

## The Post-2015 UN Development Agenda (V) – Political Challenges (Part One).

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RE: THE POST-2015 UN DEVELOPMENT AGENDA, PART FIVE – POLITICAL CHALLENGES (I)

1.- INTRODUCTION: THE MAIN OBJECTIVE OF THE POST-2015 GLOBAL AGENDA IS POLITICAL

In its previous reports (see in particular IIS 290, 291 and 292), **IIS has repeatedly referred to the political processes through which the new, postmodern ethic came to impose itself globally in the last two decades: global governance, good governance, participatory democracy, bottom-up approaches, multistakeholder partnerships, facilitation, consensus-building, inclusive consultation... These new, interdependent paradigms express a political revolution.** The revolution achieved *a power transfer from “the people” (as interpreted in a representative democracy framework) to the “partners” who are “participating” in global governance and are willing stakeholders in its agenda.*

Pursuing our effort to discern what these complex changes in political theory and praxis put at stake, IIS 299 and IIS 300 examine the processes used in setting the post-2015 global agenda.

**Our basic finding is that the main objective of the new development agenda (and therefore its likely main future achievement) is political, not socioeconomic.** It consists, after two decades of a political revolution that proceeded informally, in moving a decisive step further **in transferring power to global governance’s partners, leading to the establishment**

**of a new and global political regime**. The gives this regime a name: a “new global partnership”. The new regime does not abolish democratic institutions but coexists with them: it operates within, through or in parallel with them. It is, so to speak, hidden in them. But **in the new political framework, “multistakeholder partners” - not governments, not “representative democracy” - are the effective policy- and decision-makers and the real power holders**.

The new partnership calls itself “global”. It is meant to “transcend” not only sovereign governments but all “stakeholders”: all governments, businesses, civil society organizations, “global citizens” must enter the framework. When so doing, IIS notes, **“all” will sell their self-determination for an allegiance to the global norms of the partners**, because the framework is intrinsically “transformative” (see IIS 29?): it “drives transformations”. Moreover, the partners’ agenda is holistic; it has a totalitarian side, in the sense that it covers all areas: socioeconomic (health and education), environmental, security, human rights... Seeking “global” power for itself, the new global partnership is globalist.

The global partnership is “new”: while “partnerships” have been introduced in the UN discourse some twenty years ago, the political change that the new agenda envisions is of such speed, scope and depth as to make the balance of power rapidly and decisively tilt in favor of the “partners”, to the disfavor of traditional democratic processes.

**Partnerships, which are “thematic” and ideologically like-minded, destabilize the pillars of modern democracy, such as John Locke’s “contract of society” and “contract of government”, pluralism, democratic opposition and democratic representation**.

In the new political system, governments are accountable, not first and foremost to their citizens, but to the “partners” of “global governance”. IIS concludes that the new global partnership engages the world, national governments, businesses, citizens in unchartered political territory.

## 2.- BRIEF HISTORY OF PARTNERSHIPS AT THE UN

Let us recall the history of partnerships at the UN. The theme of “partnerships” was introduced at the UN in the course of the conference process of the 1990s. The 1992 Rio conference integrated in its “consensus” the idea that “sustainable development” was too broad an agenda for governments alone to implement: “all actors” (also called “stakeholders”, and later “partners”), whether state or non state, had to get involved. Establishing that sustainable development was by

its very nature a multistakeholder enterprise, Rio created nine major, non-state groups: business and industry; children and youth; farmers; indigenous peoples; local authorities; NGOs; scientific and technological community; women; workers and trade unions. **Sustainable development drove a political revolution. Its multistakeholder character created the need for an “authority” that “transcended” all “partners” and monitored its implementation: “global governance”, an operational multistakeholder political entity, a “global partnership” with the UN at its center as leading agent.**

At the 1996 Istanbul Habitat conference, **“partnership with civil society” was turned into a “principle” that governments were in practice bound to follow to implement sustainable development.** The UN reform led by Kofi Annan gave increasing structural and political space to partnerships with “civil society”. The UN Secretariat dynamically promoted them as the means to implement the UN agenda in all its dimensions. **In 1999 Annan launched his “global compact” with business to co-opt business as an essential “partner”.** Partnerships were then the object of the eighth Millennium Development Goal: a sign of the strategic importance they had acquired by 2000. In 2004, the UNFPA launched its “partnership” with cultures and religions strategy, to change them “from within” and align them with UN secularist goals. At this point, no social actor any longer escaped co-optation by the partnerships’ movement.

The delegation of governmental responsibilities to global governance’s “multistakeholder” partners has become an entrenched practice in the last twenty years, to the point, it seems, of having become irreversible. This makes us discern in the current transition to the post-2015 agenda a critical moment for the political revolution.

### 3.- WHAT IS NEW ABOUT THE NEW GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP?

The High Level Panel’s report calls the “new global partnership” – by nature a multistakeholder partnership [1] - the “most important” of the “transformative shifts” that must take place between 2015 and 2030. It also calls the new global partnership a “principle”: the HLP’s report refers to the “principle of global partnership” (1, pp. 9-10). For the UN, partnerships are mandatory: “Working together” is a “moral obligation” (1, p. 10).

As mentioned above, what is new about the proposed post-2015 agenda is **the revolutionary scope of the new global partnership and the determination to turn multistakeholder partnerships into the primary modus operandi of global**

**governance**: “The idea of partnership must be reflected at every point in the post-2015 agenda, the spirit of partnership must permeate all goals,” insists Dr. Horst Köhler, a member of Ban Ki-moon’s High level Panel and former President of the Federal Republic of Germany. The HLP recommends to “infuse global partnerships and cooperation into all the goals” (1, p. 15).

**Such a political transformation, led at the “global” level, is meant to profoundly impact the national level.**

**The new global partnership is “an overarching change in international cooperation that provides the policy space for domestic transformations”** (1). The partners at the “global

level” set the framework. Governments, businesses, all “stakeholders” implement the new vision at their own level: such is the gist of the political revolution, which the post-2015 agenda is set to consummate.

#### 4.- A GLOBAL STRUCTURAL TRANSFORMATION

At this stage in the history of their power-grab endeavor, the globalists seek to take advantage of the post-2015 global agenda-setting process to achieve a “global structural transformation” (5, p. 2), the platform of the political revolution. IIS remarks that “global” is to be interpreted as involving not only all countries, governments and states, but all “stakeholders” and all cultures.

According to Köhler, the post-2015 envisioned structural transformation must rest on three pillars:

- equal partnerships;
- one single agenda: integrating poverty eradication, sustainability, good governance, as previous UN agendas were insufficiently integrated;
- a global agenda: the new agenda must be relevant to all nations; the previous agenda was a “development agenda”, directed at developing countries only or mainly.

**The transformation begins with a change of mindset: “the new global partnership should encourage everyone to alter their worldview, profoundly and dramatically” (1, p. 10).** The High Level Panel considers that “one of the most exciting features” of partnerships is “that they can”, better than governments alone, “bring about a change in mindsets, altering the thinking of millions of people worldwide” (1, p. 23).

#### 5.- POWER LOSERS AND POWER WINNERS: WEAKENING OF DEMOCRACY

The political revolution brought about power losses and power gains. **National governments - and the people they are mandated to represent, according to traditional (representative) democratic principles - are the main losers. Global governance’s socioeconomic, environmental, political and cultural language, policies and norms now in practice overrule a significant part of national governments’ legislative, judicial and executive powers.** Governments have joined “global consensuses” built under the aegis of the UN and their set of new global “norms”. They

have also bound themselves to an increasing number of treaties and conventions in the last fifty years. **Reduced to “partners”, governments now often act as mere managers, passively allowing themselves to be framed by the norms established by experts at the global level.** They turn into mediators between global governance and the people, at the service of the former to the detriment of the latter.

**The major power winners are those NGOs, technical experts, “eminent persons”, academics and other so-called “civil society actors”, including minorities and lobbies, that are ideologically akin to the UN** and have been the drivers of the political revolution from the onset.

Independently from the political revolution, the financial and economic power of transnational finance and businesses now often dwarfs that of national governments.

Noting these various power transfers, some go as far as affirming that there is now no more state. The weakening of governmental authority weakens democracy and its principles: a problem which is currently inaccurately diagnosed and insufficiently addressed. The global partners’ effective power over national and local policies and laws is not submitted to democratic checks and balances. Should the people and their governments allow informal partnerships to keep on gaining ground they may wake up in a new and global form of dictatorship that will operate under the guise of democratic freedom. There is an intrinsic link between the partnerships’ regime and the strengthening of the institutions that stand at their core, the UN.

It is significant that the two “enablers” singled out by the UN Secretariat for the implementation of the Secretary General’s five-year action plan (ending in December 2016) are, on the one hand, “Harnessing the Full Power of Partnership across the Range of UN Activities” and on the other, “Strengthening the United Nations”. The two objectives are interdependent: the development of partnerships serves the strengthening of the UN, because the *raison d’être* of partnerships is to implement UN goals. And the strengthening of the UN serves partnerships, because the UN is “the” institution giving them their power, content and direction: “The United Nations can lead in setting the agenda because of its unique and universal legitimacy and its ability to coordinate and monitor globally” (1, p. 21), reads the High Level Panel’s report.

## 6.- “EQUAL” PARTNERSHIPS AND THEIR HIDDEN, “HORIZONTAL” LEADERS

Governments have willingly joined the dance of partnerships [2]. But this dance turns partners into “equal partners”: partnerships reduce governments, which are by democratic right endowed with governmental authority and therefore hierarchically above organized groups, to “equal partners” of transnational (predominantly western) “participatory” NGOs, “eminent persons”, foundations, women’s organizations, youth groups, minority pressure groups, research institutions and other “stakeholders” of an agenda established, not first by governments, but by these “participating partners”.

**“Equal partnerships” deconstruct governmental authority.** The new political paradigms - governance, partnerships etc. - are “flat” only in appearance. Partnerships are not equal: they are governed. Those partners who set the agenda, are the real partners of the UN, are “visionaries” and trailblazers posit themselves above the other partners, sometimes calling themselves “horizontal leaders”. They are the watchdogs of the other “partners”.

Let us make two remarks about “equality”. The first concerns its dominant interpretation in the expression “equal partners”. Whether the partners are governments only, or are multistakeholder, the tendency is to deny the legitimate and constitutive differences between the partners and the specificity of their respective mission and identity. The second remark is that the spirit of partnership promotes the value of equality, which becomes an absolute ethical imperative. But the “equality” that is being promoted is contractual: it is an equality without love.

#### 7.- REDISTRIBUTION OF ROLES

The new global partnership, subdivided in “thematic partnerships”, redistributes the roles of each “stakeholder” according its objectives and priorities: “Partnerships in each thematic area, at global, national and local levels, can assign responsibilities and accountabilities for putting policies and programs in place” (1 , p. 10).

**The UN, “of course, has a central normative and convening role”. The role of national governments begins by deciding on national targets within the new global goals framework. Local governments are to operate globally driven change at the local level. The role of business is to “drive economic growth” and innovation, ensure employment, generate resources while conforming to the norms of sustainable development established by the “global experts”. All companies will have to report to shareholders on sustainability practices [3].** Civil society organizations “have important parts to play in designing, realizing, and monitoring” the new agenda. They “must motivate – and, if necessary, pressure – ... governments to create this framework, whether in the North or South or in between. [They] must demand the right to cooperate on these policies” (5, p. 6). Scientists and academics “can make scientific and technological breakthroughs that will be essential to the post-2015 agenda” (1, p. 11). Each partner must be “completely transparent” and “fully accountable” - to global governance, the new source of “authority”.

IIS recalls that **the political revolution has redefined “civil society” and reduced it to those NGOs and other so-called “non-state**

**actors”, ideologically akin to the UN, that have participated in the global governance process from agenda-setting to the consultative process, and then to monitoring implementation by governments and businesses (watchdogs).**

So redefined, “civil society” has the central role: it is endowed with the political power which legitimately belongs to the people – the whole people, not only those participating NGOs. IIS remarks that NGOs have obtained that central role through a power struggle. The struggle goes on in the post-2015 agenda-setting phase: “To boost transparency and improve the inclusiveness of global governance to better serve the post-2015 development agenda, respondents [4] advocated an expanded role for civil society organizations as independent agents and partners in planning, implementation and monitoring of government policies” (6).

#### 8.- “WIDE AND INCLUSIVE” CONSULTATION: ANALYSIS

At their various meetings and in their final report, the members of the High Level Panel (HLP) insisted on their commitment to what they called an “open, inclusive and transparent process” in the development of the new global agenda, that would be ensured by a “broad consultation” with “a variety of stakeholders globally”. They claim to have listened to women and men, women’s groups, young people and children, disadvantaged and minority groups, farmers, workers in the informal sector, traders, parliamentarians, civil society organizations, indigenous people and local communities, people living in poverty, faith-based groups, migrants, experts, business, trade unions and governments, the scientific and academic community... and to “hundreds of thousands of people from all over the world, in face-to-face meetings as well as through surveys, community interviews, and polling over mobile phones and the internet” (crowd-sourcing).

Agenda-setting consultations were global, regional, national. They were thematic. They were organized under the aegis of the UN: at the national level, by the UN Development Group; at the regional level, by UN regional commissions.

In the national consultations process, the UNDG provided “guidelines” and “helped” countries build a national position. The UNDG argues that having a national position gives countries a sense of inclusion, ownership, participation and empowerment and gives them a desire to engage in negotiations, preparing them for national and international consensus-building. The UN wants to “include” countries in the post-2015 agenda-setting phase more than they had been with the MDGs: “It took several years before the current MDGs, which were not designed in an inclusive way, were recognized by advanced and developing countries.” The UNDG affirms that the countries it selected to participate are “a representative sample across several dimensions: regional, country typology, and different types of development challenges”.

At the end of the consultation process, the High Level Panel, having listened to many different perspectives, took on the “challenging work of making choices”.

**Let us analyze the post-2015 agenda-setting consultative process. First, we note that it is “facilitated” by the UN and its direct**

partners from the beginning to the end. The facilitator, IIS observes, is the one who knows the agenda, uses its language, and knows how to lead participants into its framework, which implies that the facilitator also knows the participants, to some degree. “Inclusion” is inclusion in a UN-led process and UN-set agenda, and “ownership” is ownership of UN goals, turning national governments and the actors development actors into “stakeholders” of the UN agenda. The UN also has the freedom to choose whom it consults first (in the early stages of agenda-setting) and most. At the end of the process, the UN’s High Level Panel chooses what it deems relevant to submit to the multilateral negotiations. This reveals that the UN agenda, not the will of the people, is the starting and likely end point of the consultative process.

Another remark concerns the difference there is between a “broad”, “inclusive” consultative process using the social media or crowd-sourcing on the one hand, and a “social contract” on the other. The former involves only the willing, those who participate because they themselves have an agenda. IIS observes that the agenda of those who participate is often special interests, not the good that is common to all. They participate because of their ideological affinity [5] with the UN agenda: such is their common denominator, which makes “agenda-setting” and “consensus-building” so easy. A social contract, by contradistinction, involves an entire society, represented by those that the people mandate to govern them according to their common values. As “inclusive” as consultative processes claim to be, they will never be as “inclusive” as a social contract is supposed to be. The post-2015 agenda-setting consultative process included those countries that the UN chose only, those institutions, organizations, individuals who “participated” only: in fact an infinitesimal minority with respect to the citizens of the world [6].

Another remark: a transition is underway from knowing the will of the people through their social contract and traditional democratic processes (representation, elections) to knowing it through the new participatory and consultative processes: “New forms of participation such as social media and crowd-sourcing can enable governments, businesses, CSOs and academia to interact with, understand and respond to citizens’ needs in new ways” (1, p. 12). These countless and diffuse “participatory processes”, IIS notes, become increasingly influential, but their processes and their outcome are not checked against the will of the real people. There is a danger that they end up taking over, transcending or substituting traditional democratic processes: a new political regime would then win the day according to which the will of the “partners”, no matter how ideological and arbitrary, is considered the will of the world’s people. The partners’ agenda would then fill the entire space of the social contract: as already mentioned, this would be a new, seemingly “soft” form of dictatorship or totalitarianism.

## 9.- IN BRIEF

1.- On July 26, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) launched a year-long campaign, called “Free & Equal”, to promote “global public education” about “respect for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender equality”. The campaign focuses “on the need for both legal reforms and public education to counter homophobia and transphobia.” The High Commissioner Ms. Pillay said “changing attitudes is never easy but it is possible. It begins with often difficult conversations. With this campaign, we want to help start millions of conversations among people around the world and across the ideological spectrum.” The campaign will release a variety of multimedia content in the coming year. Last year, the OHCHR produced a guide to LGBT rights, “Born Free and Equal”, that sets out “States’ core legal obligations” (8).

2.- “The lack of emphasis on mechanisms to hold governments accountable to their commitments is regrettable” according to the Special Rapporteur on the right to education Kishore Singh, who referred to the High Level Panel report. He urges member states to “ensure that a firm framework of accountability with appropriate indicators is made an integral part of the post-2015 development goals.”

3.- On July 9th, the UN General Assembly set up a High Level Political Forum, which will replace the UN Commission on Sustainable Development.

### Sources: Sources:

1.- A new global partnership. Report of the High Level Panel on the post-2015 development vision.

2.- The IPPF’s submission to the WHO consultation, “Health in the post-2015 Development Agenda”. December 2012.

3.- UN Press Release. Sustainable management of natural resources can bring peace to Afghanistan - UN report. New York, June 24, 2013.

4.- An Action Agenda for Sustainable Development. Report for the UN Secretary-General. 6 June 2013. Prepared by the Leadership Council of the Sustainable Development Solutions Network.

5.- Prof. Dr. Horst Köhler, former German federal President and member of the High Level Panel for the post-2015 development agenda. Key note speech “A global agenda for partnership and transformation”. Bonn, March 20, 2013.

6.- UN-NGLs. Executive Summary of Consultation Findings. January 11, 2013. <http://www.un-ngls.org/spip.php?pag...>

7.- Bali Youth Multistakeholder Meeting, 25th March 2013. Communiqué. Putting Youth at the Heart of Development.

8.- UN Press release. UN unveils Free & Equal campaign to promote lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender rights. July 26, 2013.

[1] The new global partnership is a partnership between, inter alia, governments, people living in poverty, those with disabilities, women, youth, civil society and indigenous and local communities, traditionally marginalized groups, multilateral institutions, local and national government, the business community, academia and private philanthropy (see 1, p. 3).

[2] Let us note that **governments submit to partnerships for different reasons: ideological entanglement (western**

nations), ***anti-Americanism or seemingly anti-western character of postmodern agenda*** (some developing countries, some Islamic countries), economic necessity, as submission is a condition to receive aid (Africa). IIS also remarks that multistakeholder partnerships have increased the complexity of UN operational mechanisms to such an extent that it would discourage anyone, not least governments, to monitor them. This complexity is compounded by the highly technical character of issues. Both factors contribute to governments' giving in to the **globalist trend**.

[3] "Sustainability practices" is a fuzzy notion. As IIS has already highlighted it, firms should know for themselves what is morally right.

[4] This was at a consultative meeting with "civil society". Among those NGOs asking for an expanded monitoring role are CIVICUS and IPPF, which "highlighted the valuable role of civil society as an independent agent in ensuring effective monitoring." (6)

[5] Consultations are framed and don't reflect pluralistic views but a remarkable alignment with UN goals. For instance, "young people said they want to be able to make informed decisions about their health and bodies, to fully realize their sexual and reproductive health and rights".

[6] "Every stakeholder" was allegedly deemed important. "This can't be an agenda for politicians. This has to be an agenda of and for the people. It requires effort and commitment from every single person." (5, p. 6) But the HLP affirms it has interacted directly with more than 5000 organizations from 121 countries, and that it has in addition reviewed 880 written submissions (May 10th communiqué). What are they compared to the world's 7 billion people?

<http://www.dialoguedynamics.com/content/research-corpus/iis-reports/2013/article/re-the-post-2015-un-development-736>

## **The Post-2015 UN Development Agenda (VI) – Political Challenges (Part Two) – The Globalist Caricature of “People-Centeredness”**

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INTRODUCTION: A DEFINING MOMENT OF CHOICE FOR HUMANITY

**Tired of modernity’s abuses (such as exclusion, paternalism, abstraction, colonialism or environmental destruction), humanity aspires to a new civilization, different from the universalist western modern synthesis**, open to all cultures and global in character: a civilization centred on the human person, on the concrete human act, on love, fostering friendship, inclusion, equality, participation, openness and transparency, solidarity, building community, celebrating our diversity, respecting the environment. The desire for a civilization founded on love has universally emerged in people’s hearts in recent decades. IIS believes that this desire is inspired.

The new values, however, are the object of a fierce interpretative combat. **The new cultural themes are also those of global governance which seeks to impose its globalist, secularist interpretation and achieves rapid inroads in the majority of the world’s cultures.**

Humanity’s future depends on how each one of us and each people will choose to engage with the new culture, which will either be centered on the person and open to God, or usher in a global totalitarian regime under the guise of a new, “people-centred” ethic. The likely scenario is that the two opposed processes grow one next to the other and that the combat will intensify. IIS 300 exposes some features of the globalist caricature of people-centredness: its utilitarian, technocratic anthropology and linkage to a new and global form of political oppression. IIS 300 concludes our series of reports on the post-2015 global development agenda.

## 1.- IS THE GLOBAL AGENDA “PEOPLE-CENTRED” OR GLOBALIST?

A striking contradiction has marred the global agenda forged under the aegis of the UN over the last two decades:

- On the one hand, this agenda labels itself as “bottom-up” and “people-centred”. It insists on “country ownership”. Global governance boasts of the “participatory” and “broadly consultative” character of its agenda-setting processes.

- On the other hand, the global agenda, which all stakeholders must implement, calls itself a global framework: it is compelling, globally normative. **Global governance insists on accountability and is strengthening its monitoring mechanisms; it encourages NGOs and other civil society actors to be the watchdogs of governments and businesses.**

Is then the global agenda genuinely coming from the people, does it express their free will, their self-determination according to who they want to be and how they want to develop? Or is it on the contrary set by minorities and experts, governed by technical data and then imposed on all? Is the global agenda people-centred or globalist – the former being the opposite of the latter? Are real people, rooted in a culture and a faith, in charge of setting it, “building consensus” on it, implementing it and monitoring its implementation? Or is this process driven and controlled by like-minded, secularist partners?

Contradictory discourses coexist in post-2015 agenda-setting endeavors. *On the one hand*, reads the High Level Panel report, “people must be central to a new global partnership”; they must have “the freedom to voice their views and participate in the decisions that affect their lives without fear”; the report also claims that “countries are not being told what to do: each country is being asked what it wants to do, on a voluntary basis”. (1, p. 7). *On the other hand*, **the new global partnership is about “unifying global goals with national plans for development”: governments must conform themselves to global goals and adapt their plans so as to reach that global “unity”.**

Global governance’s contradictory rhetoric calls for a discernment. How does it hide the contradiction and grant its agenda an apparent coherence? The answer this question is to be found in its interpretation of “people-centredness”, “participation” and “ownership”. Let us remind IIS readers that for global governance, the “people” are the people who “participate” in global governance. And in order to participate, the “people” must be stakeholders in the agenda – they must endorse its ideological line and content: the “people who participate” are like-minded stakeholders of the agenda. “People-centred” and “participatory” essentially mean “multi-stakeholder”: a process that makes actors other than governments (the traditional policy- and decision-makers) participate as “equal partners”. Such a process would be “people-centred” because these actors - NGOs and a myriad “non-state” actors - stand “below” governments as per the traditional democratic “hierarchy”: they would be “closer to the people”, to the grassroots, than governments. In the logic of global governance, multi-stakeholder partnerships make the agenda “people-centred”.

But should people express views that are ideologically opposed to the tenets of the global ethical framework, IIS observes, they would have no right of access to the “framework”, they would be out, outsiders. They wouldn’t be a stakeholder: they wouldn’t, in that sense, qualify as “people”. The new global partnership will be “people-centred” only for those “people” in the framework, participating in its agenda. “People”, in other words, means “UN partners”, in a way that is

almost exclusive. Yet the globalist goal of the framework is to make all people – even those who are not its primary “partners” – enter. “People-centredness”, IIS concludes, is a strategy to seduce “all” people into the framework. People-centredness is seducing because all people today aspire to a new civilization, one that would genuinely be centred on the human person.

Likewise, country ownership in UN terminology means that countries are asked what they want to do within the global goals framework: they are free to set their own targets within these goals, but not independently from them. Furthermore, IIS notes that the insistence on country ownership is motivated by utilitarianism. National ownership is necessary for a more efficient implementation of global goals: “We learned from the MDGs that global targets are only effectively executed when they are locally-owned – embedded in national plans as national targets”. In addition, to ensure national implementation of global goals, international partners and agencies will, reads the HLP’s report, “in many circumstances ... be invited to assist in helping countries implement their plans and achieve their targets”. IIS concludes that what global governance means by “ownership” is national (people’s and governments’) appropriation of UN global goals, and that it is urgent to challenge such a distortion of self-determination.

The people are the main agents of their own personal, family, community and country development. Surely the poor do not have the means and need technical and financial assistance but their will, culture, religion as well as the universally recognizable truth about man and woman must be honored in the process. People are not “UN partners”: they are human persons.

## 2.- A DECISIVE STEP FORWARD IN THE SHIFT TO “GLOBAL” POLITICAL POWER

While the UN is by mandate an international, intergovernmental organization, it started in the early 1990s shifting from an international to a “global” outlook. **“International” implies that “nations”, countries, remain in the driver’s seat. “Global”, by contradistinction, implies that decision-making is shifted over to a “global level”: a virtual level deprived of formal institutions and of any legitimacy, which would stand “above” nations and be governed by “global experts”.**

The UN shift to the “global outlook” is inseparable from its shift to the multi-stakeholder approach, through which “global governance” (a partnership between different state and non-state actors) came about. A “Commission on Global Governance” was set up in 1992 with the full support of UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. In 1995, it issued its report, Our Global Neighborhood, advocating that shift. The Commission defined global governance as “the sum of the many ways individuals and institutions, public and private, manage their common affairs. It is a continuing process through which conflicting or diverse interests may be accommodated and co-operative action taken. It includes formal institutions and regimes empowered to enforce compliance, as well as informal arrangements that people and institutions either have agreed to or perceive to be in their interest” [1]. That definition, then controversial,

seems to have since won the day, as manifest in the generalized practice of “partnerships” and the very nature of the next development agenda, “a new global partnership”, which makes the political revolution reach a decisive stage.

According to IIS, the chances for the “new global partnership” revolution to succeed are high due to the general apathy of national governments and their habit to look at global governance for inspiration and normative leadership. But the global partnerships’ political regime is fuzzy as to the identity of its real leaders. The HLP’s report refers to “global leaders” (1, p.21), but who are “global leaders”: heads of states or the key players in the new global partnership? The term “global”, used in numerous other expressions such as “global agenda”, “global agreement”, “global community” [2] is imprecise.

### 3.- NATIONAL REPLICATION OF THE GLOBAL POLITICAL REVOLUTION

In the post-2015 agenda, governments will be further pressured to implement the UN’s “partnership principle” at the national level. Governments, reads the HLP report, “could receive input on what is realistic and achievable in each target from citizens, officials, businesses and civil society in villages, towns, cities, provinces and communities”. **By replicating UN-style participatory processes, which fundamentally differ from those participatory processes used in a representative democracy, governments will become the agents, at the national level, of the political revolution that deconstructed their own authority.** They will be instrumentalized by global governance to co-opt their national citizens down to the village level as partners of global governance: as local communities “participate” in the implementation of the global goals, they indeed become “global partners”.

### 4.- THE “PARTNERS” ARE LOBBIES

Partnerships are “thematic”: they regroup stakeholders of a particular and single agenda. Being thematic, they do without a “contract of society” – an integrated vision of a given society’s identity, that would “represent” the views of an entire people. Moreover, the “theme” around which stakeholders regroup is often marred by an ideological agenda in conformity, not with local cultures, but with the global partners’ secularist worldview. **The post-2015 proposed new global partnership is intrinsically tied to the secularist agenda of the partners who set it. Alignment with the secularism of global governance seems to a prerequisite for participation in the partnership.**

The global sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) community, object of IIS 298, is an example of a thematic multi-stakeholder partnership that pursues a radical agenda; it is also a

particularly efficient and global “partnership”. Partnering with youth is at the heart of the post-2015 process [3]. But the young people who do participate and exercise influence in this process comprise aggressive SRHR lobbyists. According to their communiqué at the Bali Youth Multistakeholder Meeting last March 25th, those participating young people “ask for more of a focus on comprehensive sexuality education”, for “youth-friendly services that are accessible and particularly sensitive to young people’s SRHR” (7). They want to see SRHR “mainstreamed throughout all priority areas”. They insist on the “crucial” character of “respect for young people with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities” (7).

Once special interest groups have become operational partners of global governance, their influence at the regional, national and local levels becomes more difficult - if not in practice often impossible - to control democratically. Regional institutions, governments and local authorities tend to comply indiscriminately with the normative character of global governance’s “consensuses”, “recommendations”, policies and frameworks. There is no space for opposition in a “consensus” culture, no matter how fake the consensus is. Those who oppose the agenda are outsiders and live in a culture that is, to a significant extent, shaped by others.

## **5.- GNOSTIC TECHNOCRACY: GLOBAL POLICY-MAKING BY TECHNICAL EXPERTS**

**The transition to sustainable development, which is the direction that global governance engages the world in, goes through a power transfer from the people and their governments to “experts” and technicians.**

It corresponds to the conceptual structure of sustainable development to be both a highly technical agenda and a holistic one, integrating virtually all dimensions of development (economic growth, environmental protection, social equity and good governance). These combined elements make it an opaque concept, not only for ordinary people but for the very experts who forged it. **While no expert could claim having a full grasp of sustainable development in its technical and holistic complexity, the scientist dogma of its underpinning ethic is that experts know more and better than ordinary people and are the only ones able to initiate them along its obscure path: sustainable development is a Gnostic enterprise** [4].

The paradox, typical of any revolution and of gnosticism, is that although some knowledge is only accessible to a minority of technicians, all citizens must imperatively implement their “evidence-based” agenda. All people are requested to blindly rely on the enlightened despots to initiate them along the way. For instance, “when indicators are not already agreed or are unclear,” the HLP suggests “inviting technical experts to discuss and refine their models and methods” (1, p. 15).

## 6.- A “DATA REVOLUTION”

**Although sustainable development’s holistic agenda is opaque, its implementation will increasingly be driven by statistics, “evidence”, “knowledge”, data, metrics, which are by definition measurable and precise, although not deprived of ideological interests. There is a powerful, US driven, trend in the post-2015 agenda to shift to world governance by data.** The High Level Panel calls for a data revolution. **It advocates the full integration of statistics into decision making (1, p. 24): policymakers must “have the information they need to make good policy.”** IIS notes that data are generally used to turn what will be found to be most cost-effective into a target and a priority: a reflection of global governance’s utilitarianism.

The Panel advocates improving the quality, frequency, disaggregation and availability of statistics and information “available to people and governments” and “building the statistical capacities of national, subnational and local systems”. It insists on “learning from data” and “adapting actions based on what we learn from it”. Data, which would be “a true public good”, are “underfunded, especially in low-income countries. That must change” (1, p. 56). What is needed, according to the Panel, is a “commitment to changing the way we collect and share data. Systems are not in place today to generate good data” (1, p. 55).

**To support the data revolution project, the Panel recommends “establishing a Global Partnership on Development Data that brings together diverse but interested stakeholders” (1, p. 24). The Panel stresses the “key role” that the UN Statistical Commission should play.**

The data revolution is intended to be multi-stakeholder. It “is not just about governments; international agencies, CSOs and the private sector should be involved” in the revolution as data sources: “A true data revolution would draw on existing and new sources of data to fully integrate statistics into decision making, promote access to, and use of, data and ensure increased support for statistical systems” (1, p. 24). Such a multistakeholder input will increase the power and influence of those NGOs and other actors interested in enforcing their ideological views on all through “data”, IIS notes.

IIS remarks that the new global partnership will create a culture of statistics, measurements, control and knowledge possession. Surely data, if accurate and free from ideologically driven agendas, can be useful for development. But poverty “eradication” programmes enacted with a sheer technical mindset will treat people as numbers, as undifferentiated individuals, as objects of “knowledge”, not as persons deserving to be respected and loved. They will create an anthropological vacuum. Such a “technical anthropology” in turn has political consequences, leading to governance by “knowledge”. But development is not primarily a technical issue: it is a human issue. A sound anthropology is the ingredient critically missing in global governance’s development agenda.

## 7.- ACCOUNTABILITY-DATA LINKAGE: THE CONTROL MECHANISMS OF THE NEW POLITICAL REGIME

The chief purpose of the advocated data revolution is to keep all stakeholders, countries and peoples, “accountable”. Access to data – not trust in the social contract’s parties – is considered a precondition for accountability: “Accountability only works when people have the right information” (1, p. 23). To understand whether the next global agenda is being achieved, reads the HLP’s report, “data on progress needs to be open, accessible, easy to understand and easy to use” (1, p. 55).

IIS comments that the “partnerships regime” is setting its control mechanisms in place: control through “data”, control by the “partners”, not by states. In a traditional democracy, governments are accountable to their citizens who elected and mandated them to represent them according to their values and social contract. Citizens in turn are bound to respect the law. Businesses, also bound by law, are accountable to shareholders. As the political revolution has transformed the traditional institutions of democracy and their different levels of authority into “equal partners” in the implementation of sustainable development, governments are no longer accountable to citizens but to global partners. And all “partners” are bound by global governance’s ethic. Accountability, an overriding theme of the post-2015 agenda, becomes a horizontal concept: “Maybe we can even install a system where countries hold each other accountable, for example through a peer review mechanism at the UN” (5, p. 5).

## 8.- THE IPPF, A SPEARHEAD OF THE POLITICAL REVOLUTION

Over the last decades, the IPPF has been a leading agent of the political revolution: a revealing fact, betraying the connection between the political revolution and the cultural revolution.

In post-2015 agenda-setting consultations, IPPF is staunchly advocating various components of the political revolution, such as governmental support of multi-stakeholder partnerships, an “inclusive and participatory framework” (9, p. 5), country ownership, the development of targets and indicators, the data revolution.

According to the IPPF, the post-2015 framework “should go beyond the current concept of public action by fostering inclusion and participation of a variety of stakeholders, including governments, parliaments, civil society organizations, the private for-profit sector and emerging donors” (9, p. 5). The IPPF calls for “government policies and structures that enable and support the roles and responsibilities of different actors in society in order to recognize and help facilitate important partnerships between private sector, NGO and public actors in strengthening health systems” (2) [5]. As a power-grab NGO, IPPF is particularly interested in power transfer to NGOs and emphasizes the role of “civil society grassroots organizations and representatives from the most marginalized communities, in setting, implementing and safeguarding norms, services and policies” (9, p. 5).

The IPPF proposes to turn country ownership into a specific development goal: “Developing countries governments, with the participation of civil society, must be supported to amend, create and tailor their own development plans and targets. What gets measured, gets done: making country ownership a specific goal, rather than a means, provides greater security that it will be

given the resources it needs to be accomplished” (2). IIS notes how IPPF links “developing countries governments” to “the participation of civil society”: IPPF promotes the partnerships’ revolution in those countries to influence their governments.

The IPPF also pushes for sexual and reproductive health and rights metrics - for the data revolution: “what gets counted, counts!” Metrics are “the teeth with which civil societies hold their governments to account for meeting their population’s needs” (2). IPPF promotes statistical disaggregation by a variety of factors including gender: “Within SRHR, there is a particular need for disaggregated data on age and marital status, since these are often sources of discrimination that restrict individuals’ ability to access information, services and supplies. Improved data on young people’s needs could improve the responsiveness of health service providers, public and private, as well as the delivery of sexuality education” (2). IPPF also complains about the neglect of “mortality/morbidity due to unsafe abortion, prevention and treatment of violence against women, including sexual violence, youth-friendly services, access to contraceptives for young people and the poorest women” (9, p. 5) as “important SRHR performance metrics”.

#### 9.- TOWARDS A NEW DEFINITION OF WELL-BEING, “SPIRITUALIZING” MATERIALISM

“Quality of life for all”, or “well-being for all” has been the objective of sustainable development since the 1992 Rio conference. **For over two decades, global governance has worked at redefining well-being, disconnecting it from the concept of growth (both as the modern, liberal paradigm and as the Judeo-Christian divine command) and linking it to sustainability.** Pursuing this reflection, HLP member Horst Köhler advocates “new ways to define well-being”. He sees “newness” in **overcoming “a fixation on material dimensions of welfare and growth as an end in itself”, and moving to “meaningful values embedded in a concept of well-being which includes factors such as the quality of life, opportunities, health, education, as well as cultural factors such as empathy and a new spirit of togetherness in our communities”**. The end goal, IIS observes, remains “well-being”, but a “spiritualized” form of well-being. Köhler explicits the sense of “togetherness” he mentions through quoting the former head of Greenpeace International, Paul Gilding who said: “The Earth is full... We have to accept that the only way forward that is acceptable to any of us is to spread the resources we have more equally around the world” (5, p. 5). In other words, what binds us “together” is the “obligation” (to which there is no alternative but collective doom) to protect the “Earth”. But how can humanity recover a “spirit of togetherness”, IIS wonders, without returning to our common Father?

Köhler’s proposal may attract many. ***The modern liberal paradigm, its materialism and consumerism, are out of fashion and the object of public criticism. The majorities perceive the need to better steward the environment.*** But the new

definition of well-being “spiritualizes” materialism, through its focus on “quality of life” (a fuzzy materialistic notion), choice, health, empowerment through knowledge, education and feeling part of a whole. While well-being used to be centered on wealth (material possession), it now also comprises power and health/pleasure. The spiritualization of materialism, IIS notes, is a major cultural trend today. It is also present in the global gender revolution. It connects to the cultural theme of dematerialization.

## 10.- WESTERN GLOBALISM VERSUS NON-WESTERN OUTLOOK

To what extent do western-driven globalist agendas succeed in imposing themselves in a “multi-polar” world? How porous to them are, for instance, India and China, two ancient civilizations with a strong cultural identity and in the process of becoming major economic powers, or Islamic countries? How ready is business to comply with global norms? And are the people not waking up to their independence vis-à-vis some of the Diktats of globalization?

IIS notes that, on the one hand, all civilizations, all national contracts of society, all cultures experience today a profound identity crisis and on the other, that the majority of national governments have lost a significant portion of their political, judicial, socioeconomic and cultural power. These cultural and political vacuums are readily filled by the “partners”. The globalists are also proactive in partnering with the world’s religions, including Islam (see IIS 298). **As for businesses, many have bought the UN argument that, being “on the side of profit”, they were not part of civil society; they passively submitted to the “ethical norms” of the UN and of “global civil society”. The people themselves undergo a constant exposure to the norms of global governance, through education reform from kindergarten to the post-graduate university level, but also through the discourse of NGOs, the media and their own government.** What IIS wants to suggest is that the inroads of globalism in the world’s cultures and governments, western and non-western, are effective, even if to various degrees.

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- 1.- A new global partnership. Report of the High Level Panel on the post-2015 development vision.
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- 5.- Prof. Dr. Horst Köhler, former German federal President and member of the High Level Panel for the post-2015 development agenda. Key note speech “A global agenda for partnership and transformation”. Bonn, March 20, 2013.
- 6.- UN-NGLs. Executive Summary of Consultation Findings. January 11, 2013. <http://www.un-negls.org/spip.php?pag...>
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- 9.- IPPF European Network, Euro NGO, Countdown 2015. Towards a post-2015 development framework. Position paper N°1 January 2013.

[1] The Commission on Global Governance, *Our Global Neighbourhood*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995, p. 4.

[2] “There will be difficult decisions to be made and not everyone will get everything they want. But global agreement is essential and we believe strongly that the global community and member states of the UN can and will rise to the occasion.” (1, p. 25)

[3] The UN is taking it for granted that its global framework is the exclusive vision for the world’s youth. Since more than half of the population today is under 25 years old, “it is today’s young people who will bear most responsibilities for the post-2015 agenda” (7). Organized youth groups acting as if they represented the world’s young people have been involved in the post-2015 process from the very beginning: they were “recognized as key stakeholders in global conversations” on the new agenda. These groups are “calling on all stakeholders to ensure that partnerships with young people are at the heart of the whole post-2015 process” (7). Through their greater knowledge of advanced technologies, young people, they say, are “effective monitors in development, playing an important role in designing tools for data collection and analysis” (7).

[4] The Sustainable Development Solutions Network is an example of such a Gnostic technocracy. Launched in 2012 “to mobilize global scientific and technological knowledge on the challenges of sustainable development, including the design and implementation of the post-2015 global sustainable development agenda”, the SDSN is a body “comprising scientific and operational expertise on the broad range of sustainable development challenges”. Its Leadership Council “has explored what an integrated, concise, science-based and action-oriented agenda for the world might look like” (4, p. viii).

[5] “Recognizing the different actors and encouraging cooperation will help facilitate cooperation and joint working towards a common development plan. This enabler supports a person-centred approach because it recognizes that government facilities might not be the most accessible outlet for all. In SRHR, poor and marginalized groups – such as young people, sex workers, people in rural areas, people living with HIV, and women who experience gender-based violence – are more likely to access services if they are delivered in specialist ways and specific locations, including through mobile clinics, in the workplace and in schools... Private and public

health services can complement each other in terms of geographical and population coverage, and in cooperation can achieve a unified, strengthened health service” (2)