



15 April 2015 - A step towards increased political awareness of the [Post-2015 agenda](#) came on 14 April 2015 during a Sustainable Development Observatory in Brussels entitled “[Setting the agenda for a sustainable future](#)”, which provided a forum for a discussion between political decision-makers and civil society. Speakers included Klaus Rudischhauser, Deputy Director-General, DG [DEVCO](#), European Commission; Maryam Niamir-Fuller, Special Advisor to the Executive Director on Post 2015 and Sustainable Development Goals and [UNEP](#)'s Executive Director; and Kitty van der Heyden from the [World Resources Institute](#) - as well as representatives from civil society organizations.

Representatives put forward their views on a Communication issued by the Commission on 5 February titled “[A Global Partnership for Poverty Eradication and Sustainable Development after 2015](#)” which described some of the key issues to be tackled.

Representatives expressed a wide range of perspectives and expectations of what the SDG's

can, and should achieve before t
May.

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Paradigm shift

Many speakers celebrated the ability of the SDG's to incorporate objective standards into a global action framework, such as human rights, the rule of law and democracy, in a way that wasn't possible with the MDG's. UNEP's Mariam Namir-Fuller explained that ecological limitations mean that unbridled progress for one country is not possible when some other countries are lagging so far behind. "We really need to stop thinking about the dichotomy between developed vs developing – we are all working towards sustainability" she said. Hans Sielstra from the [European Commission](#) added that a more objective approach will prevent countries from "grabbing the low-hanging fruit."

Kitty Van Der Heyden of the [World Resources Institute](#) pointed out that with 90 trillion dollars already earmarked for global investment in infrastructure between 2015 and 2030, there is huge scope for avoiding climate catastrophe if systematic changes are made in the way that this money is spent. She warned of the dangers of postponing action to the post 2015 timeframe when obvious gains like these are waiting to be made now. "There are currently massive inconsistencies between our economy and our ecology. If we cannot commit to meaningful action on the environment we should stop talking about eradicating poverty."

The worlds poorest 20% consume 1.5% of the resources

Noteable criticisms of the communication document included those of Finnish NGO platform [K](#)
[epa](#)
's Jouni Nissinen who observed that there was no mention of progressive tax reforms, despite discussions about the international financial transaction tax and carbon taxes being prevalent among the members of his platform.

Many speakers were concerned that it was proving difficult to reach a global consensus on how to approach accountability. Maryam Namir-Fuller emphasized that as a voluntary framework the SDG's need to be compelling. Kitty Van Der Heydn warned that "this is not about holding each other's hands and making gentle recommendations, this is about holding each other's feet to

the fire. We need mutual accountability for compliance failure – both for governments and in the private sector.”