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UN identifies strategies to accelerate development and poverty reduction



UNDP Administrator Helen Clark

17 June 2010 – Development models that focus attention on the poor while expanding job opportunities, increased government spending on social services and aid flows from affluent nations are all successful strategies for alleviating global poverty, the United Nations says.

Access to low carbon energy and mobilizing domestic capital by, for example, improving tax collection, are the other factors the UN Development Programme ([UNDP](#)) identifies in a new report as crucial factors for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals ([MDGs](#)).

The MDGs are eight internationally-agreed targets which aim to reduce poverty, hunger, maternal and child deaths, disease, inadequate shelter, gender inequality and environmental degradation by 2015.

“For those living in poverty, the MDGs have never been abstract or aspirational targets,” said UNDP Administrator Helen Clark, when she launched the report entitled *What Will It Take To Achieve The Millennium Development Goals? An International Assessment* at UN Headquarters in New York.

“They [MDGs] have offered a pathway to a better life – a life with access to adequate food and income; to basic education and health services; to clean water and sanitation; and to empowerment for women. Put simply, advancing the MDGs is

an important milestone in our quest for a more just and peaceful world," Miss Clark added.

The [report](#) draws examples of development models that have worked from 50 countries across the world.

The abolition of primary school fees in Ethiopia and Kenya, for example, led to a surge in the number of children enrolled in school, while innovative health servicing options in Afghanistan resulted in a reduction of mortality rates among children under the age of five, according to the UNDP report.

Adequate expenditures by governments have led to improvements in both education and health, the report said, adding that evidence from assessments suggested that reductions in poverty and hunger occurred when economic growth is "job-rich." That also resulted in improved agricultural production.

Ghana's nationwide fertilizer subsidy programme, for instance, increased food production by 40 per cent and reduced hunger by nine per cent between 2003 and 2005.

Other examples include a national rural employment initiative in India which benefited 46 million households. The programme guarantees a minimum of 100 days of work for landless labourers and marginal farmers, with almost half being women.

"Such robust social protection and employment programmes reduce poverty and reverse inequality," the report stresses.

It praises Albania for adopting a "ninth MDG" by reforming public administration, legislation and policies to promote accountability and strengthen results, an indication that country-led development and effective government are at the root of achieving the MDGs.

The UNDP assessment also highlights linkages between many of the MDGs. For example, improving opportunities for women and girls and expanding access to energy have a multiplier effect on MDG progress. The report notes that providing generators in Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali and Senegal, has helped to free up an average of two to four hours per day for women, which they have been able to spend on education, improving their health and generating additional sources of revenue.

The report finds that "well-targeted and predictable aid" is a critical catalyst for meeting the MDGs and has produced significant results in Burkina Faso, Mozambique, Rwanda, Uganda and Viet Nam by making more resources available for service delivery. Countries also need to expand their own domestic resource mobilization and to adjust their budgets to ensure maximum return on their investment.

"Of course, the global recession, the food and fuel crises, and the challenges of climate change and of natural disasters generally have complicated the road to

2015," said Miss Clark. "But they do not make the MDGs unobtainable if we collectively determine that we want to achieve them," she added.

The report, which will be shared with UN Member States as they prepare the outcome document for the September MDG Summit, also singles out the failure to conclude the World Trade Organization's ([WTO](#)) Doha Development Round of trade negotiations as the most significant gap in formulating a global partnership for development.

Market access for products from developing countries remain limited and domestic agricultural subsidies by rich nations continue to overshadow policy coherence needed to accelerate MDG progress, UNDP notes.

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