

# **Programme Proposal on Southern Voice on Post-MDG International Development Goals**

## **Abstract**

As the world prepares to commit to a new development agenda, a unique window of opportunity arises to raise the concerns, research and ideas conceived by Southern think tanks. Knowledge based on local policies and programmes is a valuable input to guarantee that the next generation of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are inclusive, attainable and meaningful. By providing quality data, evidence and analysis that derives from research in countries of the global South, the participating think-tanks seek to inform the discussion on the post-2015 framework and targets, and also shape the debate itself. 'Southern Voice' aims to enhance the quality of international development policy analysis, strengthen the global outreach capacity of Southern think tanks, and facilitate professional linkages with their respective governments. Through interactions with key stakeholders, Southern Voice hopes to exploit its unique space and scope to contribute to the post-2015 debate.

To convey this research and analysis available with Southern think tanks, the initiative is designed around four core research and analysis related components involving: i) reinterpretation of existing knowledge from the MDG perspective; ii) generation of new synthesis knowledge and policy analysis as inputs for the ongoing post-2015 debates; (iii) digital outreach for dissemination of outputs; and iv) strategic engagement with key players of the post-2015 landscape. The process will also include recording of the learning aspects of the Southern Voice initiative.

If the results of the above work are considered of sufficient quality, the programme will subsequently undertake publication of a report titled 'Southern Voices on Post-MDG International Development Goals'.

## **DETAILS OF RESEARCH PROJECT**

**RESEARCH PROBLEM AND JUSTIFICATION:** With the terminal year (2015) of the MDGs drawing near, international development community is critically assessing the delivery of the development targets. Engaged stakeholders are also reflecting on the issues that need to find a place in the future framework of the international development cooperation.

The MDGs have been an important tool to draw global attention to issues relating to extreme poverty and other forms of human deprivation, and provided a structure to channel the works of the national governments as well as international development agencies. Critiques, however, notice that the narrow target-oriented focus of the MDGs has diminished the agenda, and thus MDGs have missed out on a number of critical development dimensions. It is further maintained that MDGs were designed through a top-down process. The framework and the targets were developed with little inputs from the member states, and practically with no contribution from the non-state actors.

The global development agenda-building in general, and MDG formulation in particular, have hardly benefitted from the research and analytical outputs produced by the Southern think tanks. The global policymaking processes have been mostly informed by the knowledge system centering on the think tanks, research institutions and international financial institutions (IFIs) located in the North. Indeed, this reflects the knowledge asymmetry afflicting the global governance structure, which in its own turn is embedded in power asymmetry among the

relevant actors. In this context, engaging the policy-oriented researchers from the global South, informed with local knowledge, real time information and contextualised experience will be particularly important in shaping the next international development agenda, post-2015. Additionally, Southern think tanks inform governments on how to put forward policies to accomplish the goals. Moreover, national governments can draw on these think tanks to address their capacity deficit engaging in negotiations on the post-MDG agenda.

The experience of involving Southern think tanks in the global development debate does not only benefit the process, but can also strengthen the think tanks themselves. Some ways in which their participation can be beneficial include:

- *Informing future research agendas.* Responding to the external context is not only a one-way process by which think tanks receives outcomes of the global discourse, but are able to frame local research to face emerging global challenges.
- *Guiding the funding strategy.* Following the global trends allows Southern think tanks to leverage funds while maintaining local relevance by framing proposals in ways that balance local and global concerns.

In order to have the Southern think tanks reflected in the MDG Mark 2, an initiative titled *Southern Voice on Post-MDGs* has the core objective to create a structured initiative to allow them to channel their inputs into the ongoing global discussions on post-MDGs framework and targets.

It has been launched as a follow up of the TTI Exchange Meeting in Cape Town where 'Post-MDG' was one of the roundtables on 'Hot Topics'. Since then, advances have been made. The Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) prepared a Concept Note on the theme and mobilised resources for the implementation of the first phase of the programme. In line with the call to put thoughts into action, CPD organised an Expert Group Meeting (EGM) in Dhaka (Bangladesh) during 10-12 January 2013. This event brought together representatives of Southern think tanks committed to the idea of a Southern Voice on the agenda and other key stakeholders who see this space as having the potential to encourage a truly transformative global development agenda. In organising the Dhaka EGM, CPD received support from TTI under its Matching Grant Fund.

The objective of the meeting was to lay out a common agenda for research, policy engagement and action, and establish a transparent and inclusive interface between national, regional and global dialogues. A total of 20 overseas participants met, representing 10 countries; they included local think tanks and non-government organisations (NGOs) and experts from international organisations. Participants discussed areas such as (i) Framework, Issues and Challenges of Post-MDGs; (ii) The Unfinished Agendas of MDGs; (iii) Issues for the Future; (iv) Prospects of Global Partnership and Resource Mobilisation for Post-MDGs; and (v) The Ongoing Consultation Processes and Interface with the *Southern Voice on Post-MDGs* Initiative.

The meeting endorsed the activity plan of the initiative, elected a steering committee and the immediate inputs to be sent to the UN High Level Panel on Post-MDG. The outcome document of the Dhaka meeting, "First Approximations on PostMDG International Development Goals" was shared by the lead authors with the High Level Panel as well as with the advisors to key members of the Panel. This was carried out in an outreach mission between 14-20 February 2013 in London, New York and Washington, D.C. The chair of the initiative also addressed three public dialogues during this trip.

A list of the preparatory works done towards launching of the Southern Voice initiative is provided in **Annex I**.

## **OBJECTIVES:**

In this context, given the initial works carried out in the EGM in Dhaka and thereafter, the general objective of the initiative is *to channel the inputs of Southern think tanks to the global development debate in order to strengthen their capacities for policy influence as well as the future international development agenda.*

The specific objectives, aligned with the general objective include:

- *Create a platform for think tanks to use their existing research to inform the global development agenda.*

The Southern Voice initiative will be the space for Southern think tanks to convey their research to international policymakers and other actors currently involved in the discussion of the global development agenda.

- *Carry out new policy analysis on issues that have been identified as current knowledge gaps, post-2015.*

Southern Voice seeks to prioritise research on issues that may have implications in shaping the next set of MDGs. The analysis will be analytically rigorous and primarily based on secondary materials. Issue-oriented (as opposed to country-oriented) research will get priority. A list of issues and themes will be drawn up through scanning and scoping the ongoing global discourse on post-2015. The researchers of the network will be invited to contribute on these issues and themes.

- *Promote the Southern Voice in the global arena.*

Outreach-related activities will entail showcasing of the initiative and its outputs so that the policymakers at the global as well as national (regional) level may take cognisance of these resources. Efforts will be made to link up with the other similar initiatives including the inter-governmental processes. Presentation of the outputs of the initiative may take place in dedicated events as well as in other relevant platforms.

- *Learn from the policy influencing process at the international level.*

This initiative may allow Southern think tanks to gain practical knowledge on how to influence policy process in the international arena. The learning process should be compiled in order to inform think tanks that want to venture into the international arena to pursue a global issue in the future.

## **METHODOLOGY:**

### **A. Research and Policy Analysis**

#### ***I. Reinterpreting existing knowledge in Southern think tanks***

The first component of the initiative seeks to revise, compile and communicate relevant existing research carried out by Southern think tanks on topics related to the Post-MDG Agenda. This component will follow three strategies.

1. an extensive call for the think tanks to send relevant research to the Southern Voices Secretariat.
2. desk research on the think tanks' websites will be carried out to identify possible relevant research works to complement the call.
3. commissioning papers that synthesise the findings. Authors who already have research carried in different topics will receive resources to repackage their findings for the post-MDG debate. These will be disseminated through a series of Southern Voice Occasional Papers and Policy Briefs.

## ***II. Promoting research synthesis and policy analysis***

The second component of the initiative focuses on strengthening the voices of Southern think tanks by promoting the synthesis of existing knowledge and relevant policy analysis. As in the first component, the emphasis will be given to broader issues over national cases. Based on the analysis done in the first component, a call for policy analysis will be carried out. The activities to accomplish this goal include:

- Identify a preliminary list of relevant issues
- Elaborate guidelines as to accomplish a coherent set of papers
- Select a group of experts that will review and select the proposals to be supported
- Monitor and accompany the commissioned papers to accomplish high quality research
- Carry out a peer review process and finalising papers.

## **B. Strategic Outreach and Engagement**

### ***III. Dissemination and Outreach***

The research activities will not have the expected impact without a clear communication and engagement strategy that is aimed at defined audiences. In this component two sets of activities are required: the preparation and implementation of a strategy and the development of communication tools to accompany the strategy.

- **Branding:** To brand the initiative is relevant to position it internationally in a debate that already has a significant number of actors participating. The branding will partially take place by enhancing the visibility of the initiative through participation on high-level platforms, engaging in social media and publishing quality research outputs.
- **Website:** A website and a social media strategy will be put forward to give to the initiative the global reach it required. The website will be planned as a light structure to put forward all the research activities and to communicate the findings in a more up-to-date quick manner.

### ***IV. Strategic Engagements***

- *Actor mapping and timetable discussion.* To develop a sound strategy preliminary research on the actors, events and groups currently working on the Post-2015 debate is crucial to identify a niche for the Southern Voice initiatives as well as to find appropriate channels to reach global policymakers. Attention will be given to the High-Level Panel, the intergovernmental Open Working Group, and the office of the United Nations General Secretary, among others.
- *Dedicated and side events.* According to the identified spaces for engagement available, we will put together presentations in events organised by others or organise side events in global regional meetings.
- *Expert Group Meetings.* These meetings will focus on taking stock, guidelines and validations for the research outputs and strategy.

- *Launch of Southern Voice Report.* A key milestone for the initiative will be the presentation of the report that compiles the research and position of the think tanks. This event will bring together researchers as well as policymakers of the global arena.
- *Engagement with key stakeholders.* Finally, and most importantly, an engagement strategy will be carried out based on the initial actor mapping. This strategy will be front-loaded to guarantee that there are relevant spaces for the research to be promoted during the following months.

An indicative list of the upcoming global and regional events on post-MDG agenda has been provided in **Annex II**.

## **C. Organisational Aspects**

### ***V. Learning from the programme***

The Southern Voice initiative is a unique space where think tanks can collaborate and where they can reach global audiences. As such, it is also a relevant space for learning on how to carry out policy influence in the global arena. This learning can be useful for think tanks and their coalitions trying to influence internationally. Throughout the programme evidence will be gathered that will allow us to, at the end, compile a document with lessons on how to influence at the international level. These lessons can be shared with think tanks in the next global exchange in early 2015.

Follow-up activity: “Southern Voice Report on Post-MDG”.

After the successful and timely launching of Activities I and II, and if quality of the work is sufficiently high, the initiative will consider preparation of a flagship report, for which complementary funding will be sought. This will put forward the network’s views on the new development agenda and related proposals as well as on missing issues. A concept note and structure for the report will be developed in due course to shape the content of the report. With this outline, authors from the first two components will be invited, where applicable, to collaborate in the report. Additional authors might be required in case there are new topics that have not been considered in the earlier calls. The report will require an expert group meeting devoted to discussing and putting together the position report, which based on the research activities, states a wider Southern vision on the international development agenda. The report will consider not only the discussion on the goals, but also on the policies needed to be put forward to accomplish those goals, an aspect in which Southern think tanks have a particular niche of expertise. Thus the specific activities in this regard will include the following.

- Prepare the concept note and tentative table of content
- Identify the expert group and conveying the participants
- Facilitate meetings to reach a common ground
- Compile and review the report
- Compile and review papers from the second component in a volume
- Validation meeting with the report and volume
- Review, edit and publication of the report and volume

### **PROJECT SCHEDULE:**

A general project schedule has been provided in the **Annex III**.

## **RESULTS AND DISSEMINATION:**

The main outputs of the initiative are the following:

- Southern Voice Occasional Paper Series – Online publication of scholarly outputs of the network participants and other experts.
- E-Volume on research synthesis and policy analysis – This e-book will compile the relevant new research and analysis produced through the initiative.
- Dissemination materials – Blogs, news articles and other media pieces that will position the research compiled in a non-academic language.
- Website – The online home to the initiative, will be a user friendly, intuitive place to compile the knowledge created and compiled in the initiative.
- Working Paper on the lessons learnt – A working paper will summarise the main lessons from the initiative's efforts to influence the global agenda.

*Publication of a Southern Voice Report on the Post-2015 Agenda* – A concise and executive report that will summarise the position of the Southern Voices on the Post-MDG International Development Goals will be considered in due course.

## **INSTITUTIONS AND PERSONNEL:**

**Debapriya Bhattacharya**, Chair of the Southern Voice initiative and Distinguished Fellow at the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) will lead the programme. He played a key role in developing the idea from its origin. In Cape Town, he chaired the roundtable, drafted the concept note of the initiative, organised the first expert group meeting and led the outreach missions. He is a former Bangladesh Ambassador to the UN Offices in Geneva and WTO, former Special Advisor to the Secretary General, UNCTAD, and has been the first Executive Director of CPD.

**Andrea Ordóñez** will act as the Research Coordinator of the programme. She has been part of Grupo FARO (Ecuadorian think tank) for the last seven years. In 2010 she inaugurated the Research Director position in the organisation. She has been leading the debate, articulation and revision of the institutional research agenda. Additionally, in this role she supported different teams to carry out rigorous and relevant research, and to communicate results and new ideas to a variety of audiences. She has participated in policy influencing efforts nationally and internationally. She is an enthusiast on understanding the links between policy and research.

An appropriate person will be recruited duly to lead the strategic outreach and engagement-related works of the initiative.

### ***Co-ordination, Management and reporting***

The coordination, management and reporting related core tasks of the programme will be carried out by the Chair of the initiative with institutional support from the CPD. A Secretariat in the CPD will be set up to this end. The Chair of the initiative will appoint task leaders as appropriate. The Chair will be also advised by the members of the Steering Committee. The three wings of CPD, namely, Research, Dialogue & Communication and Finance & Administration will provide necessary support to the Southern Voice Secretariat headed by the Chair.

## Annex I: Preparatory Activities (September 2012- March 2013)

Event	Content	Partner(s)	Timeline	Output
1. Preparation of the Concept Note (Programme Proposal) of the Southern Voice initiative	Conceptualisation of the initiative, defining content of Phase One and preparation of budget	Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), Dhaka	July-September 2012	Draft Concept Note (Programme Proposal)
2. Finalisation, submission and acceptance of the Proposal	Incorporation of the feedbacks on the proposal and processing through TTI Secretariat	CPD, TTI Secretariat and the interested TTI network institutions from the Cape Town Roundtable	September 2012	Finalised Concept Note (Programme Proposal) and approval from TTI Secretariat
3. Global Alert on launch of Southern Voice initiative	Strategic communication with concerned individuals and institutions regarding the initiative	CPD and TTI Secretariat	October 2012	Correspondence, Blog posting
4. Creation of webpage	Posting of preparatory documents of Southern Voice initiative in the dedicated webpage	CPD and TTI Secretariat	Ongoing since October 2012	Dedicated webpage under CPD website
5. Webinar based consultation	Defining the scope of the initiative, identification of issues and operational modalities	CPD, TTI Secretariat, TTI network members and other interested individuals	November-December 2012	Summary of the Webinar discussions (22 November and 18 December 2012) and audio records
6. Expert Group Meeting	Review of the delivery of the activity plan, preparation for the conference including papers to be presented and concretizing work plan for the upcoming period	CPD, TTI Secretariat and invited TTI institutions/experts	September 2013	Report reflecting of the initiative, review of the outputs and future plan
7. Outreach activities	London, New York, Washington, D.C. and Delhi for branding and popularisation of Southern Voice and disseminating Southern Voice's first document among the key players in the post-2015 processes	CPD, Overseas Development Institute (ODI), UN Foundations in New York and Center for Global Development (CGD) in Washington, D.C., Dr. Homi Kharas the Lead Author/Executive Secretary of the United Nations High-Level Panel (HLP) as well as the key advisors to various members of the HLP, USG H E Gyan Acharya, UN-OHRLLS, TTI network members, Global Development Network (GDN) and other interested individuals	February-March 2013	Disseminated the "First Approximations on Post-MDG International Development Goals", in a number of policy dialogues and seminars among the key players in the post-2015 processes, to understand the space available for the network's strategic engagements in post-2015 global processes
8. Publication	Preparation of transcripts review and editing of the contributions made at the Dhaka Expert Group Meeting (EGM)	CPD, TTI members, independent experts, other interested individuals,	April 2013	A series of Occasional Papers disseminated from the EGM of Southern Voice held in Dhaka in January 2013

## Annex II: An Indicative List of Global and Regional on Post-MDG Agenda (Till September 2013)

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Location</b>
Global Leadership Meeting on Population Dynamics	3-7 March 2013	Dhaka
Global Leadership Meeting on Health	5-6 March 2013	Botswana
Leadership Meeting of the Global Thematic Consultation on Environmental Sustainability in the Post-2015 Development Agenda	18-19 March 2013	San José, Costa Rica (UNDP and UNEP)
Global Leadership Meeting on Education	18-20 March 2013	Dakar
High-Level Panel Summit	18-20 March 2013	Bali
CSOs Consultation Meeting: Advancing the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda	20 March 2013	Bonn (Berlin Civil Society Centre)
Youth Multistakeholders Meeting on the Post-2015 Development Agenda	24-25 March 2013	Bali
Global Leadership Meeting on Hunger, Food and Nutrition Security	4 April 2013	Madrid
OECD Global Forum on 'Innovative Approaches to Poverty Reduction, Social Cohesion and Progress in the Post-2015 world'	4-5 April 2013	OECD, Paris
Launch of European Development Report on 'Post-2015'	9 April	EU, Brussels
How should Inequality Feature in a Post-2015 Agreement?	18 April 2013	(ODI) London
Private Sector Focal Points Meeting and Annual Local Networks Forum	24-26 April 2013	Geneva
ESCWA meeting on the Post-MDGs	1 July 2013	Cairo (tentative location)
UNECE meeting on the Post-MDGs	1 July 2013	Geneva
ECLAC meeting on the Post-MDGs	1 August 2013	Montevideo
ECA meeting on the Post-MDGs	13 September 2013	location to be determined
ESCAP meeting on the Post-MDGs	16 September 2013	Bangkok
General Assembly High-level Meeting on MDGs	23 September 2013	New York
UNGA High-level Meeting on MDGs	23 September 2013	New York (UN Headquarters)

### Annex III: Activity Schedule

Activity / Period	2013									2014					
	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June
<b>I. Reinterpreting existing knowledge in Southern think tanks</b>															
Call for submission of existing MDG-related research	■														
Desk research on existing research works available with Southern think tanks	■														
Sort and cluster existing knowledge in a user friendly manner and web posting	■	■	■	■	■	■									
Commission of Issue Papers that adapt existing documents with a post-MDG perspective and follow-up	■	■	■	■	■	■									
Preparation of the draft and submission of the commissioned papers		■	■	■	■	■									
Peer review, edit and online publication of the papers					■	■	■								
<b>II. Promoting research synthesis and policy analysis</b>															
Identification of a preliminary list of relevant issues based on the knowledge gaps assessment															
Call for research synthesis and policy analysis inputs with guidelines	■														
Selection of a Reference Group to guide the initiative	■	■													
Drafting of the identified papers and follow-ups	■	■	■	■	■	■	■								
Peer review, editing and finalisation of the papers						■	■	■	■						
<b>III. Dissemination and Outreach</b>															
Branding exercise	■	■	■	■	■										
Creation of a website	■	■													
Maintenance of website	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Preparation of communicational material based on, among others, Activities of I, II and III (blogs, briefs, newsletters)	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Publication of the Occasional Papers	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■

Activity / Period	2013									2014					
	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June
<b>IV. Strategic Engagement</b>															
Landscape mapping and articulation of a strategic approach															
Organisation of dedicated and side events															
Engagement and advocacy															
<b>V. Monitoring and Learning</b>															
Preparation of a framework for identifying key learning aspects from the initiative															
Organisation, collection and analysis of data															
Interviews with key internal and external stakeholders of the Southern Voice process															
Preparation of the draft of a working paper on the Southern Voice initiative															