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Ban unveils 'collection of superheroes' to help eradicate poverty



Achieving universal primary education by 2015 is Goal 2 of the MDGs

23 June 2010 – Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon **announced** today that he is establishing an advocacy group of eminent persons to try to galvanize support worldwide towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (**MDGs**) by their target date of 2015.

Mr. Ban said “a real collection of superheroes in defeating poverty” has been chosen to serve on the MDG Advocacy Group, which will be co-chaired by Rwandan President Paul Kagame and Spanish Prime Minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero.

The group is tasked with helping Mr. Ban to build political will and mobilize global action on the eight Goals ahead of the high-level summit on the issue that will take place at United Nations Headquarters in New York in September. Mr. Zapatero will host the first meeting of the advocacy group next month in Madrid.

“We need to emerge from the September Millennium Development Goals summit with concrete national action plans for realizing the Goals. These advocates can help us get there,” Mr. Ban stressed. Each of the group’s members have been asked to focus their advocacy efforts on specific Goals.

The members include two Nobel Peace Prize laureates – the Bangladeshi pioneer of microcredit Muhammad Yunus and the Kenyan environmental activist Wangari Maathai – and the former Chilean president Michelle Bachelet.

The businessmen and philanthropists Bill Gates and Ted Turner are participating, as are Jeffrey Sachs, the Secretary-General's Special Adviser on the MDGs, and Ray Chambers, the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Malaria.

Qatar's First Lady, Sheikha Mozah Bint Nasser, and the former Mozambican First Lady Graça Machel have also been named as advocates, along with former General Assembly president Jan Eliasson and Philippe Douste-Blazy, the UN Special Adviser on innovative financing for development.

The other members are: Stine Bosse, the chief executive of TrygVesta Group and the chairman of Børnefonden (the Children's Fund); Dho Young-Shin, the chairman of the UN World Tourism Organization's ([UNWTO](#)) Sustainable Tourism for Eliminating Poverty Foundation; Julio Frenk, the former Mexican health minister and the Dean of the Harvard School of Public Health; Akin Adesina, the Vice-President of the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa; and Hiromasa Yonekura, the chairman of the Japan Business Federation.

Mr. Ban said distinguished personalities from China, India and the United Kingdom will also join the group soon.

Speaking to the UN News Centre, Mr. Chambers said that "it's a privilege to join such an accomplished group of leaders who have the experience and ambition to ensure that all MDGs remain on track at this critical juncture."

He added that "from our experience with malaria, we know that achieving the MDGs is within sight, and by coordinating our efforts and sharing best practices, we will maximize the likelihood that all eight Goals will be met by 2015."

The MDGs, which include targets for slashing poverty, boosting school enrolment rates, improving maternal health and increasing access to clean water and decent sanitation, were devised at the Millennium Summit in New York in 2000.

Today Mr. Ban issued the latest UN assessment report on efforts to reach the Goals, which shows that there has been mixed progress in the developing world. Extreme poverty is falling rapidly but maternal health and sanitation are lagging and there are still large gaps between rich and poor, men and women, and urban and rural communities.

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