

# Advancing Global Health and Human Rights in the Post-2015 Development Agenda

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Conference

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THE UNIVERSITY  
of NORTH CAROLINA  
at CHAPEL HILL

“A commitment to human rights starts within each of us as a conceptual leap. It is a leap because it embodies the difference between seeing something like food, voting, education, or healthcare as a right compared to thinking of them as privileges. And it is a leap, because human rights inevitably represents a challenge to the status quo.”

*- Jonathan Mann*



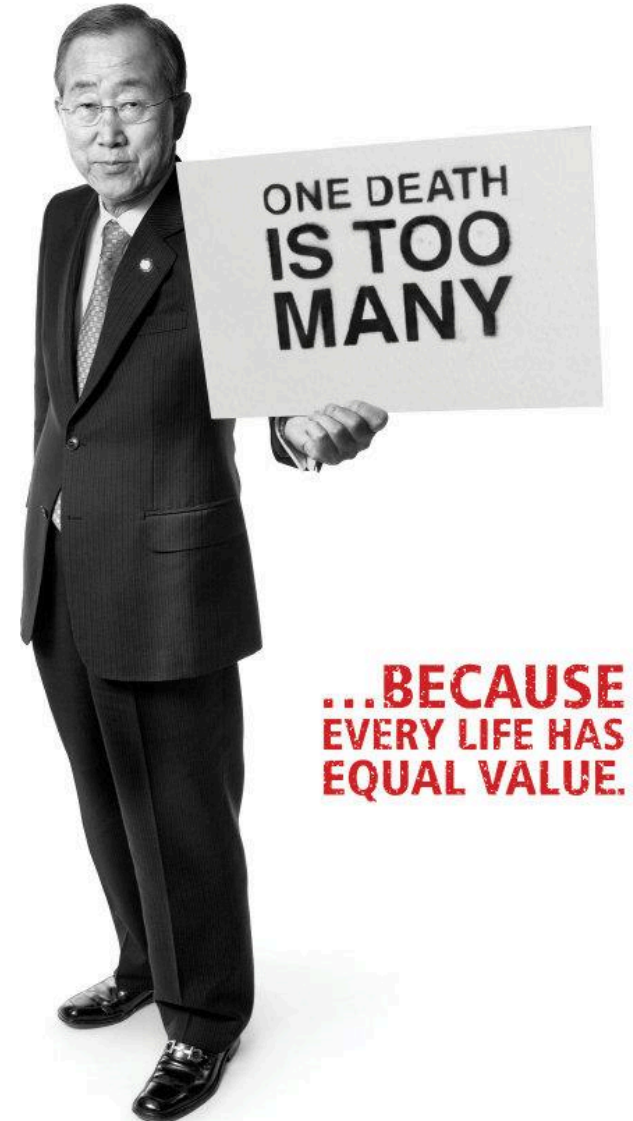
- 1. Theory** – Human Rights in Global Health Governance
- 2. Evolution** – From the Human Right to Health to the Millennium Development Goals
- 3. Application** – The Implementation of Human Rights in the Post-2015 Health Agenda

# Human Rights

- Legal claims simply on the basis of being human
  - universal,
  - indivisible,
  - inalienable, and
  - interdependent

...what governments can do to you,  
cannot do to you and  
should do for you...

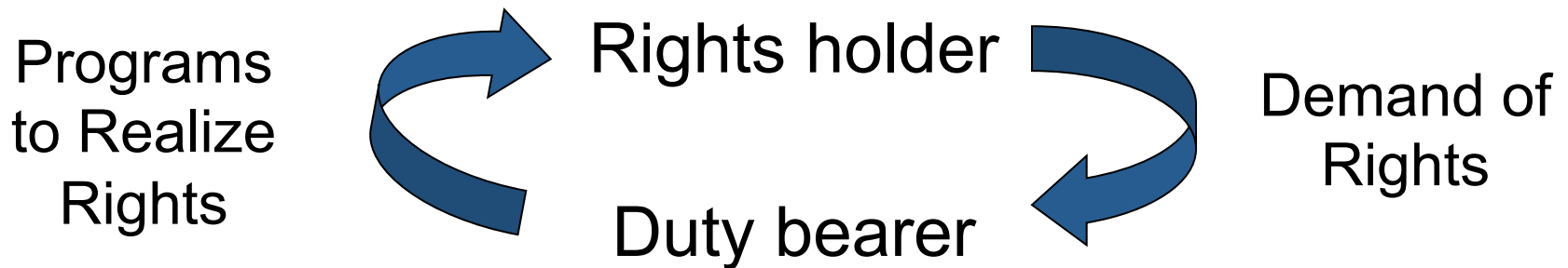
- Governmental obligations to:
  - Respect rights
  - Protect rights
  - Fulfill rights



**...BECAUSE  
EVERY LIFE HAS  
EQUAL VALUE.**

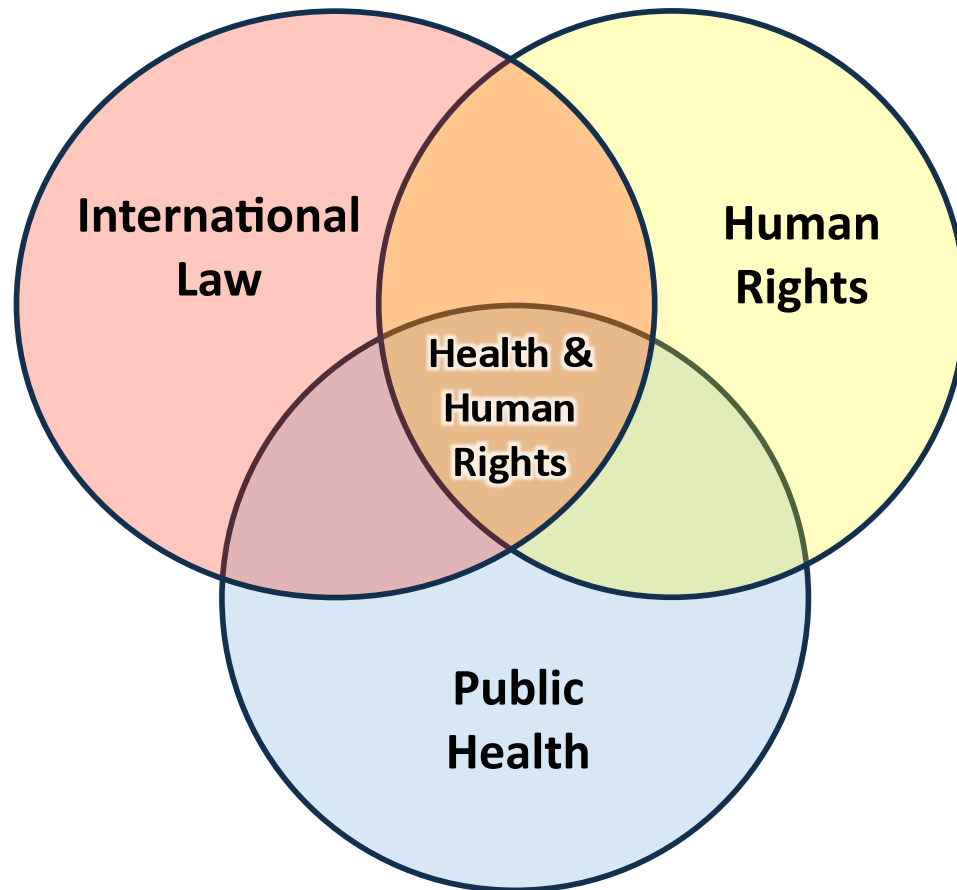
# Human Rights-Based Approach

Human Right = Valid claim & Corresponding duty  
(*"X has a right against Y in relation to Z"*)



*E.g.: "A child has a valid claim against the national government for a right to health, which is realized through the government duties to provide free vaccinations."*

# Human Rights in Global Health Governance



- Human Rights Matter
- Human Rights Evolve
- International Law Instrumental to the Evolution of the Right to Health
  - Development in Law
  - Implementation through Programming
- Human Rights as a Basis of Global Health Governance

Second World War



Four Freedoms



UN Charter



**WHO**



UDHR

## CONSTITUTION OF THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

THE STATES parties to this Constitution declare, in conformity with the Charter of the

The enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being

regardless of every human being regardless of race, language, political belief, economic or social condition.

Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

Unequal development in different countries in the promotion of health and control of disease, especially communicable disease, is a common danger.

Governments have a responsibility for the health of their peoples which can be fulfilled only by the provision of adequate health and social measures.

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# Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Second World War



Four Freedoms



UN Charter



WHO Constitution



**UDHR**

- **Article 25**
  - medical care
  - underlying determinants of health

“Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services...”





# Declaration of Alma-Ata



## International Conference on Primary Health Care

- Culmination of Rights-Based Approach to Underlying Determinants
- WHO definition of “complete” health

health—which is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity—is a fundamental human right [that] requires the action of many other social and economic sectors in addition to the health sector.



“All human rights are universal, indivisible and interdependent and interrelated. The international community must treat human rights globally in a fair and equal manner, on the same footing, and with the same emphasis.”

# Vienna Declaration

- Human rights are indivisible and interdependent
  - **Indivisibility** - Economic, social and cultural rights must be respected, protected and realized on an equal footing with civil and political rights.
  - **Interdependence** - Difficulty (and, in many cases, the impossibility) of realizing any one human right in isolation.

# General Comment 14

## Underlying Determinants of Health

- The right to health extends “not only to timely and appropriate health care but also to the underlying determinants of health, such as”
  - Access to safe and potable water and adequate sanitation
  - Adequate supply of safe food
  - Nutrition and housing
  - Healthy occupational and environmental conditions
  - Access to health-related education and information, including on sexual and reproductive health



# Millennium Development Goals



**Eradicate Extreme Poverty & Hunger**



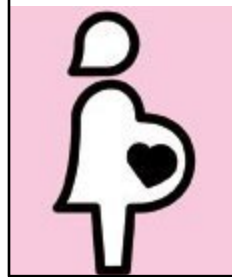
**Achieve Universal Primary Education**



**Promote Gender Equality & Empower Women**



**Reduce Child Mortality**



**Improve Maternal Health**



**Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria & Other Diseases**



**Ensure Environmental Sustainability**



**Develop a Global Partnership for Development**

“The MDGs reflect only a partial human rights agenda and a clear challenge exists to ensure that there is full mutual compatibility”

- Philip Alston



## Human Rights & the MDGs

- Largely absent
  - Explicit references to human rights limited and tenuous
- Avoidance of legal obligations under human rights

Theory	EVOLUTION	Application
	<b>MDGs</b>	<b>Human Rights</b>
<b>Conceptualization</b>	Averages	Equity
<b>Implementation</b>	Achievable Goals	Progressive Realization
<b>Accountability</b>	Universality	Enforceability



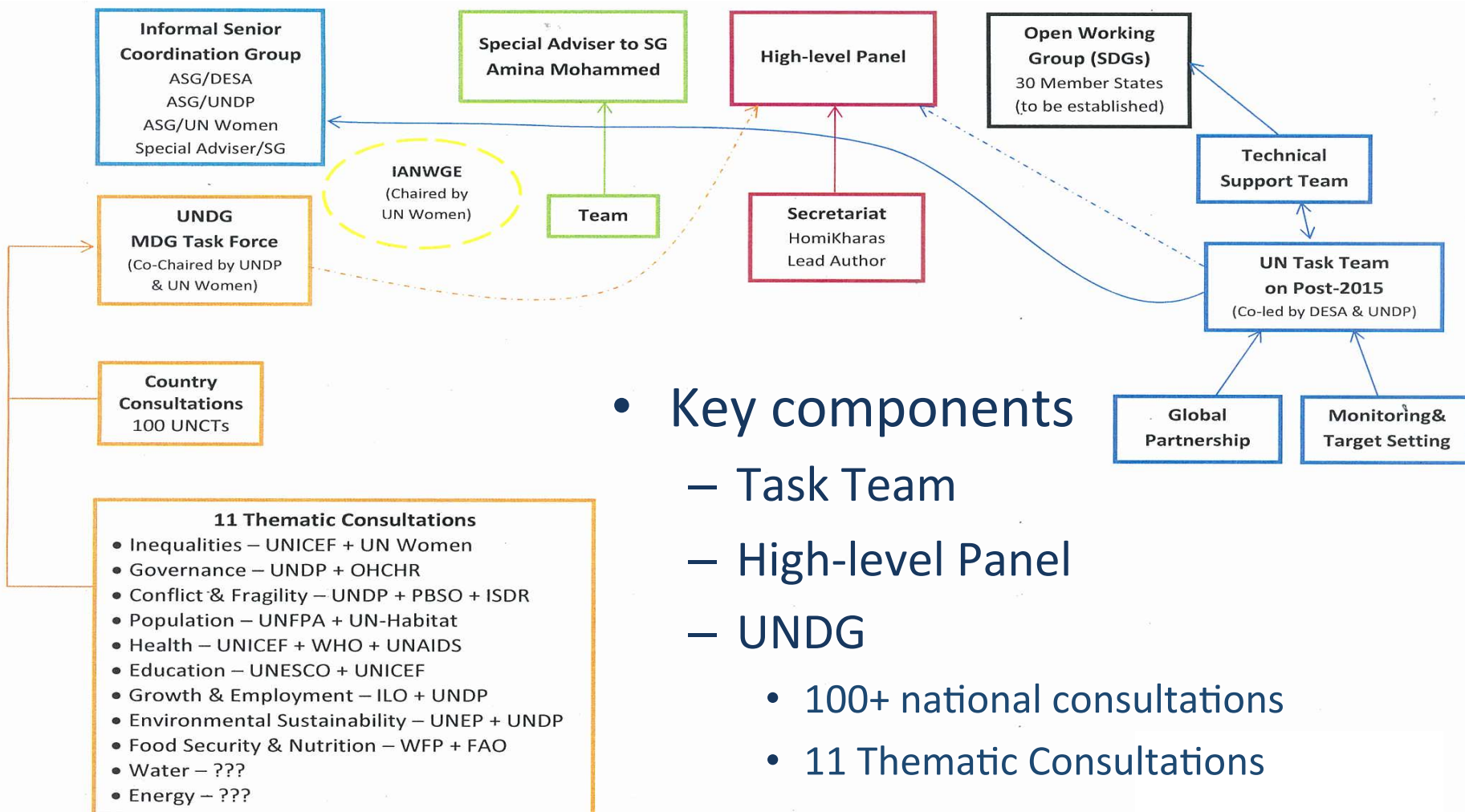
# Framing Human Rights in the Post-2015 Development Agenda



...what next?

- Build upon progress made under MDGs
- Greater inclusivity and participation
- Targets must be broadly applicable, yet adaptable to national contexts
- Progressivity to maintain relevance
- Sustainability

# Development of Post-2015 Agenda

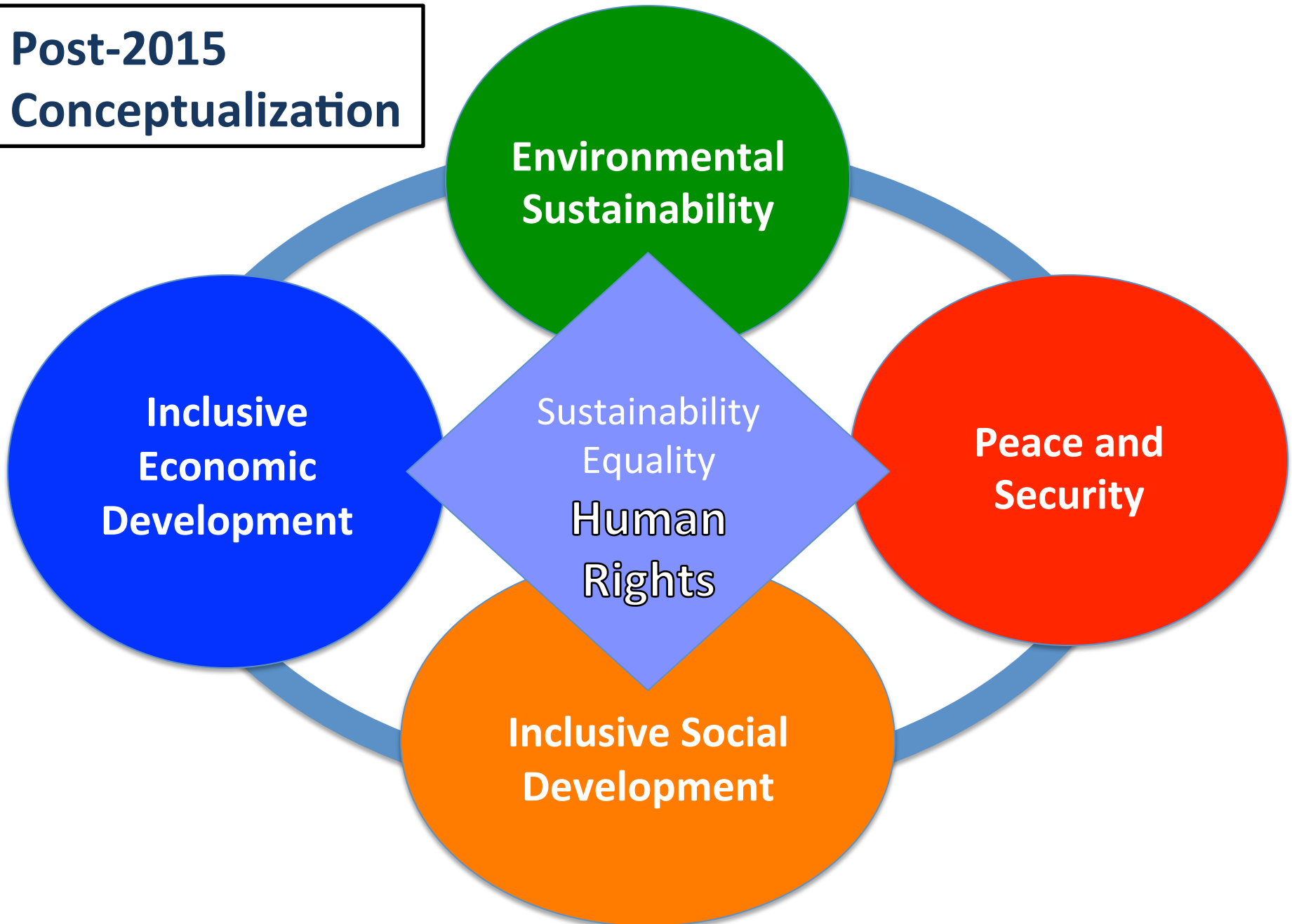


## Key components

- Task Team
- High-level Panel
- UNDG
  - 100+ national consultations
  - 11 Thematic Consultations



**Post-2015  
Conceptualization**



# Developing the Post-2015 Health Agenda

A human rights-based approach to health is essential.

It underpins action and provides part of the rationale for including health in the post-2015 development agenda.



# Potential Contributions of Human Rights in Post-2015 Health Agenda

## In Concept

1. Equity in progress
2. Empowerment of civil society
3. Recognition of inter-dependent targets
4. Strengthen universality

## In Practice

- June 2012
  - Rio +20 Conference
  - SG's Report on the Post-2015 Agenda
- February 2013 – Global Thematic Consultation on Health



**RIO+20**  
United Nations  
Conference on  
Sustainable  
Development

UN SYSTEM TASK TEAM  
ON THE POST-2015 UN  
DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

Realizing the Future We Want for All  
Report to the Secretary-General



# What Role for Human Rights in the Post-2015 Agenda for Global Health?



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