

**PRESS RELEASE**

**UN Secretary-General's MDG Advocacy Group urges the world to intensify efforts  
to achieve anti-poverty goals**

New York, 26 September 2012 – Meeting at UN Headquarters today against the backdrop of the opening of the 67th General Assembly session, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's MDG Advocates – eminent personalities from the private sector, academia, governments and civil society – urged the international community to intensify efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals in the final three years until their 2015 target date.

The MDG Advocacy Group, co-chaired by Prime Minister Julia Gillard of Australia and President Paul Kagame of Rwanda, was established by the Secretary-General in 2010 to help him build political will and mobilize global action for the benefit of the poor and the most vulnerable. The Group includes well-known figures such as Nobel Peace Prize laureate Muhammad Yunus, Mozambican humanitarian and former first lady Graça Machel, and singer and political activist Bob Geldof.

The eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) seek to: end poverty and hunger; achieve universal primary education; improve child health; boost maternal health; combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; ensure environmental sustainability; and attain a global partnership for development.

With the 2015 deadline for meeting the MDGs approaching rapidly, the Advocates are urging the international community to increase efforts for the final three years. Although several targets have been met ahead of schedule – including on poverty reduction, water access, slum improvement and gender parity in primary education -- enormous challenges remain. More than one billion people are still living in extreme poverty, and approximately 61 million children of primary school age are out of school. Progress has been uneven within countries and regions and severe inequalities persist.

“Achieving the MDGs is challenging but possible,” said Prime Minister Julia Gillard, co-chair of the Group. “We have seen what can be accomplished when the international community works together – we have made real progress towards the MDGs. But we still have a lot to do. And we are running out of time.”

President Kagame, co-chair of the Group, warned against losing focus following the recent global economic downturn, which has slowed progress towards the MDGs. “We need to be innovative and find ways to do more with limited resources, and scale up what has been seen to work over the last decade,” he said. “We must ensure the most vulnerable are not left behind.”

At their 2011 annual meeting, the Advocates agreed to an Action Plan setting out a series of targeted actions in the fields of food security, environment, health, education and the empowerment of women. At today's meeting, the Advocates discussed further areas for collaboration to accelerate achievement of the MDGs by 2015.

“Governments, business, civil society and communities need to work together,” said Prime Minister Gillard. “Together, we can make achieving the MDGs a reality.”

“The pursuit of development is a continuous endeavour, and so we must look beyond 2015, and build a sustainable foundation beyond the MDGs,” said President Kagame.

Today’s gathering was the third annual meeting of the Advocates since the Group was established in 2010. For more information, please visit [www.un.org/millenniumgoals/advocates](http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/advocates).

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