A GLOBAL DASHBOARD for the new POST 2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

A proposal from the Government of Colombia

There is emerging consensus regarding the scope of the new agenda, as one that is relevant to, and actionable by, all countries. There is also growing consensus that such an agenda needs to provide mechanisms or modalities for reflecting the differences between countries given the wide range of circumstances and priorities along the development spectrum.

Many have proposed the adoption of a set of global sustainable development goals that would be underpinned by targets and indicators adopted at the national level. There is wide agreement that the targets and indicators need to be appropriated at national level, and adapted to national realities and priorities.

Questions inevitably arise regarding what this approach would actually translate into, in practice. A far ranging and possibly disparate cohort of targets and indicators would be difficult to aggregate and compare at regional and international levels, making it difficult for the international community to rally around these issues as was the case with the MDGs. Opportunities for capacity building, exchange of lessons and cooperation could be limited or constrained.

The concept of a dashboard provides a possible way forward:

- At international level, Member States - with inputs from a wide range of stakeholders through the extensive participatory Post 2015 process now underway - will define a set of SDGs that reflect priority areas for development.
- For each Goal, there would be a core set of targets with respective indicators, that would also be defined at an international level. These targets would seek to capture basic deliverables across the range of development needs. A good example would be a target on food waste, which would include indicators focusing both on production and on consumption. Countries would determine which targets and indicators are relevant for them, and define national milestones.
- In addition to these common targets and indicators, countries would also be able to develop other targets and indicators that reflect specific priority issues at national and sub-national level.

What are the benefits of such an approach
- Issues that are common to many countries would be reflected in the same targets and indicators, thus providing a sounder basis for capacity building, exchange of lessons, and overall support from all sources
- Issues related to management of global commons would be, cumulatively, more appropriately addressed
- Regional and global comparability and aggregation would be possible
- Overall, the new framework would be more coherent between the global, regional, and national levels

- The option of adding other national-level goals would ensure that the totality of priority issues for each country would be included. (In MDG process this is, in fact, what happened in many countries that defined additional MDGs that were relevant at national level.)

Concerns have been expressed that such an approach could foment a race to the bottom or limited participation. Such outcomes are unlikely.

- Firstly, we should recall that when metrics work and are perceived to be useful, countries use them. GDP and MDGs are both voluntary yet countries and the international system use them.
- Secondly, in an age increasingly defined by the reach and scope of communications technologies and social media, it is unlikely that any country will opt out of the new develoment framework, or render its participation irrelevant by focusing on targets that have already been met.

Rather, the new metrics - if we are able to get the framework right - will spur a race to the top. A race in which governments must take a lead, but one in which all stakeholders will have a key and decisive role.

The proposal is therefore for Member States, as a first step, to agree to the concept of a global Dashboard to underpin the SDG framework. This could help to structure the architecture for the new framework. Work under the OWG SDG, by the TST, by the UNTT as well as by UN agencies and other stakeholders, could contribute to the elaboration of this Dashboard.