

**Substantive session of 2005**

New York, 29 June-27 July 2005

Item 2 of the provisional agenda\*

**Achieving the internationally agreed development goals,  
including those contained in the Millennium Declaration,  
as well as implementing the outcomes of the major  
United Nations conferences and summits: progress made,  
challenges and opportunities**

**Summary of the roundtable dialogues on progress, challenges and opportunities for  
achieving the internationally agreed development goals, held on 29 June 2005**

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**Dialogues on progress, challenges and opportunities for achieving the internationally agreed development goals – 29 June 2005**

**1. Roundtable dialogue on the eradication of poverty and hunger**

Chair: H.E. Mr. Gérard Latortue, Prime Minister of Haiti

Lead Discussant: H.E. Mr. Armand De Decker, Minister of Development Cooperation, Belgium

Moderator: Mr. Jacques Diouf, Director-General of FAO

Discussants: Ms. Charlotte Mclain-Nhalpo, South African Human Rights Commission/World Bank; Heads of delegations

Organizers: FAO, IFAD, WFP

**2. Roundtable dialogue on health**

Chair: H.E. Ms. Carin Jämtin, Minister for Development Cooperation, Sweden

Other Discussants: H.E. Mr. Eugène Camara, Minister of Planning, Guinea; Ms.

Thoraya Obaïd, Executive Director, UNFPA; Ms. Joy Phumaphi, Assistant Director-General for Family and Community Health, WHO; Mr. Victor Mari Ortega, Deputy Director, UNAIDS New York Office; Mr. Stephen Stedman, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General; Heads of delegations

Organizers: WHO, UNFPA, UNAIDS

**3. Roundtable dialogue on global partnerships and financing of the MDGs**

Chair: Dr. Ishrat Hussain, Governor, State Bank of Pakistan

Moderator: Mr. Carlos Fortin, Officer-in-Charge of UNCTAD; Mr. Stephano Manservigi, Director-General for Trade, European Commission; Mr. José Luis Machinea, Executive Secretary, UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean;

Respondents: Ms. Eveline Herfkens, Executive Coordinator of the MDG Campaign; Mr. Reinhard Munzberg, Special Representative of the IMF to the United Nations; Mr. Alhaji Bamanga Tukur, Executive President of the African Business Roundtable and Chairperson of the NEPAD Business Group; Ms. Melinda Kimble, Senior Vice President for Programmes, United Nations Foundation

Organizer: UNCTAD

**4. Roundtable dialogue on building state capacity to meet the MDGs: human rights, governance, institutions and human resources**

Chair: H.E. Ms. Tarja Halonen, President of Finland

Lead Discussant: Professor Anyang' Nyong'o, Minister of Planning and National Development, Kenya

Moderator: Mr. José Antonio Ocampo, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs,

Other discussants: Ms. Mehr Khan Williams, Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights, Prof. Rehman Sobhan, Chairman, Centre for Policy Dialogue, Bangladesh; Heads of delegations

Organizers: DESA/Division for Public Administration and Management and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

**5. Roundtable dialogue on Education and literacy**

Chair: H.E. Mr. Datuk Mustapa Mohamed, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department, Malaysia

Discussants: Mr. Peter Smith, Assistant Director General for Education, UNESCO; Ms. Geeta Rao Gupta, President of the International Center for Research on Women; Mr. Magdi Mehani Amin, Community Development Consultant, Egypt, Heads of Delegations

Organizers: UNESCO

**6. Roundtable dialogue on gender equality and the empowerment of women**

Chair: Mrs. Nilofar Bakhtiar, Adviser to the Prime Minister and In-charge for Women Development, Pakistan;

Discussants: H.E. Ms. Marcela del Mar Suazo Laitano, Minister in charge of the National Institute of Women of Honduras; Ms. Rachel Mayanja, Assistant Secretary-General and Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women; Ms. Debbie Budlender, Principal Researcher, Community Agency for Social Enquiry; Ms. Noeleen Heyzer, Executive Director, UNIFEM; Heads of delegations

Organizers: UNIFEM and DESA/Division for the Advancement of Women

**7. Roundtable dialogue on environmental sustainability**

Chair: H.E. Mr. Rogatien Biaou, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Benin

Discussants: H. E. Mme. Brigitte Girardin, Minister of Development Cooperation of France; Ms. Anna Tibaijuka, Executive Director of UN-HABITAT; Mr. Klaus Töpfer, Executive Director of UNEP; Heads of Delegations

Organizers: UNEP and UN-Habitat

**8. Roundtable dialogue on national strategies to achieve the MDGs**

Moderator: Mr. Mark Malloch Brown, Administrator of UNDP

Discussants: H.E. Mr. Sidi Ould Didi, Minister of Economic Affairs and Development of Mauritania; Mr. Masood Ahmed, Director-General for Policy and International, Department for International Development, United Kingdom, Heads of Delegations

Organizer: UNDP

### **Roundtable 1: Dialogue on Eradication of Poverty and Hunger**

#### **Lead Organizations: FAO, IFAD, WFP**

The Roundtable on “Eradication of Poverty and Hunger,” organized by FAO, IFAD and WFP, concentrated on the first Millennium Development Goal: eradicating extreme poverty and hunger. Following two introductory presentations, a lively discussion took place among participants from which several themes emerged:

- There is a serious imbalance in the world: in the presence of food surpluses and abundance, 853 million people do not have enough to eat.
- About 75% of the poor and hungry live in rural areas and earn a living from agriculture or related activities.
- Reducing hunger and poverty requires a twin-track approach : Programmes and policies to support the productive sectors, especially agriculture and rural development, combined with programmes to enhance immediate and direct access to food for the most needy.
- National governments in developing countries retain primary responsibility for reducing hunger and poverty in their countries assisted by international donors , organizations of the civil society and other stakeholders.
- Harmonization between donors and recipients and coordination among donors is a requirement to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of resources mobilized for hunger and poverty reduction.
- The right to food must be recognized as a fundamental human right, and governments should develop policies and development strategies centered on this basis;
- Developing countries, especially those in Africa, need assistance in the forms of ODA, debt relief, domestic resources as well as technical assistance and capacity-building in order to create or strengthen institutions and policies capable of responding to their citizens’ needs and to attract private investment, which is a pre-requisite for sustainable growth;
- The creation of a fair and conducive international trade environment, especially on agriculture, is essential for national growth and poverty reduction.
- The special needs of Africa were highlighted
- The critical need for employment generation was underlined for the success of poverty reduction strategies
- It was emphasized that reducing poverty and hunger is a precondition for the majority of the remaining MDGs, but that on the current trajectory, the hunger goal could only be met as early as 2050, well beyond the 2015 deadline. It was underlined that hunger has a devastating impact on the lives and livelihoods of people suffering from it : it reduces productivity and working capacity, it makes people susceptible to disease, prevnts children from learning. It thus compromises growth of entire economies. Alleviating hunger is a pre-condition for poverty reduction.

Reducing hunger and poverty requires a twin-track approach : Programmes and policies to support the productive sectors, especially agriculture and rural development where most of the poor derive their living need to be combined with programmes to enhance immediate and direct access to food for the most needy.

It is an unacceptable paradox that, in a world in which there is agricultural production sufficient to feed the entire population, more than 800 million remain hungry and malnourished, that obesity and waste co-exist with malnutrition and hunger. Developed countries have a strategic interest as well as a moral obligation to improve the quality of life of people in the

South. However, poverty reduction remains the ultimate responsibility of national governments, and structural reform could help governments to provide for the needs of their citizens. Such reform should include the participation of poor segments of society through participatory and democratic mechanisms wherever possible.

Speakers welcomed the **efforts taken by the Rome-based agencies**, FAO, IFAD and WFP, to combat hunger and malnutrition and emphasized how fundamental is the need for national food security programmes along with programmes to fulfill other basic needs such as health and access to safe drinking water.

There is a need for the **harmonization** of donor and domestic policies and resources in order to achieve better results. Greater consistency and coordination among developing countries as well as donors and international agencies is needed if we are to succeed in eradicating poverty. In this context, some speakers stated support for the **reform and strengthening of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)** to better execute its very important responsibility in reviewing progress toward the MDGs. ECOSOC's key role in harmonizing and coordinating consistent action was noted. The need for better coordination among multi-lateral and bi-lateral activities was also highlighted; FAO, IFAD and WFP are undertaking efforts to develop strategies to respond to this need.

The importance of access to work and **sustainable employment** was underscored. The prominence of agriculture as the main source of employment in rural areas was noted, and discussants outlined the need to put agriculture and agricultural policy as a high priority item on the policy agenda of national governments. Development strategies and economic policies that increase farm productivity above subsistence levels can provide both a sustainable source of income for farmers as well as provide for improved food security at a national level. This can only be achieved, however, if there is sufficient profit potential for farmers to engage in commercial agriculture. For this reason, commodity price volatility is an important factor in levels of food production in the South.

**Trade policy** is clearly an important component in fighting poverty and hunger. The creation of a fair and conducive international trade environment, especially on agriculture, is essential for national growth and poverty reduction. Developing countries' ability to respond to expanded opportunities need to be strengthened. One speaker emphasized the value of developing regional markets, such as ECOWAS, as a means by which to strengthen the agricultural sector in developing countries.

The need to change priorities in favour of the hungry using a **rights-based approach** was underlined. In this context the "Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right To Food in the Context of National Food Security" contain relevant issues that governments need to address in achieving food security. Implementation of the guidelines was recommended including framework legislation. In particular, what is required is the mobilization of the civil society, attention to the most vulnerable groups, employment generation, social safety nets and economic and social policies targeting the most needy.

Speakers emphasized the need for **democratic institutions** and the right legal and justice frameworks at the domestic level, and good governance in order to ensure access to food and support food production. The state role in protecting the most vulnerable was emphasized, as well as the need to take action to address disease, support pro-poor growth policies and stimulate the increase of agricultural productivity as well as to good governance, rule of law, democratic institutions that are responsive to the needs of the people; provide infrastructure, peace and

security; and protect human rights and gender equality. The hope was expressed that the new poverty reduction strategy processes will pay more attention to food security, agriculture and rural development. The role governments play in creating this enabling environment must be complemented by a vibrant civil society.

Speakers noted, however, that many developing countries do not have the administrative capacity to reform or to govern public aid received. They require **capacity- and institution-building**, assistance that can come through partnership with the North and through multilateral institutions. Such programmes must be appropriate to the needs of the country and its citizens. Selected regions and groups of countries – such as Sub-Saharan Africa and the LDCs – require a targeted and highly customized response.

Speakers noted that **African countries** have special needs and that many have made great progress in political and economic reform. NEPAD, which has made food security one of its priorities, has been successful in helping many citizens to secure their right to food with the full involvement of the African continent, a testament to the value of developing-country ownership of development activities in the context of international partnership. Speakers urged the further support of NEPAD, lauding it as a “special instrument.” Promoting agriculture and rural development should, as far as possible build on existing initiatives such as NEPAD with which international organizations should work.

**Financing for development** should address the important role of agriculture and rural development. The declining trend of public resources to those sectors should be reversed. Measures should be taken to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of development assistance. Despite the essential role of agriculture and rural development for poverty reduction, Official Development assistance in support of agriculture and rural development is extremely low compared to the cost of agricultural subsidization in the rich countries. Participants were reminded of the 0.7% of GNP financing commitment and developed countries were urged to fulfill their promise.

Participants warmly welcomed the recent pronouncements made by various donors and donor groups concerning a substantial increase in **Official Development Assistance** and the steps taken to increase its effectiveness and efficiency as expressed in the Paris declaration. Underscoring the need to double ODA in order to meet the MDGs, other innovative financing mechanisms, including the International Finance Facility proposed by the United Kingdom and a levy on airline tickets, were mentioned.

The role of the Group of Eight in working toward the MDGs, including reduction of poverty and hunger, was welcomed. In particular, its recent decision to cancel **debts** of some of the world’s poorest countries was praised. It was underlined that debt forgiveness must be used for development and poverty reduction purposes.

Even combined, aid and debt relief is not sufficient to produce sustainable development; additional private investment is necessary. Therefore, developing countries need to take steps to promote and attract **private investment**. Reducing bureaucracy, supporting a conducive legal and judicial environment and other similar actions will boost the confidence of potential investors.

**Employment generation** is critical for the success of poverty reduction strategies and it should permeate the objectives on many programmes and policies. The jobless growth phenomenon was pointed out. Obstacles which prevent the expansion of **private sector** activity should be removed. Private sector investment is critical. Small- and medium-sized enterprises

have a vital role in poverty reduction, as these are a source of employment and income, and their formation and support should be encouraged by government policy and microfinance initiatives.

The role that **women** play in reducing poverty and hunger was also highlighted. Women should be empowered through education, one aspect of which is providing primary education to girls. Women also need secure access to land.

The **vulnerability of agriculture and rural livelihoods** to disasters such as floods, droughts and other acts of nature was noted. The **links between conflict, poverty and hunger** were also highlighted. It was pointed out that many conflicts are not a product of ideology or political motives, but rather originate in an effort to claim power and resources. Typically the hungry and poor are the victims of those conflicts. States should be held responsible for protecting their citizens through appropriate mechanisms and sanctions should be used. Prevention of conflict should have high priority in pursuit of MDG1. Failing to do so will only result in large migratory pressures and North-South tension. Speakers expressed support for the proposed Peacebuilding Commission, noting its potential to assist those suffering from conflict, which include many of the world's poorest.

One speaker mentioned that income poverty is a very restrictive **indicator** and should be supplemented by other indicators reflecting for example employment status, education, nutrition and health status and participation in the political and social processes.

## **Roundtable 2: Ministerial dialogue on health**

### **Lead Organizers: WHO, UNFPA, UNAIDS**

Around 100 delegates, both from capitals and New York missions, senior staff from UN agencies and representatives from civil society participated in a lively roundtable dialogue on health in the context of the MDGs, on the occasion of the 2005 substantive session of ECOSOC.

In an interesting exchange between the panelists and with the audience, most of which were neither health experts nor working directly on health issues, a number of key issues for the achievement of the MDGs were highlighted, including the following:

- The situation in global health calls for **urgent action**, in particular if the MDGs and other international goals are to be achieved.
- What is required in the year 2005, in particular with a view to the September summit, is strong **political leadership** to push for the necessary political decisions to be made in order to achieve the health-related MDGs.
- The **window of opportunity** to achieve major breakthroughs on a number of key issues in development, security and human rights is closing quickly, and health – while finding broad but generally unfocused support – as one of the vital dimensions exemplifying the interdependence of these spheres, is currently not being addressed seriously.
- The inability of the world to address the plight of a great part of humankind also raises serious moral questions over **equity and fairness** in an age of unprecedented wealth and technological progress. Maternal mortality in particular is one area that illustrates most shockingly the widening health gaps in today's world: the risk of a woman in sub-Saharan Africa dying during childbirth is 1 in 16, compared to 1 in 3,800 in the developed world, highlighting that access to health services must be recognized as an issue of equity and citizenship, not only a technical matter. There is a need to place equity right at the centre of poverty eradication strategies.
- **Stronger equitable national health systems** are central to the challenge of scaling up services and proven, effective health interventions; in too many countries the health systems needed to address the many challenges don't exist or are on the point of collapse; building and strengthening national health system capacities is not easy and straightforward but has to be at the centre of national and international efforts.
- The lack of adequately trained **health workers** in most developing countries, including through migration to developed countries and the loss to HIV/AIDS, is a major obstacle to progress, including in the fight against HIV/AIDS, and a reason for grave concern; Participants expressed a sense of urgency to address the issue, both internationally and in the affected countries themselves. For Africa alone it is estimated that one million additional health workers are needed.
- **Reproductive health services** are an integral part of functioning health systems and must be strengthened in the interest of millions, in particular women and children. Currently, there exist deep inequities in access to reproductive health services between and within countries.



Universal access to reproductive health, including family planning, is essential for making progress on MDG 5 (Maternal Health) and requires sustainable and predictable financing. It was emphasized that without greater attention and resources to sexual and reproductive health and women's empowerment and gender equality, the health MDGs will not be achieved.

- The **pandemic of HIV/AIDS** continues to worsen despite positive initiatives and will only be brought under control if there is universal access to prevention, treatment and care as part of longer-term sustainable systems; In the long term prevention is essential in the fight against HIV/AIDS - not only within the health sector but across sectors and societies as a whole – as are efforts to improve access to antiretroviral therapy.
- Greater political **leadership** and investments are required for **women's empowerment** through education, legal rights and zero tolerance of gender-based violence which are central to the fight against AIDS; Integrating HIV/AIDS prevention and care efforts within reproductive health policies and programmes (and vice versa) is part and parcel of these efforts. Increasingly, AIDS becomes a disease primarily affecting women and young girls.
- Improving **nutrition**, especially of children and infants, is one of the key aspects – though often overlooked – for increasing the likelihood of children to survive and thrive.
- Consequences of **conflict** on societies is immense, including on the health of the affected populations, in particular the poor and most vulnerable; Post conflict situations require special **and more attention**, more effective and better coordinated approaches; given the burden of conflicts especially on women and girls, the extension of reproductive health and family planning services is important in these settings.
- The scaling up of interventions called for requires **significant new financial resources**, including from external sources and through innovative models as currently discussed; in the past neither international donors nor national authorities have given health strengthening the priority it requires.
- It was expressed that while the **primary responsibility** to provide services to those who need them lies with the state, it is important that all that can contribute to effective responses and the overall improvement of health outcomes are brought to the table.
- While the health challenges in development are most obvious and were the focus of the debate, there was also reference to the possibly profound consequences, both directly and indirectly, of new and re-emerging **disease outbreaks** such as a global flu pandemic, on the health of populations in all regions and countries; finding the right international mechanisms to prevent and respond to such challenges in an equitable way, is important.
- The tragic of the current **lack of political will** to address the challenge adequately is striking as all other necessary conditions are recognized to be present: we know what works and we have effective and proven interventions to do it.

The discussion ended with an urgent appeal to those representing governments to not only recognize the importance of addressing the challenges in health, but to also return to their offices and actively work on seizing the opportunity presented today and in the coming weeks.

**Roundtable 3: Dialogue on Global Partnerships  
and financing of the MDGs**

**Lead Organization: UNCTAD**

The roundtable focused on Millennium Development Goal 8 and had two themes: Resource Mobilization for Development and Partnerships for Development.

**1. Resource mobilization for development**

It was generally accepted that MDG 8 was about the responsibility of the international community in supporting developing countries in reaching goals 1-7. Many types of resources were discussed, particularly official development assistance (ODA), debt relief, trade and foreign direct investment (FDI).

**Official Development Assistance**

Quantifying ODA was a good starting point in determining the amount of support to the MDGs by donor countries. Many discussants commended the European Union for having set the target of reaching 0.7 % of GDP as ODA by the year 2015 and 0.56 % of GDP as ODA by 2010 and encouraged the rest of the donor community to follow suit. An increase in ODA was seen as crucial for the poorest countries while for middle-income countries issues such as trade and FDI were of more importance for overall development.

Although an increase in the quantity of ODA was seen as essential, the quality and modalities of aid was just as important for reaching the intended impact on the ground. ODA as it is currently disbursed is not highly oriented to the attainment of the MDGs. One discussant highlighted that debt relief was counted as ODA and so was humanitarian assistance. Although these areas are of great importance they do not necessarily contribute to the long-term sustainable achievement of the MDGs. Also, a large amount of ODA followed donor country national interests and was being spent on consultants, conferences and seminars. A large portion of ODA was donated to countries that did not have the biggest need for ODA. An increase in ODA was therefore not necessarily going to have an impact on the achievement of the MDGs. It was suggested that targets should be set for each donor in how and where they spend their ODA.

A considerable amount of time was spent discussing the appropriate allocation of ODA within recipient countries. Many discussants emphasized the need to spend ODA in sectors that would create economic growth and thereby the resources for subsequent investments in both social and economic sectors. ODA (including debt relief) would in this case be the foundation for future resources for growth and poverty reduction. This view was contested by others as an outdated paradigm. Spending on social sectors such as health and education was a prerequisite for the establishment of a sustainable economic growth sector in providing the foundations of a country's human capital. The economic sector identified as the most important for attaining the MDGs was the agricultural sector followed by the stimulation of small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

**Debt**

It was agreed that in the international discourse on debt the word itself had become seen as having a negative connotation. It was argued that debt could be a way of mobilizing resources as long as the debt was sustainable and was spent in income generating areas. It was at the same

time recognized that debt could be unsustainable. In Latin America for example debt represented 3% of GDP. The World Bank had confirmed that debt relief was essentially used for social purposes and it was strongly recommended that the released funds be used to create a balance between social investments and investing in a growing and developed economy so that a virtuous circle could be created that would generate new resources.

### **Foreign Direct Investments**

Participants posed the question of how to maximize the attractiveness of developing countries as well as making sure that FDI was useful for development. FDI was seen as having the potential of building infrastructure and providing basic services for development. It was emphasized that good governance and the rule of law securing predictability and transparency was essential for foreign capital to accrue. However, it was also highlighted that domestic investment and the stopping of capital flight was just as important.

### **Trade**

For many developing countries trade was more important than aid, especially for middle income countries. The agricultural sector employed a majority of people in poorer countries which was why progress in the Doha development round in the area of market access to and agricultural subsidies in developed countries were seen as essential for the development of the economic sectors in developing countries.

## **2. Partnerships for Development**

### **Public-private partnerships (PPPs)**

One discussant explained that there were three ways to deliver services to citizens: through a private effort, through a public effort or through a public-private partnership. With private delivery, one often get increased efficiency, better coverage but eventually a point would be reached where the profit motive of the company would conflict with the service goal of the government. Public delivery systems were often not efficient and service goals were therefore not reached. A subsidy would be necessary in those cases. Public Private Partnerships seemed to be an interesting alternative but the parameters for what such a partnership entailed would still have to be defined. A suggestion was that essential elements for successful public-private partnerships for development needed to include, among others, mutual goals and objectives; a mutual commitment to a common cause; choosing partners with the best possible expertise; trust and transparency between partners; open dialogue among partners; and mutual adherence to the criteria for success. There was a need to identify ways for all stakeholders to benefit from entering into a partnership.

One area of successful PPPs was microfinance. The microfinance sector was becoming more and more important as part of the larger capital market. Microfinance institutions have helped improve conditions for public services and have enabled communities to grow and thrive. Larger international actors had started to partner with civil society organizations in delivering microfinance products to especially women since women are most often the main economic actors in poorer countries. Supporting female entrepreneurship is an important way to contribute to the attainment of several MDGs. The large private sector partner provide the international connections and the expertise while the local public or civil society partner provide delivery on the ground. Another example was a United Nations Foundation supported partnership for immunization where lower child mortality rates had already been observed.

### **Donor-recipient partnerships**

The relationship between donors and developing countries was discussed as important for development efforts to have an impact. There was consensus on the need for coordination but developing countries are not in a position to coordinate the donors and many of the donors had different priorities. The national development strategies of developing countries are a starting point for both donors and recipients. For recipients, it means taking ownership and responsibility of national development, providing the necessary domestic resource mobilization as well as improving good governance and human resource mobilization. Donors, on their hand, should respect their partners' priorities and use the strategies as a point of entry and coordination. The difficulties of achieving ownership was highlighted by some developing country participants as there were differences in priorities on the national and local level. In order to effectively support national development strategies donors should, when possible, provide their aid through direct budget support and provide predictable multi-year commitments.

The following recommendations enjoyed broad support during the Roundtable:

- Donors should set targets for reaching 0.7% of GDP as ODA;
- Developing countries should have national development strategies with clear priorities;
- To increase aid effectiveness, donors should provide ODA within those national development strategies, preferably through national budgets;
- A balance between ODA to social and economic sectors respectively should be identified according the unique context of each country;
- The appropriate mix of resources (ODA, FDI and debt relief) should be determined according to each country's special circumstances.
- Debt relief should be provided as a foundation for economic growth.
- Developing countries should work towards maximizing their attraction of FDI through establishing good governance and rule of law.
- The international community should work within the framework of the Doha development round of the WTO to increase market access for developing countries to developed country markets as well as removing other trade obstacles such as export subsidies and tariff escalations.

**Summary of Roundtable 4: Building State Capacity to Meet the MDGs:**  
**Human Rights, Governance, Institutions and Human Resources**

**Lead organizations: Division for Public Administration  
and Development Management/DESA  
and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights**

The roundtable on "Building state capacity" focused on the cross-cutting issues of human rights, good governance, institutions and human resources which underpin the achievement of all MDGs.

The roundtable highlighted the mutually reinforcing relationship between the MDGs and other commitments contained in the Millennium Declaration, particularly human rights and good governance, and underlined the importance of strengthening institutional and individual capacities to meet the MDGs.

Key points raised during the discussion included:

- **The MDGs reflect and build upon the human rights agenda** in seeking to ensure an adequate standard of living for individuals, a commitment contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and international human rights instruments. It is important to see the MDG commitments not only in terms of producing development, but of implementing rights.
- **Human rights and the MDGs are mutually reinforcing** and complementary in their approaches. The MDGs support the realisation of human rights, and the protection of human rights is a precondition for sustainable achievement of the MDGs. Education and gender equality are good examples of this interaction: both are powerful tools for furthering development, as well as important goals in their own right. In both areas, states have obligations under international human rights law.
- **Human rights should be integrated into all development policies**, including poverty reduction strategies and national MDG plans. The essential elements of a rights-based strategy for achieving the MDGs are non-discrimination, participation and accountability.
- **Non-discrimination** involves identifying vulnerable and marginalised groups, such as indigenous peoples, minorities and persons with disabilities, and providing them with equitable access to services.
- Achieving **meaningful participation** is a challenging task but essential for ensuring that development is pursued in a just and equal manner, and that policies address the needs of the poor and marginalised. Participation should include the right to express one's opinions freely, freedom of assembly and association, the right to information and effective and equal access to justice.
- In order to ensure **accountability**, it is essential to build the capacities of specific rights-holders to claim their rights and of duty-bearers to fulfil their obligations.
- **Human rights and good governance are also interlinked.** The promotion of human rights requires firm and principled governance at all levels. At the same time, good governance can

be said to be meaningless without human rights. A conducive and enabling environment is also a precondition of economic and social development. Good governance should be seen as "MDG 9", and has been adopted as such in some national MDG strategies.

- **Strengthening democratic institutions and supporting civil society** are essential for ensuring meaningful participation, which is central to both human rights and good governance.
- Hierarchical governmental structures should be "**de-verticalised**" into democratic, horizontal institutions of governance. A democratic governance system is characterized by transparency of processes and accessibility of information.
- In order to strengthen civil society, **education and civic instruction** are essential. Special emphasis should be placed on providing primary instruction in local languages and building the capacities of the most marginalised. A society based on human rights must invest in the capacity of its citizens.
- **Sound economic and social policies** are an important aspect of good governance. These entail enhancing public financial management, encouraging employment creation and ensuring social cohesion. Practical steps in this area can include e.g. a "people's budgeting" approach and social auditing of public services by the poor. Decent work should be a central objective of national development strategies and access to economic opportunity should be facilitated, especially for the poor and marginalised.
- **Combating corruption**, which weakens institutions and diverts resources from development, is essential for all efforts to achieve the MDGs.
- An **enabling international environment**, including a more equitable trading system is needed to support national efforts to reach the MDGs. Regional initiatives, such as the African Peer Review Mechanism are crucial for identifying challenges and best practices.
- Building state capacity requires both **financial and human resources**. In terms of external financial resources, investments, ODA and debt relief are central. International governance relating to these issues should be enhanced and the access of developing countries to international financial institutions improved.
- **Investing in human capacity**, especially in the capacities of the most marginalised, through education and health-care, is vital for combating poverty and for achieving the broader goal of equitable social development. The positive aspects of migration should be taken into account in poverty eradication strategies.

Participants at the roundtable agreed that the problems in the areas of human rights, governance, institutions and human resources are by now well identified, as are some of the most effective solutions, but practical steps in addressing the challenges are still falling short of the desired results.

The discussion ended with a call to all governments to consider these issues carefully in the context of the September summit, and to continue policy dialogue between governments, among civil society representatives, and in broader fora combining all relevant stakeholders.

## **Roundtable 5 : Education and Literacy**

### **Lead Organization: UNESCO**

The Roundtable on education and literacy in a lively debate concentrated on addressing the challenges ahead in meeting the targets by 2015 not defining the problems we have grappled with over the past fifty years in education and describing in historical terms what measures and interventions have taken place. The focus had been for panellists to present options in overcoming the three major challenges which essentially are:

- How to promote a gender inclusive world through education based on the right to education to ensure that mutual respect is nurtured and developed?
- How to develop on a sustained basis, basic literacy for all with special emphasis on reading, writing and numeracy skills beginning with the promotion of early stimulation and learning of children through to secondary and higher education for economic growth, employment and sustainable development ?
- How to tackle the key ingredients of reform and accountability at the national and international levels to ensure that the goals set are met by examining the systemic problems of governance, policy coherence, partnerships and aid effectiveness?

Key elements and conclusions from the discussion included the following:

#### **The first missed goal for 2005 to ensure gender parity at the primary and secondary level should serve as an opportunity to reinvigorate our efforts and to increase aid for education**

Education is an essential human capacity and this missed opportunity should be a source of energy to fuel the resolve of the international communities and national governments and civil society to live up to their commitments and promises. While continuing the work in progress to achieve universal primary education, a greater emphasis should be placed on the provision of secondary education where not enough progress has been made in relation to primary education. Focussing on secondary education will provide the incentives not only for parents to send their children to primary schools but will increase the completion rates at the primary level as well. Further, gender parity will more likely be attained if there is an increased transition rate from primary to secondary.

#### **Increased investment in secondary education has a higher rate of economic returns both for society and the individual but more especially for women**

To ensure inclusion and access especially for the female gender there is the need to reduce the cost of secondary education to make it more affordable through the provision of scholarships/ bursaries specifically targeting girls in rural communities and marginalised or vulnerable groups. There is ample research evidence on the high correlation between level of education of women beyond primary schooling and women empowerment, lower fertility, reduced vulnerability to HIV/AIDS and violence, increased participation in the formal as opposed to the informal sector of the job market. However great emphasis was placed on locating schools closer to homes, ensuring flexibility in the school calendar and hours of schooling, improving the relevance and quality of education, encouraging the participation of girls in science and technology, and making schools more girl-friendly.

### **Increased investments in ensuring literacy outreach programmes for out-of-school youth and adults especially mothers**

Literacy competencies and skills for youth and adults especially mothers will reduce the high incidence of illiteracy and will break the cyclical chain of illiteracy through the intergenerational approach which promotes family literacy. Literate parents especially mothers will ensure the early stimulation of learning in the early years of their children, will enroll their children in primary schools and ensure the completion of their children's education at the primary level for a start. In addition, improving the literacy skills and competencies of both youth and adults has strong correlation with job opportunities and job creation that impact on socio-economic development and human security.

### **Greater coherence in policy reform and partnerships through increased coordination of UN agencies, other development partners and national governments in support of education to scale up successful initiatives to reach the goals of 2015**

A lot has been put in place already and although some successes have been registered in the education sector the realisation of MDGs and EFA goals by 2015 cannot be guaranteed especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, some parts of Asia and Latin America. More concerted effort is required especially among the UN agencies to work together in a more focussed manner for a more effective and results oriented integrated approach to development in general and education in particular. There is also the need for increased financing of the FTI, an already promising initiative that must be supported to respond to the needs of developing countries to meet the 2015 target not only in the identified areas of increased access and completion of primary education but in other areas of the EFA goals, early childhood education; adult and youth literacy; skills acquisition; secondary education, tertiary and higher education and quality related goals.

### **Ensuring education as a public good and country ownership of the education process**

National governments have the duty and responsibility to ensure effective domestic resource mobilisation and careful targeting of mobilised resources and aid to ensure inclusive education policies and practices especially of vulnerable groups and the female gender in benefiting from relevant and quality education for sustainable development. To this end special attention will have to be paid to:

- Issues of educational governance to curb corrupt practices and ensure internal and external efficiencies for economic growth and eradication of poverty. Here the participation and involvement of civil society, the private sector in partnership with governments and development partners is crucial and will foster greater transparency, accountability and community ownership
- Using innovatively research in science in developing more **effective schools** that focus more on **learning** and ensuring teachers understand the concept of learning how to learn towards a breakthrough in getting students to learn better and become autonomous learners, more interested in learning and their own self development
- Improving school systems that fail students thus leading to high incidence of failure, drop-outs and disenchantment among youth. Major change or shifts in the approach to education at country level is required without reinventing traditional modes of delivery that have become less effective and efficient
- Effective utilisation of education aid to build the required human resource capacity to develop coherent policies and plans and implementation strategies; train quality teachers and education supervisors and managers in adequate numbers to meet the demands of the



expansion of the education system and the challenges and opportunities that the new information and communication technologies (NICT) have to offer in reaching the MDG's and EFA targets

### **Recommendations**

- The need for increased donor coordination and harmonization to ensure aid effectiveness.
- The need for greater advocacy for national governments to give priority and greater prominence to education and literacy acquisition within national development frameworks and poverty reduction strategy programmes.
- The need to pay close attention to governance issues in education to ensure the effective delivery of goods and services to recipients and beneficiaries of education system.
- To ensure that education as a right and gender issues and HIV/AIDS prevention education are built into sector wide approaches that address the disparities and inequities within education systems.
- National governments should be provided with budgetary support to ensure that adequate provision is made for initial and continued in-service teacher training, and that teachers' salaries, welfare and status are given due consideration.
- The need for the quality and relevance of education to be dealt with alongside concerns for access and completion rates to ensure education for sustainable development and growth using combined modes of delivery including NICTs and ODL.
- The need for a continued call for a global response to the global problem of illiteracy and inadequate educational attainment may well be seen as the biggest security issue the world faces during this millennium. A sustained response is essential until targets are actually met.
- The Millennium Development Goals along with other development-related goals require a collective and urgent response if 2015 is not to simply provide another shift of dates to re-set the same goals. The response also would require careful resource targeting in favour of rural people, marginalized groups, people with disabilities, girls and women.

**Roundtable 6: Dialogue on gender equality  
and women's empowerment at the local level: think globally – act locally**

**Lead organizations: United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and  
Division for the Advancement of Women/DESA**

1. During the High-level round table Member states, representatives of the United Nations entities and non-governmental organizations exchanged experience and good practices on promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women at the local level within the context of the implementation of the Millennium Declaration and MDGs. The panel discussion highlighted the efforts of national machineries in Central America to mainstream a gender perspective into economic policies related to regional trade agreements, identified practical lessons of implementing gender-sensitive budgeting initiatives in Africa, and outlined achievements and challenges in using positive actions to increase women's political participation at local level in South Asia.
2. The discussants acknowledged that throughout the process of the implementation of the MDGs there had been a growing recognition that gender equality is important not only as a goal in itself, but also as a means to achieve other goals. CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly provide a solid framework for the work towards gender equality and the empowerment of women. Together with Millennium Declaration and MDGs, they constitute the basis for addressing the challenges of gender inequality, including in allocation of resources and improving accountability, in the context of the UN agenda for development, security and human rights.
3. The discussants agreed that achieving the successful implementation of these internationally agreed commitments requires translating them into concrete actions at the local level. Progress in achieving the MDGs will not be successful without establishment of strong local governance systems which contribute to local development and poverty reduction in a gender-sensitive way.
4. It was acknowledged that the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women in the context of achieving the MDGs require transformation in the distribution of power, opportunities and outcomes for both women and men. The process of transformation should be based on the following principles:  
Participation: equal participation of men and women in governance institutions and processes at the national and local levels.  
Partnership and alliance-building: harmonization of procedures and linkages among all stakeholders in order to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women, including with men.  
Transparency and accountability: particular, in the allocation of resources and accountability for public actions.  
Legitimacy: gender equality legislation and the promotion and protection of women's rights.  
Effectiveness: gender-sensitive policies and institutional structures.
5. National and local governments should demonstrate commitment to gender equality and the empowerment of women by creating an enabling environment for gender-sensitive development, including in relation to poverty eradication, curtailing of the HIV/AIDS pandemic

and reducing child and maternal mortality through mainstreaming gender concerns into policies and programmes.

The following recommendations were made to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women within the context of the implementation of Millennium Declaration and the MDGs:

- Increase women's political representation both at national and local levels, including through the use of positive measures.
- Continue awareness-raising about women's rights, and promoting and protecting women's rights through national and local legislation and policies.
- Promote human resource development at the national and local levels as well as building capacities of both women and men through:
  - providing equal access to primary and secondary education and health care, ensuring both sexual and reproductive health and rights;
  - eliminating gender inequalities in employment, including closing the wage gap and reducing discrimination of women in the labor markets;
  - ensuring women's property and inheritance rights, especially land rights;
  - ensuring women's access to capital and skills training;
  - combating violence against women;
  - improving infrastructure, including access to water, sanitation and energy, and delivering services that address the specific needs and priorities of women and men.
- Mobilize and allocate the required resources for gender equality policy formulation and implementation using gender-sensitive budgeting as a tool.
- Encourage and mobilize the efforts and the resources of the UN system and the Bretton Wood Institutions to support gender-sensitive human resource development at the local and national levels.
- Support and promote collection of data disaggregated by sex and development of indicators to provide information for policy-making, planning and resource allocation.

### **Roundtable 7: Dialogue on Environmental Sustainability**

#### **Lead organizations: UNEP and UN Habitat**

The Roundtable focused on the Millennium Development Goal entitled “Environmental Sustainability”. The Goal includes specific targets related to provision of water, improving the lives of slum dwellers, the integration of the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes, and reversing natural resources loss. Participants stressed that **environmental sustainability underpinned all the other Millennium Development Goals** and that it was the foundation on which sustainable economic development should be built. Participants noted that this was also the central conclusion of the UN Millennium Project Task Force on Environmental Sustainability.

The **slums** target is a challenge for current and future cities world wide. The rapid trend of urbanization, particularly in developing countries, and the limitations that cities face in absorbing influx of large numbers of people, result in the proliferation of slums lacking access to adequate shelter, and to basic services, such as clean water supply and adequate sanitation. Today, half the world’s population lives in urban areas. UN-HABITAT estimates that, in the year 2020, the slums population will grow from 1 billion to 1.6 billion people if no immediate measures are taken, including preventive measures to address current and new slums formation. Target 11 (“by 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers”), as proposed, is very restrictive and far too modest as it covers only a small fraction of slum dwellers. Therefore, a much broader and ambitious approach is needed to address the slum challenge. In recognition of this major challenge and in pursuance of CSD-13 decision, UN-HABITAT has been working closely with Member States to provide guidance, to monitor, and gradually attain the “Cities without Slums” target. The achievement of these development goals requires increased international financial assistance. UN-HABITAT’s slum upgrading facility and the Water and Sanitation Trust Fund are examples of financial mechanisms established to address the increasing funding needs. There is a need to recognize that the urban context and the adoption of pro-poor, gender-sensitive, inclusive and equitable urban policies are critical to meeting all the goals of the Millennium Declaration.

It was stressed that the 2005 World Summit should not focus only on United Nations reform, but retain the emphasis on the Millennium Development Goals and implementation of the outcomes of major United Nations conferences and summits. It was a cause for concern that the **early time bound targets agreed at the World Summit on Sustainable Development were in danger of not being met**. Reference was made to the report of the Secretary General “In Larger Freedom” (A/59/2005) which stresses that the world fundamentally depends on natural systems and resources for its existence and development and that efforts to defeat poverty will be in vain if environmental degradation and natural resource depletion continue unabated. These trends disproportionately impact the poor and increasingly make them more vulnerable to natural disasters and to conflict over land and other natural resources.

References were made to the impacts of **desertification and deforestation**, particularly on the rural poor, and the resultant rapid growth in urbanization. Particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, the region most in danger of not achieving the Millennium Development Goals, degradation of the environment was having a serious effect on agricultural production. The effects of climate change, exacerbating natural resources loss, were also stressed. In this context there was recognition that the private sector can make a valuable contribution by investing in

renewable energy sources and that most countries have now agreed to take steps to address the impact of greenhouse gas emissions.

There was a growing need for countries to **mainstream environmental considerations into their national planning processes** and to ensure coordination with particularly Ministries of Finance and Planning. With national priorities and strategies defined, the challenge remains building sufficient capacity at the national level and access to the necessary resources for effective implementation. It was important not to regard economic growth in isolation from environmental considerations. In this context poverty reduction strategies should focus on implementation at the local level. Urban populations already match those in rural areas and urban poverty was increasing at a rapid pace. The growth in slums has accelerated problems such as inadequate water and sanitation provision, illiteracy, lack of secure tenure and high child and maternal mortality.

In this regard it was important to address the slums target not only through efforts to upgrade existing settlements, but also to **counter growth of new slums**. It was stressed that the levels of urbanization were such that the Millennium Development Goals agreed to in 2000 would impact on only a small percentage of slum dwellers.

In the broader context there was agreement that countries were realizing that the premise of economic growth preceding environmental conservation could not be sustained. Environment should not be regarded as a luxury, but quite the contrary, as an **essential component in fighting poverty**. It was becoming more evident that the economic value of natural resources was being underestimated. In terms of carbon sequestration the economic value of forest cover was only now becoming obvious, and other examples included the destruction of natural habitat, such as mangroves and coral reefs, through natural disasters. The value of environmental services should therefore be recognized in terms of development assistance and also in terms of planning policies. UNEP and the World Bank have recently issued data on the financial values of natural resources and environmental services, illustrating the importance of sound management practices and adherence to multilateral environmental agreements.

There was growing concurrence that the current **environmental governance structure** was too decentralized and not sufficiently effective. Although not all countries agree on how the institutional structures governing the global environment should be changed, there was broad support for a new structure encompassing the existing multilateral instruments and having a strengthened financial basis, as well as more authority. It was also emphasized that any new structure should add value and build on existing strengths and competencies, and that the legal autonomy of the multilateral environmental agreements be retained.

**Roundtable 8: National Strategies to Achieve the MDGs**Deleted: TDeleted: Z**Lead Organization: UNDP**

The roundtable on *National Strategies to Achieve MDGs* was organized by United Nations Development Programme for the 2005 ECOSOC High Level Segment on “Achieving the internationally agreed developing goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration, as well as implementing the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits: progress made, challenges and opportunities”.

Panelists were asked to comment in response to the following four questions:

- What are the key elements of MDG-based development strategies that countries need to prepare to plan the needed public investments to achieve the MDGs?
- How do donors need to organize themselves and their support to effectively support MDG-based national development strategies?
- What role should the UN system including the World Bank and IMF play in supporting the preparation and implementation of MDG-based national development strategies?
- Which decisions need to be taken at the September World Summit to allow all countries to prepare and implement MDG-based development strategies?

**Key elements to mobilize public investments:**

- Governments need to introduce factors which mitigate risks for investors and to consider how to quantify structures and products which would generate those investments;
- Quality data is an important aspect of good decision-making, as is an integrated process involving all ministries, not just the sectors particularly identified with the various MDGs;
- A vital aspect of successful implementation will be multi-year planning and commitment of funds across that time horizon.
- The “quick wins” identified in the Millennium Project report should not become the basis for new global issue-specific funding mechanisms or facilities;
- Nor should “quick wins” be used as the sole vehicle to mobilize funds and channel resources at the national level.

**Donor support for MDG-based national Strategies**

- Successful implementation of MDG-based national strategies requires broad based support at the national level, by parliaments, local authorities, civil society and the population as a whole; the challenge to Governments is how to mobilize this support;
- There is a need for increased donor flexibility, as donors are resistant to giving up their own priorities in support of the recipient government’s priorities, and for developing countries to

improve the quality of their national strategies, which will also help to secure more donor support for these strategies;

- Donor support should be a multi-year commitment and aligned with both the national budgetary and political cycle;
- This alignment is an important element in terms of building democracy and good governance, allowing for the continuing recognition of national choices as expressed in the national political debate;
- Donors need to commit to a programme rather than a project-based approach.
- Aid need to include allocation of support for capacity building to enhance the capacity of developing countries to programme and manage their resources, including aid.
- The trend has been to reward good performers; however, there is an increasing awareness that over 40% of people living in poverty live in countries with weak institutional priorities. In the case of these countries, a more realistic set of priorities are required regarding what kind of change can take place in the short term and probably a less expansive view of the priorities which can be set and achieved.

#### **Role of the UN system and the World Bank in the preparation and implementation of national development strategies**

- The question is how to ensure that the competence existing in the UN-system and the multi-laterals really makes a difference;
- UNDP is the organization which assists developing countries in elaborating their national strategies;
- Elaborate policies which are focused on the gaps and elaborate strategies which are truly oriented towards attaining the MDGs.

#### **Recommendations for Summit decisions**

- Establish a mechanism, within the UN, to monitor and evaluate the implementation of commitments by both donors and developing countries;
- This mechanism should be independent and expanded to all countries benefiting substantially from increased aid;
- All Governments should be urged to prepare MDG-based needs assessments, which will assist in identifying the necessary areas for investments and areas from which funds can be redistributed.
- Achievement of the MDGs by 2015 requires that the international community maintains a global vision, not restricting their focus to any particular set of issues or countries. Middle income countries continue to face great challenges in achieving the MDGs but can also transfer valuable lessons learned. South-South cooperation is a useful mechanism for sharing this know-how across States and regions.