

By Thalif Deen

THE United Nations is on the verge of releasing a new set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – perhaps 17 or more – to replace the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which will run out by the end of 2015.

The proposed new SDGs, which will make amends for the shortcomings of the MDGs, will be an integral part of the U.N.'s post-2015 development agenda which, among other things, seeks to eradicate extreme poverty and

hunger from the face of the earth by 2030.

"Why not have a target to close down all tax havens by 2020?" -- Jens Martens

Neelie Kroes of the European Commission says the new development agenda is being described as "the most far-reaching and comprehensive development-related endeavour ever undertaken by the United Nations in its entire history."

But Jens Martens, director of the Global Policy Forum, told IPS that in general, the current list of proposed goals and targets is not an adequate response to the global social,

economic and environmental crises and the need for fundamental change.

The proposed SDG list, he pointed out, contains a mix of recycled old commitments and vaguely formulated new ones (such as the goal 1.a. to "ensure significant mobilization of resources from a variety of sources to provide adequate and predictable means to implement programmes and policies to end poverty in all its dimensions.").

According to some development experts, the world's rich nations have mostly failed to meet their

obligations on MDG target 8 which called for a "global partnership for development" between developed and developing nations.

As the Geneva-based South Centre points out, "The SDGs should not be a set of goals for only developing countries to undertake as a kind of conditionality or new obligations."

The Rio-plus-20 outcome document, adopted at an international conference in Brazil in 2012, specifically said the new goals should be "universally applicable to all countries," including developed countries.

