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## UN report card on anti-poverty goals shows mixed picture of progress and obstacles



Secretary-General briefs press on MDGs Report 2010

23 June 2010 – The world continues to make advances towards the Millennium Development Goals (**MDGs**), despite the global economic downturn, but the rate of improvement remains too slow and countries must step up their efforts if the MDGs are to be achieved by their target date of 2015, a new United Nations report says.

The annual assessment report, released today by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, shows that the world has made huge strides in reducing extreme poverty, tackling HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, and boosting access to clean drinking water, but is still lagging in other critical areas, such as improving maternal health and increasing access to decent sanitation.

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Mr. Ban **told journalists** that the report illustrates that world leaders must focus on several fronts: generating jobs, spurring economic growth, encouraging food security, promoting clean energy and strengthening partnerships between rich and poor countries to help the world's most vulnerable.

“Economic uncertainty cannot be an excuse to slow down our development efforts,” he said. “It is a reason to speed them up. By investing in the MDGs, we invest in global economic growth. By focusing on the needs of the most vulnerable, we lay the foundation for a more sustainable and prosperous tomorrow.”

The Secretary-General announced that he is setting up the MDG Advocacy Group, a collection of 17 current and former political leaders, businesspeople and thinkers from around the world who will work to galvanize support for achieving the Goals.

Rwandan President Paul Kagame and Spanish Prime Minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero will co-chair the group, which will host its first meeting next month – two months before the world’s leaders will gather at UN Headquarters in New York for a high-level summit aimed at accelerating progress towards the MDGs.

The MDG assessment **report**, based on data from more than 25 UN agencies and international organizations, indicates that the world has slashed the percentage of people living in extreme poverty – classed as earning less than \$1.25 a day – in the past two decades.

The extreme poverty rate fell from 46 per cent in the baseline year of 1990 to 27 per cent in 2005, and is forecast to fall further to 15 per cent by 2015, thanks in large part to gains in China, South Asia and South-East Asia.

But while that progress against poverty has continued despite the global economic downturn and the recent food crisis, the report notes that hunger and malnutrition are on the rise in some region, such as South Asia, and stubborn gaps persist between rich and poor and between urban and rural communities.

Girls also continue to lack the same opportunities as boys, especially in education – a girl in one of the poorest households is four times more likely than an equivalent boy to not be attending school.

And while Latin America and the Caribbean have made important progress on child health and gender equality, fewer than half of women in some African regions receive care from skilled health workers when giving birth.

The MDG report has been released ahead of the G8 and G20 summits for leading economies, being held this weekend in Toronto, Canada. Mr. Ban will attend the event, where accountability for aid commitments will be high on the agenda.

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