



MDG Summit Bulletin

A report of the High-level Plenary Meeting of the 65th Session of the UN General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)
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MDG SUMMIT HIGHLIGHTS: MONDAY, 20 SEPTEMBER 2010

Traffic chaos greeted New Yorkers Monday morning as the MDG Summit closed a dozen streets in East Manhattan. Thousands of participants streamed into dozens of side events and partnership events. Nearly 140 Heads of State and Government simultaneously attended day-long plenary sessions in the General Assembly Hall at UN Headquarters and high-level roundtables on: health and education; and poverty, hunger, and gender equality. IISD-RS was there to report on eight of the side and partnership events, the highlights of which are presented below.



The dais during the session on “Domestic Resource Mobilization”

THE AFRICAN NETWORK OF PARLIAMENTARIANS ON MDGS : Tunji Ganiyu Olukolu, House of Representatives, Nigeria, reviewed the role of the Network of African Parliamentarians on MDGs—founded in March 2010—in encouraging more transparent and accountable activity on the MDGs within African parliaments and between parliaments and executive branches of government.

Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi, UN Development Programme (UNDP), introduced the UNDP report “Parliamentary Engagement with the Millennium Development Goals,” which discusses: the integration of the MDGs into legal processes; government transparency; budgetary concerns; and citizen engagement.

Hajiya Amina Az-Zubair, Senior Special Assistant on MDGs to the President of Nigeria, reported on the challenges of creating a partnership within the national assembly. Stating that MDG committees now exist in multiple levels of parliament, she praised their achievements, including the near eradication of polio and significant increases in healthcare provision.

Joseph Jaiyeola Ajatta, on behalf of Oladimeji Sabur Bankole, Speaker of the House of Representatives, Nigeria, highlighted the creation of the Nigerian MDG Resource Center and the publication of a Parliamentary Handbook on MDGs.

ACHIEVING THE MDGS: ADDRESSING CONFLICT, FRAGILITY AND ARMED VIOLENCE: José Ramos-Horta, President, Timor-Leste, lamented that there is very little reference to conflict, peace building and state building in discussions on MDGs, saying that these are crucial to meeting the MDGs and to the overall development of countries affected by violence and conflicts. He highlighted that the “fragile g7+” countries group including Afghanistan, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Côte d’Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Timor Leste will not achieve the MDGs unless they are provided with extensive support and are engaged as active partners in international efforts.

Andrew Mitchell, Secretary of State for International Development, UK, stated that a “rethink” on conflict response is necessary and requires effort on improving safety in conflict-ridden countries.

Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, President of Liberia, mentioned that despite progress on resolving conflicts in some countries, the important question is how peace and stability can be sustained. She underscored the need for different responses for countries in conflict and post-conflict. She stressed the need, in both cases, to focus particularly on those MDGs that countries are most likely to achieve by 2015.

Surin Pitsuwan, Association of Southeast Asian Nations, highlighted the role of regional organizations in resolving conflicts and violence, and stressed that regional efforts strengthen and add value to development policy and goals. He



Participants during the session on “Achieving the MDGs - Addressing Conflict, Fragility and Armed violence”

emphasized the need to mainstream government efforts with international support in order to, *inter alia*, reduce inequalities and improve access to justice in preventing conflicts.

Jordan Ryan, UNDP, underscored the need to invest in conflict prevention. Mo Ibrahim, Mo Ibrahim Foundation, highlighted the centrality of local leadership in preventing conflicts.

UN-HABITAT AND UNCDF - LOCALIZING THE

MDGS: Inga Klevby, UN-HABITAT, stressed the role of local governments in successfully achieving the MDGs, as they are better placed to successfully implement plans to achieve targets within the frameworks of national systems. David Morrison, UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), noted that local authorities understand the particular challenges of their locality. Karma Tshiteem, Gross National Happiness Commission, Bhutan, outlined instances where MDG targets and local priorities do not align and emphasized the importance of sufficient financial, human and technical resources.

Leonardo Romeo, New York University (NYU), noted that enabling conditions, such as a reasonable legal framework and good local leadership, can empower communities to achieve MDG targets. Leonardo Martinez-Diaz, United States Agency for International Development, highlighted that under conditions where the division of responsibilities between the national government and local authorities is unclear, implementation of development policies can be ineffective. Jerry Hultin, NYU, stressed that micro-finance is important for bringing in money and other resources from outside the local economy to effectively implement local plans.

Relinda Sosa, CONOMOVIDI, outlined her organization's work in educating and assisting women in improving their living conditions. Macharia Kamau, Kenya, permanent representative to UN Environment Programme and UN-HABITAT, stressed the importance of proper infrastructure for governments to achieve MDG targets and deliver on promises for basic services.

EU AND AfDB - DOMESTIC RESOURCE

MOBILIZATION: Andris Piebalgs, European Commission, highlighted that loss of capital from developing countries is seven times greater than development aid going into them. He stressed the need for developing countries to raise taxation as a proportion of GDP and to receive fair amounts of tax revenues from extractive industry activities. Donald Kaberuka, African Development Bank (AfDB), underscored the need to empower countries to collect their own revenues, as well as to provide direct budgetary support. He also outlined the conflict between regional integration and domestic regulations. Noting that this results in loss of customs revenue, he called for assistance in building capacity to overcome this conflict.

Angel Gurría, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), urged a focus on low simple taxes with flat tax rates and few exemptions. He said the tax and

development communities should work together and noted that new bureaucracies, such as a world tax organization, were unnecessary.

Jean Ping, African Union Commission, underscored the low levels of foreign direct investment, as well as the lack of trade, among African nations due to insufficient infrastructure. Helen Clark, UNDP, stressed the need to expand fiscal space and emphasized that efficiency can be increased by improving the quality of public spending. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, World Bank, suggested providing incentives to formalize activities of informal sector actors, including through time-limited tax breaks.

Gay Mitchell, European Parliament, linked promoting of enterprise development and ensuring social justice to building tax systems. Highlighting the overall African trend of increasing tax revenues, Daniel Sowa Ablorh-Quarcoo, African Tax Administration Forum, stressed the need to incorporate all actors into the tax net and to build a "compliance culture" in Africa.

Stating that illicit financial flows represent the most significant economic challenge facing the world's poor, subsequently preventing the attainment of the MDGs, Raymond Baker, Global Financial Integrity, questioned why developed countries are not able to curtail intake of these funds. Krister Anderson, Business Europe, explained, from an investor's perspective, that transparency and stability are often considered more important than the tax rate applied.

The ensuing discussion focused on: transparency initiatives around extractive industry taxation; the significant difference between the mild tone of the outcome expected from the MDG Summit and the strong presentations heard during the side event; the role of civil society in holding governments to account on the way revenues are spent; and the need for an African equivalent of the European Union to drive regional integration activities.

LAUNCHING OF TWO REPORTS ON AID IN AFRICA:

Cheick Sidi Diarra, UN Office of the Special Advisor for Africa, presented the report "Africa's Cooperation with New and Emerging Development Partners." He said successes of South-South partnerships in China and India can be replicated in Africa. Diarra gave examples of positive development impacts from emerging partnerships in Africa, including: lower prices of consumer goods; provision of generic medicines; cheap antiretroviral drugs and insecticide-dipped mosquito nets; and enhanced infrastructure and telecommunications. He cautioned that any large inflows requiring repayment can result in future indebtedness.

In the ensuing discussion, participants debated, *inter alia*: the importance of maintaining integrity of African culture and preventing debt from partnerships and aid; means of ensuring that Africans benefit equitably from partnerships; negotiating as a



L-R: Abdoulie Janneh, UNECA; Ángel Gurría, OECD; Cheick Sidi Diarra, Under-Secretary-General, Special Adviser on Africa and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States; and Margaret Novicki, UN Department of Public Information



L-R: Patrice Robineau, Senior Advisor to the Economic Commission for Europe; Abdoulie Janneh, Executive Secretary, Economic Commission for Africa; UN Deputy Secretary-General Asha-Rose Migiro; Executive Secretary Noeleen Heyzer, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific; Bader Omar Al Dafa, Executive Secretary, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia; and Antonio Prado, Deputy Executive Secretary, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

bloc rather than as individual states; addressing problems of poor governance and corruption; and triangular cooperation linking North-South to South-South cooperation.

Abdoulie Janneh, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, introduced the second report, “2010 Mutual Review of Development Effectiveness in Africa.” He remarked that in spite of the challenges to meeting the MDGs presented by the financial crisis, general progress has been made in improved governance and political conditions for investments, increased enrollment in primary schools and curbing infectious diseases. He emphasized that great effort is still needed to tackle corruption, and called on governments to foster economic reforms and intensify regional cooperation. He added that climate change is also a barrier to meeting the MDGs.

Angel Gurría, OECD, emphasized that lack of donor commitments constrain efforts to achieving the MDGs, noting that some developed states are taking the financial crisis as an excuse to pull out of, or default on, their aid commitments. He highlighted the importance of reducing illicit economic flows out of Africa and trade liberalization in Africa.

In the ensuing discussion, participants discussed, *inter alia*: the role of foreign banks in preventing illicit flows and ensuring the return of funds to states; investment in human capacity development; enabling investment through partnership with the African diaspora; and the need to empower women to achieve many of the MDGs.

THE MDGS: A DECADE OF ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL: UN Deputy Secretary-General Asha-Rose Migiro highlighted that many challenges to achieving the MDGs span national borders, necessitating regional approaches. Noting that although each region faces unique challenges, maternal and child mortality, hunger, and sanitation are common to them all. High-level representatives from UN Regional Commissions then described challenges and successes in achieving the MDGs.

Abdoulie Janneh, Economic Commission for Africa, said the African region is making significant progress on enrollment in primary education. He stressed, however, that such progress must not come at the expense of quality.

Noeleen Heyzer, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, said the region is making impressive gains in reducing poverty despite significant population growth. She noted, however, that 14 Least Developed Countries in the region are making slow, or no, progress on most MDG indicators. She stated that regional studies demonstrate the link between poverty reduction and infrastructure development.

Bader Omar Al Dafa, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, highlighted that although the region is likely to halve the number of people living on US\$1.25 daily, this statistic masks the proportion of people living just above this poverty line who still remain vulnerable to shocks.

Antonio Prado, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, said the Gini Index scores of 10 countries in his region has improved between 3-10 per cent. Similar to the Asia-Pacific region, he noted that hunger remains a problem even though his region produces more food than it consumes.

Patrice Robineau, Economic Commission for Europe, noted that women in his region are over-represented in low-paying and vulnerable jobs. Robineau called for an integrated policy framework that balances macroeconomic, structural and social policies and social, economic and environmental goals.

Ministers from Spain, Niger, Thailand, Brazil, Chile, Indonesia and Kazakhstan added their national perspectives. Among other things, they stated that: equality, particularly gender equality, is a means to achieving multiple MDGs; agricultural policy development is critical for poverty alleviation in Africa; the UN can play an important role in facilitating intra- and inter-regional knowledge sharing; achieving the MDGs requires economic growth; and poverty is multi-dimensional and dynamic in its causes and effects.

Participants encouraged continuously raising MDG targets as they are achieved, and emphasized the need to consider what will happen post-2015, when the timeline for achieving the MDGs expires. They stressed that better coverage and quality of MDG-relevant data is essential in informing good policy development and implementation.

SMARTER PARTNERSHIPS FOR MDG ACHIEVEMENT (MDG 8 ON A GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR DEVELOPMENT)

This three-part event included two panels and an interactive discussion.

LOOKING BACK – HIGH EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS AND THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO THE MDGS: Navanethem Pillay, UN High Commission for Refugees, noted the importance of a human rights based approach to the MDGs for enabling, *inter alia*: equitable participation and representation of developing countries; empowerment of aid recipients to provide quality services; and donor accountability through monitoring of aid flows.

Taalat Abdel-Malek, Working Party on Aid Effectiveness, Egypt, discussed progress made by the OECD on: encouraging stronger partner representation and engagement; focusing on delivery of results; and provision of tools for cooperation and capacity development.

José Antonio Fares, SESI Paraná, presented on aid effectiveness. He said that three elements were required for accelerating development: cooperation among governments; coordination of efforts; and systematic approaches to action.

Francesco Pisano, United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) Operational Satellite Applications Programme, showed how partnerships formed with international organizations, local governments, local field assistants and the private sector enabled rapid analysis of earthquake damage in Haiti in order to improve aid assistance through accurate localization of affected regions.

Emilia Pires, Ministry of Finance, Timor Leste, reported that the “Fragile g7+” countries required support in peace and state building in order to achieve the MDGs. In the ensuing discussion, participants noted: the exclusion of civil societies in ensuring accountability of governments; the need to define the role of the private sector in tracking aid funds to delivery; and the utility of aid information systems in transparency and accountability.

LOOKING FORWARD: HIGH POTENTIAL NEW PARTNERSHIPS FOR MDG ACHIEVEMENT: Stephen Groff, OECD, underlined the importance of partnerships, but reiterated the primary role for government.

Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi, UNDP, discussed the role of Information Communication Technology in achieving all the MDG targets, saying mobile phones are “a tool in the hands of billions of people.”

Georg Kell, UN Global Compact, considered how to bring public-private partnerships forward and listed several means, including innovative bilateral agencies and the scaling up of successful existing partnerships.

Kemoko Touré, Chamber of Mines, Guinea, described an example of private sector engagement where his bauxite company invested more than US\$40 million in local community development, lamenting, however, that it was misused.

Leonard Ferrari, Naval Postgraduate School, noted the importance of partnerships between research institutions, the private sector and diplomatic agencies.

Angel Gurría, Secretary General, OECD, said a new paradigm for aid is inherent for smarter partnerships and is a cornerstone for achieving the MDGs by 2015, emphasizing mutual responsibility between hosts and donors.

During the discussion, participants highlighted a number of issues, including gender inequality, the importance of political relationships, and the need for innovative platforms for discussion.

THE AUDIENCE DECIDES: HOW DO WE MAKE PARTNERSHIPS SMARTER: Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul, Parliament, Germany, described successful MDG partnerships, such as those in the global fund in the fight against HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis and debt relief.

Lydia Alpizar, Association of Women’s Rights in Development, said MDG 8 must address global economic disparities.

Christiaan Rebergen, Ambassador for MDGs and Public Private Partnerships, Netherlands, emphasized that the private sector should be regarded as valuable partners to achieve MDGs, reporting that the Dutch government has received substantial support from the private sector for food programmes in Africa.

Talaat Abdel-Malek, Egypt, using marriage as a metaphor, underlined the value of mutual trust as key to effective partnerships. On this point, several participants emphasized the inadequacy of accountability and called for more attention to consistency and the potential impacts of unmet commitments. Abdel-Malek summarized that partnerships are not a luxury but a necessity.

Rebergen said partnerships can be effective at global and local levels, citing the global fund and smallholder Kenyan flower farmers, respectively.

Mariela Oliveira, UNITAR, called for global solidarity in ending poverty through the formation of a global initiative uniting partnerships, to reinforce existing efforts. On capacity, Slade called for a compact between donors and developing countries to improve aid effectiveness.

Slade emphasized that discussion on the implementation of MDGs is linked to climate change negotiations, saying innovative funding is important but requires a smart way to manage it.

BIODIVERSITY, CLIMATE CHANGE AND ACHIEVING THE MDGS: SCALING UP LOCAL SOLUTIONS TO ACHIEVE THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS:

Policy Forum Event: Andrew Revkin, Reporter and Author, facilitated the session and highlighted the importance of “modifying the trajectory” of current development and instead fostering a sustainable relationship with the planet. Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary, Convention on Biological Diversity, stressed that climate change cannot be combated without taking account of biodiversity or desertification and said all approaches should be holistic. Christiana Figueres, Executive Secretary, UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, noted that, if climate change is left unchecked, it threatens to undermine thirty years of advances in development. Ángel Gurría, said OECD’s Development Assistance Committee (DAC) has mandated that development aid cannot be administered effectively without “mainstreaming green.”

Leonardo Rosario, Trowel Development Foundation, representing the Equator Prize 2010 winning communities, emphasized the qualitative effects of ecosystem restoration projects including increased income, increased awareness of the environment and contributions to lifestyle changes. Noting that replanting ecosystems will have numerous benefits including fuelwood, fisheries and water security, Pavan Sukhdev, Director, The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity, stressed this public wealth is essential for securing livelihoods. Erik Solheim, Minister of the Environment and International Development, Norway, underscored the importance of involving indigenous groups in policy and stressed the need to follow the concepts of free, prior and informed consent.

Evening Programme: At the evening reception, Ted Turner, Chairman of the United Nations Foundation and Gisele Bündchen, UNEP Goodwill Ambassador, welcomed participants to the event noting the importance of local community initiatives in addressing biodiversity loss, ecosystem and climate change, which is important for attaining the MDG targets. Delivering the keynote address during the evening’s dinner event, Helen Clark, Administrator, UNDP, highlighted the importance of environmental goods and services, as well as the need for the active engagement of local communities. She urged delegates to work towards “virtuous” as opposed to “vicious cycles.” Timothy Wirth, President, United Nations Foundation, stressed the MDGs are not attainable without biodiversity and energy. He also announced the establishment of the Global Partnership for Community-Based Adaptation, which he said aims to develop templates for community-based programmes that can be scaled-up.

During the Equator Prize 2010 Ceremony, awards were given to 25 winning community initiatives, including five special recognition awards: for Africa, Association ADIDY Maitso, Madagascar; for Asia and the Pacific, Monks Community Forest, Cambodia; for Latin America and the Caribbean, Kapawi Ecotourism Complex, Ecuador; for Applied Indigenous Knowledge, Tsimane Masetene Regional Council - Pilon Lajas, Bolivia; and for Ecosystem-Based Adaptation to Climate Change, Local Federation of GIE of Niodior (FELOGIE), Senegal.

Achim Steiner, Executive Director, UNEP, said leaders seeking examples of how to green their economies can look to the 2010 Equator Initiative projects as a range of practical blue-prints for sustainability. On behalf of the 25 community leaders gathered to receive the Equator Prize 2010, three representatives from Africa, Asia and Latin America, emphasized that drawing upon the indigenous community experience is essential for meeting the Millennium Development Goals.