

Accomplishing the MDGs Requires Real Commitment of Resources and Support for the Global South

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Nord-Sud XXI continues to express its steadfast support for the importance of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and its concern about the continuing indication that they will not be achieved in many of the poorest countries in the world and in relation to many of the most vulnerable people in the world.

Nord-Sud XXI continues to place special importance on the heightened attention given to the MDGs that are truly standards of achievement by which the United Nation's commitment to bring social justice to the world will be measured. We urge that the achievement of these standards be judged primarily on the basis of the situation of the most vulnerable people and how well the wealthiest nations live up to their obligation—a legal obligation—to cooperate with the developing countries of the global South to ensure that the MDGs are achieved.

Nord-Sud XXI welcomes the significant attention generated for MDGs 4 and 5, which require the lowering of children's and mothers' mortality. Indeed, children and the women who give birth to them are our common future and deserve to be prioritized. Despite the progress that has been made in recent years we regret that the distance between the poorest countries in the world, especially those in sub-Saharan Africa, and the most developed countries has widened. Nord-Sud XXI emphasizes, in the strongest terms possible, the moral and legal necessity of ensuring, with equal commitment and in light of the heightened historical responsibility of developed states, progress towards lowering children's and mothers' mortality in these most vulnerable countries. In this regard, we recognize that this is only possible through a holistic approach by which efforts are made to reverse past injustices which can encourage and assist poorer countries to develop to the level of the most developed countries in the world.

Nord-Sud XXI reiterates, as many governments and members of civil society have done, the need for the sufficient investment by developed countries for achieving the MDGs. We welcome the commitments by some states to provide enhanced resources, especially in areas related to poverty reduction and the reduction of women and children's mortality. We urge the international community to establish a mechanism to measure to what degree these promises are kept. The provision of adequate resources for achieving the MDGs is an obligation of all states, both in collaboration with the United Nations and separately. The legal obligation of cooperation is stated expressly in articles 55 and 56 of the Charter of the United Nations.

Nord-Sud XXI also recalls that almost a quarter century ago the UNGA declared that the right to development is "an inalienable human right by virtue of which every human person and all peoples are entitled to participate in, contribute to, and enjoy economic, social, cultural and political development, in

which all human rights and fundamental freedoms can be fully realized.” It is also a right of all states and a duty of states with the most substantial resources to contribute to the development of others with less resource. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and numerous regional human rights instruments commit state parties to ensuring economic, social, and cultural rights, including labor rights, the right to health, to education, and to an adequate standard of living, among others.

Nord-Sud XXI also recalls the commitments undertaken by states in the Monterrey Consensus, the Glenn Eagles Summit, and on several occasions since then, which remain unfulfilled, but which constitute authoritative interpretations of their legal obligations. The failure of a state to meet its commitments to finance development is evidence of that state’s failure to sufficiently respect its international legal obligation to cooperate to achieve development and respect for human rights.

In light of the above, Nord-Sud XXI offers the following recommendations:

1. That any monitoring of developing countries’ efforts to achieve the MDGs be accompanied by monitoring of the fulfilment of pledges of financing by developed countries in light of the heightened historical responsibility incumbent upon developed countries.
2. That a Task Force be established to review the consistency of policies and principles, good-practices and recommendations adopted by the High Level Dialog on Financing for Development for their consistency with international law, including international human rights law.
 - a. This Task Force could include at least five or seven experts drawn from states and civil society, including academic institutions with due attention for diverse geographical representation.
 - b. This Task Force could be based either in New York or Geneva (where the Human Rights Council of General Assembly is based) and hosted by a Permanent Mission on a rotating basis or by UNCTAD, UNDP or the ILO.
 - c. This Task Force should be tasked with both reviewing the work of High-Level Dialogue for its consistency with international law, especially international human rights law, as well as suggesting ways in which the law can be used to strengthen the work of the High-Level Dialogue.