

PRESS RELEASE

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Millennium Development Goals must be met, UN Secretary-General says ahead of September Summit

Report provides basis for Government negotiations on action plan to 2015 deadline

UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK, 16 March – With only five years left until the 2015 deadline to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon is calling for the adoption of a global action agenda for accelerating progress towards the Goals, when world leaders meet at a UN Summit in New York in September.

“We must not fail the billions who look to the international community to fulfil the promise of the Millennium Declaration for a better world. Let us meet in September to keep the promise,” Mr. Ban says in his report, *Keeping the Promise*, issued today.

The report – which will serve as a basis for Government deliberations on an action-oriented outcome document for the 20-22 September Summit on the MDGs – identifies success factors and lessons learnt, highlights gaps, emerging challenges and opportunities, and lays out specific recommendations for action to boost progress towards the Goals over the remaining five years. Additional reports are expected, including the Statistical Appendix to the Secretary-General’s report, in April; the latest official statistics on progress towards meeting the Goals, in late June; and a more in-depth assessment of gaps in international cooperation, by early September.

“Our world possesses the knowledge and the resources to achieve the MDGs,” Mr. Ban says in the report, referring to the targets based on the 2000 Millennium Declaration, aimed at greatly reducing poverty, hunger, disease, maternal and child deaths and other ills by 2015.

Falling short of the Goals “would be an unacceptable failure, moral and practical,” the Secretary-General says. “If we fail, the dangers in the world – instability, violence, epidemic diseases, environmental degradation, runaway population growth – will all be multiplied.”

A mixed picture

A number of countries have achieved major successes in combating extreme poverty and hunger, improving school enrolment and child health, expanding access to clean water, strengthening control of malaria, tuberculosis and neglected tropical diseases, and providing increased access to HIV treatment, the report points out. (See fact sheet *Millennium Development Goals: At a Glance*.)

These successes have taken place in some of the poorest countries, demonstrating that the MDGs are indeed achievable with the right policies, adequate levels of investment, and international support.

Yet progress has been uneven and – without additional efforts – several Goals are likely to be missed in many countries, according to the report. The challenges are most severe in the least developed countries, land-locked developing countries, some small island developing states, those vulnerable to natural hazards, and countries in or emerging from conflict.

The shortfalls in progress towards the MDGs are not because they are unreachable, or because the time is too short, the report states, but rather because of unmet commitments, inadequate resources and lack of focus and accountability. This has resulted in failure to deliver on the finance, services, technical support and partnerships needed. As a consequence of these shortfalls, improvements in the lives of the poor have been unacceptably slow, while some hard-won gains are being eroded by the food and economic crises.

Lessons learnt

Nearly ten years into the global effort to achieve the MDGs, the report identifies a number of key lessons learnt. Among them, the most important is the national ownership of development strategies. Successful countries pursued pragmatic policy mixes, with enhanced domestic capacities. International cooperation should more strongly support such national development strategies and domestic capacity-building efforts.

While economic growth is necessary, it is not sufficient for progress. The growth process must be inclusive and equitable to maximize poverty reduction and progress on other MDGs.

Hard-earned gains can be reversed due to economic and other shocks. Hence, countries need forwardlooking macroeconomic policies to support broad-based stable growth, e.g. by sustaining public investment strategies and universal social protection, for achievement of the MDGs.

Adequate, consistent and predictable financial support, as well as a coherent and predictable policy environment, both at national and international levels, are crucial for achievement of the MDGs. Lack of adequate and predictable international financing has been an important constraint. There is an urgent need to broaden and strengthen partnerships to ensure supportive international frameworks for debt relief, trade, taxation, technology and climate change mitigation and adaptation to sustain long-term human progress.

Commitments need to be kept

While financing the MDGs needs to start at home, with developing countries raising and allocating domestic revenues, according to the report, the donor community must deliver on its long-standing promises of greatly expanded official development assistance (ODA). Although ODA reached its highest level ever in 2008, large gaps in meeting commitments remain.

The ODA commitment at the 2005 Gleneagles G8 Summit is approximately \$154 billion in current value; additional flows of \$35 billion a year will need to be delivered by 2010 to achieve this target. Africa will need an extra \$20 billion of the increase in ODA in 2010 to reach its Gleneagles target of \$63 billion by 2010. "If these promises are not met, the poor will suffer and, indeed, die in large numbers," the report states.

The report notes several promising Government proposals to ensure adequate financing for the MDGs, including new financing to build better health systems and the G8 2009 L'Aquila Food Security Initiative. These opportunities must be acted on quickly to ensure that longstanding commitments are kept by the time of the G8 and G20 Summits in Canada in June 2010.

At the same time, innovative financing schemes should be further developed, according to the Secretary-General's report. The MDG Summit in September should also endorse an accountability framework that consolidates global aid commitments, links them to results with timelines, and establishes monitoring and enforcement mechanisms.

Calling for a new "pact", not just among governments, but among all stakeholders, Mr. Ban urges developed and developing countries, civil society actors, private businesses, philanthropy and the multilateral system to each focus on the best use of their assets, acting "efficiently, effectively and collectively." The September Summit - officially a "high-level plenary meeting" of the UN General Assembly - provides a unique opportunity to strengthen such collective efforts and partnerships for the push to 2015.

"Coming together in September with a renewed commitment to build on our achievements so far and to bridge the gaps identified, we can deliver on our shared responsibility to build a better world for generations to come," the Secretary-General says. "Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals remains feasible with adequate commitment, policies, resources and effort."

The Secretary-General's report is available online at www.un.org/millenniumgoals.

Media contacts for UN System communications officials can be found on the same website.

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