



**A sustainable future for all:**  
Eradicating poverty and tackling climate chaos



## PURPOSE OF THIS PAPER

This paper explains why CARE believes it is vital that climate change is included in the sustainable development goals (SDGs) if the world is to effectively tackle poverty in the 21st Century, and outlines steps to ensure this happens. It is based on the outcome of the work of the UN's Open Working Group (OWG) on the SDGs. Section 1 considers the links between poverty eradication, sustainable development and climate change and the urgent need for action. Section 2 makes the case for a specific climate change goal in the SDGs in combination with strong integration of climate change across other goals. Section 3 contains arguments as to why links to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) process should be used constructively. Section 4 analyses the outcomes of the OWG with regards to climate change. Section 5 concludes with an outlook and suggestions for next steps.

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### *Cover images*

Top: Sayed Hekmat, 56, from Shafid Chesma village, Afghanistan, carefully cleans his solar panel that powers nine light bulbs providing light for his family. CARE's engineers have worked with local authorities to install solar-powered electricity in a number of remote villages. © Jenny Matthews / CARE

Below: Traffic clogs a motorway in Brisbane, Australia. High-carbon lifestyles depend on energy from fossil fuels, which drive climate change. © Courtesy of Simon Forsyth / Flickr.com / Creative Commons

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Bringing in the harvest in Peru's Central Andes. CARE has been working with highland communities to re-introduce indigenous plant varieties which are better able to cope with increasingly extreme climatic conditions. © CARE

CARE's vision is of a world of hope, tolerance and social justice, where poverty has been overcome and people live in dignity and security. While 700 million people have been lifted from extreme poverty globally since 1990, achieving a poverty-free world is still a long way off.

According to the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), "throughout the 21st Century, climate change impacts are projected to slow down economic growth, make poverty reduction more difficult, further erode food security, and prolong existing and create new poverty traps."<sup>1</sup> With 1.2 billion people still living in extreme poverty worldwide<sup>2</sup>, it is no exaggeration to say that climate change is fast becoming the global injustice of our time.

Not only have the world's poorest done the least to contribute to the emissions which cause climate change, they are already being hit hard by its impacts. At the same time, and in spite of the stark warnings from science, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions continue to rise at an alarming rate. The dangerous 'tipping points', beyond which it will be extremely difficult to put things right, are not far off.<sup>3</sup>

In 2015, governments have a unique opportunity to act. Over the next 18 months, they will conclude a post-2015 development framework with a set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a new climate change agreement and a framework to address the risks of disasters.

The recent outcome of the Open Working Group on the SDGs, the intergovernmental body tasked with presenting a draft SDG framework, was an important milestone. In mid-July, a blueprint for what could become a truly ambitious plan emerged. In the latest draft, governments recognise the importance of tackling climate change to help lift millions more from poverty by ensuring climate change is given its own, standalone, Sustainable Development Goal.

The draft text also highlights the need for urgent climate action, and contains targets related to the integration of climate change into the other proposed SDGs. But now the negotiations – to refine the SDGs and underpin them with effective indicators – really begin.

At CARE, we know that if governments fail to address the causes and consequences of climate change, efforts to eradicate poverty and deliver sustainable development will fail. In this paper, we call for a single post-2015 sustainable development framework with poverty eradication at its core. We also want to see further goals that are key to delivering sustainable development remain in the draft framework, including a goal to promote gender equality and women's empowerment.<sup>4</sup>

In the next round of negotiations, CARE calls on governments to maintain a standalone climate change sustainable development goal, and ensure the goal commits to:

- **Limited global warming:** Hold the rise in global temperature to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels in accordance with international agreements.
- **Ambitious emissions reductions:** Ensure greenhouse gas emissions peak before 2020, and then rapidly decline to achieve zero fossil fuel emissions around the middle of the century, with a global carbon budget until 2030 consistent with the global warming limit.
- **Resilience and adaptive capacity:** By 2020, build resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-induced hazards and natural disasters, especially amongst the poor and vulnerable.
- **Integration:** By 2020, integrate climate change adaptation and mitigation into all relevant national strategies and plans.
- **Human rights, participation and gender equity:** By 2020, ensure climate planning and action at all levels is rights-based, participatory and gender equitable.
- **Appropriate financial instruments:** Apply instruments in order to price emissions and rapidly reduce investment in fossil fuels, and to increase investments in low-emission solutions in all relevant sectors.

The moment for action is now. Governments must seize this unique opportunity to tackle poverty whilst also addressing climate change if they are to deliver a truly sustainable future for all.

**“We cannot deliver sustainable development without tackling climate change, and we cannot tackle climate change without tackling the root causes of poverty. An integrated approach is needed, and it is needed now. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) must contain a strong, dedicated goal to tackle climate change, and they must integrate resilience and low-emission development across the board. Governments must work to strengthen the current text as presented by the UN General Assembly’s Open Working Group, the body tasked with preparing a proposal on the Sustainable Development Goals.”**

**– Sven Harmeling, CARE International**

## 1. Urgent action on poverty and climate change to ensure an equitable and sustainable world

As governments develop the post-2015 international development framework, they have an historic opportunity to address many of the fundamental issues of our time. If done well, the 2015 process could effectively tackle the key development needs of the poorest and help shift our planet towards sustainable development. Although we have seen progress on many aspects of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), in 2014 the world is still profoundly unequal, truly unsustainable, and in the midst of poverty, food and nutrition, and gender inequality crises. When world leaders convened for the United Nations Sustainable Development Conference (Rio+20) in 2012, CARE urged them to seize new opportunities, demonstrate where solutions have been successful, and formulate new ambitions and cooperation to move towards a more sustainable future.<sup>5</sup> The post-2015 development framework process must now aim to transform current commitments into a viable framework that addresses these many challenges. The fact that there was an agreed outcome document from the Open Working Group on the Sustainable Development Goals in mid-July 2014 is an achievement in itself and a major milestone on the road towards an ambitious SDG framework, but further work remains. The framework currently contains 17 goals with 167 target proposals, and addresses all areas of the MDGs and all of the major economic, social and ecological sustainable development challenges.<sup>6</sup>

The growing threat of climate change, which will increasingly result in huge changes to the very parameters of human civilisation and life on planet Earth, is at the core of the abovementioned crises. Exceeding limits to global warming would have, “intolerable consequences either today or in the future”, due to disproportionate growth in risks. Climate change is therefore regarded as one of the planetary guardrails. Perversely, it is the world’s poorest and most vulnerable people, who bear least responsibility for causing climate change, who are already bearing the brunt of climate change impacts. These impacts exacerbate the pressures on vulnerable people, who are already marginalised by the inequitable distribution of resources and the denial of rights. According to the UN’s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), “throughout the 21st Century, climate change impacts are projected to slow down economic growth, make poverty reduction more difficult, further erode food security, and prolong existing and create new poverty traps, the latter particularly in urban areas and emerging hotspots of hunger.”<sup>8</sup> The IPCC also concludes that, “poverty eradication will be difficult, if not impossible, if climate change is not tackled.”<sup>9</sup> For this reason, the promotion of “equitable policy and programme responses to climate change which improve the livelihoods and increase the resilience of poor and marginalised women, men, boys and girls”, is the overarching objective of CARE’s Climate Change Strategy.<sup>10</sup>

Based on current commitments from governments to reduce or limit greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2020, the world is now on a path towards 4 degrees Celsius or more of average global warming by 2100.<sup>11</sup> By the middle of this century, 2 degrees of average warming may already have been surpassed.<sup>12</sup> The abovementioned reports from the IPCC and others, such as those published by the World Bank, have clearly laid out the massive development risks posed by climate change in a 4-degree and even a 2-degree-warmer world.<sup>13</sup> Ahead of the 2013 UN Climate Change Conference in Warsaw (COP19), African ministers warned that a 2-degree rise in average global temperatures, “represents [an] extremely dangerous interference with the climate system and a threat to ecosystems, food security and sustainable development.”<sup>14</sup> A recent scientific paper also concluded that 2 degrees of warming would subject young people, future generations and nature to irreparable harm.<sup>15</sup>

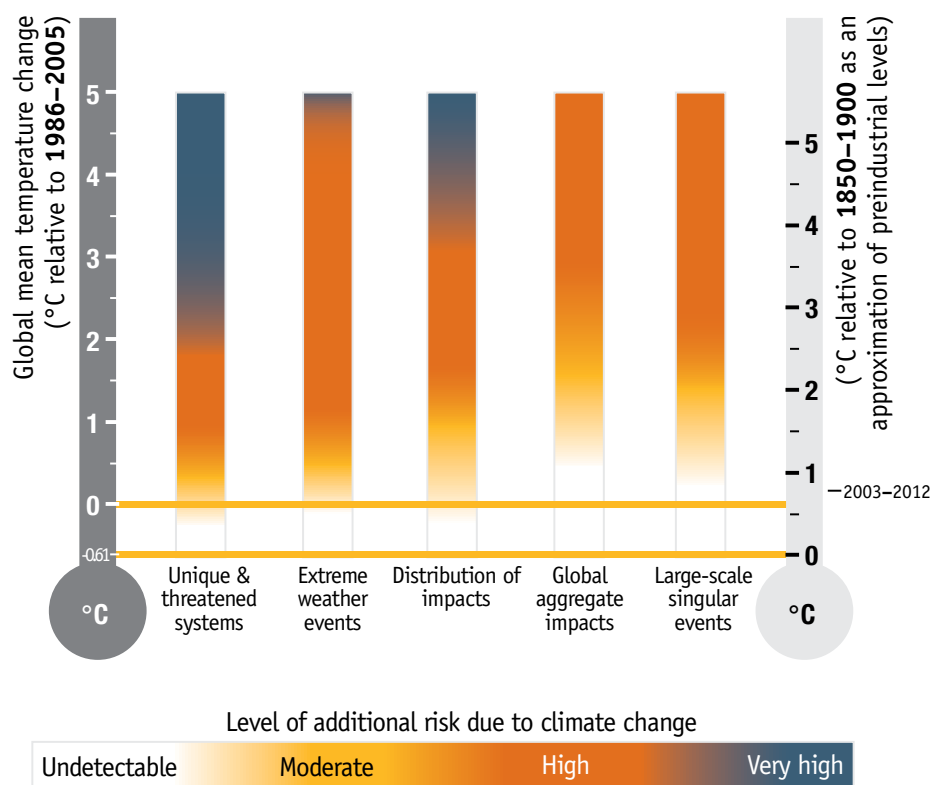


Figure 1: A global perspective on climate-related risks. Source: IPCC, 2014<sup>16</sup>

Thus, the scale of action required is considerable and urgent. As far as emissions are concerned, it is crucial that global GHG emissions peak as soon as possible to kick-start the transition from growing emissions to falling emissions. Cutting the use of, and emissions from, fossil fuels is also vital. In order to have a fighting chance of not exceeding 2 degrees of warming, between 60-80% of coal, oil and gas reserves of publicly listed companies are ‘un-burnable’ (because of the need to reduce emissions) and must be left in the ground.<sup>17</sup> And, to keep global warming to as close to 1.5 degrees as possible and avoid the worst risks of climate change, net GHG emissions need to be almost entirely phased out by the middle of this century. Most of these goals can be achieved using technologies that are already available. Recent scientific analysis also suggests that, by 2030, global emissions will have to reduce by roughly 30% based on current levels.<sup>18</sup> The environmental and social risks and impacts of fossil fuel use, which include ‘unconventional’ energies such as (gas) fracking and tar sands, are often neglected. At the same time, the savings to be made from using cleaner, renewable energies, including for pro-poor solutions, are also often underestimated.<sup>19</sup> For example, a study recently published by the World Bank indicates substantial socio-economic benefits from a number of emission mitigation policies in developing countries.<sup>20</sup>

With regards to adaptation and safeguarding development from the impacts of climate change (as far as is possible), it is difficult to assess how much work will be required, but the challenge is enormous. The glaring gap between the estimated costs of adaptation in developing countries and the current and likely levels of adaptation support provided by richer countries is just one indicator of the scale of the challenge. Many poor countries are, in fact, already taking action on adaptation independently and without drawing on international adaptation finance.<sup>21</sup> This funding gap is also highlighted in the IPCC’s Fifth Assessment (AR5) Report.<sup>22</sup> What is more, significant loss and damage – both economic and non-economic – including loss of life and territory, are now to be expected. This is partly because the so-called ‘adaptation gap’ will not be closed quickly enough, but also because not all the effects of climate change can be addressed through adaptation measures alone. Given the unequal historical (and current) responsibilities for causing climate change – that is, with richer parts of the world primarily responsible for the



largest share of emissions – there is a clear moral and legal responsibility to assist the world’s most vulnerable people by helping communities living on the front line of climate impacts to build their resilience. CARE knows that early action on adaptation, disaster and emergency preparedness, and by protecting the poor from climate hazards, pays off. What is needed now is rapidly scaled-up action.<sup>23</sup>

## 2. The case for a dedicated SDG on climate change and climate-smart targets

The main challenge in a climate-constrained world is the pursuit of sustainable development that combines poverty eradication with rapid reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, while also building resilience to climate-change impacts and helping vulnerable communities deal with and recover from climate-related loss and damage.

At the Rio+20 summit in 2012, governments laid the basis for discussions on the post-2015 development framework. Politicians agreed that, “climate change is a cross-cutting and persistent crisis, that the scale and gravity of the negative impacts [...] undermine the ability of all countries, in particular, developing countries, to achieve sustainable development and the MDGs and threaten the viability and survival of nations”.<sup>24</sup> Then, in 2013, a report from the UN’s High-Level Panel on the post-2015 development framework noted, “above all, there is one trend – climate change – which will determine whether or not we can deliver on our ambitions”.<sup>25</sup>

When governments collectively adopted the Rio+20 outcome document, *The future we want*, they emphasised that, “[the] SDGs should be action-oriented, concise and easy to communicate, limited in number, aspirational, global in nature and universally applicable to all countries while taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities”. A critical lesson from the MDG process is undoubtedly that concrete targets and indicators deliver concrete action – something that should be borne in mind as the SDGs are finalised.<sup>26</sup>

**In light of the above, CARE proposes a two-pronged approach for addressing climate change in the post-2015 development framework:**

### 1. A dedicated goal to address climate change

A dedicated goal would ensure that the global fight against climate change is given the profile it needs – as well as helping to provide a clear sense of direction for scaling-up climate action in the coming years. Simply integrating climate change into other SDGs, through targets and indicators, is insufficient.

Shaping this goal should also build on previous agreements. Governments have already agreed to pursue a paradigm shift towards low-emission and climate-resilient development.<sup>27</sup> The ultimate objective of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) – to avoid dangerous climate change – has been translated into a shared agreement to limit global warming to below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, and to consider strengthening this to 1.5 degrees. Governments have also agreed to promote cooperation on enhanced action for adaptation.<sup>28</sup> This builds on the UNFCCC acknowledgement that, “climate change will be felt most acutely by those segments of the population that are already vulnerable owing to geography, gender, age, indigenous or minority status, or disability”.<sup>29</sup>

In light of the urgent warning from scientists about the growing scale and pace of climate change, and the overall aspirations to limit warming as quickly as possible, CARE proposes an overarching climate-related SDG that strengthens climate action as a means to achieve low-emission and climate-resilient development.

To ensure that the goal and its associated targets effectively reflect the level of action and ambition required, the following critical issues must be addressed.<sup>30</sup>





Mitilda Joseph waters plants at Vinile village in Tanzania. CARE has worked with local people to help them plant new trees and more than 5000 seedlings of various varieties. There is now less soil erosion, and soils are richer in nutrients, helping the community to build their resilience in the face of climate change. © Brendan Bannon / CARE

**Goal: Tackle climate change at all levels and promote low-emission and climate-resilient development. This goal must be based on principles of:**

- **Limited global warming:** Hold the rise in global temperature to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels in accordance with international agreements.
- **Ambitious emissions reductions:** Ensure GHG emissions peak before 2020, and then rapidly decline to achieve zero fossil fuel emissions around the middle of the century, with a global carbon budget until 2030 consistent with the global warming limit.
- **Resilience and adaptive capacity:** By 2020, build resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-induced hazards and natural disasters, especially amongst the poor and vulnerable.
- **Integration:** By 2020, integrate climate change adaptation and mitigation into all relevant national strategies and plans.
- **Human rights, participation and gender equity:** By 2020, ensure climate planning and action at all levels is rights-based, participatory and gender equitable.
- **Appropriate financial instruments:** Apply instruments in order to price emissions and rapidly reduce investment in fossil fuels, and to increase investments in low-emission solutions in all relevant sectors.

These targets need to be underpinned by indicators to measure key elements in specific national contexts.

## 2. Integrate climate change into other sustainable development goals

The second pillar of the approach involves integrating climate change into other SDGs that are climate-sensitive, that is, where either climate change impacts have the potential to significantly undermine the pursuit

of these goals, or the pursuit of the goals may further increase climate change or undermine climate resilience. From CARE's perspective, actions to strengthen climate resilience must pay particular attention to safeguarding the poorest and most vulnerable people from climate impacts. Therefore, there is a need for an, "integrated approach to development, inclusive of poverty reduction, health, energy, sustainable livelihoods and food and water security".<sup>31</sup> Key elements of integration from a climate change perspective include:

- **Poverty eradication and equity:** Increase the resilience and adaptive capacity of poor and vulnerable communities and reduce the underlying causes of vulnerability and inequality.
- **Food and nutrition security:** Increase the resilience to climate change impacts and sustainability of practices relevant to achieving food and nutrition security, in particular for poor and vulnerable communities, and secure their land tenure and access to resources.
- **Health:** Reduce the health impacts on the poor from adverse climate change impacts and increase the resilience of health systems to these impacts.
- **Education:** Ensure all students acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote climate-resilient and low-emission development, and that quality education is not undermined by climate impacts.
- **Water:** Increase the resilience of poor and vulnerable communities to, and reduce mortality from, water-related climate impacts; promote sustainable practices for achieving the right to water.
- **Energy:** Strong expansion of sustainable, renewable energies and energy-efficiency improvements, including improving poor people's access to energy resources; phase out fossil fuel emissions.
- **Sustainable consumption and production:** Promote sustainable consumption patterns that result in fewer emissions.
- **Ecosystems:** Increase the protection and resilience of ecosystems, including to climate change impacts, and as a means to reduce emissions from ecosystem destruction.

However, to ensure that climate change is truly integrated, consistency will be needed across the SDGs. For example, building the adaptive capacity of the poor also depends on tackling the underlying causes of vulnerability, in particular poverty, inequality (including gender inequality) and lack of human rights. These aspects must be reflected across the SDGs. Goals and targets, particularly with regards to economic contexts such as economic growth or industrialisation, must be sustainable and contribute to a paradigm shift towards low-emission and climate-resilient development while at the same time safeguarding equitable and pro-poor sustainable development.

### Means of implementation

A big question mark still remains about the so-called 'means of implementation' as part of a global partnership. A central pillar of this is the financial support needed to deliver on the SDGs, and the capacity-building and technology required. In the context of the SDGs, the issue of finance is dealt with through a separate and far less transparent negotiation process known as the 'Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing'. Developing countries – the G77 and China – came up with a joint position that contains proposals for means of implementation in various goal areas, including climate change.<sup>32</sup> In the context of the UNFCCC, developed countries have promised to provide USD100bn annually for climate action in developing countries by 2020. However, lack of progress on this goal continues to be a barrier in the UNFCCC negotiations and currently stands in the way of a more ambitious future climate change agreement. From a poverty eradication perspective, it is important that existing commitments from developed countries to deliver 0.7% of their Gross National Income in Official Development Assistance (ODA) are fully implemented and that, since climate change impacts result in additional costs for adaptation, further resources are provided for adaptation. The developed world needs to support poor countries as they take steps to shift towards sustainable development, and all countries need to create environments conducive to promoting sustainable development in their national contexts. Particularly in the area of adaptation for the poorest and most vulnerable people and communities, public finance will remain critical, as will support from developed countries, in line with their obligations as outlined in the UNFCCC.

### 3. Why the post-2015 development framework and the UNFCCC process can, and must, be mutually supportive

CARE believes that the UNFCCC remains the key forum in which to formulate a new and comprehensive international climate change agreement in 2015 – one which includes new emissions targets and improved structures to tackle the consequences of climate change. Although governments are currently working towards this new, legally binding agreement for adoption in 2015, it is only due to come into force by 2020.

Nonetheless, if it is to succeed, the post-2015 development framework must reflect the critical challenges already undermining efforts to achieve sustainable development, of which climate change is one. The post-2015 development framework must be seen as a comprehensive societal contract – not a standalone policy forum. Therefore, climate change cannot just be ‘left’ to be dealt with by the UNFCCC. Nor does a strong commitment to tackle climate change as part of the post-2015 development framework throw the role of the UNFCCC into question. As Chowdhury argues, “making climate change central to the SDGs would send a strong signal to the UNFCCC negotiators, especially by setting a goal on mitigation that is in accordance with the goals in the UNFCCC process.”<sup>33</sup> Achieving the SDGs will require a range of actions from various actors. Furthermore, the UNFCCC ‘implementation architecture’, for example, its funding mechanisms and support for adaptation planning, could play a crucial role in making progress towards climate-related goals and targets.<sup>34</sup> What is required is merely agreement from governments on broadly consistent goals, targets and indicators.

It is also important to note that the need to promote low-emission and climate-resilient development is not in question. Not taking serious action on climate change is just not an option for communities already facing the impacts of climate change. A clear signal from the SDGs may also help catalyse action to promote lower emission development. Such action must not be contingent on the outcomes of the new global climate treaty to be agreed in Paris at COP21, although the latter is likely to have implications for the level of ambition, the modalities of support and cooperation, and the ambition that every country would commit to undertake.<sup>35</sup>

The targets for mitigation proposed in this paper will lead some to ask how emissions reductions can be achieved in a fair and just manner, and how the principle of ‘common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities’ (CBDR&RC) can be applied. ‘Responsibilities’ are often understood as the contribution to global warming in terms of emissions, and ‘capabilities’ as, for example, the economic capacity to act (such as per capita income).

Countries may, for example, hit their emissions reductions targets at different times. In fact, some developing countries have already committed to becoming climate-neutral, e.g. Costa Rica (by 2021) and the Maldives (by 2020), irrespective of any negotiated specific effort sharing agreements. Countries with higher cumulative historical and per-capita emissions – most notably, developed countries – have a particular duty to reduce their emissions *and* implement zero-emission development models. They also have a duty to provide financial and technical support to developing countries. To date, developed countries, with most responsibility for causing emissions, have so far failed to lead when it comes to reducing emissions, although some countries’ leadership efforts are to be commended.<sup>36</sup> But it is also undisputed that responsibilities and capacities are changing, and the principle of CBDR&RC and its application (e.g. in proposals for equity reference frameworks<sup>37</sup>) could provide a framework for taking this into account. As a matter of equity, there are clear reasons to reference it in the SDGs.<sup>38</sup>

Overall, the exact mechanics of how to distribute the required mitigation amongst countries and incentivise ambition is better assessed and debated under the UNFCCC through its already-elaborate architecture, as also reflected in the suggestions by the German Advisory Council on Global Environmental Change (WBGU) or the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN).<sup>39</sup> These discussions must be guided by the overall levels of ambition and relative levels of effort required. Honest assessments are also needed of the multiple benefits of emissions reductions initiatives, in particular in the area of energy efficiency and renewable energies, where costs have significantly decreased in recent years.<sup>40</sup>





A woman harvests potatoes in the mountains high above Shullcas River in Peru's Central Andes. CARE has been working with communities to overcome variations in sources of water, as glacial melt and increasingly unpredictable weather conditions take hold. © CARE

#### 4. The outcomes of the Open Working Group: Vague climate goal, limited integration

With the adoption of the outcome of the Open Working Group (OWG) on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in mid-July 2014, an important milestone in the SDG process has been achieved. The OWG engaged in intense consultations and intergovernmental negotiations over a period of 16 months. The OWG should be commended for the fact that it achieved an outcome, and also for its relatively high level of transparency, which allowed stakeholders to contribute and engage, and also to track the development of the negotiations, in complete contrast to the behind-closed-doors work of the Expert Committee on Sustainable Development Finance.<sup>41</sup> CARE was actively engaged in this process in cooperation with other networks.<sup>42</sup>

The OWG outcome can be regarded as a 'point of departure'<sup>43</sup> for the next phase of negotiations. The large number of goals (17) and overall targets (169) may be reduced in the next phase of negotiations to simplify the SDGs further. Climate change was at the centre of a number of controversies, and the negotiations resulted in a proposal for a climate goal that some regard as the "weakest, vaguest and the weirdest" of the 17 goals and which may yet be removed.<sup>44</sup> However, the fact that goal number 13 – 'take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts' – is still in the draft text is an important milestone (see Box 1).

Reflecting on work to deliver a climate change goal to date, here are the positives:

- Over time, the call for a dedicated climate change goal has gained prominence and support from various governments, with few expressing resistance.
- There was broad support among various civil society groups for a strong and ambitious climate change goal, as reflected for example in the positions of CAN International, Women's Major Group, and Beyond2015, and an open letter to the OWG chairs signed by 180 NGOs from more than 50 countries.<sup>45</sup>
- The proposed targets on integration of climate change into strategies, policies and planning, and on strengthening resilience and adaptive capacity are important, but are still very vague.
- There is broad consensus to integrate climate change across the goals, and a number of targets now either contain



explicit reference to climate-related aspects, such as resilience and disasters, or are clearly relevant to adaptation or mitigation - although fully systematic integration has not yet been achieved<sup>46</sup>, and there is a need to further strengthen these (e.g. poverty eradication: goal 1.5; end hunger: goals 2.1 and 2.4; energy: goals 7.1-7.3; cities and settlements: goals 11.5 and 11b; sustainable consumption and production: goal 12.3 and goal 12c on fossil fuel subsidies; and ecosystems: goal 14.2).

- Climate change has gained prominent mention in the introductory 'chapeau' text, despite its absence in previous drafts, and this also contains clear reference to the need for increasing mitigation ambition before 2020 and limiting global warming to 2/1.5 degrees.<sup>47</sup>
- Furthermore, the chapeau also emphasises that people are at the centre of sustainable development, and that eradicating poverty, promoting sustainable patterns of consumption and production, and protecting and managing the natural resource base are closely linked.

On a more critical note:

- The climate change goal lacks any real substance, ambition, a timeline or clear direction for action, despite a number of proposals made for ambitious and relevant targets.
- The need to promote low-emission development and cut emissions globally is absent from targets under the climate goal; despite clear political acknowledgement that this is required.
- The demand from vulnerable countries, such as the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), to include a target for limiting global warming (to 2/1.5 degrees) has not been met due to continued resistance from a small number of countries.
- All references to 'emissions' have been eliminated from targets, with 'mitigation' remaining only in the context of education, institutional capacity and climate finance (targets 13.3 and 13.4).
- Some of the targets in other relevant areas (particularly when it comes to increasing the share of renewable energies or phasing out fossil fuel subsidies) have been watered down and allow for various interpretations.
- Goals and targets related to aspects such as industrialisation or economic growth are very vague in terms of environmental sustainability (such as "endeavour to decouple economic growth from environmental degradation") and risk undermining climate-friendly development.<sup>48</sup>
- Reference to the UNFCCC process has too often been used as an excuse not to include substantive proposals for a climate goal and climate targets, rather than driving a constructive spirit of how best to use synergies and complementarities.<sup>49</sup>

#### OPEN WORKING GROUP PROPOSAL FOR A CLIMATE GOAL

##### Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts\*<sup>50</sup>

\*Acknowledging that the UNFCCC is the primary international, intergovernmental forum for negotiating the global response to climate change.

**13.1** strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries

**13.2** integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies, and planning

**13.3** improve education, awareness raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction, and early warning

**13.a** implement the commitment undertaken by developed country Parties to the UNFCCC to a goal of mobilizing jointly USD100 billion annually by 2020 from all sources to address the needs of developing countries in the context of meaningful mitigation actions and transparency on implementation and fully operationalize the Green Climate Fund through its capitalization as soon as possible

**13.b** Promote mechanisms for raising capacities for effective climate change related planning and management, in LDCs, including focusing on women, youth, local and marginalized communities

## Means of Implementation

Regarding the so-called means of implementation – financial, technical and capacity building support to help achieve the goals – the OWG outcome provides limited additional value from a climate change perspective. The goal contains targets that reaffirm the commitment by developed countries to mobilise USD100bn for climate action in developing countries and to capitalise the Green Climate Fund, and to promote mechanisms for raising capacities. The recently published report of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts for Sustainable Development Finance (ICESDF) also addresses aspects of the climate finance debate, such as financing needs for adaptation and mitigation in developing countries, the 100bn commitment, and the challenges relating to a wide variety of existing funding streams.<sup>51</sup> It clearly states that climate inaction will be more costly than climate action, particularly for the poorest. It also recommends that the international community uses reporting mechanisms which allow for separate reporting for development and climate finance commitments. This could be a basis for avoiding double counting and simply subsuming the climate finance commitment by developed countries into conventional development assistance.

However, the biggest and most notable gap in the report is the absence of serious discussion of innovative mechanisms which could raise the billions of dollars needed to assist vulnerable countries in tackling climate change and also help to mobilise resources domestically. There is no mention of options such as levies from international maritime or air transport, or CO<sub>2</sub> levies. This is despite the fact that these have been under serious discussion for many years both for climate and for sustainable development finance as a whole, and have been shown to be able to generate substantial additional resources by institutions such as UN DESA<sup>52</sup> or the High-level Advisory Group on Climate Change Finance.<sup>53</sup>

## Promoting gender equity in face of climate change: Support through the SDGs?

Promoting gender equity and women's empowerment is another key concern in CARE's work on the SDGs. CARE welcomes the gradual progress made on promoting gender equity under the UNFCCC, for example through the COP18 "Doha decision" on gender and climate change. While it is beyond the scope of this paper to provide a detailed discussion of the proposed gender goal and all aspects related to gender, CARE generally welcomes governments' support for this crucial area as reflected in the OWG.

In the context of this paper, it is important to consider the following gender-related aspects (including women's empowerment) relevant to the climate debate:

- The climate goal itself contains one reference in target 13b that highlights women as one particular target group for raising capacities related to climate change planning in LDCs.
- Targets such as 1.4 and 1b help to promote gender equity in the context of rights to economic resources and basic services as well as policy frameworks at all levels aimed at poverty eradication actions. Where, for example, adaptation and resilience building are undertaken for the purpose of poverty eradication, these targets can be applied.
- Target 4.7 promotes education for sustainable development, which cuts across issues such as climate change (although not explicitly mentioned) and gender equality.
- Targets 5.1, 5.5 and 5c provide a clear mandate to end all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere, including adopting specific legislation for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment. They also call for women's full and effective participation in, and equal opportunities for, leadership at all levels of decision-making (i.e. also in climate action).
- A target such as 5b can help promote women's empowerment through enhancing the use of enabling technologies – e.g. for adaptation.
- In the context of monitoring and accountability, target 17.18 clearly calls for increasing the availability of disaggregated data (including by gender).

It is therefore clear that a number of relevant target proposals also require attention in activities, policies and decision-making regarding climate change. This justifies promoting gender equity and women's empowerment internationally and nationally in all areas related to climate change.

## 5. Outlook and conclusion

Negotiations on the Sustainable Development Goals have now reached an important milestone. Crucially, the proposal for the SDGs contains a dedicated climate change goal, highlights the need for urgent action in its chapeau, and includes targets in other areas. As noted above, the Open Working Group report is a point of departure rather than the endpoint. The UN Secretary-General will now prepare a synthesis report based on the OWG report and other inputs (including those related to sustainable development finance). Governments will then take this report forward, and 2015 will see further negotiations until – hopefully – an agreement will be reached at the September 2015 General Assembly. CARE calls on governments to take particular note of the following:

- **Chapeau text:** The need for urgent action on climate change, and the close links with poverty eradication and sustainable development, must be clearly expressed, as they are currently.
- **Climate change goal:** Climate change must be kept as a dedicated, standalone goal and it should be reframed to promote climate-resilient and low-emission development.
- **Climate targets:** Targets should be further strengthened, in particular with regard to limiting temperature rise to 1.5 degrees and the associated emissions pathways; underlying principles of climate action (pro-poor, rights-based, participatory and gender equitable); and applying financial instruments that promote low-emission solutions.
- **Integration:** Climate-related aspects should be integrated consistently into the various goals, by strengthening ambition in existing goals (such as expansion of renewable energies) and by filling gaps (such as lack of reference in the health goal).
- **Indicators:** The targets will have to be underpinned by indicators and socially and gender-disaggregated data generation that can measure progress. As far as possible, these should be consistent with indicators already used or under consideration in the UNFCCC and also in the Hyogo Framework (relevant for disaster risk reduction (DDR) and adaptation) processes in order to minimise the efforts required for monitoring progress.
- **Accountability mechanism:** The SDGs as a whole require a reliable, comprehensive and participatory accountability and monitoring mechanism.
- **Finance and means of implementation:** Negotiations on sustainable development finance and means of implementation must ensure that developed countries provide sufficient resources to meet their ODA commitments, and additionally climate finance commitments; this should also support the shift to policy frameworks that promote low-emission and climate-resilient development, which are required in all countries.
- **UNFCCC:** An SDG framework that is strong on climate change could facilitate an ambitious climate change deal, and would not question the role of the UNFCCC. Rather, the UNFCCC process and its institutions would be required to facilitate countries' actions to reach progress on the SDGs. Principles such as CBDR&RC could be applied constructively in both processes.

Tackling climate change is fundamental if we are to achieve sustainable development and poverty reduction. If the post-2015 development framework fails to provide guidance on more ambitious climate action, not only will governments be missing a huge opportunity, the SDGs will likely be condemned to failure even before they are adopted. Overcoming poverty is not a task of charity; it is an act of justice. Climate change is man-made and it can be contained by the actions of human beings. This task falls to the current generation of leaders and to us all. There is not a moment to lose, and the opportunities ahead of us in 2015 must be seized if leaders are to set the world on a path towards zero emission and climate-resilient development.

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