



THE PRESIDENT  
OF THE  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

8 September 2010

Excellency,

I have the honour to refer to General Assembly resolution 64/184 of 21 December 2009 by which Member States decided to hold a *High-level Plenary Meeting* on the Millennium Development Goals. The same resolution calls for the organization of six interactive round-table sessions to be held in concurrence with the plenary meeting.

To this end, I am pleased to share six background notes for each of the roundtables to provide guidance for the discussions under the general themes elaborated in the resolution.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Ali' followed by a stylized surname.

Ali Abdussalam Treki  
President of the General Assembly

All Permanent Representatives and  
Permanent Observers to the United Nations

## BACKGROUND NOTE

### Roundtable 1: Poverty, Hunger and Gender Equality

The world is on track to halving extreme poverty. But major regional and national differences persist and the number of people going hungry has been rising. This increase, driven initially by the food and energy crises, has since been accentuated by the financial and economic crisis. A period of slower and negative economic growth followed, compounded by the impact of climate change.

#### **1. How can we better support and facilitate sustained and equitable growth, with appropriate structural change in countries?**

Pro-poor economic growth reduces hunger and poverty. In order to be effective, policies and increased investments must be targeted towards the productive sectors that provide livelihoods to the poor, such as agriculture. This encourages the creation of viable enterprises and decent jobs for the poor, while enabling them to extract greater value from the production chain. To do so, public and private sectors must work together and exploit their respective comparative advantages.

Existing livelihoods can be solidified and additional jobs created by complementary investments in infrastructure and sustainable agriculture, including forestry and fisheries. The growth of small and medium-sized enterprises and farms, the provision of technical training and the development of business skills can directly benefit women and youth in both rural and urban areas. An inclusive financial sector that improves access to financial services for small and medium-sized enterprises, as well as of poor people, women and youth, would help these enterprises succeed.

#### **2. How can we, through holistic community-led means, achieve the synergies of the MDGs?**

All MDGs are interlinked and holistic efforts accelerate progress across all the goals. Comprehensive approaches building on these synergies bring better results than stand-alone attempts: they are more cost-effective, catalyse local action, encourage targeted interventions, avoid one-size-fits-all policies and enhance national ownership. Three key components are necessary for the MDGs: well-functioning service delivery mechanisms; the identification and scaling up of good practices; and financing for focused investment in both private and public sectors. Civil society and community involvement are important for achieving each component and help create collective accountability towards the goals.

#### **3. How can international commitments support national efforts to ensure food security?**

Many poor countries are import-dependent on food which makes food security difficult to ensure, especially when international food prices rise. In many others, even if food stocks are sufficient, it may be a challenge to ensure access to adequate nutrition for poor and vulnerable people at all times. Each country needs to put in place policies and programs that address its own needs. International efforts, including those arising from South-South cooperation, must support and complement national efforts.

After decades of declining support to agriculture in developing countries, higher levels of food production requires increased investment (including more effective development assistance). Delivery on commitments such as those linked to the L'Aquila food security initiative and others should be speeded up; mechanisms should be put into place to ensure that they can effectively support country efforts for sustainable solutions. Such increased investment should go towards:

- Improving access to better seeds, fertilizer, equipment, small-scale irrigation, technical extension, post-harvest storage and processing, credit and markets among small-holder farmers and other such producers, especially women.

- National measures to improve agricultural production technologies and rural infrastructure. Along with helping link small farmers to domestic markets, policies should also enable countries to access international markets.
- Food security programmes which address issues of access to adequate and nutritious food and its proper utilization, in particular among the poor and vulnerable.

#### **4. How can we ensure that new and existing commitments, by all stakeholders, are adequately monitored and met?**

Countries and their development partners must build the capacity of their statistical systems, including for better collection and use of sex-disaggregated data. Better data and monitoring support the formulation of responsive policies and programmes, improve their implementation and ensure better accountability. Monitoring can highlight the lack of progress due to unmet commitments, insufficient resources or inadequate policies and thus signal the need for corrective action. By aligning delivery with commitments, it can enable more harmonised and effective aid flows.

An enhanced accountability mechanism between developed and developing countries, and between Governments and their citizens, would ensure that MDG commitments are honoured. Such a framework should consolidate global commitments, including those for poverty reduction, eradication of hunger and gender equality, link them to time-bound results and establish credible mechanisms for monitoring and enforcement.

#### **5. What institutional reforms and commitments are required to overcome gender inequality and the main obstacles to women's empowerment?**

Experience shows that expanding opportunities for women and girls and advancing their economic, political and legal empowerment have positive effects across all MDGs. Many countries have made progress along one or more dimension but in general women continue to face discrimination and inequities. Steps to address this problem include:

- Policies specifically targeted towards women as well as the systematic mainstreaming of a gender perspective into all sectors, including those relating to infrastructure and energy access.
- Strong institutional mechanisms □ such as quotas □- that include women in decision making should play a lead role across all areas of Government and catalyse effective cooperation and coordination among all stakeholders.
- Implementation of gender-sensitive laws, policies and programmes, and capacity for gender-sensitive planning, programming and budgeting need to be strengthened.
- Sex-disaggregated data and gender-sensitive indicators can help monitor progress and improve accountability.

Such strengthening is supported by international conventions and the Beijing Platform for Action.

#### **6. How can Governments be supported to expand social protection systems where they indicate this is a priority?**

The impact of crises on poor and vulnerable groups is exacerbated by the lack of adequate social protection systems in many countries. Establishing such systems, starting with a basic social protection floor, is an urgent priority to ensure that MDG gains are not reversed. These must extend to women, children and other especially vulnerable groups, who may otherwise be at risk of exclusion from social protection strategies. Such a floor promotes the transfer of essential goods and services to those in need during crises and fosters inclusive development. Rolling one out is feasible and fiscally affordable for most developing countries, but requires commitment and continuity and, for the poorest countries, well-tailored international technical and financial support.

## BACKGROUND NOTE

### Roundtable 2: Health and Education

Health and education are integral to the attainment of all the MDGs. Although significant progress has been made towards the attainment of the education and health-related MDGs, accelerated efforts are required if all targets are to be met by 2015.

#### **1. How do we enhance access to public health care?**

Ensuring that public health care systems deliver affordable, good quality services and respond to the needs of each community is necessary to achieve MDGs 4, 5 and 6. Strengthening health systems involves:

- Ensuring that the health system is well governed and regulated. Improving governance and stewardship including by seeking to ensure that the resources of local governments, civil society and the private sector contribute to the achievement of better health outcomes. An approach that puts the responsibility for health in all sectors and in all government agencies in order to address effectively the social determinants of health, including gender inequality, stigma and discrimination, poverty and unemployment. Setting priorities is a national responsibility.
- Maintaining and expanding infrastructure and services, especially in under-served areas such as rural areas or urban slums as well as for particularly vulnerable or marginalized populations. Attracting, training and retaining health workers is needed to address human resources gaps.
- Expanding access to health care services to ensure universal and equitable coverage, including through social protection and cash transfer programmes, and through reforms to extend health coverage to all. Enhancing the quality of the services delivered and tailoring them to the needs of specific groups to protect the health of communities and the right of everyone to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. Sponsoring a comprehensive approach to health maintenance and the treatment of disease, by fostering, for instance, a continuum of care from mothers to children.
- Sufficient allocation of domestic resources and donor assistance as well as innovative partnerships and sustained financing to scale-up successful interventions to strengthen health systems and to provide the technical support needed to train additional personnel and implement new technologies.

#### **2. What cost-effective key interventions in health are needed, especially to improve maternal health? How can national policies and international partnerships overcome the current institutional and resource constraints?**

Cost-effective interventions exist to achieve the health-related MDGs:

- Maternal health and accelerating the reduction of maternal mortality: ensuring skilled birth attendance and access to emergency obstetric care, expanding access to family planning and providing antenatal care and nutrition programmes to all pregnant women. The prevention and treatment of life-threatening infections, such as HIV, will also improve maternal health.
- Child mortality: immunization programmes, vitamin supplements, oral rehydration therapy, expanded access to safe water and sanitation, the mass distribution of insecticide-treated bed nets, mass drug administration for the prevention and treatment of neglected tropical diseases are all effective measures to reduce mortality among children and to improve health generally.
- Malaria, TB, HIV/AIDS: improving access to effective drug treatment for malaria and tuberculosis, promoting the prevention of HIV infection, voluntary testing for the disease and access to anti-retroviral therapy for people living with HIV/AIDS, and addressing stigma and discrimination.

Although effective interventions are known, obstacles remain. Ways to overcome these include:

- Partnerships with the private sector and non-governmental organizations and others, can reduce funding constraints and ensure that effective health interventions reach the communities with the greatest disease burdens, especially in conflict situations. Partnerships can also help in prioritizing specific regions or vulnerable and marginalized groups—such as the poor, rural populations, pregnant women and young people.
- A review of national policies can help ease institutional constraints, particularly those related to the expansion of access to health care and education. A national health policy and strategy can ensure complementarities between all the elements needed to improve health outcomes.

### **3. What are the best strategies to overcome institutional and resource deficiencies in achieving education for all?**

Persisting inequalities are a major barrier to the achievement of universal primary education. Considerable obstacles in accessing good quality education are faced by poor children, especially those living in rural areas, slums and areas affected by conflict or emerging from it, as well as child labourers, children with disabilities and children from indigenous and minority groups. Such groups are most affected by a shortage of trained teachers and the lack of adequate learning environments. Key barriers to girls' education, especially for rural girls, need to be removed and investment in girls' enrolment in and continued attendance at secondary school must be scaled up.

- Generating and maintaining a strong political commitment to universal education is crucial. The root causes of disparities and marginalization are usually unrelated to the education system. Measures that expand entitlements and promote social cohesion related to education should be considered. Completion and attendance rates need to be tracked.
- Policy measures with a proven track record include abolishing school fees, providing subsidies for other school costs, using cash transfers conditional on school attendance, improving the nutritional status of school-age children through school feeding programmes, as well as providing key health interventions at school.
- Making progress towards universal education requires more resources, more equitable allocation and effective use of existing resources especially for marginalized groups. More equitable spending and targeted strategies to make quality education available, accessible and affordable can go a long way in furthering progress towards universal primary education. Strengthening the capacity of non-governmental organizations to reach marginalized children, especially those living in remote areas or in areas affected by conflict, merits consideration.

### **4. How can we ensure that new and existing commitments, by all stakeholders, are adequately monitored and met?**

Slow progress towards achieving the MDGs is often due to unmet commitments, inadequate resources, lack of prioritization and a lack of recognition of rights and accountability. As a result, improvements in the lives of the poor have been slow and some hard-won gains are being eroded. Developing countries have committed to mobilizing and allocating more resources to health and education services.

In addition, it will be important to improve the quality, effectiveness and predictability of official development assistance. It is important to reduce the fragmentation of assistance, limit conditionalities and ensure that ODA supports national development strategies. Innovative financing mechanisms at the international level offer new opportunities to finance MDG-related investments. National-level capacity to track and report on progress, gaps and opportunities should be improved through adequate investment in the systems and institutions that generate, analyse and disseminate information on health and education outcomes. Better monitoring and disaggregation of data are vital for policy making, as well as for ensuring mutual accountability.

## BACKGROUND NOTE

### Roundtable 3: Promoting Sustainable Development

To reach all the Goals requires concerted effort within a more integrated and strategic framework based on a sustainable development approach. Sound and equitable management of the environment is integral to inclusive growth and evidence shows that investing in the environment is critical to expanding the opportunities for poor people to lift themselves out of poverty.

#### **1. What are the most cost-effective national policies to increase the availability of safe drinking water on a sustainable basis and to improve sanitation?**

A sustainable development approach incorporates environmental sustainability issues – such as increased access to basic services, including safe drinking water and sanitation, addressing biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation, slum rehabilitation, along with managing the natural resource base – into the design and implementation of coherent and effective national development strategies.

Achieving universal access to clean drinking water and sanitation is critical for reducing poverty and malnutrition, and realizing the gender and health-related MDGs. While notable progress has been made in increasing access to improved water sources, explicit efforts are needed to monitor water safety, accessibility, affordability and reliability (or continuity). Greater emphasis on sanitation is particularly urgent as access to sanitation is still far from being achieved in many countries.

The most effective national policies are those that catalyze, facilitate and support effective local action. Local management and community initiatives play a key role in ensuring and sustaining the success of enhancing water supply and sanitation services to poor communities. National strategies can prioritize sanitation and water coverage by, for instance, setting norms and targets, and locating them within the framework of integrated water resource management. Successful policies have focused on:

- Building local community arrangements and capacity for developing, maintaining and expanding new systems to ensure sustainability of the benefits.
- Mobilizing local leadership and participation of community women in local water management institutions as well as training local people in maintenance and repair.
- Establishing management committees or groups that manage water systems beyond the completion of projects, instituting user fee arrangements, as appropriate, to ensure financing for management, maintenance and repair.

#### **2. What are the most cost-effective ways of improving the welfare of slum-dwellers and of ensuring their access to basic services on a sustainable basis?**

Successful programmes include:

- Mobilizing key stakeholders - including local authorities, civil society, local communities and the private sector - to collaborate in the provision of services that both enhance the quality of life in the slums and create employment and business opportunities.
- Sound urban planning and making urban areas resilient to emergencies and disasters.
- Incorporating rural development strategies into the framework for improving slum dwellers' welfare can reduce pressures for rural-urban migration and address other rural-urban linkages.
- Ensuring participatory governance and community development. Compiling lessons learned and sharing for others to use. Ensuring the security of tenure and women's rights to land, property ownership and inheritance.

### **3. What institutions and reforms will protect biodiversity and forest cover?**

The target to reduce biodiversity loss by 2010 has not been met. Every year 7 million hectares of forest cover are being lost. The major drivers of biodiversity loss include over-consumption, population pressure, habitat loss, pollution and climate change. The International Year of Biodiversity (2010) and Forests (2011) as well as the establishment of post-2010 targets on biodiversity, provide valuable opportunities to re-invigorate efforts to address biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation.

Studies show that effective conservation can bring species back from the brink of extinction. Protected areas are widely recognized as cornerstones of biodiversity management and sustainable development. A comprehensive, effectively managed and ecologically representative global network of protected areas is crucial to reduce biodiversity loss. Successful strategies include:

- A national policy framework for sustainable development that strengthens participatory local governance and institutions capable of delivering conservation and poverty reduction benefits through capacity development efforts.
- Recognition of land and property rights, including the rights of indigenous peoples and of women to equal ownership and inheritance.
- Technical support and support for community management of forests and biodiversity.
- Financial incentives for conservation. Mobilization of international financial support for local conservation efforts. Focus on livelihoods, creating employment and nature-based enterprises
- Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD) is a promising mechanism to protect biodiversity and forest cover.

### **4. What international partnerships and resources are needed to support national efforts?**

National policies, existing technical capacities and financial resources will be insufficient for achieving the MDGs in the poorest countries. Actions needed include:

- The proportion of ODA dedicated to water and sanitation should be increased to cover both investment and operational costs to restore and sustain ecosystem goods and services in ways that drive rural growth, poverty reduction and improved resilience of populations.
- The effectiveness of such resources can be maximized through adequate and predictable financial support, a coherent policy framework and mechanisms to promote the transfer of skills, knowledge and technology. Partnerships can leverage mutual learning, including South-South learning, promote lessons learned from best practices, facilitate the adaptation of new technologies, encourage cost-effective methods, and enable broad stakeholder participation.

### **5. How can we ensure that new and existing commitments, by all stakeholders, are adequately monitored and met?**

- Establish robust monitoring frameworks to ensure the accountability of all partners. Accountability mechanisms at all levels can provide redress where rights are not met.
- Disaggregate data on access to clean water and sanitation by gender, rural/urban disparities, and upper and lower income quintiles.
- Strengthen governance at the national and local levels to ensure the durability of commitments made. Integrate policy approaches such as national sustainable development strategies to serve as both planning and monitoring frameworks.
- Strengthen institutional infrastructure to improve national capacity for implementation, delivery of services and strengthen national development management, and where appropriate establish indigenous structures for monitoring and evaluation of progress.

## BACKGROUND NOTE

### Roundtable 4: Emerging Issues

Progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals is threatened by a number of emerging issues, including climate change, the global financial and economic crisis, food security and armed conflict. Mitigating the adverse effects of these challenges presents an opportunity to design and deploy more coherent, inclusive, sustainable and equitable approaches to development.

#### **1. How should climate change mitigation and adaptation be incorporated into broader efforts to enhance sustainable development?**

Climate change poses an obstacle to the achievement of all the MDGs. Extreme weather events caused by climate change will particularly impact land productivity and water availability, undermining rural livelihoods, with a disproportionate impact on women and vulnerable populations. Climate change can also destroy fragile homesteads in coastal and mountainous areas, and it threatens the very existence of Small Island Developing States.

Mitigation and adaptation will require domestic policy change and resource allocation, together with major increases in international support. Actions include:

- Raising investment levels and channelling resources towards renewable energy and in developing resilience to climate impacts, as well as strengthening institutional capacities and delivering appropriate technological solutions to respond to climate change.
- Switching to low greenhouse gas emitting, high-growth is both necessary and feasible. Provide economic incentives to accelerate a transition to cleaner technologies, especially for low-income countries. Encourage and support approaches such as large-scale use of solar power or the restoration of heavily degraded or unused land.
- Partnerships for greater global and regional integration need to be broadened and strengthened.

The risk of natural disasters is increasing globally and is highly concentrated in middle- and low-income countries. Scientific evidence suggests that climate change is one driver of this trend. Accelerating progress towards the MDGs also depends in part on reducing the risk of natural disasters and increasing resilience to natural hazards in different development sectors.

Ensuring sufficient infrastructure investments in areas on which the poor depend for their livelihoods offers a way to achieve three objectives at once: providing financing for growth and full and productive employment, decreasing the cost of climate change adaptation, and increasing resilience to natural disasters.

#### **2. How should the international financial system and international economic governance be reformed to better support sustainable and equitable development?**

The global financial and economic crisis has undermined hard-won gains towards the MDGs and exacerbated shortfalls in progress. Although the response to the crisis has thus far prevented a deeper recession, the recovery remains fragile and uneven. A long-term solution will require a better coordinated and more comprehensive response that addresses the impact of the crisis on developing countries. Further consideration is needed on:

- Reform of the international financial system for improved regulatory oversight, higher buffer capital requirements for financial institutions, measures to deal with financial institutions deemed “too big to fail”, and reduced volatility in financial markets.



- New measures for debt relief and restructuring to assist countries facing severe financial distress resulting from the crisis.
- Reform of the global financial and economic architecture to better enable it to prevent and respond to emergencies, and to promote more sustainable and equitable development, driven by employment-intensive pro-poor growth.

### **3. What are the most effective measures to enhance food security?**

- A sustainable increase in agricultural output to address hunger and improve rural livelihoods.
- A significant scaling-up of investment to improve the capacities of small farmers, in particular women farmers, to expand the use of efficient water management technologies, to restore soil nutrients, increase access to stress-resistant plant varieties and improve market opportunities for small farmers.
- Social programmes that translate increased food availability into improved nutrition by ensuring that the most vulnerable and those most in need of nutritious food have access to it, including very young children.
- Cost-effective innovations need to be scaled-up, such as complementary and supplementary nutritious food items to address the specific needs of young children and the ill, including people living with HIV, and more diversified production of local nutritious foodstuffs.

### **4. How should the international community address new emerging issues that are intimately linked with the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, such as security and armed violence?**

Some of the most formidable challenges to progress towards the MDGs confront countries affected by armed violence, conflict (inter-State, civil and criminal) and the resulting breakdown of the rule of law, justice and security.

Address the causes of conflict:

- Identify the root causes of conflict and armed violence: including the underlying drivers, risk factors and tensions.
- Advance people-centred solutions: engage all stakeholders, empowering women and including underrepresented communities. Meaningful participation, non-discrimination and accountability can better address the root causes of poverty and conflict.
- Strengthen institutions that monitor and mitigate conflicts, crime and violence.

In post-conflict situations:

- Post-conflict and development strategies must be nationally owned.
- Strategies are needed that promote the rule of law, justice and security and human rights. Adhering to the fundamental norms and values of the Millennium Declaration, including human rights, gender equality and governance accelerates progress towards the achievement of all the MDGs
- Nurture democratic institutions and ensure institutions and policies are grounded in national and international human rights frameworks to strengthen engagement and accountability of all stakeholders.
- Ensure equal access to resources and opportunities, generate early economic recovery and rebuild capacities, while implementing policies that reduce the necessity of armed violence

## BACKGROUND NOTE

### Roundtable 5: Addressing the Special Needs of the Most Vulnerable

The most vulnerable countries and people risk being left behind in achieving the MDGs. Addressing the special needs of vulnerable communities and people will help protect their basic human rights and ensure that they benefit from progress made in attaining the MDGs. Special assistance is required to help the most vulnerable countries achieve more progress.

Vulnerable communities and peoples include those who are traditionally disadvantaged, marginalized or excluded based on geography, gender, age, disability, ethnicity and other vulnerabilities.<sup>1</sup> They are disproportionately among the poorest and are often victims of violence, exploitation, trafficking, discrimination and other abuses. Vulnerable countries include the least developed countries (LDCs), landlocked developing countries (LLDCs), some small island developing States (SIDS), countries emerging from conflict and those that are vulnerable to the recurrence of armed violence or to natural hazards

#### **1. What more should be done to address the special needs of the poorest countries?**

The exports of LDCs are still highly concentrated and remain exposed to the high volatility of international commodity markets and other external economic shocks. Official Development Assistance (ODA) to LDCs has not yet reached the target of between 0.15 and 0.20 per cent of Gross National Income (GNI) and has neglected productive sectors. Addressing the needs of the poorest countries involves:

- The speedy implementation of duty-free, quota-free access pledges for LDC exports which were agreed to at the WTO Ministerial Review in Hong Kong in 2005. Additional measures by donors to expand and implement the Enhanced Integrated Framework for LDCs to enhance their productive and export capacity, including the technical capacity necessary to meet the complex rules of origin.
- Priority attention to agricultural development and support to small farmers to improve access to seeds and fertilizers and to introduce more stress-resistant agricultural varieties.
- For landlocked LDCs, which have more difficulty in forging trade links with world markets because they depend on transit countries, access to transport networks, better infrastructure and trade facilitation are key for development.
- International community support for adaptation to and mitigation of climate change.

#### **2. What should be done to better identify and address the special needs of the most vulnerable countries, communities and people?**

The most vulnerable countries, particularly some of the SIDS, are highly susceptible to external shocks. While some countries have made notable progress towards meeting the MDGs, those gains have often been undermined by the adverse impacts of natural disasters, climate change and the recent food, fuel and global economic and financial crises. Additional support from the international community is necessary to improve vulnerable countries' ability to face such challenges. This could include strengthening their capacity to identify risks, to assess vulnerabilities and sources of resilience, particularly by improving national data and information systems and fostering monitoring and evaluation to inform policy-making.

The most vulnerable communities and peoples not only lack opportunities and resources to participate in decision-making processes but also are often invisible in national statistics and are therefore ignored by policy-makers. While access to social services has been expanding in many countries, the coverage remains uneven and often excludes the most vulnerable. Addressing the needs of vulnerable communities and people involves:

- Strengthening national capacity to identify the most vulnerable in order to address their needs and protect their rights. Establishing a social protection floor and increasing access to education and decent work.
- Implementing effective measures to combat all forms of discrimination and social exclusion.

### **3. What can be done to break the cycle of poverty, political and economic exclusion and civil violence?**

The intergenerational transmission of poverty and exclusion, armed violence, civil or criminal conflict, and the resulting breakdown of the rule of law, justice and security are major challenges to achieving the MDGs. Because marginalized groups suffer from multiple vulnerabilities, addressing the structural causes of chronic poverty and social exclusion in a holistic manner is important. This can be done by:

- Addressing the root causes of poverty, all forms of discrimination and exclusion, violence, civil or criminal conflict, especially because they are often inter-related.
- Removing existing social, economic and legal barriers to meeting the basic needs of the most vulnerable.
- Strengthening the institutions that promote justice, monitor the fulfilment of human rights and mitigate conflicts, crime and violence, and promoting citizen's participation. Increasing access of the most vulnerable people to information and to the justice system.

### **4. What is the developmental potential of humanitarian, disaster relief and peacebuilding efforts?**

The risk of natural and human-made disasters, which is higher in many middle- and low-income countries, can lead to social tensions, armed violence, civil unrest, polarisation and social disintegration. Reducing that risk and increasing societal resilience to potential hazards or sudden shocks can prevent backsliding in the achievement of the MDGs and accelerate progress.

- Post-conflict or disaster relief interventions that are inclusive and participatory, that address the specific needs of vulnerable communities and peoples, promote transparency and give voice and representation to underrepresented communities, will promote social inclusion and equitable outcomes.
- Risk reduction strategies that build resilience and improve the capacity of communities to face hazards or that promote the reduction of violence and conflict management can empower vulnerable communities and enhance outcomes.
- Developing an early warning system, pursuing early economic recovery after disasters or conflicts, supporting the development of democratic institutions, strengthening institutions of governance and re-engaging countries in the global architecture without undermining national ownership of development strategies are all measures that can contribute to reduce vulnerabilities and lay a sound foundation for development

### **5. How can we ensure that new and existing commitments, by all stakeholders, are adequately monitored and met?**

The challenge is to design and implement effective policies and institutional mechanisms to:

- Honour the accountability mechanism between developed and developing countries (as agreed in the 2003 Monterrey Consensus and the 2008 Accra Agenda for Action) and between Governments and their citizens regarding MDG commitments.
- Involve all relevant stakeholders in the formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation processes. This increases transparency, accountability and enhances the sense of ownership.

## BACKGROUND NOTE

### Roundtable 6: Widening and Strengthening Partnerships

Effective global partnerships are crucial to achieving the MDGs. They require the mutual accountability of all stakeholders – donor and developing country governments, non-governmental actors, the private sector and foundations. Additional progress is needed in all the components of MDG 8 as well as to address other emerging issues that have significant impact on progress in achieving all the Goals.

#### **1. How do we ensure that aid commitments are met and what else can be done to improve aid predictability?**

Increases in aid (Official Development Assistance) have had a significant impact on MDG achievement. However, current ODA targets are unlikely to be met as well as commitments made at international summits, including the 2005 Gleneagles G8 Summit. There is considerable scope for improving the distribution and allocation of existing ODA including faster progress on aid effectiveness as made under the Paris and Accra commitments.

- Donors and recipient countries could further develop and apply the concept of mutual accountability in accordance with the 2008 Accra Agenda for Action
- National aid policies and joint performance frameworks can greatly improve mutual accountability by engaging stakeholders in an ongoing dialogue, by assigning responsibilities and by making commitments on development targets and transparency more tangible.
- New commitments on ODA should specify how and when they are to be delivered, with clear timelines and targets; that debt relief and funds towards addressing climate change are additional to ODA; that aid is better aligned to country objectives; and that, if donors earmark aid, they define how such funds fit into their overall commitments.

#### **2. How do we ensure debt sustainability through enhanced international cooperation? What are the best ways to facilitate debt relief and debt workouts?**

Despite progress, several low- and middle-income countries with critically high debt ratios have not benefited from the Highly-Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) scheme and Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative (MDRI). The financial and economic crisis has also eroded some progress in achieving the MDGs and as a result, many developing countries have had to borrow both internally and externally, thus increasing public debt and reducing their ability to finance achievement of the MDGs.

- Creditors should consider extending debt relief to low- and middle-income countries that are experiencing debt difficulties. Where appropriate and feasible, new resources could be provided in the form of grants and other grant-like innovative sources of financing to assist Governments in reaching the MDGs without becoming overburdened with public debt.
- The HIPC Initiative should be extended in time and in coverage to include all low-income and lower-middle-income vulnerable countries. HIPC/MDRI debt relief can be increased or tailored to the specific circumstances of pre-completion-point countries that experience higher debt vulnerabilities.
- The United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions could convene an expert group to examine proposals for fairer and more equitable debt restructuring and other debt arrangements and to make recommendations on debt relief and debt restructuring.

#### **3. How do we ensure that the Doha Round of World Trade Organization trade negotiations realizes its development promise?**

Nearly nine years after the launch of the Doha Round, trade negotiations remain stalled. Calls are being made to conclude the Doha Round with a strong development focus, especially with regard to the Least Developed Countries (LDCs).

- Trade-distorting agricultural support should be reduced in order to increase the competitiveness of products exported by developing countries and to reduce the potentially harmful impacts of agricultural support on food security. Improve market access to agricultural and manufactured exports from developing countries and enhance special and differential treatment.
- Continued donor commitment to Aid for Trade is essential to improve the trading capacity of developing countries, especially to LDCs. Donor countries need to provide adequate trade-related assistance to mitigate the detrimental effects of trade reforms.

#### **4. How do we ensure easier and cheaper access to medicines and new agricultural and renewable energy technology?**

Many essential medicines are inaccessible to the poor in developing countries because their prices remain high. It is urgent for developing countries to strengthen their health systems and increase pharmaceutical expenditures, supported by ODA where necessary. Governments of developed countries can facilitate the export of more affordable medicines to developing countries. Governments of developing countries can facilitate the importation or, where the capacity exists, the production of generic versions of patented medicines taking advantage of exceptions provided in international trade agreements so as to increase the availability and reduce the prices of medicines.

Agriculture's contribution to economic growth and poverty reduction could be greatly increased through investments in agricultural technology research and infrastructure, coupled with policies to improve and sustain the productivity of smallholder farmers consistent with environmentally sustainable practices. The development and transfer of technologies for the mitigation of and adaptation to climate change in developing countries should be promoted. E-Government applications would improve the delivery of services in health, education and the environment in ways that reduce costs and transaction time.

#### **5. How can stakeholders work more effectively together to prevent conflict and armed violence and to strengthen the rule of law, justice and security?**

- Governments need to ensure efficacy, transparency and inclusion in the delivery of public services which will contribute to peacebuilding and the prevention of violent conflict.
- The United Nations system should ensure the integration of its peace and development objectives and further mainstream gender and human rights in all areas of its work, especially activities that are interlinked across departments and agencies.
- Greater efforts are needed to address the socio-economic and institutional causes of potential violence and armed conflict and formulate strategies with appropriate analysis, research, advocacy and outreach to ensure sustainable peacebuilding based on the interdependence of human rights, gender equality, governance, development and peace and security.

#### **6. How can we ensure that new and existing commitments, by all stakeholders, are adequately monitored and met?**

- Clear, numerical and measurable targets and timelines in all areas relative to MDG 8 need to be set and agreed to by all stakeholders. National statistical systems should be improved to monitor progress made towards achieving the MDGs and other development indicators in order to inform and guide policy interventions.
- The increasing use of e-Government in the planning and execution of national development strategies in developing countries and in development cooperation by donor countries could be the basis for the establishment of a mutual accountability framework to keep track of commitments fulfilled and programme delivery.