



HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT



CONFERENCE COMMUNIQUÉ

1. **We**, the **60** parliamentarians from **32** parliaments of Commonwealth and non-Commonwealth countries, met at the Houses of Parliament in London 26-28 November 2013. Our purpose was to express our commitment as parliamentarians from across the world to accelerate the process towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); to exchange information, knowledge and examples of good practice with peers and international development experts; to build our capacity to ensure that good governance is at the core of the post-2015 development agenda; and to commit to holding governments to account to ensure that international commitments to development are implemented at local, national and regional levels.
2. **We acknowledge** the critical role that parliamentarians have as key stakeholders in the design, implementation and oversight of the post-2015 framework. **We recognise** the unique responsibility of elected parliamentarians to be the bridge between governments and citizens and **we affirm** our commitment as the people's representatives to work towards a set of targets with poverty eradication and sustainable development at its core. Integral to the framework are effective and legitimate institutions that support peace and security, the rule of law, property rights, freedom of expression and a free media, open political choice, access to justice, and accountability.
3. **We recall** the importance of the Millennium Declaration that led to the creation of the MDGs which provide a common purpose, raised awareness of the world's poorest people, mobilised public support and aligned global development actors around a set of concrete, time-bound benchmarks. **We welcome** the significant progress that has been achieved in meeting several important targets, despite the impact of the global economic and financial crisis.
4. **We remain** concerned by the unevenness and gaps in the achievement of the MDGs and the immense challenges that remain. **We recognise** the specific challenges and needs of the least developed countries, small island developing states and landlocked developing countries some of which are not on track to achieve the MDGs by 2015. **We also recognise** the special challenges in meeting the goals faced by people living in conflict and post-conflict countries, and in areas affected by complex humanitarian emergencies and natural disasters.

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5. **We recognise** the important contributions and outcomes from the major international discussions on the post-2015 development agenda, notably the UN General Assembly's Special Event towards achieving the MDGs¹ in which Member States renewed their commitment to meet the MDGs and agreed to hold a high-level summit in September 2015 to adopt a new set of goals.
6. With respect to the post-2015 agenda, **we call** on governments to ensure that there is a single set of goals, which whilst taking account of differing national circumstances and respecting national policies and priorities, are universal and achievable.
7. **We strongly support** placing gender equality at the heart of the post-2015 development framework with a standalone goal as proposed at the 57th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women in March 2013. **We recognise** that without gender equality other goals on access to education and development of appropriate curricula, poverty eradication, and maternal health will never be achieved.
8. **We recognise** that all parliaments through their legislative, oversight, budget approval and representational responsibilities are key stakeholders in accelerating progress in achieving the MDGs and monitoring the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda.
9. **We recognise** the critical role of Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) in realising the MDGs and post-2015 development agenda towards all countries attaining economic independence. **We call** on all development partners to be transparent and accountable in the delivery framework of ODA with the private sector, NGOs and governments.
10. **We pledge** to build on the knowledge and learning from this conference. **We commit** to the Post-2015 Action Plan for Parliamentarians and encourage our fellow parliamentarians to implement these recommendations.

¹ On 25 September 2013, the President of the UN General Assembly hosted a special event on the MDGs to follow up efforts made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The discussions focused on analysing the gaps and weaknesses in the implementation of the MDGs, ways to accelerate progress and a reflection on elements for a post-2015 development agenda.

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POST-2015 ACTION PLAN FOR PARLIAMENTARIANS

From 25-28 November 2013, 60 parliamentarians from 32 countries assembled in the Houses of Parliament in London with a clear commitment to engage with the post-2015 development agenda. The members had a common purpose to commit to a set of recommendations, agreed by the participants through their discussions that take the form of an action plan to enable all parliamentarians to engage in the design, implementation and oversight of the post-2015 agenda.

Recognising the successes and learning the lessons from the MDG process, the parliamentarians agreed the following action plan.

1. **We support** consensus that a set of key principles should underpin the new development goals:
 - a. *Democratic governance* – by building and strengthening effective institutions that are participatory, transparent and accountable.
 - b. *Human rights* – by upholding the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, respecting all internationally recognised human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development.
 - c. *Sustainable development* – by ensuring that economic, social and environmental sustainability are included in disaster risk reduction, peace and security, resilience and the recognition of the impact of climate change into the framework.
 - d. *Equality* – by ensuring that no one is left behind and that the appropriate measures are in place to protect and promote equality, equity, and social inclusion by incorporating them into laws, policies and programmes.
 - e. *Global partnership* – by fostering a new spirit of solidarity, cooperation, and mutual accountability which ensures effective and equitable financing for development and delivers on all commitments.
2. **We call** on governments to maintain their commitment to a transparent process, which includes input from all stakeholders including civil society, scientific and knowledge institutions, parliaments, local authorities, and the private sector.
3. **We affirm** our commitment as parliamentarians to influencing the formulation of the new development goals by engaging with the intergovernmental negotiations and policy discussions at local, national and regional levels by:
 - a. **Promoting** discussion through parliamentary debates and questions to obtain information, raise

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awareness, to hold our governments to account and to draw media attention to the post-2015 debate.

- b. **Conducting** committee hearings that investigate national priorities in greater depth and that give opportunities to hear testimony from independent experts and civil society representatives.
 - c. **Convening** constituency meetings and public fora to establish dialogue with members of the public to inform them of the issues and ensure their voices are heard.
 - d. **Engaging** with relevant stakeholders such as local authorities, civil society organisations, the media and the private sector by sharing information and supporting their participation in decision-making.
 - e. **Providing** representation to women and young people, and vulnerable and marginalised groups to ensure that they will be at the centre of the post-2015 agenda.
4. **We agree** that parliamentarians need to uphold effective institutional mechanisms for monitoring the implementation of the new development goals. **We commit** to:
- a. **Introduce, scrutinise and review** legislation to ensure that the new development goals are reflected in national policies and that the necessary enabling legislation is in place.
 - b. **Oversee** policy implementation to ensure our governments and other stakeholders are held to account in their international commitments.
 - c. **Advocate for** the adequate, efficient and transparent allocation of resources in national and local budgets to ensure they are prioritised in the best way to make progress towards the new development goals.
 - d. **Provide** representation to all sectors of society by ensuring that citizens, different stakeholders and civil society groups have a voice at the national level and are able to participate in the decision-making process.
 - e. **Foster** debate on innovative, fair, transparent and accountable mechanisms – including ensuring fairer trade – by which to achieve the post-2015 agenda.

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