



HUMAN RIGHTS PERSPECTIVES ON THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

CONFERENCE REPORT

NOVEMBER 11, 2003

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INTRODUCTION

The MDGs and the NYU Center for Human Rights and Global Justice

The Millennium Development Goals, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2000, intersect at many points with the international human rights framework. For this reason the Center for Human Rights and Global Justice (CHRGJ) at NYU School of Law has decided to explore the relationship between human rights and the MDGs. This report, and the Conference on which it is based, are contributions to that important ongoing debate.

The CHRGJ was established in 2002 with the purpose of producing a comprehensive body of scholarship on the theoretical underpinnings of human rights as well as sophisticated legal analyses of human rights challenges in a globalized environment. The Center is led by Philip Alston, its Faculty Director, Smita Narula, its Executive Director, and Margaret Satterthwaite, its Research Director.

The Center's emphasis on human rights in the context of 'global justice' is designed to highlight two fundamentally important, but nevertheless all too often neglected, dimensions of the human rights equation.

The first is that the concept of internationally recognized human rights, whether embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Human Rights Covenants, the Helsinki (OSCE) Accords, or the Inter-American or European human rights systems, includes not only civil and political rights but also economic, social and cultural rights. Women's human rights, the relationship between human rights and poverty, and many other essential components of the twenty-first century debate over human rights cannot be understood in any meaningful sense if this dimension is downplayed or air-brushed out of the picture.

The second dimension concerns the link between issues of globalization and the emerging international economic order on the one hand and respect for all human rights on the other. This serves to highlight the centrality of a range of issues which need to be examined far more systematically than they so far have been from a human rights perspective. They include, for example, gender and human rights, the many issues surrounding the concept of transitional justice, the human rights responsibilities of multinational corporations, the utility of private codes of conduct in ensuring that private actors respect human rights, the feasibility of minimum or 'core' international labor standards and of the types of 'social clauses' that have been proposed in the WTO context, the role of non-state actors ranging from 'terrorist' or liberation groups to the international financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

The conference summed up in this report, “Human Rights Perspectives on the Millennium Development Goals,” was held at NYU School of Law on November 11, 2003. The lively discussions about the relationship between human rights and the Millennium Development Goals that took place during the conference exemplify the Center’s commitment to advancing cutting-edge thinking and research on human rights issues. The conference is characteristic of the many activities the Center is carrying out with the purpose of appropriately contextualizing human rights in the broader landscape of political, legal, economic, and anthropological debates over rights.

The Millennium Development Goals and the Millennium Project

During the United Nations Millennium Summit held in September 2000, world leaders placed development at the heart of the global agenda by adopting the Millennium Declaration and a set of accompanying Millennium Development Goals (“MDGs” or “Goals”), which set clear targets for reducing poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, environmental degradation, and discrimination against women by 2015.¹ The Millennium Project was established with the task of devising a recommended plan of implementation that will allow all developing countries to meet the MDGs.

The Millennium Project's research has focused so far on identifying the operational priorities, organizational means of implementation, and financing structures necessary to achieve the MDGs. These endeavors must be supplemented by close attention to the ways in which human rights work and efforts to achieve the MDGs can be harmonized. This conference was aimed at catalyzing this important work.

¹ The Millennium Development Goals are included in this report as Annex One. *See also* <http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/html/about.shtm> .

PANEL ONE

HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE MDGs: AN OVERVIEW OF THE LINKS/CONNECTIONS

Philip Alston, as a Member of the Millennium Project's Task Force 1, introduced the panelists and moderated the opening session.

Professor Philip Alston began the conference by emphasizing the importance for the human rights community of understanding the connections and interdependence between the MDGs and the broader human rights agenda. He called upon human rights groups to actively involve themselves in supporting the MDG exercise. Professor Alston also underlined the importance of persuading the development community that mainstreaming human rights into the MDG process was necessary.

He reminded the participants that a discussion of the linkages between the MDGs and human rights is not only timely but also critical in furthering work on the MDGs. In the course of the next few months a number of major reports will be issued which seek to identify and operationalize the steps required to make the MDGs a reality. It is essential that they reflect the human rights dimension of the issues and that human rights groups feel comfortable supporting the major efforts that will be made at both the national and international levels to ensure that these goals are met.

One indicator that the various communities are prepared to do the work required to make the connections real could be found in the wide attendance at the seminar by relevant actors from the governmental, non-governmental, and inter-governmental arenas.

Mary Robinson, Executive Director, Ethical Globalization Initiative; former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights; Former President of Ireland

Mary Robinson opened the debate by emphasizing the organic linkage between the MDGs and human rights, embodied particularly in the Millennium Declaration² which

² The UN Millennium Declaration, UN Doc.A/RES/55/2 (2000); *World Leaders Adopt 'United Nations Millennium Declaration' at Conclusion of Extraordinary Three-Day Summit*, reprinted in, G.A.

includes – in addition to the eight MDGs – six commitments for promoting human rights, democracy and good governance. Through the Declaration, governments commit to respect and fully uphold the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, to strengthen the capacity of all countries to implement the practices of democracy and human rights, to implement CEDAW, to ensure respect and protection for the rights of migrant workers and families, to work collectively for more inclusive political processes allowing genuine participation by all citizens in all countries, and to ensure freedom of the media and public access to information.³

Mrs. Robinson expressed concern that even if the MDGs reflect many parts of the human rights agenda (including the rights to food, education, health, decent living standards, etc.) most of the strategies to achieve the MDGs currently operate in a predominantly economic and still incipient human rights framework. She felt that the Goals need to be solidly embedded in a human rights framework. In this context, it was encouraging to see that the Human Development Report for 2003⁴ included a detailed analysis of the value-added of the human rights framework in achieving the Goals, and of the multiple connections between the MDGs, human development and human rights.⁵

Mrs. Robinson expressed some of the criticisms made by human rights and grassroots activists concerning the MDGs. In her opinion, one way to meet some of these criticisms would be to emphasize the equal importance of the Millennium Declaration alongside the MDGs. This approach was strongly supported by the Asia-Pacific Civil Society Forum in its Statement on the Millennium Development Goals and the Eradication of Extreme Poverty.⁶

This statement crystallized the concerns and recommendations of NGOs from 14 countries in the Asia-Pacific region, affirming that: “the MDGs sideline the more critical and important issue of human rights. Certain norms and standards are particularly pertinent in addressing the problem of poverty, such as effective non-discrimination, the recognition of vulnerable groups, the right to an adequate standard of living, the right to be free from hunger, the right to economic self-determination and the right to development.”⁷ The Declaration recommended that: “the Committee should affirm and

Press Release, UN Doc. GA/9758 (8 September 2000) available at http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/html/doc_lib.shtm

³ *Id.*

⁴ See UNDP, HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORT 2003: MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS: A COMPACT AMONG NATIONS TO END HUMAN POVERTY 3 (2003), available at www.undp.org/hdr2003.

⁵ Mrs. Robinson noted that these connections were reaffirmed in the context of the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, where the NGO participants acted under the motto: “No sustainable development without human rights,” as well as in the more recent report of the Commission on Human Security, which links human rights and development with human security. See <http://www.humansecurity-chs.org/>

⁶ Statement of the Asia-Pacific Civil Society Forum on Millennium Development Goals and the Eradication of Extreme Poverty and Hunger, 6-8 October 2003, Bangkok, Thailand, facilitated by ECAP and hosted by FOCUS. The Statement is included as Annex Three to this Report.

⁷ *Id.*

operationalize rights based approaches to poverty eradication.” The Statement criticized the concept of poverty as formulated by the MDGs as too narrowly construed, noting that durable and sustainable solutions to poverty will require the active involvement of the poor and civil society, in addition to an adequate measurement of poverty and a commitment to tackling the roots of poverty. The Declaration urges the international community “to take into consideration political, social, cultural and human rights dimensions, determined by factors like class, gender, race, geography and ethnicity. This broader definition is necessary in designing more sensitive and responsive policies and programs on poverty.”⁸ The guidelines and recommendations proposed conceive the MDGs not as a policy prescription externally imposed but as an inclusive process.⁹

The most important political message is that it is essential to examine the MDGs from the human rights perspective and to acknowledge that they may be too narrow, leaving out important issues and being limited by numeric indicators that purport to assess the achievement of greater dignity and quality of life.

A recent report commissioned by UNICEF on child poverty in developing countries¹⁰ might be a useful example of a human rights-based approach. The study measured child poverty on the basis of the non-fulfillment of basic human rights and demonstrated how far we are from ensuring the rights of children around the world: over a billion children – more than half of all children in developing countries – suffer from severe deprivation of at least one basic human right, and over a third of children in developing countries suffer from absolute poverty, which means they suffer two or more severe deprivations.

In addition to the lack of human rights analysis, Mrs. Robinson noted that another possible limitation of the MDGs is that they can be met more easily by improving only the situation of those who are already better off. This approach would comply with the letter of achieving the MDGs, but it would not embody their spirit.

Once all these limitations are recognized there is no question that the MDGs can be a useful tool in mobilizing all stakeholders towards the eradication of poverty, which is a major obstacle to the development of human rights, not only in developing countries but also in rich countries. However, in order to be effective, global goals must be country-owned and people-centered.

If poverty eradication is to be carried out using a true human rights approach, a broad definition of poverty is required. There are a number of possible definitions to be used,

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ “At macro level, decision of poverty reduction policy and project must seek the consultation of the civil society and organization of the poor prior to the implementation. The consultation and selection of participation process must be transparent and accountable. At micro level, poverty reduction project must seek the majority endorsement of the poor of the affected areas prior to approval of the indicators if these processes should be reflected in annual assessments.” *Id.*

¹⁰ See David Gordon & Peter Townsend, “Child Poverty in the Developing World” (paper commissioned by UNICEF), October 21, 2003. Available at http://www.unicef.org/media/media_15082.html.

including the one proposed by the 1997 Human Development Report:¹¹ “the denial of opportunities and choices most basic to human development – to lead a long, healthy, creative life and to enjoy a decent standard of living, freedom, dignity, self-esteem and the respect of others.”¹²

To conclude, Mrs. Robinson emphasized the need to focus on the human rights approach by highlighting the need for empowerment, particularly the empowerment of women. In this context, Mrs. Robinson referred to Chapter 4 of the 2000 Human Development Report,¹³ which links civil and political rights with empowering people to achieve their economic and social rights. Mrs. Robinson referred to Amartya Sen’s study¹⁴ linking famine with non-democratic governance and underlined the importance of the strategic use of civil and political rights and legal instruments in empowering poor people locally. The 2003 Human Development Report¹⁵ includes good language on women’s capabilities and agency as a key to achieving the MDGs and these findings are supported by a 1995 study by Amartya Sen and Jean Drèze¹⁶ on the impact of women’s education and access to ownership rights for the well being of the household.

The human rights approach to poverty reduction should focus on vulnerable groups: women bearing a disproportionate burden of poverty, children, older people, indigenous people, refugees and internally displaced persons. All these categories are more vulnerable to the consequences of disasters and conflicts, their access to services is limited because of poverty, and they are more exposed to correlative health risks.

A human rights approach to the MDGs should also include socially responsible and gender-responsive budgeting. Empowering vulnerable groups would mean that these groups could demand responsible social budgeting rather than charity.

In conclusion, if we have a strong sense of what a human rights-based approach to MDGs means, the human rights community can show that the human rights framework

¹¹ UNDP, 1997 HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORT: HUMAN DEVELOPMENT TO ERADICATE POVERTY 5 (1997). Available at <http://hdr.undp.org/reports/global/1997/en/>

¹² A similar definition of poverty proposed by Mrs. Robinson was drawn from the UN Statement of commitment of the Administrative Committee on Coordination for action to eradicate poverty: “poverty is a denial of choices and opportunities, a violation of human dignity. It means lack of basic capacity to participate effectively in society. It means not having enough to feed and clothe a family, not having a school or a clinic to go to, not having the land on which to grow one’s food or a job to earn one’s living, not having access to credit. It means insecurity, powerlessness and exclusion of individuals, households and communities. It means susceptibility to violence, and it often implies living on marginal and fragile environments, without access to clean water and sanitation.” UN Doc. E/1998/73, at para. 3. See also AMARTYA SEN, “Poverty as Capability Deprivation,” in DEVELOPMENT AS FREEDOM (1999).

¹³ See UNDP, *Rights Empowering People in the Fight Against Poverty*, in HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORT 2000: HUMAN RIGHTS AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT (2000). Available at <http://hdr.undp.org/reports/global/2000/en/>

¹⁴ AMARTYA SEN, POVERTY AND FAMINES: AN ESSAY ON ENTITLEMENT AND DEPRIVATION (1981).

¹⁵ See UNDP, *supra* note 4, at 86-87. Available at www.undp.org/hdr2003.

¹⁶ AMARTYA SEN AND JEAN DRÈZE, INDIA: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL OPPORTUNITY, 1995.

is essential to achieving the MDGs. Equally, taking the MDGs seriously will advance the human rights agenda, particularly economic and social rights.

Professor Jeffrey D. Sachs, Director, The Earth Institute at Columbia University; Special Advisor to the UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan on the MDGs

Professor Jeffrey Sachs affirmed his belief that achieving the MDGs would be revolutionary, and that the human rights community has a critical role to play in this process.

Professor Sachs stressed that while he understood the doubts and skepticism of the human rights community in relation to the MDGs process, this phenomenon was similar to the misguided divide between environmentalists and the development community. Both schisms are results of specific misunderstandings. The human rights community's reluctance to endorse the MDGs were partially justified by the sense of disempowerment felt in relation to international institutions and the fact that the MDGs were seen as a part of the "business-as-usual" of the international financial institutions. Though it is possible for the MDGs to become "owned" by the international financial institutions, it is not how they emerged and it is not what they really are.

Professor Sachs discussed why it is not useful to focus on whether the MDGs are compatible or not with the human rights framework. While the human rights agenda is much broader than the MDGs, the poverty agenda is not only a human rights issue. Human rights and poverty reduction are in fact intersecting though distinct endeavors: not everything about poverty reduction can be resolved through a human rights approach or through empowerment, inclusion or voice. Instead, poverty reduction entails technical, economic issues, and analytical questions about how to organize economic institutions. Though all these mechanisms are distinct from the human rights agenda, there is a significant overlap of the two powerful communities and there are common objectives, such as the substantive content of access to food and healthcare, which are simultaneously substantive economic and social rights and at the core of the MDGs.

The convergence of the two sets of concerns extends beyond the simple definitional overlap. Human rights are instrumentally critical in ensuring empowerment, voice, access to social services, and equality before the law, and are therefore essential in achieving poverty reduction. At the same time, overcoming poverty is absolutely critical in securing civil and political rights, economic and social rights, and human security. When Paul Farmer speaks about structural violence against the poor,¹⁷ he is talking about the fact that when people are extremely poor it is hard for them to achieve

¹⁷ Paul Farmer, *On Suffering and Structural Violence: Social and Economic Rights in the Global Era*, in *PATHOLOGIES OF POWER: HEALTH, HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE NEW WAR ON THE POOR* (2003). See also PAUL FARMER, MARGARET CONNORS, JANIE SIMMONS (EDS.) *WOMEN, POVERTY AND AIDS: SEX, DRUGS AND STRUCTURAL VIOLENCE* (1996).

and secure human rights in their non-economic dimensions as well. There is a tight link that goes in both directions: human rights support poverty reduction goals and poverty reduction supports the non-economic dimension of human rights.

The MDGs are a list of goals excerpted from the Millennium Declaration. The fact that the MDGs are not all-inclusive goals is not a reason to attack them. Their existence does not mean that other goals are not important or that parallel agendas are to be neglected. It means only that the MDGs are issues to be taken seriously. Reducing poverty, reducing hunger, providing universal education, reducing infant and child mortality, controlling AIDS, TB and malaria, alleviating slum conditions, or helping to achieve environmental sustainability are not less important because they are not explicitly human rights. MDGs are not a comprehensive set of objectives of human society but a set of targets that relate to extreme poverty and to what the world has pledged to do about them.

Professor Sachs explained that we should care about the MDGs because the MDGs give us some leverage to achieve progress. Since international goals are temporary and most of them end up as empty promises, a shared declaration of 189 countries can be used to actually do something. Thus, the first task is to not let the MDGs disappear under the waterline alongside so many other unfulfilled commitments and promises. The first struggle is for recognition that the world has committed itself to some specific targets and that achieving them would change the lives of hundreds of millions of people, as well as the world we live in.

Professor Sachs expressed his concern that the promises of the MDGs – that by 2015 poverty will be cut by half, hunger will be cut by half, children will be in schools, AIDS, TB and malaria will be under control, etc. – are mere promises since not enough is happening right now to achieve them. He emphasized that it is the mandate of the Millennium Project to try to add substance to empty promises and, in this context, the phrasing of the MDGs is irrelevant.

Professor Sachs objected to single factor explanations and simplistic approaches and underlined that the answer to the question of what would make the MDGs achievable is multi-faceted. The solution would not be available through the human rights approach only, nor through economic or market reforms only. What is required is synergy as a strategy – using several types of approaches and operating in a mutually supportive way. This synergy is fundamental for our ability to act; although empowerment and inclusion are vital, almost no poor country can achieve the MDGs on its own.

An important feature of this discussion is the need for financial transfers from rich countries to poor countries in order to enable poor countries to achieve the goals. In Tanzania, Ghana, Chad or Malawi, for example, the issue is not the way government budgets are allocated – the real question is one of extreme impoverishment on a national scale, which results in a real inability to provide for minimum needs (paved roads, liquid petroleum gas, anti-retroviral drugs, anti-malaria bed nets, etc.). It is not a matter of distribution within the countries themselves but of meager budgets and of a lack of resources to allocate. It is indeed paradoxical and ironic that the IMF and the World

Bank repeatedly call on such States to reorganize their internal finances in order to achieve development-related goals. These countries do not need reallocation of their money; they instead need an infusion of money from abroad.

The focus here should be on the international struggle, the promises not kept by the rich countries. In paragraph 42 of the Monterrey consensus,¹⁸ rich countries that had not already done so promised to take concrete steps to meet the international target of giving 0.7% of their GNP in development assistance. The US is at one seventh of that commitment and it is about to send to Iraq in aid and reconstruction twice the overall development assistance budget: \$20 billion is allocated for reconstruction in Iraq this year and only \$10 billion is allocated for the rest of the world.

The MDGs provide us with the chance to grab onto something real, as standards and reminders of the promises and responsibilities to which rich countries agreed. These goals are similar to human rights standards, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other human rights documents which should serve as guidance in the process. Human rights are and should be instruments for the empowerment of the MDG agenda.

In addressing the two-way linkages between human rights and poverty reduction, we should look at the human rights role in poverty reduction. First, the focus should be on the substantive human rights dimension. The rights to health, education, freedom from hunger, etc., are real rights enshrined in important globally-accepted documents. This is where the legal counsel of the human rights community is required: to establish the content of these rights, to demonstrate the required level of commitment, and to articulate the types of enforcement available in relation to these rights. Second, we have to assess the role of human rights within all countries in achieving the alleviation of extreme material deprivation. The role of women and the denial of the access to rights embedded within certain social norms – in households, access to property, or access to work – are important aspects of this process of poverty reduction. The transformation of society, for example, has women's rights as mothers at its very center. When mothers are disempowered, change doesn't take place; when mothers are empowered societies can transform dramatically for the better in almost any dimension of development. This is where the links between human rights and poverty reduction are made.

These links imply that poverty reduction will improve economic and social rights, but it can also be argued that poverty reduction will tremendously improve civil and political rights. Reduced poverty means improved voice, improved political access, empowerment, greater stability of fragile democracies, and less probability of violence and civil conflict. These are also direct links, and we should view poverty reduction as empowering people in many aspects of their lives, including the improvement of their economic and social rights.

¹⁸ See Report of the International Conference on Financing for Development, Monterrey, Mexico, 18-22 March, 2002. UN Doc. A/CONF.198/A1 (2002). Available at <http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/aconf198-11.pdf>

To conclude, Professor Sachs raised the question which was the theme of the meeting: how can we use the human rights approaches and machinery (legal standards, norms, codes, agreements, international and local institutions) to push for a shared agenda that will be equally beneficial to the MDGs and to the enjoyment of human rights?

Philip Alston, Professor of Law, NYU School of Law, and Special Advisor on the MDGs to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

Professor Philip Alston stated that the MDGs present a range of challenges for the human rights community but declared his strong belief that the process has an enormous amount to offer. He acknowledged that there were a number of strong criticisms of both the content of the MDGs and of the process by which they had been elaborated. Some of the strongest of these criticisms had come from the NGOs gathered together at the Asia-Pacific Civil Society Forum. But for Professor Alston, the challenge for the human rights community should not be whether to engage in the MDGs process or not, but rather how that process could be made human rights-compatible and thus be an important tool in the struggle to achieve much neglected economic and social rights.

At first glance, the links between the MDGs and economic and social rights are unmistakable, and they therefore seem to present a golden opportunity. Not only is there major overlap in terms of the content of the goals and of commitments contained in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights but there is also a very strong political commitment on the part of some governments to achieving the MDGs. In terms of appealing to public opinion and changing global priorities there is an immense moral capital inherent in the MDGs. Most importantly – and perhaps uniquely among international goals – the MDGs are feasible. The MDGs are also very closely linked to various other developments which are prominent on the international agenda (especially the PRSP – Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers process – developed by the World Bank and the IMF and increasingly strongly supported by bilateral donors and other international institutions) and with the ‘Rights-based Approach to Development’ which is being promoted by a range of UN and other international agencies.

Given this apparent complementarity, the question is: why have human rights groups not engaged with the MDGs so far? There are two major exceptions: gender focused groups and minority rights groups have done significant work in emphasizing that human rights ought to be an important part of the MDG exercise. The arguments for mainstream human rights groups not to engage in the process of promoting the MDGs can be summed up in eight points:¹⁹

¹⁹ In addition to the Statement of the Asia-Pacific Civil Society Forum on Millennium Development Goals and the Eradication of Extreme Poverty and Hunger, reproduced in Annex Three to this Report, see Thomas Pogge, "Global Justice and the First UN Millennium Development Goal," available at <http://www.etikk.no/globaljustice/>.

- (1) The MDGs sideline human rights because they do not contain any particular focus on rights;
- (2) MDGs are superfluous because the adoption of the alternative framework of a rights-based approach to development would take care of all of the issues;
- (3) The MDG definition of poverty is too narrow, and its emphasis on specified goals takes poverty out of its broader context;
- (4) The process is top-down and has not come from the grassroots up – it is, in effect, an imposition by governments acting through the UN General Assembly;
- (5) The MDGs do not provide for any in-depth analytical review of progress achieved or of shortcomings;
- (6) The MDGs represent a one-size-fits-all prescription, and are not tailored to the specific needs of individual countries;
- (7) The MDGs are offensive from a human rights perspective because of their selectivity, their exclusion of certain rights, and their preparedness to settle for half measures (e.g. halving poverty, instead of eliminating it); and
- (8) The MDGs process will be used by governments and donors to distract attention from the real human rights issues.

In seeking to explore the negativity shown by some within the human rights community Professor Alston suggested a number of factors were at work. First, a preference for the known rather than the unknown militated in favor of an insistence on the comfortable human rights framework as having all of the answers. Second, what human rights groups do best is to critique and there is often a reluctance to put forward alternative constructive proposals. Third, most human rights groups have not traditionally engaged effectively with economic issues, and the MDGs are seen to involve technical economic issues. Fourth, there is an ideological aversion on the part of many groups to any policies and approaches which seem to be being championed by the IMF and the World Bank. He emphasized, however, that these factors did not make it unnecessary to respond to the MDGs' critics. On the contrary, they highlighted the importance of sustained debate and critical reflection.

The starting points in addressing these issues are, according to Professor Alston, an approach premised on the need for engagement by the human rights community, and one based on the assumption that a judicious blend of elements from the human rights framework, the PRSP context, and the MDGs offers immense potential over the longer term.

The Millennium Project itself is extremely important, since it offers a channel through which human rights groups can promote their own goals and can develop their critiques of the ways in which the MDGs are interpreted and applied.

The main challenge for the human rights community is to abandon the human rights comfort zone, that somewhat circumscribed legal and political area in which they feel comfortable operating, and move into less familiar territory in dialogue with non-traditional partners. Mainstreaming human rights means taking risks, engaging with others, and acknowledging that the resources of human rights groups are limited and that the institutional arrangements within which they have traditionally worked are inadequate on their own to achieve the human rights agenda.

The way forward is first to insist that the MDGs do not and cannot exist in isolation. They must be seen as a part of the broader human rights strategy. At the same time, they do not subsume or threaten the broader human rights agenda.

Furthermore, Professor Alston suggested that those working on the MDGs must acknowledge a part of the critique: the MDGs are not sufficiently infused with a civil and political rights perspective and they must be located more directly in a human rights framework. Most importantly, some of the concepts of participation and accountability, used in the MDG context, must be given their human rights meaning. Accountability, for example, which is too often reduced to technocratic dimensions, should instead be understood in its true human rights sense. Accountability would then concern the responsibility of individual governments toward their people and the responsibility of all governments toward the international community in meeting their human rights and MDG commitments. Both commitments should be equally emphasized.

In this process, human rights need to be called by their own name. This has not been the case so far. It would make a major difference for the Report of the Task Force Three on primary education and gender equality²⁰ to state that access to education is an acknowledged right and that its infringement constitutes a clear violation of what governments are legally obligated to do.

The MDGs thus can be seen as ends and not only as means. Highlighting the gender dimensions of meeting the MDG goals is indispensable to the success of the enterprise, and here too human rights standards and actors can make a central contribution. Fortunately, the very valuable work done in this context already should ensure that a highly gender conscious set of proposals will emerge from the Millennium Project, as illustrated by the remarks made earlier on this issue by both Mary Robinson and Jeffrey Sachs.

Human rights implementation and monitoring frameworks must be mobilized in relation to the MDGs. In this way, engagement does not involve necessarily compromising the human rights enterprise. Indeed, the human rights framework offers a set of monitoring and accountability mechanisms which are unparalleled. Though they

²⁰ See Millennium Project Task Force Three on Primary Education and Gender Equality, "Background Paper on Achieving Universal Primary Education by 2015," available at <http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/documents/tf03edapr18.pdf>.

are not perfect and are not fully utilized, human rights mechanisms could fill in the gap and help in monitoring the MDGs. If the MDGs can be inserted in appropriate ways into the human rights monitoring framework, there is much to be gained on both sides: the human rights framework – which tends to operate in isolation – will be linking itself to a major impetus within the international community, which has immense financial potential and a high level of formal commitment. Conversely, the rewards are equally great on the side of the MDGs because of the longstanding reluctance of governments to accept that development goals can usefully be monitored in order to ensure that they are taken seriously and that failure to address them adequately will be highlighted.

Question & Answer Session

The panel was followed by a question and answer session during which the participants had the opportunity to emphasize the significance of the discussion for the UN and the international development community. They also focused on the importance of the conference in establishing a bridge between the human rights and development communities. Several participants also underlined the need to reflect human rights standards in poverty reduction strategies and in correlative processes through grassroots participation. Speakers also noted that the modality chosen to achieve the MDGs is equally important as achieving the goals.

Several of the speakers emphasized the link between the MDGs and women's rights and expressed their concern that gender issues might be boxed into one limited development-driven goal, and that some of the goals from the Beijing Platform for Action and the Cairo Platform would be set aside.

PANEL TWO

CAN A HUMAN RIGHTS FRAMEWORK HELP IN ACHIEVING THE MDGs?

Margaret Satterthwaite, Research Director, Center for Human Rights and Global Justice, New York University School of Law, introduced the panelists and moderated the panel

Salil Shetty, Director, UN Millennium Development Goals Campaign and former Chief Executive, ActionAid

Salil Shetty opened his speech by linking the subject of the meeting with the UN Millennium Campaign, which was set up to help create conditions to hold national governments accountable to the Millennium pledges through national campaigns. He commended the opportunities generated by the debate to clarify the conceptual questions and create new allies in the MDGs movement. To the question “can a human rights framework help in achieving development or human development?” Mr. Shetty answered positively.

The MDGs are a derivative of the Millennium Declaration of September 2000, which spells out the following values: freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, respect for nature, and shared responsibility. They are a clarion call of 189 governments, on behalf of their citizens, to “free our fellow men, women and children from the abject and dehumanizing conditions of extreme poverty, to which more than a billion of them are currently subjected. We are committed to making the right to development a reality for everyone and to freeing the entire human race from want.”²¹ The UN Secretary General’s Road Map²² towards implementation of the UN Millennium Declaration goes even further in saying that human rights should be at the center of peace, security and development programs.

So the MDGs are fundamentally located within a human rights framework. Human rights provide the normative basis for the MDGs. In applying a human rights framework, the MDGs as a political commitment become strengthened by a set of legally binding norms. Moreover, a human rights framework ensures that the MDGs, which are outcomes, are achieved through a process that respects the values, standards

²¹ Millennium Declaration. See *supra* note 2.

²² See UN Secretary-General, *Road Map Towards the Implementation of the UN Millennium Development Declaration: Report of the Secretary-General*, UN Doc. A/56/326 (2001). Available at <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/docs/56/a56326.pdf>.

and principles outlined in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and in the international covenants.

Mr. Shetty argued that the MDGs are unique because for the first time they represent a compact between the so-called developed and developing countries, and the Bretton Woods Institutions and the WTO, towards a shared responsibility. The goals are inter-linked and achievable – but only if there is the necessary political will and the willingness to be held accountable – and they offer a minimum threshold level of transparent and measurable outcomes, targets and indicators, rendering themselves open to independent monitoring.

The implementation unit for the MDGs is the nation state, with the necessary support from international actors. As the minimum outcomes are already agreed in the form of the MDGs, the debate shifts from what we are trying to achieve and whether or not it should be done to what does this mean for each particular country and how do we help achieve these goals, what does it take, should we aim even higher, over what time frame, who is responsible, how do we hold governments to account, and so forth. The goals are nationally adapted; heterodox development models and policies are generated to achieve the goals; and they are owned and driven by the people of the country as active citizens in an open and participatory manner.

The concepts of shared responsibility, indivisibility, non-discrimination, equality, and accountability are all human rights concepts and without these basic concepts, the MDGs lose their teeth and become another set of lofty statements of intent. The MDGs are powered by the legitimacy and value-base of human rights as they help operationalize the right to development.

The human rights underpinning of the MDGs help remind us that poverty is multi-dimensional and that development is about freedom in a very holistic sense: freedom from misery and suffering, from hunger, from illiteracy, from disease, from poor housing and insecurity. The absence of respect, dignity and choice is what poverty is all about. The human rights framework of the MDGs helps us remember that we are talking not of welfare or charity, but of rights and entitlements, based on the recognition of the structural and underlying causes of poverty. Injustice and discrimination of one kind or the other are increasingly seen as key determinants of poverty, and it is not by coincidence that the very same determinants account for most human rights abuses.

For no other group of people does the existence and fair application of rule of law and human rights matter more than for poor and marginalized people, and they are the same people for whom the achievement of MDGs matter the most. There is no doubt that without a human rights framework, achieving – and even more importantly, sustaining – the MDGs would not be possible.

When examining how a human rights framework can help achieve the MDGs, we have to remember that the MDGs are not legally enforceable. This is in fact the *raison d'être* of the Millennium Campaign: to create the necessary conditions for creative political and moral pressure. The inspiration for this approach comes from several recent examples

at the national and international levels. One example is the “Basic Needs are Basic Rights” campaign in Kenya, which worked with the media and key political actors to push for basic rights to be included in the framing of the new Constitution and managed in this way to make primary education free of charge. Another example is the Right to Food Campaign in India, which filed a public interest petition alleging that food grain stocks lying in government warehouses should be made available through the public distribution system; the Indian Supreme Court directed all State Governments to introduce cooked mid-day meals in primary schools within six months of the order.

Women’s movements are the first to have realized and used the power of converting their demands into rights. The legal provisions followed the popular framing of the issues in a rights discourse. This happened in the case of children’s rights and is beginning to take shape in the case of people living with HIV/AIDS. And the process is essentially of identifying and monitoring the duty bearers and empowering the claim holders – none of which would have been possible if a minimum level of civil and political rights were not available.

Hence, the potential is enormous and the relationship between human rights and the MDGs is an interdependent and mutually reinforcing one. But for the potential to be realized, human rights and development actors – who have traditionally worked in parallel – will have to come together to work much more closely, using each other’s power and language. This is beginning to happen: Oxfam Great Britain and Amnesty International are running the first joint campaign on small arms. As national MDGs reports get published, there is significant scope to treat them as alternative reports to the governmental reports submitted to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. MDGs indicators could be reframed in the national context. For example, the impact of women’s access to credit could be looked at in terms of increased incomes as well as in terms of their participation in the political process and the elimination of domestic violence. The human rights framework could influence budgeting and resource allocation processes for MDGs. We could work much more closely with the Special Rapporteurs and the Treaty Bodies to look at the intimate links between human rights and the MDGs.

At the national level, there is also increasing scope for legal challenges. Many developed countries are beginning to implement laws concerning international cooperation. International institutions are increasingly legally accountable to their member governments. The Committee on Economic and Social Rights General Comment on international technical assistance measures²³ and much of the work done by the Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights is commendable.

²³ See Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, General Comment 2: International technical assistance measures (Art.22 of the Covenant) (Fourth session, 1990), reprinted in COMPILATION OF GENERAL COMMENTS AND GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS ADOPTED BY HUMAN RIGHTS TREATY BODIES, UN Doc. HRI\GEN\1\Rev.6 at 11 (2003).

The link between human rights and MDGs is not a preference, but an absolute necessity, particularly as the human rights space in the recent period in many parts of the world has been narrowing.

Lynn Freedman, Associate Professor of Clinical Population & Family Health and Director, Law and Policy Project, Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University; Member, Millennium Project Task Force 4 on Child Health and Maternal Health

As a member of Task Force 4 of the Millennium Project, Professor Lynn Freedman returned to some of the questions discussed in the first panel and channeled the discussion forward by talking about the concrete challenges presented to the Millennium Project and the MDG campaign.

Professor Freedman focused on MDG 5: “improve maternal health.” Referring to the critiques of previous speakers, she described MDG 5 as the classical, much too narrow goal. Moreover, its single target, to reduce maternal mortality by three-fourths by 2015, is measured by two indicators, neither of which is sufficient in assessing progress toward the target or the goal:

- 1) maternal mortality ratio, and
- 2) proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel.

So Task Force 4 has used human rights to recast the MDGs and fill out the content of the goal, its targets and assigned indicators. This approach stems from the basic understanding of health as not only biological, but also fundamentally determined by social, economic and political factors.

Professor Freedman proposed several ways of using human rights to recast the MDGs, particularly in the context of MDG 5. First, she looked at the features of maternal health and concluded that this notion necessarily includes human rights dimensions. For example, the concept of reproductive health has been defined to encompass not only access to health care and information, but also other rights-based dimensions such as the ability to make choices free from violence, coercion, and discrimination. Although a separate goal on reproductive health was dropped from the final list of MDGs, reproductive health is critical to both maternal health and child health, and it must therefore be central to the interpretation of and strategies for meeting MDGs 4 and 5.

Second, as the goal was initially written with no concept of equality included, the Task Force read the concepts of equity and equality back into the substance of the goal as inequity itself is a major threat in access to the highest attainable standard of health.

Third, the processes of disease must be put into the context of health systems. When speaking about health systems, the Task Force looks at more than buildings, supplies

and people, instead seeing the health system as a dynamic entity which can neglect and abuse but which can also be the context for people and communities interacting with the government, asserting claims of entitlement, thus enhancing participation, transparency and constructive accountability.

Other ways that human rights relate to MDG strategies can be demonstrated with the example of maternal mortality reduction. Maternal mortality takes the lives of more than half a million women per year and 95% of these women are in Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia. Fifteen years ago the world committed itself to reducing maternal mortality with the launch of the Safe Motherhood Initiative. Yet, to this day, the statistics on maternal mortality remain virtually unchanged. One critical reason why there has been so little progress in reducing maternal mortality is because the health community developed laundry lists of actions needed to reduce maternal mortality but did not prioritize these actions. Yet not all interventions are equal. If the standard of progressive realization is to be applied to government actions to reduce maternal mortality, then it should not be enough to show simply that the intervention chosen is rationally related to the goal. Professor Freedman argued that the obligation of progressive realization requires a stricter standard.

Maternal mortality will not decrease in a significant way until there is a functional health system that provides emergency obstetric care and women have access to that system. Consequently, the core issue is insisting on the health system as the key location for intervention. This means that the health systems around the world that have been decimated because of failing economies, effects of globalization and international policies, must be recuperated.

Professor Freedman proposed that the notion of progressive realization be used within the MDG framework to force countries and the international community to immediately take the most important actions to meet the goals. She asserted that given the history of neglect of maternal mortality and the context of weakening health systems, there is a need to use this notion to insist that all interventions are not equal. We must use the idea of progressive realization to identify and press for the right policies that will lead to achievement of the MDGs.

Question & Answer Session

The question and answer session following the panel focused on the politicization of the MDGs. Some suggested that the MDGs could be usefully politicized for effective implementation, and that the obligation of progressive realization could be used effectively to press for the right to health.

PANEL THREE

CAN THE MDGs HELP IN ACHIEVING HUMAN RIGHTS GOALS?

Smita Narula, Executive Director, Center for Human Rights and Global Justice, introduced the panelists and moderated the panel

Paul Hunt, UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Health and Member of the Human Rights Centre, University of Essex

Professor Paul Hunt took as the theme of his presentation the question of what human rights – and more particularly, the right to health – can bring to the MDGs. He began by commenting on the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the right to health. The Resolution of the Commission on Human Rights²⁴ that established the mandate for the Special Rapporteur tasked him with helping States, and other actors, to promote and protect the right to health. Under this mandate, the Special Rapporteur took up three objectives: 1) to enhance the currency of the right to health as a fundamental right; 2) to clarify the contours and content of the right to health; and 3) to find ways of operationalizing the right to health.

Professor Hunt emphasized two themes in his first report to the Commission: poverty and the right to health, and discrimination and the right to health.²⁵ This was a choice determined by a number of factors, including the MDGs. In that report, he pointed to the interventions he wanted to undertake so far as his resources permit: to assess a selection of the Millennium Development Goals Reports and poverty reduction strategies papers through the prism of the right to health; to examine the work of the WTO in the context of right to health; to consider the issue of impact assessments; to focus on neglected diseases; to inquire into the role of health professionals; and to analyze mental health issues.²⁶

The main thrust of the Special Rapporteur's first report to the General Assembly²⁷ was to explain the difficult issue of right to health indicators. Following his mission to the

²⁴ See Commission on Human Rights Resolution 2002/31, UN Doc. E/CN.4/2003/58.

²⁵ See UN Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, Preliminary Report. UN Doc. E/CN.4/2003/58.

²⁶ *Id.*

²⁷ See UN Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, Report to the General Assembly, UN Doc. E/CN.4/2003/56. Available at

WTO, the Special Rapporteur is preparing a report on trade and the right to health and he anticipates that the MDGs will feature in this report. His next report to the Commission on Human Rights will focus on sexual and reproductive health and will also refer to the MDGs.

Professor Hunt next spoke about a court-based approach, which depends upon justiciability, as one road to fulfilling the right to health. He emphasized that there are other approaches, including the policy-based approach, which is epitomized by engagement with the MDGs and the poverty reduction strategies processes. If human rights are to be relevant we have to be able to engage in these major debates and acknowledge the need for new skills and new approaches. In this context, the new challenges include how to shape policies and deal with progressive realization; how to identify and utilize right to health indicators and benchmarks; how to face up to prioritization while observing the interdependence, universality and inalienability of human rights; determining a minimum essential level for the right to health; and identifying new accountability mechanisms and mechanisms for the participation of the poor in decision-making processes.

Professor Hunt underlined the congruence between the MDGs and the right to health: 4 of the 8 MDGs are health-related, 8 out of 16 MDG targets are health-related, 17 out of 40 MDG indicators are health-related. The challenge is to integrate the right to health into the MDGs. Still, Professor Hunt warned against overstating what human rights and the right to health can bring to the MDGs. The integration of the right to health into MDGs would not represent a radical new departure but, for the most part, reinforce and enhance some of the existing features of the MDG processes. The right to health highlights the importance of: non-discrimination and equality and so the need for disaggregated data, participation and the development of health systems not just vertical interventions, accountability (broadly understood, not just in its narrow sense of judicial accountability), and the human rights concept of international assistance and cooperation which resonates with MDG 8. The right to health also makes explicit some crucial elements, in particular sexual and reproductive rights, which are implicit in the MDGs.

Human rights methodologies demand rigor in policy making processes, including in the MDGs. Crucially, human rights can help to achieve the MDGs by inserting and insisting on effective, transparent and accessible mechanisms of accountability. A special rapporteur mechanism is an embryonic form of international accountability - albeit feeble, fragile and flawed - and Professor Hunt confirmed that, so far as his resources allow, he hopes to monitor the health-related MDGs through the prism of the right to health. A key issue here is one of capacity: the policy approach takes time, skills, care, detailed analysis, creative thinking, listening to the development community and effective integration of human rights in the MDGs. There is a pressing need therefore to ensure that human rights accountability mechanisms have the capacity to engage, in a well-informed and professional manner, in the MDG processes.

Rory Mungoven, Global Advocacy Director, Human Rights Watch

Rory Mungoven emphasized that it was important for human rights activists to focus on the MDGs. He proposed the metaphor of the Trojan horse: the question is how to inject rights thinking into a range of policies and processes from which human rights are currently excluded.

Secondly, the question is how we can use the MDGs to leverage resources and pursue accountability at the national and international level with respect to developing countries, as well as donors, financial institutions and the international development community.

The degree to which the human rights groups have failed to do this is not a question of ideology but of ignorance and the absence of human rights activists during the Millennium Summit is proof.

When asked how the MDGs could help human rights activism, Mr. Mungoven answered by underlining the utility and instrumentality of the MDGs as a powerful new form of accountability and leverage. The Monterrey consensus on financing for development²⁸ includes this accountability side, as do the debt relief arrangements and the poverty reduction strategies. These were the foundation stones of a new kind of approach, and are all based on the MDGs. It is only a short step to extend that argument beyond the MDGs to the treaty obligations inherent in the MDGs, which have a more binding legal character than the merely aspirational goals. We can use the MDGs as a platform for the human rights argument that debt relief, poverty reduction strategies, structural adjustment loans, and development assistance programming must be conducted in line with human rights obligations.

The human rights framework offers a new dimension of accountability to the MDGs process beyond the MDG reporting process before the General Assembly. By working with the MDGs – as the Special Rapporteur on the right to health exemplifies – this process can give a new role to the treaty bodies and to the human rights system more broadly. This is also an opportunity to bridge that gap – the huge disconnect within governments – and to engage in more dialogue and human rights discourse.

As for the methodological questions about what the human rights community brings to the process, there are a variety of methods that might be applied to this new environment. Human rights can also bring an institutional focus, and this may be the missing development goal. While the discussions of the MDGs are limited to economic policies and service delivery, the human rights approach can bring a focus on the institutional and legal arrangements necessary to fulfill the goals, ensure that there is no retrogression, and guarantee that these strategies reach the poorest of the poor. The missing goal, MDG 9, can be phrased from a universal perspective as Access to Justice. This is a missing element but also a theme that runs through all of the MDGs.

²⁸ See *supra* note 18. Available at <http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/aconf198-11.pdf>

Question & Answer Session

The comments following the panel focused on the distinction between the first seven goals as outcome goals and MDG 8, which is a “means” MDG. The first seven MDGs are targets restating human rights guarantees. Achieving them would serve human rights, but there is no way to achieve them without achieving MDG 8. Economic and social rights obligations rest with the governments of States but if in the case of poor countries we leave the responsibility solely in the hands of those governments, MDG 8 will not be achieved. The innovation would be to provide resources under MDG 8 to accomplish these goals.

The focus on MDG 8 – developing a global partnership for development – brings the emphasis back to the need for a transfer of resources guided by human rights. In response to the question of whether the transfer of resources itself could be seen through the human rights framework, Professor Hunt suggested that it is appropriate to speak about some form of international legal responsibility to engage in international assistance and cooperation. This is why international assistance and cooperation should not be just about the transfer of resources, and there should be more importance attached to pointing out where powerful countries can change things in the international system without incurring major costs but instead by supporting the efforts of developing countries.

ANNEX ONE

THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Accurate as of 23 October 2003²⁹

Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

Target 1: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day

Indicator 1. Proportion of population below \$1 per day (PPP values)

Indicator 2. Poverty gap ratio at \$1 a day [incidence x depth of poverty]

Indicator 3. Share of poorest quintile in national consumption

Target 2: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger

Indicator 4. Prevalence of underweight children under five years of age

Indicator 5. Proportion of population below minimum level of dietary energy consumption

Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education

Target 3: Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling

Indicator 6. Net enrolment ratio in primary education

Indicator 7. Proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reach grade 5

Indicator 8. Literacy rate of 15-24 year olds

Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women

Target 4: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and to all levels of education no later than 2015

Indicator 9. Ratios of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education

Indicator 10. Ratio of literate females to males 15-24 years old

Indicator 11. Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector

Indicator 12. Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament

²⁹ Available at http://unstats.un.org/unsd/mi/mi_goals.asp

Goal 4: Reduce child mortality

Target 5: Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate

Indicator 13. Under-five mortality rate

Indicator 14. Infant mortality rate

Indicator 15. Proportion of 1-year-old children immunised against measles

Goal 5: Improve maternal health

Target 6: Reduce by three-quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio

Indicator 16. Maternal mortality ratio

Indicator 17. Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel

Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases

Target 7: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS

Indicator 18. HIV prevalence among 15-24-year-old pregnant women

Indicator 19. Condom use rate of the contraceptive prevalence rate

19a. Condom use at last high-risk sex

19b. Percentage of populations aged 15-24 with comprehensive correct knowledge of HIV/AIDS

Indicator 20. Ratio of school attendance of orphans to school attendance of non-orphans aged 10-14

Target 8: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases

Indicator 21. Prevalence and death rates associated with malaria

Indicator 22. Proportion of population in malaria risk areas using effective malaria prevention and treatment measures

Indicator 23. Prevalence and death rates associated with tuberculosis

Indicator 24. Proportion of tuberculosis cases detected and cured under DOTS (Directly Observed Treatment Short Course)

Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability

Target 9: Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources

Indicator 25. Proportion of land area covered by forest

Indicator 26. Ratio of area protected to maintain biological diversity to surface area

Indicator 27. Energy use (kilogram oil equivalent) per \$1 GDP (PPP)

Indicator 28. Carbon dioxide emissions (per capita) and consumption of ozone depleting CFCs (ODP tons)

Indicator 29. Proportion of population using solid fuels

Target 10: Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water

Indicator 30. Proportion of population with sustainable access to an improved water source, urban and rural

Indicator 31. Proportion of urban population with access to improved sanitation

Target 11: By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers

Indicator 32. Proportion of households with access to secure tenure

Goal 8: Develop a Global Partnership for Development

Some of the indicators listed below will be monitored separately for the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Africa, landlocked countries and small island developing States.

Target 12: Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system [Includes a commitment to good governance, development, and poverty reduction – both nationally and internationally]

Target 13: Address the Special Needs of the Least Developed Countries

[Includes: tariff and quota free access for LDC exports; enhanced programme of debt relief for HIPC and cancellation of official bilateral debt; and more generous ODA for countries committed to poverty reduction]

Target 14: Address the Special Needs of landlocked countries and small island developing States (through the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and the outcome of the 22nd special session of the General Assembly)

Target 15: Deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries through national and international measures in order to make debt sustainable in the long term

Official Development Assistance

Indicator 33. Net ODA, total and to LDCs, as percentage of OECD/DAC donors' GNI

Indicator 34. Proportion of total bilateral, sector-allocable ODA of OECD/DAC donors to basic social services (basic education, primary health care, nutrition, safe water and sanitation)

Indicator 35. Proportion of bilateral ODA of OECD/DAC donors that is untied

Indicator 36. ODA received in landlocked countries as proportion of their GNIs

Indicator 37. ODA received in small island developing States as proportion of their GNIs

Market Access

Indicator 38. Proportion of total developed country imports (by value and excluding arms) from developing countries and from LDCs, admitted free of duties

Indicator 39. Average tariffs imposed by developed countries on agricultural products and textiles and clothing from developing countries

Indicator 40. Agricultural support estimate for OECD countries as percentage of their GDP

Indicator 41. Proportion of ODA provided to help build trade capacity

Debt Sustainability

Indicator 42. Total number of countries that have reached their HIPC decision points and number that have reached their HIPC completion points (cumulative)

Indicator 43. Debt relief committed under HIPC initiative, US\$

Indicator 44. Debt service as a percentage of exports of goods and services

Target 16: In co-operation with developing countries, develop and implement strategies for decent and productive work for youth

Indicator 45. Unemployment rate of 15-to-24-year-olds, each sex and total

Target 17: In co-operation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable, essential drugs in developing countries

Indicator 46. Proportion of population with access to affordable essential drugs on a sustainable basis

Target 18: In co-operation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications

Indicator 47. Telephone lines and cellular subscribers per 100 population

Indicator 48. Personal computers in use per 100 population and Internet users per 100 population

ANNEX TWO

SELECTED RESOURCES ON THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Millennium Project, www.unmillenniumproject.org (including Task Force background papers)

Overseas Development Institute, "The Millennium Development Goals and the Use of Targets in Development Policy," available at <http://www.odi.org.uk/mdg/index.html>

UN CESCR & UN Special Rapporteurs, "The Millennium Development Goals and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights: A Joint Statement by the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the UN Commission on Human Rights' Special Rapporteurs on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights" (29 November 2002), available at <http://www.unhchr.ch/housing/MDG.doc>

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UN Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality, the OECD/DAC Network on Gender Equality, and the Multilateral Development Bank Working Group on Gender, "The Millennium Development Goals and Gender," <http://www.mdgender.net/>

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ANNEX THREE

STATEMENT OF THE ASIA-PACIFIC CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM ON THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND THE ERADICATION OF EXTREME POVERTY AND HUNGER

We the representatives of non-government and people's organisations, gathered here in Bangkok from 14 countries in the Asia-Pacific region, for the Asia-Pacific Civil Society Forum, 6-8 October 2003 to give inputs into the inaugural meeting of the Committee on Poverty Reduction.

We have the following concerns and recommendations to make:

The MDG sidelines the more critical and important issue of human rights. Certain norms and standards are particularly pertinent in addressing the problem of poverty, such as effective non-discrimination, the recognition of vulnerable groups, the right to an adequate standard of living, the right to be free from hunger, the right to economic self-determination and the right to development. The Committee should affirm and operationalise rights based approaches to poverty eradication. Civil society organisations have already adopted this approach in their fight against poverty.

The MDG itself formulates the problem of poverty too narrowly in term of vision, scope and direction. It is not simply just a numerical target to be achieved by a certain date and by technical fixes. Durable and sustainable solutions to poverty will require the active involvement of the poor and civil society, a more comprehensive understanding of the root causes of poverty and its multidimensional and diverse consequences and the right policies.

In this respect, the practice of measuring poverty in terms of income and consumption levels is inadequate. We urge the Committee to take into consideration political, social, cultural and human rights dimensions, determined by factors like class, gender, race, geography and ethnicity. This broader definition is necessary in designing more sensitive and responsive policies and programs on poverty. We have offered a preliminary conceptualisation of this in our working paper.

In order for participation to be meaningful and genuine, responsibilities and roles in the fight against poverty should not be defined for civil society and the poor. The current process of formulating and implementing poverty reduction policies has not been successfully tackling the roots of poverty. This is due to the fact that the poor

themselves are excluded in the whole process. We recommend the following principle guidelines to be adopted by UNESCAP and every individual government in the Asia-Pacific region. At macro level, decision of poverty reduction policy and project must seek the consultation of the civil society and organization of the poor prior to the implementation. The consultation and selection of participation process must be transparent and accountable. At microlevel, poverty reduction project must seek the majority endorsement of the poor of the affected areas prior to approval.

The indicators of these processes should be reflected in the annual assessments. The MDG does not provide an in-depth analytical review of policy reform and institutional change. Hence, to link the MDGs with a particular set of policy prescriptions would be the wrong approach, no matter which policies are prescribed, precisely because there is no single correct policy for all societies and circumstances. In this respect, externally imposed one-size-fits-all policies such as the way the current PRSP initiative of the World Bank and the IMF is being practiced is to be rejected. We demand that the Committee and UNESCAP actively involve and recognise the poor as rightful participants in any formulation of poverty eradication strategies and policies. Successful development efforts require appropriate policies at domestic, regional and international levels. However, the international economic structure is inequitable and currently antagonistic to the achievement of the MDGs themselves. The committee should urgently address the ramifications of globalisation and to facilitate the formulation of the necessary reforms.

Attention and financial resources are diverted away from the priorities of directly addressing poverty and hunger and instead allocated to debt servicing and military spending. There is an urgent need to re-orient government expenditure. The Committee should identify clearly the resources needed for governments in implementing poverty eradication policies and programs. Moreover, given the multidimensional aspects of poverty, the Committee must also consider the implementation of conscientious poverty-budgeting in all aspects of government expenditure. Finally, sufficient resources should also be identified and channelled to facilitate the participation of civil society and the poor.

We challenge the Committee to adopt a more comprehensive understanding of Poverty and hunger and intensify its work towards poverty eradication urgently.

Signed by: The Asia-Pacific Civil Society Forum, 6-8 October 2003

ANNEX FOUR

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