



Concept Note

Title: *2015 and Beyond: Our Action Agenda*

Theme: *The role of civil society in the post-2015 development agenda*

Overview: The 65th UN DPI/NGO Conference will return to United Nations Headquarters from 27-29 August 2014. The 64th Conference was held in Bonn, Germany, and previous Conferences were held in Melbourne, Mexico City and Paris. The Conference was last held at UNHQ in 2007. A major civil society gathering at the UN, the Conference will provide an opportunity for civil society, international networks and activists to develop an “Action Agenda” to mobilize messaging, advocacy strategies, partnerships and accountability frameworks in the lead up to the launch of intergovernmental negotiations at the beginning of the 69th Session of the General Assembly for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda, due to culminate at a summit in September 2015. The Conference will also be an important milestone ahead of the Secretary-General’s September 2014 Climate Summit and UN General Assembly, finalization of the Secretary-General’s Synthesis Report on the post-2015 development agenda, and the Lima (2014) and Paris (2015) UNFCCC COPs.

Purpose: The Conference will take place at a critical time in the post-2015 process. As the international community strives to achieve the Millennium Development Goals while formulating the post-2015 development agenda including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), 2015 is recognized to be a once-in-a-generation opportunity for transformational change. The UNFCCC COP 21 in Paris and the launch of the post-2015 agenda will culminate within months of each other in the second half of 2015, with the potential to shape the future of our peoples and our planet for the better. Yet, beyond global policy makers and advocacy groups, most citizens are not fully aware of the contours and importance of this new sustainable development agenda. The purpose of this Conference is to harness the strategies, expertise and resources across the broadest spectrum of civil society to move poverty eradication, sustainability, human rights and climate justice into the mainstream discourse, and spark sustained public demand for lasting political action in support of an ambitious outcome from the post-2015 sustainable development process. A Conference Declaration, designed to frame an ambitious “Action Agenda” for civil society, shall be produced.

Co-Hosts: The Co-Hosts are the UN Department of Public Information and the NGO/DPI Executive Committee that represents more than 1,300 NGOs associated with DPI. The Conference Planning Committee shall make every effort to ensure that perspectives from north/south; gender; youth; older persons; indigenous peoples; persons with disabilities; LGBT; global geographic areas; thematic/expert constituencies; and international networks (including the sustainable development, post-2015 development & climate change constituencies) are

included. The planning process itself will be as inclusive and representational as possible, to produce a credible Conference Programme, and set the stage for an outcome declaration that equitably reflects the aspirations and ambitions of all global citizens.

Format: The Conference shall include opening and closing plenary sessions, interactive roundtables, breakout sessions, conference reception, workshops organized by conference participants, capacity building workshops, exhibits and a host of public/side events and evening sessions to engage the public. Several NGOs and international networks are organizing events and conferences that will feed into the DPI/NGO Conference.

Participants: The last Conference at UNHQ was attended by over 1,700 representatives from 469 NGOs affiliated with DPI and ECOSOC the Economic and Social Council representing 54 Member-States/countries. Civil society members representing diverse constituencies from vulnerable communities most affected by poverty, inequality and climate change will be actively identified and assisted to participate in the 65th Annual UN DPI/NGO Conference. The UN-NGO co-sponsored platform provides a unique opportunity to engage diplomats, UN officials, policy experts, scientists, educators, businesses, trade unions, parliamentarians, local authorities, and others from around the world.

Conclusion: Since the Millennium Summit in 2000, the United Nations, governments, civil society and other stakeholders have been engaged in an historic enterprise to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and are now defining a new sustainable development agenda for 2015-2030. The year 2015 could potentially be the point of transition to a bold, new generation of people-centered and planet-sensitive development and the beginning of a strong movement for transformational change. Constituencies working on climate change, sustainable development, development effectiveness, environment, economic justice, human rights and gender equality must come together to strengthen existing and create new ones if we are to achieve an historic, new social contract that reflects a strong and radical narrative of hope and transformation.

The 65th Annual UN DPI/NGO Conference is an opportunity to bring together the vast diversity of civil society representation, constituencies and campaigns in the lead up to the opening of the 69th Session of the General Assembly and UNFCCC COP 20 in Lima, when critical decisions will be made by governments about advancing the sustainable development agenda. The Conference shall provide an inclusive space for the expression of a diversity of views, with a focus on ensuring that marginalized voices are heard. It should be an opportunity for civil society to come together to support the post-2015 negotiations, and contribute to a successful post-2015 agenda and its implementation, including through informed and constructive dissent.

A Conference Declaration that defines an ambitious, inspiring and concrete “Action Agenda” on poverty eradication, sustainable development, human rights and climate change shall be produced building upon and advancing a global movement comprised of diverse mobilization campaigns, advocacy strategies, partnerships, and accountability frameworks. This Declaration will be widely shared with UN system, UN Member-States, global civil society and other stakeholders.

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