

Dr Homi Kharas  
Brookings Institute  
1775 Massachusetts Avenue  
Northwest Washington, DC 20036  
United States

19 March 2013

Dear Dr Kharas,

As a group of 90 economists, academics and development experts, we are writing to ask that you put inequality at the heart of any potential post-2015 framework discussed during the meeting of the High Level Panel in Bali. In order to eradicate extreme poverty in all its dimensions by 2030, we must find a way to reduce vast and increasing inequalities both within and between countries.

While the Millennium Development Goals did spur some progress in human development in the last two decades, there is evidence of growing gaps in terms of income, health, nutrition, education and many other areas that impede the fulfillment of human rights and wellbeing. Global inequality has increased. The incomes of the world's top 1.75% earners now exceed those of the bottom 77% (Milanovic, 2010).

Inequalities threaten our ability to pursue fair and sustainable development as much as they threaten the eradication of extreme poverty. Research shows that inequality – both within and between countries – is a barrier to individual development and sustained economic growth. It undermines social cohesion and distorts the democratic process.

For this reason, a core objective of the post-2015 framework must be to enshrine our joint responsibility to tackle inequality at many different levels. The international community must continue its efforts to reduce inequalities between countries which, according to the World Bank, are still responsible for half of global inequality. This requires an international context that is conducive to progressive government strategies, including promoting poor and developing countries' efforts to diversify their economies, ensuring fair access and equitable distribution of natural wealth resources, establishing just and effective tax systems, and ensuring financial and economic stability. International agreements must be sensitive to these requirements, including those relating to trade, investment and financial flows.

The post-2015 development framework must also aim to reduce the gaps within countries. To this effect, we believe the framework should include a top-level goal to reduce inequalities, including income and gender inequalities in particular. This should be in addition to disaggregated indicators and targets in every other goal to ensure equitable progress across different social groups towards agreed development objectives.

Whilst it may be early in the process to discuss detail, we suggest that an inequality target could be based on Palma's (2011) ratio of the income share of the top 10% of a population to the bottom 40%. In more equal societies this ratio will be one or below, meaning that the top 10% does not receive a larger share of national income than the bottom 40%. In very unequal societies, the ratio may be as high as seven. A potential target could be to halve national Palma ratios by 2030, compared to 2010, and dramatically reduce the global Palma ratio, which is currently 32.

Prioritising the need to tackle inequality in this way will ensure that the new development framework is truly inclusive and can drive the human progress we all seek.

With best wishes for a successful meeting,

**Kate E Pickett**, Professor of Epidemiology, University of York, UK; **Richard Wilkinson**, Emeritus Professor of Social Epidemiology, University of Nottingham, UK; **Jayati Ghosh**, Professor of Economics, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India; **Thomas Pogge**, Leitner Professor of Philosophy and International Affairs, Yale University, USA; **Gabriel Palma**, University Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Economics and Politics, Cambridge University, UK; **Lars Engberg-Pedersen**, Head of Research, Politics and Development Unit, Danish Institute for International Studies, Denmark; **Isabel Ortiz**, Director Global Social Justice Program, Initiative for Policy Dialogue, Columbia University, USA; **Ilene Grabel**, Professor of International Economics, Josef Korbel School of International Studies, University of Denver, USA; **Jose Antonio Ocampo**, Professor of Professional Practice, School of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University, USA; **Sir Richard Jolly**, Honorary Professor and Research Associate, Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, UK; **Kevin Watkins**, Senior Fellow, Brookings Institution, USA; **Andy Sumner**, Co-Director, International Development Institute, King's College London, UK; **Richard D. Wolff**, Professor Emeritus, University of Massachusetts and Visiting Professor, Graduate Program in International Affairs, New School University, New York City, USA; **Rolph van der Hoeven**, Professor of Employment and Development Economics, International Institute of Social Studies, Erasmus University, The Hague, The Netherlands; **Jan Prieue**, Professor of Economics, University of Applied Sciences, Germany; **Indu Bhushan**, Deputy Director General, Strategy and Policy Department, Asian Development Bank, Philippines; **John Langmore**, Professor, School of Social and Political Sciences, University of Melbourne, Australia; **Eugenia McGill**, Director, Workshop in Development Practice, School of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University, USA; **Alfredo Saad Filho**, Professor, Department of Development Studies, SOAS, University of London, UK; **Bidyut Kumar Pal**, President, Bank Employees' Federation, Bihar, India; **Dr. Valeria Esquivel**, Associate Professor of Economics, Instituto de Ciencias, Universidad Nacional de General Sarmiento, Argentina; **Venkatesh Athreya**, Professor of Economics (retired), M. S. Swaminathan Research Foundation, Chennai, India; **Dr. Mridul Eapen**, Hon. Fellow, Centre for Development Studies, Trivandrum, India; **Rodrigo Lopez-Pablos**, Investigador en Cs. Económicas, Universidad Nacional de La Matanza, Argentina; **Ikemoto Yukio**, Professor, Institute for Advanced Studies on Asia, University of Tokyo, Japan; **Tapas Paul**, Department of Economics, Independent University, Dhaka, Bangladesh; **Dr K. Prabhakar**, Professor, School of Management, SRM University, Tamil Nadu, India; **Hamid Gbawuru Marah**, International University College of Turin, Italy; **Alejandro Bendaña**, Director, Centro de Estudios Internacionales, Managua, Nicaragua; **Titilope Ngozi Akosa**, Centre for 21st Century Issues, Texas, USA; **S. M. Shafaeddin**, Development Economist, Switzerland; **Joyce Yen Feng**, Professor, Department of Social Work, National Taiwan University, Taiwan; **Jose Enrique Africa**, IBON Foundation, Philippines; **Dr D. R. Khanal** Chairman, Institute for Development Policy Research and Visiting Professor, Tribhuvan University, Nepal; **R. V. Bhavani**, M. S. Swaminathan Research Foundation, Chennai, India; **Akhilesh Mishra**, Associate Professor in Economics Department, Sambhu Dayal College, India; **Alberto Minujin**, Professor and Director of Equity for Children, The New School, USA; **Des Gasper**, International Institute of Social Studies, Erasmus University, Rotterdam, The Netherlands; **Aldo Caliari**, Director, Rethinking Bretton Woods Project, Center of Concern, USA; **Ivo Eskinja**, Research Assistant, University of Rijeka Faculty of Law, Department of Economic Sciences, Croatia; **Jesus Miranda Hita**, Economist, Ministry of Finance, Spain; **Dr Marcus Taylor**, Associate Professor, Department of Global Development Studies, Queen's University, Kingston, Canada; **Karl Theodore**, Professor of Economics, The University of the West Indies, Trinidad; **Dr Oscar Ugarteche**, Research Fellow, Instituto de Investigaciones Económicas, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Coyoacán, Mexico; **Duncan Campbell**, Director for Policy Planning in Employment, International Labour Organisation, Switzerland; **Dino Dean Gracious Dympep**, Secretary General, Meghalaya Peoples Human Rights Council, India; **Seija Toro**, Representante, Unicef-Cuba, Cuba; **Margaret L. Satterthwaite**, Professor of Clinical Law & Director, Global Justice Clinic, New York University School of Law, USA; **David Barkin**, Distinguished Professor, Universidad Autonoma Metropolitana,

Xochimilco, Mexico; **Arthur MacEwan**, Professor Emeritus of Economics, University of Massachusetts, Boston, USA; Dr **Marko Malovic**, Associate Professor, Institute of Economic Sciences, Belgrade, Serbia; **Anthony Bebbington**, Professor of Environment and Society and Director, Graduate School of Geography, Clark University, USA; **Maria S. Floro**, Professor, Department of Economics, American University, USA; **Julio A. Berdegue**, Principal Researcher, Rimisp-Latin American Center for Rural Development, Chile; **Radhika Balakrishnan**, Rutgers University, USA; **Nanna Hvidt**, Director, Danish Institute for International Studies, Denmark; **James Heintz**, Research Professor, University of Massachusetts, USA; **Mustafa Ozer**, Professor, Department of Economics, Anadolu University, Turkey; **Helle Munk Ravnborg**, Senior Researcher, Head of Natural Resources, Governance and Poverty Research Unit, Danish Institute for International Studies, Denmark; **Alicia Puyana**, Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales FLACSO, Mexico; **Dwijen Rangnekar**, School of Law, University of Warwick, UK; **Poul Engberg-Pedersen**, Managing Director, International Union for Conservation of Nature, Switzerland; **Dr Timo Voipio**, Senior Adviser for Social Policy and Decent Work, Department for Development Policy, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Finland; **Professor J. George**, Chief Promoter, Strategic Economic Management Initiatives Group, Delhi University, India; **Rasigan Maharajh**, Chief Director, Institute for Economic Research on Innovation, Faculty of Economics and Finance, Tshwane University of Technology, South Africa; **Rana Eşkinat**, Associate Professor of Economics, Anadolu University, Law Faculty, Turkey; **John Phoa CL**, Head of Department of Development Studies, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, Malaysia; **Kunibert Raffer**, Department of Economics, University of Vienna, Austria; **Atanu Sengupta**, Economics Department, Burdwan University, India; **Naoko Otake**, Senior Employment Specialist, Employment Policy Department, International Labour Organisation, Switzerland; **Amakom Uzochukwu**, Lecturer in Economics, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Nigeria ; **Kamal Mitra Chenoy**, Professor, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi, India; **Anuradha Mitra Chenoy**, Professor, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi, India; **C. T. Kurien**, Former Director, Madras Institute of Development Studies, India; **Maria Consuelo R. del Castillo**, Associate Professor, Mindanao University of Science and Technology, Philippines; **Stephanie Seguino**, Department of Economics, University of Vermont, USA; **Jens Martens**, Director, Global Policy Forum Europe, Germany; **Dr Carmine Gorga**, President, The Somist Institute, USA; **Dr Murali Kallummal**, Associate Professor & Consultant, Indian Institute of Foreign Trade, India; **Sevil Acar**, Assistant Professor, Istanbul Kemerburgaz University, Turkey; **Dr Meera Tiwari**, Reader in International Development, School of Law and Social Sciences, University of East London, UK; **Biplab Sarkar**, Senior Research Fellow, Indian Statistical Institute, Bangalore, India; **Gabriele Köhler**, Development Economist, Munich, Germany; **Sreeram Mushty**, Freelance Economist, Vijayawada, India; **Sona Mitra**, Senior Research Officer, Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability, New Delhi, India; **Ignacio Perrotini**, Autonomous National University Of Mexico, Mexico; **Professor P.N. (Raja) Junankar**, Honorary Professor, Industrial Relations Research Centre, University of New South Wales; Australia; **Lucy van Kessel**, ECOSOC Representative, International Presentation Association, USA; **Dr Urban Jonsson**, Human Rights Expert, Dar es Salaam and Stockholm; **Rania Antonopoulos**, Senior Scholar and Program Director, Gender Equality and the Economy Program, Levy Economics Institute of Bard College, New York, USA.

**Correspondence Address:**

Kate E Pickett, PhD FRSA FFPH  
Professor of Epidemiology  
University of York  
Department of Health Sciences  
Seebohm Rowntree Building, Area 3  
Heslington  
York  
YO10 5DD  
UK