



“THE ROLE OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR IN ACHIEVING THE MDG’S”

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Success in getting things done is a function of a compelling vision combined with broad based commitment and disciplined execution. And those things, those goals that we are trying “to get done” must be S.M.A.R.T.: Specific, Measurable, Agreed, Realistic, Time-bound. The MDG’s have some SMART features, they do provide quantified and time bound targets.

The commitment to achieve the MDG’s from now all 191 members of the UN should not be taken lightly. There are many who consider the MDG’s too modest: 50% reduction in people suffering from hunger leaves 50% still very hungry; others believe they are unrealistically ambitious and hence elusive. But also, after 50 years and \$ 1.400 bln ODA, the challenge to create a better world has only increased.

Business can only thrive in stable, fair, prospering societies. So if societies and governments are struggling with their problems, “business” may be part of the solution: “Eradicating Poverty through Profit”. The UN Global Compact is an excellent effort to engage and mobilise international business in this context.

There are good reasons why business out of well-considered self-interest and “within their own sphere of influence” can actively participate in the achievement of the MDG’s (and beyond): improving their operating environment; develop new (growth) markets; reducing risks, liabilities and costs. Moreover, entrepreneurship in any country, affluent or poor, is a crucial factor for development and growth.

The “role of business is doing business”, although the concept of what constitutes the “right” business and what “profit” means is changing (Sustainable Development respectively “People, Planet, Profit). The role of government is creating an enabling environment, which includes to ensure the rule of law, to foster health, education, social justice, and to create incentives for local entrepreneurship and also for international corporations. The latter are offering access to funding, markets, skills, operating and governance standards.

Cooperation between governments, the business sector and also civil society groups, is of the essence. Convergence of the vision for development (and the value case behind this), as well as the recognition of, and respect for each others' distinctive features and roles are very important and will create major benefits in output and time-horizon. Within and among governments much more harmonization of policies should take place. Moreover, host governments in developing countries urgently need to upgrade the governance and operating standards. Assistance from international development organizations is clearly required. A sound local banking system is also of paramount importance.