



THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS and the United Nations Role

In September 2000, at the United Nations Millennium Summit, world leaders agreed to a set of time-bound and measurable goals and targets for combating poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, environmental degradation and discrimination against women. Placed at the heart of the global agenda, they are now called the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The Summit's Millennium Declaration also outlined a wide range of commitments in human rights, good governance and democracy.

At the International Conference on Financing for Development in Monterrey, Mexico, earlier this year, leaders from both developed and developing countries started to match these commitments with resources and action, signalling a global deal in which sustained political and economic reform by developing countries will be matched by direct support from the developed world in the form of aid, trade, debt relief and investment.

The MDGs provide a framework for the entire UN system to work coherently together towards a common end. The UN Development Group (UNDG) will help ensure that the MDGs remain at the centre of those efforts. On the ground in virtually every developing country, the UN is uniquely positioned to advocate for change, connect countries to knowledge and resources, and help coordinate broader efforts at the country level.

The world is making progress toward the MDGs—but it is uneven and too slow. A large majority of nations will reach the MDGs only if they get substantial support—advocacy, expertise and resources—from outside. The challenges for the global community, in both the developed and developing world, are to mobilize financial support and political will, re-engage governments, re-orient development priorities and policies, build capacity and reach out to partners in civil society and the private sector.

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan has asked United Nations Development Programme Administrator Mark Malloch Brown, as Chair of the UNDG, to coordinate the MDG campaign and country-level monitoring activities. This means working on four key dimensions:

Practical assistance in support of country priorities: The UN is helping to integrate the MDGs into all aspects of its work at the country level, in response to the priorities identified by each country. UN staff and country teams are working closely with a steadily expanding circle of partners who are supporting developing nations with practical advice and assistance in designing policies and programmes, building capacity and testing innovations, as these countries map out their own paths to reach the Goals.

Country-level Monitoring: UN agencies, the OECD Development Assistance Committee and, in many cases, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, are working to support MDG reports for every developing country. These reports, which are in a growing number of cases the product of collaboration between a country's government, the private sector and civil society, highlight where countries are on track to meet the Goals, where urgent efforts are needed, and how money is being spent. Nine MDG reports have been completed, about 40 are expected to be ready by the end of 2002, and nearly every developing country is planning to produce its first by the end of 2004.

Global Monitoring: These country-level reports will complement the UN Secretary-General's global reports on implementing the Millennium Declaration, the first of which will be presented to the General Assembly in October 2002. These global reports include a chapter on the MDGs and summary statistics for all the MDGs, aggregated at the global or regional level. Drawing on inputs from the entire UN family of agencies, funds, programmes and regional commissions, and from the World Bank, the IMF, the WTO and the OECD, the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs coordinates data analysis and maintains a comprehensive data basis of global level statistics.

Research leader: Currently being set up is the UN Millennium Research Project, which will generate new research and ideas by mobilizing networks of scholars from developing and developed countries, working with experts from within the UN system. Headed by Professor Jeffrey Sachs, the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the MDGs, this global effort will help identify what is needed—in terms of policy, expanded capacity, required investments and financing — for countries to meet all the Goals.

Advocate: The UN system and its international and civil society partners are aiming to spearhead a series of awareness-raising Millennium Campaigns within countries, based on national strategies and needs. In the developed countries, the campaigns' primary focus will be on galvanizing public opinion as a means to boost development assistance, trade, debt relief, technology and other support needed to achieve the MDGs. In the developing world, the aim is to build coalitions for action and help governments set priorities, including in their budgets, and use resources more effectively.

MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS TO BE ACHIEVED BY 2015

- **HALVE EXTREME POVERTY AND HUNGER**
1.2 billion people still live on less than \$1 a day. But 43 countries, with more than 60 per cent of the world's people, have already met or are on track to meet the goal of cutting hunger in half by 2015.
- **ACHIEVE UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION**
113 million children do not attend school, but this goal is within reach; India, for example, should have 95 per cent of its children in school by 2005.
- **EMPOWER WOMEN AND PROMOTE EQUALITY BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN**
Two-thirds of the world's illiterates are women, and 80 per cent of its refugees are women and children. Since the 1997 Microcredit Summit, progress has been made in reaching and empowering poor women, nearly 19 million in 2000 alone.
- **REDUCE UNDER-FIVE MORTALITY BY TWO-THIRDS**
11 million young children die every year, but that number is down from 15 million in 1980.

- **REDUCE MATERNAL MORTALITY BY THREE-QUARTERS**
In the developing world, the risk of dying in child-birth is one in 48. But virtually all countries now have safe motherhood programmes and are poised for progress.
- **REVERSE THE SPREAD OF DISEASES, ESPECIALLY HIV/AIDS AND MALARIA**
Killer diseases have erased a generation of development gains. Countries like Brazil, Senegal, Thailand and Uganda have shown that we can stop HIV in its tracks.
- **ENSURE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY**
More than one billion people still lack access to safe drinking water; however, during the 1990s, nearly one billion people gained access to safe water and as many to sanitation.
- **CREATE A GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR DEVELOPMENT, WITH TARGETS FOR AID, TRADE AND DEBT RELIEF**
Too many developing countries are spending more on debt service than on social services. New aid commitments made in the first half of 2002 alone, though, will reach an additional \$12 billion per year by 2006.