

• Position paper

# UK Civil Society Analysis of the UN MDG Review Summit 2010

## Recommendations to the UK Government



January 2011





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# Summary of Recommendations

The Department for International Development (DFID) is a globally respected development agency with an important aid budget of over £7 billion (2010 – 2011) and programmes in over 50 countries. British civil society feels that it is incumbent on DFID and the UK Government to take a leading role in building on the momentum garnered at the MDG Summit and ensuring that the MDGs are achieved by 2015. In order to do so, we recommend the following:

## General

1. Environmental sustainability, gender equality, disability and human rights are cross cutting issues and should be mainstreamed through the UK's development policy and programming.
2. The UK Government should actively encourage other donor countries to enshrine their commitment to 0.7% of GNI for ODA in national law.
3. The UK Government should support the declaration calling for the adoption of a Financial Transaction Tax jointly issued by France, Belgium, Japan and Spain.
4. UK Government development policies and strategies to alleviate poverty must be consistent with and guided by human rights standards.
5. The UK Government should recognise the importance of incorporating healthy ecosystems into development work, and prioritise environmental sustainability as they focus on MDG delivery. All development interventions should have climate and environmental safeguards built in, and be resilient to future climate impacts.
6. The UK Government should adopt equity-focussed approaches in its work to achieve the MDGs, targeting its development assistance at the most vulnerable and most marginalised (including women and girls, minority groups, disabled people and indigenous groups).
7. The UK Government should include a civil society representative for future Summits and actively encourages other governments to do the same. The UK Government should further consult with civil society in forthcoming reviews of MDG priorities and on the UK 'Agenda for Action' on the MDGs.
8. The UK Government must support the effective participation of local communities (including the most marginalised and vulnerable), civil society organisations, parliaments and national human rights bodies in national plans and strategies.
9. The UK Government should work with partner countries to promote mutual accountability in development. Effective mechanisms must be developed and utilised.
10. The UK Government should promote the inclusion of people with disabilities and vulnerable groups in development actions. Furthermore, it should take a lead role in collecting data and monitoring inclusive development and tracking progress towards this through the full implementation of DFID's own guidelines on inclusion (How to Note: Working with Disability in Country Programmes, 2007)

## MDG1

11. The UK Government should add MDG1 as a priority in any DFID review of the MDG objectives and DFID's 'Agenda for Action' in the coming months.
12. DFID's research and support programme design should include a comprehensive and interconnected response to tackling hunger.

## MDG2

13. DFID should strengthen the education components of its conflict prevention work and further strengthen the links with education in its Business Plans for reproductive, maternal and newborn health, and malaria accordingly.
14. DFID should champion the missed MDG target of gender parity in education in international meetings.
15. DFID should play a key role in influencing other donor countries to maintain their education aid and should maintain its support to multilateral institutions.

## MDG3

16. DFID should increase political and financial investment in programmes to strengthen women's leadership and participation in formal and informal political structures, particularly for grassroots women, and invest more ambitiously in reducing women's economic dependency.
17. DFID should deliver on the pledge to put women at the front and centre of aid by tracking performance on gender equality and monitoring the delivery of equitable development outcomes.
18. DFID should champion and build capacity for improved coverage, quality, frequency and use of disaggregated data and indicators in country statistical, monitoring and evaluation systems to help identify those who are most vulnerable, allowing policies and resources to be designed and channelled accordingly.
19. DFID should seize the historic opportunity of the creation of UN Women to build an agency with the capacity and budget to deliver real impacts for women and girls. DFID should use its influence internationally to scale up the annual budget to at least \$1 billion within the first few years of UN Women to ensure it has the resources to carry out its mandate effectively. As such, the UK should provide at least £20 million of core funding to UN Women per year.

## MDG4-6

20. DFID should play a leading role in ensuring the development of a robust accountability framework to ensure commitments made in the Global Strategy for Women and Children's Health are met.
21. The UK Government should do more to promote the interconnectedness of the health-related MDGs and their relationship to other MDGs. In particular, the UK Government should take a lead in investing in integrated approaches to water, sanitation and maternal and child health.
22. The UK Government should support developing country governments to produce fully-costed, robust national health plans.

## MDG7

23. The UK Government should mainstream environmental sustainability across the UK's response to the MDGs.
24. The UK Government should show leadership on achieving the sanitation target through the partnership it helped to set up – Sanitation and Water for All: A Global Framework for Action.
25. The UK Government should position itself as a leader on green development, investing in understanding and implementing climate-resilient low carbon, green development initiatives.

“We will keep our promises, and we expect others to do the same”

Nick Clegg, Deputy Prime Minister of the UK

## MDG8

26. The UK Government should take a global lead in pushing for international financial transparency.
27. The UK Government should publicly support the need for an international mechanism to resolve sovereign debt problems.
28. The UK Government should give significant finance to the UN Adaptation Fund, support the creation of a UN Mitigation Fund in UNFCCC negotiations, and stop giving finance for adaptation as loans through the World Bank.
29. The UK Government should take a lead in ensuring WTO negotiations, particularly at the proposed Ministerial meeting in 2011, as well as negotiations around EU trade deals, lead to time-bound actions to support the poorest to be able to trade locally and regionally, remove trade-distorting subsidies, and ensure developing countries are able to retain the policy tools necessary to address poverty.



Dr. Ben Lun, Flickr; Woman with child

# Introduction

In 2000, world leaders came together at the Millennium Conference to agree on the Millennium Declaration<sup>1</sup>, which led to a roadmap setting out eight time-bound and measurable goals to be reached by 2015, known as the Millennium Development Goals<sup>2</sup> (MDGs). This represented the most significant collective effort made by the international community to eradicate extreme poverty.

“Between now and 2015, we must make sure that promises made become promises kept. The consequences of doing otherwise are profound: death, illness and despair, needless suffering, lost opportunities for millions upon millions of people. The UN system and I personally will do our utmost to promote accountability on all sides.”

Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary General

Ten years on and five years before the 2015 deadline, world leaders convened in New York at the UN MDG Review Summit to review progress and plan how to achieve the MDGs in the next five years. Civil society throughout the world called on leaders to make specific commitments, and on the UN to deliver an *‘ambitious and universal MDGs rescue plan with clear political and financial commitments including national plans and timetables to achieve the MDGs over the next five years.’*<sup>3</sup>

Bond made very specific asks of the UK Government, articulated in the collective position paper **‘A Last Chance to Keep our Promises’** which was signed by 54 member organisations. Numerous meetings were organised between representatives of the UK Government and civil society in which our collective positions were articulated.

This detailed analysis of the MDG Summit is a collective document agreed by 28 organisations working in international development. It contains an analysis of the MDG Summit (touching on the Outcome Document, statements by member states, roundtable events and side events) with specific regard to each of the MDGs. Most importantly, it contains specific recommendations to the UK Government which, if adopted, would enable the UK to make a meaningful contribution to the achievement of the MDGs by 2015.

## General analysis

The Summit led to a renewed commitment to the target of 0.7% of Gross National Income (GNI) for Official Development Assistance (ODA) (para 78f of the Outcome Document). We welcome this, and urge DFID to continue pushing other developed countries, especially those within the EU, to honour this commitment. It is also important to note that developed nations need to think about not just the quantity, but the quality of their aid. Furthermore, experience tells us that donors regularly fail to honour commitments made. We would like to see donor countries commit to making their 0.7% ODA commitments legally binding, as the UK Government is doing. This is the only way that citizens in donor countries can actively hold their governments to account for commitments made.

The fact that the Outcome Document does little more than reiterate previous promises is disappointing. It does not seriously address the lack of progress towards the MDGs and does not agree any new policies, resources or improvements in the international economic environment. The document is extremely weak on clear actions for implementation, and is far from the ambitious MDGs Rescue Plan with clear financial and political commitments which is needed to ensure that the MDGs are met by 2015.

The absence of such a time-bound, result-oriented accountability framework for the achievement of the MDGs is worrying. While this issue was raised at the civil society hearings, the Outcome Document simply states that the commitments made by developed and developing countries require mutual accountability (78c).

**Innovative financing** was a theme at the summit, with a declaration calling for the adoption of a Financial Transaction Tax (FTT) jointly issued by France, Belgium, Japan and Spain. We strongly urge the UK to support this declaration, as the FTT and other innovative mechanisms would provide much needed long-term and sustainable financing for international development and climate change adaptation and mitigation.

“During the year of my G20 and G8 presidency, I will strive to promote the idea of innovative financing... We can decide here to implement the taxation of financial transactions.”

Nicolas Sarkozy, President of France



Flickr, MDGs summit UN

## The UK at the MDG Summit

The UK Government came to the Summit in the context of a new coalition government in the midst of an economic crisis, deep spending cuts and a bilateral and multilateral aid review. The Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for International Development represented the UK strongly at the Summit, exercising global leadership on the issue of 0.7% of GNI for ODA and taking a leading role in pushing for effective monitoring and accountability frameworks. That said, this leadership has not led to many countries honouring their 0.7% commitments, or to an effective accountability framework.

Bond and our members welcomed DFID's engagement with civil society in the run up to the MDG Summit, during and after. While we welcome the opportunity afforded by the Secretary of State's and Deputy Prime Minister's civil society briefings in New York, we are very disappointed that the UK Government did not agree to include a representative from civil society on their delegation – whereas Ireland included four people on its delegation, and Denmark seven. Italy also included civil society representation, as did a number of developing countries including Senegal. Inclusion of a civil society representative in the UK delegation would have sent a clear and positive sign to other countries about engagement with civil society, and would no doubt have encouraged other governments to agree to such an engagement.

**“With only five years to go, it is completely unacceptable that world leaders have still not agreed to take concrete action to address discrimination and other human rights violations, which prevent the MDGs from benefiting those who need them most.**

Salil Shetty, Secretary General,  
Amnesty International

## Cross-cutting issues

In addition to the specific recommendations for each MDG, we are also concerned about a number of cross-cutting issues which were not fully addressed at the Summit. These issues must be recognised and addressed in order to create the conditions for the attainment of the MDGs.

**Recommendation:** Environmental sustainability, gender equality, disability and human rights are cross-cutting issues. The Accra Agenda for Action<sup>4</sup> emphasises that these issues are cornerstones to achieve enduring impact. These issues are essential to the achievement of the MDGs and should be mainstreamed through development policy and programming.

### 1. Ensure that all MDG efforts are consistent with human rights obligations.

The Outcome Document acknowledges the link between human rights (including economic, social and cultural rights) and development, including the need for more efforts to reduce inequality, tackle exclusion and discrimination, and promote universal access to public and social services. It also refers to the importance of the rights to education, health and food. However, the Summit's Action Agenda did not make a necessary and explicit commitment to ensuring that all MDG efforts are consistent with human rights obligations. It did not identify concrete steps that governments will take to address discrimination, exclusion, and the specific barriers many groups face in accessing basic services, despite evidence that this is why the poorest people in the world are being left out of progress on the MDGs. It did not commit to ensuring freedom of expression, association and assembly to enable poor people to participate fully in the achievement of the MDGs and also did not commit to identifying effective national and international accountability mechanisms to ensure that all MDG efforts are consistent with human rights standards. In doing so, the Review failed to make concrete commitments in terms of policies, programmes and actions to address some of the root causes of lack of progress and to ensure that their efforts across all the MDGs do not exclude the poorest and most marginalised.

**Recommendation:** UK Government development policies and strategies to alleviate poverty must be consistent with and guided by human rights standards. This requires that human rights are explicitly recognised and integrated in development assistance policies and programmes to ensure that assistance does not result in or contribute to a negative human rights impact. It also requires that there is participation and adequate safeguards, monitoring and accountability mechanisms to ensure that development assistance complies with human rights standards.



istockphoto.com, UN building

## 2. The underlying causes of poverty and injustice

The lack of attention to the underlying causes of poverty and injustice throughout the MDG Summit is concerning. Whilst the Outcome Document is strong on the need for national ownership of development strategies, there is a lack of recognition of the role of international and developed country policies (trade, agriculture, finance) on the ability of developing countries to achieve the MDGs. It fails to address the need to integrate greater policy space for developing countries into existing global rules; inappropriate external conditionalities imposed by donors and international financial institutions; and the lack of policy space resulting from dictates of international market forces on national policy choices.

## 3. Environmental sustainability underpins all the MDGs

Without environmental sustainability, any gains on the MDGs will be transitory and inequitable. A healthy environment underpins food security, water provision and health. Climate change has risen hugely up the global agenda, and failure to respond to it will stall and then reverse international efforts to reduce poverty. If we are to end poverty, tackle climate change and have a sustainable future on our planet we need a development model that recognises ecological limits, equity and social justice and decouples development from carbon emissions and environmental degradation. These issues were recognised in the roundtables at the MDG Summit; however they are not reflected in the MDG Outcome Document which fails to challenge 'business as usual'.

**Recommendation:** It is vital that the importance of healthy ecosystems is recognised, effectively valued and incorporated into development work. They are the fundamental building blocks of development and are often a lifeline for the poorest and most vulnerable people. Contradictions around economic growth and sustainable development need to be addressed to ensure we are living fairly and equitably within ecological limits. This could be progressed around the emerging green economy agenda (for example through Rio+20)

## 4. Recognition of equity and non-discrimination throughout the MDGs

Research shows there is an equity gap in progress toward the MDGs with the most vulnerable, (including women, children, minorities and those with disabilities), missing out. Exclusion and discrimination are key factors in driving and deepening poverty.

Current gains made towards realising the MDGs are largely based on improvements in national averages; this conceals broad and widening disparities in poverty both among regions and within countries. Therefore we welcomed the increased recognition of the inequities of progress towards the MDGs at the Summit, where member states, civil society, the media and think tanks discussed disparities within and between countries in terms of increased vulnerabilities, deepened inequalities, and growing disparities.

The MDGs, for example, will not be achieved without the inclusion of people with disabilities, who account for almost one in five of the world's poor. DFID acknowledges that *'Disability is a key threat to reaching the Millennium Development Goals, and DFID's policy on tackling social exclusion provides a clear home for work on disability.'*<sup>15</sup> The UN emphasises the Right to Development and the importance of mainstreaming people with disabilities in development<sup>6</sup>, without which the MDGs will not be achieved.

Ensuring that we achieve the MDGs requires DFID to focus its assistance where it is most needed, and where the potential gains are greatest. It is crucial that the UK's development assistance is directed at and focused on the most vulnerable, those whose lives will otherwise be most blighted by poverty, exclusion and discrimination. It is therefore critical, in order to address these marked disparities and achieve the MDGs, that DFID places a greater emphasis on equity between and within regions, countries and social groups.

**Recommendation:** The UK Government must adopt equity-focussed approaches in its work to achieve the MDGs. This means targeting its development assistance at the most vulnerable and most marginalised with the aim of accelerating progress, reducing disparities and lowering out-of-pocket expenditures for the poor. Doing this will involve identifying the most deprived, investing in proven, cost effective interventions and overcoming the barriers which prevent the most deprived from accessing and utilising essential services. Tackling gender inequality and discrimination – in law, policy and practice – should be included in efforts across *all* the MDGs and not restricted to MDG 3.



**“We welcome the General Assembly’s agreement to annually review progress made against the commitments agreed at this Summit.”**

**Nick Clegg, Deputy Prime Minister of the UK**

**Recommendation:** In order to ensure that the UK’s development assistance is directed and focused on the most vulnerable and that it promotes inclusion, the UK Government should take a lead role in collecting data and encouraging other donors and national governments to do the same. Such data should be disaggregated by age, sex, disability, ethnicity, caste and indigenous status. This data and analysis should inform the design and evaluation of all programmes relating to the MDGs.

### 5. Participation of civil society

People living in poverty are rarely involved in developing, implementing or monitoring efforts to meet the MDGs. The Outcome Document recognises that full participation of all segments of society, including the poor and disadvantaged, can help achieve the MDGs. Whilst the UN nominally included civil society in the proceedings (with the civil society consultation in June and civil society speakers on the roundtable discussions during the Summit), it is unclear whether civil society input had any meaningful effect on proceedings at the MDG Summit itself.

**Recommendation:** The UK Government must include a civil society representative for future Summits and actively encourage other governments to do the same, allowing sufficient space for civil society at national and international levels to monitor their governments’ contribution to achieving the MDGs.

**Recommendation:** The UK Government must support the effective participation of local communities (including the most marginalised and vulnerable), civil society organisations, parliaments and national human rights bodies in national plans and strategies. This should include support for ensuring participation in developing local and national priorities and in their implementation and monitoring the use of development assistance at the local and national levels. It should also include support for the same to hold states to account for their use of development assistance resources.

### 6. The importance of monitoring and accountability mechanisms

The Summit was weak on actions and commitments. The Outcome Document offers general statements of principle and agreement, but there is nothing binding and specific by which governments can be held to account. This is disappointing. The document does not capture commitments and discussion from the roundtable or side events that took place at the Summit. In addition, with the exception of women’s rights, there is no reference to specific accountability mechanisms to ensure enforcement of human rights in national and international MDG efforts.

We welcome the fact that the UN has committed to an annual monitoring process via ECOSOC (although this is only a voluntary process), and that the Secretary General will issue an annual report on the MDGs. It is important that civil society be included in this monitoring. We look forward to the next MDG Summit in 2013, and hope that civil society will be given more of an opportunity to make a real contribution.

**Recommendation:** The UK Government must work with partner countries to promote mutual accountability in development assistance. At the national level, mechanisms such as courts, parliaments and regulatory bodies should play an important role. At the international level all states should report on their national and international implementation of the MDGs in their reports under the Universal Periodic Review of the Human Rights Council and other human rights accountability mechanisms. Ensuring transparency and access to information on the provision and use of development assistance is also critical to promoting accountability.

**Recommendation:** Actions taken as a result of the Summit should include specific plans on monitoring inclusion and participation of the marginalised and most vulnerable people, including women, older people, children, those with disabilities and minority groups. The UK Government should take a lead role in promoting this. Further it should use its status as a global leader to push for inclusive development, tracking progress towards the inclusion of marginalised and vulnerable groups – including those with disabilities.



## Beyond-2015

The Summit recognised the need for global thinking on a post-2015 development framework. We agree on the need for an overarching, cross-thematic framework for development after 2015. We suggest that the process of developing this framework is participatory, inclusive and responsive to voices of those directly affected by poverty and injustice. Plans need to be developed **immediately** for what that new agreement looks like – but without detracting from the need to deliver the current goals by 2015. There needs to be a **two-track strategy of pushing the MDGs while thinking about what comes next**. This is likely to be complex, but is essential if we are to make progress on poverty reduction.

A future framework needs to address **cross-cutting issues** including human rights, climate change, gender, disability and environmental sustainability much more effectively than the current MDGs. Sustainable development needs to be the underpinning narrative for a post-2015 framework. This will ensure that results are long lasting, sustainable and reduce poverty for the long as well as the short term.



# MDG 1: Eradicating Extreme Poverty and Hunger

## Introduction

The MDG1 goal to halve the proportion of hungry people in developing countries – from 20% to 10% between 1990 and 2015 – is badly off track and has been going backwards. This failure has significant economic, as well as human, cost. ActionAid estimates that hunger could be costing poor countries \$450 billion a year in lost output and social costs – ten times the amount needed to halve hunger by 2015.<sup>7</sup>

This lack of progress is particularly disappointing because we have the tools we need to achieve MDG1. There is enough food available in the world to feed everyone. There are excellent examples of countries that are winning the fight against hunger. Brazil, for example, recently cut child hunger by 73% in six years by making it a political priority, adopting a right to food framework, extending social protection, and supporting women and smallholder farmers.

We welcome some of the positive language within the Outcome Document. In particular, we welcome the commitment to address the root causes of poverty and hunger and acknowledgement of the links between the MDGs, the reaffirmation of the right to food, the reiteration of the Five Rome Principles for Sustainable Global Food and the call on donors to deliver their L'Aquila Initiative funding commitments.

There is also positive messaging in the Outcome Document that highlights support to three important elements of tackling hunger: empowerment of rural women, support to small-scale producers and commitment to sustainable agriculture. Support to women marginal farmers remains critical to meeting MDG1 on poverty and hunger. By providing agricultural support, and facilitating access to training, resources and markets, governments can ensure a cost-efficient and effective method to empower women, increase agricultural productivity and reduce hunger, poverty and gender inequality.

However, despite this positive language, we believe that many aspects of the Outcome Document are weak, with a failure to acknowledge that MDG1 remains badly off-track and that the agreement lacks concrete financial and political commitments or accountability mechanisms.

## Analysis

### 1. Lack of acknowledgement that MDG1 is off-track

Within the document there is a lack of acknowledgement that MDG1 remains badly off-track. According to FAO figures, the number of hungry people in the world actually increased significantly from 2007 to 2010 to an estimated 925 million.

Perhaps as a result, the text appears to betray a lack of urgency from governments to meet MDG1 and specific targets to halve poverty and hunger by 2015. Rather than urgent and action-orientated language, the text mentions 'accelerating progress', 'increasing efforts' and 'reaffirming commitments'. The language appears weak in comparison to the scale and size of the challenge, and illustrates a lack of political commitment from governments on this important goal.

### 2. Lack of clear political and financial commitments

The Outcome Document lacks specific financial and political commitments to reduce hunger and poverty, and rather illustrates a set of general aims. For example, the statement 'to accelerate progress on the challenges faced by indigenous peoples in the context of food security' shows little evidence of what measures should be taken and how.

A much clearer and more detailed road map for how to achieve MDG1 is essential. Clear political and financial commitments, an illustration of when governments would meet these commitments, and how they would be held to account for commitments made would have significantly strengthened the Outcome Document.

### 3. Lack of clarity on responsibilities and no accountability mechanism

The Outcome Document also lacks clarity on the roles and responsibilities for how these goals will be met, and also fails to outline clear accountability and follow-up mechanisms. Although the right to food is mentioned in the text, the text fails to emphasise the importance of this legal framework as a mechanism to outline state responsibilities in tackling hunger.

We believe that governments should report clearly and transparently on how they are progressing to meet MDG1 targets on hunger and poverty. General government statements on economic growth and wealth creation should also illustrate how such growth is resulting in the reduction of poverty and hunger within the population.



CIMMY, Flickr, Maize plantation

#### 4. Short-term response rather than long-term development

The causes of undernutrition are rooted in poverty, lack of access to adequate healthcare, poor public health systems, inadequate caring practices and food insecurity. With the timeline for the expiration of the MDGs quickly approaching there is a risk that short-term interventions that can demonstrate quick results are prioritised over long-term sustainable solutions to end hunger and poverty. To achieve long-term sustainable progress towards the MDGs that can illustrate impact up to 2015 and beyond, governments and UN agencies should commit to long-term multi-sectoral approaches that integrate nutrition into health, water and sanitation, education and food security sectors and cross-cutting issues like gender equality, governance and state fragility.

In this regard we support the new Scale-up Nutrition (SUN) roadmap announced at the MDG summit and welcome its holistic approach to nutrition. However we remain concerned about the lack of clarity on the implementation phase of the initiative and the lack of engagement from civil society at the field level.

### Recommendations to the UK Government

#### 1. DFID's public support for MDG1 remains critical

We would like the UK government to strongly emphasise the importance of achieving MDG1 and tackling near-record levels of global hunger. We believe that addressing hunger and food insecurity can lead to multiple interlinking benefits that enable and increase the chances of meeting the other MDGs.

To date, DFID has failed to state, either at the MDG Summit or afterwards, that achieving MDG1 by 2015 is a priority for the UK.

Specifically, **we would like to see MDG1 added as a priority in any DFID review of the MDG objectives** and DFID's 'Agenda for Action' in the coming months.

#### 2. Address hunger holistically

We welcome the UK Secretary of State's commitment to the SUN framework and the 1,000 days campaign at the MDG summit and would like to emphasise the positive language in the SUN document on the importance of addressing hunger holistically for long-term sustainable solutions to hunger and malnutrition.

Specifically, **we would like to ensure that DFID research and support programme design includes a comprehensive and interconnected response to tackling hunger;** including linking nutrition, social protection, health and education systems and support to agriculture and rural development – in particular to women marginal farmers.

# MDG 2: Achieve Universal Primary Education – Moving beyond access to achieve quality, equity and inclusion in education

## Introduction

MDG2 on ‘universal primary education’ (UPE) received little attention at the Summit and was the subject of considerably fewer events and discussions than other MDGs. Only two delegations (Australia and Japan) and the World Bank prioritised MDG2 and made public financial commitments. This low level of recognition seems disproportionate in light of the centrality of primary education to meeting all, and in particular the most off-track, MDGs.

Overall, there is a pervasive assumption that UPE has almost been achieved; further fuelled by overstatements by some delegates of progress made. In reality, the Global Monitoring Report<sup>8</sup> shows that 69 million children are out-of-school, approximately. 54% are girls, and more than half live in conflict-affected fragile states (currently, 39 million). One-third of the global out-of-school children are disabled and 90% of children with disabilities in developing countries do not go to school.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, the widespread low quality of education, discrimination in schools and the absence of child protection structures in schools will lead to 75 million children dropping out of primary school early.

Debates around MDG2 and UPE tend to place an over-emphasis on access. Children’s right to education entails far more than accessing schooling; it is about ensuring that children receive a quality education in child-friendly learning environments. Global leaders must ensure MDG2 translates into meaningful education for children; moving beyond basic assessments of how many children enter education to look at how long they stay, how much they learn and the tangible impact on children of basic schooling, not only for the benefit of achieving MDG2, but all other MDGs.

The current global financing gap for education stands at USD 16 billion.<sup>10</sup> All States, in particular donor countries, must acknowledge their role in contributing to the financing of education as committed to in the *Dakar Framework for Action on Education for All*. If the current trend in reduced financing for education continues, progress on MDG2 could well be reversed, along with education’s contribution to achieving the other MDGs.

## Analysis

The Outcome Document recognises that removing barriers which prevent children from enjoying their right to education, including the removal of school fees, provision of school meals and other incentives increase enrolment and retention. However, countries must also acknowledge the indirect opportunity costs to education that mostly affect the poorest and most marginalised children. Similarly, the Outcome Document fails to acknowledge the importance of family and community participation in decision-making, alongside education providers, and their role in ensuring the access to education of particularly vulnerable and ‘hardest to reach’ groups.

Beyond access, MDG2 needs a particular focus and strengthened efforts in the following areas:

- **Transition:** we welcome the specific mention of helping young people to make the transition from primary to secondary education, vocational training and non-formal education; acknowledging the importance of securing resources to cater for growing demand for secondary education, and the need to ensure education empowers young people and gives them the skills to access employment. However, States must commit to ensuring children are ready for school by investing in early primary education and acknowledging the link between investing early and higher returns in student performance.
- **Gender:** MDG2 will not be met without concentrated efforts to get more girls into school and, while we welcome a reference to the need to eliminate gender-based discrimination in education, vital detail is currently lacking. Only around 63% of countries with available data have achieved gender parity at primary level and girls face a range of gender-specific barriers to education. Once in the classroom, girls are subject to school curricula and training methods which perpetuate gender inequality and diminish their potential.
- **Equity and inclusion:** Addressing the root causes of inequalities and exclusion in education systems, and acknowledging that out-of-school children often come from the most excluded and vulnerable backgrounds, is crucial for MDG2. We welcome the mention of inclusive education and the need to promote accessibility, though the failure to specifically mention children with disabilities and children from ethnic and minority groups (including language groups) is a striking omission.



- Conflict and Emergencies:** The majority of children without access to education live in countries affected by conflict and in 2009 only 31% of emergency education funding requirements were met – a fundamental issue not addressed in the Outcome Document. Conflict compounds barriers to education, reduces the demand for education from children and their families, transforms schools into insecure environments, increases exclusion and discrimination for the most vulnerable children and young people, and reduces the quality of education. We must adopt a conflict sensitive approach to overcoming the additional barriers to quality education. Education should be viewed as a priority where it contributes to building peace and improving the welfare of children by providing life saving skills.
- Rights respecting schools:** The text fails to address the importance of investment in making schools 'youth friendly' and 'rights respecting' as part of delivering quality education. Every year, more than 350 million children suffer some type of violence in school, from bullying to sexual abuse. Where young people's rights are not respected, their voices are not heard, they have no means of reporting and ending abuses, they learn less and are more likely to not attend. Involving young people in the design, delivery and monitoring of their own education results in a better and safer learning environment, higher attendance and retention rates and higher attainment.
- Attainment:** We welcome mention of the need to improve quality of education and the recognition that enrolment is not a full measure of the benefit that young people get from education. We would have welcomed an attempt in the document to suggest the need for more suitable indicators for assessing quality and attainment.

## Recommendations to the UK Government

- DFID must continue to recognise the importance and centrality of education in achieving the MDGs and to ensure education is linked to key aspects of DFID's MDG strategy. DFID should strengthen the education components of its conflict prevention work and further strengthen the links with education in its Business Plans for reproductive, maternal and newborn health, and malaria accordingly.
- DFID should adopt an indicator to measure its performance in ensuring all girls receive nine years of basic education (including both primary and secondary); improve the appropriateness of education for girls; tackle gender-specific barriers; support the recruitment of female teachers; and at an international level, champion the missed MDG target of gender parity in education at all international gatherings which discuss progress on the MDGs. DFID should ensure it monitors the impact of its work by concentrating on access and the quality of education and monitoring the impact of its work from a quality perspective, which will guarantee the cost effectiveness of ODA spend on MDG2.
- DFID must acknowledge its crucial and leading role in enabling States to progress on their MDG2 and EFA commitments, including in emergency settings; and in ensuring progress does not suffer due to the global downturn in the financing of education, should remain one of the biggest bilateral donors on basic education. In addition, DFID should play a key role in influencing other donor countries to maintain their education aid; and should maintain its support to multilateral institutions particularly its commitment to provide the EFA-Fast Track Initiative with £100 million. DFID should support FTI's replenishment and extend its financial support beyond 2011 to enable FTI to strengthen education in eligible countries that are furthest from achieving MDG2 and most in need of multilateral funding.

# MDG 3: Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women

## Introduction

Commitment to improving women's lives and empowering women was a defining feature of the 2010 MDG Summit. The UK Government played a key role in driving this agenda at the Summit, making a welcome promise to put women at the heart of its aid efforts. The UN Secretary General's Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health, launched at the Summit, was also well received by women's rights advocates, particularly its explicit recognition of the need to promote gender equality as an integral aspect of work to reduce maternal mortality.

## Analysis

The Summit Outcome Document itself contains strong language around reducing inequality, social exclusion and discrimination, and advancing the economic, legal and political empowerment of women. It recognises that 'achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women is both a key development goal and an important means for achieving all of the Millennium Development Goals.' (para 12). It also acknowledges that there has been slow progress in this area to date. Other positive aspects of the Outcome Document with regards to MDG3 include:

- Strong rights-based language and reaffirmation of the need for the full and effective implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action
- Clear recognition of the importance of ending impunity regarding violence against women
- Emphasis on strengthening the political participation of women, including by scaling up investment in women's leadership and women's involvement in peace-building processes
- Commitment to pledge full support for the operationalisation of UN Women (para 12).

However, it is a concern that the strong language in the Outcome Document on tackling gender inequality is not followed through with concrete actions, indicators and commitments to new resources. Nor are there the robust accountability mechanisms in place to monitor progress on women's empowerment, making it possible that rhetorical commitments to putting women at the heart of development will evaporate in practice.

The narrow scope of the Outcome Document with regards to the empowerment of women and girls is also disappointing, focusing heavily on addressing maternal mortality to the neglect of also advancing women's economic, social and political empowerment, and combating violence against women. With regards to the UK Government specifically, while the resources pledged for MDG5 on improving maternal health are much needed, we regret the lack of political and financial commitment at the summit to MDG3. A particular gap is the lack of dedicated resources for strengthening women's participation, leadership and political empowerment. This is despite strong evidence that investing in women's leadership has been proven to have a catalytic impact on reducing poverty and inequality, accelerating development for future generations, strengthening accountability to women and ensuring a more responsive and effective allocation of public financial resources.



Shreyans Bhansali, Flickr, Indian women



DAVIDSHUB, Flickr, Woman voting

While the UK's commitment to putting women at the 'front and centre' of aid is welcome, it is concerning that this important agenda is given a very narrow definition at both the UK and international level in terms of improving maternal health, to the neglect of advancing women's economic, social and political empowerment. This approach fails to recognise that poor maternal health is rooted in gender inequality and women's low status in society, as well as in women's lack of economic opportunity, systemic violence against women and conservative social norms and practices. Without investing more ambitiously in achieving MDG3, in order to tackle gender inequality and bring about improvements in women's social, political and economic status, well-intentioned efforts to improve maternal health are destined to fail (for example, increasing the availability of contraception will have minimal impact where women fear violence from their partner if they suggest using a condom).

Women comprise an estimated 70% of the one billion people living in extreme poverty and hunger. Improving maternal and reproductive health services will not be enough to lift these women out of chronic poverty. We thus regret the lack of attention at the Summit to addressing the underlying structural causes of women's poverty – systemic gender inequality, violence, and lack of power which makes and keeps women poor. Tackling these structural causes requires robust investment in expanding women's economic opportunities and facilitating their voice and leadership, yet these crucial dimensions of women's empowerment received little attention at the Summit.

Finally, while the Outcome Document recognises the need to tackle social exclusion and discrimination, neither the Outcome Document nor Summit discussions led to detailed plans or strategies for targeting the most vulnerable and excluded women and girls – Dalits, women living with HIV, informal sector women workers, disabled women, women migrants, minority and indigenous women, young and older women. Many of the world's poorest people are thus likely to stay marginalised, remaining invisible in policy responses and interventions designed to achieve the MDGs.



istockphoto.com, Traditional rural Indian woman in Rajasthan

## Recommendations to the UK Government

1. To realise the UK Government's commitment to putting women at the heart of development, DFID must increase political and financial investment in programmes to strengthen women's leadership and participation in formal and informal political structures, particularly for grassroots women, and invest more ambitiously in reducing women's economic dependency, including by expanding their access to business training, financial services and decent jobs.
2. DFID must deliver on the pledge to put women at the front and centre of aid by tracking performance on gender equality and monitoring the delivery of equitable development outcomes. Gender equality objectives and indicators must be established at all levels – organisational, in-country and project, including in the Business Plan and Operational Plans – and results must be systematically scrutinised through the use of gender responsive budgeting tools. Better indicators and forms of evaluation also need to be developed to ensure that reporting mechanisms are able to capture less tangible, qualitative, and gradual changes in women's lives.
3. Innovative indicators should be set to motivate and monitor urgently needed progress for the most discriminated-against groups of women – Dalit women, disabled women, informal sector women workers, women living with HIV, young and older women, and migrant women. DFID should champion and build capacity for improved coverage, quality, frequency and use of disaggregated data and indicators in country statistical, monitoring and evaluation systems to help identify those who are most vulnerable, allowing policies and resources to be designed and channelled accordingly.
4. DFID must seize the historic opportunity of the creation of UN Women to build an agency with the capacity and budget to deliver real impacts for women and girls. DFID should use its influence internationally to scale up the annual budget to at least \$1 billion within the first few years of UN Women to ensure it has the resources to carry out its mandate effectively. In order to reflect the UK Government's high-priority commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment worldwide, DFID should commit significant financial support to UN Women – considerably increasing the contributions made to UNIFEM in the past. The UK should provide at least £20 million of core funding to UN Women per year.

# MDG 4 – 6: The Health MDGs

## Introduction

The need to address the off-track MDGs, many of which are related to health, was a key aspect of the MDG Review Summit. The focus given to the health-related MDGs at the Summit was therefore welcomed as was the positive progress made in a number of areas that are critical to ensuring these MDGs can be met including:

- Recognition of the inter-relationship between the MDGs 4, 5 and 6 as well as the link between these MDGs and the necessity of clean water and sanitation
- The strong commitment to putting in place an integrated continuum of care for women and children that was demonstrated by the signing of the Global Strategy for Women and Children's Health
- A focus on human rights and an understanding that efforts towards meeting the health MDGs must be consistent with international human rights standards including those pertaining to the highest attainable standards of health if the MDGs are to be successful. Recognition that tackling the issue of Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) is linked to the achievement of the other MDGs

Despite these positive aspects of the Summit, there are a number of areas where there were disappointments, including the fact that, although the Global Strategy for Women and Children's Health (GSWCH) was welcomed by a broad range of stakeholders, its integration into the Outcome Document is weak.

**“The signature initiative of the summit – the Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health – is a comprehensive plan to save the lives of 16 million mothers, newborns and children by 2015.”**

The ONE Campaign

Concrete donor commitments to ensuring the health MDGs will be met by 2015 were lacking. While more than a dozen developing countries made clear commitments on introducing or expanding free health care, we saw no high level commitment from donors, including the UK, on sustained financial and technical support for the removal of user fees. The Outcome Document, while presenting some strong principles that may help to make progress towards the health MDGs, falls far short of presenting concrete actions by which donors and developing countries can be held accountable for ensuring progress towards the health MDGs actually happens.

## Analysis of MDG 4-6

The MDG Summit and its Outcome Document present a number of positive outcomes for the achievement of the health MDGs. These include strong references to the need to strengthen the capacity of national health systems to deliver health care services and, in particular, the references to realising the values of primary health care and the emphasis on supporting national efforts as the basis for strengthening health systems. In addition the emphasis given to the need to invest in recruiting, training and retaining health workers is welcomed, as are the references to developing national health workforce plans, the importance of retaining skilled health personnel, and the adoption of the WHO code of practice on the international recruitment of health personnel.

The Outcome Document demonstrates positive progress in recognising the inter-relationship between the different health MDGs, and the crucial role that the provision of safe drinking water and adequate sanitation and nutrition contribute to progress towards these MDGs. In addition the focus on NTDs and the recognition of the need to renew efforts to prevent and treat these diseases is warmly welcomed.

The inclusion of references to the GSWCH within the Outcome Document is also welcomed, given the strong emphasis that it places on putting the integrated continuum of care for women and children at the centre of strong national health plans. The partnership approach taken in the development of the GSWCH was widely welcomed, as were re-commitments made by developing country governments to meet their target of allocating 15% of national budgets to health.

In addition to these three critical areas of strengthening national health systems, recognising the inter-relationship between health-related MDGs, and the launch of the GSWCH, there are also a number of other key strengths of the Outcome Document including:

- References to the importance of human rights in attaining the health MDGs, including the right to sexual and reproductive health
- Reiteration of the centrality of national governments in implementing national strategies and actions and their collaboration with civil society
- The importance placed on strengthening statistical systems, including for the collection of disaggregated data

Yet, despite these positive aspects of the MDG Summit, all of which attest to the critical importance given to addressing the health MDGs, there are a number of areas where the Summit could have delivered more to ensure their achievement.

Whilst the GSWCH demonstrated the wide support that it has through the commitments made to it by a range of stakeholders, the reference to it in the final Outcome Document is weak. This risks the GSWCH being implemented separately from other commitments in the Outcome Document, or could risk commitments laid out in the GSWCH not being met. In addition, while the inclusion

of this strategy demonstrates a strong commitment to fast-track progress on MDGs 4 and 5, specific attention to women and disabled children and indigenous women is missing. Disabled women, for example, face particular challenges in accessing reproductive health education because they are not considered sexually active people, nor do they receive timely antenatal care should they choose to have children. Indigenous women (who are among the poorest and most vulnerable) face much higher maternal mortality rates and are much less likely to have skilled birth attendance or access to reproductive health services.

The Outcome Document demonstrates positive progress in addressing the interconnectedness of the health MDGs and the relationship between water, sanitation and nutrition and the health MDGs. However, it does not go far enough in terms of recognising and presenting clear approaches to address the links between under-nutrition and child mortality; the importance of establishing clear strategies to integrate environmental risk factors such as water and sanitation into child and maternal health programmes; the links between NTDs and other diseases such as malaria and HIV; and the links between these diseases and maternal and child health. The document presents a set of principles, rather than a clear plan of action and with so little time left to meet the MDGs, the latter is what is needed.

The Outcome Document mentions the importance of human rights in ensuring the achievement of the health MDGs. However, despite this reference it fails to recognise the inequities faced by marginalised groups such as indigenous women, disabled people, and adolescents and young people. While the reference to human rights is respected, we would like to see stronger and more explicit references to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The Outcome Document commits to achieving universal access to reproductive health, including, through integrating family planning, sexual health and health-care services in national strategies and programmes. It includes welcome commitments to the adoption of measures to address root causes of maternal mortality and morbidity such as harmful practices, gender inequality and violence against women. However, the Document fails to refer to unsafe abortion as an important cause of maternal mortality. Further, it does not include States' commitments to review laws containing punitive measures against women who have undergone illegal abortions. We welcome its recently articulated position on abortion, and we urge the UK Government to devote its best efforts to ensuring that women have the right to safe abortion and are not penalised in law for undergoing abortions.

The most significant concern for the health MDGs is that while there are many commitments, especially within the GSWCH, there is a lack of clear mechanisms for translating these into concrete financial contributions, action plans and strategies that can be effectively monitored. There is a lack of clarity regarding the extent to which resources pledged to implement the GSWCH are 'new funding' – we are particularly concerned that money allocated to this strategy will simply be removed from another area of health financing (e.g. HIV). It is critical that resources allocated in support of the GSWCH are new resources, thus avoiding the risk of undermining progress already made in other health areas. It is also crucial that in its implementation the GSWCH recognises the integration of health issues – as captured in the text – in order to make sure that it supports progress across the three health MDGs, including MDG 6.

There is a particular concern that progress amongst the hardest to reach populations is likely to be the biggest challenge faced in trying to achieve the MDGs by 2015. Although some progress has been made, the MDGs are still failing to address the inequity of outcomes for especially vulnerable groups (including disabled people and indigenous women), and are not targeted to ensure the hardest-to-reach do not remain left out of global efforts to improve health and reduce poverty. Although the inclusion of disabled people is referenced in a number of places throughout the Outcome Document, there appears to be a lack of recognition of the need to ensure disabled people are specifically included in maternal health, child health, and specific disease-related programmes and that the barriers to inclusion of disabled people are identified and removed.

An additional concern involves used to collect data on progress towards the health MDGs. In order to ensure that the most vulnerable and hardest-to-reach populations are indeed being reached it is critical to develop indicators that reflect this. As such efforts to disaggregate data should also aim to collect data that can highlight the extent to which most vulnerable groups, including indigenous women, disabled people, adolescents and the more remote rural populations, are able to access health services. There is also a concern that while the Outcome Document references an increased commitment to addressing NTDs, there are no indicators and targets associated with this in MDG6, thus raising a question of how progress towards the prevention, treatment and elimination of NTDs will be measured.

## Recommendations to the UK Government

1. DFID must play a leading role in ensuring a concrete action plan and robust accountability framework for commitments made in the Outcome Document and the GSWCH is developed by March 2011. In developing this accountability framework DFID should advocate for greater involvement of civil society and, in particular, civil society from the most vulnerable and hard-to-reach populations (e.g. indigenous women, adolescent women and people with disabilities).
2. The UK Government must do more to promote the interconnectedness of the health-related MDGs and their relationship to other MDGs. In particular, the UK Government should take a lead in investing in integrated approaches to water, sanitation and maternal and child health, recognising the importance of maintaining the full continuum of care, as well as the contribution that cost-effective interventions to prevent, treat and eliminate NTDs can make to improving maternal and child health.
3. The UK Government should support developing country governments to produce fully-costed, robust national health plans and should allocate funding on the basis of these. It should also encourage and support the capacity of governments to collect disaggregated data and the development of indicators to measure MDG outcomes for specific vulnerable groups, in order to address the 'equity gap' in the MDGs. It is vital that the UK maintains and scales-up its support – both financial and technical – to governments wishing to introduce more equitable financing mechanisms and to remove financial barriers to access. This is imperative if countries are to move towards universal coverage, as was recently explained in the 2010 World Health Report.

# MDG 7: Ensure Environmental Sustainability

## Introduction

MDG7 aims to ensure environmental sustainability. It covers a wide range of environmental issues including biodiversity, air pollution, forests, climate change, fish stocks, clean drinking water, sanitation and improvement of slums. The environment underpins all the MDGs, especially those concerned with hunger and food security, education, gender, child mortality, health and disease. Climate change is threatening to reverse international efforts to reduce poverty despite having risen rapidly up the global agenda. Many of the impacts of climate change play out through the natural world, making MDG7 even more vital. Nevertheless, MDG7 is often sidelined – particularly the aspects concerning biodiversity and environmental resources.

At the MDG summit, references to environmental sustainability were present, but the environment was a long way from being “mainstreamed” or being recognised as crucial to the success of meeting all of the MDGs. MDG7 is often narrowly interpreted as the ‘water and sanitation goal’ and its wider elements get less attention and resources than other MDGs. There is a worry that this could continue to be the ‘forgotten MDG’ as the push to meet all MDG targets by 2015 accelerates. In the run up to 2015 there is an opportunity to bring together the interlinked challenges of natural resource depletion, environmental degradation, climate change and development and shape a new growth and development paradigm that is based on the sustainable use of natural resources. While there was some positive language on these issues at the MDG Summit, particularly in the roundtable discussions, this is not reflected in the Outcome Document and efforts did not go far enough to put development and growth on a sustainable footing that will tackle climate change and lead to long term poverty reduction.

## Analysis

### Sustainable development

The roundtables at the MDG Summit called for ‘an environmentally sustainable paradigm for development’. Support for smallholder farmers was also a theme. However these issues do not appear in the Summit’s formal documentation, so the outcomes and recommendations of the roundtables are lost.

A successful outcome of the Rio+20 negotiations was also called for at the summit, and the Outcome Document’s text on MDG7 (point D) specifically refers to a successful United National Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012 (Rio+20), which we welcome.

However, elsewhere there are potential contradictions in the Outcome Document, for example the repeated use of the phrase “sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth, poverty eradication and sustainable development”. We need more developed and coherent thinking about what ‘sustainable development’ means in this context and how economic growth can be a driver of sustainable (rather than unsustainable) development.

### Links between poverty, biodiversity, ecosystem services and climate change

The Outcome Document does refer to environmental degradation, climate change and biodiversity. For example, paragraph 6 recognises the “increasing challenges posed by climate change and the loss of biodiversity, which have increased vulnerabilities and inequalities and adversely affected development gains, in particular in developing countries.” Also, within MDG1, the loss of biodiversity, land and soil degradation and water quality and availability are listed amongst the environmental challenges to sustainable agricultural development and the need for sustainable fisheries management in the fight against malnutrition and hunger.

However the strong links between these issues was not given the discussion time they deserve at the MDG Summit. They were discussed in much greater depth at the High Level Meeting on Biodiversity which happened in parallel to the MDG summit. At the High Level Meeting, Ban Ki-moon said: “Ecosystem services are directly linked to the bottom line. They are our natural capital ... We need to show that protecting ecosystems can help us achieve the Millennium Development Goals and build resilience to climate change.” It was a real oversight and a huge missed opportunity that these vital issues were not fed back into the MDG Summit process and that the two processes were not interlinked.

The MDG7 text also fails to capture important points on the economic value of ecosystem services. These points were made strongly at the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and in recent Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity reports (TEEB). We suggest following the approach in the CBD strategic plan to work with relevant international organisations to develop and implement the economic aspects of biodiversity and ecosystem services. Further, having missed the 2010 target for reducing biodiversity loss, target 7b of MDG7 now needs to be updated to adopt the new targets agreed at the CBD COP in Nagoya, October 2010.

istockphoto.com,  
Deforestation in the Amazon



## Water and sanitation

The sanitation target is now the most off-track target in sub-Saharan Africa. With only five years left to meet the MDGs, it is vital that the neglect of sanitation is reversed. This includes recognising how achieving the targets on sanitation and water underpins progress on many of the other MDGs. This is the case particularly for the health MDGs, and sanitation is key to tackling these challenges.

There was high-level engagement at an important side event on water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) which involved UN Secretary General Ban-Ki-moon and several Heads of State including the Liberian President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, who clearly stated that the sector is “under-discussed, under-prioritised and therefore under-resourced”. The Outcome Document includes some positive language on integrating water and sanitation interventions in efforts to promote health, education and nutrition. The Global Strategy for Women’s and Children’s Health also contains encouraging language on taking an integrated approach to tackling maternal and child health, recognising the importance of clean water, sanitation and hygiene.

However, sanitation wasn’t given the priority civil society was calling for and ‘Sanitation and Water for All: A Global Framework for Action<sup>11</sup>’ was not endorsed in the document. This weakness is the same for the Global Strategy for Women and Children’s Health, and the summary of country-by-country commitments published alongside the Strategy. None of these adequately outline actions to be taken. The true test for both documents will be how they are now implemented and whether the language around the desire for more integration, actually leads to changes in practice.

Access to water for domestic use, agriculture and good health are all dependent on the availability and integrated management of the freshwater resource. There is a lack of recognition of the importance of water resources and management to achieve MDG7, and the Outcome Document doesn’t recognise the gender implications of, and the role of indigenous/local knowledge, in water management.

## Slums

Most discussions of the MDGs forget to mention the target to significantly improve the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020, and it is not mentioned in the Outcome Document. This target may be met, for example, through the ambitious slum upgrading programmes now in evidence in Thailand and several Latin American nations.

States are required under international law to take immediate and progressive steps to realise the rights to adequate housing and other human rights of people living in slums and informal settlements. The MDG target of 100 million slum dwellers is desperately unambitious when considered in light of the obligations of states under international human rights law to prioritise the realisation of minimum essential levels of shelter and housing for all; to take deliberate, concrete and targeted steps towards achieving the right to adequate housing; and to prioritise the most disadvantaged and vulnerable groups when allocating resources. Approximately 1 billion people live in ‘slums’ and this number is still growing in almost all low-income and most middle-income nations. If the formulation of this target was similar to most others – to reduce by half or three quarters the number of people living in ‘slums’ – then this would probably be the target that would be most off-track.

The process by which the number of people living in slums is reduced must be handled carefully. Reference to “reducing the slum populations” potentially allows for forced evictions and the demolition of slums, in violation of international human rights standards, resulting in slum-dwellers losing their homes with no alternative provision. Further, there is no commitment to measures prohibiting forced evictions and to providing a minimum degree of security of tenure to all. It is critical that security of tenure is ensured as a means of improving the lives of slum dwellers.

istockphoto.com, Girl planting tree



## Climate change

Climate change is undermining progress on all MDGs. Without radical steps to reduce carbon emissions and ensure that temperature rise stays below 1.5 degrees celcius, we are likely to see increased disasters, sea-level rise, drought, and the disappearance of small-island states. It will not be possible to tackle global poverty if the global community fails to agree on urgent action to tackle climate change.

The importance of collective global action on climate change was acknowledged at the Summit. However whilst emission reduction targets may be part of MDG sub-targets, climate change was for the most part not included in the original MDG targets. By noting the need for a new global agreement, the Outcome Document acknowledges that action on climate change is inherently linked to development.

Emerging economies must be supported to develop along a low-carbon pathway rather than follow the well-trodden route of carbon intensive industry. Alongside emissions reductions, there is a pressing need to identify new funding to help poor communities to adapt to climate change and for this funding to be additional to money already committed to overseas development assistance. The delivery of fast-start finance (\$30 billion) and an agreement on the sources of long-term finance (\$100 billion agreed at Copenhagen moving towards the \$200 billion which is needed) must be delivered in order to build trust and move forward action on climate change.

Most heads of state from developing countries referred to climate change as a key challenge in their plenary speeches. However the Outcome Document, including the MDG7 section, does not reflect the importance and urgency of the issue strongly enough.

## Working with other international processes

In the MDG7 text we welcome the links that are made to the CBD and UNFCCC. We also welcome references to marine ecosystems, forests and energy. There are very clear synergies between the UNFCCC, CBD and MDGs. However these three multilateral UN processes are largely happening in isolation of each other. This is not conducive for long term and sustainable impacts in poverty reduction, biodiversity or tackling climate change.

## Recommendations to the UK Government

1. The vital role of the environment in underpinning all the MDGs needs to be embedded in the UK Government's response to development challenges. The UK needs to lead the global response to these, including mainstreaming environmental sustainability across the UK's response to the MDGs. All development interventions, including those delivered through multilaterals, should be screened for climate and environment impacts and have climate and environmental safeguards built in, they also need to ensure they will be resilient to future climate impacts. Biodiversity and ecosystem services should be targeted in poverty reduction and climate adaptation/mitigation strategies. The UK has a major role to play in the EU, for example supporting CBD follow up, building the new CBD targets on biodiversity loss into the MDG framework, and ensuring that environmental sustainability is mainstreamed across EU responses to the MDGs.
2. The UK Government also needs to show leadership on achieving the sanitation target through the partnership it helped to set up – Sanitation and Water for All (SWA): A Global Framework for Action. In practice, leadership requires a commitment to Ministerial attendance at high level meetings of the partnership, as well as financial and human resource input to SWA's catalytic support for the sector. Such leadership also needs to be reflected in ODA for sanitation and water, which is currently lagging behind other 'essential services'. We are calling on the UK Government to provide 100 million people with access to clean water and sanitation, by increasing DFID's investment in the sector between now and 2015.
3. The UK Government should be positioning itself as a leader on green development, investing in understanding and implementing climate resilient low carbon, green development initiatives. DFID should be investing in green development through its ODA spending. The UK Government needs to promote and utilise tools that highlight the economic and social benefits of functioning and healthy natural systems, and the costs of degrading the environment, such as natural resource accounting, changes in subsidies and fiscal incentives and strategic environmental assessments. It should be working with governments in developed and developing countries to do likewise.



istockphoto.com, Melting iceberg

# MDG 8: Develop a Global Partnership for Development

## Introduction

MDG8 is unique in that it is notably difficult to measure its outcomes, yet the successes and failures of global partnerships for development have acute impacts on people around the world. MDG8 specifically addresses the reality that tackling poverty involves making political decisions. This challenges us all – especially in the North – to confront vested interests that keep certain unjust structures in place. In the context of MDG8, the role of the North is that of an essential partner rather than simply a donor in development efforts. The North must be as accountable for its actions and decisions as it expects the global South to be. Global partnerships and truly internationally agreed decisions are necessary in order to achieve the rest of the MDGs. It is with this in mind that we continue to push for innovative, immediate, effective and mutually accountable action at the global level in order to eradicate the poverty and injustice that prevents so many people in the world from living a dignified life and realising their rights as human beings.

## Analysis

The 2010 Outcome Document shows a shift in thinking (compared with the outcome document of the 2005 World Summit<sup>12</sup>) on issues such as domestic resource mobilisation and illicit capital flows.

We welcome statements such as those in 78.i, supporting national efforts to enhance tax systems domestically as well as supporting international cooperation in addressing international tax issues. Research suggests that countries with higher levels of domestic revenue mobilisation per capita are performing significantly better on the MDGs than those countries with lower levels of tax collection. This is an encouraging development both in evidence and in global thinking around tax and domestic resource mobilisation, but we hope that it will not be used as an excuse to fall back on the Gleneagles commitments.

**“Let us be clear about which Millennium Development Goal is lagging the most behind... it’s MDG #8, the Global Partnership for Development, which is about debt, aid, trade and technology. The only responsibility that developed countries had is not being met. That’s why the other goals are not being met.”**

Adelaide Sosseh, former co-chair of the Global Call to Action Against Poverty

We welcome the newly stated commitment to promote transparency in financial transactions (78.j) as a way of ensuring tax is paid where it is due, therefore increasing the revenue raised by developing countries in order to help fund their own development.

We welcome the fact the Outcome Document considers an “enhanced” approach to sovereign debt restructuring mechanisms. However, it fails to endorse important principles such as the need for any mechanism to be independent of both debtors and creditors. The document’s only call is for all countries to contribute to ongoing discussions in the IMF and World Bank; but there has been little evidence that such discussions exist.

We welcome the reiteration of the commitment to action to make the world trading system work for poverty reduction. In particular we welcome the renewed commitment to offering duty-free, quota-free access for developing countries to developed country markets; to support for regional integration and to the elimination in agriculture of developed-country export subsidies by 2013. However we must see more concrete actions and timelines for each of these issues, and action to address trade-distorting subsidies must be taken as a matter of urgency. International negotiations must also take account of the need for developing countries to be able to use the full range of policy tools to support the development of key sectors: export taxes, for example, are often key to raising vital revenues.

However, the Outcome Document ignores the goal to develop an “open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory ... financial system”. This is extraordinary given the financial crisis over recent years.

One outcome of the financial crisis, which originated in the global North, has been to increase debt burdens in southern countries.<sup>13</sup> Not only those countries which have been included in comprehensive debt restructuring, but also those which have been ignored, have seen the burden of debt increase. Yet the only concrete suggestion of the Outcome Document – to “deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries” – simply re-endorses existing mechanisms.

The Outcome Document is strong in discussing mechanisms for finance for development, but one major omission is that of climate finance. Countries with a high historical responsibility for climate change need to give significant finance to the UN Adaptation Fund, and enable the creation of a UN Mitigation Fund. Without support for these climate funds – entities which should be completely separate from Official Development Assistance – the poor will continue to suffer the consequences of a changing climate that they had no part in creating.



It is concerning that much of the climate finance currently committed is being given as loans, increasing rather than reducing unjust financial debts. It is essential that the international community recognises that developed countries bear the most responsibility for causing climate change, and so therefore need to contribute to UN climate funds and take action to quickly reduce their greenhouse gas emissions.

It is disappointing, in the lead in to the ten year anniversary of Doha, to see little that is new or innovative in attempting to address the current stalemate. It is more urgent than ever that the concerns of developing countries, in particular regarding agriculture, are properly addressed. It is also disappointing that nothing was said regarding the need to address the issues of unequal power amongst members of the WTO.

It is particularly worrying that there has been no re-assessment of the model of liberalisation and export-orientation that developed countries continue to try to impose on developing countries. It is a model that has been shown to leave countries much more vulnerable to global economic shocks, does not benefit the poorest sectors of developing country populations and was not the model used either by industrialised countries or by the Asian Tigers in the early stages of their development. Trade policy must be shaped to work for the poorest, many of whom need support to trade locally or regionally rather than internationally.

### Recommendations to UK Government

1. Take the global lead in pushing for international financial transparency in order to curtail illicit financial flows that would otherwise be a valuable source of revenue for developing countries. Specifically, the UK Government should support country-by-country reporting in all industries.
2. Publicly support the need for an international mechanism to resolve sovereign debt problems which is a) independent of debtors and creditors, b) treats all foreign creditors on an equal basis and c) cancels unjust debts based on corrupt, irresponsible or undemocratically contracted loans which did not benefit the people of the borrowing country.
3. Give significant finance to the UN Adaptation Fund, support the creation of a UN Mitigation Fund in UNFCCC negotiations, and stop giving finance for adaptation as loans through the World Bank.
4. Take a lead in ensuring WTO negotiations, particularly at the proposed Ministerial meeting in 2011, as well as negotiations around EU trade deals, lead to time-bound actions to support the poorest to be able to trade locally and regionally, remove trade-distorting subsidies, and ensure developing countries are able to retain the policy tools necessary to address poverty.

## References

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