

briefing

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Voices from the margins: including the perspectives of minorities and indigenous peoples in the post-2015 development agenda

By Farah Mihar

Introduction

As we approach the 2015 deadline for attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), it is becoming ever clearer that minorities and indigenous peoples have not benefited from development initiatives to the same degree as majority groups, and in many cases make up a large proportion of those communities left behind.¹ The

voices of these communities were left out during the drafting and planning of the MDGs and continue to be sidelined during implementation.²

In this context MRG decided to speak to partners, activists and community representatives from minority and indigenous groups and ask them to help us formulate a



A WOMAN PREPARES FOOD IN A DALIT SWEEPER COLONY IN DHAKA, BANGLADESH. MRG/LIVIA SACCARDI.

post-2015 development framework to ensure that minorities and indigenous groups benefit fairly from the international commitment to meet the MDGs.³

This briefing captures the major development concerns for minority and indigenous communities – cultural development, security of land and natural resources, conflict and migration and youth unrest – issues which do not feature prominently in post-2015 discussions as yet. It also offers key recommendations for the post-2015:

- Ensure that minorities and indigenous people are included in designing and implementing the post-2015 goals.
- Ensure that the post-2015 goals are based on a human rights framework.
- Have specific measurable targets for states on anti-discrimination and human rights protection, including minority and indigenous rights.
- Address the underlying causes of poverty – such as discrimination and inequality.
- Strengthen the collection of disaggregated data on ethnicity, religion, language, gender, caste and indigenous identity.

According to UN estimates, there are some 370 million individuals belonging to indigenous peoples in the world, and a much greater number of persons belonging to ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities. Over 900 million people, or some one in seven of the world's population, belong to groups that experience disadvantage as a result of their identity. Minorities and indigenous peoples certainly constitute a population large enough to be considered a constituency in the debate on post-2015 development goals.

Minorities and indigenous peoples are generally non-dominant groups in the societies in which they live, they can be subject to multiple forms of discrimination, and they typically have poor or limited representation at all levels of decision-making. Often they compose the poorest or most marginalized section of a country's population. All of these features give minorities and indigenous peoples a profile that makes them crucial to development yet often isolated by it.

This briefing quotes at length from the views of minority and indigenous leaders and activists interviewed for the research. It should be noted, however, that minorities and indigenous peoples exhibit a high degree of diversity and it is important to avoid making simplistic generalizations about their views or extrapolating from the situation of one community to that of another.

MDGs, minorities and indigenous groups

The MDGs, which were agreed by all UN member states in 2000, set out eight specific – and ambitious – goals for the international community, including eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, achieving universal primary school education, and reducing maternal and child mortality rates. Some of those goals in some countries are expected to be achieved by the 2015 deadline; others will not.

Goals to halve extreme poverty and halve the number of people with no access to clean drinking water have been met ahead of schedule. There has also been significant progress on reducing child mortality. However, targets to reduce hunger and maternal mortality lag far behind.⁴

MDGs have also met with significant criticism; they are not context-specific (all countries whatever their economic level have to work towards the same goals); they are led by 'top-down' priorities largely targeted towards developing countries; they are not based on a human rights framework; and they fail to address some of the underlying causes of poverty and underdevelopment, such as discrimination and inequality.

Measurement of the goals, based on national averages, has also masked growing inequalities within countries. Most MDG indicators for indigenous peoples and minorities are worse than national averages. But the lack of data in monitoring the progress of the MDGs, particularly disaggregated data, is a major shortfall.⁵

What comes after the MDGs?

With only three years to renegotiate the global framework the debate about future targets is gathering momentum. In July 2012, the UN Secretary General appointed a high-level panel of 26 civil society, business and government leaders to 'advise on the global development agenda beyond 2015'.⁶ The panel, co-chaired by UK Prime Minister David Cameron, held its first substantive meeting in November 2012 and will submit its report to the UN in May 2013.

Debate has focused on both the effectiveness of the current framework and what should replace it. The global context is now very different from when the MDGs were first designed. The MDGs period has been marked by events such as the global economic crisis as well as the global political deadlock around climate change. Meanwhile the role of new donors – countries like Brazil and China and private sector actors – is expanding rapidly. This provides challenges, but also opportunities to incorporate under-represented issues.

Opportunities for a more inclusive framework

How can the new development framework be more equitable and inclusive? Should goals be set for developed and developing countries alike? How deeply should the framework address different factors which drive poverty and development? The debate is still at an early stage, but some strong possibilities for change are emerging:

1. The existing MDGs should be extended for a period of time to ensure that the original goals are achieved, but with specific focus on the 'off track' MDGs, such as those relating to maternal and child health, and groups most at risk.
2. A new set of wider goals should be developed, which may be more cross-cutting (focus on human rights, sustainable development, gender), or locally developed in different countries and regions.
3. A completely new approach is now needed that looks at poverty more broadly, as a feature of developed, middle-income and poor countries, and that focuses on thematically based solutions to problems which may be

seen as more systemic within all societies rather than just the poorest countries.⁸

Some commentators are calling for a greater focus on economic growth and argue for the importance of markets and the private sector, or environmental issues and climate change.⁹

Why focus on minorities and indigenous peoples?

'Minorities and indigenous peoples are being denied access to education, health, standards of living and are subject to poverty. They are discriminated against and denied services. The natural environment they live in is under threat from climate change. They have no land rights and are evicted. They have nowhere to go. Nothing or very little is being done about these issues. In many cases they are not treated as if they are human at all.'

Phil ya Nangoloh, executive director of NamRights, Namibia.

Table 1: Statistics table showing disparities

GOAL 1: ERADICATE EXTREME POVERTY AND HUNGER	
Target 1A: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than US\$1 a day	
Global	Situation for minorities and indigenous peoples
Globally, the number of people whose income is less than US\$1 a day has fallen by 20 per cent since 1990 to 2010. ¹¹	In India, the number of people whose income is less than US\$1 a day has fallen by a third since 1990 and the country is set to meet the target by 2015. However, poverty rates among scheduled castes and tribes remain 46 per cent compared to 29 per cent at a national level. ¹² In China, ethnic minorities comprise 46 per cent of Chinese living in extreme poverty, but only 8 per cent of the total population. ¹³
Target 1C: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger	
Global	Situation for minorities and indigenous peoples
Globally, the share of undernourished populations decreased from 20 per cent in 1990–2 to 16 per cent in 2006–8.	In Uganda, 6 per cent of people in Uganda are malnourished and 9.5 per cent of pastoralists in Karamoja. ¹⁴ In China, the percentage of underweight children in the richer eastern provinces (5.8 per cent) is less than half that of the poorer western provinces (12.5 per cent). ¹⁵
GOAL 2: ACHIEVE UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION	
Target 2A: Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling	
Global	Situation for minorities and indigenous peoples
Globally, the enrolment rate has steadily risen and, by 2010, 90 per cent of children in the developing world were enrolled in primary education.	In Peru only 16.26 per cent of children from the Afro-Peruvian community have completed primary school, ¹⁶ compared to 100 per cent at a national level. ¹⁷ In Nepal 76 per cent of Dalits in Terai region aged 6 years old and above have never attended school compared to a national average of 44 per cent. ¹⁸

GOAL 3: PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER WOMEN

Target 3A: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015

Global	Situation for minorities and indigenous peoples
<p>Globally, gender parity has been achieved in primary schools, even though some regions, such as South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, lag behind.</p>	<p>In the Somali region of Ethiopia, the literacy rate for male pastoralists is 23 per cent and for women just 4 per cent.¹⁹</p> <p>In Pakistan, less than 10 per cent of girls from the Baluch and Pashtun ethnic minorities in rural areas complete primary school, compared to over 20 per cent of Punjabi girls (the largest ethnic group) in rural areas and 55 per cent of Punjabi girls in urban areas.²⁰</p>

GOAL 4: REDUCE CHILD MORTALITY

Target 4A: Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate

Global	Situation for minorities and indigenous peoples
<p>Globally, child mortality has fallen by a third, but progress is still too slow to meet target. Over 7 million children still die each year before they reach their fifth birthday.²¹</p>	<p>In Nepal, under-five mortality rates among Dalit communities (90 per 1000 live births) are more than double those of the Newar caste (43 per 1000 live births).²²</p> <p>In South Africa, infant mortality rates have declined between 1998 and 2003 from 45.4 to 42.6 per 1,000 live births. But infant mortality risk is four times higher among black children than white children.²³</p>

GOAL 5: IMPROVE MATERNAL HEALTH

Target 5A: Reduce by three-quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio

Global	Situation for minorities and indigenous peoples
<p>Globally, maternal mortality has nearly halved since 1990, but levels are far removed from the 2015 target. An estimated 287,000 maternal deaths occurred in 2010 worldwide.</p>	<p>In Guatemala, maternal mortality for indigenous women is three times higher than for non-indigenous women.²⁴</p> <p>In Ecuador, in 2003 the national maternal mortality rate was 74.3 per 100,000 live births, whereas it was 250 per 100,000 among remote indigenous communities.²⁵</p>

GOAL 6: COMBAT HIV/AIDS, MALARIA AND OTHER DISEASES

Target 6A: Reduce by three-quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio

Global	Situation for minorities and indigenous peoples
<p>Globally, the number of new HIV infections fell steadily from a peak of 3.5 million in 1996 to 2.7 million in 2010. Deaths from AIDS-related illnesses also dropped from 2.2 million in 2004 to 1.8 million in 2010.</p>	<p>In Tanzania, there are increasing rates of HIV among pastoralist communities, particularly among adult women, estimated for pastoralists at 15–18 per cent as compared to a national average of 8.8 per cent.²⁶</p> <p>In Indonesia, prevalence of HIV/AIDS among Papuans is twice as high as among non-Papuans. Papua has consistently had the highest rate of HIV infection in the country, at 15 times the national average.²⁷</p>

GOAL 7: ENSURE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Target 7A: Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources

Global	Situation for minorities and indigenous peoples
Globally, the rate of deforestation shows signs of decreasing, but is still alarmingly high.	In Cambodia , the Prey Lang forest, inhabited by the Kuy indigenous people , has been designated as a conservation area. However, the government has granted tens of thousands of hectares of the forest for extraction of minerals, timber and for rubber plantations, leaving the community unable to practise their traditional livelihoods. In Kenya , in 2009, the Kenyan Parliament authorized the eviction of all Ogiek from the Mau Forest, ostensibly for conservation purposes, although this was done without proper consultation. The 40,000 hectare forest is seen as a key area for the development of tourism, as well as power generation projects and tea plantations.

Target 7B: Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation

Global	Situation for minorities and indigenous peoples
Globally, the world has met this target five years ahead of schedule.	In Uganda , 63 per cent of the population have access to safe drinking water but only 30 percent of Karamoja . ²⁸ In Vietnam , only 7 per cent of ethnic minority households have access to improved sanitation, while the figure for the majority Kinh and Chinese groups is 43 per cent. ²⁹

From the interviews carried out for this briefing, two major reasons why special attention needs to be paid to minorities and indigenous peoples in the post-2015 discussions emerged.

First, the majority of people interviewed for this report said that while the MDGs had had an impact at the national level, minorities and indigenous peoples had been left out of the process. This, in turn, has increased the already wide political, economic and social gap between minorities and indigenous peoples and the rest of the population.

Second, an overwhelming number of respondents were critical of the development model upon which the MDGs are based. These factors make it even more important for their voices to be heard in the current debate.

Over the past five years, MRG has warned that the MDGs have not sufficiently benefited minorities and indigenous peoples. Despite their vision and ambition, the MDGs have failed to consider identity, inequality and discrimination, which are fundamental causes of under-development, or to ensure participation of communities.

‘The MDGs have been formulated in a way that they don’t recognize the situation of minorities and indigenous people. When you have a goal that says education for all, it is as if there are no obstacles or definitive boundaries in this definition of ‘all’. Also poverty is defined in the MDGs mainly as economic deprivation. For minorities social discrimination is a

major contributing fact towards poverty. Unless they address the reason for their exclusion and don’t target those causes separately they get lost in there.’

Dr Meghna Guha Thakurta, Research Initiative, Bangladesh.

One of the failures of the process of monitoring the MDGs is that states are not required to collect disaggregated data, except for some goals where gender disaggregation is required. Few countries compile socio-economic data based on ethnic, religious, racial or indigenous status.

Due to this shortfall it is difficult to determine the extent to which minorities and indigenous peoples have fallen behind; however, the following examples show that MDG indicators are consistently worse for many minority and indigenous groups in every region.¹⁰

Minority and indigenous perspectives on the MDGs

Most community members and representatives interviewed for this research argued that the approach of existing development interventions under the MDGs have been highly problematic for minorities and indigenous peoples and needs to be changed. Key criticisms are described below.

Lack of consultation

The MDGs were designed without the consultation or participation of minorities and indigenous peoples.

'The current model does not help indigenous people and Afro-Peruvians, because this model is exclusive, it doesn't consider the "view of the world" of ethnic groups and it's built from the western view of development.'
Oswaldo Bilbao Lobaton, director of Centro de Desarrollo Etnico (CEDET), Peru.

'Many global development initiatives have been made in offices and indigenous communities have not been consulted. Development needs to come from the communities themselves. The communities need to feel that that the development designed is theirs.'
Estebancio Castro Diaz, International Alliance of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples of Tropical Forests, Republica de Panama.

Narrow view of development

The current MDG framework does not take into account, or directly conflicts with the worldviews and perspectives of these communities on development. Representatives from indigenous communities in particular gave examples of how they have a close and interdependent relationship with land and natural resources that is not factored into development planning and projects.

'Development should not be at the expense of traditional ways of life, our sacred streams, our rivers. We have had our own systems for centuries. Why ignore these? This is deep, they are world views.'
Maurice Bryan, Caribbean-born minority rights activist.

Sao Vansey from the Indigenous Community Support Organization (ICSO), Cambodia, explained that the current model is driven by political and economic motives at the expense of social and cultural rights, which, particularly in developing countries, is leading to conflict and even war.

Fails to reach those most in need

Development assistance linked to the MDGs may not always reach those communities most in need. In some cases minorities and indigenous peoples are isolated by development and, in the worst cases, development is seen as a threat to the existence of their communities as cultural entities.

'The current development model is threatening pastoralists – people should be at the centre of development. Governments think they have solutions and impose it on communities. There is no participation of the community. If nothing is done they will lose land to crop farming and infrastructure projects. They have no land security, as a result they lose their means of livelihood. This will lead to a breakdown in the community.'

Sali Django, Mbororo Social and Cultural Development Association, Cameroon.

Minorities' and indigenous peoples' development priorities post-2015

While some of the themes in the current set of MDGs arose as development priorities for minorities and indigenous peoples, there were several additional issues raised that have not yet been featured in the post-2015 debate. These highlight the particular needs of minorities and indigenous peoples, and the fact that their voices are so rarely heard.

On development goals such as education and gender, the needs of minorities and indigenous peoples are more nuanced, or complex, which development actors cannot ignore if they genuinely want to close the gap between marginalized and non-marginalized groups.

The following section describes the main priorities that were identified by communities.

Human rights and anti-discrimination

Every respondent identified human rights violations and discrimination as a major barrier to development. Many argued that because minorities and indigenous peoples are defined by identity, discrimination is the root cause of their under-development. Discrimination exists at every level, in government institutions, legal systems and in society. In many cases it is entrenched and systemic.

Respondents were very emphatic that no development model can be successful unless rights violations and discrimination are addressed. For example, building a well to provide water for a village does not help Dalits in the village because they are discriminated against by upper-caste groups and denied access to the well. Similarly, building a school in a particular village may not help minorities if they are discriminated against on grounds of religion or ethnicity when they attend school.

Interviewees were clear that post-2015 development initiatives must take place within a human rights framework. This is the only way to address discrimination and exclusion, the key factors blocking their development. According to John Dayal, a minority rights activist who works with Christians and Dalits in Chennai, India.

'[The] system of distribution is discriminatory. The problem is that the distribution mechanism is controlled by upper caste. Even in a disaster situation like the South Asian tsunami, when everyone was a victim, aid went first to the higher caste.'

'Human rights [are] the key of [the] development process. [There will be] No development when human

rights are not respected – that is why our community is the most vulnerable of the country, because it is the one of which its rights are dearly violated. Respecting their rights will reduce their poverty.

Donatien Munyali Kacibaasa, Collective for the Indigenous Peoples of Kivu, Democratic Republic of Congo and member of Réseau des Associations Autochtones Pygmées (RAPY).

Those interviewed for this briefing emphasized that the inequality gap between minorities and indigenous peoples and other groups can only be addressed through some form of affirmative action.

Education

All respondents said that education is a development priority and will continue to be post-2015. However, the responses varied on the nature of education and future needs in this area. Top areas of concern were access to primary and secondary education, retention and literacy rates. The literacy rate among Uganda's Karamoja population is 11 per cent; as one activist explained, even if this figure doubles in 20 years it will be far below the national average of 67 per cent.³⁰

Even though global statistics show that the MDGs have improved access to primary education, between 50 and 70 per cent of the 101 million children out of school belong to minority and indigenous groups.³¹ Many of the community representatives and activists interviewed said that there was more work to be done within their communities. In Cameroon about 60 per cent of children are in primary school but only 25 per cent of boys and 10 per cent of girls from the Mbororo community go to primary school, according to one Mbororo community representative.³²

There are many barriers that prevent minority and indigenous children from accessing education. In many cases, they live in remote areas so the school is far away.³³ Many indigenous and minority families are very poor and cannot afford to send all children to school, even if education is free. Cultural attitudes among some communities, such as those attaching more importance to boys' education while promoting early marriages for daughters, can also keep girls out of school.

Discrimination is another reason why minorities are often unable to attend school. For example, Dalit children in South Asia are sometimes not allowed to enter schools because they are lower caste, or they are segregated, treated differently and abused in school. Once in school these children face language barriers because education is only available in the dominant, official language rather than in mother tongues spoken by minorities.³⁴

In Bangladesh's Chittagong Hill Tracts, Adivasi children are turned away for not speaking Bangla (the national language), or they experience education in a

totally unfamiliar language; the school dropout rate for Adivasi children is double the national average.

Beyond 2015, while respondents agreed that access to primary education must remain a focus, they argued the bigger issue is that the education does not provide children with adequate skills for employment, or equip them to be part of the traditional way of life.

'Right to education in India is merely window dressing. So it can be said that all children go to school. But the education they get does not empower them. Earlier you had illiterate and unemployed now you have unemployed people who can just sign their names.'
John Dayal, minority rights activist, Chennai, India.

Karamoja pastoralists are also concerned that education is not allowing children to develop the skills they need to find employment, according to Albert Kiyonga from the Karamoja Agro-pastoralist Development Programme in Uganda.

Hira Bishwakarma, a Dalit academic in Nepal also said that:

'minorities don't have sufficient skills. Their professions are dying and [they have] no alternative income. So many people are now choosing to go to other countries as migrant workers, but they get into debt to be able to afford to do it.'

Nearly every respondent emphasized that education must empower individuals; this includes building understanding of human rights within communities, and other subjects that will help them participate in policy discussions at national level.

Poverty

In many countries minorities and indigenous peoples are among the poorest and, according to most people interviewed for this briefing, income disparities were increasing. For example in Nepal the national poverty rate is 29 per cent, but 50 per cent among the Madhesi community.³⁵ In Uganda, 80 per cent of its Karamoja population live in poverty, compared to 31 per cent at a national level.³⁶

Many minority communities have been forced to settle on marginal lands, exacerbating their vulnerability and removing them further from access to infrastructure. Representatives of pastoralist communities, particularly in East Africa, stated that, for a number of reasons, such as reduced access to grazing lands and increased periods of drought, their livelihoods have been affected leading to lower incomes. Similarly, farming communities in South and South East Asia are suffering from poor crops due to unpredictable weather, lack of access to markets and/or unfair competition in the marketplace that has knock-on

effects on their livelihoods and income levels. One Indian activist explained:

*'Dalits don't own land. They cultivate on other peoples lands. This does not yield a sufficient income. In the last 10 years 290,000 farmers have committed suicide in India and most are from marginalized communities.'*³⁷

Due to the challenges of continuing with traditional forms of livelihoods many people are forced to go to urban areas to search for jobs. However, because of poor education and literacy levels, and discrimination, many of them are again confronted with unemployment and no income, or a low income and poverty.

'In Laos poverty amongst minority communities is around 90 per cent. They engage in agriculture based on traditional ways. They live so far away from the town. There are no proper roads and transport to be able to get to a market to sell their goods. There is no one to buy their food in their local area.'

Mr Khampha Keomanichanh, Community Development and Environmental Association, Laos.

Natural resources and land

'We have to accept that indigenous communities have the resources and it is why they have been displaced, their human rights violated, illegal logging, etc. The governments and the UN agencies need to fix these mistakes, making the human rights instruments available and their implementation possible.'

Estebancio Castro Diaz, International Alliance of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples of Tropical Forests, Republica de Panama.

Many minority and indigenous groups live in areas rich in natural resources. These communities – from pastoralists in the Middle East and Africa, to fisher communities such as the Elmolo in Kenya – rely on these resources for their livelihoods. According to interviewees, in recent years communities have faced two major problems: competition with other communities for scarce resources; and acquisition of these resources by governments and companies for development. As populations grow and resources dwindle exacerbated by climate change, demand and competition increase.

Respondents from pastoralist communities in Cameroon, Uganda and Kenya said the use of grazing lands for crop farming causes problems between communities.



AN AFRO-COLOMBIAN MINER FROM THE CAUCA REGION, COLOMBIA. MRG/MORRIS PRODUCCIONES.

'The main issue in Karamoja is competition for resources. Land and crops that are arable are getting lesser crops [and] are suffering from the extreme climates. When animal lands get used for crop farming migration routes are broken. This affects livestock.'
Benjamin Mutambukah, Coalition of Pastoralist Civil Society Organizations, Uganda.

There is also competition for scarce fish resources in rivers and the sea. Cases have been reported from Kenya, India and Sri Lanka.³⁸

Communities are often not consulted about development projects; they are left with little or none of the benefits from such projects. According to a recent report, in India, 40–50 per cent of those displaced by dam development projects were Adivasi tribal people.³⁹ In the Ahwazi-Arab minority region of Khuzestan in Iran, where 90 per cent of the country's oil revenues originate, minority communities live in poverty and suffer ill health from the pollution from industry.⁴⁰

Nearly every respondent referred to land rights as being one of the major development concerns post-2015.

*'Afro-descendants and indigenous people always had their own land. With the expansion of mining and tourism industries they are not getting basic services delivered to them by the state and in addition to this they are losing their lands.'*⁴¹
Maurice Bryan, Caribbean-based minority rights activist.

Participation

Minority communities are characterized either by their small numbers or their non-dominant status. As a result they are poorly represented in political or economic decision-making. Their exclusion from these power structures is largely because of discrimination, but also due to poor education.⁴²

'In Namibia representation from minority and indigenous communities is non-existent. San Bush people have no political representation. Himba have only one member of parliament. Their own systems are dying out, mainly because governments can't understand them. They are problematized, they are sidelined and kicked out of the mainstream.'
Phil ya Nangoloh, executive director of NamRights, Namibia.

Minorities and indigenous peoples also face barriers to proper participation in social life, including in religious and cultural activities. Christians and other religious minorities in Iraq, for example, fear going to church or attending religious services because they could be targeted for attack.⁴³ This could mean that they face restrictions in practising

their own religions and cultures, but it could also be that they are discriminated against and prevented from attending public social events. Dalits in India and Nepal are often prevented from being part of village-level social events, they are not allowed to sit at the same level or be in the same public space as people from dominant classes.⁴⁴

Almost every respondent interviewed for this report listed participation and representation as essential criteria for development to be successful in the future. If communities are not included in the decisions that affect them, projects may end in failure or cause conflict with communities. Development policy makers must realize that politically and socially empowering community leaders creates vital social harmony that strengthens economic development.

Health and HIV

Access to health care is a major problem for minorities and indigenous peoples, according to interviewees. This is sometimes due to the remoteness of the areas they live in, or because they face discrimination in accessing these services. Interviewees explained that some communities have a small health centre close to them but rarely a hospital. In many cases people have to walk miles in order to access basic health services.

According to Manjula Pradeep, head of Navsarjan, a grassroots Dalit organization in India, often non-Dalit midwives will not provide services for Dalit women, and doctors at government-run primary health centres will not touch Dalits during an examination.

Poor health care services in minority and indigenous areas affect life expectancy, and infant and maternal mortality rates, which are already disproportionately high in these communities compared to national levels.

According to statistics from the Indian State of Andhra Pradesh, for example, in 2012 the Dalit infant mortality rate was double the average rate, and the maternal mortality rate for Dalits was 50 per cent higher than average. A recent UNICEF study of maternal mortality rates in six northern states found that 61 per cent of all maternal deaths were of Dalit or tribal family origin.⁴⁵

Several respondents explained that HIV rates were higher in their communities compared to the national levels but that they are unable to assess how serious HIV prevalence is because of poor reporting and diagnosis, and lack of statistical evidence.

Rates of HIV infection are increasing among pastoralists in Tanzania, particularly among adult women, where it is estimated at 15–18 per cent as compared to a national average of 8.8 per cent. The government has failed to respond with targeted policies: for example, national education campaigns are only in the dominant language of Swahili and antiretrovirals, although free, are not easily available.⁴⁶

Youth

A number of respondents interviewed for this report said that youth unrest is an increasing problem in their communities. This is a fairly new problem and the communities often find it difficult to cope with the situation. Those interviewed explained there were a number of factors involved. Engaging in traditional livelihoods has become tougher. Many young people don't get a comprehensive introduction to the community way of life because their role in the community is disrupted by attending school. However, because of the poor quality education they receive they don't have the skills to find jobs outside the traditional ones within the community. There is also a sense of disenchantment among youth who are caught between modernity and tradition. As a consequence of the weakening of community structures, such as traditional forms of leadership, and the breakdown of cultural and traditional roles young people have less faith in the community.⁴⁷ They also bear the pressure of having to earn an income to support the family, which is more and more a struggle.

Respondents said that in recent years these issues have contributed to high levels of unrest and, in some cases, a rise in violence committed by youth. Community leaders interviewed by the author for this briefing and during

research trips to Israel, Uganda and Kenya said they are concerned as incidents of theft, attacks, gang violence, substance abuse, gender attacks and violence have been rising within communities.

Many of the respondents interviewed felt that this situation is going to worsen because many minority and indigenous communities have a high percentage of youth. In most communities youth constitute the majority of the population. Sixty per cent of the Israeli Bedouin population are youth and a similar proportion of Karamoja are youth. Those interviewed for this report state that it would be difficult to bring about effective development if young people are not properly engaged in the process.

*'You take a teenager Muslim/Christian/Dalit from a village in India. What is his future? He can't live in the village, he has no livelihood. There are no toilets, roads, schools in his village. So he comes to the town to live in a slum in the worst conditions imaginable. He has no education so he can't be employed. Would you be surprised if he became a rebel?'*⁴⁸

Community activists warned that development actors need to take this issue seriously for several reasons. First, this is in keeping with the rights of young minority and



BATWA CHILDREN IN BURUNDI. MRG.

indigenous people to meaningful participation, both as youth and as members of minorities. Second, young people can contribute immensely to development with innovative ideas, skills, energy and dynamism if they feel they are part of the process. Moreover, excluding youth, particularly in a context described above, could result in a rise in social unrest, and possibly violence and conflict, which would seriously impede future development.

Minority and indigenous women

In all of the areas of development discussed in this report, minority and indigenous women are disproportionately affected.⁴⁹ MRG research has found that women and girls from minority and indigenous groups face challenges on multiple levels. They face political, economic and social discrimination by states and dominant groups because of their identity and gender. They are less likely to have access to education at all levels, they have lower literacy levels and face discrimination and even violence at school. This cycle of discrimination is based on their identity and gender, and continues through their lives when they seek employment, when they try to get appointed to public positions and when they access services.⁵⁰ They are not only excluded from services but also from decision-making processes around these services.

Women respondents working with Dalit communities in India, Nepal and Bangladesh and pastoralist and Batwa groups in East Africa emphasized that women are also vulnerable to violence and sexual attacks, for example, when land or natural resources in the areas where they live are seized for development projects.

MRG has also reported that women from minority and indigenous communities are sometimes targeted for rape and other forms of sexual violence specifically because of their ethnic, religious or indigenous identity.⁵¹

In India, for instance, Dalit women experience multiple levels of violence due to caste, class and gender. They face killing, rape, gang rape and custodial torture on a daily basis. In Uganda, in a study conducted by MRG in 2010, 100 per cent of women from the Batwa community said they experienced violence and in many cases it was ongoing.⁵²

In many cases, access to justice is very limited for minority and indigenous women, who face discrimination and further attack from the police and the judicial system.

'Adivasi women are in a worse situation than even Dalit women are. If an Adivasi woman is raped there is no problem, police don't feel they need to even file a complaint, people believe nothing wrong raping Adivasi women.'

Manjula Pradeep, director of a grassroots Dalit organization.

If new development goals do not recognize the multiple levels of exclusion and discrimination minority and

indigenous women face they will not succeed in reaching those most in need.

Climate change

Some minorities and indigenous peoples in particular, have a special and unique relationship with nature. For some, the earth is the dwelling place of their ancestors: they believe the erosion of land or increased flooding as a result of climate change disrupts the peace of their dead. For the Shuar people in Ecuador for example, waterfalls are seen as places of worship. People from Taiwan's indigenous Paiwan community would never 'speak bad words in the mountain valley' because the words are echoed across the rest of the environment.

Most minority and indigenous communities that live outside towns and cities depend on natural resources for their livelihoods. Recent adverse weather conditions, some a result of climate change, such as flooding and long-term droughts, have had huge adverse impacts on these communities. This has resulted in food shortages and increased poverty.

Minority communities are also likely to be the last to gain access to relief when climate-related disasters happen. For example, in India Dalits were discriminated against in post-tsunami relief and after the Bihar floods in 2007 – a parallel to the discrimination minorities face at the hands of development agencies.⁵³

Individuals interviewed for this report saw current forms of development as endangering the environment. Planners do not have the local knowledge of the environment when they create development plans. The projects are then implemented without taking proper care of the environment.

While communities that live in natural habitats call for targets for environmental protection and sustainability, they also want a more prominent role in the climate change discussions.

Minorities and indigenous peoples have for long explained that they have traditional knowledge, passed down through generations over centuries of surviving different types of climate, that can contribute significantly to environmental protection and formulating international-level adaptation and climate change mitigation strategies.

Culture

One of the major criticisms from representatives of these communities was that current development is heavily defined in economic terms and does not consider cultural aspects. For most minority and indigenous communities their culture is associated with their identity, their history, their spirituality, their way of life and their livelihood. In an increasingly globalized world, development threatens these communities; some of them are beginning to lose aspects of their culture and in some cases their languages.

A large number of respondents interviewed called for a greater emphasis on cultural development; this requires efforts to first map and record the culture and language of individual communities, and then look at ways to develop, strengthen and preserve them.

Women activists, however, have cautioned that cultural development must not be at the expense of women's rights. One female activist from India said:

A cultural impact assessment should be added to safeguard measures. Indigenous peoples are demanding that a fourth pillar, namely, culture, should be added to "sustainability" in the context of "sustainable development"

Migration, displacement and conflict

Migration and displacement as a result of environmental changes or conflict is expected to rise significantly in the coming years. High levels of poverty and the breakdown of community structures mean that significant numbers of people from minority and indigenous communities have already begun to migrate to urban areas.

Women from minority and indigenous communities suffer considerably as a result of outward migration. They have to find a way to run their homes until their men return with money. It is not uncommon that women in this situation experience poverty and hunger. Women are also especially vulnerable to sexual abuse and rape in these situations.

According to MRG statistics, between 2007 and 2009, 55 per cent of violent conflicts had at their core minority rights violations or tensions between communities, while in 22 per cent of cases such violations or tensions had arisen as an issue during the course of the conflict.⁵⁴

In situations of conflict, minorities and indigenous peoples are often displaced or targeted for arrest or detention, and threatened with violence – torture, rape, attacks and killings.

Minorities and indigenous peoples are particularly affected by issues of migration, displacement and conflict, and the new generation of development goals must take such factors into account.

Future concerns on donor aid

Respondents also gave suggestions on how donors could improve the way aid is currently distributed. Many donors design 'top-down' programmes without proper consultation or participation and often impose activities and ideologies that recipient communities do not agree with. Respondents also said that international aid is often given for short periods of time, with short-term goals that do not contribute to long-term sustainable change.

Several respondents said coordination between donor agencies was sometimes poor; some communities were over-supported or funded while others were completely neglected. There were also criticisms that, in some cases, donors did not make enough effort to reach out to the communities. 'They don't travel where a four-wheel drive can't go,' one respondent said.

Some activists and community representatives said that a donor had not sufficiently understood community dynamics and diversity within communities. They said that this limited understanding in some cases, or had led to disparities in aid distribution within and outside communities and caused conflict.

Finally, one of the strongest criticisms of donor agencies was that they themselves can sometimes contribute to discrimination, when decisions made by local staff are influenced by caste and class issues.⁵⁵

Conclusion

This briefing aims to bring the voices of the poorest, most marginalized people into the current debate about the post-2015 development goals – minorities and indigenous peoples. It highlights some of the development concerns for minority and indigenous communities, such as cultural development, security of land and natural resources, conflict and migration and youth unrest. These issues do not feature prominently in post-2015 discussions as yet.

For too long, development plans have been drawn up in national and international centres far away, in terms of geographical distance, ideology, perspective and knowledge, from the communities at which development is aimed. The result has not been positive. While substantial progress has undoubtedly been made through the MDG process, in many cases development has not reached those who need it most. Among the core reasons for this have been human rights violations and discrimination. The inability to implement appropriate development for communities marginalized by systematic discrimination, in some cases the poorest of the poor, will result in greater inequality and increase the danger of conflict.

There is a resounding and urgent call from minorities and indigenous peoples interviewed for this briefing to address the underlying issues causing poverty and economic deprivation, such as discrimination.

The UN panel looking at post-2015 goals, national governments and donor agencies, and international NGOs should take into consideration the perspectives of minorities and indigenous communities, the factors that they identify as development priorities, and the problems and structural barriers that exist, in the formulation of a new generation of development goals after 2015.

Recommendations to the UN Secretary-General's high-level panel, to UN agencies and international development agencies and organizations:

1. Ensure that minorities and indigenous peoples are included in the current discussions and negotiations in framing the post-2015 goals and their views are reflected in the recommendations made by the high-level panel.
2. Conduct an analytical study drawing on the critiques made by minorities and indigenous peoples of the current MDG process and recommend ways in which these can be addressed and rectified in the next phase of development goals.
3. Ensure that the post-2015 goals are based on a human rights framework.
4. Have specific measurable targets for states on anti-discrimination and human rights protection, including minority and indigenous rights.
5. Examine the underlying causes of poverty – such as discrimination and inequality – and make direct efforts to address them in the post-2015 framework.
6. Ensure that the monitoring of progress of post-2015 development goals includes disaggregated data as appropriate on gender, ethnicity, religion, language, caste and indigenous identity.
7. Ensure that mechanisms set up to implement and monitor the post-2015 development goals have sufficient expertise and training on minority and indigenous rights standards, and include the participation of minorities and indigenous peoples themselves.

Notes

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- 2 Minorities are not mentioned in any of the 8 goals, 21 targets or 60 indicators. A study presented by the UN Independent Expert on Minority Issues (IEMI) in 2007 showed that only 19 of the 50 MDG Country Reports reviewed discussed minorities. See McDougall, G., *Report of the UN Expert on Minority Issues, A/HRC/4/9*, 2 February 2007, available at: <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G07/105/93/PDF/G0710593.pdf?OpenElement> (accessed January 2013).
- 3 This report is based on a series of interviews the author conducted with 20 minority and indigenous community leaders, representatives and academics from Asia, Africa and Latin America. The report uses statistics gathered from MRG partners, previous MRG research and other research and policy reports, and previous material from the author's research in the Naqab in Israel (September 2011), north and east of Sri Lanka (2009, 2010 and 2011), Maasai Mara in Kenya (October 2010) and interviews on the impact of climate change (2008).
- 4 *The Millennium Development Goals Report 2012*, op. cit.
- 5 For more information on the effectiveness of MDGs, see: Vos, R., 'Post-2015: why we need a new development agenda', UNICEF Office of Research, June 2012; Kenny, C., 'What should follow in 2016?', June 2012.
- 6 See 'We can end poverty 2015', Gateway to the UN system's work on the MDGs, available at: <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/beyond2015.shtml> (accessed 10 August 2012).
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- 14 Interview with Benjamin Mutambukah, Coalition of Pastoralist CSOs in Uganda.
- 15 Kabeer, op. cit.
- 16 Interview with Oswaldo Bilbao Lobaton, Director of Centro de Desarrollo Etnico (CEDET), Peru, July 2012 (citing a survey conducted by CEDET in three Afro-Peruvian communities).
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- 19 See MRG, *State of the World's Minorities and Indigenous Peoples 2009*, London, MRG, July 2010.
- 20 *Ibid.*
- 21 UN, *Millennium Development Goals Report 2012*, op. cit.
- 22 Kabeer, op. cit.
- 23 *Ibid.*
- 24 See Population Reference Bureau, 'Maternal mortality in Guatemala: a preventable tragedy', available at: <http://www.prb.org/Articles/2003/MaternalMortalityinGuatemalaAPreventableTragedy.aspx?p=1> (accessed 10 August 2012).
- 25 Kabeer, op. cit.
- 26 See MRG, *State of the World's Minorities and Indigenous Peoples 2011*, London, MRG, July 2011.
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- 28 Benjamin Mutambukah, July 2012, London [UNICEF 2008]
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- 51 *Ibid.*
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Minority Rights Group International 54 Commercial Street, London E1 6LT, United Kingdom

Tel +44 (0)20 7422 4200 **Fax** +44 (0)20 7422 4201 **Email** minority.rights@mrgmail.org

Website www.minorityrights.org  www.twitter.com/minorityrights  www.facebook.com/minorityrights

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