

Special Report on MDGs Summit 20-22 September 2010

United Nations: Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) Summit and Related Events, 20-22 September 2010

The High-level Plenary Meeting of the 65th Session of the UN General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) - or "MDG Summit" - will take place at the United Nations headquarters in New York from 20-22 September 2010, under the theme "We can end poverty by 2015." With only five years left until the 2015 deadline to achieve the MDGs, and amid mixed progress on halving extreme poverty, and drastically reducing hunger, disease, maternal and child deaths and other ills, the MDG Summit and related events will seek to accelerate progress on these issues. Participants will undertake a comprehensive review of successes, best practices and lessons learned, obstacles and gaps, challenges and opportunities, which will help lead to concrete strategies for action. Preceding the UN General Assembly's 65th session (which begins on Thursday, 23 September), the MDG Summit and related events will be attended by heads of state and other dignitaries, as well as members of civil society, academia and the private sector. The three-day event will see daily morning and afternoon plenary sessions held concurrently with round-table sessions on the following six themes: addressing the challenge of poverty, hunger and gender equality; meeting the goals of health and education; promoting sustainable development; addressing emerging issues and evolving approaches; addressing the special needs of the most vulnerable; and widening and strengthening partnerships. In addition, several dozen side events and other related partnership events will take place. The main outcome of the Summit will be a document calling for increased efforts at all levels to attain the MDGs, a draft of which was made public before the Summit, highlighting methods and avenues to accelerate progress.



UN Secretary-General's "KEEPING THE PROMISE" Report: The UN Secretary-General published a report in February 2010 entitled "Keeping the promise: a forward-looking review to promote an agreed action agenda to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015," which highlighted lessons learned for accelerating progress in achieving the MDGs, stressing the urgency to broaden and strengthen partnerships to ensure supportive international frameworks for trade, taxation, technology and climate change mitigation and adaptation to sustain long-term human development. It says the interlinkages among the challenges of poverty, food, energy, global recession and climate change present the global community with a unique opportunity to tackle them together. It concludes by stating that guiding principles for further action must include, *inter alia*: national ownership and leadership complemented by supportive global programmes; recognition of the interdependencies of human rights, gender equality, governance, development and peace and security; an active and equal gender balance; and the need to empower the poor through scaled-up efforts focused on citizen monitoring.

The Millennium Development Goals Report: The report, published by the United Nations in June 2010, details the progress made since the Millennium Declaration in the year 2000. The report emphasized that improvements in the lives of poor have been intolerably slow, and that prior gains in achieving the MDGs have been lost due to climate, food and economic crises. However, it also cites gains in cutting the rate of extreme poverty, getting children into primary schools, addressing AIDS, malaria and child health, and a good chance to reach the target for access to clean drinking water.

A number of countries have achieved major successes in fighting poverty, improving school enrolment and child health, expanding access to clean water, strengthening control of malaria and tuberculosis, and providing increased access to HIV treatment, according to the UN Millennium Development Goals Report 2010, the latest progress report on the Goals. These successes have taken place in some of the poorest countries, demonstrating that the MDGs are indeed achievable with the right policies, adequate levels of investment and international support.

Yet progress has been uneven and — without additional efforts — several of the Goals are likely to be missed in many countries, according to the report. Around 1.4 billion people still subsist on less than \$1.25 a day, the international poverty line defined by the World Bank. Around one billion people suffer from hunger. Almost nine million children die each year before they reach their fifth birthday, hundreds of thousands of women die due to complications of pregnancy or child birth every year, and only half of the developing world's population has access to improved sanitation, such as toilets or latrines.

The challenges are most severe in the least developed countries, land-locked developing countries, small island developing states, countries in or emerging from conflict, and those most affected by climate change.

"It is clear that improvements in the lives of the poor have been unacceptably slow, and some hard-won gains are being eroded by the climate, food and economic crises," the UN Secretary-General said.

The economic crisis took a heavy toll on jobs and incomes around the world and severely impacted the ability of the poor to feed their families, according to the MDG Report 2010.

ECOSOC High-Level Segment 2010: The High-level Segment of 28 June – 2 July 2010, held at UN Headquarters in New York, focused on a broad range of issues relevant to the implementation of the UN development agenda, and resulted in a Ministerial Declaration reaffirming the importance of gender equality and the empowerment of women in achieving the MDGs. In addition, the High-level Segment's Development Cooperation Forum informed the MDG Summit's draft outcome document through its discussions on, *inter alia*: coherence and transparency of development cooperation; South-South and triangular cooperation; dealing with multiple crises; and improving and increasing cooperation to achieve the MDGs by 2015.



The MDGs Summit 20-22 September: Governments re-affirm their Commitments to meet Development Goals by 2015:

“The Millennium Development Goals can be achieved but we need to act now.”

This is just one of the key messages of the High-Level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), better known as the “MDG Summit,” which starts Monday, 20 September, at UN Headquarters in New York.

The three-day meeting, which brings together around 140 Heads of State and Government, as well as leaders from civil society organizations, foundations and the private sector, aims to review progress, identify gaps, and commit to a concrete action agenda to advance and attain the MDGs. Although the Summit highlights that progress has been made in the last decade, this progress has been uneven among and within countries, nor has it been sustainable as a result of the various global crises (economic, financial, food) and the more and more visible effects of climate change.

Previewing the Summit at a press conference on 16 September, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, said that while the gaps in achieving the MDGs are serious, “let us not be daunted by them. Despite setbacks, shortfalls and obstacles, we have the tools and the resources to achieve the goals by 2015.”

Investment in the Goals is an investment in global economic growth, and recovery hinges on progress made in developing countries, Mr. Ban Ki-moon said.

“We must not balance our budgets on the backs of the poor,” he stressed.

In the lead up to the Summit, representatives from UN Member States had negotiated a draft outcome document, which was informally agreed on and transmitted to the Summit for consideration and adoption. In the document, Heads of State and Government express their deep concern about the inequalities between and within countries; the alarming global levels of maternal and child mortality; the multiple and interrelated crises; and the more than 1 billion people living in conditions of extreme poverty and hunger. They reaffirm their commitments to work together for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples, as well as to collectively advance and strengthen the global partnership for development. Countries also acknowledge that much more needs to be done to achieve the MDGs, and recognize the need for increased political commitment. The draft outcome document also includes an action agenda, specified per MDG, showing countries specific commitments to achieve each of the MDGs by 2015.

The MDG Summit is structured around a total of six plenary meetings – featuring statements by Heads of State and Governments, and six parallel roundtables. The latter allow for more in-depth discussions on how to address the challenges of the eight MDGs. In each roundtable, four selected representatives of civil society will participate.

The roundtables are organized as follows:

- Roundtable 1 – Addressing the challenge of poverty, hunger and gender equality
- Roundtable 2 – Meeting the goals of health and education
- Roundtable 3 – Promoting sustainable development
- Roundtable 4 – Addressing emerging issues and evolving approaches
- Roundtable 5 – Addressing the special needs of the most vulnerable
- Roundtable 6 – Widening and strengthening partnerships

The Civil society In the lead up to the Summit, civil society has been mobilizing around the world to make their voices heard in global discussions and among national governments on how to accelerate and sustain progress towards the MDGs. During the UN General Assembly's informal interactive hearings with NGOs, civil society and the private sector on 14- 15 June, civil society called for a global “MDG Breakthrough Plan” that focuses on an integrated and holistic approach to achieving the Goals, including progress on gender equality. Civil society has also been engaged with Member States in advocating for language in the negotiated outcome document for the MDGs Summit.

In an effort to make their positions heard more strongly at the Summit itself, civil society is organizing various side- and off-site events, some of which are organized in cooperation with governments and UN agencies. Although civil society did not have a formal role in negotiating the outcome document, these side events aim to bring about new partnerships, initiatives and actions among various stakeholders that will advance the MDGs beyond the Summit.

Stand UP, Take Action, Make Noise for the MDGs around the Glob: The World For World Organisation (WFWO) took action to raise public awareness and organised a special event to support for the eight MDGs focused on the STAND UP globally on 17-19 September 2010.

WFWO's Communications Team