



**Remarks**

**by**

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**President of the 68<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations**

**General Assembly**

**New York**

**25 September 2013**

**Special Event towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals**

*Please check against delivery*

Honourable Heads of State and Government,  
Ministers,  
Excellencies,  
Secretary-General,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning and welcome to this Special Event towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals – the MDGs.

Thirteen (13) years ago, we adopted a set of eight (8) time-bound and measurable goals- the MDGs – for combating poverty, hunger, illiteracy, gender inequality, disease and environmental degradation. We are here today in this our General Assembly to renew our commitment to our globally agreed upon goals that support the right to development for all peoples and our striving for a world free of want and fear.

Three (3) years ago we agreed to hold this meeting to, among other things, provide us with a unique opportunity to look critically at the progress we have made, to identify gaps and barriers that have impeded progress, and to begin charting a sustainable development path for our shared post-2015 future.

Many minds, voices and hands have played a significant role in the long lead-up to today, and I would like to recognize all of these efforts. But particularly, I want to pay tribute to often forgotten voices throughout the world – hundreds of thousands of them – who have shared their stories, concerns, expectations and priorities with the global development community at all levels about the world they want for themselves. We must not forget the stakeholders who cannot be in the room today and to them I say, we in the Assembly of Nations are renewing our commitment to implement the MDGs in an effective, equitable and transparent manner.

Excellencies,  
Distinguished Guests,

In its nearly 70-year history, the United Nations has seen a number of memorable and transformative moments – moments that have not only defined this organization but have

may shifted the course of world history. Today, we will discuss two, one created at the dawn of our millennium and one still to come.

The adoption of the MDGs in 2000 signalled a landmark shift in how the world approached development, putting the poorest and most vulnerable at the heart of the global development agenda. The goals ignited a sense of hope and possibility that common solutions can be found to the major challenges facing humanity, such as the HIV/AIDS pandemic, which was rapidly spreading at the time.

We are here today to acknowledge and pay tribute to unprecedented development progress, which in large part is due to the MDG momentum and concerted efforts at the global, national, regional and local levels.

At the global level, significant efforts have been made to reduce poverty and hunger. In spite of the enormous challenges and burdens imposed on developing countries by the global financial and economic crises, the proportion of people living on less than \$1.25 a day fell by more than a half during the last two decades. The target of halving the percentage of people suffering from hunger is now within reach.

We can also proudly say that, despite challenges, the improved water target was met ahead of schedule and that expanded treatment and prevention have saved millions from HIV infections and AIDS-related deaths, as well as from deaths due to malaria and tuberculosis. In fact, making new HIV infections a relic of the past is, for the first time, an achievable reality. These undeniable successes are a direct result of unprecedented and longstanding partnerships among governments from the North and the South, the private sector and the civil society.

While much has been done, much remains undone or to be done. There are many areas where this is the case.

To say our work remains unfinished is an understatement; progress has been uneven and the statistics alone are intolerable. More than 1.3 billion people still live in extreme poverty. Two-and-a-half billion people lack access to decent sanitation and one billion practice open defecation, which is a continued source of ill health. And while women and girls are seen as

the key drivers of development, the scourge of gender violence and discrimination continues to oppress and diminish the promise of better life for many across the globe.

Meanwhile the scale and magnitude of the linkages between socio-economic crises and environmental challenges has dramatically increased during the last decades. Environmental degradation, the loss of valuable biodiversity resources, and the overwhelming impacts of the adverse impacts of climate change on the poorest and the most marginalized are proving too hard to grapple with for so many developing countries.

With less than 850 days left to the MDG target date, we must do everything possible to accelerate action and get the job done by 2015. Fulfilling our existing commitments must be our foremost priority. Urgently implementing the global partnership for development is not only a moral obligation, but will also put us in the best possible starting point for agreeing on what comes next.

This brings me to the next milestone – the transformative and perhaps historic moment yet to come.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we prepare to begin work on the post-2015 development agenda, the international community is embarking on a process with the potential for global transformation. We are working towards a framework that will address pressing global problems such as climate change and biodiversity loss, conflicts, population demographics, inequality and job insecurity.

This new agenda must not only tackle the unfinished business of the MDGs, it must go further – leading to a great overhaul in how we approach the planet and its people. On many levels, for many people, the new agenda's composition will be a matter of survival.

Over a year ago, at Rio+20 we agreed to begin a process of defining Sustainable Development Goals that are coherent with and integrated into the Post 2015 development agenda. We also decided to establish a committee of experts on sustainable development

finance to enlighten us on the means of implementation. The inaugural meeting of the High Level Political Forum yesterday was an important step in that direction, as is our meeting today.

Today we will agree to hold a United Nations Summit in 2015 to adopt the post 2015 development agenda. We will endorse an initial roadmap to guide our work between now and 2015. Your roundtable discussions here today will provide critical ideas on how to define the goals and the framework we plan to adopt in a mere 18 months.

As President of the General Assembly, I will do everything in my authority to assist Member States in defining their priorities by organizing a series of multistakeholder consultations on key elements of a post-2015 development agenda.

I expect these consultations, and other preparations, to be open and inclusive. Yet at the same time, ultimately, it is up to UN Member States to adopt a new universal development agenda, with goals and means of implementation to guide us toward a world free of poverty, supported by healthy ecosystems.

As we proceed, I look forward to hearing about the concrete steps that you are taking to accelerate achievement of the MDGs, and your ideas about how to define a post-2015 development agenda

Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are about to undertake an endeavour that will define the development trajectory of future generations. Our common goal must be an outcome of which we can be proud, that leaves a lasting legacy, and establishes norms and frameworks that improve human well-being and dignity. By committing to an ambitious unified and universal post-2015 development agenda, we can initiate a new dawn for development.

Let us not turn our backs on achieving the goals we have previously agreed to, but also be bold as we embark on this historic opportunity to define a new framework for development,

so those who come after us will say – what you leaders did in 2013 and beyond was wise yet bold.

Thank you.

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