



REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA



CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY!

STATEMENT

BY H.E. SERGEI STANISHEV,

PRIME MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA

AT THE HIGH-LEVEL EVENT ON THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT
GOALS

ROUND TABLE I: POVERTY AND HUNGER

NEW YORK, 25 SEPTEMBER 2008

Mr. Secretary General,
Mr. President of the General Assembly,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Exactly eight years ago we gave a solemn promise (and I quote): “We will spare no effort to free our fellow men, women and children from the abject and dehumanizing conditions of extreme poverty...” (end of quote).

In the years since the adoption of the Millennium Declaration, we have seen progress in fulfilling our pledge: the proportion of people living in extreme poverty has fallen from nearly a third to less than one fifth between 1990 and 2004; enrolment in primary education has grown from 80 per cent in 1991 to 88 per cent in 2000; child mortality has declined; key interventions to control malaria and tuberculosis have been expanded.

These results are truly remarkable. And yet, there still are around 1 billion people living at the margins of survival on less than US\$1 a day. About 72 million children of primary school age in the developing world were not in school in 2005. Infectious diseases, especially HIV/AIDS, continue to blight the lives of the poor across the world. Moreover, new challenges, in particular climate change, energy and food crises further impede progress towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Thus, we need to double our efforts and to map out a detailed strategy for better addressing old and new challenges on the road to 2015. Moreover, we need to send a strong message to the Doha Review Conference on Financing for Development. This forum gives us an excellent opportunity to do both and I would like to thank very much the Secretary General and the President of the General Assembly for organizing it. I would also like to express our appreciation for Mr. Gordon Brown’s MDGs Call to Action initiative which my country has readily joined.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

My country is contributing, within its capacities, to the world’s efforts to eradicate global poverty and hunger. We are in the process of rebuilding, slowly but steadily, our national donor capacity and are committed to strive to achieve the EU new member states’ targets of 0.17 % of Gross National Income (GNI) allocated for Official Development Assistance (ODA) by 2010 and 0.33 % of GNI by 2015.

Improving the quality of aid is equally important for achieving the MDGs as increasing its volume. Bulgaria’s development cooperation policy fully embraces the principles of ownership, alignment, accountability, coordination, complementarity and coherence, laid down in the European Consensus on Development and the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and reaffirmed recently in the Accra Agenda for Action.

Furthermore, the eradication of poverty in all its dimensions and manifestations is the main objective of our development policy. Education and implementation of healthcare reforms, alongside the provision of assistance in socio-economic transition; infrastructure,

environmental protection, security and post-conflict reconstruction and preservation of cultural diversity, count among the sectoral priorities of our development assistance effort.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

To live in a better and more prosperous world we need deeds. We need the partner countries to speed up their efforts in putting their own house in order by means of improved policies and governance; we need the donor community to live up to its commitment to provide more and better targeted aid; we need the private sector and civil society to unleash their potential in poverty reduction; and we also need an effective monitoring mechanism holding everybody accountable. This is the only way we still can ensure the achievement of the MDGs by using clear benchmarks. If we fail, the MDGs may well end up debasing the currency of global promises and damaging probably beyond repair the credibility of the international community and the United Nations. Let us not allow this to happen!

Thank you!