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## 20/20 IS A SPRINGBOARD

The 20/20 Initiative is an attempt to bring the goal of universal access to basic social services within reach of people living in poverty. This initiative, which was officially adopted by the heads of State during the World Summit for Social Development (WSSD) in March 1995, seeks to establish a mutual contract between donor and recipient countries in which 20% of the donor country's Official Development Assistance (ODA) and 20% of the recipient country's public expenditure will be used on basic social services. The initiative is an important means for re-orienting international development co-operation towards supporting basic social investment in developing countries, as well as a means to encourage the re-structuring of public budgets in these countries towards providing for social priorities.

While the concept has been agreed, the process of implementation is still being worked out.

### A LITTLE HISTORY

The 20/20 initiative was developed by the UN Specialised agencies as a result of the recognition that successful sustainable development is not possible without adequate investment in the social services of a country. In 1991 the Human Development Report of UNDP recommended that governments direct half of their social expenditures towards human priorities. These were defined as basic education, basic health, access to safe water, elimination of malnutrition and access to family planning. Since it was assumed that social expenditures would account for 40 per cent of public budgets, half of this would imply spending 20 per cent on basic social services. The following year the Human Development Report recommended that donors should commit at least 20 per cent of their aid budgets for human priorities. UNICEF linked the two recommendations in its 1993 report on the global situation of children and the 20/20 initiative that was adopted in Copenhagen in 1995 was established.

In its current state the 20/20 initiative aims to mobilise the resources needed at the country level to achieve the internationally accepted social goals to which the global community has already made commitments during the 1990s: at the 1990 World Conference on Basic Education for All, the 1990 World Summit

for Children, the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the 1993 Conference on Human Rights, the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), the 1995 World Summit for Social Development, the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women, and the 1996 Conference on Habitat. The social goals that were formulated during these conferences include:

- Universal access to, and completion of, primary education.
- Halving of 1990 adult illiteracy levels with emphasis on reducing the disparity between male and female illiteracy rates.
- Reduction of severe, as well as moderate, malnutrition among under five children to half of 1990 levels.
- Halving the 1990 maternal mortality rate.
- Reduction of 1990 infant and under five child mortality rates by one third or to 50 and 70 per 1.000 live births respectively, whichever is less.
- Making reproductive health care, including family planning information and services, available to all individuals and couples.
- Universal access to safe drinking water and to safe sanitation.

The WSSD was a kind of catalyst to these goals. At this conference the 20/20 initiative was formulated and formed part of the Programme of Action to materialise the social goals.

Also at the next UN conference, the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, the 20/20 initiative has been reconfirmed. A gender perspective was added to the 20/20 initiative, saying: «To facilitate implementation of the Platform for Action, interested developed and developing country partners, agreeing on a mutual commitment to allocate, on average, 20 percent of official development assistance and 20 percent of the national budget to basic social programs should take into account a gender perspective». (PFA paragraph 358, Ch.6, p.175)

NGOs believed that with the official recognition of the 20/20 initiative an important breakthrough could be reached towards the long standing social goals. They considered that the achievement of the social conferences was that poverty eradication became an important issue on the international political agenda. The outcome was that a broad consensus was reached that social policies are linked with economic policies. The WSSD yielded new

international standards for eradicating poverty. It was officially recognised that durable poverty reduction could only be reached by empowering the people (men and women) living in poverty through the enhanced investment in their basic capabilities. The realisation of gender equity and equality will require that access to basic social services should be universal.

The WSSD consensus on social policies is embodied in the goals and targets agreed or reaffirmed in some of the national plans of action prepared by developing countries as follow up to these conferences, as well as in priorities set by the main international agencies, including the World Bank and a number of donor statement. Donor countries have also re-affirmed these in a paper on a vision and targets for the 21st century prepared for the high level meeting of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) in May 1996: «Shaping the 21st Century: the Contribution of Development Co-operation». In this document the donor countries committed themselves to specific social development targets.<sup>1</sup>

## THE OSLO MEETING

An international meeting on the 20/20 initiative was held in Oslo, Norway with government representatives between 23–25 April 1996. The reason for the conference was to consider ways to implement the 20/20 initiative as one of the concrete outcomes of the Social Summit. The conference was attended by a large number of high government officials from 22 developing countries, 26 donor countries, 10 multilateral organisations, and observers from 14 non-governmental organisations. The «Oslo Consensus on 20/20» was adopted by this conference which provides a very good and concrete starting point for the implementation.<sup>2</sup>

The two most important results of this conference are the consensus about the definition and the ways for the implementation of the 20/20. Within the context of the initiative, the meeting understood basic social services as comprising primary health care, nutrition programmes, population programmes and reproductive health, environmental health with clean water supply and sanitation and basic education, as well as the institutional capacity for delivering those services. Access to these services should be universal, while targeting the poorest and most vulnerable.

There were different views as to whether post-crisis humanitarian assistance, shelter and income generation should also be included in the 20/20. The 20/20 is meant to provide universal access to basic social services. Post-crisis humanitarian assistance is temporary in nature. The World Social Summit Programme of Action suggests that in addition to universal access to basic social services, access to shelter, employment and participation in cultural and social life are necessary to meet basic human needs and should therefore be part of the national poverty eradication plans. The inclusion of shelter has been discussed during the Oslo conference. It was noted that in the case of shelter the government plays a lesser role in providing financing and satisfying the needs. The participation of the private sector and local communities in providing shelter is much more important than in the case of basic social services. The other reason for not adding provision of income support to the poor, including food for-work programmes and programmes directly targeted at women, is that widening the scope of basic social services would imply that you also need more resources.

## WHY 20/20?

The 20/20 initiative was adopted as an integral part of an international strategy to eradicate poverty. The figure of 20 per cent was derived as a rough estimate. According to existing estimates, attaining universal access to basic social services would require additional spending of some \$30 billion to \$40 billion per annum over the rest of the decade. Beyond that period, further additional spending will be required. A precise estimation of the extra costs has been made by some UN organisations. Dr. Richard Jolly, special adviser for UNDP put it this way: «20/20 is a rough guideline, based on rough averages. Every country must calculate in its own particular situation, exactly what resources will be needed to move the goals for basic social services for all within the next 5–15 years. However, even as a rough guideline, 20/20 suggests the need for considerable budgetary priority to basic social services and shows that the goals are financially feasible with a reasonable degree of reallocations of government and aid expenditures. Rough as the calculations are, they are of great practical significance».

<sup>1</sup> Targets for social development investment:

- > a reduction by one-half in the proportion of people living in extreme poverty by 2015.
- > universal primary education in all countries by 2015. demonstrated progress toward gender equality and the empowerment of women by eliminating gender disparity in primary and secondary education by 2005.
- > a reduction by two-thirds in the mortality rates for infants and children under age 5 and a reduction by three-fourth in maternal mortality, all by 2015.
- > access through the primary health-care system to reproductive health services for all individuals of appropriate ages as soon as possible and no later than the year 2015.
- > the current implementation of national strategies for sustainable development in all countries by 2005.

(from: *Shaping the 21st Century: The Contribution of development co-operation*, OECD, May 1996)

<sup>2</sup> From: International meeting on the 20/20 initiative, Oslo, Norway 23–25 April 1996. «Report of the International Meeting on the 20/20 Initiative».

At present, the available information allows only an approximate assessment of the respective budget and ODA shares that are allocated to basic social services. They indicate that the global ratio is approximately 13/10, which means that an average of 13 per cent of national budgets and an average of 10 per cent of ODA are supporting the capacity to deliver basic social services.<sup>3</sup> An estimation from the OECD Development Assistance Committee comes to the same conclusion:

TABLE 1.

DAC Members' combined bilateral aid to basic social services. 1994 Commitments <sup>4</sup>			
	Bilateral ODA to total social sectors (\$m)	Percentage of total bilateral aid	Number of donors reporting
Basic Education	306	2.03	11
Basic Health	273	1.70	11
Population	649	1.62	14
Water and sanitation	2,212	5.17	19
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,440</b>	<b>10.52</b>	<b>55</b>

The strength of the 20/20 initiative is the limited set of provisions and the concrete needed costs for this on an annual basis.<sup>5</sup> It is an output approach and not an input approach because it owes its calculations about how to mobilise the financial resources required to meet the goals. During the Oslo conference it became clear that implementing it could have a great effect. It will help encourage aid effectiveness by showing that partnership towards time-bound targets by developing countries and the donor community can lead to rapid human progress and contribute to global, sustainable development. The 20/20 proposal should be seen as a guide-post. It describes the overall amount of resources that may be required in terms of additional spending world wide. It refers to the combined effort that developing countries and donors would have to make, the specific efforts are likely to vary considerably depending on the necessities and the priorities in a specific country. The goals should not be addressed by an isolated action but in a systematic manner based on sectoral policies that assures complementarity, cost effectiveness and efficiency between the different components of basic social services.

In emphasising the importance of the 20/20 initiative as a mechanism for laying the foundation of sustainable development,

the use of remaining resources should not be forgotten. During the debates in the Social Summit some donors argued that the aim should be complete poverty eradication. In using the 80 per cent remaining (both as part of the national public budget in developing countries, and as ODA from donors) a comprehensive plan for the eradication of poverty is needed. Indeed, there was a commitment by heads of state and government at the WSSD for national eradication plans to be developed in each country. These still need to be pursued. The NGO position towards the use of ODA also called for at least 50 per cent of aid funds to be devoted to social investment (including 20 per cent for basic social services).

While overall figures suggest otherwise (see above) some governments (donors and aid-receivers) and multilateral organisations claim that they spend 20% on basic social services. This is because a clear definition of what qualifies as a basic social service has been lacking. However, the DAC has been working on establishing a new creditor reporting system that will make the assessments of expenditure on basic social services clearer. Even under this new system, there is likely to be some tendencies to try to stretch definitions to give a favourable interpretation to current expenditures.

It is also going to be important to ensure that the focus on the statistics does not detract from the real objective: the universal access to basic social services. A focus on how far these objectives are being achieved is as important as defining the achievements in realising the input ratios. Even if the 20 per cent inputs are achieved, but the objective is not, the initiative will have failed. Therefore a good analysis of the problem is needed and detailed country programmes will have to be designed, with special emphasis on women, to ensure that universal access is achieved. In addition, access to basic social services will not be sufficient on its own to address basic human needs, poverty and promote sustainable human development. Other policies and actions by governments and donors are also needed to enable the poor to earn incomes through investments in economic infrastructure, information services, banking facilities with credit schemes for housing and productive investments, etc. Therefore 20/20 must be seen as a floor, a springboard.

## HOW SHOULD IT BE IMPLEMENTED?

The 20/20 initiative should be seen as part of an integrated strategy which aims to reach the time bound social targets established in the UN conferences. It is a means, not an aim in itself. It

<sup>3</sup> *Implementing the 20/20 Initiative*, p.3 The source quoted is E. Jespersen and D. Parker, «20/20: Mobilising Resources for Children in the 1990s». UNICEF Staff Working Papers, no. 12, January 1994.

<sup>4</sup> «Measuring donor performance on 20/20», in a paper by Simon Scott, OECD, prepared for the Oslo conference, April 1996.

<sup>5</sup> 20/20 meeting, Oslo 23–25 April 1995, «Implementing the 20/20 initiative: Issues regarding definitions, modalities and monitoring.» Paper prepared by UNCTAD, UNDP, UNFPA, and UNICEF in consultation with representatives of Bangladesh, Canada, Chile, France, The Netherlands, Norway and Uganda, as well as the World Bank.

suggests a social compact as a medium-term reciprocal commitment to social development by an interested developing country and its development partners. The proposal does not in any way stipulate across-the-board uniformity in policy approaches; nor does it in any way imply conditionality. Rather it suggests a pragmatic, practical and flexible approach for the partners involved. On the implementation some concrete recommendations have been made at the Oslo meeting with regard to the Reporting System of the Development Assistance Committee of the OECD and the donor co-ordination meetings of the World Bank and UNDP.

In the Oslo consensus the Consultative Group meetings of the World Bank and the Round table conferences of UNDP are mentioned to be the right forums for bringing a 20/20 compact into being for a particular country. Each year the World Bank hosts 20 to 25 Consultative Group meetings in Paris to allow donor countries and multilateral development institutions to meet with a single applicant country from the developing countries. Prior to the meeting, the World Bank prepares an economic analysis and projects for which it is seeking international financial assistance. The Round Table meetings are also donor co-ordination meetings. While many developing countries as beneficiaries of the aid co-ordination mechanisms are taking increasing responsibility for organisation and preparation of such meetings, the Bank and UNDP are expected by both the donors and the beneficiaries to co-ordinate their activities. The World Bank and UNDP are committed to strengthen their close co-operation in Consultative Group meetings and Round Table processes, which are two major forums for policy dialogue, aid co-ordination and resource mobilisation. To date the 20/20 compact has not been raised in any Consultative Group or Round Table meetings.

The other recommendation for implementation of 20/20 is the request to the Development Assistance Committee of the OECD to adopt a reporting system that will enable it to collect ODA information for the purpose of monitoring the ODA share allocated to basic social services. Developed countries should increase efforts to provide data on assistance for basic social services using existing reporting systems.<sup>6</sup> The OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC) brings together major bilateral donors to discuss and evaluate aid efforts and policies, with a view to improving the quality and quantity of aid. The DAC has monitoring and peer review mechanisms. Thus the OECD/DAC is the logical place to collect data relevant to the donor part of the 20/20 initiative.

## CIVIL SOCIETY

NGOs who were present during the preparatory meetings of the WSSD. They were also present at the meeting on 20/20 in Oslo. The German Government included one representative of the German NGO Platform in the WSSD delegation. NGOs urged for the early implementation of the 20/20 initiative. They believe that

the 20/20 agreement forms a crucial and integral part of a comprehensive strategy for poverty eradication. The effective provision of basic social services depends on the active involvement of civil society in the design, implementation and evaluation of these efforts. In the design of plans for institutional development and policy reforms for the provision of basic social services the experience and knowledge of NGOs should be taken into account. But NGOs can also play an active role in advocating the 20/20 initiative and by putting pressure on their governments to make plans and estimate resource implications of achieving universal access to basic social services. The Social Watch network offers a platform in which NGOs from the South and the North work together. They can put combined pressure on governments of developing countries and governments of donor countries to realise the 20/20 initiative.

In Germany there is an active working group on 20/20 of the German Forum WSSD. They organised one workshop and two hearings with Governments representatives and UNDP. They also published a number of papers on the issue. There is a constant dialogue between the NGOs and the Ministry of Economic Co-operation and Development.

## WHERE; IN WHICH COUNTRIES?

During the Oslo meeting a large number of developing and donor countries indicated that they would start with the implementation of the 20/20 initiative immediately, from the side of developing countries among others, these were Burkina Faso, Benin, Tanzania, Uganda, Guinea, Bolivia and Vietnam. And from donor's side: The Netherlands, Norway, Denmark, Germany and Canada showed interest. Also UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA, UNCTAD and the World Bank committed themselves to increase the level of expenditures for basic social services. Burkina Faso and Nicaragua expressed also their interest in being considered as pilot cases for 20/20 implementation. Norway promised to host a second conference on 20/20 to review the pilot cases within a year, maximum two years time.

The number of countries can grow over time. For example, in the Dutch aid budget some countries are mentioned but it is also indicated that the Netherlands could establish a compact with others who are interested. *«Every country that has a development-aid relation with the Netherlands could, in principle, become a 20/20 partner».*

It was stressed that the initiative should come from the developing countries. Developing countries can declare their interest and their willingness to make a commitment by initiating a process of preparing a consolidated National Plan of Action (which draws on existing plans for basic education, children, nutrition, reproductive health and family planning, human development) and

<sup>6</sup> From the Oslo Consensus on 20/20, Oslo, April 1996.

draws together an assessment of the situation, a statement of the goals and intentions and a programme of action. They could also prepare a consolidated budget, with realistic costs of what it would take, nationally and internationally, to achieve universal access to basic social services within a 5–15 year period.

For the implementation there seems to be no reason to set a minimum number of donor or developing countries before 20/20 can move into operation. To begin with only a few countries and a core of three or four donors, could be a good way to get started.

The Netherlands attaches considerable importance to the implementation of 20/20. In the Budget for Development co-operation 1997 a special part is devoted to the implementation of the concept. Preparing for the budget, the financial officials at the ministry examined all categories of expenditure and calculated what percentage of each could account towards the ultimate 20/20 target. 100% of contributions to UN agencies such as the World Food Programme and UNICEF were included in the calculation, compared with 10% of the contribution to the European Development Fund and 20% of funds aimed at improving the position of women. In 1995, the total amount came to 18,4% of official development assistance; this is expected to rise to 19,45% in 1996. In the 1997 budget, expenditure on basic social services amounts to 20,31%. The funds will be preferably spent in developing countries which are committed to implementing the 20/20 initiative. So far, Bolivia, Guinea, Tanzania, Vietnam and Burkina Faso have expressed their support for the idea, and other countries are expected to follow.

The German government has started discussions with 6 recipient countries on the implementation of 20/20: Kenya, Guinea, Yemen, Jordan, Ivory Coast and Cambodia. Non-governmental organisations in Germany, however, have been disappointed in finding out that the budget of the Ministry for Economic Co-operation and Development (BMZ) for 1997 completely neglects to mention the 20/20 compact. This goes against numerous statements of the Ministry emphasising the significance of the compact for the follow-up process of the Social Summit. NGOs see reason for concern that this neglect is an expression of the lack of political commitment. NGOs formed a 20/20 working group, in which they have a more qualified debate. It is, however, encouraging that from the Government side the 20/20 initiative has been included in several agreements between the BMZ and governments of the South.<sup>7</sup>

TABLE 2.

Annual Additional Cost Estimates for Basic Social Services					
Sector	World Summit for Children [1]	Human Development Report [2]	World Development Report 1993 [3]	ICPD estimates to 2000 [4]	Estimates of add global cost to 2000
Health and Nutrition [5]	6 (9)	5 - 7	10		11 - 13
Reproductive health and population	5 (6)	10 - 12		12	11 - 12
Primary schooling [6]	5 (6)	5 - 6			3 - 6
Low-cost water and sanitation	9 (9)	10 - 15			5 - 9
TOTAL	25 (30)	30 - 40			30 - 40

Source: UNDP et al., 1994

- 1 Figures in parentheses reflect updating of 1990 costs as the UNICEF estimates for the World Summit for Children were prepared in 1989.
- 2 UNDP, *Human Development Report, 1994*, figures are based on inter-agency estimates.
- 3 *The World Development Report 1993 (World Bank)* estimated that for public health and essential clinical services the total additional cost would be in the region of \$30 billion to \$40 billion per year. However, through restructuring and reallocation of costs in high- and middle-income countries, the additional resources requirement in low-income countries would be about \$10 billion per year.
- 4 Costs for reproductive health and population activities are based on an analysis of an integrated programme and include some costs formerly covered under health. It is estimated that these activities will cost \$17 billion in 2000. Current estimates of the expenditure in family planning programmes is \$5 billion to \$6 billion (United Nations, 1994)
- 5 The health and nutrition estimates have not been separated. For the World Summit for Children in 1990, the costs for health and nutrition were estimated at \$3 billion each. Nutrition covers some food, prevention and control of disease, and care.
- 6 The costs for early childhood education, education in literacy, general knowledge and life skills for youth and adults have not been estimated.

● NOVIB Dutch agency of Development Cooperation.

<sup>7</sup> Statement on the German aid programme for 1997, by the working group 20/20 of the German NGO Forum World Social Summit, September 1996.