



NORWAY

CHECK AGAINST

United Nations
61st Session
Plenary

High Level Meeting on the midterm comprehensive global review of
the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for
the Decade 2001-2010

Stoltenberg
Prime Minister

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Madam President

One of the most haunting challenges of our time is to narrow the gap between the rapidly developing world and those parts which are lagging behind.

Billions of people are moving towards a brighter future.

But hundreds of millions are not.

The challenge is new to present generations:

We now can radically reduce poverty.

We can end the long night of under-development.

The poor countries do not need to be lectured about what it takes to break out of the trap.

They know the need for investing in people, health and education, good governance. The Least Developed Countries themselves have the primary responsibility for their own development.

And they have taken leadership in the midterm review process.

They need long-term partnerships with countries who understand that the fortunate ones are under a compelling obligation to care.

Norway was among the first to reach the goal of 40 per cent bilateral development assistance to least developed countries. We reached it in 2002.

We have stayed on the top of such donors' lists since then, together with those other countries which are always on the top when donor performance is measured.

This year again we are moving ever closer to donating one per cent of our income as development assistance.

We reached the 0.7 target decades ago and the 0.9 target years ago.

Madam President, this year I have the honour of serving as co-chair for the UN High-Level Panel on system-wide coherence, together with my good colleagues from Mozambique and Pakistan.

The panel will present its report to the Secretary-General later this autumn. And we are in the process of finalizing our recommendations having met with a great number of stakeholders and country representatives.

I sincerely hope that the panel will contribute to a UN that is even more responsive to the needs of least developed countries and that the UN can deliver better services for development, environment and humanitarian assistance.

Six years ago, in the year 2000 here in New York, I participated in the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals as Prime Minister of Norway.

We knew- then, as we know now, about the many fine and solemn declarations adopted by world leaders. These declarations have raised hope for a better tomorrow among the poor and destitute peoples and nations. But many have remained unfulfilled.

The Brussels plan must not end up in that category.

I felt then back in 2000 that there was a risk that we would not feel compelled to deliver on those promises and that the world would return to business as usual.

That is why that Norway has decided to take a special responsibility for realizing at least one of the Millennium Goals.

And we are going to take a lead role in achieving Millennium Goal number 4: To help reduce child mortality by two-thirds by the year 2015.

It's a Herculean task. But it is possible.

We have the means. It only takes finance and organization to deliver.

Our first step towards achieving the goal is providing vaccines for all the children of the world.

I announced earlier today that Norway has decided to increase our budget allocations for immunisation and child survival from 75 million US dollars to 125 million dollars annually.

We need to work together to develop a global strategy to reach Millennium Goal No. 4. What we need is a global business plan. This plan will spell out clearly how we best can organize ourselves, the financing instruments we need and the pathways to achieve our goal. We have the will and the knowledge to do so.

Reducing child mortality is a worthy goal. We cannot pursue it half way or part-time.

That is why I invite everybody here, to join this global campaign.

Norway is a country of 4 million people. We are the fifth largest donor to the operational activities of the United Nations. We cannot do everything but we have set out with high ambition to save the lives of millions of little children.

These millions are the people that will live and help lift the poor countries out of poverty in our lifetime.

I am humbled and proud to be a part of that sea change.