

## BACKGROUND NOTE

### Roundtable 6: Widening and Strengthening Partnerships

Effective global partnerships are crucial to achieving the MDGs. They require the mutual accountability of all stakeholders – donor and developing country governments, non-governmental actors, the private sector and foundations. Additional progress is needed in all the components of MDG 8 as well as to address other emerging issues that have significant impact on progress in achieving all the Goals.

#### **1. How do we ensure that aid commitments are met and what else can be done to improve aid predictability?**

Increases in aid (Official Development Assistance) have had a significant impact on MDG achievement. However, current ODA targets are unlikely to be met as well as commitments made at international summits, including the 2005 Gleneagles G8 Summit. There is considerable scope for improving the distribution and allocation of existing ODA including faster progress on aid effectiveness as made under the Paris and Accra commitments.

- Donors and recipient countries could further develop and apply the concept of mutual accountability in accordance with the 2008 Accra Agenda for Action
- National aid policies and joint performance frameworks can greatly improve mutual accountability by engaging stakeholders in an ongoing dialogue, by assigning responsibilities and by making commitments on development targets and transparency more tangible.
- New commitments on ODA should specify how and when they are to be delivered, with clear timelines and targets; that debt relief and funds towards addressing climate change are additional to ODA; that aid is better aligned to country objectives; and that, if donors earmark aid, they define how such funds fit into their overall commitments.

#### **2. How do we ensure debt sustainability through enhanced international cooperation? What are the best ways to facilitate debt relief and debt workouts?**

Despite progress, several low- and middle-income countries with critically high debt ratios have not benefited from the Highly-Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) scheme and Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative (MDRI). The financial and economic crisis has also eroded some progress in achieving the MDGs and as a result, many developing countries have had to borrow both internally and externally, thus increasing public debt and reducing their ability to finance achievement of the MDGs.

- Creditors should consider extending debt relief to low- and middle-income countries that are experiencing debt difficulties. Where appropriate and feasible, new resources could be provided in the form of grants and other grant-like innovative sources of financing to assist Governments in reaching the MDGs without becoming overburdened with public debt.
- The HIPC Initiative should be extended in time and in coverage to include all low-income and lower-middle-income vulnerable countries. HIPC/MDRI debt relief can be increased or tailored to the specific circumstances of pre-completion-point countries that experience higher debt vulnerabilities.
- The United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions could convene an expert group to examine proposals for fairer and more equitable debt restructuring and other debt arrangements and to make recommendations on debt relief and debt restructuring.

#### **3. How do we ensure that the Doha Round of World Trade Organization trade negotiations realizes its development promise?**

Nearly nine years after the launch of the Doha Round, trade negotiations remain stalled. Calls are being made to conclude the Doha Round with a strong development focus, especially with regard to the Least Developed Countries (LDCs).

- Trade-distorting agricultural support should be reduced in order to increase the competitiveness of products exported by developing countries and to reduce the potentially harmful impacts of agricultural support on food security. Improve market access to agricultural and manufactured exports from developing countries and enhance special and differential treatment.
- Continued donor commitment to Aid for Trade is essential to improve the trading capacity of developing countries, especially to LDCs. Donor countries need to provide adequate trade-related assistance to mitigate the detrimental effects of trade reforms.

#### **4. How do we ensure easier and cheaper access to medicines and new agricultural and renewable energy technology?**

Many essential medicines are inaccessible to the poor in developing countries because their prices remain high. It is urgent for developing countries to strengthen their health systems and increase pharmaceutical expenditures, supported by ODA where necessary. Governments of developed countries can facilitate the export of more affordable medicines to developing countries. Governments of developing countries can facilitate the importation or, where the capacity exists, the production of generic versions of patented medicines taking advantage of exceptions provided in international trade agreements so as to increase the availability and reduce the prices of medicines.

Agriculture's contribution to economic growth and poverty reduction could be greatly increased through investments in agricultural technology research and infrastructure, coupled with policies to improve and sustain the productivity of smallholder farmers consistent with environmentally sustainable practices. The development and transfer of technologies for the mitigation of and adaptation to climate change in developing countries should be promoted. E-Government applications would improve the delivery of services in health, education and the environment in ways that reduce costs and transaction time.

#### **5. How can stakeholders work more effectively together to prevent conflict and armed violence and to strengthen the rule of law, justice and security?**

- Governments need to ensure efficacy, transparency and inclusion in the delivery of public services which will contribute to peacebuilding and the prevention of violent conflict.
- The United Nations system should ensure the integration of its peace and development objectives and further mainstream gender and human rights in all areas of its work, especially activities that are interlinked across departments and agencies.
- Greater efforts are needed to address the socio-economic and institutional causes of potential violence and armed conflict and formulate strategies with appropriate analysis, research, advocacy and outreach to ensure sustainable peacebuilding based on the interdependence of human rights, gender equality, governance, development and peace and security.

#### **6. How can we ensure that new and existing commitments, by all stakeholders, are adequately monitored and met?**

- Clear, numerical and measurable targets and timelines in all areas relative to MDG 8 need to be set and agreed to by all stakeholders. National statistical systems should be improved to monitor progress made towards achieving the MDGs and other development indicators in order to inform and guide policy interventions.
- The increasing use of e-Government in the planning and execution of national development strategies in developing countries and in development cooperation by donor countries could be the basis for the establishment of a mutual accountability framework to keep track of commitments fulfilled and programme delivery.