



IX CEMOFPS SC CONFERENCE

"The Arab Spring: The Post-2015 Agenda and the Spanish Cooperation for Development"

The Spanish development cooperation policy: The Arab Spring in the context of the post-2015 agenda

12/02/2014

Juan José ESCOBAR

Consul General of Spain in Jerusalem

At the beginning of the 2000s, it was possible to build a major international consensus on how to reduce poverty in the world. That commitment was shared by the organizations of the UN system, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the Bretton Woods Institutions (World Bank and International Monetary Fund), including a number of countries both North South.

This consensus materialized in the so-called "Millennium Declaration", the result of the "Millennium Summit" held in 2000, which synthesized but not collected in full, the various commitments made at successive United Nations World Summits held in the 90s. In that Declaration, world leaders pledged to join forces to ensure that by 2015, 8 goals and 18 specific targets were met with an aim to reduce poverty in the world, it was called the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

These objectives, aimed at the entire international community, address some of the many dimensions of poverty and its effects on the lives of people. Thus, 2015 was identified as a temporary limit for halving the number of people earning less than \$ 1 a day, and also the number of people suffering from hunger, achieve universal primary education, reduce inequality gender in education, reduce child mortality and improve maternal health, combat AIDS, ensure environmental sustainability, among other global measures, the reduction of youth unemployment and the sustainability of the external debt of countries with greater financial difficulties.

For the first time, developed and poorest countries set up a common agenda to help make managing globalization and make it inclusive, promoting social cohesion. This north-south common agenda put the human being first and not the economy in the center of the development debate, promoting a universal and inclusive vision of human rights.

Once agreed on the MDGs and defined some measures to finance development in the "Conference on Financing for Development in Monterrey" in 2002, the efforts of the international community were directed to find the keys to be more effective in providing assistance. The basic reference for the international agenda of aid effectiveness is in the Paris Declaration of 2005, signed by over 90 countries, donors and partners and multilateral funding agencies and financial institutions. This declaration established the basic principles for greater aid effectiveness through "ownership", "alignment", "harmonization", "managing for results" and "mutual accountability". The PD was completed with the so called Agenda for Aid Effectiveness (Accra Agreements 2008 and Busan 2011), under which concrete commitments to development policies of donors and partners were included, as well as the inclusion of new development actors, highlighting the important role of civil society.

What has happened since the proclamation of the Millennium Declaration and the global commitment to poverty reduction through the achievement of the 8 Millennium Development Goals?

Now that 2015 is near, it is time to take stock and see to what extent the MDGs have been achieved. Any analysis would be incomplete if we ignore the major developments since the proclamation of the Millennium Declaration in 2000:

1. Emergence of new regional powers operating on the world stage, with an increasing incidence and projection. The so-called "emerging countries" (a score of them, most notably Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) are characterized by a rapid growth in domestic economic activity, as well as a substantial increase in trade relations with third countries. These countries claim in different international settings, for greater weight and taking more responsibility in managing global problems. But that rapid economic growth has not been accompanied by redistributive policies of wealth or social policies, so that the gap between rich and poor has worsened considerably.

2. Since the summer of 2007, the international system is threatened by the worst economic crisis since 1929. This crisis has originated in developed countries, where theoretically govern the most regulated and efficient financial systems, which are precisely both origin and cause of the crisis. However, the effects of the crisis have not been limited to the most advanced countries, but its effects have also been felt in the developing world, not to mention the impact it has had on the budgets of many donors who have significantly reduced their contributions.
3. Considerable increase in food prices; consequently, worsening food crisis affecting a large group of countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa.
4. Emergence of social protest movements organized by civil society. Examples are the so-called Arab Spring, or more recently the cases of Ukraine and Bosnia - Herzegovina. Such movements have been characterized by the absence of specific leaders, mobilizing young people, the use of new technologies and internal situations characterized by high unemployment and political corruption.

What is Post Agenda - 2015?

En apenas 10 meses, el mencionado año 2015 habrá llegado. La agenda internacional del 2014 está pues marcada por la finalización de los ODM y la elaboración de la nueva agenda post-2015. Se cerrará así un ciclo de 25 años de política global de desarrollo centrada en la lucha contra la pobreza, que exige la valoración de lo ocurrido y la definición de una nueva agenda, partiendo de la base que se han hecho importantes progresos de cara a la consecución de los ODM. Así, los niveles de pobreza global se han reducido, un mayor número de niños y niñas tienen acceso a la educación primaria, los niveles de mortalidad materno-infantil han disminuido considerablemente, se ha mejorado el acceso al agua y saneamiento y los avances en la lucha contra la malaria, SIDA y tuberculosis han salvado millones de vidas. Considerablemente menores han sido los avances (y por tanto podemos hablar de fracaso) en materia medioambiental y las metas relacionadas con la reducción del desempleo juvenil.

In just 10 months, 2015 will be reached. The international agenda for 2014 is marked by the completion of the MDGs and the development of the new post-2015 agenda. A cycle of 25 years of global development policy focused on the fight against poverty is about to end. An assessment on what has taken place and the definition of a new agenda on the basis that there has been significant progress in terms of MDGs achievement is required. Thus, overall poverty levels have decreased, more children



IX CEMOFPSC CONFERENCE

"The Arab Spring: The Post-2015 Agenda and the Spanish Cooperation for Development"

have access to primary education, levels of maternal and child mortality have declined significantly, access to water and sanitation has improved and advances in malaria, AIDS and tuberculosis have saved millions of lives. Considerably less progress has been made (and thus, we can speak of failure) in environmental matters and goals related to reducing youth unemployment.

Geographically it is also necessary to make distinctions: Central Europe, Central Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Mediterranean and North Africa show good results, because the goals of poverty reduction have been reached before the deadline 2015. Not so in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.

While not all the targets set for 2015 will be achieved, it is true that since 2000 to date, a new scenario has emerged. This new scenario requires rethinking what are to be the future development goals. In this new identification, not only governments and international organizations should work, but also civil society should play a leading role.

Under the auspices of the General Assembly and the leadership of the UN Secretary General, the post-2015 agenda began in July 2012 with the work of a High Level Panel within the General Secretariat and in September 2013, with the opening of a process of intergovernmental negotiation. An organization of national consultations in 100 developing countries and 11 thematic consultations with all stakeholders is also working in drawing the materials to be included as new development goals:

- Conflict and fragility
- Education
- Environmental sustainability
- Governance
- Growth and jobs
- Health
- Hunger, Food Security and Nutrition (led by Spain)
- Inequalities
- Population dynamics
- Energy
- Water

Together with the above, the United Nations Program for Development (UNDP) has initiated an unprecedented global method consultation, through which people around the world can contribute their opinions to shape the development agenda post 2015.



IX CEMOFPSC CONFERENCE

"The Arab Spring: The Post-2015 Agenda and the Spanish Cooperation for Development"

The aim is to give a voice to anyone who wants to participate in the identification of the new Development Goals.

The Spanish Cooperation and the Post 2015 Agenda: a commitment to the Mediterranean

Since Spain joined the Millennium Declaration in 2000, the eight goals set therein have become the major beacon that has guided our international development cooperation. Spain led the international commitment to achieving the MDGs by creating specific funds that have financed many projects and programs.

The Spanish position for the post-2015 scenario is to encourage missing dimensions in the MDGs, such as democratic governance, citizen participation, human rights, food security and inclusive economic growth in the framework of a new definition of development goals that Spain wants to contribute in accordance with the current context of budget cuts caused by the severe global economic crisis. Thus, the roadmap of the Spanish Cooperation for the coming years, as part of that post 2015 Agenda is as follows:

1. Geographic concentration and centralization of efforts, strengthening partnerships with other donors, working where our cooperation has added value.
2. Priority on strengthening institutional capacity and knowledge transfer, especially in middle-income countries.
3. Introducing sources of funding other than those traditionally used, including contributions from the private sector.

In this global scenario, the Spanish Development Cooperation is working in the southern Mediterranean under the conditions and characteristics that the so-called "Arab Spring" has brought. This phenomenon has required the restatement of our policy of cooperation, in line with the expectations of democratic change in these societies and with the European Neighborhood Policy.

The focus of the Spanish Cooperation in the Mediterranean is regional, but focused on the characteristics and demands of individual countries. For the Spanish Cooperation the big challenge in the region is the conclusion of its political transition and democratic governance. Their success will depend largely on the ability of public



IX CEMOFPSC CONFERENCE

"The Arab Spring: The Post-2015 Agenda and the Spanish Cooperation for Development"

institutions to give a sufficiently satisfactory response to the demands of their societies.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Spanish Cooperation, through the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation for Development (AECID), launched in late 2012, under the name "MASAR" a program to support the processes of democratic governance in North Africa and Middle East, whereby financial resources and the experience and ability of the Spanish Public Administration and private relevant institutions are used to achieve two main objectives:

1. Modernization and strengthening of public institutional capacities.
2. Support to civil society organizations in order to improve their advocacy skills, particularly regarding the rights of women.

In the framework of the MASAR Program in the Middle East the following interventions so far:

1. Equality and combating gender violence. Jordan, Egypt, Libya and Palestine.
2. Modernization of penal institutions: Libya and Tunisia.
3. Support for the judicial systems. Egypt and Jordan.
4. Strengthening civil society: Egypt and Jordan.

In the framework of the Post-2015 Agenda, Spain has already laid the foundations for a clear positioning in its policy of cooperation with the Mediterranean: institutional strengthening and support to civil society as a way of consolidating democratic processes and the rule of law, through the promotion of political pluralism, the strengthening of the party system and supporting processes of representative and participatory democracy, especially contributing to ensure women's participation.

Through its MASAR Program, Spain has prioritized as part of its foreign policy, support for the democratic process in the Middle East, including development goals and targets related to democratic governance in the new agenda post – 2015. The promotion of the quality of democracy and respect for fundamental rights through a real and effective participation of citizens are hallmarks of our cooperation in the region.

The challenge of the Spanish Development Cooperation in the Middle East under the post-2015 agenda is to help strengthen democratic institutions and regulatory capacity, support participation systems of civil society in collective decision-making processes and fight corruption and lack of transparency. The Spanish aid can contribute to this process of change, providing the resources and experience of their own institutions to facilitate the transformation processes that civil society demands.

CONCLUSSIONS

1. The development aid system has undergone profound changes since the 90s. A development agenda based on international commitments to eradicate poverty (Millennium Development Goals) and to improve efficiency and impact cooperation activities (Paris Declaration for Aid Effectiveness) was created.
2. Post-2015 Agenda will involve the expansion or replacement of existing MDGs, generating a new architecture in the cooperation system capable of integrating new modalities, recognize the value of emerging countries and other stakeholders such as civil society and private sector and considering the current increase in inequality and geopolitical changes.
3. Post 2015 Agenda should take into accounts the variables and consequences arising as a result of the Arab Spring. The MDGs were designed to combat poverty alone without addressing the possible variables that could be derived from complex political processes, such as the events arising from the Arab Spring.
4. Since 2012, in a clear positioning in the face of post 2015 - Agenda, Spain has structured its policy of cooperation with the Mediterranean in the consolidation of democratic processes and the rule of law following a maxim: the basis of all human development lies in democratic governance, the existence of strong public institutions and guarantors of fundamental rights, with special emphasis on gender equality policies.