Background Paper on the Topic

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INTRODUCTION

The development of the Post-2015 Development Agenda provides an opportunity to place sustainable development where it should be, that is; at the core of humankind’s pursuit of shared progress. With a new sustainable development agenda, the world can make many historic achievements which include:

- eradicating extreme poverty by 2030;
- protecting the environment; and
- promoting social inclusion and economic opportunities for all.

The ultimate aspiration of the development agenda beyond 2015 is to create a just and prosperous world where all people realize their rights and live with dignity and hope.

On the other hand, the Commonwealth recognises that accelerating growth has become central to policy efforts globally. It also notes that rising inequality at both international and national levels has implications for poverty reduction and future growth potentials of member states. The Commonwealth agrees that achieving growth with equity and inclusivity must be one of the main policy priorities for the Commonwealth, in keeping with its Charter adopted in December, 2012. The adopted post-2015 development goals meet the aspiration of the Commonwealth as contained in the Commonwealth Charter. They include both governance and development goals.

THE POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

The Rio+20 Outcome document, The Future we want, inter alia, set out a mandate to establish an Open Working Group (OWG) to develop a set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for consideration and appropriate action by the General Assembly at its 68th Session. It also provides the basis for their conceptualization.
The Rio outcome gave the mandate that the SDGs should be coherent with and integrated into the UN development agenda beyond 2015.

The OWG concluded its 13th Session (14th to 19th July) after over one-and-a-half years of discussions and negotiations.

The adopted text of the SDGs contains a set of 17 goals that span the three pillars of sustainable development; that of economic, social and environmental issue areas. Each goal is accompanied by a set of targets and means of implementation (MOI). The 17 goals are as follows:

(i) end poverty in its forms everywhere;
(ii) end hunger, achieve food and security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture;
(iii) ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages;
(iv) ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all;
(v) achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
(vi) ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all;
(vii) ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all;
(viii) promote sustained and inclusive sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all;
(ix) build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and industrialization and foster innovation;
(x) reduce inequality within and among countries;
(xi) make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable;

(xii) ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns;

(xiii) take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts;

(xiv) conserve and use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development;

(xv) protect, restore and promote use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainable manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reserve land degradation and halt biodiversity loss;

(xvi) promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels; and

(xvii) strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

**CONTENTS OF THE COMMONWEALTH CHARTER**

The Commonwealth Charter, which was signed on 14th December, 2012 affirms the core values and principles of the Commonwealth. The content of the Commonwealth Charter include the following:

I. democracy;

II. human rights;

III. international peace and security;

IV. tolerance, respect and understanding;

V. freedom of expression;

VI. separation of powers;
VII. rule of law;

VIII. good governance;

IX. sustainable development;

X. protecting the environment;

XI. access to health, education, food and shelter;

XII. gender equality;

XIII. importance of young people in the Commonwealth;

XIV. recognition of the needs of small States;

XV. recognition of the needs of vulnerable States; and

XVI. the role of civil society.

EVALUATING THE POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

I. End Poverty in all its Forms Everywhere.

This goal, when evaluated against the Commonwealth Charter, is very adequate as it is takes on board what is in the Charter. The Charter recognizes sustainable development as important for helping to eradicate poverty. It also commits itself to removing disparities and unequal living standards. This goal also covers what is captured in the Charter under the section on Human Rights where the Commonwealth committed itself to the protection and promotion of economic rights among others.

II End Hunger, Achieve Food Security and Improved Nutrition, and Promote Sustainable Agriculture.

This goal fully incorporates what is in the Charter. However, unlike in the Charter where it only recognizes the right of all people to access nutritious food which is consistent with the right to adequate food in the context of
national food security, the proposed goal also adds targets on the production of food.

III. **Ensure Healthy Lives and Promote Well-being for all Ages.**

This goal is in line with the Charter under the section dealing with access to health, education, food and shelter. It recognizes the necessity of affordable health care, the importance of promoting health and well-being in combating communicable and non-communicable diseases.

I. ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all;

II. achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls;

III. ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all;

IV. ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all;

V. promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all;

VI. build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation;

VII. reduce inequality within and among countries;

VIII. make cities and human settlement inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable;

IX. ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns;

X. take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts;

XI. conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development;
XII. 

protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss;

XIII. 

promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels; and

XIV. 

strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development.

**EVALUATING THE POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA**

I. **End poverty in all its forms everywhere.**

This goal when evaluated against the Commonwealth Charter is very adequate as it takes on board what is in the Charter. In the Commonwealth Charter, this is adequately covered under the section on Sustainable Development. The Charter recognises sustainable development as important for helping to eradicate poverty. It also commits itself to removing disparities and unequal living standards. This goal also covers what is captured in the Commonwealth Charter under the section on Human Rights where the Commonwealth committed to protection and promotion of economic rights among others.

II. **End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture.**

This goal fully incorporates what is in the Charter. However, unlike in the Charter where it only recognises the right of all people to access nutritious food which is consistent with the right to adequate food in the context of national food security, the proposed goal also adds targets on the production of food.
III. **Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.**

This goal is sufficiently discussed and is in line with the Commonwealth Charter under the section dealing with access to health, education, food and shelter. It recognises the necessity of affordable health care, the importance of promoting health and well-being in combating communicable and non-communicable diseases.

IV. **Ensure Inclusive and Equitable Quality Education and Promote Life-long Learning Opportunities for all.**

This goal takes on board what is contained in the Charter under the section dealing with access to health, education, food and shelter, where it recognises the importance of access to education. It also touches on the section on Human Rights, where the Commonwealth commits itself to equality and respect for the protection and promotion of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development.

V. **Achieve Gender Equality and Empower all Women and Girls.**

The proposed goal tackles both gender equality and women’s empowerment as stipulated in the Charter. The Charter under the section on gender equality recognises that gender equality and women empowerment are essential parts of human development and is a basic human right.

VI. **Ensure Availability and Sustainable Management of Water and Sanitation for all.**

When evaluated against the Charter, the proposed goal tackles sufficiently the need for access to clean drinking water and sanitation for all citizens. The section on Access to Health, Education, Food and Shelter in the Commonwealth Charter covers the importance of clean drinking water, sanitation and housing for all citizens.
VII. Ensure Access to Affordable, Reliable, Sustainable, and Modern Energy for all.

Energy plays a critical role in economic growth and social development. Ensuring access to affordable, modern and reliable energy resources for all is also important for poverty eradication and the provision of basic services. This proposed goal is not adequately covered in the Commonwealth Charter, except under Support to the Needs of Small States.

VIII. Promote Sustained, Inclusive and Sustainable Economic Growth, Full and Productive Employment and Decent Work for all.

This goal covers what is in the Charter on economic development, trade promotion, protection of the environment and job creation. The Charter deals with issues under this goal under the sections Sustainable Development, Protecting the Environment and Importance of Young People in the Commonwealth.

IX. Build Resilient Infrastructure, Promote Inclusive and Sustainable Industrialization and Foster Innovation.

Efficient, productive and globally competitive economies require well-functioning infrastructure. The Provision of adequate and reliable infrastructure for water, sanitation, energy, transport and communications is necessary for the social and economic development and improvement of quality of life.

The Commonwealth Charter does not adequately address itself to the provision of infrastructure. It only caters for water, sanitation and information and communication technologies, and does not have provision for energy and transport infrastructure.
X. **Reduce inequality within and Among Countries.**

The targets under this goal are the same ones that are raised in the Charter. Like in this goal, the Charter, under the section on Human Rights is opposed to all forms of discrimination. Under the section on International Peace and Security, the Commonwealth has committed itself to an effective multilateral system based on inclusiveness, equity, justice and international law, which is essential for equality among countries. The goal also tackles adequately the need for a competent government able to come up with good policies. This is highlighted under the sections on Rule of Law and Good Governance, in which the Commonwealth commits itself to promoting good governance through the rule of law, ensuring transparency and accountability at both national and international levels.

XI. **Make Cities and Human Settlements Inclusive, Safe, Resilient and Sustainable.**

Though this goal is not categorically dealt with in the Charter, the aspects of environmental protection are dealt with under the sections on Protecting the Environment and Recognition of the Needs of Vulnerable States where the Commonwealth has committed itself to helping the poorest and most vulnerable countries. The Charter does not seem to cater for infrastructural development for transport and housing facilities.

XII. **Ensure Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns.**

This proposed goal covers all that is highlighted in the Charter under the sections on Protecting the Environment where the Commonwealth recognises the importance of protecting and conserving our natural ecosystems and affirms that sustainable management of the natural environment is the key to sustainable human development. It also covers what is provided for in the section on Recognising of the Needs of Small
States where the Commonwealth pledges to support small and developing states in tackling climate change.

XIII. **Take Urgent Action to Combat Climate Change and its Impacts.**

As already stated under proposed Goal No. XII, the goal is comprehensive and covers all that is in the Commonwealth Charter. This is well covered in the Charter under the section on protecting the Environment, in which the Commonwealth is committing itself to addressing the adaptation and mitigating challenges of climate change. Climate change issues are also dealt with under the Needs of Small States.

XIV. **Conserve and Sustainably Use the Oceans, Seas and Marine Resources for Sustainable Development.**

This goal is comprehensive and it covers all that is provided for in the Commonwealth Charter under the section on Protecting the Environment.

XV. **Protect, Restore and Promote Sustainable use of Terrestrial Ecosystems, Sustainably manage Forests, Combat Desertification, and Halt and Reverse Land Degradation and Halt Biodiversity loss.**

XVI. This goal adequately elaborates what is generally discussed in the Charter under the section on Protecting the Environment.

XVII. **Promote Peaceful and Inclusive Societies for Sustainable Development, Provide Access to Justice for All and Build Effective, Accountable and Inclusive Institutions at All Levels.**
XVIII. All the targets under this goal are complete as they take on board all that is spelt out in the Charter.

XIX. **Strengthen the Means of Implementation and Revitalise the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development.**

This proposed goal is comprehensively covered under the following sections of the proposed Post-2015 Development agenda:

- **financing:** this deals with resource mobilization from domestic sources and from official development assistance (ODA) from developed countries;
- **technology sharing;**
- **capacity building for implementing sustainable development goals;**
- **trade promotion;**
- **policy and institutional coherence;**
- **multi-stakeholder partnership; and**
- **data, monitoring and accountability.**

Some of the issues itemized above are also highlighted in the Charter. However, the Charter is not categorical on how the Commonwealth will implement its commitments.

**Zambian Situation**

With the 2015 deadline for achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) approaching, the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) launched a global consultation on Post-2015 Development Agenda in one hundred countries at the end of 2012. The UN Secretary-General formed a high-level panel of eminent persons to guide and review these results to come up with an inspiring global agenda for development in the post 2015 period.
The objective of the post 2015 “Future We Want” national dialogues were to identify priorities and provide inputs to the global exercise which culminates in the world's leaders formulating and agreeing to a bold and inspiring development framework owned by all stakeholders and that takes us beyond the MDGs. Zambia has been fully engaged in this process.

The design and scope of the Zambian post-2015 consultations were informed by the principle that the choices people make, and the opportunities they are given to improve their own lives count most for making human development more impactful and sustainable. The Zambian consultations provided a platform for students, local communities, media, small informal sector entrepreneurs and the formal business community, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and civil society organizations, district development coordinating committees, women’s groups, traditional chiefs, Members of Parliament and youth organizations to directly express their ideas and vote for their choices on what will make the world a better place for them and for others.

Through these consultations, the following issues emerged as development challenges for the post-MDG era for Zambia:

1. providing quality education with life skills.
2. better health care.
3. equality (income, gender, geographic and access).
4. better job opportunities and enabling business environment (agriculture diversification, entrepreneurship, employment, financial schemes for youth, women etc).
5. having eradication of poverty.
6. providing an honest and responsive government (strengthen decentralised government bodies).
7. access to clean water and sanitation.
8. protecting natural resources/environment.
9. affordable and nutritious food/food security.
10. better infrastructure including transport and roads, schools, hospitals and accommodation.
11. freedom from discrimination and persecution.
12. support for people who cannot work (social protection schemes).
13. protection against crime and violence.
14. political freedoms.
15. Phone and internet access (access to information, including freedom of speech).
16. action taking on climate change; and
17. providing reliable energy at home.

These are the issues that were contained in the country's contribution to the global discussion on the development of the MDGs. It is worth noting that all these issues fall within the Commonwealth Charter.

CONCLUSION

Given the fact that poverty eradication is the greatest global challenge facing the world today indispensable requirement for sustainable development, strong monitoring and accountability will be crucial for the implementation of the post-2015 Development Agenda. Parliaments should therefore, play a central role in ensuring that the Executive Branch of Government comes up with workable implementation strategies, and that the activities are effectively implemented.
DRAFT RECOMMENDATION

In line with the request from the CPA Headquarters for discussion leaders to come up with 25 word recommendations, the following is the proposed recommendation on this topic:

Implementation support to developing countries in the Commonwealth should tackle domestic revenue collection; policy and institutional coherence as well as Institutional and human resource capacity.