

Intervention by
Anders Fogh Rasmussen, Prime Minister of Denmark

At the MDG High-level Event, Round Table 1 (3 minutter)
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- *Check against delivery* -

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

In 2000, the world community made a strong commitment by adopting the Millennium Declaration. The need to act now is even stronger than it was eight years ago.

One continent in particular still faces significant challenges to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. We must keep Africa in focus. We need a strong focus on young people and employment and on economic growth.

These issues are at the heart of the Africa Commission, which was launched by my government earlier this year and which I am pleased to chair.

Today, I wish to highlight one issue which needs particular focus: the empowerment of women. By empowering women, we accelerate progress on all the MDG's.

The reasons are many but simple: Gender equality is a basic human right. But it is also smart economics, which creates development and wealth.

The link between gender equality and poverty reduction is clear. In Sub-Saharan Africa agricultural productivity could increase by up to 20 percent if women had similar access to resources as men have. There is much truth in the saying that: “If you empower one woman, you empower the whole family and generations to come.”

We need to dramatically change our efforts. Denmark is committed to double our targeted assistance to gender equality and women’s empowerment by 2010. And we have voiced a Global Call to Action on Goal Number 3 on empowerment of women.

It has been a great success. Many different stakeholders have committed themselves to act. For women and for gender equality.

The commitments include the provision of new funds from donors, the launching of new initiatives by the private sector. It also includes scaling-up of activities from international organizations such as the UN, the World Bank, the WTO and the European Union.

The many contributors have created a wave of political resolve. Together, they form a “Global Coalition”. And I am honored that the Secretary-General has accepted to put the force of the UN behind our Call to Action.

Thank you