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**Statement by Mr. Olav Kjørven, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs
Norway**

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Mr. President,

Yesterday was a good day for all those who work day in and day out for human development, here and around the world. The honourable Secretary General Kofi Annan, the honourable Secretary of the US Treasury, Paul O'Neill and several others spoke eloquently and convincingly about the great benefits of investing more and better in people. They spoke about the imperative of investing more in people, particularly their health and education. I particularly welcome the specific commitments and results oriented targets presented by the Treasury Secretary. It is vital that we all establish clear commitments and targets, and that we seek to expand our commitments where that is clearly needed, and improve our targets wherever possible.

Norway has for many years allocated a substantial share of ODA to social sector development. We strongly supported the formulation, adoption and subsequent implementation of the 20/20 initiative for universal access to basic social services, which was approved at the Social Summit in Copenhagen in 1995.

But we need to do more. Let me first talk about education. As we see it, it is hard to overstate the impact of education on development. If poverty reduction is the overarching Millennium Development Goal, education can be termed an overarching millennium development means. My government has chosen education as the number one priority for our development efforts in the years ahead.

The education targets are vitally important in and of themselves. It is, after all, about setting people free. To allow them to fulfil their potential. But they are doubly important in the sense that education is also a means of achieving all the other development goals and targets. Kofi Annan said this so well yesterday. The education of girls is especially important. As far back as 1992 the World Bank found that girls' education is the development investment that yields the highest economic returns in the poorest countries. Nothing beats it. This has been confirmed by many other studies. We know this. But do we act accordingly? No, we don't.

Still 120 million children do not go to school. More than 880 million adults are illiterate. A majority share of these millions is girls and women. Eighty-nine countries are currently predicted to fall short of the Dakar goal of universal primary education by 2015. This is unacceptable. "Education for All" must be pursued vigorously by all of us. And, let's start with the girls, for a change.

First we have to look at the priorities, plans, and practices of the developing countries themselves; at how education is factored into national poverty reduction strategies. We must help build capacity at the national level.

Second, we have to look at what advice and support countries are getting in the field of education from the donor community. Are we providing sufficient support for capacity building? Are we coordinating our support sufficiently – without focusing too much on national flags? The answer is – in my view – no, we are not.

Third, we must make more effective use of the rights-based approach. Every individual has the right to education, including every single girl. The right to education is one of our most fundamental human rights.

Fourth, we must provide additional resources. The prime responsibility for fulfilling the right to education rests with the national governments. But, the Dakar Framework for Action affirms that no countries seriously committed to education for all shall be thwarted in their achievements of this goal by lack of resources.

Norway strongly supports the *EFA Fast Track Initiative* that the World Bank is now working on in cooperation with UNESCO, UNICEF and several bilateral donors. It involves concerted action to support low-income countries that have demonstrated commitment to the goal of universal primary education.

Mr. President,

I have spoken at length, about the crucial importance of education. This does not mean that I in any way underestimate the role of health for development. On the contrary - health and education are intimately linked. The cycle can be a vicious one, in countries where health and education services are lacking. Our challenge is to make it virtuous, positive circle. This point is very well brought out by Professor Sachs and his colleagues in their groundbreaking report on Macroeconomics and Health.

I am particularly struck by the report's affirmation that by 2015 eight million lives could be saved and 360 million dollars generated if the donor community and the developing countries together increase their expenditure on health by 66 billion dollars.

Norway supports the current emphasis in international health cooperation on diseases that are associated with poverty - HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. We also strongly support the inclusion of childhood and maternity-related interventions. I can't help feeling that, again, there is an element of gender discrimination in the fact that maternal health has not received the same attention as other health problems. Women must be given the highest priority in health policies.

However, the importance of investing in health systems over and above the interventions dealing with specific diseases can hardly be overemphasised. Broken limbs, burns, asthma, diarrhoea, malaria, parasites from contaminated water, skin infections, pneumonia – these are conditions that can be seriously debilitating. A narrow, vertical approach tailored to specific health concerns would not be very productive in this context. The setting of most developing countries requires us to address the whole health system, it requires a broad approach rather than a vertical intervention focusing only on one aspect without a sustainable system to deliver the services in the long run.

Real progress, sustainable progress, requires that we also go much beyond the health sector itself. Ill health is a result of complex conditions arising from such things as environmental degradation, malnutrition, lack of political stability and conflict, and lifestyle choices. Broad economic policies - also beyond the health sector - matter. And, Mr. President, this is why the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg is so crucial, also when it comes to health. We must get at the root causes of ill health, particularly for the poor. This requires real, political commitment in both North and South. The question is: do we have it?

The prime responsibility for fulfilling the right to education and health rests with the national governments. But, widening the scope of the Dakar Framework of Action, I would like to invite *all* donor countries to pledge that no country seriously committed to education *and health* for all will be thwarted in its efforts to achieve these goals by lack of resources.

Mr. President,

We welcome the progress made in the recent G-8 meeting in Canada in terms of the preparedness of the largest industrial economies to strengthen their efforts to fight global poverty. However, if we are to really deliver on the Dakar commitments and the MDGs, we must expect more from the G-8. Results orientation and resource commitments are not mutually at odds. They must go hand in hand.

We must maintain a high level of pressure to move all developed countries closer to the ODA target of 0.7 per cent of GNI. For its part Norway will increase its ODA to 1 per cent of GNI by 2005. We currently allocate more than 10 per cent to health and have decided to increase the share to education from the present 8 per cent to 15 per cent by 2005.

Now it is time for action. Now it is time to deliver on the basic Millennium Development Goals – on education and health for all.

Now it is time to use education and health investments as the major weapons in the war on poverty.

Thank you, Mr. President.