

UN summit confident of achieving MDGs on time if world delivers



Goal 1 of MDGs: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

22 September 2010 – While expressing deep concern that progress has fallen far short of what is needed, a United Nations summit on the Millennium Development Goals (**MDGs**) today voiced confidence that with renewed global commitment the targets to slash hunger, poverty, disease and a host of other social ills can still be achieved by 2015.

“We are convinced that the Millennium Development Goals can be achieved, including in the poorest countries, with renewed commitment, effective implementation and intensified collective action by all Member States and other relevant stakeholders,” the summit, attended by some 140 heads of State and government, pledged in a final outcome document.

The 31-page **document**, which touched on virtually every aspect of global issues beyond the headings of each of the eight MDGs, from human rights to corruption to climate change, focussed particularly on actions, policies and strategies to support those developing countries that are lagging most behind and those goals that are most off track, thus improving the lives of the poorest people.

“We are convinced that the United Nations, on the basis of its universal membership, legitimacy and unique mandate, plays a vital role in the promotion of international cooperation for development and in supporting the acceleration of the implementation of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals,” the outcome document said.

“We reaffirm the need for a strong United Nations to meet the challenges of the changing global environment,” it added, calling especially for more attention to be paid to Africa, in particular to the countries there that are most off track for meeting the goals by 2015.

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, who made the summit a focal point of his activities in recent months and opened its first session on Monday with an impassioned appeal to Member States to provide the necessary investment, aid and political will to meet the goals, called the gathering “the most significant global development conference” since the UN Millennium Summit laid out the MDGs 10 years ago.

In achieving the goals, it stressed the vital need to promote human rights, resist protectionist trade tendencies confront the challenges of peacebuilding and early recovery in post-conflict countries.

It dealt with each MDG separately, with dozens of recommendations on each. On MDG-1, which seeks to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, the outcome document called for addressing the root causes, pursuing job-intensive and equitable economic growth to promote full employment, and promoting the empowerment and participation of rural women as critical agents for enhancing agricultural development and food security.

Achieving universal primary education, MDG-2, requires removal of barriers outside and within education systems and strengthening the sustainability and predictability of funding for national education systems.

On MDG-3, promoting gender equality and empowerment of women, the summit called for the removal of barriers for the education of girls, the provision of free primary schooling, financial aid, policies to end discrimination and empowering women through social and economic policies.

The outcome document called for integrated management of childhood illnesses, enhanced vaccination programmes, improved nutrition, increased use of insecticide-treated bed nets to combat malaria and a stepped up fight against pneumonia and diarrhoea to achieve MDG-4, reducing child mortality by two thirds.

For MDG-5, reducing maternal mortality by three quarters, the summit stressed the need to address reproductive, maternal and child health, including newborn health, in a comprehensive manner through the provision of family planning, prenatal care, skilled attendants at birth, emergency obstetric and newborn care, with access to and choice of the widest possible range of safe, effective, affordable and acceptable methods of family planning.

A significant intensification of prevention efforts and increased access to treatment with the support of the international community is essential for achieving MDG-6, combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases.

On ensuring environmental sustainability, MDG-7, the leaders called on States to take urgent global action to address climate change in accordance with the principles identified in the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (**UNFCCC**), and to implement UN treaties that fight desertification and seek to sustain biological diversity.

Finally, the summit declared that fulfilment of all official development assistance (ODA) commitments, including those by affluent countries to achieve the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product (GNP) for ODA to developing countries by 2015 is crucial for achieving MDG-8, developing a global partnership for development.

These commitments include reaching at least 0.5 per cent of GNP by 2010, with a target of 0.15 to 0.20 per cent to least developed countries.

"Today we close the most significant global development conference since the Millennium Summit ten years ago," Mr. Ban **told reporters** as the gathering was winding up. "And we open the final five-year push until 2015."

He cited the Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health, which he launched today, as an example of global resolve backed by \$40 billion in resources and many ambitious pledges from governments, international organizations, philanthropists, civil communities and business entrepreneurs.

"The main message I take away from this summit is the collective will to step up," he said. "To step up our action. To step up to our responsibilities and commitments. To step up our progress because the MDGs will help us all step into a better world."

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