

# A last chance to keep our promises

Joint statement by UK civil society  
organisations ahead of the 2010  
UN MDG Review Summit

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In 2000, all world leaders signed up to achieving eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015.<sup>1</sup> Yet progress towards many of the targets is badly off track.

In 2010, the world needs to deliver on a rescue plan at the UN Millennium Development Goals Review Summit. This Government is the one that can make sure that the United Kingdom keeps its promises.

## A global pledge to fight poverty

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) represent the most significant effort ever made by the international community to fight global poverty and inequality.

UK efforts have made important contributions towards achieving the MDGs by helping millions of children go to primary school, providing clean drinking water and protecting people from malaria to name just a few. UK political interventions have also contributed to progressing international discussions, for instance by taking a leadership role on debt relief and aid effectiveness. This is a legacy which UK citizens are rightly proud of and that the new UK Government has committed to build upon.

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*"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."*

**Ban Ki-moon**  
UN Secretary-General, UN SG report "Keeping the Promise"

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## Will we keep our promises?

However, much more needs to be done as the MDGs are off track in many regions and many governments are ignoring their pledges. International crises such as the global financial and economic crisis, the food price crisis, the climate change crisis and a growing environmental crisis have had and continue to have devastating results for poor communities in developing countries risking the reversal of development gains made in recent decades.<sup>2</sup>

Development benefits often remain out of reach for those who are poorest and most marginalised – women and girls, minority groups such as disabled people, Dalits and indigenous groups – the very same people for whom the achievement of the MDGs matters the most. For example, women own less than one percent of the world's land yet make up 70% of the world's poorest people. As a direct result of marginalisation people are still dying of hunger; children are still not able to go to school; women are still subject to routine violence and are not receiving the healthcare necessary to reduce maternal mortality and improve child survival.

With over 60% of essential environmental services degraded, we also need to recognise the critical role of natural resources and ecosystem services in contributing to the health, wealth and well-being of the poorest.

Conflict and insecurity continue to undermine and impede progress across the MDGs. Fragile countries account for a fifth of the population of developing countries, but a third of those living in extreme poverty, half of children not in primary school and half of children who die before their fifth birthday. We will not meet the MDGs unless we ensure our development interventions most successfully address conflict and fragility.

Alongside governments, international civil society has a key role to play in achieving the MDGs through their work in developing and developed countries including improving services to poor people, holding governments to account and raising awareness of global poverty amongst citizens worldwide.

## What needs to happen in 2010?

This is a decisive year for international development. The EU, G8, G20 and the wider international community will focus their attention on the MDGs in the lead up to the UN MDG Review Summit in September. These summits are key moments to demonstrate the UK's continuing dedication to the fight against global poverty and lead the way in achieving the MDGs.

**UK civil society organisations urge the UK Government to show international leadership and take action on the following priorities in order to ensure it makes an important contribution to the UN MDG Review Summit and to the fight against global poverty:<sup>3</sup>**

- Live up to international and national commitments by ensuring that aid levels reach 0.7% of GNI, enshrining this target into law, and maintaining the focus of aid spending on poverty reduction
- Make UK aid more effective, transparent and accountable by fully implementing the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action and working towards a strong aid effectiveness framework to be agreed in 2011
- Support innovative financing schemes such as a Financial Transaction Tax that will provide long-term and sustainable financing for international development and climate change adaptation and mitigation, in addition to donor countries meeting their commitments on Official Development Assistance (ODA)
- Ensure policy coherence across the UK Government particularly in regard to trade, climate change, gender equality, agriculture, the environment, conflict and security
- Make global structures and decision making processes more democratic, inclusive, transparent and accountable including International Financial Institutions, the G8 and the G20
- Provide developing countries with the tools they need to mobilise domestic resources and support international co-operation to prevent capital flight and tax avoidance
- Deliver on a fair, ambitious and legally binding deal on climate change capable of keeping average global temperature rise below 2 degrees Celsius and establishing a finance mechanism to raise an additional \$200bn a year for adaptation and mitigation
- Realise the human rights of all people, protecting the most marginalised – including disabled people, older people, children and minority and indigenous groups – and upholding the rights of women and girls
- Enable sufficient space for civil society at international and national level to monitor their governments' contribution to fighting poverty and achieving the MDGs
- Recognise that with the interconnectedness of the MDGs, they need to be addressed coherently with sufficient resources and support by the international community. While some MDGs are more off-track than others, much-needed donor attention on specific issues should come through providing additional resources and not at the expense of taking the focus away from other MDGs
- With its record on aid spending the UK is in a strong position to provide political and financial backing to the UN Secretary-General's proposed global action plan for maternal, newborn and child survival. The action plan should prioritise women's reproductive health and rights as the route to sustainable change. It should include a doubling of annual aid to maternal, newborn and child health from \$4bn to \$8bn. It should also focus on the 30 low-income countries that are furthest off track and which together account for three quarters of maternal, newborn and child deaths

**We call on Prime Minister David Cameron to demonstrate the UK's political commitment to international development and participate in the UN MDG Review Summit in September. Together with other world leaders, he needs to take the following actions at the Summit:**

- Agree an ambitious and universal MDGs rescue plan with clear political and financial commitments including national plans and timetables to achieve the MDG targets over the next five years
- Address the interlinkages between all eight MDGs by focussing on cross cutting issues which are vital to their achievement such as human rights, gender equality, and environmental sustainability as well as decent work, conflict, social exclusion, and by reinvigorating the global partnership for development

## The Millennium Development Goals

- 1 Eradicate Hunger and Extreme Poverty
- 2 Achieve Universal Primary Education
- 3 Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women
- 4 Reduce Child Mortality
- 5 Improve Maternal Health
- 6 Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other Diseases
- 7 Ensure Environmental Sustainability
- 8 Develop a Global Partnership for Development

## The following organisations support this statement (as of 2 June 2010)

|   |                                       |                                   |
|---|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| ActionAid UK  | Interact Worldwide                    | Sightsavers                       |
| Action for Global Health                                | Leonard Cheshire Disability           | Tearfund                          |
| Amnesty International UK                                | The Leprosy Mission England and Wales | TUC                               |
| CAFOD   | MAG                                   | UK Aid Network                    |
| CARE International UK                                   | ONE                                   | UK Gender and Development Network |
| Christian Aid   | One World Action                      | UNICEF UK                         |
| Bond  | Oxfam GB                              | VSO                               |
| Deaf Child  | Plan UK                               | WaterAid                          |
| Fairtrade Foundation                                    | Progressio                            | Women and Children First          |
| Health Poverty Action                                   | RICS BuildAction                      | World Emergency Relief            |
| HelpAge International                                   | Save the Children                     | World Vision                      |
| International Forum for Rural Transport and Development | Send a Cow                            | WWF UK                            |

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*“Poverty is created by people – it can be eradicated. Ultimately it is a question of political choice. We expect our leaders to be bold in the choices they make at this summit – to commit to the ambitious actions and changes needed to tackle the pervasive inequality and lack of power that keep women and men poor.”*

**Jennifer Albano**  
**Director, Institute of Politics and Governance, Philippines**

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For more information about the work of Bond and our members on the MDGs:

[bond.org.uk](http://bond.org.uk)

[advocacy@bond.org.uk](mailto:advocacy@bond.org.uk)

+44 (0)20 7837 8250

1 Find a list of all 8 MDGs on the UN website – [www.un.org/millenniumgoals](http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals)

2 The World Bank estimates that in 2015, 20 million more people in Sub-Saharan Africa will be in extreme poverty and 53 million more people globally due to the effects of the global financial crisis. In: The World Bank, *Global Monitoring Report 2010. The MDGs after the Crisis*, May 2010

3 UK NGOs have also outlined our political agenda for a new UK Government in the International Development Manifesto “Vote Global” signed by over 200 UK organisations. Read the Manifesto at: [www.bond.org.uk/election](http://www.bond.org.uk/election)

We have also produced a detailed policy agenda for the European Union in cooperation with CONCORD, the Pan-European Confederation of NGOs – “Towards the UN MDG Review Summit 2010. Recommendations to the EU”. Find the paper at: [www.bond.org.uk/pages/mdgs.html](http://www.bond.org.uk/pages/mdgs.html).

