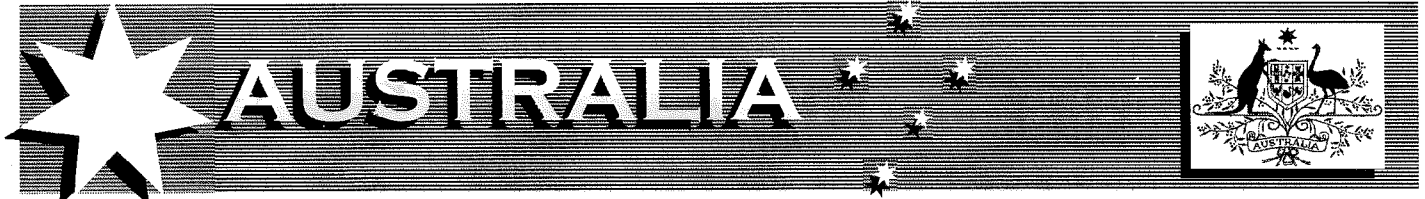


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AUSTRALIAN MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

E-mail [australia@un.int](mailto:australia@un.int)

150 East 42<sup>nd</sup> Street, New York NY 10017-5612 Ph 212 - 351 6600 Fax 212 - 351 6610 [www.australia-unsc.gov.au](http://www.australia-unsc.gov.au)

Wednesday 25 September 2013

## **The Special Event in 2013 to follow up efforts made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals**

**Statement by The Hon Julie Bishop MP  
MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**Check Against Delivery**

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At the beginning of the new millennium, our Leaders came together at the United Nations to express our shared commitment to reduce poverty and promote a more secure and prosperous world.

The Millennium Development Goals express these shared commitments.

Australia reaffirms its commitment to the MDGs.

As we look to accelerate progress on the MDGs to 2015 and design their successors, it is timely to reflect on the lessons learned.

The experience of the Asia-Pacific, where we focus, is an instructive one.

In 1990, 54 per cent of people in the Asia-Pacific lived in extreme poverty. This has since fallen to below 22 per cent.

This is a remarkable achievement — one that evidence shows has been underpinned by economic growth, most notably in China but also in countries like Indonesia, Vietnam and the Philippines.

China is a clear example of the power of countries actively addressing their development challenges.

The progressive liberalisation of China's economy has supported its strong growth and improved living standards.

It is sound economic policies, underpinned by strong national leadership that determines how quickly countries transition out of poverty.

The evidence is clear.

Jobs are the decisive factor in moving people out of poverty and it is the private sector that creates the vast majority of these jobs.

The private sector grows when new markets are accessed and when reduced costs make companies more internationally competitive, including through infrastructure investments.

One dollar invested in aid for trade is associated with an estimated increase of nearly eight dollars in additional exports from developing countries.

Also key to international competitiveness is access to a well-trained and educated labour force.

But the story of progress in the Asia-Pacific is also one of differentiation between countries.

The experience of the Small Island Developing States and fragile and conflict affected states is markedly different from the rest of the Asia-Pacific region.

In some Pacific Island countries, up to 35 per cent of people live in poverty. Persistent unemployment and limited economic potential, compounded by remoteness, are major challenges.

In fragile countries such as Afghanistan, instability and poor governance has hampered development and economic growth.

People in fragile countries are twice as likely to be undernourished and 50 per cent more likely to be impoverished.

That is why the new framework also needs to take account of the barriers of development - poor governance, insecurity and instability.

In this respect, I fully endorse the messages from the Secretary-General's High Level Panel Report, ably chaired by President Yudhoyono, President Johnson Sirleaf and Prime Minister Cameron, that economic transformation and job creation, as well as sound institutions and peaceful societies, must be core to the post 2015 agenda.

The new framework should be simple and compelling, and focus on the eradication of extreme poverty through sustainable development.

Thank you.