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Aid and fairer trade crucial to boost Africa's poverty reduction efforts – Ban



Goal 5 of the MDGs: improve maternal health

4 September 2010 – Africans need both foreign aid and fairer trading terms with other regions to achieve the poverty reduction and social development targets known as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by their 2015 deadline, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon stressed today.

“Far more than that, they need the tools with which they themselves will create jobs, generate income and unleash the continent's own potential,” Mr. Ban said in a message to the two-day Africa Consultative Forum on the MDGs in the Rwandan capital, Kigali.

Mr. Ban said Africa had seen remarkable success in combating hunger, reducing child malnutrition and mortality, improving school enrolment, expanding access to clean water and HIV/AIDS treatment, as well as controlling tuberculosis, malaria and other neglected tropical diseases.

He gave the example of the forum's host, Rwanda, which he said had made impressive efforts in achieving almost universal primary enrolment, including gender parity at the primary school level.

With nearly 60 per cent of children sleeping under insecticide-treated bed nets aimed at keeping out malaria-spreading mosquitoes, the country has registered the

largest increase in the use of the nets in Africa, Mr. Ban said in his message, delivered by Jeffrey Sachs, his Senior Adviser on MDGs.

Rwanda also made history in 2008 when the representation of women in parliament reached the highest level in the world, Mr. Ban noted.

Progress has, however, been uneven across the goals, as well as from country to country and within nations, the Secretary-General noted. Moreover, Africa remains the continent facing the most severe challenges in achieving the MDGs, and progress has been especially slow in improving maternal health and reducing maternal mortality, he pointed out.

The MDGs provide concrete benchmarks for tackling extreme poverty and include goals and targets on income poverty, hunger, maternal and child mortality, disease, inadequate shelter, gender inequality and environmental degradation.

Overall, and despite the recent food security crisis and global economic upheaval, the developing world remains on track to halve extreme poverty from 1990 levels by 2015, Mr. Ban said.

“Encouraging progress has also been made in a significant number of least developed countries. This is no small feat; it shows that the MDGs are achievable,” he said.

The high-level summit on the MDGs bringing together nearly 150 world leaders later this month will provide the strong political impetus needed to address the remaining gaps and accelerate progress, the Secretary-General noted.

“For my part, I will continue to press hard for a successful summit. We need the strongest possible outcome document – a results-oriented action plan, with concrete steps and timelines, and with mechanisms for holding all partners accountable.

“The summit will also showcase success stories, with the hope of scaling them up and creating partnerships that will allow us to do even more in Africa and around the world. I will continue to be your close partner in this effort,” Mr. Ban said.

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