



POST-2015 **REPORT**

**Post-2015 goals  
for children:  
Stop at nothing**



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Cover photo: After participating in World Vision's garden training programme, Johura and her husband built a small garden, which now helps them earn income and provides nutritious food for their children.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### STOP AT NOTHING TO PUT CHILDREN AT THE CENTRE IN A POST-2015 WORLD

World Vision believes that to build a fairer future for every child, the post-2015 development agenda must aim to reach the world's most vulnerable children, ensure that success is measured through the impact it has on them, and to transform the systems and social practices that keep them poor.

As we approach the end of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), we have the chance to build on the extraordinary progress that has been made in reducing extreme poverty and improving child well-being, and to set the direction for ensuring a fairer world for all children.

The past 15 years have shown us that this dream is within sight. A world where the next generation can not only survive but thrive is possible. A world where the number of children dying from preventable causes is zero, not 6.6 million. A world where children going hungry is nothing but a memory. A world where children know nothing of abuse, violence, war or labour. It is possible if individuals, corporates, organisations, leaders and governments stop at nothing to see that world become a reality. And the best place for them to start is with the post-2015 agenda.

To ensure a fairer world for all children, the post-2015 agenda must:

- **Recognise that investing in children is the key to sustainable development.** Early intervention and investment in vulnerable children is the surest way to create a more just and prosperous world. The new framework should address explicitly the most vulnerable children by ensuring their health, nutrition and protection; targeting children in fragile contexts; and eliminating all forms of violence against children.
- **Spell out how it will achieve change for all children.** The new goals will not be delivered by simply doing more of what we are already doing. The framework will need to enable all sectors of society – citizens, government, business and civil society – to make their distinct and complementary contributions.
- **Measure success in improvements made for unseen, uncounted and invisible children.** When the girl from the poorest family in the most crowded slum or remotest village can grow to adulthood in good health and dream of the future her secondary education might provide, then we will know we are achieving sustainable development.

#### World Vision's key message on post-2015

The success of the post-2015 framework that replaces the MDGs must be measured by its ability to reach the most disadvantaged and vulnerable children in the hardest places to live.

## 2015 AND BEYOND: STOP AT NOTHING TO CHANGE CHILDREN'S LIVES

### Changing Razita's life in Afghanistan

There is no doctor for miles around the area near Herat, where 13-year-old Razita lives. Access to health services for women and children is extremely difficult in rural Afghanistan, and one in 10 children like Razita die before reaching the age of 5. But local community health workers have teamed up with World Vision and its partners to change these dire statistics, using mobile phones and a specially designed app to provide expectant mothers with information on antenatal care and birth planning. In just under two years the project saw a 22 per cent increase in the number of babies delivered in a health facility, a 20 per cent rise in antenatal care visits and a 14 per cent increase in the use of iron supplements – all of which spell better health for Afghan children and their mothers.



*Rozita, one of unseen, uncounted and invisible children in Afghanistan, wants leaders and government to make a hospital with an ambulance in her neighbourhood.*  
© Narges Ghafary/World Vision

The world stands at an historic juncture of achievement and opportunity. The most successful global anti-poverty push in history has produced impressive results. As we near the 2015 deadline for achievement of the MDGs, we can take pride in the fact that every day 17,000 fewer children die of preventable causes; that more than 2 billion people have gained access to safe drinking water; that 700 million people have escaped the grip of absolute income poverty.<sup>1</sup>

As a result of these accomplishments, the complete elimination of extreme poverty by 2030 is within our reach.

Yet the call to end extreme poverty needs to be something more than an abstract idea or an aggregate figure, like the number of people living below US\$1.25/day. In more than 60 years of working in development, World Vision has come to understand that eliminating poverty has to be about people's lived experience: the survival, health and education of their children, their sense of personal security, the ability to feed and provide for their family and the resilience to withstand shocks. Each of these elements will need to be addressed in the post-2015 development framework if we are to eradicate extreme poverty.

No one imagines that this work will be easy. While the MDGs brought better health and living standards to hundreds of millions of people, design flaws that became more apparent over time meant that more than a billion people were simply passed over, ignored by the targets and unable to benefit from the tide that lifted their neighbours.

**The post-2015 sustainable development framework must be different.** The MDGs' *aggregate* targets drove policymakers to focus on the people that were easiest to reach. Left behind were newborns, people in fragile and conflict-affected states, marginalised groups and those in the bottom quintile of middle-income economies. Similarly, the process that generated the MDGs did not bring key stakeholders to the table, from citizens to the private sector.

## WORLD VISION'S POSITION

**The success of the post-2015 framework that replaces the MDGs must be measured by its ability to reach the most disadvantaged and vulnerable children in the hardest places to live.**

Issues affecting children deserve particular priority within the new framework. Healthy, cared for, educated, safe and engaged children have the best chances of becoming productive adults and of contributing to healthy, peaceful, productive societies – and, ultimately, to sustainable development.

World Vision's aim is to secure a global framework that promotes well-being for all children, building on and finishing the challenges set out by the current MDGs. But that framework must give particular priority to the children, issues and targets that are most critical to its achievement. In practical terms this means prioritising:

- **very young children**, who are in a crucial phase of physical and mental growth. Laying a foundation for individual, community and national development is only possible if we reach the most vulnerable children in their first 1,000 days.

### World Vision's key message on post-2015

The success of the post-2015 framework that replaces the MDGs must be measured by its ability to reach the most disadvantaged and vulnerable children in the hardest places to live.

- **children experiencing or at risk of violence.**<sup>2</sup> Violence is a dimension of poverty that was not reflected in the MDGs. It is an urgent priority both because children have a right to be protected from violence and because investments in health, education and well-being of children are undermined by violence.
- **children in fragile and conflict-affected contexts, states and regions within otherwise stable states.** These are the places that experience the most extreme inequality and vulnerability. The children who live there comprehensively missed out because the MDGs failed to address the specific drivers of poverty in those contexts.

In order to have an impact on these children, **we need to bring new partners to the table.** This means including citizens – and particularly the most vulnerable – in the conversations and decisions about implementing the new goals. We need to build a chain of accountability from households to the global agreement.

This also requires **harnessing business**, which is vital to introduce the necessary innovation to scale and speed up the delivery of national development plans. Cross-sector partnerships for delivering the goals – engaging the private sector alongside government, multilateral institutions and civil society – should be part of the post-2015 framework.

## STOP AT NOTHING: START WITH VULNERABLE CHILDREN

Three types of arguments support the call for the post-2015 framework to focus on vulnerable children:

- **Developmental:** The post-2015 framework should prioritise children because childhood – specifically the early years – provides a unique opportunity in which the boundaries of human potential are ultimately set. Making sufficient investments that enable children to survive and thrive is an obligation under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Post-2015 is an opportunity to deliver on those commitments.
- **Pragmatic:** Eliminating poverty will not happen without targeting those who are furthest from the goals. Worldwide, young children in the poorest households are two to three times more likely to die or to be malnourished than those in the best-off households.<sup>3</sup> Children born in rural areas are at a greater risk of dying than children in urban areas, and the under-5 mortality rate for children born to uneducated mothers is almost three times higher than for those whose mothers have secondary education.<sup>4</sup>
- **Economic:** Repeated studies find that investments during childhood can yield a lifetime of gains, not only for individual children, but also for societies and economies. Research shows that ‘a 5 per cent improvement in child survival raises economic growth by 1 per cent per year over the subsequent decade.’<sup>5</sup> The converse also holds true. Failing to invest in children comes at a price: the annual costs associated with child under-nutrition in Africa have been found to be between 1.9 per cent and 16.5 per cent of GDP (gross domestic product).<sup>6</sup> We cannot achieve sustainable development without a clear and compelling investment in all children, especially the hardest to reach.

### STOP AT NOTHING TO REACH THEM

Two strategies that will make this possible are (1) ensuring strong civil registration and vital statistics systems, and (2) promoting robust social protection programmes.

#### Stop at nothing to count them

One of the greatest challenges in promoting the survival, protection and well-being of children is finding out who and where they are. Just two-thirds of the world’s children are registered at birth; more than 230 million others are unknown and unseen, at risk of slipping through the cracks and being denied their rights.<sup>7</sup> It is only when they are included that health or social protection systems can adequately cater to their needs. **The post-2015 framework must ensure these rights by requiring free, universal legal identity**, measured by the percentage of children under 5 registered at birth and the existence of universally effective civil registration and vital statistics systems.

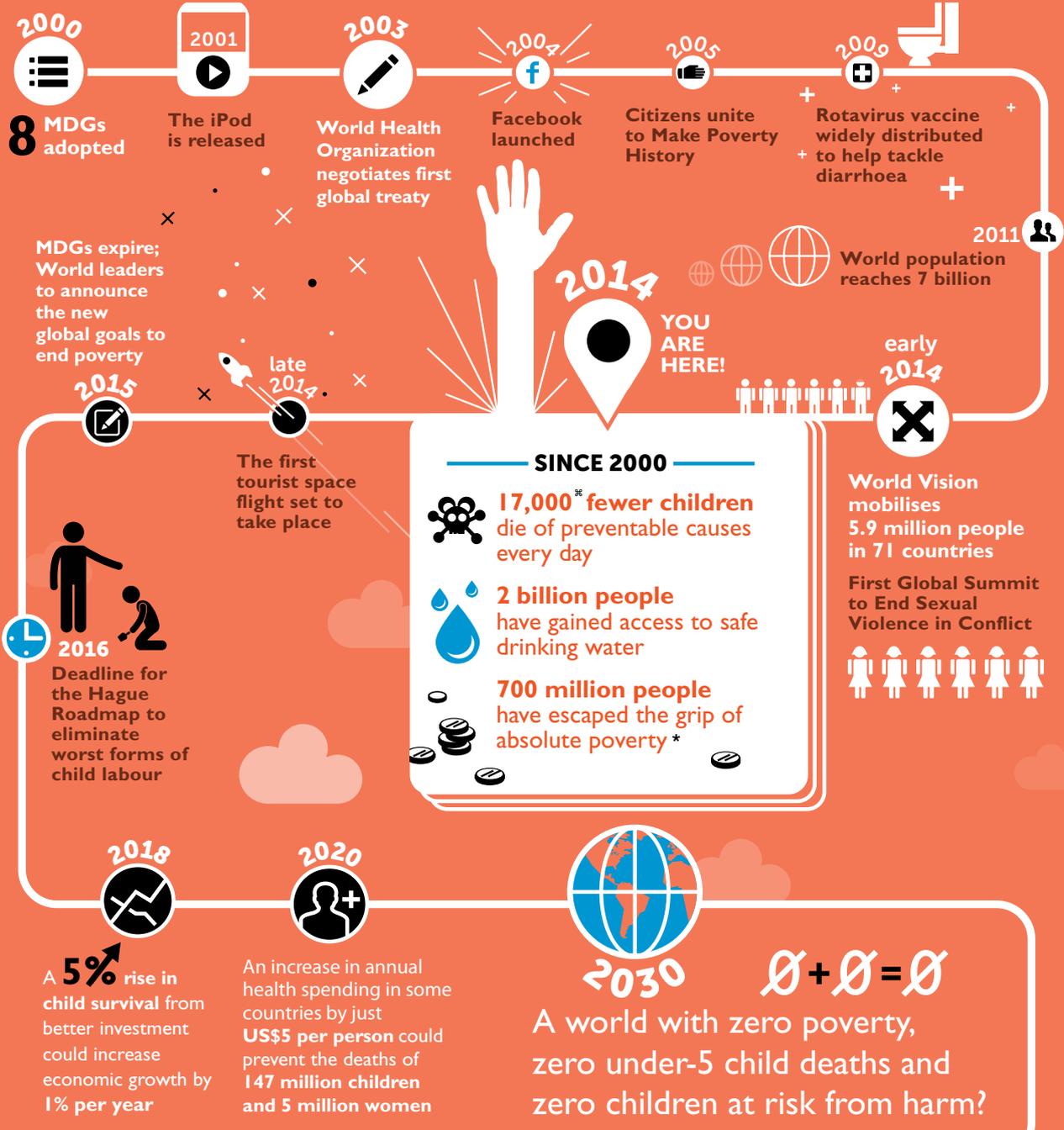
### Stop at nothing to protect them

There is clear evidence that social protection programmes can reduce child poverty and deprivation, help families avoid harmful coping strategies such as child labour and increase children's access to services.<sup>8</sup> Equitable access to social protection services strengthens the care and protection of children within the wide range of contexts (fragility, emergency response and long-term development) in which World Vision operates.<sup>9</sup> **The post-2015 framework must require the implementation of nationally appropriate social protection measures** (including floors which set basic social security guarantees), with the focus on coverage of the most vulnerable, especially children.

The last 15 years have seen some incredible events & life-saving progress.

Could the next 15 years see an end to global poverty?

# WE WILL STOP AT NOTHING TO GET THERE



**IT'S WITHIN REACH...  
LET'S STOP AT NOTHING TO GET THERE.**

\* SOURCE: UN (2013), *The Millennium Development Goals Report 2013*. \* Compared with 1990 figures.

## HOW TO STOP AT NOTHING: TARGETS TO STAY ON TRACK

We must prioritise the following three groups if we are to achieve our goal of ending extreme poverty by 2030:

### I. FOCUS ON THE FIRST 1,000 DAYS

The first 1,000 days of each child's life, during pregnancy and up to age 2, form the critical foundation on which their potential and that of their society is built. Earliest childhood represents a unique window of opportunity for investing in a child's cognitive and physical development.<sup>10</sup> If lost, it cannot be recovered.

Vulnerable children are at the greatest risk of being deprived during this early period. Accumulated developmental deficits in early childhood place children on a lower lifetime path, with negative implications for adult cognitive and psychological functioning, educational attainment and subsequent income – thus perpetuating inequalities into the next generation.<sup>11</sup>

An integrated response to early childhood is necessary to achieve developmental targets. The response needs to make universally available a package of quality interventions that promote survival, adequate nutrition, effective protection and care, and early education. Eliminating under-nutrition and achieving child survival are two of the most critical commitments that need to be achieved by 2030.

#### Ensure adequate nutrition

Improving nutrition during a child's critical 1,000-day window is one of the most cost-effective investments we can make towards lasting progress in health and development. Yet nutrition was poorly recognised in the MDGs,<sup>12</sup> and under-nutrition remains the single biggest cause of preventable deaths of young children, responsible for almost half of the 6.6 million under-5 child deaths in 2012. One in four of all children under 5 are stunted, and 52 million suffer from wasting, with significant impact on their, and their societies', future prospects.<sup>13</sup>

Improving nutrition requires integrated, quality interventions that reach the most vulnerable and promote effective feeding practices, access to the right types of food for pregnant mothers and very young children, and early education. Increasing exclusive breastfeeding rates is especially critical: exclusive breastfeeding up to six months followed by continued breastfeeding alongside complementary foods has the greatest potential impact on child survival of *all* preventive interventions and could save up to 800,000 lives each year.<sup>14</sup> Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN), a global movement to end under-nutrition, is leading global action on this issue.<sup>15</sup>

**Focusing on the first 1,000 days – locally**

Just three months shy of her second birthday, Felister was severely malnourished, weighing only as much as an 8-month-old infant. Her mother enrolled her in a nutrition programme led by World Vision and was stunned to find her daughter thriving after just a few days – the feeding regimen, after all, consisted of nothing more than eating a nutritious menu of affordable foods available locally in Zambia. This approach uses members of poor communities whose children are well-nourished as positive role models for families with malnourished children. It has been shown to be both sustainable and effective: up to 85 per cent of participating children under 5 gain sufficient weight to graduate after 12 days. Pioneered by Save the Children in the 1970s, the programme is now a model for behaviour change and has been implemented by World Vision in 40 countries throughout Africa, Asia and Latin America.



*In Zambia, Felister's mother feeds her nutritious food with help from a World Vision nutrition programme. © Carmen Tse/World Vision*

**The post-2015 framework must ensure the elimination of childhood malnutrition, including reducing stunting to below 5 per cent and wasting to below 4 per cent; 100 per cent year-round access to adequate food for all people.**

### No preventable child deaths

The potential return on investment for health is overwhelming. A recent study found that increasing annual health spending by just US\$5 per person until 2035 in 74 countries could yield nine-fold economic and social benefits and prevent the deaths of 147 million children and 5 million women, as well as 32 million stillbirths.<sup>16</sup>

Yet current investments in health in many countries are neither sufficient nor equitable. More than a billion people cannot access the health services they need, either because the services are unavailable or because they cannot afford them.<sup>17</sup>

To achieve long-term improvements in the well-being of the most vulnerable children, the next development framework must refocus efforts to reach those furthest away from quality health and related services.<sup>18</sup>

Health, particularly of the world's poorest and most vulnerable children, must remain central to the post-2015 framework. **World Vision strongly supports getting to zero in preventable deaths of children under 5 (including targets to end preventable maternal, newborn and child deaths). Significant improvements in child and maternal nutrition will be needed to achieve zero preventable deaths, including boosting rates of exclusive breastfeeding up to 6 months of age to at least 60 per cent.**

## 2. NO CHILDREN SUFFERING FROM ABUSE

Violence against children is prevalent in every country and affects between 500 million and 1.5 billion children every year. The worst forms of violence include harmful traditional practices like child marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM), physical and sexual abuse, labour exploitation and forced recruitment into armed forces.<sup>19</sup>

Children exposed to violence are more likely to drop out of school, with negative long-term consequences. Child marriage, FGM and some forms of child labour correlate with higher rates of maternal and infant mortality and injury and also directly increase survivors' vulnerability to poverty.<sup>20</sup> Violence against children also produces considerable economic costs. The 168 million children who forgo school in order to work reduce their potential lifetime earnings by an estimated 13–20 per cent and increase their likelihood of being poor in later life by as much as 30 per cent.<sup>21</sup>

The omission of violence from the MDGs continues to undermine progress across the goals, and its eradication is essential if we are to achieve the end of extreme poverty before 2030. **The post-2015 framework must include a specific goal to end all forms of physical and sexual violence against girls and boys.**

### Suffering from abuse – Conflict and early child marriage

One in nine girls around the world is forced to marry before her 15th birthday. Of the 25 countries with the highest rates of early marriage, the majority are affected by conflict, fragility or natural disasters. Humaiya Akhter's grandmother was married at the age of 9; Humaiya's mother at age 16. But the cycle has ended with Humaiya. Now 17, she is an advocate for girls' education and child rights in her home country of Bangladesh, the nation with the third-highest prevalence of child marriage in the world. Humaiya credits her parents with encouraging her to pursue her education and protecting her from the fate of her schoolmates who married and bore babies while still children themselves. As Humaiya told the United Nations in a 2013 speech, 'Female education is the most important weapon against child marriage'.



*Humaiya, a World Vision sponsored child, is an advocate for girl's education and child rights in Bangladesh. © Arpona Ghosh/ World Vision*

### 3. NO CHILDREN LIVING IN CONFLICT

Some 500 million children live in fragile contexts (including fragile areas of otherwise stable states), in fear for their lives and safety, with no access to the most basic nutrition, health care and education and little hope of a better future. Of all the world's children, the most vulnerable are those subject to multiple drivers of poverty in the most marginal, fragile and conflict-affected contexts. Fully 70 per cent of infant deaths worldwide occur in the most fragile countries. A child born in a fragile state is twice as likely to die before age 5 as a child born in a more stable low-income country, and five times more likely to die than a child in a middle-income country.<sup>22</sup>

These children were not reached by the MDGs. This is not only because of a lack of resources, but also because the MDGs did not address the distinct drivers of poverty: poor or absent governance, systemic injustice, corruption, displacement and violence. These factors must be addressed if sustainable change is to be achieved.

Conflict and fragility makes development harder, but the urgency of protecting children in these contexts must be taken seriously. The good news is that our experience suggests that change is possible, even in the most challenging environments.

The next set of development goals must target the hardest-to-reach children in fragile and conflict-affected contexts. **The post-2015 framework must include a goal to achieve lasting peace and eliminate violence. In addition to specific targets that support peace directly, the new framework must contain targets on governance, inclusion and accountability that include a focus on children in fragile contexts.**

## WHO WILL STOP AT NOTHING: EVERYONE INVOLVED

If ending poverty is going to be a reality, we need clear plans. The MDGs failed millions of children because there was no roadmap for getting to the targets. Achieving an end to poverty will not be possible simply by doing business as usual; innovative approaches are needed. **It is vital that the post-2015 process gives sufficient consideration to, and makes provisions for, how the new thematic goals will be achieved.**

This can be done through: (1) engaging citizens in both implementing and ensuring accountability for the goals; and (2) enlisting the resources of the private sector through the creation of cross-sector partnerships.

### I. PEOPLE POWER: TOGETHER, WE WILL STOP AT NOTHING

Primary responsibility for the delivery of the goals sits with individual governments. Each goal will need to be translated into a national-level target. Engaging citizens means mobilising people – including children – to own those national targets and to hold their governments to account for pledges they have made. Involving communities in gathering and sharing data about their experience and in planning, monitoring and reviewing services is a key means to ensure that global goals translate into concrete change at the local level. To support such community engagement, **the post-2015 framework must include mechanisms for participatory monitoring and accountability mechanisms, including by children and youth**, as well as initiatives for local participation in programme planning and implementation.

Children are agents of change and their voices will lead to goals that better respond to their needs. The Convention on the Rights of the Child explicitly affirms that children have the right to express their opinions, to be heard, and to participate in decisions that affect them. Their participation ensures inclusiveness and ownership of the development process, builds democratic societies, reduces dependency and increases the well-being of children and youth.

Participation of children and youth also improves decision-making processes. By participating in the decisions that affect their lives, children and youth can contribute to making them more effective, relevant and sustainable. Services that better meet their needs are more cost effective and will deliver more progress.

### Peer pressure and social accountability

Almost half of the world's 6.6 million child deaths each year take place in sub-Saharan Africa, where children living in poverty, in remote locales and in conflict-affected areas are the most vulnerable. How much impact can poor people in rural regions have to change this grim reality peaceably through peer pressure? A remarkable amount, it turns out.

In Uganda, a social-accountability approach – in which citizens monitor their public services and hold local authorities accountable for performance – significantly improved both child-survival rates and education. A randomised control trial in 50 communities across the country studied the impact of social accountability on community health clinics. A year after the intervention started, under-5 child mortality had dropped by one-third, use of general outpatient services increased 20 per cent, and the number of births with a skilled attendant rose by 58 per cent. Another rigorous evaluation, this time using a similar approach to scrutinise local primary-education services, increased student attendance by 10 per cent, boosted test scores by 9 percentage points, and reduced teacher absenteeism by 13 per cent.



*Students have lunch at Kambuzi Primary School in Uganda where World Vision has been carrying out local-level advocacy, which has changed the community's attitudes towards education and the rights of children in general.*

*© Sylvia Nabanoba/World Vision*

## 2. PRIVATE SECTOR: JOIN US TO STOP AT NOTHING

Ending preventable deaths, violence against children and under-nutrition requires more than 'business as usual'. The financial, political and technical resources of the international community must be directed to the most vulnerable, to those places and people who are missing the benefits of broad-based growth. Cross-sector partnerships – among government, multilateral organisations, business and civil society – can foster innovations to speed and scale delivery of the new goals.

If such partnerships are to flourish, however, it is critical that a strong *enabling environment* is in place, and so **World Vision calls for the following targets to be included in the post-2015 framework:**

- by 2020, a single, government-led, multi-stakeholder platform covering all of the new post-2015 goals is in place enabling the establishment and execution of cross-sector partnerships in support of the government's development priorities;
- by 2020, accountability mechanisms are in place for all cross-sector partnerships; and a global, multi-stakeholder issue platform is in place by 2017 for each of the new post-2015 goals, to convene diverse stakeholders and to support alignment with (and link to) national-level platforms.

Companies should be encouraged to play a role in *promoting* and *advocating* for good governance within a country, that is, to do more than simply *comply* with existing governance structures. Companies should consider how they can partner with civil society actors to drive these types of systemic change.

One of the most pressing cases for such systemic change is on taxation. National development is the responsibility of governments. Both the ambition of the new goals and the decline of official development assistance will require many governments to create a nationally sustainable resource base by increasing tax revenue. **The post-2015 framework should include measures to ensure that companies and high net worth individuals pay full and proper taxes, noting that developed countries also have responsibilities to support this target in low-income contexts.**

## CONCLUSION

The world stands at an historic juncture of achievement and opportunity. Bringing an end to extreme poverty is no longer a pipedream, but an achievable goal, provided the right political and financial resources are brought to bear. If we are to grasp the opportunity of this moment, the post-2015 framework must be oriented from the very beginning to ensuring that the most vulnerable children in the hardest to reach places benefit directly from new global goals. Reaching the most vulnerable children will require ensuring universal coverage of essential services that provide the foundation for a better life. Initiatives that target the most vulnerable require the implementation of improved health, education and social protection systems that are likely to directly benefit all. In contrast, broad-based initiatives neglect the specific factors that consistently exclude most vulnerable populations.

World Vision believes that it is when the poorest women in the Democratic Republic of the Congo can safely give birth to children who will survive and thrive, or when slum dwellers in one of the world's major cities are able to access nutritious food and health care for their family, that we will know that the post-2015 framework has succeeded.

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