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# IRELAND

Statement by

Mr Eamon Gilmore, T.D.  
Tánaiste (Deputy Prime Minister) and  
Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade

at the

Special event of the President of the General Assembly  
to follow-up efforts made towards achieving the  
Millennium Development Goals

New York, 25 September 2013

*Check against delivery*

PERMANENT MISSION OF IRELAND TO THE UNITED NATIONS  
885 SECOND AVENUE, NEW YORK, NY 10017 TELEPHONE 212 421-6934 FAX 212 752-4726  
[newyorkpmun@dfa.ie](mailto:newyorkpmun@dfa.ie)

**MDG Special Event, UN New York 25 September 2013**

**Opening Plenary Statement by Mr Eamon Gilmore,**

**Tánaiste (Deputy Prime Minister) and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade  
Ireland**

Distinguished Heads of State and Government; Distinguished Ministers;  
Excellencies; Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are here today, representatives of all nations, thirteen years since the adoption of the Millennium Declaration, to re-commit to the Millennium Development Goals. Despite the serious challenges we all face, both domestically and globally, the message from our meeting today must be that we are determined to free the world from the degradation of poverty and hunger, and to ensure a life of dignity for all.

Together we have made great progress under the MDGs. Our combined efforts have lifted millions of families out of poverty, brought children into education, and built hope and economic opportunity for communities and countries in some of the poorest regions.

But today, 870 million people still go hungry in our technologically-advanced world. Every single day, 18,000 children die needlessly from preventable causes. 7,000 of these are children under the age of five who die because they are undernourished. And, every day, 800 women die because of complications during pregnancy and childbirth, for reasons that could have been prevented.

Ending global poverty and hunger remains the single greatest challenge we face as an international community. We have placed it at the heart of Ireland's foreign policy. During our recent EU Presidency, I co-hosted with Mary Robinson a major international conference on the linkages in the lives of communities in poor countries, between Hunger, Nutrition and Climate Justice.

We heard loudly and clearly that we need a transformative approach to tackling global challenges as a global community. This is a matter of justice and rights, but also of the security of the future of all of our children.

Ireland was honoured to be asked to work with South Africa to facilitate this Special Event and to secure agreement on the important Outcome Document before us today. It provides a clear commitment to maximising progress over the next two years under the MDGs and a roadmap for the negotiation of a new global development framework post-2015. I am convinced that the principles of equality, inclusion and fundamental human rights must be at the core of this work. And we cannot ignore the particular development challenges facing countries and communities beset by conflict and violence. We in Ireland know this all too well from our own historical experience.

I believe we can reach agreement on a new set of measurable, global goals, with a clear commitment to implement them at national level. But we need to be ready to address difficult issues openly.

I do not believe we can eradicate poverty without genuinely empowering women and girls. Nor can we eradicate hunger without addressing the growing impact of climate change, which is already being experienced to devastating effect in small island developing states and large areas of Africa. There, the poorest communities which have contributed the least to the problem are suffering the most. We need a strong emphasis on agriculture that is climate-sensitive.

Finally, I want to acknowledge the vital work of civil society in driving forward this common agenda. We want to build on the progress registered at the international civil society forum in this Chamber on Sunday. There, it was recognised that we have reached a pivotal moment that we are all challenged to transform our thinking about development. And, if we do so, if we put the lives and experiences of real people at the heart of our efforts, we have now an opportunity to end extreme poverty and hunger in a generation. Let us take up that challenge, and act on it.

Thank You