



Remarks

by

H.E. Ambassador John W. Ashe

President of the 68th Session of the United Nations

General Assembly

New York

23 September 2013

MDG Success: Accelerating Action and Partnering for Impact

Closing Session

Please check against delivery

Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

We now come to a close of this extraordinary event. I would like to thank the Secretary-General for convening us and the many distinguished leaders gathered here for offering numerous points of reflection.

I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge, at the outset, the collection of outstanding pledges by partners convened here today – that combine to more than 2.5 billion dollars towards our shared development goals. Resources are essential to reaching our development objectives, but must be complemented by strong capacity and equally strong vision.

The valuable ideas and many impressive examples presented today will no doubt serve as important point from which Member States can gather lessons learned and garner momentum for the Special Event on the MDGs on September 25th. This event, mandated by the General Assembly in 2010, will provide an opportunity for Member States to assess progress on the MDGs, and determine how to accelerate action. What we heard today will be an important part of that conversation, as well as our larger agenda going forward.

Many of today's sessions are also complementary to the six High Level Events and Thematic Debates I will hold during the 68th session to set the stage for the post 2015 development agenda, and so I encourage you to think about and, more importantly, share those linkages with Member States. As a result of your deliberations here today, I am beginning to see linkages with the High Level Events on Women, Youth and Civil Society in the post 2015 development agenda and South-South, Triangular Cooperation and ICT for Development, as well as the thematic debates on the Role of Partnerships and Water, Sanitation and Sustainable Energy. As many panellists noted today's challenges

are deeply interconnected and as one stated, to the point, “no one can take them on alone”.

Distinguished guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today’s event brought together unique voices with a common goal - to speed up progress on achieving the MDGs. There was particular focus on the “how” by bringing together concrete examples of success from partnerships across the spectrum of the MDGs. From the excellent discussions you have had, it is clear that we have taken progressive steps forward in accomplishing our aims.

All actors, and I don't mean only governments, but private enterprises, civil society, sub national governments and private foundations are mobilized behind the implementation of the MDG Agenda. This powerful message should be kept in mind as we move forward with discussions on the post 2015 development agenda.

This morning at the on ‘Matching Ambitions with Results’ session participants emphasized the added value of partnerships to address the complex development challenges of today, including meeting commitments of the MDGs, climate change and sustainable development. With 839 days to reach our millennium development goals, success in many areas and many countries is within reach however, as the Secretary-General urged, we have to “chart an ever more efficient path to impact”. The most innovative and productive partnerships accelerate progress, share resources and incentivize action; they build on each partner’s comparative advantages and contributions. The sum is greater than its parts.

The next session on ‘Partnering for Impact’, analyzed and provided substantive examples of how multi-stakeholder partnerships, particularly those convened by and under the UN umbrella, have been able to achieve unmatched scope. Speakers reminded us that that there is no substitute for national ownership and leadership by responsible businesses and

development organizations - but especially by Governments. Tackling today's multi-dimensional problems require a coalition of actors. We must build our capacity to engage in multi-stakeholder partnerships at scale, while ensuring accountability, ownership and impact to reach those most in need.

Already multi-stakeholder initiatives have led to big wins. The accountability processes that have been built are unprecedented. The transition towards a more sustainable world has been jump-started through the creation of new partnerships on energy access, renewable energy and -efficiency worth billions of dollars, which are bringing benefits to the climate, environment and people's health as well as to economic development and the empowerment of women.

Partnerships, and prioritization by Governments, have contributed to thirty-eight countries already achieving the MDG of halving hunger, showing us it is possible. Participants heard about new commitments and successes by governments and their development partners in overcoming bottlenecks in regards to getting every child in school and progressing on sanitation and water goals, which offers the promise of better health and a sounder environment, especially for the most vulnerable women and children of our world.

During the panel on "Translating from Global to Local," we heard fantastic new commitments to achieve the MDGs, from private sector partner IKEA towards MDG 4 and 5 as well as, development organizations committed to advancing Sustainable Energy for All and gender equality. The panel explored just how critical it is to convene and coordinate at all levels – global, regional, and local – in order to leverage the required resources, finance, expertise, knowledge, and broad coalitions of leaders needed to meet agreed targets.

In the first afternoon session, we heard from leaders from Africa, who are shaping development through their own generosity. Philanthropy in Africa is not a new phenomenon, but it is growing, and its influence is becoming greater. These

philanthropists have shared their personal convictions, their vision for their countries and continents, and what is needed now. In partnership with all sectors, these leaders are playing a unique role in support of the MDGs.

A message from this session is that although philanthropy has a strong link to basic services such as primary education, health, housing and access to food, it should be distinguished from profit seeking enterprise. As we progress towards the post 2015 development agenda, we have to better understand that both philanthropy and enterprise will have a distinctive role to play.

Finally, the session on innovation was exciting. Here speakers looked at innovation in terms of technology as well as how there are innovative new ways of organizing our work both around issue areas and cross-sectorally. The UN's multi-stakeholder initiatives are demonstrating the potential and power of this innovative new model of organization and cooperation. Advances in science and technology provide an enabling environment for unprecedented innovations for development.

More people than ever have access to the internet and mobile phones, and connect with each other online, generating an enormous amount of information. A new generation of public-private partnerships is building capacity to use these new sources of data to better understand and respond to people's needs.

Colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I believe that today's event has accomplished what it was intended to do. We have all had an enriching discussion and the opportunity to reflect on where we have progressed and what we can learn from our experience in order to better implement the MDGs. We have also had the chance to see just how firmly our multi-stakeholder approach has taken root and we have demonstrated its influence.

Let us now build on this momentum as we push toward the last mile of the MDGs and future efforts. If we are truly to achieve a world without poverty, we will need to be steadfast. As one chair noted we will need to operate at a pace between 4-5 times of that so far. We are already 7 billion people sharing this earth. By 2030, that number will have risen to more than 8 billion. This means we will need at least 50 percent more food, 45 percent more energy, and 30 percent more water.

This means there is much for our partnerships to dedicate their efforts to. 18,000 children under-five still die every day from largely preventable causes. 57 million children are still out of school. 37 per cent of the world's population live without basic sanitation and 780 million people lack access to water. With the increasingly present impacts of climate change now a persistent reality, these problems are in danger of being worsened.

Each one of us, in every aspect of life has a choice: business as usual or sustainable development. Any forward looking investor, policymaker or citizen knows there is only one answer. We must act, we must partner, for sustainability.

We now move ahead in this very important week and I look forward to seeing how we can each play a part in fulfilling commitments already made, changing old paradigms that no longer serve us, and building something that serves and honours all of us. I remain hopeful and I have faith that when our collective skill, creativity, ingenuity and commitment are united for the greater good, we can - as the saying goes - move mountains.

Thank you.