognize that poverty is not only a 'developing country problem' but a fundamental injustice that impacts all countries.

Two parallel UN processes inform the Post 2015 Framework. The High Level Panel (HLP) on the Post 2015 framework led

by the governments of Indonesia, Liberia, and the United Kingdom rightly concluded that we must 'leave no one behind'; it aims to address inequalities across all sectors of development through 12 proposed goals. Secondly, the Rio+20 Conference in Brazil in 2012 established a global consensus on a link between environmental sustainability, human development and economic growth. The details of how such aspirations can become a reality will be finalised between March and August 2014 through the Open Working Group (OWG), attended by 70 countries as well as many civil society organizations.

Some of the many priority areas of action within these debates include:

- Poverty eradication and inclusive growth
- Equality, including gender equality
- Conflict prevention, rule of law and governance
- Food security and nutrition
- Disaster Risk Reduction and resilience
- Climate change, sustainable development,
- Water, Sanitation and Hygiene as well as health
- Employment, decent work and social protection
- Countries with special needs (Least Developed Countries and Small Island States)

The time for influencing outcomes is now. Whatever decisions are eventually made about the new goals and targets in September 2015, they will not only determine what programs are prioritized in the international arena, but they will also have a significant impact on overseas development aid as well as on national development plans. The timeline below outlines key moments in the remaining discussion period and underlines the urgency of acting immediately to influence the new goals, targets, and indicators of the Post 2015 framework.

**January 2013:
High Level Panel
Report (proposed
goals and targets)**

**February 2014:
Open Working Group
completes 8
thematic sessions**

**June 2014:
High Level Political
Forum discusses
Post 2015
(Ministerial level)**



September 2015:
New framework agreed
(including financing
questions)



December 2014:
Intergovernmental
negotiations on proposed
vision, principles, goals
and targets.



November 2014:
Synthesis report of OWG
report, Financing Report,
MyWorld and the High
Level Panel.

August 2014:
Open Working Group
Report (proposed
goals, targets)

August 2014:
Expert Committee
on Sustainable
Development
Financing Report

September 2014:
UN General Assembly
discusses Post 2015

THE IMPORTANCE OF PARTICIPATION

FOR THE MUSLIM UMMAH

Why participate? First and foremost, as Muslim inspired institutions and organizations, it is our responsibility to recognize the importance of this discussion to the Muslim Ummah – the majority of which resides in lower income nations, receiving significant flows of foreign development assistance – and our duty to act.

“Of the world’s roughly 1.59 billion Muslims, nearly 97% live in developed or under-developed countries”

“Despite the fact that OIC countries possess nearly 70 percent of world energy resources and 40 percent of its natural resources, around 40% of their populations live below the poverty line.”

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ بِالْقِسْطِ شُهَدَاءَ لِلَّهِ وَلَوْ عَلَىٰ
أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَوِ الْوَالِدِينَ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ، إِنْ يَكُنْ غَنِيًّا أَوْ فَاقِرًا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ أَوْلَىٰ
بِهِمَا، فَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا الْهَوَىٰ أَنْ تَعْدِلُوا، وَإِنْ تَلَوُّوا أَوْ تُعْرَضُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ
كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا

“Oh you who believe! Stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to God, even as against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, and whether it be (against) rich or poor.”

An-Nisa 4:135



INFLUENCE ON FUNDING STREAMS

One major part of the Post 2015 Process, the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing, is directly linked to funding reforms. This member State led process is designed to mobilize more diversified funding for development purposes. This Committee is also coordinating with international and regional financial institutions and other relevant stakeholders. While this discussion has so far been relatively closed off to civil society, it is likely to reshape what development financing looks like in the post-2015 period.

TAKING AN ACTIVE ROLE

Finally, in many international discussions, Muslim majority countries and Islamically inspired institutions and organizations have not yet developed coherent, Islamically rooted policy positions of their own. Often this leaves them in a defensive position with respect to policies shaped at the UN. The particular values, priorities and contributions of the Ummah may be omitted or alienated if our voice is not heard. Given the importance of the Post 2015 Agenda for shaping global discussion, it is important that Muslim majority countries and institutions make their voices heard to clarify their priorities for sustainable development and poverty alleviation, including reforms to uphold justice and oppose oppression in their own societies. Actively participating in this process is the best way of ensuring that the perspectives of Muslim majority countries are respected rather than ignored or worse attacked.

ISLAMIC RELIEF WORLDWIDE'S CONTRIBUTION

ISLAMIC RELIEF'S CORE VALUES INCLUDE:

Social Justice
(*Adl*)

Excellence
(*Ihsan*)

Sincerity
(*Ikhlas*)

Custodianship
(*Amana*)

Compassion
(*Rahma*)

ENGAGEMENT AT THE UN LEVEL

Islamic Relief's identity as a Muslim inspired NGO, deeply rooted in Muslim communities across the world places us in a unique position at the United Nations, where religious perspectives are rarely heard but increasingly seen as necessary. Growing recognition in some quarters of the UN of the importance of global diversity in human beliefs, cultures, and values has led to excitement about Islamic Relief's participation in the Post 2015 Process.

Islamic Relief's Post 2015 team has already been hard at work attending the Open Working Group Sessions to ensure our Islamic perspectives are heard in global discussions. We will hold side events with UN agencies at the Commission for the Status of Women (March), the High Level Political Forum (July) and the UN General Assembly (September) to raise awareness of the value of working with local communities, including Imams and scholars, rather than against them. It is essential that the final text of the Post 2015 framework represents the realities of Muslim communities around the world. So, in the coming months, our team will return to the UN to speak with Member States that are participating in the drafting of goals and targets for the Post 2015 framework, offering them our expertise on humanitarian issues and faith sensitive approaches to complex topics like gender. Acknowledging the limits of high level conversations, Islamic Relief is also investing resources in developing relationships directly with national governments through our field offices.

PARTNERING WITH OTHERS FOR GLOBAL REFORM

Islamic Relief recognizes that many of the underlying causes of poverty in today's world are not local, national, or even regional - but global. This is especially true of macroeconomic issues such as trade relations and farm subsidies as well as global lending practices that disadvantage less developed countries, contributing to the creation of a fundamentally unjust global financial environment. While Islamic Relief has already begun advocating for reform through initiatives like its Pakistan Debt Relief campaign, as an organization it acknowledges that an issue as far reaching as global economic reform requires a broad coalition of support and that coordinating our advocacy with the work of others will increase the pressure on high level policy makers to enact positive change. For this reason, Islamic Relief is eager to participate in the on-going initiatives of other organizations as well as to support its field offices to move forward with national level advocacy.

A UNIQUE VOICE

This Islamically inspired foundation has led us to develop our own, internal policy on human development in Islam based on work conducted in close coordination with Islamic scholars. These guidelines suggest that in accordance with Islamic ethics and law (Maqasid al-Shari'ah) that there are five crucial dimensions of human development, namely: spiritual (faith), human (life), educational (intellect), social (posterity) and economic (wealth). Importantly, this view underscores that, in Islam, the basic goal of development is to create an environment that enables people to enjoy spiritual, moral and socio-economic well-being in this world and success in the Hereafter (known collectively as *falah*).

An essential part of Islamic Relief's field programs with a focus on DRR is WASH related programming. Currently, we have 32 on-going WASH projects in 12 different countries with a total value of nearly 3.5 million pounds and a beneficiary reach of roughly 500,000 people.

AREAS OF FOCUS

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AND WASH

The effects of climate change mean environmental disasters are becoming increasingly frequent, resulting in the destruction of life, assets and livelihoods. Economic and social losses from disasters are projected to double every 30 years. Most Governments now acknowledge it is more economically viable to move from damage control to investment in adaptation and mitigation, but require technical support to implement successful Disaster Risk Reduction strategies across multiple sectors. Islamic Relief has already implemented many successful DRR programmes with local governments, building on local knowledge and existing capabilities. Therefore we are well placed to offer practical solutions to those seeking to integrate resilience to shocks into the Post 2015 framework.

We currently have 22 on-going education projects in 8 different countries with a beneficiary impact of around 500,000 and a total value 6.9 million pounds. All are gender sensitive by promoting the equal access of boys and girls to educational opportunities or directly targeting older female learners, especially widows, that have been marginalized.

GENDER JUSTICE

Islamic Relief has chosen to prioritize gender justice because of the unique perspectives that we bring to this issue. For instance, we emphasize that equality between men and women is a discussion about complementary and mutually reinforcing rights rather than creating false antagonism between the genders. One of our main advocacy campaigns for 2014 is combating gender-based violence (GBV), as well as the issues of education and sustainable livelihoods – areas in which we have a history of strong programs in a majority of our 40 country offices. We are eager to see what our active participation and unique voice can achieve in the discussion on gender justice issues.



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