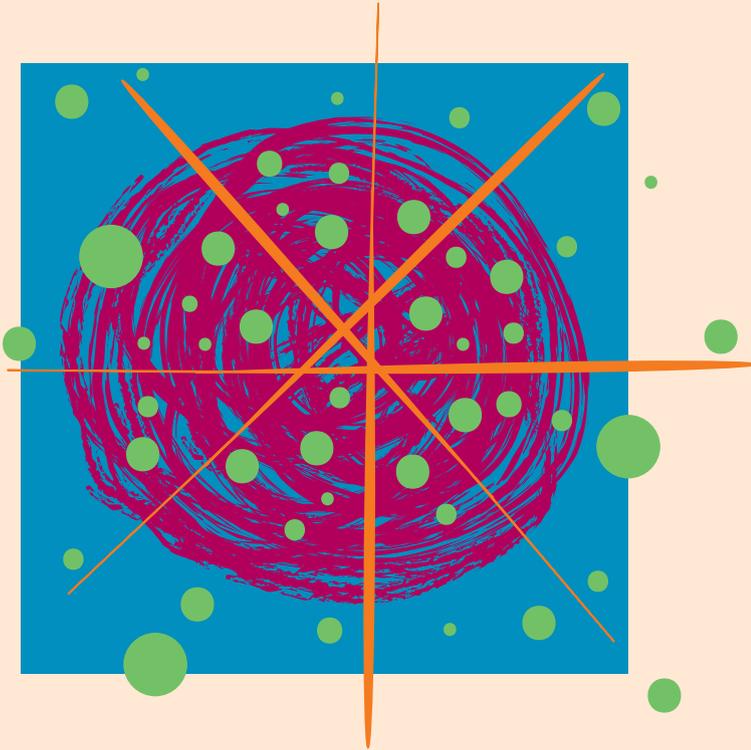


Economic &

Social Affairs

The United Nations Development Agenda: Development for All



United Nations

Department of Economic and Social Affairs

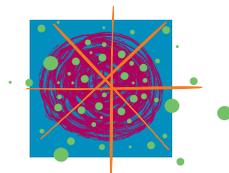
The United Nations Development Agenda: Development for All

Goals, Commitments and Strategies
agreed at the United Nations world
Conferences and Summits since 1990



United Nations

Preface



The historic United Nations conferences and summits held in the past two decades generated an unprecedented global consensus on a shared vision of development. These remarkable participatory processes, and the array of development goals that were agreed through them, laid the groundwork for the Millennium Summit, at which a series of challenging time-bound goals and targets were adopted. Many were later collated as the Millennium Development Goals, which have succeeded in galvanizing an exceptional momentum to meet the needs of the world's poorest.

This comprehensive set of development goals, of which the MDGs are an integral part, has come to be called the United Nations Development Agenda. It serves as the internationally shared framework for development—for action at the global, regional, and country levels. The Agenda encompasses inter-linked issues ranging from poverty reduction, gender equality, social integration, health, population, employment and education to human rights, the environment, sustainable development, finance and governance. It includes as well systemic issues, such as the differential impact of globalization, inequalities among and within countries, and greater participation of developing countries in global economic governance. And it also addresses the question of inter-linkages between development and conflict.

Two elements have permeated the content and character of the Agenda since its inception. First is a fundamental concern for equity and for equality of all persons, as human beings and as citizens. In my eyes, it is this struggle for equity and for equality that makes the United Nations so valuable. It is also, in many ways, what brings civil society to rally around the UN's participatory processes. This points up the second essential element: partnership. The conference process has engaged all the key stakeholders: governments, UN system organizations, other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, civil society, and the private sector. Moreover, the process has produced a global partnership for development, with a framework for mutual accountability, which is now recognized as critical for advancing progress towards all the development goals.

This publication seeks to share the wealth of the United Nations Development Agenda in a friendlier format for stakeholders of all sorts. It reviews the decisions of the major conferences and summits held between 1990 and 2005 in an integrated manner and draws implications for current and future development strategies. Above all, it should serve to make the conference and summit concepts and outcomes more accessible and more easily integrated to inform public discourse, policy debate and democratic decision-making on development issues.

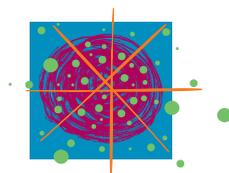


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Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs

June 2007

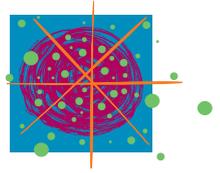
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1



Goals and Commitments

The first paragraph of the Charter of the United Nations expresses the determination of the peoples of the world to ‘promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom’ and to ‘employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples’. Article 55 expands on these purposes:

With a view to the creation of conditions of stability and well-being which are necessary for peaceful and friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, the United Nations shall promote:

- a.* higher standards of living, full employment, and conditions of economic and social progress and development;
- b.* solutions of international economic, social, health, and related problems; and international cultural and educational cooperation; and
- c.* universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all.

The world conferences and summits since 1990 have been the best attempt in the history of the United Nations to give concrete content to these objectives of the UN Charter. Although UN forums had long been the locus of policy debates, the conferences and summits of the past two decades were exceptional in responding to calls by leaders from many countries for the United Nations to more actively adopt the normative role outlined in the Charter by defining values, setting goals, articulating strategies and adopting programmes of action in the different dimensions of development. They reflect, in turn, the fact that the UN is the political heart of the international system and—

thanks to its now universal membership—the international organization with the greatest legitimacy.

Since its creation, one of the main aims of the United Nations has been to support and protect the disadvantaged, the weak and the vulnerable. Such conditions of adversity occur in a wide variety of forms—from economic deprivation to social exclusion, lack of choices and even lack of freedom—and at all levels—from continents to countries, regions within countries, communities and individuals. One of the over-arching purposes of each of the world conferences was to agree on remedies to these inequities. Within each Conference's specific area of interest, they all focused on the need, indeed the global responsibility, to address various inequalities by improving the situation of the poorest, weakest and most vulnerable segments of the world community.

In this sense, it is perhaps symbolic that the first of all the summits focused on children. Late in the 1980s, UNICEF proposed holding a World Summit for Children, and six countries—Canada, Egypt, Mali, Mexico, Pakistan and Sweden—initiated its planning. The Summit was organized with the support of UNICEF, the UN Secretariat and other UN agencies, and was held under the auspices of the UN Secretary-General. One hundred and fifty-nine governments attended, including 71 Heads of State or Government. A World Declaration and a Plan of Action for the survival, protection and development of children were adopted.

The Declaration adopted by the Children's Summit made ten commitments, including: ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child; enhancement of children's health through provision of clean water, sanitation and eradication of hunger; strengthening the status of women; respect for families; reduction of illiteracy; amelioration of the plight of child victims of racial discrimination, foreign occupation, exploitation, displacement and disasters; protection of children from the scourge of war; protection of the environment; and an attack on poverty. The Summit also endorsed seven explicit goals including reduction of infant and child mortality by a third during the following decade and of maternal mortality by half; universal access to safe drinking water and sanitation; universal access to basic education and completion of primary school by at least 80 per cent of primary-school-age children; halving adult illiteracy by 2000; and protection of children exposed to armed conflict. The Plan of Action adopted policy recommendations for working towards the goals.

GLOBAL CONFERENCES AND SUMMITS	
<i>Event</i>	<i>Year</i>
Children	1990
Education for All	1990, 2000
Least Developed Countries	1990, 2001
Drug problem	1990, 1998
Food Security	1992, 1996
Sustainable Development	1992, 2002
Human Rights	1993, 2001
Population and Development	1994
Small Island Developing States	1994, 2005
Natural Disaster Reduction	1994, 2005
Women	1995, 2005
Social Development	1995, 2005
Human Settlements	1996, 2001
Youth	1998
Millennium Summit	2000, 2005
HIV/AIDS	2001
Financing for Development	2002
Ageing	2002
Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries	2003
Information Society	2003, 2005

The Children's Summit model of adopting a declaration, including goals and commitments, and a plan of action set an example followed by the succeeding UN world conferences. As the conferences proceeded, there was a tendency for increasingly explicit commitments to be made, with time-bound targets and more extensive plans for national and international implementing action. This is impressive, for most countries were represented at the world conferences with delegations that were normally led either by serving Heads of State or Government, or by the minister responsible for the issue being discussed.

Initially, however, the conferences were not seen as a collective, even though all were convened by the General Assembly. Each had its origins in separate intergovernmental processes, some of them going back years, even decades before. By the mid-1990s, however, it was clear that something special and wider was at work, with these conferences, one after another, each focusing on a different dimen-

sion, but providing as a group a comprehensive vision of development. For while each had a distinct focus, they reinforced each other, as the issues they dealt with were inevitably inter-linked. Together, they articulated a coherent and comprehensive strategic framework: the United Nations Development Agenda.

For example, the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), known as the Earth Summit, held in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992, aimed to rethink economic development, to find ways of halting the destruction of irreplaceable natural resources and constraining greenhouse gas emissions and other sources of pollution. The Rio Declaration on Environment and Development defined the responsibilities of states to take full account of the environmental impact of their economic policies. Agreed policies included systematic scrutiny of production to control toxic outputs; seeking alternative sources of energy to replace fossil fuels; a new reliance on public transportation; and ways of coping with the growing scarcity of water. The principal message of the comprehensive programme of action, Agenda 21, was that a transformation of attitudes and behaviour was required to bring about sustainable development. Two legally binding Conventions, on Climate Change and Biological Diversity, which had been negotiated before the conference, were opened for signature. The “Forest Principles” adopted at the Summit, outlined a framework for sustainable management of all types of forests.

The Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995—the fourth of its kind but the first real Summit—is widely regarded as the point of reference for the international agenda of gender equality and the empowerment of women. The Declaration and Platform for Action adopted at the Conference is the most thorough document ever produced by a United Nations conference on the subject of women’s rights. It focuses on 12 critical areas of concern and identifies strategic objectives and concrete actions to be taken by Governments, the international community, NGOs and the private sector to eliminate discrimination against women and achieve equality between women and men. These are: women and poverty; education and training of women; women and health; violence against women; women and armed conflict; women and the economy; women in power and decision-making; institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women; human rights of women; women and the media; women and the environment; and the girl child. A powerful agenda for the empowerment of women, the

Platform for Action highlights the role of the gender mainstreaming strategy and calls for the systematic integration of gender perspectives in all policies and programmes. The twenty-third special session of the GA on “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century”, confirmed that the Beijing Platform for Action remains the reference point for governmental commitment to women’s advancement and gender equality.

The World Summit for Social Development, held in Copenhagen in March 1995, focused on poverty reduction, employment growth and strengthening social integration. The Social Summit adopted ten commitments including: creating an economic, political, social, cultural and legal environment that would enable countries and peoples to achieve social development; eradicating absolute poverty in the world through decisive national actions and international cooperation by a target date to be set by each country; promoting the goal of full employment as a basic policy goal; promoting social integration; achieving equality between women and men; attaining universal and equitable access to education and primary health care; and increasing financial resources for social development. The five chapters of the Programme of Action articulate a detailed strategy for implementing those commitments. These are ambitious goals and programmes and yet they were adopted by the largest meeting of national leaders ever held to that point (the Social Summit was attended by 117 Heads of State and Government). The Copenhagen Declaration was a clear indication that priorities were changing and that there was a determination that social, economic and environmental goals would be integrated and have equal weight. It was the start of a global campaign to end desperate poverty, a campaign equivalent to that for the ending of slavery. But as a leading delegate said in the concluding negotiating session, ‘Now we have to walk the talk’.

A feature of these development commitments is that they involve improvements in total human well-being, far more than, though inclusive of, the growth of national income. They are aimed at movement towards some of the core purposes which Member States set for themselves and the UN in the Charter. They are responsive to the preferences of the peoples represented by governments for improvements in the quality of life and in the services which contribute to that. While economic growth is one of the necessary conditions for the improvements sought, it is not the only one: other policies are also

required to directly increase capacity for all to contribute to the spread and growth of human well-being in all its dimensions.

The UN world conferences focused not only on children's rights, sustainable development, social development and gender equality, but also on human rights, population and development, human settlements, food, education, trade, finance for development, the information society, youth, ageing, vulnerable countries, reducing natural disasters, and prevention of crime—all from the perspective of human well-being. Each of these conferences demonstrated the universality of concern about the issues in question and recognition of the imperative of renewing international cooperation for development. Each of them set international goals and benchmarks and recommended national and multilateral policies. Each adopted commitments unique to its area of focus, and reiterated previously agreed commitments essential to achievement of the goals.

The International Conference on Finance for Development held in Monterrey, Mexico in March 2002 was notable for the breadth of its agenda; the extent of the collaboration among all parts of the UN system in the preparation, including the Bretton Woods institutions; and also the participation, in consultation with Member States, of a wide range of business and NGO representatives and other civil society organizations. In the Monterrey Consensus, governments committed themselves and the multilateral system to action on domestic resource mobilization, private resource flows, Official Development Assistance (ODA), trade, debt, and governance of the global economic system. The Secretary-General wrote that 'The consensus reached in Monterrey reflects a landmark global agreement between developed and developing countries, in which both recognize their responsibilities ... Civil society groups and private sector representatives were there in force, energizing the process by offering ideas and forging partnerships for the future'.

Two world conferences, the 2000 Millennium Assembly and the 2005 World Summit, were global in both attendance and agenda. The Heads of State and Government gathered at the UN Headquarters in New York in September 2000 to reaffirm their 'faith in the Organization and its Charter as indispensable foundations of a more peaceful, prosperous and just world'. Their Declaration had the political authority of being adopted by leaders from 189 countries. Values considered by them to be essential include freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance,

respect for nature, and shared responsibility. Their Declaration states that ‘Global challenges must be managed in a way that distributes the costs and burdens fairly in accordance with basic principles of equity and social justice’. The goal of cutting serious poverty in half by 2015, first adopted by the 24th special session of the United Nations General Assembly on Social Development, held in Geneva in June 2000, was endorsed by the Millennium Assembly and later became part of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The MDGs are a summary of some of the main commitments of the Millennium Summit and are an integral part of the UN Development Agenda. In addition to the overarching goal of halving serious poverty, the MDGs include universal primary education, gender equality, targets for reduction in child and maternal mortality, combating disease, ensuring environmental sustainability, and building a global partnership for development, with a framework for mutual accountability among developing and developed countries and engaging other key development partners, such as UN system organizations, other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, civil society and the private sector. Since their adoption, the MDGs have become the framework for development cooperation, not only of the UN but also by other international organizations and bilateral donors.

The 2005 World Summit was designed as a combined follow-up summit to the Millennium Assembly and to the other world conferences. The Summit outcome’s section on development begins by saying unequivocally that ‘We strongly reiterate our determination to ensure the timely and full realization of the development goals and objectives agreed at the major United Nations conferences and sum-

THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS	
Goal 1:	Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
Goal 2	Achieve universal primary education
Goal 3	Promote gender equality and empower women
Goal 4	Reduce child mortality
Goal 5	Improve maternal health
Goal 6	Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
Goal 7	Ensure environmental sustainability
Goal 8	Develop a Global Partnership for Development

mits ...' (para. 17). This means that all the internationally agreed development goals and objectives have the imprimatur of both the conference at which they were first agreed and of the 2005 Summit. The Summit indeed emphasized 'the vital role played by the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields in shaping a broad development vision and in identifying commonly agreed objectives ...' (para. 18).

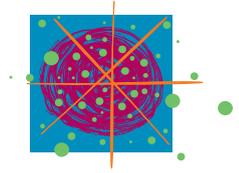
The Summit achieved a number of other significant advances. One major example is putting full and productive employment and decent work for all at the forefront of the UN Development Agenda. Another is the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) by giving it new functions, including two mechanisms to strengthen accountability for keeping development commitments: the Annual Ministerial Reviews of progress in implementing the development goals and the Development Cooperation Forum, which will bring all stakeholders together to discuss the various forms of development cooperation and its effectiveness in supporting achievement of the development goals.

A fundamentally important feature of all the conferences is their political authority. They were attended by large numbers of Heads of State and Government and relevant ministers. Preparatory processes were informed by highly professional advice, but, in the end, the agreements reached were based on the values and priorities of national governments. They were the result of consultative political processes and hard negotiation by representatives of governments, who reflected the interests of their citizens, who in many countries had engaged in national consultation processes leading up to the conferences. Given the diversity of interests, the process of negotiation was often prolonged. This meant that all declarations and programmes were compromises, never exactly reflecting the position of any single country or group of countries, or the victory of one ideological position over others. The final declarations were therefore consensual documents reflecting the diversity of views. This, together with the openness of the discussions—the transparency and accountability of the processes, and the universality of attendance—means that their results have a high degree of credibility and authority. The extent of political engagement and participation gives the outcomes legitimacy, which recommendations from experts alone cannot offer.

Adding further to this legitimacy is the growing voice of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and individuals in shaping development discourse, who attended and participated in the world conferences in strikingly large numbers. The Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in September 1995 was the largest: an estimated 35,000 NGO representatives participated in the Conference, making it the most highly-attended UN Conference on record to date. Such participation made clear that the UN is not just the preserve of governments; that the first phrase of the Charter, 'We the peoples', is not empty. Such gatherings and their preparatory processes were major mobilizing events for generating the changes being sought, for strengthening governmental, organizational and individual commitments and establishing and strengthening networks of cooperation for change. Media reporting was also a valuable influence on public attitudes.

This document draws together key elements of the major outcomes from all these world conferences which together articulate the United Nations Development Agenda, underscoring their contemporary and future relevance. The imperatives for sustaining national and international action for development in its economic, social and environmental dimensions are clear. Repeated renewal of commitment to promotion 'of social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom' is a necessity for continuing the struggle to find ever more effective means of achieving these ends.

2



National Development Strategies

National Ownership of Country Strategies

The principal and most consistently articulated recommendation of the world conferences was that countries must take full responsibility for their own development. National responsibility for national development is the necessary consequence of sovereignty. The Monterrey Consensus states that ‘Each country has primary responsibility for its own economic and social development, and the role of national policies and development strategies cannot be overemphasized’ (para. 6). National development strategies and policies are therefore critically important. This was reflected most recently at the 2005 Summit when Member States agreed on a target date of 2006 for all developing countries to adopt and start to implement comprehensive national development strategies to achieve the internationally agreed development goals and objectives, including the MDGs.

The automatic corollary of that principle is that each country must be free to determine its own development strategy. It is essential that all donors and lenders accept the principle of country ownership of national development strategies. This implies the acceptance of the principle that development strategies should not only be attuned to country circumstances, but also be prepared and implemented under the leadership of the governments of the countries themselves. The 2005 World Summit also acknowledged, in this regard, that all countries must recognize the need for developing countries to strike a balance between their national policy priorities and their international commitments.

National medium- and long-term development strategies generally include national goals, targets, timeframes and indicators of achieve-

ment tailored to each country's specific conditions and priorities. Such strategies commonly set out a trajectory for achieving the proposed goals, and identify the policies, institutions, investments and other actions necessary to achieve them, together with costing and schedules for implementation. Central to good governance is the national capacity for setting priorities and decision-making in ways directly accountable to voters. Such frameworks are most effective when they include measures to maintain peace and advance social justice, including through respect for human rights.

Integrating Economic, Social and Environmental Policy

A second repeated theme of the world conferences was the importance of securing coherence. Although the thematic conferences focused on particular issues, they each also touched on other areas of development since there are strong inter-relationships among all areas, while the two global summits in 2000 and 2005 brought all these issues together into a consensual UN Development Agenda.

However, such coherence is difficult to achieve in practice. The world conferences addressed this problem by explicitly recognising the diversity of high priority goals, while at the same time arguing for attention to the particular focus of their meeting. So, both social and environmental conferences acknowledged that economic development was crucial to economic security, but argued that human well-being also required recognition of the imperatives for social progress and ecological sustainability. For example, Principles 3 and 4 of the Rio Declaration state that 'The right to development must be fulfilled so as to equitably meet developmental and environmental needs of present and future generations. In order to achieve sustainable development, environmental protection shall constitute an integral part of the development process and cannot be considered in isolation from it'. Another example is Commitment 8 of the Social Summit: 'We commit ourselves to ensuring that when structural adjustment programmes are agreed to they include social development goals, in particular eradicating poverty, promoting full and productive employment, and enhancing social integration'. Of course, the difficulty of realizing these principles is in the detail of applying them, which inevitably involve battles over specific national policies and concrete projects.

The world conferences all agreed that national institutions responsible for preparing these national development strategies should ensure, from the earliest stage, that gender mainstreaming is integrated into all policies, programmes and projects. The responsible agencies may well require additional human and financial resources to fulfill this task. Implementation of this commitment would ensure that the empowerment of women and their full participation on an equal basis with men, in all areas of life, at all levels and in each and every aspect of development, would be a feature of every country's development strategy. Gender analysis is an essential tool for integrating gender equality into the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all development strategies, policies and programmes and ensuring that women's interests and concerns are fully and explicitly taken into account. All the goals and all the activities proposed to achieve them apply to and involve women and men equally. To this end, women should have the opportunity to participate fully and equally in all decision-making, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Gender-disaggregated data and information facilitate these processes.

The Enabling Framework: Peace, Good Governance and Human Rights

One dimension of the international partnership forged through the global conferences was agreement on the conditions that developing countries themselves need to foster in order to ensure that more specific development actions—including support from the international community—bear fruit. The conferences identify a wide range of economic, social, political and other conditions that are an essential part of an enabling environment for development. For example, the Political Declaration of the 24th special session of the GA on further initiatives for social development included recognition that ‘The maintenance of peace and security within and among nations, democracy, the rule of law, the promotion and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development, effective, transparent and accountable governance, gender equality, full respect for fundamental principles and rights at work and the rights of migrant workers are some of the essential elements for the realization of social and people-centred sustainable development’ (para. 5). Many of

these necessary conditions—such as ensuring human rights—are universally recognized as desirable goals in themselves.

The global conferences took place during a period when there were a number of intra-national conflicts, mostly in developing countries. In many cases, political and social exclusion and economic deprivation within countries gave rise to unrest that ranged from civil disorder to terrorism or civil war. The immediate result was substantial loss of life, large population displacements, destruction of property and infrastructure and damage to the country's institutions of government. The human suffering was immense and the setback to development severe.

As these events demonstrated, development is not possible without peace and security, but successful development also contributes to peace and security by reducing some of the tensions that give rise to conflict. Although there are two way interactions between peace and development, resolving conflict and avoiding violence within a society are necessary preconditions for development. A primary goal of all governments has to be peace and security within their borders. In countries where there has been conflict recently, governments must prevent the recurrence of conflict, undertake rehabilitation and reconstruction, and rebuild society in order to ensure that development efforts yield the maximum results. The 2005 Global Summit recognised 'the need for a coordinated, coherent and integrated approach to post-conflict peacebuilding and reconciliation' by establishing the Peacebuilding Commission. The Commission's purpose is to 'focus attention on the reconstruction and institution-building efforts necessary for recovery from conflict'.

Promotion of democracy was one of the explicit commitments of many of the world conferences. The 2005 Summit affirmed the universal value of democracy as a means of ensuring the participation of people in issues affecting their lives. There was recognition that there are many forms of democracy, and that respect for sovereignty and the right of self determination mean that each country has the responsibility for choice about the form it adopts. The Summit agreed to strengthen UN capacity to respond to Member States requesting assistance.

Succeeding world conferences have given increasing attention to the need for good governance in securing successful development, but there has not been a conference dedicated specifically to the subject,

although governance and public administration were discussed at the Fiftieth Session of the General Assembly. Coupled with the outcomes from the conferences, this meeting provided an agreed agenda for action by governments in the area of governance. The 2005 World Summit underlined the need for countries to enjoy good governance and the rule of law in order to achieve sustained economic growth, sustainable development, and the eradication of poverty and hunger.

Good governance comprises the rule of law, effective State institutions, transparency and accountability in the management of public affairs, respect for human rights, and opportunities for all citizens to participate in the decisions that affect their lives. As a first step to sound governance, all countries need constitutional and administrative laws that provide for different branches of government, including a legislative branch and an independent judiciary. To ensure the rule of law, promotion of a culture of lawfulness is essential, enforced through a system of crime prevention and criminal justice that is effective at crime-control, but is also just and protective of human rights.

As recognized in the Monterrey Consensus, apart from providing a basic legal system, the nature and extent of the role of government in prompting and facilitating development will vary from country to country. To the extent that development is driven by market forces, public policies serve as a framework that supports markets and encourages efficient and ethical private sector activities. They must, however, also aim to ensure that private sector activities do not undermine the public interest by, for example, increasing excessive inequities or adversely affecting the natural environment.

The results achieved through public policies will depend both on the policies themselves and on the government's effectiveness in implementing them. The effectiveness of government, in turn, requires a sound and efficient public administration that has the managerial and administrative capacities and capabilities required to fulfill its responsibilities. Good governance requires that governments continuously strive to improve the efficiency, effectiveness and equity of all public institutions and government administrative procedures. The impact of these efforts can be strengthened by policies and procedures to secure the accountability of government operations, to ensure ethical conduct and to avoid corruption. All countries are encouraged to sign, ratify and implement the United Nations Convention against Corruption. Measures to curb the illicit transfer of funds into or out

of their countries and to retrieve funds that have been expropriated through corrupt practices are also important. Such measures include a high degree of transparency and accountability in the public sector through such mechanisms as parliamentary public accounts committees, national auditors and appointment of ombudsmen. Implementing such policies may be assisted by decentralization as far as possible in order to encourage regional and local development.

One of the many implications of these principles is that all individuals should have opportunities to participate in the political system. Led by the Beijing Declaration, all the conferences also stressed the necessity for equality of opportunity for women in public administration as in all other areas of social and economic life.

In relationships between the state and the citizen, the fundamental freedoms and human rights create a climate enabling personal initiatives to contribute to socio-economic development. Development of public policy can be improved by including civil society in public decision-making and implementation. There can be value in public sector partnerships with the private sector and civil society, though there are also risks from the increased opportunity for selective advantage to particular interests.

The world conferences also recognised the principle incorporated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that 'the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people'. In the Vienna Declaration, Governments reiterated these convictions that all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development, are universal, indivisible, interdependent and mutually reinforcing. Ensuring that everybody is able to enjoy their human rights is vital to the maintenance of peace and hence to development. The 2005 World Summit amplified this in declaring that the promotion and protection of the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities contribute to political and social stability and peace and enrich the cultural diversity and heritage of society. Collectively, these understandings demonstrate that human rights are not only an overarching goal but are also important for economic and social development.

An essential component in efforts to ensure human rights within their countries and to translate their international commitments to

human rights into action includes ratification and implementation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the other, more specific international human rights instruments, some of which are identified in the relevant sections below.

Full and Productive Employment and Decent Work for all

High levels of unemployment and under-employment are major causes of poverty in all countries. Reducing poverty in developing countries is therefore intrinsically linked to the creation of adequately paid employment. At several world conferences, governments reiterated the commitment to full employment made in the UN Charter. It was agreed that all men and women should have the opportunity to secure a sustainable livelihood through freely chosen productive employment and work. Member States have repeatedly agreed that the creation of employment, the reduction of unemployment and the promotion of adequately remunerated employment should be one of the principal goals of national development strategies. This is one reason for the attention given to ensuring that education and training are readily available to all youth and to the value of life-long education. Particular attention to the growth of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) can be especially cost-effective in terms of job creation. To this end, programmes aimed at building general entrepreneurship skills, providing credit and benefiting from globalization, for example by supplying information on potential markets and training to meet new international standards, are useful.

Attention must also be paid to the quality, as well as the quantity, of employment for both women and men. In the Copenhagen and Geneva Declarations and the global summits, Member States committed themselves to ensuring full respect for such fundamental principles and workers' rights as freedom of association, collective bargaining, the elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labour, the abolition of child labour and the elimination of discrimination

in employment. Employment-related policies are most effectively developed with the participation of employers, workers, and their respective organizations. Such policies should embrace existing international instruments and programmes addressing basic worker's rights and quality-of-work issues, such as the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work adopted by the International Labour Conference in June 1998.

The persistence of high levels of unemployment in developing (and many developed) countries highlights the difficulty of meeting the challenge of achieving “full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people”, to use the words of the 2005 World Summit. More attention is essential to understanding the wide-ranging social, human and financial costs of unemployment, underemployment and low-quality and unproductive work and to assess the impact that all policies and programmes—not only those with an employment objective—have on employment. More exchanges of experience on measures that have succeeded in increasing employment and reducing unemployment and underemployment would be useful contributions to this learning process.

Several of the world conferences also recommended particular consideration to meeting the employment needs and increasing the earning power of economically deprived families and groups with special needs, including women, young people, older persons, people with disabilities and disadvantaged groups. Gender gaps and inequalities in livelihoods and labour market participation can be removed by ensuring that women have equal access to labour markets as well as to employment opportunities and labour benefits and protection, including social security systems. The Beijing conference was only one of many which repeated the goal of equal pay for work of equal value. Both developing and developed countries are encouraged to adopt laws, regulations and other measures that improve women's ability to earn income from non-traditional occupations, to achieve economic self-reliance, and to combine the roles of child-bearing and motherhood with participation in the workforce. Female heads of household warrant particular attention, especially the growing number who are responsible wholly or in part for the support of children and other dependants. Measures could include provisions for women who work at home.

Economic Policies

When, as in most countries today, market forces and the private sector play a leading role in development, economic policies assume particular significance, in part because they can make a direct contribution to the attainment of development goals, but also because they influence the actions of individuals, firms and other participants in the economy.

The world conferences therefore emphasized the importance of appropriate macroeconomic policies. For example, the Monterrey Consensus notes that 'A crucial task is to enhance the efficacy, coherence and consistency of macroeconomic policies', and 'to pursue macroeconomic policies aimed at sustaining high rates of economic growth, full employment, poverty eradication, price stability and sustainable fiscal and external balances' (paras. 10 and 14). One of the distinctive features of the conferences was the emphasis placed on employment and poverty reduction as central objectives of macroeconomic policy. Thus, the 24th special session made a commitment to 'Ensuring that macroeconomic policies reflect and fully integrate, *inter alia*, employment growth and poverty reduction goals.' It was recognized that this would require countries to 'reassess, as appropriate, their macroeconomic policies with the aims of greater employment generation and reduction in the poverty level while striving for and maintaining low inflation rates.' Similarly, the Social Summit Programme of Action states that social development requires implementation of 'sound and stable macroeconomic and sectoral policies that encourage broad-based, sustained economic growth and development that is sustainable and equitable, that generates jobs, and that are geared towards eradicating poverty and reducing social and economic inequalities and exclusion' (para. 9).

This approach shifts the emphasis from the usual priority given today in macroeconomic policies to low inflation and sustainable fiscal and external balances. It means that these undoubtedly desirable objectives are not ends in themselves, but intermediate goals that contribute to fostering sustained economic growth, dynamic employment generation, poverty reduction and, more generally, improving well-being.

Several of the world conferences also emphasized the importance of strengthening the competitiveness of enterprises through increased

investment, use of new technology and expanded training programs. This may require active economic policies. The Social Summit noted, in this regard, that 'Public policies are necessary to correct market failures, to complement market mechanisms, [and] to maintain social stability' (Programme of Action, para. 6). At the microeconomic level, governments should ensure that their advisory, regulatory and other economic policies, including their trade policies, foster entrepreneurship and private investment, especially by small- and medium-sized enterprises.

In developing countries, technological progress is likely to be heavily dependent on the ability to acquire and disseminate technology from developed countries, especially from private firms in those countries. Local R&D and innovation are also essential in this effort. Since most new technology is introduced by private firms, these plans should include actions to attract greater private investment, both domestic and foreign. Special attention to innovations in agriculture, health and the environment (especially energy) and to the possibilities offered by information technology can be particularly valuable (see section 6 on transfer of technology). The recommendations of the World Summit on the Information Society offer many possibilities for national consideration.

The imperatives of development requires focusing public expenditure on social services such as health and education (see Chapter 3), and economic and social infrastructure. Public investment is vital for building the communications infrastructure essential for the growth of markets and services and provision of essential services such as clean water and sewerage. Experience has also repeatedly shown that the emphasis of the world conferences on minimizing military expenditures is completely justified because of the implications of such spending on the availability of finance for desperately needed human services and infrastructure.

Sound public sector finances are thus a crucial element of nationally-owned economic policy. Adopting a medium-term or multi-year approach to fiscal accounts, rather than operating on a year-to-year basis, can enable a longer perspective and provide a basis for appropriate counter-cyclical policies and more gradual adjustment during crises. Establishment of effective and equitable tax systems to mobilize revenues for public services and investment in economic and social infrastructure are essential in this regard. Tax systems should aim to

mobilize revenue in a transparent and progressive manner. Possible measures include broadening the tax base (for example, by shifting emphasis from taxes on trade to income and/or value-added taxes), increasing the progressiveness of the tax system, simplifying the tax code and improving the effectiveness of tax collection. Technical assistance can be very cost-effective when used for strengthening the administrative efficiency of tax systems.

Sustained economic growth is usually associated with solid rates of domestic savings and investment. A key goal of economic policies and related measures must therefore be to facilitate the mobilization and effective use of domestic financial resources. It is for this reason that the global conferences, particularly the Monterrey Consensus, addressed the mobilization of domestic financial resources for development and called upon developing countries to foster the internal conditions necessary to mobilize domestic savings and sustain productive investment. Mobilizing domestic savings and generating productive investment require a positive ‘investment climate’ within the country. Some of the main ingredients of a healthy investment climate are those identified in this and preceding sections, and include an effective legal system, good governance, a clear enunciation of the country’s national development strategy and priorities, and sound economic policies. Together, these assist in providing the transparent, stable and predictable economic conditions that prompt private businesses to invest, encourage domestic savings and ensure adequate financing for needed investments.

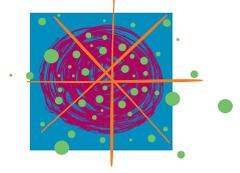
Increasing the mobilization of domestic resources requires a financial sector to channel private resources into activities that accelerate economic development. An effective financial sector includes a competent central bank, an efficient and well-regulated banking system and a capital market that encourages and channels domestic savings into productive domestic investments. The provision of “inclusive finance” is a crucial element in an equitable financial system, and can take place through entities ranging from microfinance institutions to development and commercial banks, and should provide a full array of financial services (savings, lending, transfer, insurance, etc.). Since development is a long-term endeavour, the provision of long-term financing is also a crucial element in financial reform.

Because of the central role of the financial sector in an economy, a miscalculation or other error by a financial institution can pose a

disproportionately large risk to an economy as a whole. To reduce the risk and impact of such financial disruptions, transparent and effective systems of regulation and supervision of the financial sector are important. These regulatory and supervisory arrangements have to be continuously updated to keep pace with the growing sophistication of financial markets.

3

Social Progress



Education and Training

Providing every individual with an education is an integral part of the ultimate goal of improving individual well-being and so is an end in itself. In addition, as long recognized and emphasized once again by the 2005 World Summit, both formal and informal education are vital to developing productive human potential. Universal and equitable access to quality education is therefore an indispensable part of the effort to eradicate poverty and promote full and productive employment, as well as being a necessity for achievement of other development goals. As a reflection of this, most of the world conferences, including the 2000 Millennium Summit, have reiterated or built upon a number of goals for education in the Dakar Declaration on Education for All, most notably:

- universal access to primary education before 2015; and
- elimination of the gender gaps in all levels of education

Since the adoption of the Dakar Declaration, there has been further progress towards universal and equitable access to quality education in many countries but there are still many critical shortfalls. The education of girls and women is still lagging behind that of boys and men in many countries and disadvantaged groups are less likely to receive education than the population as a whole. For example, children of poor families and of uneducated mothers are less likely to receive education than the rest of the population, perpetuating illiteracy and disadvantage—and hence poverty—from one generation to the next. To break such vicious circles, all children, including the most vulnerable and disadvantaged, especially girls, children from poor families and children with special needs, have to receive comprehensive early childhood care and good quality education.

Many of the actions required to achieve these goals are self-evident from the goals themselves. In most cases, education at all levels, but particularly basic education, will require both long-term investment and larger recurrent expenditures. At the same time, governments have to ensure the efficient, effective and equitable use of all educational resources. Within this overall framework, some specific actions to be considered include:

- preparation of a national action plan for education that is fully integrated into the country's broader development and poverty reduction strategies;
- inclusion of strategies for achieving gender equality in education, including means to change attitudes, values and practices;
- engagement and participation of civil society in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of these plans for education;
- use of responsive, participatory and accountable systems for implementing the plans;
- creation of a safe, healthy and inclusive educational environment that is conducive to learning;
- establishment of clearly defined levels of achievement for all;
- measures to ensure the necessary quality, status and morale of teachers, including through appropriate pay and other conditions of service;
- the use of new information and communication technologies for educational purposes;
- promotion of vocational and other job-related training that raises productivity and hence real wages; and
- in countries affected by, or vulnerable to, conflict or instability, the inclusion in educational programmes of efforts to promote mutual understanding, tolerance and peace and to prevent conflict and violence;

Attainment of the internationally-agreed quantitative goals for education is central to the overall development agenda, but attention also has to be given to improving the quality of education, especially in such areas as literacy, numeracy and essential life skills. Since education at all levels—not only primary—is increasingly necessary to provide the labour force with the skills required for employment in the

contemporary global economy, lifelong learning and the use of new information technologies have become important additional educational challenges.

Health

Like education, enabling each individual to enjoy a long and healthy life is both a fundamental development goal and a means of enhancing a country's potential for development more generally. Like access to education, access to health services makes an indispensable contribution to the effort to reduce poverty, promote full and productive employment and foster social integration. One of the long-term successes of development has been raising life expectancy in most regions of the world. However, progress stalled in some regions—and even reversed in some countries—in the 1990s. This was notably because of HIV/AIDS but also because of the resurgence of some other diseases, such as malaria and tuberculosis. Some groups, notably children and women giving birth, are particularly susceptible to other causes of premature death. Every year, more than 10 million children—about 30,000 each day—die before their fifth birthday. In sub-Saharan Africa, more than one child in six lives less than five years, while one woman in 16 dies during pregnancy or childbirth. Tragedies on this scale can be avoided at relatively low cost in developing countries.

Data on births and deaths have long been readily available indicators of health conditions. The international community has, over the years, used these data to establish many concrete targets intended to stimulate the development of the health sector. As a means of achieving such targets, the Alma Ata Declaration of 1979 called for programmes that would provide 'Health for all' by 2000. Although there were many improvements, this goal was not achieved, but, in the global conferences, governments repeatedly renewed their commitment to the highest attainable standards of physical and mental health and to access for all to primary health care. More specifically, they have set, or reconfirmed, particularly in the World Summit for Children and in the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and its five-year review, many specific targets for life expectancy, infant mortality, maternal mortality, reproductive health and the reduction or elimination of a wide range of diseases rampant

in many developing countries. In several cases, these goals had target dates of 2000 or 2005. Few of these targets were met, reflecting the inadequate commitments to ensure their achievement. Consequently the goals remain relevant today.

The ICPD called for countries to achieve by 2005, a life expectancy at birth of more than 70 years, and by 2015, a life expectancy of more than 75 years. Within this, there were less ambitious targets for countries with the highest levels of mortality, namely a life expectancy of more than 65 years by 2005 and more than 70 years by 2015. Within these overall targets, it was agreed that efforts should be made to reduce any marked differences in life expectancy among groups within a country, for example between men and women, among geographical regions, among social classes, and between the population as a whole and indigenous peoples and ethnic groups.

With regard to infant mortality, the fourth MDG calls for the under-five mortality rate to be reduced to one-third of its 1990 level by 2015. In ICPD and ICPD+5, a number of more detailed absolute targets were established. Countries were called upon to reduce their infant mortality rate below 35 per 1,000 live births and their under-five mortality rates below 45 per 1,000 births, both by 2015. Among a number of intermediate targets, it was agreed that countries with the highest child mortality should strive to reduce the infant mortality rate to below 50 deaths per 1,000 births and the under-5 mortality rate to below 60 deaths per 1,000 births by 2005.

As the fifth of the MDGs, countries have established the target of reducing the maternal mortality rate to one quarter of its 1990 level by 2015. Within this aggregate, it was agreed that countries with intermediate levels of mortality would aim to achieve a maternal mortality rate of less than 100 per 100,000 live births by 2005, and less than 60 per 100,000 live births by 2015; and that countries with the highest levels of mortality would aim to achieve a rate below 125 per 100,000 live births by 2005 and a rate below 75 per 100,000 live births by 2015. All countries aim to narrow any domestic disparities in maternal mortality such as between geographical regions, socio-economic and ethnic groups.

As one of the key means of achieving these child and maternal mortality reductions and other goals, the 2005 World Summit called upon countries to achieve universal access to reproductive health by 2015. ICPD+5 established a range of targets for the proportion of

births assisted by a skilled attendant, with the minimum being to ensure that at least half of all births in every country benefits from skilled attention by 2010, and at least 60 per cent by 2015.

As a first step towards achieving the overall life expectancy goal, it is necessary to determine the causes of any stagnation or increase in mortality among the adult population and to develop health policies and programmes to combat such causes. For children and child-bearing women, the causes may be readily apparent, but this may not always be true for other women and men in their productive years. The major causes of death and the extent of each need to be identified in order to attune health services to the most critical needs in each country.

As long recognized, a second step to achieving health targets is to make primary health care, particularly reproductive health care, universally available. In most countries, this requires particular attention to enhancing health care in rural areas. All communities need convenient access to primary health care that is practical, scientifically sound, community-based and socially acceptable. This includes health education in schools, outreach activities and other means of exchanging health information within societies.

Within such programmes, a high priority is to address child and maternal mortality. There need to be intensified national and local efforts to ensure safe motherhood, to immunize children and improve their nutrition, promote their healthy growth, reduce their exposure to malaria and protect them against other major diseases and from death due to dehydration. An important part of such an effort is to ensure that everybody is able to make free and informed decisions about the number, spacing and timing of their children and to protect themselves from sexually transmitted diseases. This requires that individuals of appropriate ages have access—through either public, private or non-governmental organizations—to a full range of family-planning information, family-planning methods and related reproductive health services. To ensure that these services are available to all, primary health care networks have to include family planning facilities that can provide, directly or through referral, family-planning information and counseling, the widest achievable range of safe and effective family planning and contraceptive methods, essential obstetric and prenatal care, safe delivery and post-natal care, and means of prevention, treatment and management of reproductive tract infections, including

sexually transmitted diseases. Removal of any barriers to the use of family planning is a necessary condition for human well-being.

Maternal mortality is greatly reduced when births are assisted by a skilled attendant. Recognizing that shortages of skilled personnel will prevent this in parts of some countries in the near future, the intermediate targets of ICPD + 5 referred to above offer an appropriate shorter term goal. Reduction of infant and child mortality is strengthened by programmes that emphasize improved prenatal care and nutrition, improvements in household sanitation, the use of clean water, measures to prevent infectious diseases, immunization and oral rehydration therapies.

When men take full responsibility for their own sexual and reproductive behaviour and health, they share in family planning and in the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases. This supports, promotes and respects the sexual and reproductive rights and health of women. Men have shared responsibility and can be actively involved in all aspects of parenthood. Leaders, parents and educators assist this by promoting positive male role models that aid boys in becoming gender-sensitive adults.

Increased attention is also needed to protect the health of poor and marginalized populations and otherwise reduce health inequalities; counter the potential threat to health from nutritional deficiencies, environmental hazards and risky behaviour; develop more effective health systems; and invest in health research, especially for new vaccines and drugs.

Combating HIV/AIDS

A number of major communicable diseases that are largely absent or under control in developed countries cost the lives of millions of people annually in developing countries. Children are usually the most vulnerable to affliction. This dichotomy between the two groups of countries was further aggravated in the 1990s when HIV/AIDS was allowed to reach pandemic proportions in large parts of the developing world at a time when it was largely controlled in the developed countries.

An improvement in the availability of primary health care facilities in developing countries, including prevention through health education, would reduce the impact of many communicable and other

diseases, but will not eliminate or control them. There also need to be specific campaigns against each of these diseases.

At the Millennium Summit and other recent international gatherings, HIV/AIDS and the resurgence of malaria and tuberculosis have been given particular attention. These three diseases are the major causes of premature death in developing countries, especially in Africa. Reflecting this, the sixth MDG is a commitment to halt and begin to reverse the incidence of HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases. As one of the means to achieve this, the 2005 World Summit set the goal of achieving by 2010, universal access to treatment for HIV/AIDS for all those who need it.

Encouragingly, the means of treating, controlling and, in some cases, eliminating these diseases is available. What are required are the determination and, above all, the resources to undertake the task. Evidence indicates that the prerequisite for a successful national HIV/AIDS programme is robust political commitment, particularly among national leaders. Giving the disease the attention it requires, involves making a commitment and urgently adopting and implementing a comprehensive national programme to fight HIV/AIDS. Second to public commitment, education is indispensable as a contribution to preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS. The provision of information and counseling regarding responsible sexual behaviour and the prevention of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases are integral components of all reproductive and sexual health services. Implementation of government plans, including target dates, for achieving universal access to information and education will reduce the transmission of HIV/AIDS.

Education has to be accompanied by efforts to ensure that adults and adolescents are able to protect themselves from the risk of infection. The effectiveness of reproductive health care services is strengthened through the reliable supply and distribution of high-quality female and male condoms, as well as facilities for HIV testing. In order to prevent the transmission of HIV from mother-to-child, it is vital that women living with HIV/AIDS be provided with anti-retroviral drugs and infant-feeding counseling during and after pregnancy.

Most developing countries currently lack the resources to provide the victims of HIV/AIDS with the package of medicines and care available to most of their counterparts in the developed countries. However, the treatment of HIV/AIDS is one area where international assistance

is beginning to become available in significant amounts. Governments should therefore devise plans and programmes aiming to make HIV treatment available to all afflicted by the disease. Attention is also required to reducing the vulnerability of persons indirectly affected by the disease, in particular orphaned children and older persons.

Housing and Shelter

The rate of growth of the urban population in developing countries is five times that in developed countries. Already, one third of the urban population in these countries lives in squatter settlements or slums. Policies to prevent the flow of rural migrants into urban areas have been ineffective and are likely to remain so unless there is a major transformation in the prospects for development in rural areas. In the meantime, managed urbanization and planned urban settlements are essential. These will have the additional potential benefit of limiting the adverse impact of large numbers of people on the natural environment.

In order to prompt action to address the problems of existing urban populations in developing countries, the Habitat Agenda adopted by the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) set the target (echoed in the Millennium Declaration) of significantly improving the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020.

As a starting point in addressing the housing needs of their populations, developing countries should formulate strategies for regional development that, taking into account demographic trends, seek to achieve a balanced spatial distribution of production, employment and population. A balanced geographical distribution of the population is another reason, in addition to that of reducing poverty, for promoting the sustainable development of rural areas. At the same time, governments can also encourage urban consolidation and the growth of small or medium-sized urban centres. To support both, it is necessary to develop effective and environmentally sound energy, transport and communication systems.

At the community level, the Cities without Slums Initiative is relevant to the preparation of urban development programmes. Central governments can often offer vital support to local authorities in elaborating slum upgrading programmes within the framework of ur-

ban development plans that take into account local culture, climate, social conditions and vulnerability to natural disasters. They should endeavour to ensure that the urban poor, especially female heads of household, have access to land and property, to adequate shelter and to basic services. The world conferences have articulated the ambitious aim of delivering services which meet the needs of all urban citizens, especially the poor, internal migrants, older persons and people with disabilities. Environmental management strategies for towns and cities, giving attention to water, waste and air quality, are also vital.

Since the urban poor themselves produce most shelter facilities in developing countries, policies to support those efforts are essential. The possibilities include improving access to credit for the poor, adopting legislation and administrative instruments that provide security of tenure and protect against unlawful eviction (as called for in the Global Campaign for Secure Tenure) and facilitating access to information on housing legislation. Housing for the poor can be constructed using low-cost and sustainable materials and appropriate technologies.

Such actions need to be rooted in an environment of good urban governance; governments, local authorities and civil society partners could be assisted by the Global Campaign for Good Urban Governance. Governments can encourage local development by decentralizing their own administrative systems and increasing the capacity and competence of city and municipal authorities to manage urban development. Local governments naturally aim to respond to the needs of all their citizens, including urban squatters, for basic infrastructure and services.

Water and Sanitation

Two broad causes of poor health in many developing countries are unsafe drinking water and inadequate sanitation. About one person in five in developing countries does not have access to safe drinking water and about one in two lacks adequate sanitation. This gives rise to the widespread prevalence of water-borne diseases, such as cholera and schistosomiasis. These conditions are also a source of afflictions, such as diarrhea, that can be life-threatening, particularly for children, in the absence of adequate health care facilities.

Recognizing this problem, one of the MDG targets is to halve, by 2015, the proportion of people unable to reach or afford safe drinking water. The Johannesburg Programme of Action and the World Summit added the target of halving, also by 2015, the proportion who do not have access to proper basic sanitation. Success in meeting these water and sanitation needs would have large spillover benefits for other human development goals and consequently should be an integral part of all national development strategies.

Achieving these goals will require major public and private investments in water supply and waste disposal. Both appropriate local technologies and improved international technologies could be considered. In addition to new water supply systems, attention may be needed to resurrect damaged watersheds and restore polluted water systems. Measures to conserve water, such as economic valuation of water and water pricing, may be useful. The disposal of sewage and other wastes, including industrial and hazardous wastes, should conform to international environmental guidelines, including recycling and reuse. Actions can be taken at all levels to introduce efficient household sanitation systems, to improve sanitation in schools and other public institutions, to promote safe hygiene practices, especially among children, and to integrate sanitation into water resources management strategies.

Social Protection

The world conferences recommended that, to the extent possible, governments aspire to provide public goods and social protection to vulnerable and disadvantaged members of society. Member States are encouraged to organize social security systems capable of providing protection against basic risks, such as old age, sickness and unemployment. For example, the 24th special session of the GA urged countries to ‘Share best practices on how to establish or improve social protection systems covering risks that cannot be mastered by the beneficiaries themselves ... [and] exploring ways and means ... to develop social protection systems for vulnerable, unprotected and uninsured people’ (para. 29).

In most countries, further action is required to protect persons with disabilities and to ensure that they are able to fully enjoy their

rights, without discrimination. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which was adopted by Member States in the General Assembly in December 2006, sets out standards for equality of opportunity and access for people with disabilities. Policies are described, adoption of which will enable people with disabilities to engage with societies more fully, and implementation of which will strengthen support for them.

Combating Drug Abuse

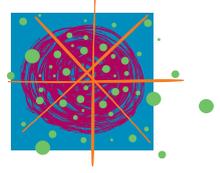
The special session of the General Assembly in 1998, devoted to the problem of drug abuse, recognized that reduction of demand is an indispensable pillar in countering such a multidimensional problem. In the session's Political Declaration, Member States committed themselves to putting in place new or enhanced demand reduction strategies and programmes by 2003 and achieving significant and measurable reductions in demand by 2008. They also adopted an Action Plan for the implementation of the Declaration on the Guiding Principles of Drug Demand Reduction.

As a first step to finding responses to drug abuse, countries could establish national drug abuse monitoring systems and undertake regular assessments of the problem. Together with knowledge acquired from research and lessons derived from past programmes, this information would be the basis for preparing demand reduction strategies. Both the design and implementation of these programmes normally requires the collaboration of public health, social welfare and law enforcement authorities, among others. Information on effective strategies and practices should be shared, both nationally and internationally.

In addition to narcotic drugs, reduction in tobacco use would directly improve health, so support of the Tobacco-Free Initiative would also improve well-being.

4

Social Justice and Inclusion



Social injustice and exclusion are manifest in many forms and remains pervasive in both developed and developing countries. One of the underlying goals of the global conferences was to improve the situation of those most disadvantaged. In most countries, there are various population sub-groups who experience a specific disadvantage or face special difficulties in improving their well-being. In addition to securing an absolute improvement in the well-being of all citizens, another goal of development strategy is to narrow the gaps between the opportunities that the disadvantaged and the privileged enjoy. National policies as well as action focused on particularly vulnerable or marginalized groups are required.

Equity

Apart from the ethical questions involved, economic inequity can be an obstacle to attacking the structural causes of poverty and can dampen economic growth by reducing efficiency in the use of human and physical capital. In terms of income and the benefits of growth, an inequitable distribution of income means that poor people receive a smaller share of the benefit from any given rate of growth than they would if income distribution were more even; an unequal distribution of income requires a higher rate of growth to achieve a specified reduction in poverty. Both by raising the growth rate and by making any growth more beneficial for the poor, improving income distribution can make a powerful contribution to national strategies to reduce poverty. Reducing poverty may not necessarily reduce inequality, and

it may be difficult to significantly improve income distribution in the short-term. However, this should not be allowed to discourage immediate efforts in this direction: distributional equity is a permanent goal against which to judge the effects of short-term measures.

Reducing Poverty

Everybody in the world should be able to enjoy an acceptable level of physical well-being. The need to reduce poverty has long been universally recognized and there have been important reductions in poverty over the decades. Nevertheless, poverty, in its many forms and with its multiple economic, social and political consequences, remains common and widespread. Reducing and ultimately eliminating extreme poverty continues to be the single greatest development challenge facing the world and is at the heart of the UN Development Agenda.

One of the most significant outcomes of the Social Summit was to place the goal of poverty eradication at the centre of the national and international policy agendas. As recommended, many governments set national poverty reduction targets and formulated and implemented national poverty reduction plans, including by promoting employment, and developing tools to evaluate progress. Yet, progress was highly uneven and further and better efforts are clearly required. The 24th special session of the GA concluded that that the objective of eradicating poverty was ‘an ethical, social, political and economic imperative of humankind’ and set a new global goal of ‘reducing the proportion of people living in extreme poverty by one half by the year 2015’. This commitment was adopted by the Millennium Assembly and designated the first of the MDGs. The World Bank suggested that extreme poverty could be regarded as an income equivalent to less than a \$1 a day.

With poverty reduction as an overriding objective, not only must it be a goal in its own right with national plans for its achievement, but all government actions should take this goal into account. In addition to ensuring that all national policies and budgets reflect the goal of reducing poverty, governments need to ensure that measures taken for other reasons also contribute to this goal or, at a minimum, do not compromise it. The poor should be able to participate in and benefit from all development programmes. In other words, poverty eradication is one of the wide-ranging goals that must be ‘mainstreamed’ into

national policies and actions. This includes many of the policies already described in this Development Agenda such as: ensuring that macro-economic policies fully integrate employment growth and poverty reduction goals; restructuring public expenditure programmes to make them more efficient and maximize their impact on poverty reduction; improving productive capacity through skills training and microcredit schemes; and encouraging sustainable rural development.

It is difficult to reduce poverty in a stagnant or slowly growing economy. Economic growth normally contributes to raising employment and median incomes and to increasing the availability of resources that can be used to tackle other dimensions of poverty. A high priority in confronting poverty must therefore be to achieve adequate and sustained economic growth which in turn requires well-balanced national economic policies and practices which focus on growth of employment as well as financial stability.

Sound economic growth alone, however, will not produce wide-ranging and long-lasting reductions in poverty. Countries therefore need to adopt a variety of additional policies and actions specifically targeted at this objective. As underlined by the 1995 Social Summit, two broad principles need to be applied in devising such measures. First, it is necessary to identify and tackle the root causes of poverty in a country (and not just the symptoms); moreover, since the causes are inter-related, they need to be addressed in an integrated and multi-sectoral way. Second, to increase the probability that they are effective, activities to address poverty should be developed and implemented in consultation with civil society, particularly the fullest possible collaboration with the poor themselves.

Within this framework, it is important to ensure that people living in poverty have access to public social services, to employment and other economic opportunities, and to productive resources. National budgets should be oriented to ensure that such basic needs as food, primary health-care (including reproductive health care), safe drinking water, sanitation and shelter are met. These actions would be complemented by measures to ensure that poor people have access to the land, education, training, credit, energy, technology, information and employment opportunities necessary for them to improve their well-being. In all these areas, the effectiveness of the programmes would be increased by giving particular attention to those with special needs such as women and children, people with disabilities and other vulnerable and disadvantaged groups and persons.

In tailoring these general requirements to individual situations, most of the poorest countries need to give attention to the agricultural sector because that is the main source of income and employment for the poor. Rural development is an integral part of national development policy in these countries. Building basic rural infrastructure and improving transportation and access to markets is vital. Enhanced rural electrification and decentralized energy systems improve the availability, particularly to the poor, of reliable, affordable, economically viable, socially acceptable and environmentally sound energy. Land tenure arrangements should recognize and protect indigenous and communal property rights. Measures can be taken to raise the productivity and revenue of poor farmers, for example by disseminating knowledge and improved techniques for sustainable agriculture, ensuring the availability of fertilizers and other inputs and providing market information and credit. Governments can encourage labour-intensive projects and training, particularly of young people, for rural non-farming jobs. Minimizing regulatory and other obstacles to micro-enterprises and the informal sector contributes to their establishment and growth.

Nutrition

The most damaging symptom of poverty is hunger. Having sufficient food is universally recognized as a necessity. Occurrences of famine usually produce a humanitarian response because everybody everywhere recognizes the need and the responsibility to provide all individuals with adequate nutrition. Beyond such periodic concentrations of intense hunger, however, in 2003 there were still over 800 million people in the developing world affected by chronic hunger. The elimination of hunger has been a longstanding and universally accepted goal, but some decades ago, there were doubts whether it was possible for the world to produce all the food necessary for its people, particularly as populations continued to grow. One indicator of humanity's progress is that nowadays, the world has the means and ability to meet this need, though it has failed to actually do so.

Eliminating hunger is not only a goal in itself but also has secondary benefits that contribute to achieving other development goals, including reducing poverty. Hunger is a cause, as well as an effect, of poverty because it inhibits people's learning, increases their suscep-

tibility to disease and reduces their productivity. Hunger thus keeps people poor by reducing their ability to earn income. Eliminating hunger will contribute to reducing poverty.

The World Food Summit in 1996 set a target of reducing the number of undernourished people in the world by half by 2015. At a follow-up meeting in 2002 governments unanimously adopted a declaration urging fulfillment of the earlier pledge to cut the number of hungry people to about 400 million by 2015. Nevertheless, the number of undernourished people in the world has remained stubbornly unchanged over the past decade: there have been improvements in some countries, but these have been offset by deterioration in others. The reasons for this lack of progress include inadequate land, water, technology and investment and the depletion of natural resources.

The Plan of Action adopted by the World Food Summit seeks to reduce poverty and hunger by targeting the poorest people in the neediest countries. Programmes to provide direct food aid will continue to be important in critical cases, but the emphasis should be on ensuring that the food needs of each country, region, town and household can be met over the long term. The hungry should not just be beneficiaries of assistance, but should be involved in formulating and implementing programmes and actions to increase food supplies over the longer term.

One broad reason for the lack of progress in recent years has been inadequate attention to agriculture in some developing countries. This underlines the need for governments of developing countries to give greater priority to food security and rural and agricultural development in their national development strategies and national budgets. To this end, the Johannesburg Programme of Implementation called for all African countries to prepare food security strategies. This involves taking measures to raise agricultural productivity and increase food production by addressing the shortages of water, technology and investment referred to above. The commitment to gender equality means ensuring that men and women have equal access to these inputs. Recognition and inclusion of the unique perspectives of indigenous peoples and the potential of other local communities is also important.

In addition to increasing food production, the availability and affordability of food have to be improved for undernourished people, including through better food storage, equitable and efficient distribu-

tion systems, and improved linkages between urban and rural people and enterprises. Policies should ensure access to culturally appropriate food. For the many people suffering from nutritional deficiencies, efforts should be made to improve the quality of their diets through locally acceptable and cost effective means. Ensuring that women and disadvantaged groups receive adequate nutrition should be an integral part of all of these efforts.

Social Inclusion

Social inequities and exclusion not only deny some people rights and opportunities available to others but, by doing so, also reduce those people's productive capacities, limiting their benefit to society and often forcing them into poverty. Every individual has the right to play an active and positive role in society. Everyone should have the right to benefit from society's development but should also have the responsibility and ability to contribute to that development.

Progress towards social integration in developing countries has been mixed. In many countries, development has been accompanied by greater inclusion. At the same time, economic and social change, conflict, population movements and other disruptions have resulted in the social marginalization of many individuals and groups, including in countries considered to be development 'successes'. Particularly over the longer term, such polarization is likely to impede development and lead to various forms of conflict, creating a vicious circle of poverty. For this reason, a third focus of the Social Summit, in addition to reducing poverty and increasing employment, was enhancing social integration.

Promotion of social integration is easier in societies that promote and protect all human rights and the participation of all people. This requires actions to ensure equality of opportunity, respect for diversity, tolerance, non-discrimination, solidarity and security, with special attention being given to disadvantaged and vulnerable groups and persons. Member States have frequently committed themselves to removing barriers faced by groups within societies because of factors such as gender, age, race, language, ethnicity, culture, religion or disability.

Gender Equality

Inequalities between women and men persist in many aspects of life in most countries. Partly because of these inequalities, the creativity and potential contributions of women to development are often underestimated and usually underused. As a principle and basic human right, and as a central means of achieving other development goals, ensuring that the potential of women is fully utilized in all aspects of development—and that women share equally in the benefits of development—is vital.

Embracing the principle of gender mainstreaming involves ensuring that the gender dimension becomes an integral part of all development activities, rather than a separate and additional element. Gender mainstreaming has to apply to all age groups and at all levels of society, from the home to the workplace and to local, regional, national and international entities in both the public and private sectors. Assuming that approach is adopted in each of the areas addressed earlier, the present section is limited to a number of other areas where the gender dimension is of concern.

An overarching legal framework is provided by implementation of the international human rights norms and instruments relating to women, especially the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Similarly, at the national level, governments can adopt laws and enforcement mechanisms that promote gender equality and that place the rights of women on a par with those of men in all respects. The human rights conventions require that both women and men have full access to justice, remedies and redress for violations of their rights. The widespread dissemination of information about laws, regulations, means of protection and redress for gender discrimination will greatly assist in achieving that goal. These legal measures are complemented by actions to eliminate any government policies or practices involving gender discrimination. Other programmes could raise awareness and sensitize and educate the population about gender equality in order to foster a culture that is non-discriminatory, gender-sensitive, ensures equality and does not tolerate violations of the rights of women and girls within families, communities or the country at large.

In all societies and across all lines of income, class and culture, women and girls continue to be subjected to physical, sexual and psy-

chological abuse, while trafficking in women and girls is becoming increasingly widespread. Situations of armed conflict also give rise to sexual exploitation, violence and abuse. As a formal step in confronting these problems, legislation can be passed and enforced to make violence against women and trafficking in women and girls illegal. Governments must ensure that military personnel abide by obligations under international humanitarian and human rights laws to protect civilians, in particular women and girls, during and after armed conflicts. Laws concerning the minimum legal age of consent and minimum age at marriage must be enforced and the age of consent raised where necessary. Similarly, laws to ensure that marriage is entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses should be enforced. Educational and other activities to generate social support for the enforcement of such laws can be influential. Legal enforcement of male parental financial responsibilities as well as measures to increase the employment opportunities available to married women are also important.

Protection for Children

In 1989, Governments adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The following year the World Summit for Children set the goals described earlier relating to the health, education and other aspects of the well-being of children. Since then, more progress has been made for the world's children than in any comparable period. Nevertheless, additional efforts are required to meet all the targets and, more generally, to respect and protect the rights of children throughout the world. This requires that each country aim to ensure all individuals respect and ensure the rights of each child without discrimination, irrespective of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status of the child.

More generally, societies must aim to ensure that all children have the nurture, care and safe environment that enable them to survive and to be physically healthy, mentally alert, emotionally secure, socially competent and able to learn. From the development perspective, the most important aspects of children's well-being are health and education. Children must also be given the opportunity to com-

plete a basic education of good quality and not be compelled to work. This would be supported by adherence to the ILO Convention on the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour that was unanimously adopted in 1999. A second step is to set specific target dates for eliminating child labour.

Opportunities and Support for the Ageing

The Second World Assembly on Ageing which took place in Madrid in April 2002, adopted a Political Declaration and the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing. Both documents included commitments from Governments to devise and implement measures to address the challenges posed by ageing. They included over 100 recommendations for action based on three priority themes: older persons and development; advancing health and well-being into old age; and ensuring enabling and supportive environments.

Reflecting the success achieved in raising life expectancy, the proportion of people in the world who are 60 years of age or older is expected to double between 2002 and 2050. Moreover, ageing of populations is expected to proceed much more quickly in developing countries than it did in the developed countries. Developing countries therefore face the challenge of finding the resources to accommodate the ageing of their populations when resources are also required to accelerate their development and eliminate extreme poverty among the rest of the population. These dual goals make it crucial for developing countries to integrate the ageing of their populations into their overall development strategy. This requires viewing the ageing population as a potential resource to contribute to the development effort. The Madrid Plan of Action calls for changes in attitudes, policies and practices at all levels—international, national, community, corporate and organizational—in order to realize this potential. At the same time, it seeks to ensure that people everywhere will be enabled to age with security and dignity, and continue to participate in society as citizens with full rights.

This requires that countries guarantee the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of older persons, including gender equality. Measures to empower older persons to participate fully and effectively in the social, economic and political lives of their societies

would benefit both them and their communities. It is mutually beneficial to encourage the development of opportunities for older people to contribute to their societies, achieve self-fulfillment and maintain their well-being throughout life.

All societies have to recognize the importance of inter-generational interdependence, solidarity and reciprocity and in this spirit government should endeavour to provide health care, housing, social protection and other support to older people, as needed. Special efforts are required to eradicate poverty among the older population.

Recognition of Indigenous Peoples' rights

Indigenous peoples often face multiple levels and sources of discrimination and exclusion, causing them to be marginalized within their broader communities and to lag behind other parts of the population in terms of improving their well-being. At the same time, efforts by dominant parts of society to accelerate their own development may have adverse effects on indigenous peoples, either by displacing them from their lands and traditional territories or by damaging those lands and related natural resources on which indigenous peoples depend for their physical, cultural and spiritual survival.

Respect for indigenous peoples has been demonstrated by the international community in the last four decades, among other things, through the establishment of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and the proclamation of the First and Second International Decades of the World's Indigenous People and the Programme of Action of the Second Decade, as well as the adoption by the Human Rights Council of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in June 2006. , The full and effective participation of indigenous peoples in all aspects of society, in particular in matters of concern to them, is crucial. Not only must discrimination and marginalization of indigenous peoples be eliminated but also they must be included through their free, prior and informed consent, in the design, implementation and evaluation of all development programmes and projects that have a bearing on their lifestyles, lands, territories or cultural integrity and well-being.

In particular, indigenous peoples should be enabled to participate effectively in the preparation of the national development strategy.

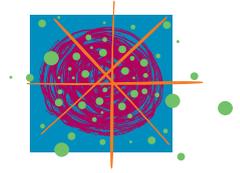
Those strategies should incorporate responses to the human rights, needs, visions and specificities of indigenous peoples while at the same time respecting indigenous peoples' heritage, traditional knowledge, innovations and practices, traditional lands and territories, and traditional institutions. To this end, development policies, including in the area of education, should respect the cultural and linguistic diversity of indigenous peoples and include policies, programmes and projects that are specifically targeted at their well-being, with a particular emphasis on women, children and youth. Public and civil society development practitioners should establish institutional frameworks and promote national dialogues to foster understanding of indigenous peoples' perspectives, priorities and expectations. Governments would also contribute by collecting disaggregated data and information on indigenous and tribal peoples.

Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons

The large number of violent conflicts in recent years has driven unprecedented numbers of people from their homes. Many have been forced to leave their countries but a large proportion also find themselves internally displaced within their own countries. In addition, natural disasters have continued and, by some measures, have become more intense, adding to the number of people temporarily lacking shelter. At the 2005 World Summit, government leaders pledged to increase cooperation in resolving the plight of refugee populations, to strengthen the protection of refugees and to share responsibility for supporting countries and the local communities that serve as sanctuaries for refugees. (See also the section on migration)

5

Environmental Sustainability



Growth in the production of goods for the world's increasing population is damaging many aspects of the physical environment, sometimes irreversibly. The global atmosphere, soils, water supplies and plant and animal life are all being adversely affected. Air, water and marine pollution are reducing the quality of life of tens of millions of people, and desertification is claiming more and more fertile land. Developed countries are responsible for most of the environmental damage so far but developing countries, particularly those achieving rapid economic growth, are responsible for an increasing amount of the present destruction and are vulnerable to the consequences of the ongoing environmental degradation. Maintaining the physical environment is vital for human well-being and for economic and social progress, especially over the longer term. Sustainable development policies require meeting present needs with minimal damage to the physical environment and in a way that avoids compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This is captured in the seventh MDG which calls on countries to reverse the loss of environmental resources.

One of the key outcomes of the Earth Summit in 1992 is the recognition that this quest for sustainable development has economic, social and environmental dimensions and that the three aspects are interdependent. Reflecting this, one of the ten Principles of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development is that environmental protection must be an integral part of the development process, rather than being treated as a separate component, i.e., environmental protection has to be mainstreamed into development policies and programmes in all countries. Another key principle is that achieving

sustainable development requires both eradicating poverty in the developing world (since poverty itself brings about damage to the environment) and making lifestyles in the developed world less environmentally damaging. A further underlying principle is that, because of the global nature of the task, all countries share a common responsibility to contribute to the protection of the environment, but that the nature and extent of this responsibility vary in accordance with a country's capacity and capabilities.

Sustainable Consumption and Production

The main cause of the deterioration of the global environment is unsustainable patterns of consumption and production, particularly in the developed countries. It is essential to change what societies consume and the ways in which they produce. All countries will benefit from this process and have correspondingly common responsibilities to bring about the necessary changes. However, one dimension of the differentiation of these common responsibilities is that the developed countries should take the lead in promoting sustainable consumption and production patterns. Attention focuses on two broad areas. First, the management, conservation and sustainable development of agricultural land, water sources, forests and fisheries are crucial in maintaining the earth's life-support system and in supporting social and economic development. Second, sustainable energy production and use are indispensable to protecting the environment, constraining global warming, reducing health hazards and thereby improving the quality of life.

Agenda 21, the programme of action adopted at UNCED, calls upon countries to adopt a broad package of national policies to foster sustainable development. These include national environmental laws and regulations and such economic measures as the internalization of environmental costs in market prices and environmental impact analysis. Establishment or strengthening of environmental protection agencies would enable governments to enforce the successful implementation of these policies. An important dimension of this is ensuring that national initiatives are translated into action at the local level. Good local governance therefore has an important role to play. National sustainable development councils, whether sponsored by gov-

ernments or formed by civil society, could contribute to the formulation, implementation and monitoring of policies and other measures. The five-year review of UNCED recommended that all countries formulate national sustainable development strategies by 2005. Local 'Agenda 21 processes' and other similar initiatives by major groups of stakeholders are expected to contribute to this exercise.

The 2002 Johannesburg Programme of Action re-emphasized that the sustainable management of the world's natural resources is an overarching development objective. This was further reflected in the 2005 World Summit when governments renewed their pledge to protect the world's natural resource base in support of development. While Agenda 21 is a relatively general series of exhortations, the Johannesburg Programme of Action contains targets and timetables on a wide range of issues and is more specific on the action required in each area. It calls for reducing biodiversity loss by 2010—a goal also set by the 2005 World Summit—establishing a network of marine protected areas by 2012, restoring depleted fisheries by 2015 and, by 2020, using and producing chemicals in ways that do not harm human health and the environment. There was also agreement to increase access to energy services, including a specific target of providing at least 35 per cent of the African population with access to energy within 20 years, i.e., by 2022. For the first time, countries committed to increase the use of renewable energy 'with a sense of urgency' (although no target was adopted). Some of the further commitments related to preparing ten-year programmes on sustainable consumption, improving agriculture, particularly in drylands, and strengthening health programmes. It was also agreed that continued efforts were needed to develop, utilize and disseminate national indicators to measure progress in achieving these objectives. At the international level, all countries were called upon to ratify and fully implement the international environmental agreements on climate change, biological diversity, desertification and hazardous wastes.

The 2005 Summit recognized that fulfilling these goals would require additional financial resources. A ground-breaking outcome of the Summit was, in this regard, the generation of concrete partnerships among governments, businesses and citizens' groups for specific projects in the areas addressed by the Summit. More than 200 partnerships were identified in the preparations for and during the Summit; more were announced outside the formal Summit proceedings, and the number has increased further since that time.

The Johannesburg Programme called on all countries to develop programmes to promote sustainable consumption and production. The predominance of developed countries in economic activity means that they must take the lead by reducing their present unsustainable consumption and production practices. Developing countries can seek to achieve sustainable consumption and production as they develop, including avoiding those patterns and practices of the developed countries that have proven wasteful and environmentally harmful.

More specifically, incorporation of 'green accounting' into national accounts would reflect the environmental costs of consumption and production. Governments could encourage companies and individuals to reduce the adverse effects of human production and consumption on the environment and to increase the efficient use of physical resources by measures such as:

- a.* minimizing waste and maximizing reuse, recycling, the use of environmentally-friendly alternative materials and other eco-friendly and energy efficient measures;
- b.* promoting the development and diffusion of environmentally sound technologies and know-how and its transfer to developing countries; and
- c.* increasing the environmental performance and encouraging the environmental responsibility and accountability of producers through such mandatory or voluntary measures as environmental audits, environmental impact assessments, the development of 'green' products, environmental management systems, codes of conduct, certification and public reporting on environmental issues.

With regard to specific products, governments could apply the global system for the classification and labelling of chemicals, and follow the Bahia Declaration and Priorities for Action in their approach to chemicals management. They should also honour their commitments in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) regarding chemical, radioactive and other hazardous wastes and ratify and implement the Rotterdam Convention and Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants. Developed countries agreed in the JPOI to improve developing countries' access to environmentally-sound alternatives to ozone-depleting chemicals by 2010.

Climate Change and Energy

There are going to be enormous increases in the demand for energy in developing countries, because the improvement in the standards of living of their populations will be energy-intensive and also because additional energy will be required to reduce poverty. To confront this challenge, preparation of national energy strategies is essential. The Johannesburg Programme identifies some of the considerations that these strategies will have to take into account.

An essential aspect of efforts to achieve other goals, particularly the reduction in poverty, is increasing the availability of energy that is affordable, economically viable, socially acceptable and environmentally friendly. At the same time, such strategies can aim to increase energy conservation and energy efficiency, and reduce the environmental damage associated with using fossil fuels. Adhering to the agreement in Johannesburg to remove market distortions by restructuring energy taxes and phasing out energy subsidies would contribute to this goal. Governments could also raise the share of the total energy supply provided by solar, wind and geothermal power, fuel-wood and biomass technologies, including the use of agricultural residues. Such programmes would benefit from inclusion of efforts to encourage the discovery, introduction and diffusion of new or improved products and technologies in each of these areas.

In the Conferences on Sustainable Development, in the Millennium Declaration and at the World Summit, it was agreed that climate change is a serious and long-term challenge that has the potential to disrupt overall development throughout the world. It was also agreed that the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change is the key instrument for tackling this problem. This agreement aims to stabilize concentrations of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere at a level that would limit global warming, within a period sufficient to allow humans and ecosystems to adapt to the higher levels of greenhouse gases already in the atmosphere, while developing measures to adapt to the unavoidable, adverse effects of climate change.

The future stability of the world depends on developed and developing country governments meeting all the commitments and obligations undertaken in the Convention and related international agreements, including the Kyoto Protocol. In accordance with their common, but differentiated responsibilities and capabilities, devel-

oped countries must meet the greenhouse gas reduction targets entered into under the Protocol. Fortunately, some developed countries are setting out to exceed those targets but the biggest per capita greenhouse gas emitters are threatening global climate stability by their refusal to adopt emission-reduction targets. Meanwhile, developing countries, particularly small-island developing States, least developed countries and African countries, should be assisted in adapting to the adverse effects of climate change. As part of this effort, upgrading of research, development, application, diffusion and use of cleaner fossil fuel technology and, as indicated above, renewable sources of energy is essential.

Desertification

As one outcome of the Earth Summit, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, was adopted in 1994 and entered into force in 1996. However, a lack of financial resources has limited its implementation. Implementation of this Convention would be supported by further ratifications as well as by increased financing. Desertification and land degradation would be addressed by efforts to mitigate the effects of droughts and floods through such measures as improved use of climate and weather information and forecasts, early warning systems, land and natural resource management, better agricultural practices and enhanced conservation of the ecosystem.

Biological Diversity

Another outcome of the Earth Summit was the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). All countries that have not done so should ratify this Convention. There has already been progress in the implementation of the Convention with agreement on measurable indicators and specific goals to reduce the current rate of biodiversity loss by 2010. All countries would contribute to the conservation of biological resources by their sustainable use and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources. Countries would also contribute to safeguarding of the exploration, collection,

conservation, evaluation, utilization and availability of plant genetic resources, by completing the revision of the international undertaking on plant genetic resources for food and agriculture and its harmonization with the Convention on Biological Diversity. Countries would also demonstrate respect by preserving and maintaining the knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous communities that pertain to the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity. With the approval and involvement of their holders, such knowledge, innovations and practices could be more widely applied, with the benefits shared equitably.

A further outcome of the Earth Summit was the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety which concerns the transboundary movement of living modified organisms and which entered into force in September 2003. Signing, ratifying and implementing this Protocol is a basis for elaborating policies to promote the safe use of biotechnologies for development in their own countries. Wherever possible, countries should contribute to further research on possible environmental as well as health benefits and risks of genetic engineering and other biotechnologies. Contributions to international efforts (such as those of the FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius Commission and the intergovernmental Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture) to maximize the positive effects and minimize the possible negative impacts of biotechnologies in agriculture are also important and valuable.

Forests

Covering one third of the world's land mass, forests constitute the largest terrestrial ecosystems and the richest source of biological diversity. Forests provide a wide range of economic, social, cultural and environmental services, including wood and non-wood forest products, protection of other natural resources, and contribution to local and global climate control.

Unsustainable management of forests and competing land uses, such as large scale agriculture, and aggravation by fires and airborne pollution, have resulted in extensive and rapid rates of deforestation and forest degradation, contributing further to local and trans-boundary environmental deterioration. Although limited progress has al-

ready been made reversing deforestation in some areas and in moving towards the sustainable management of forests, deforestation remains a highly demanding challenge for the international community.

The United Nations Forum on Forests, an inter-governmental process with universal membership, functions with a mandate of discussing forest issues in a holistic manner. In 2007, the Forum adopted a Non-Legally Binding Instrument on All Types of Forests, providing a framework and policy guidance for national action and international cooperation.

The issues being addressed include a wide range of issues related to sustainable forest management worldwide and strengthening international cooperation. The key issues are identification of the underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation; promotion of sustainable production and consumption patterns; forest law enforcement, governance and public participation; forest sector planning, including forest conservation and protected areas; conservation of forest biological diversity; management of forests in watersheds; forests fires; soil and water conservation; trade in forest products and its impact on the environment; means of implementation and transfer of environmentally sound technologies; forest-related scientific and traditional knowledge; and the special requirements of countries with low forest cover and small island developing States

Oceans and Seas

The world's oceans cover the majority of the globe's surface and, through fisheries, are an important source of nutrition and employment for many countries, particularly developing countries. However, human damage to the oceans and over-exploitation of the world's fisheries are putting both these assets at risk. Among its goals in this area, the Johannesburg Programme of Action called for fish stocks to be maintained or restored to levels that can produce the maximum sustainable yield by 2015.

Almost all oceans and most seas have at least two coastal states so that their protection is an international public good that intrinsically requires multilateral cooperation. However, action by all coastal countries is required to fulfill their international commitments, most notably those identified in the Johannesburg Programme of Action. In the

first instance, the Law of the Sea provides the overall legal framework for ocean activities. In addition, national development of integrated, multidisciplinary and multi-sectoral ocean policies and mechanisms for coastal management, using an ecosystem approach and including the establishment of marine protected areas, is vital.

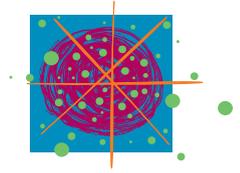
Fisheries management forms an integral element of this approach. This includes implementing the plans of action agreed through the FAO for the management of fisheries and for the prevention, deterrence and elimination of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

Disaster Reduction

The world seems to be beset by more frequent and more devastating disasters, both natural and human-made, that are having terrible human and developmental costs. The World Conference on Disaster Reduction (WCDR), held in Kobe, Japan in January 2005, resulted in intensified cooperation to establish early-warning systems and reduce the number and effects of natural and human-made disasters, particularly through the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR).

Development strategies can mitigate the impact of disasters by identifying and assessing risks and vulnerabilities in disaster-prone and overcrowded areas and integrating them into human settlements planning and design. For example, people could be provided with alternatives to living in areas prone to disasters. More importantly, all levels of government should put in place disaster preparedness and response capacities. Preparation of these in partnership with the private sector and community groups, will increase their effectiveness, particularly if their planning is coordinated and implementation is flexible.

6



An Enabling International Environment

The world conferences recognized that many obstacles to development are external to developing countries. They include: shortages of finance; the risk of international transmission of financial crises, high external indebtedness; difficulties in the international coordination of macroeconomic policies; the trade policies of developed countries; the cost or inadequate transfer of technology; and rigidities in the international movement of labour.

External Private Financial Capital Flows

All developing countries would benefit from increased external finance for development to fund the investment, services and infrastructure essential for growth. Domestic savings will continue to be the major source of private and public funds for investment. External financial flows (including workers' remittances) can nevertheless serve as a useful complement to domestic private savings in financing investment. The Monterrey Consensus underscores the need to sustain sufficient and stable financial and other resource flows to developing countries. To this end, it calls for measures to increase the transparency and sustainability of financial flows, and to contain the excessive volatility of short-term capital flows and highly leveraged transactions.

The conditions needed for developing countries to attract foreign capital are broadly the same as those required to increase domestic investment, namely appropriate macroeconomic policies, transparent

and predictable conditions for investment, including an effective legal and regulatory framework. In order to reduce the possibility of externally-induced financial crises, countries that succeed in attracting foreign capital must have an effective system for monitoring and managing public and private sector external debt and precautionary measures to dampen the volatility of capital flows.

Most developing countries can expect, however, limited external capital. Most international financial flows go to developed countries, and the part that goes to the developing world is concentrated in less than a dozen countries. In fact, developing countries have been financing some rich countries throughout the last decade. Net outward transfers by developing countries reached \$658 billion in 2006 and those by economies in transition \$125 billion.

Developed countries and the international financial institutions can adopt measures to encourage private sector financial flows to developing countries, such as providing insurance against political and related risks. For their part, foreign firms would increase their value to host countries by being reliable and consistent partners in the development process, taking into account not only the economic and financial dimensions of their activities in partner countries, but also their developmental, social, gender and environmental implications. Foreign investors can make one of their most valuable contributions by simply paying their taxes, training local staff, and introducing new technology. However, the prospects for private external capital providing more than a fraction of the funds needed by developing countries, particularly the poorest countries, are limited, so additional official flows must be sought.

External Borrowing and Debt

External borrowing can increase the resources that a country has available for development purposes, but the resulting amortization and interest payments have the opposite effect. Over the years, many developing countries, including a substantial number of the poorest, have experienced acute financial difficulties and development setbacks as a result of excessive external debt liabilities. Many of the global conferences therefore called for the relief of external debt for developing countries, to free up financial resources that can contribute to economic growth and poverty alleviation.

In response, a series of actions have been taken to reduce the external debt burden of developing countries. One such instrument is the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative, launched in 1996. Despite the progress made under this Initiative and its later enhancement, progress had been limited until 2005, when a new Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative (MDRI) was launched to cancel the official and multilateral debt of the poorest countries. For poor non-HIPC and middle-income countries, the Paris Club provides a mechanism to renegotiate official financing but there is no similar mechanism to manage the problems of unsustainable external indebtedness with private creditors. The developed countries also contribute to achieving long-term sustainability for all developing countries' external debt through measures such as increased grant-financing. For their part, developing countries have to carefully manage all remaining and new external debt in order to avoid difficulties in the future.

Official Development Assistance (ODA)

One common element of the outcomes of all the conferences and summits was the recognition that the developing countries will not be able to achieve their numerous goals, targets and other objectives without additional international support in a variety of forms and the removal of external impediments to development. There was a common understanding about the types of support required, but few efforts to quantify needs. Among the conferences, ICPD quantified the national and international financial resources required for its implementation. Later, as part of the preparations for the 2002 International Conference on Finance for Development and for the 2005 World Summit, there were a number of estimates of the external financial resources required to achieve the MDGs. All of them pointed to the need for a substantial increase in ODA.

Most of the conferences urged developed countries that had not done so to achieve the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product (GNP) as ODA to developing countries, with 0.15 to 0.2 per cent to the least developed countries. The 2005 World Summit recognized that, since the adoption of the Monterrey Consensus, ODA had started to increase again, and European countries had established timetables for achieving the 0.7 per cent target for ODA, with an

intermediate target of reaching 0.5 per cent by 2010. At the same time, the Summit underlined that a substantial further increase in external assistance would be necessary to achieve the internationally agreed goals by their target dates and again called for increased international support for development. This is crucial, as the most recent data shows that ODA in 2006 decreased by 5 per cent, the largest drop since 1997.

The motivation to provide additional ODA will be enhanced if confidence that it will be well used, increases. The Monterrey Consensus calls upon recipient and donor countries, as well as international institutions, to make ODA more effective through improved harmonization and coordination. The OECD estimates that 31 developing countries received close to 11,000 donor missions in 2005, almost one a day per country. In March 2005, over 100 countries and development institutions adopted the 'Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness' which identified four principles for donor assistance, enumerated 12 indicators to measure improvements in the quality of aid and set 2010 as the target date to achieve five goals, including streamlining their own procedures and reducing the administrative burden on recipient countries. One of the major outcomes of the 2005 World Summit was the establishment of the Development Cooperation Forum, which was launched during the High-level Segment of the Economic and Social Council in July 2007. The Forum is expected to become a key instrument of the Council in promoting more effective and coherent development cooperation.

A central part of this effort revolves around giving full effect to country ownership. Despite recognition of this principle, there remains a tendency for development partners to provide assistance to countries and programmes that relate to their own preferences and perceptions, rather than in response to the needs identified by the developing countries themselves in their efforts to achieve the internationally agreed development goals and objectives. Sometimes, criteria relate to a partner's perception of 'performance', which may be subjective or politically motivated. Full recognition by development partners of recipient country responsibility for development policies is a necessary condition for the most effective use of ODA. The content as well as the quantity of aid programmes should accord with each recipient country's own estimate of its needs for these purposes; donors should avoid prescribing development modes, policies or actions,

either directly or through conditions attached to their support. ODA programmes will be of greatest value when they have a long-term perspective and are continuous, predictable and assured.

The value of economic and technical cooperation between developing countries had been stressed by several of the conferences. This could be supported and enhanced by triangular mechanisms through which donors provide appropriate support to enable developing countries to assist each other.

Innovative Sources of Finance

Despite the generally positive trend of ODA in recent years, further increases in concessional assistance are essential to financing the physical and social investments if the MDGs, let alone the other internationally agreed development goals are to be reached. Therefore, a number of governments have explored the potential for additional 'innovative' sources of finance for development. There was agreement at the 24th special session of the GA to conduct 'a rigorous analysis of advantages, disadvantages and other implications of proposals for developing new and innovative sources of funding, both public and private, for dedication to social development and poverty eradication programmes'. The alternatives that have been explored include environment and currency transaction taxes, the use of Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) for development purposes, an International Finance Facility, a global lottery and global premium bonds, philanthropy, and leveraging migrants' remittances. The idea of issuing additional SDRs for development was seriously discussed at the Monterrey conference on finance for development and there was agreement to keeping the need for new SDR allocations under review.

There has been progress towards the introduction of a number of specific proposals by a number of governments, including an International Financing Facility for Immunization. This Facility uses national guarantees of grants by donor countries to leverage commercial borrowing, enabling aid expenditure to be brought forward in order to contribute to achieving the MDGs. A solidarity contribution on airline tickets for development purposes has also been introduced by some countries. This contribution corrects, among others, the strange anomaly that aircraft fuel has been free of duty since the mid-forties.

These initiatives have thus started to materialize the potentialities of ‘innovative sources of financing’ for development, and many more ideas are in the cards.

International Trade

The 2005 World Summit reaffirmed that international trade must play its full part in promoting economic growth, employment and development for all. Despite many rounds of multilateral trade negotiations and the establishment of the WTO, a wide range of obstacles continue to inhibit the ability of the developing countries to reap the full benefits of the international trading system. Developing countries face difficulties in such areas as tariff escalation and tariff peaks; subsidies and other trade-distorting measures, notably in agriculture; non-tariff barriers; technical barriers, including sanitary and phytosanitary measures; antidumping measures; limitations on the movement of natural persons for the provision of services; the transfer of knowledge and technology, including the additional costs of technology generated by the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS); the lack of recognition of intellectual property rights for traditional knowledge; and, generally, the need for more effective application of special and differential treatment (SDT) for developing countries in international trade.

At the Fourth WTO Ministerial Conference, held in Doha in 2001, the members of the WTO agreed to complete, by the end of 2005, a series of trade negotiations focused on the needs of developing countries (the “Doha development agenda”). Subsequent United Nations conferences and summits have stressed the need to achieve a timely, successful and development-oriented outcome to the negotiations associated with this agenda, but by mid-2007, almost no progress had been made. Success in meeting the goals established in Doha remains a potentially valuable element of the global development agenda. Countries could demonstrate their commitment to the Doha development agenda by contributing flexibly and positively to the on-going negotiations and ensuring their completion as soon as possible. In view of their commitments in the 2002 Monterrey Summit and the 2005 World Summit, developed countries have a special responsibility to ensure that the outcome of the negotiations lives up

to the commitment that it will enhance the development prospects of the developing countries.

Globalisation and the resulting rapidly changing structure of the global economy increase the risk that less advanced and small economies will become marginalized in world trade. Recognizing this possibility, and in addition to the generic measures to benefit all developing countries, all countries should adhere to the commitment in the Doha development agenda to address issues related to the trade of least developed, small and vulnerable economies and to their full integration into the multilateral trading system. To this end, all developed countries should provide duty-free and quota-free access for all exports from all least developed countries (LDCs) by 2008. They should also reduce, and set a date for eliminating, all non-tariff barriers to exports from LDCs, including subsidies to their own exports and domestic production. Rules of origin and trade procedures imposed by developed countries on imports from LDCs should be simplified and harmonized to make them more transparent and understandable to exporters in LDCs. The special circumstances of small island developing states (SIDS) must also be taken into account in WTO negotiations. In addition, further measures should be taken to expedite the movement, release and clearance of the exports and imports of landlocked developing countries.

Trade among developing countries has been increasing rapidly in recent years, despite the persistence of substantial tariffs and other barriers to such trade. In order to realize the further potential of such trade, developing countries should endeavour to finalize as soon as possible the third round of negotiations of the Global System of Trade Preferences among Developing Countries that they agreed to undertake at UNCTAD XI.

To benefit fully from the possibilities offered by international trade, developing countries need to have in place the infrastructure, institutions and policies necessary to develop the domestic production of exports and to facilitate trade. Donors would support the development of productive and export capacities through technical assistance and mechanisms such as the Integrated Framework, the Common Fund and Aid-for-Trade.

Transfer of Technology

Many of the conferences emphasized the crucial importance of promoting international technological transfers in the areas on which they focused. Many of them point to the crucial role of technical progress in stimulating growth of productivity and income. At the 2005 World Summit, Member States committed themselves to supporting research and development 'to address the special needs of developing countries in the areas of health, agriculture, conservation, sustainable use of natural resources and environmental management, energy, forestry, and the impact of climate change' (para. 60).

The 1992 Earth Summit gave detailed attention to environmentally-sound technologies for production of renewable energy and management of biotechnology. Agenda 21 suggests that biotechnology 'promises to make a significant contribution in enabling the development of, for example, better health care, enhanced food security through sustainable agricultural practices, improved supplies of potable water, more efficient industrial development processes for transforming raw materials, support for sustainable methods of afforestation and reforestation, and detoxification of hazardous wastes' (para. 16.1). The corresponding chapter in Agenda 21 describes objectives, activities, cooperative arrangements and means of implementation for public and private organizations working in each of these areas. The World Food Summit also gave attention to the role of research, innovation and technological transfer in strengthening food security.

Modern technologies can play a critical and direct role in meeting the internationally agreed development goals in health. It is vital, in particular, that the disproportionate under-funding of medical research relating to diseases common in developing countries be addressed. Governments, international institutions, professional associations, universities, research centres and pharmaceutical enterprises all have responsibilities to support and undertake research and development on vaccines and other treatments for HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis and other diseases prevalent in developing countries. The International Partnership against AIDS in Africa, the Roll Back Malaria Campaign and the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunizations are all examples of initiatives involving partnerships between public and private organizations whose purpose includes the promotion of research and development.

Improving information and communications infrastructure is a necessity in developing countries, including by the adoption of the latest technologies and by striving to make access to these facilities as widely available as possible. The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) articulated a vision in which Member States declared their 'common desire and commitment to build a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society, where everyone can create, access, utilize and share information and knowledge' (para. 1). The use of information and communication technologies (ICT) can not only enable developing countries to 'leapfrog' some stages, and avoid some of the costs of development, but it is now almost a necessary condition for development. In the early stages of its introduction, most developing countries were seriously lagging in their adoption of ICT, giving rise to a so-called 'digital divide'. In more recent years, there has been a rapid acceleration in the adoption of ICT by developing countries, but a considerable gap remains and a concerted introduction of ICT offers the promise of further wide-ranging benefits. In addition to the purely technological benefits of ICT, its role in improving access to information and enhancing the sharing of knowledge can contribute significantly to economic, social and cultural development.

Migration

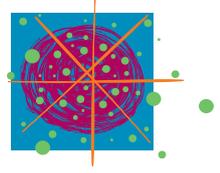
During the current globalization, goods, services and capital are increasingly free to move across national boundaries, but there are significant restrictions on the mobility of labour, particularly low-skilled labour. The global conferences did not achieve global consensus on how to harness the potential of migration. The 2005 World Summit acknowledged, nonetheless, the important nexus between international migration and development and the challenges and opportunities that migration presents. Some of the global conferences addressed, in turn, the concerns of individual migrants and there are international conventions on selected aspects of the rights of migrants. These conventions describe the responsibilities of host countries as:

- providing migrants, migrant workers and members of their families with effective protection and equal treatment before the law, including protecting their human rights and dignity (irrespective of their legal status);

- ensuring the social and economic integration of documented migrants, especially those who have acquired the right to long-term residence in the host country;
- providing migrants with basic health and social services, including reproductive health services; and
- facilitating family reunification of documented migrants.

The counterpart to the physical flow of migrant workers can be a financial flow of remittances from the migrants to their countries of origin. Such flows, which now substantially exceed ODA, can be productively used for development purposes, including meeting the needs of the migrant's family. To realize this potential, host and source countries should ensure the availability of, and universal access to, facilities for the low cost transfer of remittances—and their productive investment— by adopting measures to reduce the cost of transferring migrant remittances to developing countries.

7



Reducing Inequality Between Countries

From the development perspective, the world is usually seen as being divided into developed and developing countries. There have long been large differences in average well-being between these two groups, with some measures suggesting that the gap is widening. Only a handful of countries are considered to have changed from one category to the other. At one level, therefore, the global conferences focused on reducing differences in well-being between developed and developing countries by improving the welfare of developing countries as a group.

The developing countries themselves are not, however, a homogeneous group. For broad geographical, historical and cultural reasons, there are some general differences among, and broad similarities within large geographic regions. Among these, however, the African continent, particularly south of the Sahara desert, has fallen behind other regions in its development; hence, the region has received special attention in UN conferences.

There are also groups of countries spanning the regions that face common or similar development challenges. Some countries and sub-groups of countries are more disadvantaged than others because, in addition to the universal development challenges, they face additional geographical or other development constraints. One group comprises those countries where the overall depth and breadth of the 'poverty trap' they face makes progress extremely difficult. Other cases are countries that are islands, or are landlocked. In each of these cases, the countries need to consider the broad set of actions identified earlier, but they also need to take action to address their specific constraints.

Africa

Sub-Saharan Africa is the poorest region in the world. In recent decades, it has also been the most conflict-ridden. It has reaped few of the benefits of globalization and has become increasingly marginalized in the world economy. Conflict and poverty have formed a vicious circle perpetuating the continent's wretched condition. As one consequence of its poverty, it has now become, by a wide margin, the region most afflicted by HIV/AIDS, a disease likely to impede its development for many years to come. It is also the region where development is most impeded by malaria and several other infectious diseases.

In response to this desperate situation, the Millennium Declaration and succeeding global conferences devoted special attention to Africa. Sub-Saharan Africa concentrates the majority of least developed countries, to which we will concentrate our attention next. In the meantime, we should underscore that the African countries themselves have adopted the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). The task for African countries is to translate their political commitment to NEPAD into action.

Least Developed Countries

Many people are poor because they live in countries that are poor. Because they are poor, these countries do not have the resources—finance, technology, and skills—they need to extricate themselves from their predicament. This vicious circle has become more pronounced with globalization. Because they lack the human, financial, physical and institutional resources required to take advantage of globalization, these countries are unable to reap its benefits and are becoming marginalized in the world economy. Like certain individuals or regions within a country, the countries themselves are, in a sense, caught in a 'poverty trap'. They therefore require special help to change the conditions in which they find themselves.

In 1971, the international community designated this group as the 'least developed countries' (LDCs). More than 600 million people—over 10 per cent of the world's population—now live in the 49 countries identified as LDCs. Since their identification as a group, it has been a global priority to help the LDCs escape their poverty trap

and set themselves on paths of sustained economic and social progress. Only a few have been able to do so. The Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries adopted in Brussels in 2001 is the most recent effort to enable more LDCs to do likewise.

Many LDCs suffer geographical or similar handicaps, being either landlocked, small islands or subject to desertification. Most are heavily dependent on a few commodities, have very little manufacturing capacity and only a nascent services sector. Poverty is rampant and human development is lacking. To tackle these problems, the Brussels Programme identified six priorities:

- reducing poverty;
- developing human and institutional resources;
- enhancing productive capacity and expanding domestic markets
- accelerating growth and fostering international trade and financial flows;
- improving environmental protection; and
- attaining food security and reducing malnutrition.

The nature of these priorities does not differ greatly from those of most other developing countries, as identified in the global conferences and outlined earlier. The over-riding difference between the LDCs and the rest lies mostly in the *magnitude* of the development challenge, particularly in relation to the inadequacy of the resources the LDCs themselves have available. Ensuring that the LDCs break out of the 'poverty trap' they face will therefore depend very heavily on other commitments in the Brussels Programme, namely those of donors, most especially regarding ODA.

Testifying to the importance of economic growth for development, the Brussels Programme of Action sets a target of 7 per cent for the annual growth of GDP in these countries. The need for investment to achieve this growth rate is reflected in the target of an investment to GDP ratio of 25 per cent and in a number of goals relating to investment in transport and communications infrastructure. It shares many of the global human development goals and targets for 2015 (such as those relating to absolute poverty, hunger, primary education, adult literacy, gender equality and health), but includes some additional human development targets (including raising computer literacy). Reflecting the lack of infrastructure that characterizes these

countries, the Brussels Programme includes goals relating to roads, railways, postal services, telephones and telecommunications. It calls for monitoring progress towards attainment of all the goals with a view to ascertaining whether individual countries are making progress towards extricating themselves from LDC status.

Small Island Developing States

With globalization and trade liberalization, the size of an economy is becoming increasingly important, as illustrated by the worldwide push for regional integration. Economies with small populations are unable to benefit from critical mass and economies of scale, including in infrastructure and public administration. These countries are necessarily heavily dependent on international trade and are unusually vulnerable to the vicissitudes of the world economy, including reverberations from developments in the large economies. Overall, the rapidly changing global economic structure puts them at increasing risk of being marginalized in the world economy.

For their part, islands, particularly small islands, face a variety of short-term and long-term economic handicaps and environmental hazards. In addition to lack of economies of scale, they often lack natural resources and most face high transportation and communication costs. Environmentally, islands are especially vulnerable to damage to their infrastructure and productive capacity from seemingly more frequent and increasingly severe natural disasters. Because of their small geographic size and their exposure, the physical impact of a natural disaster is relatively greater for islands than for other countries; because of their small economic size, their capacity to respond is also less; and because of the remoteness of many of them, the international response may be hampered. Over the long term, islands face other problems relating to the globe's environmental deterioration, most notably the consequences of the sea level rise occurring as a result of global warming.

Developing countries that are small islands therefore confront an unusual set of challenges, not only of overall development, but also of economic and environmental vulnerability. The Barbados and Mauritius Conferences on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and their respective Programmes of Action resulted in

a global consensus on the actions that should be taken to address these challenges. They focused on the need for adequate financial resources, the transfer of environmentally sound technologies and capacity-building assistance from the international community.

As a complement to the general strategies for development outlined in the preceding chapters, a broad development goal for these countries is to strengthen their resilience to the economic and environmental vulnerabilities they confront. Some of these actions can be mutually reinforcing and therefore deserve special attention.

In response to their geographical conditions, these countries have opportunities to exploit their physical advantages, but have to do so without reducing these potential benefits to future generations. For example, they can promote sustainable tourism, while protecting their culture and traditions and conserving and managing their natural resources. Similarly, they can strive to increase the returns from fisheries by strengthening fisheries management but also ensure the sustainability of fisheries over the longer term, consistent with the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries. Becoming parties to the United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement and the FAO High Seas Fishing Agreement would assist to this end. These countries must be especially vigilant about the trans-shipment of hazardous wastes and materials through their jurisdictions.

Because remoteness makes much trade difficult or costly, these countries have to ensure a higher degree of self-reliance in some aspects of development highlighted in the preceding chapters. For example, these countries should give particular attention to developing adequate, affordable and environmentally sound sources of energy, including indigenous and renewable energy. They need to develop means of acquiring and delivering adequate supplies of freshwater, of providing sanitation services and of reducing and managing waste and pollution.

These countries also need to address their environmental vulnerabilities. To cater with extreme weather events and other emergencies, it would help to have comprehensive programmes of risk management and disaster prevention, mitigation, preparedness and relief. For the longer term, they have to begin to take action, consistent with their commitments under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to address the rise in the sea level occurring as a result of global warming.

Their small size and vulnerability to events either beyond their boundaries or beyond their control, mean that these countries need to give particular attention to building international partnerships and cooperation. In addition to regional economic integration, these efforts would naturally focus on cooperation intended to address specific concerns, such as (in addition to the agreements mentioned above) the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities in Small Island Developing States, the Convention on the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean, the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism and the relevant parts of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Landlocked Developing Countries

Because of their lack of territorial access to the sea, remoteness and isolation from world markets, landlocked developing countries face high transportation costs (including physical barriers and cumbersome border-crossing and customs procedures) for their externally traded products. This is especially disadvantageous because, for many of these countries, a large proportion of exports are accounted for by commodities which are transport-intensive. The diversification of exports is consequently inhibited by the competitive disadvantage that high transport costs present. Import costs are also high, to the detriment of both investment and consumption. In most cases, the transit neighbours of landlocked developing countries are also developing countries and lack the resources to provide the necessary transit transport facilities, not only infrastructure but also customs and administrative facilities. These handicaps have contributed to slow growth in the landlocked developing countries, placing many of them among the poorest in the world; several of which are LDCs. The Almaty Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries and their respective Programmes of Action resulted in a global consensus on the action that should be taken to address these challenges.

Landlocked developing countries have to confront these additional challenges in formulating their national development strategies. In this case, other countries in the region, particularly transit countries, are indispensable partners, and this partnership has to be taken into

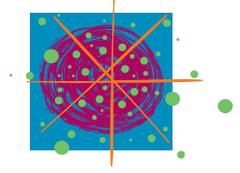
account in their own development strategies. Particular attention is required to construct ‘missing links’ in the regional, sub-regional and bilateral transport network, including through adoption of transport corridors, and to develop common rules, standards and procedures for trade.

At the national level it is even more important for landlocked countries than for other developing countries to adopt an integrated approach to the trade and transport sector. Bearing in mind the constraint it imposes on their development, the share of public investment and government attention allocated to developing and modernizing transportation infrastructure might well be larger than in most other developing countries. All modes of transport, including multimodal transport operations, are worth considering, with the environmental aspects being fully taken into account in each case. Competition among different modes, particularly road and rail transport, could increase the probability that the services would respond to user needs.

Eliminating non-physical barriers to transit transport is also vital. Impediments to transport between landlocked and transit developing countries would be greatly eased if both became parties to, and implemented, all applicable international conventions and instruments relating to road, rail, inland waterways and multimodal transport. Domestically, efficiency would be improved by efforts to streamline, simplify, standardize and make transparent all transit and border regulations, rules and procedures, including through acquiring and using modern customs, administrative and monitoring systems.

8

Systemic Issues



Global Economic Governance

The evolution of international economic, social and environmental institutions lags well behind the deepening of global interdependence. It has indeed been recognised that in a diverse set of issues, from countering global financial stability to combating global environmental problems, institutional arrangements continue to be insufficient. And on top of inadequate governance, there is also a democratic deficit, as the representation of developing countries in economic decision-making is absent in some cases and inadequate in others.

In preparation for the International Conference on Finance for Development the UN Secretary-General established a high-level panel to study this and other issues. In its report the Panel wrote that ‘Despite recent worthy efforts, the world has no fully satisfactory mechanism to anticipate and counter global economic shocks.’ Further: ‘...global economic decision-making has become increasingly concentrated in a few countries. Tensions have worsened as a result. For a range of common problems, the world has no formal institutional mechanism to ensure that voices representing all relevant parts are heard in the discussion.’ The Panel proposed the creation of a global council ‘at the highest political level to provide leadership on issues of global governance. ... Through its political leadership it would provide a long-term strategic policy framework to promote development, secure consistency in the policy goals of the major international organizations and promote consensus building among governments on possible solutions for issues of global economic and social governance’.

In the Monterrey Consensus, Member States underlined ‘the importance of continuing to improve global economic governance and

to strengthen the United Nations leadership role in promoting development' (para. 52). While the idea of a global council was not adopted, a number of important recommendations were agreed. Efforts to reform the international financial architecture were commended including stronger coordination of macroeconomic policies among leading developed countries and better mechanisms to prevent and manage financial crises. Monterrey also recognized the vital importance of strengthening international tax cooperation through enhanced dialogue among national tax authorities and greater coordination of the work of the multilateral and regional bodies concerned. Finally, the Consensus called for increasing effective participation of developing countries and countries with economies in transition in international economic decision-making, including in areas such as the formulation of financial standards and codes, where developing countries have been absent in the past.

The Economic and Social Council

The unique legitimacy of United Nations forums, associated to their universal membership, democratic structure and openness, is as valuable for international discussion and decision-making on economic and social development as for security and human rights. Improving the effectiveness of these forums, particularly the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) is thus vital, as is increasing attention to the focused outcomes of the functional commissions of ECOSOC.

Several of the conferences such as the Millennium Assembly and Monterrey have urged strengthening of ECOSOC to enable it to fulfill the role ascribed to it in the UN Charter. The 2005 Global Summit stated clearly that as ECOSOC is the principal body for coordination, policy review and policy dialogue, it must oversee realization of the decisions of the world conferences and achievement of the international development goals, including the MDGs, by holding annual ministerial-level substantive reviews to assess progress. 'The Council should serve as a quality platform for high-level engagement among Member States and with the international financial institutions, the private sector and civil society' and develop its ability to respond more rapidly to economic, social and environmental issues. Holding a bi-

ennial high-level Development Cooperation Forum was mandated. ECOSOC also has a major role in ensuring coherence between the funds, programmes and agencies of the UN system, including in efforts to address humanitarian emergencies.

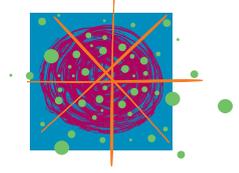
The first annual ministerial reviews and the launch of the Development Cooperation Forum takes place during the High-Level Segment of ECOSOC in July 2007. While the reviews are a major step in the accountability of member states for commitments made at the global conferences and summits, the establishment of the Forum is a significant step in the implementation of the global partnership for development as set out in the Millennium Declaration and the Monterrey Consensus.

International Financial and Economic Institutions

In the Monterrey Consensus and the 2005 World Summit, governments recognized the need to enhance the coherence, fairness and consistency of the international economic, financial and trading systems and called upon the IMF and the World Bank to continue to enhance participation of all developing countries in their decision-making. Through the world conferences, Member States made clear a commitment to reform the international financial institutions to strengthen the effective participation of developing countries in multilateral financial and economic decision-making. This reform of the international financial architecture should be accelerated, with further efforts to increase transparency and accountability. In addition, the WTO needs to ensure that its full membership is represented in its consultations. The Bank for International Settlements, Basel Committees and the Financial Stability Forum too should continue enhancing their outreach and consultation efforts with developing countries. Other ad hoc groupings that make policy recommendations should correspondingly improve their outreach to non-member countries.

9

Challenges



United Nations world summits and conferences have played a crucial role in raising awareness of issues, articulating goals and strategies, and mobilizing political will. They have engaged civil society and the private sector and influenced public opinion. The impact of UN conferences can be directly traced to some major examples of priorities such as the recent increases in ODA, the development of the Kyoto Protocol and the Declaration of the Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. The impact on national policies, actions and outcomes is immeasurable and uneven but certainly highly significant in many countries. The norms and policies articulated at these global conferences offer principles, standards and strategies to all countries committed to improving the well-being of their peoples.

The outcomes are not legally binding. All the outcome documents were referred to the General Assembly where they were supported, but like other GA resolutions, they do not have legal status. The Foreword to a UN report on International Instruments of the UN explains the situation clearly:

- While [the GA] does not have enforcement powers directly, in the realm of public opinion its power is considerable. ... there is almost no area of universal concern on which the GA has not focused its attention. Through its main committees and subsidiary organs, there is constant attention to the social, economic, legal and political problems of human rights, sexism, racism, relations between nations, the welfare of children and women ... Some of the products of the GA are standards to which the nations of the world have agreed. Sometimes these are principles and strategies that help to guide behaviour, and sometimes the GA adopts conventions and treaties that become part of the legal framework of the individual nations.

- Even after a treaty or convention has been ratified by an individual nation, there is no ironclad guarantee that all of its provisions will be enforced. The world is still working towards systems of international law that will enhance the enforcement of instruments adopted by the GA. At present much of what is adopted by the GA relies on public opinion as the primary tool of enforcement. This vast body of treaties (530 had been deposited with the Secretary-General by the end of 2001), protocols, agreements, conventions, declarations, proclamations, charters and resolutions is virtually unknown by most people. *Having passed through the committees of the GA and then the full Assembly, these products represent the conscience and wisdom of the nations.* This is our world working together for the betterment of everyone and every nation. We have a responsibility to disseminate these standards widely; their implementation will make our world an infinitely better, more just and peaceful planet.

Sceptics have argued that words do not matter, but the negotiating sessions of these conferences have shown that this is a superficial view. All the outcome documents were the result of preparatory meetings at which every word was carefully considered and negotiated. Diplomats and public servants were attentive to every detail. For some issues, representatives of national interest groups lobbied their delegations or even sat with them. There were strong disagreements over many issues, resolution of which required prolonged, patient and sometimes tedious negotiation, and about which difficult compromises had to be sought and made.

It is impossible to comprehensively and accurately assess their impact. Partial, short term evaluations have been attempted. For example, in preparation for the five year review of the Social Summit, the 24th special session, Member States were asked to report progress. One hundred and ten countries reported taking some action. About thirty countries had set themselves time-bound poverty reduction targets, and 78 had issued poverty reduction plans or included such chapters in national economic and social strategies. Many countries gave more attention to employment than five years before, including all Member States in the European Union. Many had lifted the priority given to education, health, housing and social protection. Nonethe-

less, some governments ignored or acted inconsistently with the Social Summit commitments and recommendations, and the Social Summit outcomes did not resolve the complexity of making practical policy choices in the face of limited resources, let alone the debates about the most effective means for achieving particular goals. Yet, agreeing on shared goals, strategies and policies was a major step. With greater clarity about objectives, a sharper and more cost effective focus for programmes is easier.

There were major changes in some international organizations too. The World Bank and the UN Development Programme made poverty reduction their principal priority. The structural adjustment policies of the World Bank in the eighties and nineties were replaced by Poverty Reduction Strategies. These organizations and the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD adopted the MDGs as their overarching framework for development cooperation.

Similar evaluations are possible for each of the conferences. It is clear that though poverty has fallen in some countries, it has increased in others. Despite the warnings of UNCED, and reductions in a few countries, global greenhouse gas emissions have continued to rise. Despite the determined commitments agreed to in Cairo and Beijing, hundreds of millions of women still do not have the opportunity to choose the size of their families or experience equality at the workplace. We are still not on track to achieving the MDGs in sub-Saharan Africa, and many donor countries are not meeting the internationally agreed targets for ODA provision.

There are many reasons for these and many other failures, delays and inadequacies. Many countries lack the enabling environment essential for many policies to work. Countries that are conflict-ridden, or which have weak institutions, major disease infestations, poor human resources or small cadres of professional and technical personnel, can only address these impediments slowly. Many developing countries have tightly constrained resources, receive far too little ODA, and have no panaceas for such poverty traps.

In all countries, some domestic interests may strongly oppose policies which conflict with their short-term interests or preferences. Fossil-fuel-based energy companies strenuously oppose limiting greenhouse gas emissions. Some economists and financial interests oppose measures which divert attention from reducing inflation. Defence forces and their suppliers resent criticisms of military expenditure.

In short, there has been diversity in the extent to which world conference declarations were or could be implemented. There can, however, be little doubt that the UN world conferences and summits have played a vital role in the evolution of the global political climate. Their focus on human well-being may have been some times eroded by security concerns, but few would doubt that the goals, commitments, strategies and policies adopted and commended by Member States in the world conferences contribute to easing the conditions which contribute to the growth of misery, alienation and despair.

For the last few years the principal concern among national representatives to the United Nations has been to improve the effectiveness of the formal structures. The era of the great global conferences focusing on particular issues may be over, but there will certainly be more world conferences and summits, special sessions of the GA and high-level meetings to discuss major issues, decide on action and strengthen resolve to achieve agreed goals.

The peoples of the United Nations committed in the first paragraph of the UN Charter:

- to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war;
- to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights;
- to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained; and
- to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

And they resolve furthermore 'to combine our efforts to accomplish these aims'.

If that is so, then it is vital to take every opportunity to renew determination to reach the goals and to apply the commitments, strategies and policies agreed to at the UN world conferences with greater strength and energy.