

3rd VOLUME



*Global Civil Society
and the Post-2015
Development Agenda*



LUARA LOPES



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CEBRI is a Think Tank that aims at developing knowledge and promoting debate on topics concerning international relations, offering subsidies to the definition of public policies. It also seeks to foster dialogue among different players, both in the public and private sectors, aiming at a better understating of the international agenda, as well as Brazil's role in the global scenario.

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Presentation

Convinced of the importance of discussing issues related to sustainable development and seeking to contribute to the implementation of the decisions agreed by countries in environmental multilateral meetings, the Brazilian Center for International Relations (CEBRI), with the important support of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation (KAS), developed, in 2013, the project Pathways to 'The future we want'. Through this initiative, CEBRI intends to promote knowledge and give visibility to three important multilateral processes boosted by the Rio+20 Conference (2012); namely:

- (i) The search for indicators that complement the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), including measures of social welfare and sustainability;*
- (ii) The analysis of the global mechanisms for financing mitigation and adaptation to climate change;*
- (iii) The creation of the Sustainable Development Goals.*

In this article, Luara Lopes examines the main processes of the current international development agenda; including the review of the Millennium Development Goals, the negotiation of the Sustainable Development Goals and the construction of a new, post-2015 global framework.

The author highlights civil society's participation in those initiatives, examining the ways in which civil society organizations try to influence international policy, an arena where States are the privileged actors. Forming networks or coalitions, these organizations make use of discursive resources and strategies, like "naming and shaming" and the "boomerang effect". This way, civil society actors seek to broaden social participation and create a more democratic and representative agenda.

These and other issues addressed by Lopes are extremely important for Brazil, since the country occupies a prominent position in the international scenario and the Brazilian civil society is willing to cooperate with the Government in the process of forging a new global framework for development. We hope that this paper contributes to deepening the dialogue between these actors and to strengthening Brazil's performance in the post-2015 agenda.

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1 Introduction

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), established in 2000 by 189 countries and considered the first organized global effort in support of development, have a deadline set to 2015, when the goals will be replaced by a new global framework for development. The MDGs were not only a multilateral pioneer initiative negotiated worldwide, but were also an attempt to characterize the new incarnation of development in the 21st century, setting eight goals, a deadline and corresponding indexes (see Box 1).

But development has not always been associated with education, maternal health and poverty eradication. In fact, due to its transitory and imprecise nature, the term can have different meanings, especially when it comes to the international dimension. After the Second World War, development was one of the main driving ideas of the United States' soft power¹ and marked the ideological dispute during the entire bipolar regime of the Cold War. Instead of the revolution propagated by the Soviets, the idea of development suggested an evolution, a positive, measurable and linear transformation – or in stages, as suggested by the economist and political theorist W.W. Rostow in his “non-communist manifesto” (ESTEVA, 1992).

In his inaugural speech, in January 1949, the American president Harry Truman not only indicated that the priority of the American foreign policy would be to help “underdeveloped areas” on the resistance against the communist threat, but also revealed the almost technical nature of the American approach to development. From this perspective, development could be attained by means of scientific and industrial progress, without much consideration on issues of distribution, inequality and exploitation (TRUMAN, 1949). Thus, the decolonization and the dispute for areas of political and ideological influence in the context of the Cold War are decisive elements to understand development after the Second World War – more than a concept, it was a field of dispute (MORAES, 2006).

The opening of the international political

agenda after the Cold War, in its turn, gave rise to a new normative concept of development. The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, known as Rio-92, brought up new topics for debate – environmental protection, climate change, rights of future generations – and new actors. Among the last ones, it is possible to highlight the significant presence of international civil society networks and organizations, which started to monitor the international agenda of sustainable development and created strategies to influence actors and institutions. The cycle of United Nations (UN) conferences in the 1990s was followed closely by increasingly complex and dense civil society networks that included activists, organizations, movements, and national platforms of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) – groups directly affected by development policies carried out in local, national, regional, and global scopes.

Likewise, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in Brazil also widened their international agendas from the 1990s throughout the first decade of the 2000s. Whereas CSOs engagement with

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Note 01

Soft power is a concept developed by the International Relations theorist Joseph Nye that refers to an ability of a political actor, such as a State, to indirectly influence the behavior or interests of other political actors through cultural or ideological means. The concept can be contrasted to the notion of hard power, which is the use of military capability and coercion.

Box 1 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Promote gender equality and empower women
4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve maternal health
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
7. Ensure environmental sustainability
8. Develop a global partnership for development

international cooperation during the military regime was generally restricted to receiving funds from organizations based primarily in Western Europe; after the democratization, the organizations in defense of common goods and rights began to participate actively in international coalitions and networks, broadening and deepening the scope of their international relations (HAZARD, 2012).

The consolidation of these dynamics became evident during the People's Summit: a parallel event to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (2012), organized by a set of movements and organizations of the Brazilian civil society, which comprised more than 800 self-managed activities and gathered an estimated public of hundreds of thousands of people. The official conference, also known as Rio+20, had modest results with little progress regarding practical commitments. Nevertheless, it represented the first step towards the creation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which will substitute the MDGs from 2015 on.

The year of 2015, therefore, represents an opportunity to expand and stimulate the dispute over the meaning of development – a term that, despite its inaccuracy, moves significant international actors and resources and informs political behaviors of States and International Organizations.

Civil society organizations, structured in international networks and coalitions, have a lot to contribute to this debate; not only because they have to live with the impacts of development policies, but also because they have a repertoire of sustainable practices that

can inform public policies in local, regional, and global spheres. The international actions of the CSOs are also responsible for re-politicizing the debate, calling attention to the structural causes of inequality and poverty, pointing out the incoherence between rhetoric and practice and suggesting alternatives already tested in the field.

In view of the transformation of the international understandings of development, this paper seeks to contribute to the reflection on the post-2015 development agenda, emphasizing the roles played by the global civil society and by the Brazilian CSOs in this process.

2 Global civil society: strategies and resources

In the 1990s, international relations theorists began to explore issues connected to the globalization and regionalization processes and the so-called complex interdependence (a concept created by Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye) that characterized the years after the Cold War. Regarding these new approaches, we highlight two interrelated aspects: the participation of non-state actors in international summits and institutions and a more dynamic relation between international and domestic policies, known as "intermestic." Theories such as Putnam's two-level games made it possible "not only to visualize the impact of the domestic sphere on foreign policy but also to show the games played by coalitions, alliances and alignments established in the domestic plan among national actors and their impact on the external political outcome." (VILLA, 2004)

In this context, the relevant point for us is to understand how non-state actors² can influence international policies of development, not only by forging domestic alliances and coalitions, to influence foreign policy decision-making, but also by acting directly inside international forums and institutions, together with global and regional networks and coalitions.

The post- Cold War international order, in spite of the growing number of institutions and multilateral regimes that inform – and, somehow, limit – the behavior of States, remains essentially “state-centered”, anarchic and dominated by the only superpower that survived the old regime (VIOLA, 2006). Hence, non-state actors – especially, the non-violent ones – have their role limited by the lack of coercive means, but can influence international negotiations, investing in consensus building (VILLA, 2006).

Civil society networks and coalitions, as non-state transnational actors, employ identifiable resources and participation strategies in international politics. However, their influence and effectiveness also depend on the contextual aspect related to the nature of the specific arenas where they act on (VILLA, 2004). In this sense, civil society international coalitions can improve their effectiveness by mobilizing extra-coalitional and intra-coalitional resources. In the first group, are the resources related to the use of **contextual elements** that favor the causes advocated by international coalitions. In this manner, the international anti-nuclear movement employed the example of the earthquake followed by a tsunami, which occurred in Japan in 2011, that hit the Fukushima nuclear plant caused radiation leaks, to strengthen its position and to recruit activists against the use of nuclear energy in several countries.³

Mobilizing the **public opinion** is also part of the extra-coalitional resources of the international coalitions of civil society. The “CNN effect”, term created by James Der Derian to describe the presence of the media during the Gulf War, when, for the first time, television networks broadcasted images of the battlefield in real time. Nowadays, with the development of information and communication technologies

and the improvement of their mobility, it is possible to record and broadcast images from anywhere on the planet and the international civil society networks use this resource to brief the public opinion in favor of their causes.

In order to employ extra-coalitional resources, international civil society coalitions and networks develop intra-coalitional resources, whose effectiveness varies depending on the structure of the coalitions and the topics they intend to influence. The strategy of **direct action**, widely used by environmental groups such as Greenpeace, consists in holding showy protests in places where there are environmental disasters and/or risks of such and announcing them to the media. Besides direct action, the development of scientific research can also be used to strengthen non-state actors’ capacity to influence international negotiations. The investment in research crates the possibility for the coalitions to have qualified participation on debates and negotiations about specific issues, giving them consultative status in the capacity of experts.⁴

Another way to impact the public opinion, used especially by networks and organizations dedicated to the defense of Human Rights (such as Human Rights Watch and International Amnesty) is the strategy of “naming and shaming”, which consists in publicizing Human Rights violations undertaken by a given State, pointing out the break of international agreements and raising the political cost of these violations.

In addition to scientific research, international civil society networks and coalitions enjoy important **discursive resource**. Environmental and feminist movements, for example, employ a universal discourse that gives them significant symbolic capital: both environmental and gender questions would be transversal to other issues of development. The **legitimacy** of the discourse promoted by international networks and coalitions of NGOs reacts to the inconsistency, which is predominant in the globalized order, between the decisions made at the domestic level and local impacts of extra-national forces (HELD, 1995). Adding to the legitimacy factor, is the

Note 02

Among the non-state actors of the contemporary international relations, one can highlight: multinational companies, NGOs and their coalitions, and the so-called “violent non-state actors” (terrorist groups, drug traffickers and other types of organized crimes). For the purpose of this work, are considered as non-state actors Non-Governmental Organizations, acting individually or organized in international networks and coalitions.

Note 03

The Fukushima disaster caused reactions from anti-nuclear movements in Japan and also stimulated demonstrations in several countries and regions, especially in French and Germany, in the case of the latter, the anti-nuclear protests strengthened the Green Party on the 2011 elections and led chancellor Angela Merkel to alter the German nuclear energy policy, announcing a nuclear power phase-out and the investment in alternative energy sources.

Note 04

The issue of climate change, as pointed out by Rafael Villa, is a good example of environmental activists acting as “epistemic communities”, that is, carrying out scientific research that supports environmentalist views on global warming. (VILLA 2004, p.135)

task of **monitoring agreements** signed by States on international development issues, which reminds us of the work carried out by NGOs – and the civil society in general – at the national level, intended to increase social control and demand accountability from governments.

Many times – as it seems to be the case in Brazil – NGOs and social movements cannot establish a dialogue with the government of their own country on issues that affect them. Therefore, they use an important strategic resource called “the boomerang effect”. This refers to the establishment of partnerships and organization of activities at the international level (campaigns, direct actions, participation in forums and events) that can, in their turn, “come back” to the national government in the form of external pressure, increasing the influence of national NGOs (KECK e SIKKINK, 1998).

The organization of **side events in official meetings** in the global and regional spheres (Social Summits, Civil Meetings, etc.) is also an important resource used by networks and coalitions of the international civil society for mobilization and influence. One relevant example of this strategy, already mentioned in this text, was the People’s Summit, which ran in parallel to the Rio+20. The organization of a “walk in reverse” by the participants of the People’s Summit expressed the disappointment of the civil society with the outcomes of the official meeting. These

meetings and events, in spite of running in parallel to the official events, seek to engage with the latter through the participation of CSOs as observers or with consultative status.

Besides parallel forums, the global civil society⁵ also holds specific meetings for organizations, networks and activists of its field: the World Social Forum (WSF) is, perhaps, the greatest example of this tendency. Held for the first time in 2001, in Porto Alegre (RS), the WSF has established itself as a space for debate and reflection on the motto that seems to unify global social movements: the idea that “another world is possible,” also known as “alter-globalization”.⁶

3 Global civil society and the post-2015 development agenda

The review process of the Millennium Development Goals started in 2010, with the UN MDG Summit, it went further in 2012, with Rio+20, and it should include the negotiation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), thus, resulting in the post-2015 development agenda. The way the SDGs will converge with the post-2015 agenda is still uncertain, and the countless acronyms and actors can scare the non-experts.⁷ Nevertheless, there are several initiatives underway that seek to expand social participation in this process so as to include the points of view of movements, activists and organizations in defense of common goods and rights.

Beyond 2015 is a campaign coordinated

Note 05

Regarding the concept of global civil society, Herz and Hoffman define it as a “field of action and thought occupied by initiatives of citizens, individuals or groups, with voluntary character and non-profit goals”, and identify six main types of participants: transnational social movements, coalitions, or transnational networks, advocacy networks, networks of global policies, epistemic communities, non-governmental organizations (HERZ and HOFFMANN, 2004).

Note 06

Some actors identify the origin of the alter-globalization movement in the antiglobalization demonstrations that were in evidence during the events of 1999 in Seattle, which paralyzed the negotiations of the meeting of the World Trade Organization and drew international attention (HERZ and HOFFMANN, 2004).

Note 07

For a summary of the main acronyms and processes see WILLIAMS, 2013.

Box 2 Resources and Strategies of Civil Society Organizations’ Networks and Coalitions

Extra-coalitional

- Acknowledge and make use of favorable contextual elements
- Inform the public opinion and raise awareness

Intra-coalitional

- Perform direct actions
- Develop scientific researches
- Monitor agreements between States and International Organizations
- Universalist discourse / legitimacy
- Boomerang Effect
- Naming and shaming
- Organize side events during official meetings

by a coalition of more than 800 networks and organizations of the global civil society, coming from 95 countries.⁸ The campaign has held consultations at the local level, together with NGOs, social movements and activists in more than 30 countries. The goal of these efforts is to include the opinion and experience of the ones who work with poverty and exclusion and suffer the direct impact of development policies. Based on these consultations, reports with suggestions to the States and to the UN were created and they serve as subsidies for actions of national, regional, and global advocacy. In addition the national consultations, the campaign also participates in thematic consultations led by the UN.⁹

The Beyond 2015 campaign partnered with the International Forum of National NGOs Platforms (IFP)¹⁰ and the Global Call to Action Against Poverty (GCAP) to held consultations at the national level. In Brazil, the Brazilian Association of NGOs (Abong) participated in the initiative coordinating thematic consultations and increasing the visibility of the subject in the country.¹¹

The outcomes of these consultations have in common the demand to consider Human Rights as a central topic in the new post-2015 development framework, which must focus on the wellbeing of the people instead of the economies. According to the final report of the national consultations, poverty goes beyond financial criteria and, because of that, it demands more complex indexes than the growth of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) or the GDP per capita.¹² This comprehensive approach to development, which conciliates egalitarian human wellbeing and environmental sustainability, is reinforced throughout the report.¹³

Moreover, the majority of the national deliberations showed inequality as a defining element of poverty. Thus, from the point of view of NGOs and movements that were consulted, the post-2015 development framework must consider inequality as a transversal element to the other goals. In this sense, and within the campaign's advocacy strategy, representatives of Beyond 2015 invested a lot of their time to persuade the High-

Level Panel (HLP)¹⁴ to prioritize inequality, recommending a unified agenda to deal with the environment issues in an effective and holistic fashion, acknowledging the planetary boundaries. The advocacy campaign was, in this aspect, successful; the attitude of "leaving no one behind" adopted by HLP represented a change of focus and mindset. Besides HLP, the campaign also aims at influencing the Open Working Group,¹⁵ the UNDP Special Event in September 2013,¹⁶ and is already planning to participate in the anticipated 2015 Summit meeting, which will likely approve the new international development framework.

In addition to the national consultations, the Beyond 2015 campaign also co-organizes the "Participate Initiative: knowledge from the margins for post-2015", with the support of the Institutes of Development Studies (IDS) and resources from the British government. The Participate Initiative intends, among other things, to create a Ground Level Panel, with representatives of marginalized populations not necessarily connected to NGOs or social movements. The goal of this initiative is precisely to include in this process a diverse group of people who live in conflict or marginalized situations, such as slum dwellers, sexual minorities, people from isolated rural communities, nomads, indigenous groups, among others.

The outcome of these consultations reflects concerns regarding the access to water and decent jobs, corruption and governmental violence, pollution and segregation. Still, the national consultations also show a preoccupation with civil society's participation in monitoring and implementing the post-2015 development goals, underlining the need to overcome the paradigm of consultations and institutionalizing mechanisms of continued participation.¹⁷

The World Alliance for Citizen Participation (CIVICUS), an international network based in Johannesburg, South Africa, gathers social movements, NGOs, individual activists, unions, religious and professional organizations, and philanthropic foundations, among other civil society's actors. CIVICUS used its significant network of members to carry out a series of

Note 08

The campaign has an executive committee formed by a dozen international civil society organizations (among them WWF, Save the Children, and Bond) and it is also financed by a set of similar organizations: the process of national consultations has the support of the Swedish government. The complete list can be found at: <http://www.beyond2015.org/content/supportingorganisations>

Note 09

The themes are: inequalities; health; education; environmental sustainability; food safety and nutrition; governance; water; energy; conflict and fragility and population dynamics.

Note 10

IFP also published a report with consultations held by its member-platforms, in their respective countries. The final document can be found at: http://www.ong-ngo.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/EN_IFP-post-2015-position.pdf.

Note 11

The report of the consultations carried out by Abong can be found at: <http://www.abong.org.br/final/download/pospt.pdf>.

Note 12

For a discussion on alternative socio-environmental indicators for GDP, see VEIGA, 2013.

Note 13

The full Beyond 2015 report of the national consultations can be found at: <http://www.beyond2015.org/cso-led-national-deliberations>

Note 14

Personalities chosen by the UN Secretary General to advise him on the process of setting the post-2015 development agenda. The civil society has advisory space in the mornings when HLP deliberates. Further information at: <http://www.post2015hlp.org/the-panel>

→ **Note 15**

The Open Working Group was created in January 2013 and is formed by 30 members: its main mandate, resulting from the Rio+20 process, is to propose the Sustainable Development Goals in accordance and integrated with the UN's post-2015 development agenda.

→ **Note 16**

Beyond 2015, with IFP and GCAP, organized a side meeting to the Special Event of the United Nations General Assembly: the goal is to share key-ideas and coordinate strategies of advocacy along with the UN and the participant national delegations. Further information can be found at: <http://www.participate2015.org/2013/08/02/ground-level-panels-offer-reality-check-to-un-high-level-panels-hlp-proposals-for-development/>

→ **Note 17**

The outcomes of the Ground Level Panels can be found at: <http://www.participate2015.org/2013/08/02/ground-level-panels-offer-reality-check-to-un-high-level-panels-hlp-proposals-for-development/>

→ **Note 18**

The results can be found at: <http://www.civicus.org/what-we-do-126/un-representation/post-2015-interviews/1337-civicus-interviews-richard-morgan>

→ **Note 19**

The material, in English, can be found at: <http://www.restlessdevelopment.org/file/post-mdg-youth-consultation-toolkit-pdf>

→ **Note 20**

Further information available at: <http://www.pos2015brasil.org/>

→ **Note 21**

Available at: www.myworld2015.org.

→ **Note 22**

There are 9 major groups, formed by: Business and Industry, Children and Youth, Farmers, Indigenous Peoples, Local Authorities, NGOs, Scientific and Technological Community, Women and Workers and Trade Unions.

consultations and interviews with leaders of organizations and activists involved in a wide range of topics in different countries.¹⁸

International youth networks and coalitions have also had a prominent role in the post-2015: Restless Development, for example, an organization based in London, developed a toolkit so that local organizations can consult young people from all over the world, adapting technical and methodological resources to the local reality.¹⁹ In Brazil, the Brazilian Youth Coalition for the post-2015 gathers organizations, networks, youth movements and individuals from all over the country that got together to encourage, facilitate and strengthen the participation of the Brazilian youth in the several processes related to the creation of the UN post-2015 agenda.²⁰

The international civil society's partaking initiatives, as seen in the previous section, seek to influence state or interstate actors so as to have an effect on the negotiations underway on the post-2015 agenda. The strategy of holding national consultations, with a view to making the process more participatory and inclusive, is combined with advocacy activities in many levels so as to ensure that the results are communicated to the decisions-makers within the UN and its member states. However, this movement also occurs in the opposite direction; that is, States, governments and multilateral organizations look for civil society networks, movements and organizations to contribute with the official processes.

At the multilateral level, the UN launched some initiatives that seek civil society's engagement, among them we point out the world survey called "My World." Through an internet website, this initiative collects information from individuals from around the world on the priorities for a better world, by means of a multiple-choice test.²¹ The outcomes will be added to other contribution intended for the UN negotiations. Still, the UN has organized thematic consultations at the national level with representatives of different sectors of the civil society (academics, entrepreneurs, journalists, representatives of social movements and NGOs.) The "major groups," created during

Rio-92 and established by the Agenda 21, represent sectors of society whose experience must be considered at multilateral forums on sustainable development.²² The UN, through the UNDP and other particular agencies, has worked with representatives of major groups at the national level so they can contribute to the official negotiations.

4 Brazil in the post-2015 agenda

Brazil has committed itself significantly to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs): it achieved, before the deadline, the goals of poverty reduction and hunger, and made significant progresses with the other indicators.²³ The country also occupies an important position in the process of establishing the post-2015 development agenda: not only has Brazil hosted the United Nations conferences on sustainable development, but it is also represented at the HLP by the Minister of Environment Izabella Teixeira, and was responsible for leading the creation of the Open Working Group for the SDGs and carried out consultations with the civil society on this subject (through governmental and non-governmental initiatives, as well as by means of multilateral organizations).

Thus, Brazil is in a privileged position to influence negotiations for the post-2015 development agenda; however, in order to be able to do that, it needs to strengthen the dialogue with the national and international civil society – and stand by the value of social participation in the establishment of development goals.

In fact, the country has considerable experience in participatory policies: the Community and the People's Councils of the 80s, the Participatory Budget, the Management Councils and the National Conferences, intensified in the past years, are some examples. However, foreign policy affairs are traditionally distant from social participation – at least by means of official channels, as the Brazilian CSOs have been working internationally since, at least, the 1990s. The Brazilian Network for the Integration of Peoples (REBRIP), for instance, was created in 1998 in conjunction with regional coalitions

and alliances to act on international trade negotiations and integration processes.²⁴

The topic of international cooperation is still central to the international agenda of Brazilian civil society's organizations and movements, not only in the sense of fundraising – that is, as received cooperation. On the contrary: in the past years, the civil society has participated in South-South cooperation arrangements, sharing experiences locally, with their counterparts in other countries that face similar development problems. This cooperation happens, however, outside official arrangements, because there are few examples of governmental cooperation that include civil society organizations, and there is no regulation for NGOs working abroad.²⁵

Despite the evident interest and capacity of Brazilian NGOs and civil society movements to participate in foreign policy affairs, the channels to communicate with the government do not seem to be enough. It is up to the General Secretariat of the Presidency of the Republic to facilitate the relations between the federal government and civil society bodies with regards to international issues. Although pioneer initiatives were developed, such as the creation of the Social and Participative Mercosur,²⁶ institutionalized communication channels with the Ministry of Foreign Relations are lacking. Recently, Ambassador Antonio Patriota, in the capacity of the chancellor, committed himself publicly to the creation of a “permanent institutional body of consultation and participation in foreign policy,” responding to a historic demand of social networks and organizations.²⁷ Such a measure would mitigate the need for the constant use of the “boomerang effect” – which indicates difficulty in directly accessing foreign policy decision-making bodies inside the country of origin.

Those are promising steps towards a democratic and participative foreign policy, subject to social control just like any other public policy that is representative of a society's interests and values.²⁸ The enthusiasm of civil society's organizations and movements in Brazil about international policy issues (and their impacts on the national reality) is even

more impressive when we take into account that this sector lacks regulation and support in the country. The Regulatory Framework for Civil Society Organizations, which has been a demand of the organized civil society for over 20 years, is not consolidated yet and this hampers access to resources and transparent accountability. As a consequence of a fragmented and obscure regulation, corruption scandals aggravate public opinion's misgivings about the sector, creating a vicious cycle that puts at risk the survival of organizations that defend common goods and rights.

Even in this unfavorable scenario, civil society's organizations and movements in Brazil have a lot to contribute to the establishment of a post-2015 development agenda. The experiences of participative democracy in the national sphere can serve as a reflection on participation in international affairs. Even the constraints of national architecture for social participation can be used as a learning opportunity for the post-2015 agenda: starting with the progress made on methodologies for continued participation – in monitoring, implementation and evaluations – to avoid the so-called “consultation fatigue,” that is, mere consultative participation.

5 From post-Second World War to post-2015: is another development possible?

The consultation held in Brazil and in other 30 countries, with organizations, activists, and social movements on the priorities of post-2015 development, listed priorities and principles to guide the creation of a post-2015 development framework. Even in quite diverse national contexts, some commonalities stood out.

- *Deepening democracy:* the consultations demonstrated concern with the structural causes of poverty, especially regarding inequality of access to rights and resources. Whereas the official reports resulting from the UN General Assembly meetings count on the actions of companies and the private initiative, the consulted civil society demands State presence in the promotion of sustainable and inclusive public policies. The need to deepen democracy at the national level – through

Note 23

See more in the National MDGs Reports, published by IPEA and available at www.pnud.org.br/Docs/4_RelatorioNacionalAcompanhamentoODM.pdf

Note 24

The REBRIP was one of the main actors in Brazil of the campaign against the Free Trade Areas of the Americas – FTAA, which led to a plebiscite in 2000, in which there were more than ten million votes opposing the agreement. Since 2010, the network expanded its mandate to monitor the Brazilian performance in the international scenario, increasing its expertise in areas such as trade negotiations, regional integration and international regimes for the environment and intellectual propriety. Further information at: www.rebrip.org.br.

Note 25

For further information on the role of CSOs in the Brazil's South-South cooperation, see LOPES, 2012.

Note 26

The Social and Participative Mercosur program gathers ministerial representatives coming from Mercosur member states and leaders of invited social organizations from sectors such as: family farming, small and medium-sized enterprises, women, environment, youth, urban and rural workers, human rights, solidarity economy, health, education, cooperativism, culture and indigenous peoples, among others. Its main goals are to publicize governmental initiatives regarding Mercosur, debate integration issues, and advance suggestions put forward by the civil society.

Note 27

Further information at: www.conferenciapoliticaexterna.org.br.

Note 28

For a constitutional analysis on the issue “external policy as public policy,” see SANCHEZ et al., 2006.

fighters against corruption, the adoption of fairer tax and land policies, and the promotion of participative democratic practices, for example – is a demand common to many people who were consulted in all regions.

- *Participation*: not limited to consultations, the demand for civil society's participation includes the negotiation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation processes. In this aspect, the Brazilian CSOs in Brazil have a lot to contribute, as they have experience of participating in the national sphere.

- *New conceptions of development*: the debate on the post-2015 is an opportunity to consider alternatives to what is understood as development and to the ways it can be measured. Beyond the MDGs, a more integrated vision initially proposed by Latin American countries (Ecuador and Bolivia, among others) and then incorporated by Europe's civil society gathered at the Concord Platform²⁹ is the concept of *buen vivir*. Present in the vocabulary of many indigenous peoples from the region, the concept of well-being, or *sumak kawsay*, comprehends complex indicators of interaction with nature and habits, of balance between the present and future lives, and it considers well-being as a measure of progress in a context where business as usual is no longer an option.

- *Coherence*: highlighted by the Brazilian consultation as one of the basic rules that should guide the post-2015 agenda, it has also been present in many other national consultations. The consulted civil society points out the need for an integrated view of development not only in what concerns aid and cooperation, but also with regards to policies for: trade, human rights, prevention and resolution of conflicts, investment and transnational financial flows. In many countries and regions, the consulted civil society assert that the basic rules for post-2015 development must be transversal to the other international regimes, otherwise it might be that cooperation policies be overturned by predatory practices in other areas.

- *Effectiveness*: another topic strongly present in the national consultations' results, the effectiveness of international commitments is also a cause of concern for the consulted

public. The ratification of international goals and commitments is not always followed by concrete implementation measures, such as adequate legislative, administrative and budgetary conditions. In this sense, the adoption of innovative funding mechanisms for the post-2015 development agenda can significantly contribute to its effectiveness, and this has been advocated by global civil society's networks and organizations.

In Brazil, the consultations acknowledge the progress made in the fight against poverty, but they call attention to inequalities that persistent in the access to resources and rights, and also question the current development model. In addition to the need to overcome historic structural bottlenecks, there are contemporary challenges that make the country rethink its strategies of national development and international engagement.

Sustainable practices of agroecological production that contribute to food and nutritional security without depleting the environment; methodologies to promote gender equality, fight racism and prevent diseases by means of popular education; appraisal of the indigenous culture and territory are some of the experiences of the Brazilian civil society that can inform a new conception of development for the post-2015.³⁰

Actually, one of the suggestions reinforced by the consultations carried out in Brazil with a potential for synergy with the government is the adoption of innovative financial mechanisms for the post-2015 agenda: the so-called FTTs – Financial Transaction Taxes could be used with the double goal of contributing to the regulation of international financial flows and overcoming the paradigm of aid for development.³¹ There is great expectation as to what will be the Brazilian position on the post-2015 agenda, and civil society can be a valuable ally in the creation of an innovative stand, connected to the development challenges experienced in the field.

→ **Note 29**

Concord is a confederation of European NGOs based in Brussels that gathers national networks and associations that represent more than 1800 NGOs. It was created in 2003 and, since then, it acts as the main speaker of organized civil society, on development policies, within the European Union institutions.

→ **Note 30**

Abong – Brazilian Association of NGOs - systematized sustainable experiences of Brazilian NGOs on the publication *Por um outro desenvolvimento*; it can be found at <http://www.abong.org.br/publicacoes.php>

→ **Note 31**

Further information available at: <http://www.tffbrasil.org/participe/>.

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KEY-POINTS

- 1** The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), established in 2000 by 189 countries and considered the first organized global effort in support of development, have a deadline set to 2015, when the goals will be replaced by a new global framework for development. An important part of this post-2015 agenda should be constituted by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), result of a complex negotiation process, involving several international bodies.
- 2** The post-2015 debate is an opportunity for all actors to consider new alternatives and conceptions of development. Among these is the concept of *buen vivir*, or *sumak kawsay*, which understands development in an integrated manner with nature and habits and proposes a balance between present and future lives and considers well-being as a measure of progress.
- 3** In order to make the process of creating a new development framework more participative and inclusive, civil society organizations (CSOs), structured in international networks and coalitions, carried out many thematic consultations in more than thirty countries. These actions are combined with advocacy activities at several levels, so that the results can be communicated to the decisions-makers.
- 4** Since they do not represent national states, the CSOs can act independently, calling attention to the structural causes of inequality and poverty, pointing out contradictions between rhetoric and practice and suggesting alternatives already tested in the field.
- 5** In Brazil, the Brazilian Association of NGOs coordinated the thematic consultation on development, as part of the international campaign *Beyond 2015*. One of the suggestions reinforced by the consultations in the country with a potential of synergy with the government is the adoption of innovative financial mechanisms for the post-2015 agenda, such as Financial Transaction Taxes.
- 6** Brazil has participated actively in international negotiations: it has hosted two important United Nations conferences on sustainable development, carried out consultations with civil society on the subject, was responsible for leading the creation of the Open Working Group to the SDGs and takes part in the High Level Panel of Eminent Persons.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1** Among the priorities and basic rules listed in several national consultations, some topics stood out and, because of that, they must be contemplated on the post-2015 agenda. One of those is the demand for considering Human Rights as a central issue in the new development framework, which must focus on the well-being of people and not economies. This comprehensive approach to development, which conciliates human well-being and environmental sustainability, is very strong among societies.
- 2** In the consultation processes, inequality was pointed out as a defining factor of poverty, as something that curbs progress in other development goals. Therefore, it is important that the post-2015 development framework is created in a way that "leaves no one behind". Inequality must be considered as a transversal element to the other goals and fought by means of a unified agenda that extensively and effectively approaches socio-environmental issues.
- 3** Civil society can be a valuable ally in the creation of an innovative stand, connected to the development challenges experienced in the field, as CSOs have experience working with poverty and exclusion, and suffer the direct impacts of development policies. Moreover, these actors have a list of sustainable practices that must be acknowledged by and included in public policies at the local, regional and global levels.
- 4** It is notable the movement towards a more open Brazilian foreign policy, which includes initiatives such as the Social and Participative Mercosur. Nevertheless, institutionalized channels to increase the dialogue between society and the Ministry of Foreign Relations are needed. This would be an important step towards a democratic and participative foreign policy, subject to social control like the other public policies that are representative of the interests and values of the society as a whole.
- 5** In Brazil, the fragmented and obscure regulation together with the corruption scandals aggravated public opinion's misgivings about the sector, putting at risk the survival of organizations that defend common goods and rights. In order to overcome these problems, a favorable environment for CSOs in Brazil is needed, including a legal framework that facilitates transparency and accountability and that also acknowledges and embraces the international work of social movements and organizations.



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The Project "Pathways to the Future We Want" represents the continuation of the efforts promoted by CEBRI to advance the knowledge on the international agenda for sustainable development. The main objective of this initiative is to contribute to the implementation of the decisions agreed by countries in multilateral meetings.

The construction of a new global framework for development in the post-2015 period constitutes the core topic of this article.