

PERMANENT MISSION OF DENMARK
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

Statement by
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Prime Minister of Denmark

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Mr. Secretary General, Esteemed colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have committed ourselves to halve global poverty by 2015 and to achieve further ambitious goals during the next decade.

The enormous progress achieved by market oriented economic reform in Asia and Latin America over the last decade proves that eradication of poverty is not an impossible goal. But an extraordinary effort is required to give Africa the chance to succeed. We all have to do more and to do better — African governments, rich countries and the United Nations:

Firstly, Africa needs to overcome epidemic diseases. AIDS is a fully blown disaster in Africa. The combat against AIDS should be the World's absolute top priority. This is the area where every extra dollar of assistance will create the greatest benefits to society.

Secondly, Africa needs trade. Free trade is the most effective way to improve economic growth and fight poverty. When trade advances, poverty retreats. We must all work for a successful outcome of the WTO development round in Hong Kong in December. Rich countries must improve market access and dismantle trade distorting agricultural subsidies. Emerging economies must be ready to assume their fair share of responsibilities towards the poorest countries. And African countries should liberalize trade among themselves.

Thirdly, Africa needs peace. Without peace there can be no progress. The UN cannot impose peace on Africa. Africans themselves must prevent conflicts and manage crisis. But we must help them to maintain fragile peace. That is why it is so important that we establish the Peace Building Commission.

Fourthly, Africa needs more aid. Without this, poverty ridden African societies cannot benefit from free trade and globalisation. That is why Denmark is the second largest contributor per capita to Africa. I urge all donor countries to strengthen their contributions to Africa.

And fifthly, Africa needs better governance. All our aid will come to nothing if countries are ruled by corrupt dictators. Only when aid and trade are linked to good policies can we lift people out of poverty. African governments must do more to fight corruption, to ensure political liberty and economic freedom, to invest in health and education of their people, and to promote the rights of women. The UN has a special obligation as the global watchdog against human rights abuses. Frankly, it has not been good enough. We owe it to the people of Sudan, Zimbabwe and all other who suffers from oppression and abuse to agree on the establishment of a Human Rights Council. A Council that has real powers and whose members will undertake to abide by the highest human rights standards.

All good deeds start at home. In order to maintain its moral authority and play a role in this process, the UN needs to get its own house in order. The report on the mismanagement of the Oil-for-Food programme from last week pointed to several cases of severe misconduct and corruption. I am pleased that the Secretary General has promised to take a hard look at these problems.

Mr Chairman,

Together we can make poverty history. Lets do it!