

**PRESS RELEASE**

**UN Secretary-General's MDG Advocacy Group agrees to pursue concrete initiatives in support of anti-poverty goals**

New York, 21 September 2011 – Meeting at UN Headquarters yesterday against the backdrop of the opening of the 66<sup>th</sup> General Assembly session, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's MDG Advocates – eminent personalities from the private sector, academia, governments and civil society – agreed to lead a series of concrete, targeted actions in the fields of food security, environment, health, education and the empowerment of women, part of a concerted effort to boost achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by the 2015 target date.

The MDG Advocates Group, co-chaired by Presidents Paul Kagame of Rwanda and José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero of Spain, was established by the Secretary-General in June 2010 to help him build political will and mobilize global action for the benefit of the poor and most vulnerable.

An Action Plan, endorsed by members of the Advocacy Group present at yesterday's meeting, encourages each Advocate to champion at least one of the specific MDG initiatives that are grouped in two thematic clusters: "Food Security and Sustainable Growth" and "Education and Health." Gender equality and global partnerships for development are cross-cutting themes. Through these initiatives, the MDG Advocates aim to generate further momentum towards MDG achievement as the 2015 deadline for meeting the Goals approaches rapidly.

President Kagame chaired yesterday's meeting. UN Deputy-Secretary-General Asha-Rose Migiro welcomed "the important leadership, passion and expertise" provided by the Advocacy Group and noted that "targeted interventions" in support of individual Goals would foster real progress.

Discussions among the Advocates touched on the need both to strengthen global advocacy on the MDGs in light of the current global economic climate and declining official development assistance, and to build strong political support for innovative financing mechanisms.

Advocates also discussed the linkages between poverty, climate change and sustainable development in light of the upcoming UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) in June 2012. They also encouraged thinking on how to move the anti-poverty goals forward in the post-2015 period, building on progress already made. The Advocates also agreed to provide inputs to the November meeting of the G-20 in Cannes, France, on ways to accelerate achievement of the MDGs.

Yesterday's gathering was the second annual meeting of the Advocates since the Group was established last year. A full list of the membership of the Advocacy Group is attached. For more information, please visit: [www.un.org/millenniumgoals/advocates](http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/advocates)

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