

# PORTUGAL

**Statement by His Excellency the President of the Portuguese Republic,  
Mr. Aníbal Cavaco Silva,  
at the High Level Meeting  
organised by the United Nations Secretary General,  
Mr. Ban Ki-Moon,  
on the Millennium Development Goals**

## **ROUND TABLE II – EDUCATION AND HEALTH**

**New York, 25 September 2008**

Co-chairmen of the Round Table  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Millennium Development Goals agreed at the Millennium Summit in 2000 have been the compact for the international community policy and action as far as development cooperation is concerned. Many bilateral and multilateral initiatives have been launched and commitments renewed by both donor and partner countries since then to achieve these goals.

Overall progress has been achieved but is still uneven. Recent developments in the global economy pose opportunities as well as new challenges for progress towards the Millennium Development Goals.

Education and Health are critical sectors for poverty reduction and sustainable economic development. I am pleased that it was possible at the end of 2007 in Lisbon to approve the EU-Africa Joint Strategy, identifying education and health as priority actions of the partnership between the two continents.

These are priority sectors of Portuguese development cooperation with our main partner countries, which are Portuguese-speaking African countries and Timor Leste.

We agree with the line of action proposed in the Secretary General's report on the need to provide integrated support for the development of national *sustainable and inclusive* health and education systems. So, in addition to the scaled-up efforts to increase investments in these sectors, the issue of quality — of partners' policies, strategies and action plans and international community assistance - cannot be over-emphasized.

Portugal's interventions in these two sectors are mainly comprehensive programmes comprising support for institutional capacity building, legislation reforms, investments in infrastructures and services provision, as well as good governance programmes as a cross-cutting issue to the overall cooperation programme.

In recognition of the fundamental challenges that we face, Portugal has recently approved a new 30 Million Euro Fund to be allocated to the promotion of education and training in Portuguese-speaking countries.

We welcome this high level event and see it as an opportunity to fully engage in a comprehensive dialogue on the Millennium Development Goals at this critical juncture. It is important that we deepen our understanding of the reasons behind the progress of the Millennium Development Goals to make more informed policy decisions and set better targeted actions. Fragile States, for example, are among those countries falling behind on progress towards the Millennium Development Goals. What are we missing in our support for the efforts of these countries?

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I end by reiterating my country's strong commitment to the effort required by the objectives defined in these areas within the framework of the Millennium Development Goals.