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Assembly President hopeful UN summit will lead to progress on anti-poverty targets



General Assembly President Ali Treki

4 March 2010 – The global financial and economic downturn has reversed the gains made in some countries towards attaining the anti-poverty targets world leaders pledged to achieve by 2015, the President of the General Assembly said today, stressing the importance of a high-level meeting to be convened at the United Nations in September to discuss progress.

“This crisis, coupled with the negative effects of climate change and higher food and energy prices, have pushed millions of more people into poverty. The achievement of all of the goals by 2015 is now under threat,” Ali Treki **told** an informal meeting of the Assembly in preparation for the September summit.

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has called on world leaders to attend the summit, which aims to boost efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (**MDGs**), which seek to slash a host of social ills, ranging from extreme poverty and hunger to maternal and infant mortality to lack of access to education and health care, all by the target date of 2015.

Mr. Treki noted that much progress has been made in many countries, including the hundreds of millions of girls who are now enrolled in school. However, there has been little, or mixed, progress in other areas such as reducing maternal mortality.

“The task before us is to reach consensus on the ways and means that will allow all of us achieve the MDGs by 2015. While the task is daunting, I believe that with the

commitments made by all, developed and developing countries, we still have the chance of making the progress we all aspire for.

"I am hopeful that by the end of this process of consultations, we will agree on a road map that will chart our collective efforts for the coming five years."

He added that the high-level plenary could not come at a better time. "It is important that this summit is a success because it is the last chance for the international community to act together to make the final push towards achieving all of the goals."

In preparing for the summit, the Assembly President urged all Member States to reflect on the progress they have made to reach each of the eight goals, to ask whether they have done enough to reduce poverty, to tackle those goals which are lagging far behind, and to give real meaning to the idea of a new global partnership.

Mr. Treki has started the process of preparing for the two-day informal interactive hearings with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), civil society and private sector, which he hopes will contribute to the successful organization and outcome of the September meeting.

In addition, a trust fund has been established to enhance the participation of representatives of NGOs and civil society from developing countries in the hearings.

"The poor cannot wait. We must not use the economic crisis, the food crisis or other setbacks as an excuse for failing to live up to our commitments," Deputy Secretary-General Asha-Rose Migiro **told** the meeting, adding that the world has the knowledge and the resources to achieve all the MDGs.

"What is needed is decisive joint action. We need a clear agenda, with each actor – not just Governments but also other stakeholders – working efficiently, effectively and collectively."

Ms. Migiro added that Mr. Ban General has decided to create three groups to engage in advocacy for the summit, which will be held in conjunction with the start of the Assembly's annual General Debate which routinely brings dozens of heads of State and government to New York.

These are the "MDG Advocacy Group," eminent personalities from all walks of life who will raise awareness; the "MDG Champions," a group of celebrities and athletes who will lend their star power to this effort; and the "MDG Leaders," business executives who have stood out for their strong commitment to the goals.

In addition, the Millennium Campaign will hold its annual "Stand up, take Action, Make a Noise for the MDGs" event over three days immediately prior to the summit. Last year's Stand Up event attracted a record amount of more than 170 million participants.

"I hope we can do even better this year, and show the leaders travelling to New York that the world expects them to act," said Ms. Migiro.

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