

Assembly President calls for broad-based partnership to attain MDGs



Assembly President Joseph Deiss addresses the opening high-level plenary meeting on the MDGs

20 September 2010 – The General Assembly President today urged countries, donors, civil society and the private sector to cooperate more closely to defeat poverty, hunger and disease, underscoring that a global partnership is key to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

In his address to the opening of the General Assembly's **High-Level Plenary Meeting on the MDGs**, Mr. Deiss stressed that the international community has a moral duty to care about the well-being of its weakest members.

He called on the nearly 140 heads of State and government taking part in the three-day meeting to send "a strong message about our will to achieve" the MDGs by their target date of 2015.

"We must do it, we want to do it and we can do it," Mr. Deiss said. "We do not have the right to fail. The eyes of the world are upon us."

Data shows that "real progress" has been made towards some of the MDGs since they were formulated at a UN summit in 2000, with poverty declining substantially in overall terms in the past two decades.

"But we are lagging behind in some regions, such as sub-Saharan Africa. And we are also falling short in some areas, especially with regard to eradicating hunger, reducing child mortality and improving maternal health. Additional efforts are needed."

Mr. Deiss said the global financial crisis that began in 2008 had undermined progress towards the MDGs in many countries, but he emphasized that the preceding years of strong economic growth indicated the underlying potential of the world economy.

"We must be confident; we have the know-how and the resources to succeed, and we can do it. But that requires commitment from the donors and commitment from the beneficiaries, leading to a genuine partnership. This partnership must also include civil society and the private sector. If we want to succeed, we have to do it together."

World leaders and other senior government officials are addressing the high-level meeting over the next three days and also holding round-table discussions to examine how they can focus their efforts over the next five years to try to reach the Goals.

The head of the UN agency that promotes the development-friendly integration of developing countries into the world economy called for several urgent policy changes and actions to achieve the MDGs, including a significant increase in public investment, greater agricultural production in countries where food insecurity is still a perennial problem and the mobilization of private domestic resources to raise long-term productive investment.

UN Conference on Trade and Development (**UNCTAD**) Secretary-General Supachai Panitchpakdi **said** official development aid must also rise and greater attention must be paid to inequality, which has been rising globally. He cited rural development in his own country, Thailand, which had helped bring millions of people out of poverty and projections that similar policies elsewhere in the Asia-Pacific region could lift 200 million people out of poverty.

"Lack of productive investment and the persistence of employment in low-productivity activities have kept incomes low and restricted economic diversification in many developing countries," he said.

UN Economic and Social Council (**ECOSOC**) President Hamidon Ali called for a stronger role for the body in monitoring commitments and accountability, by both developed and developing countries. "I hope that this role will become the central pillar for the Council in the years ahead," he said.

The president of the preceding General Assembly and co-chair of the current high-level plenary meeting on the MDGs, Ali Treki, said that with just five years left much progress had been made, with many more children in school and health care reaching some of the poorest and most vulnerable. But he stressed that much more needs to be done.

"Let us be frank and acknowledge that whatever we say or agree in the coming days are only words unless in the poorest countries and poorest communities the poor start to see improvements in their lives," he added.

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