



Africa and MDGs High Level UNGA Events Bulletin

A report of the High-Level Meeting on Africa's Development Needs, High-Level Event on the Millennium Development Goals, and other related events

Published by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)

ONLINE AT [HTTP://WWW.IISD.CA/YMB/AFRIKA-MDGS/](http://www.iisd.ca/ymb/afrika-mdgs/)
VOLUME 153, No. 1, MONDAY, 22 SEPTEMBER 2008



HIGH-LEVEL MEETING ON AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT NEEDS, HIGH-LEVEL EVENT ON THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS, AND RELATED EVENTS

The High-Level Meeting on Africa's Development Needs will take place at United Nations headquarters in New York on 22 September 2008, under the theme "Africa's development needs: state of implementation of various commitments, challenges and the way forward," and will provide an opportunity for world leaders to renew their commitment to Africa's development. The meeting will include opening and closing plenary sessions, and two roundtable discussions in both the morning and afternoon. General Assembly resolution 62/242 decided that this meeting would be held at the highest possible political level, and that it would result in a political declaration. On 20 August 2008, the General Assembly President circulated the first draft, "the Political Declaration on Africa's Development Needs," based on views expressed by member states during informal consultations. It contains sections on: development and poverty; peace and security; financing for development; challenges; and conclusions.

On 25 September 2008, the Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly will convene a High-Level Event on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). This event will evaluate progress made towards achieving the MDGs, and marks the halfway point towards the 2015 target. It also aims to identify actions that can be taken to scale up existing development efforts and identify barriers to implementation. The meeting will include roundtable discussions on poverty and hunger, education and health, and environmental sustainability. The main outcome of this event will be the Secretary-General's summary, which is expected to contribute to discussions to be held at the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus, in Doha, Qatar, 29 November to 2 December 2008.

Both of these high-level events will be convened in the context of the General Debate of the UN General Assembly's 63rd session (23 September to 1 October 2008). In addition, partnership events by a wide variety of governmental and non-governmental organizations are scheduled to take place throughout the week, with a view to facilitating multi-stakeholder discussions, information sharing, and partnership building.

AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT AGENDA AND THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

In adopting the UN Millennium Declaration, heads of state and government agreed to take special measures to address the challenges of poverty eradication and sustainable development in Africa. The 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development reaffirmed the need to increase international support for Africa's efforts to achieve sustainable development, and devoted a specific chapter of actions dedicated towards this goal. In November 2002, the UN General Assembly adopted a declaration (A/RES/57/2) and a resolution (A/RES/57/7) on the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), affirming the UN system's support for the implementation of NEPAD and recommending that the international community use NEPAD as its framework to support development in Africa. Since 2002, the General Assembly has adopted annual resolutions on the implementation of NEPAD, as well as on the Secretary-General's report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa.

In the World Summit 2005 Outcome Document (A/RES/60/1), world leaders underscored the need for the international community to meet the special needs of Africa and resolved to strengthen cooperation with NEPAD by providing coherent support for the programmes drawn up by African leaders within that framework, including by mobilizing internal and external financial resources and facilitating approval of such programmes by the multilateral financial institutions.

In General Assembly resolutions A/RES/61/229 of 22 December 2006 and A/RES/62/179 of 19 December 2007, the Assembly decided to convene, during its sixty-third session in 2008, a high-level meeting on the theme "Africa's development needs: state of implementation of various commitments, challenges and the way forward."

At its sixty-second session the General Assembly adopted a resolution on the report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. In the resolution, the Assembly, *inter alia*, called upon the UN system to continue to mainstream the special needs of Africa in all its normative and operational activities. The Assembly reaffirmed its commitment to address the special needs of Africa, where some progress can be noted but where some countries lag behind in meeting the MDGs by 2015, in order to enable it to enter the mainstream of the world economy and to strengthen cooperation with NEPAD by providing coherent support for the programmes drawn up by African leaders within that framework.

The *Africa and MDGs High Level UNGA Events Bulletin* is a publication of the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) <info@iisd.ca>, publishers of the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* © <enb@iisd.org>. This issue was written and edited by Asheline Appleton, Robynne Boyd, Claudio Chiarolla, Wagaki Mwangi, and Peter Wood. The Digital Editor is Dan Birchall. The Editor is Soledad Aguilar <soledad@iisd.org>. The Director of IISD Reporting Services is Langston James "Kimo" Goree VI <kimo@iisd.org>. Special funding for coverage of the High-level Meeting on Africa's Development Needs and selected side events has been provided through IISD's African Regional Coverage project by Germany's Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC). Funding for our coverage of the Partnership events associated with the High-level Event on the Millennium Development Goals has been provided by UNDP's Poverty Group. IISD can be contacted at 161 Portage Avenue East, 6th Floor, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 0Y4, Canada; tel: +1-204-958-7700; fax: +1-204-958-7710. The opinions expressed in the *Bulletin* are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of IISD. Excerpts from the *Bulletin* may be used in other publications with appropriate academic citation. Electronic versions of the *Bulletin* are sent to e-mail distribution lists (in HTML and PDF formats) and can be found on the Linkages WWW-server at <<http://www.iisd.ca/>>. For information on the *Bulletin*, including requests to provide reporting services, contact the Director of IISD Reporting Services at <kimo@iisd.org>, +1-646-536-7556 or 300 East 56th St., 11A, New York, NY 10022, USA. The IISD Team at the *High-Level Meeting on Africa's Development Needs, High-Level Event on the Millennium Development Goals, and other related events* can be contacted by e-mail at <peterw@iisd.org>.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

At the Millennium Summit in September 2000, UN member states unanimously adopted the Millennium Declaration (A/RES/55/2).

At its fifty-sixth session in 2001, the Secretary-General presented his report entitled "Road map towards the implementation of the UN Millennium Declaration" (56/326). An annex of the report contains eight development goals with 18 targets and 48 indicators, commonly known as the MDGs. The first seven goals are directed toward: eradicating poverty in all its forms; halving extreme poverty and hunger; achieving universal primary education and gender equity; reducing the mortality of children under five by two-thirds and maternal mortality by three-quarters; reversing the spread of HIV and AIDS; halving the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water; and ensuring environmental sustainability. The final goal outlines measures for building a global partnership for development. The goals, targets and indicators were developed following consultations held among members of the UN Secretariat and representatives of International Monetary Fund, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and the World Bank in order to harmonize reporting on the development goals in the Millennium Declaration and the international development goals.

In resolution 56/95 on the "Follow-up to the Millennium Summit," the General Assembly takes note of the Secretary-General's report and recommends that the "road map" be considered as a useful guide in the implementation of the Millennium Declaration by the UN system, and invites member States, as well as the Bretton Woods Institutions, the World Trade Organization and other interested parties to consider the "road map" when formulating plans for implementing goals related to the Declaration.

The first comprehensive review of the MDGs was conducted in 2005 at a high-level plenary session of the General Assembly, that reviewed progress and considered what further efforts were required to achieve the goals.

INTERSESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

The tenth African Union (AU) Summit took place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 25 January to 2 February 2008, with the theme "Industrial Development for Africa." At the conclusion of its Tenth Ordinary Session, the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government adopted decisions on a variety of topics, including on: strengthening of cooperation between Africa and the Tokyo International Conference on Development (TICAD); Action Plan for the Accelerated Industrial Development of Africa; and the MDGs. The Assembly also adopted the Declaration on Africa's Industrial Development. In the decision (Assembly/AU/Dec.180 (X)), the Assembly commended and supported the establishment by the UN Secretary-General of the MDG Africa Steering Group. The Assembly also welcomed the initiative of the Secretary-General and other partners to hold meetings on the MDGs in September 2008, to find ways to reinforce the partnership between developed and developing countries. The Assembly called upon the G8 to follow through with its commitments made at the Gleneagles Summit and at other international commitments in order to scale-up aid disbursement to Africa in support of the MDGs. The Assembly also expressed its appreciation for the scaling-up of efforts by the UN system to support Africa's development agenda through such initiatives as the UN Ten-Year capacity building programme in support of the AU and its NEPAD programme.

FIRST AFRICAN WATER WEEK: The First African Water Week took place from 26-28 March 2008, in Tunis, Tunisia, and convened under the theme of "Accelerating Water Security for the Socio-Economic Development of Africa." The meeting's three objectives were to: provide a forum for key actors in Africa's water sector to discuss the opportunities and challenges

of achieving water security for Africa's socio-economic development; take stock of the status of the achievement of the MDGs and related targets on water in Africa; and make recommendations for consideration by the 2008 AU and G8 summits, and the Fifth World Water Forum in 2009. Participants agreed on two key outputs: the "Summary of Proceedings and Outcomes" and the "Ministerial Declaration on Accelerating Water Security for Africa's Socioeconomic Development", which reflects the specific commitments that ministers agreed to act on.

JOINT ANNUAL MEETINGS: The first Session of the AU Conference of Ministers of Economy and Finance and the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) Conference of Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development took place from 31 March to 2 April 2008 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The Ministerial Conference was preceded by a technical preparatory meeting of the Committee of Experts held from 26-29 March 2008. The Joint Annual Meeting, which also marked the ECA's 50th anniversary, convened under the theme "Meeting Africa's New Challenges in the 21st Century." Ministers adopted a ministerial statement reaffirming their commitment to resolutions on financing for development, climate change, research and development, and endorsed the ECA's proposed strategic framework for the 2010-2011 biennium. In the Statement, Ministers noted with concern that the majority of African countries are not on track to meeting all the MDGs by the target date, and committed to intensify implementation of national development plans or poverty reduction strategies, optimize the use of available resources and mobilize additional resources to scale-up public sector investments, in order to reach the MDGs by the target date.

ELEVENTH AFRICAN UNION SUMMIT: This summit took place from 24 June to 1 July 2008 in Sharm El-Sheik, Egypt, under the theme "Meeting the MDGs on Water and Sanitation." The AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government agreed on 19 decisions, including on: HIV and AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria maternal, infant and child health, and development. They also agreed on two declarations: the Sharm El-Sheikh Commitments for Accelerating the Achievement of Water and Sanitation Goals in Africa; and Responding to the Challenges of High Food Prices and Agriculture Development.

ECOSOC HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT 2008: The High-Level Segment of the 2008 UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Substantive Session was held from 30 June to 3 July 2008 at UN Headquarters in New York, USA. It consisted of four elements: a high-level policy dialogue on the state of the world economy and its implications for the achievement of the UN development agenda; the first Development Cooperation Forum; the second Annual Ministerial Review; and a thematic debate on integrated approaches to rural development. It concluded with the adoption of a ministerial declaration entitled "Implementing the Internationally Agreed Goals and Commitments in regard to Sustainable Development." The declaration notes that multiple challenges, including financial instability and uncertainty, slowing global economic growth, rising food and fuel prices, as well as the impacts of environmental degradation and climate change, require early concerted action, and highlights concern about "the negative impacts of these risks on sustained economic growth and sustainable development, particularly in developing countries."

DAILY MEETING COVERAGE, SUMMARY REPORT AND INFORMATION PORTAL

The *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* will be providing daily web coverage of these meetings and related events at <http://www.iisd.ca/yimb/africa-mdgs/>. A full summary will be available on Sunday, 27 September 2008.

IISD's Reporting Service's African Regional Coverage Project has established a dedicated information portal to report on issues related to the High-Level Event and Africa's development agenda. Please access this at: <http://www.iisd.ca/africa/hladn/>.