



## CONCORD statement on MDGs

The agreement of the Millennium Development Goals, (MDGs) a decade ago at the 2000 UN Millennium conference, represented the most significant collective effort ever made by the international community to eradicate extreme poverty that has been seen before or since.

With only five years remaining until the 2015 deadline for the completion of the goals, the upcoming review of the process at the UN High Level Meeting in September this year will, provide a crucial opportunity to acknowledge the significantly altered political and global landscape in the years since the MDGs were first agreed.

In the context of the economic, food and climate change crises and faced with a risk of not reaching most of the goals by 2015, some voices advocate that we should focus our efforts on setting new goals for beyond 2015. We would like to emphasize that:

- The Millennium Development Goals are still the appropriate framework for eradicating poverty, a framework which has galvanized global commitment, and that the EU has committed to fulfilling.
- 2010 is an important year, defined by UN SG as 'the year of development'. Five years from the target, we need to focus on what needs to be done NOW to accelerate achievement of the goals rather than looking beyond 2015. In the words of Ban Ki-Moon, "the MDGs are too big to fail".

CONCORD, representing 1600 European development NGOs thinks that to put the world back on track towards reaching the MDGs the EU – as provider of 60% of global aid flows and a major trading partner for some of the world's poorest nations - should take the lead towards a UN summit in September that takes the strides needed to halve poverty by 2015 by adopting the following measures at the EU Heads of States summit in June:

- Adopt a MDG rescue plan that is **concrete and action oriented**, includes **monitoring mechanisms**, recognizes the importance of tackling the MDGs as one holistic package with **synergies between all the goals** and takes a **human rights based approach**, ensuring that the vulnerable and marginalized people are clear beneficiaries.
- Implement the EU Agenda for Action and reach the targets on specific MDGs included in the Agenda.
- Use its influence (as the largest donor) to push other donors to perform better through discussion in international fora (G8, G20, IMF, World Bank).
- Ensure the legal obligations set out in the Lisbon Treaty vis a vis Development Cooperation and the objective of poverty eradication are reflected in the new institutional arrangements between the External Action Service and the European Commission (DG Development).
- Recognise that the MDGs can not be achieved without the EU and its member states engaging in meaningful and strong partnership with a wide range of stakeholders including civil society organizations in the north and the south, the private sectors, the UN agencies etc.
- Recognize the importance of leadership from the developing countries themselves by ensuring that MDGs are incorporated in national development strategies.
- Ensure that **pro-poor and sustainable development prevail** over short term, narrow or elite European interests; that sustainable development and the fulfilment of human rights form the basis for EU policy-making.

In addition, CONCORD has highlighted below three broad overarching issues that must be addressed in order to create the conditions for the individual goals to be attained. These are 1) ensuring that a rights based approach is applied across the goals including addressing gender inequality and targeting marginalised groups 2) Securing adequate financing for development 3) Addressing incoherencies across the policy spectrum that undermine development.

## **1. Rights Based Approach and inclusion of women and marginalised groups.**

An adoption of a rights based approach throughout the goal areas is essential if key barriers to achieving the MDGs, such as discrimination, are to be addressed. The current MDG structure does not take into account the rights, for example, of excluded or marginalised groups, such as people with disabilities, older people, children and minority and indigenous communities, creating a real danger that many of the key causes of poverty and exclusion will remain unaddressed in the drive to reach MDG general targets and indicators. To prevent this, these groups must be included in development policies and programmes and national capacities should be built for data collection disaggregated by age and sex as well as ethnicity and disability. This will ensure that action to reduce poverty effectively targets and reaches those who are currently marginalised and excluded.

Equally, women continue to be the majority of the world's poorest and most marginalised people. They experience discrimination in every sphere of political, social and economic life, and at every age, on the grounds of gender. This limits women's rights and opportunities, their personal security, their access to public services and economic resources, and political power.

The best way to help people realise their rights is to invest in social and human development. The EU should prioritise its actions in areas that are vital to the achievement of MDGs, such as gender equality, access to basic social services for all, including health and education, especially for excluded groups. The EU needs to contribute to the realisation of social rights to reduce inequality and promote sustainable development if the MDGs are to be achieved.

## **2. More and Better Aid / financing for development**

Development aid is more important than ever, since the financial crisis has shrunk other sources such as private capital flows, remittances and export revenues to developing countries.

The European Union is the largest provider of development aid in the world, which gives it critical responsibility in the fight against global poverty. The EU has clearly committed not only to further increasing the volume of aid, but also to increasing the quality of the aid.

2010 is the target date for meeting the EU collective commitment of 0.56% ODA/GNI towards 0.7% in 2015 and individual ODA targets for EU member states – 0.51% of GNI for the EU-15 and 0.17% of GNI for the EU-12. The 2009 AidWatch report Lighten the Load demonstrated that many EU member states are not on track to meet this interim target, let alone 0.7% by 2015. The OECD has since confirmed that the 2010 collective EU target will not be met, with aid from big EU economies such as France (0.46%), Germany (0.40%) and especially Italy (0.20%) expected to fall some way short of their individual commitments.

To reach the MDGs targets both the **quantity** and the **quality** of the EU's aid needs to be increased and the EU must make greater efforts to implement the **financing for development** agenda. International aid commitments (0.7%) *must* be met but will not be enough to deal with new global challenges such as climate change, food and energy crises and the effects of the financial crisis. The EU needs to find additional sources of financing.

We urge EU member states to:

- Deliver at least 0.7% of Gross National Income in Official Development Aid (ODA) by 2015 at the latest (and 0.56% by 2010) and to put in place binding timetables at national level showing year on year increases leading towards the attainment of these targets..
- Dedicate at least 20% of all EU assistance to basic social services, such as health and education as repeatedly called for by the European Parliament.
- Ensure that all of the money allocated under the geographic programmes of the EU's Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) and at least 90% of funds under the thematic programmes qualify as ODA in accordance with the provisions of the DCI itself.
- Step up efforts to improve the quality of aid and report annually on the progress made in the implementation of the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action Commitments. Agree to

new binding commitments on aid effectiveness at the 4<sup>th</sup> High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Seoul in 2011

- Phase out harmful economic or trade policy conditionality attached to development aid.
- The European Consensus and the Accra Agenda for Action have identified the need to strengthen mainstreaming across all sectors of policy and programming. The issues identified are human rights, gender equality and environmental sustainability. Without the systematic mainstreaming of these issues, aid cannot be effective or sustainable.
- Provide developing countries with the tools they need to **mobilise domestic resources** effectively, including through tackling capital flight, tax competition, corporate tax evasion and avoidance, transfer pricing, bank secrecy . In particular, the EU should champion the creation of a global multilateral information exchange convention, a country-by-country financial reporting standard for Multi National Companies, and a strengthened UN Committee of Tax Experts with a political mandate. The EU should work multilaterally to achieve these three objectives by 2015.
- Introducing “ **innovative**” sources of finance (ie in addition to traditional ODA). These include the **Financial Transaction Tax** . The EU must advocate for this agenda internationally but also act swiftly to put in place such measures within the eurozone in the short term.
- Cancel all debt for those developing countries which currently cannot finance the MDGs from domestic resources.

### **3. Policy Coherence for Development**

Trade, agricultural, environmental, migration, financial, and many other European policies have an impact on the capacity of developing countries to attain the MDGs. Not only have these policies not sufficiently and directly contributed to poverty eradication globally, but their inconsistency with development goals can be costly and can negate the impact of development aid. Achieving the MDGs will only be possible if we ensure that all policies elaborated at EU and at national level are consistent with the EU's legally binding development objectives.

Policy Coherence for Development is an important tool that, if implemented effectively, could have a markedly beneficial impact on sustainable development, respect for human rights and poverty reduction. For this to happen, we have identified the changes needed:

- Make more explicit the **multiple linkages** between different policy areas in order to give a better understanding of the complexities of policy solutions.
- Ensure that its policy-making becomes more **transparent** and **participatory** (i.e. participation of the relevant stakeholders in Europe and in developing countries, including civil society and parliaments) from the earliest stages and that the EU is held accountable of the harmful impact of its policies on development.
- Strengthen the **capacity of both national and EU administrations** to improve the coherence of their respective policies vis-à-vis EU and national level development objectives as well as international commitments on development; with a view to have an effective impact, to identify the incoherencies regardless of the policy areas involved and suggest solutions.
- Make sure that the **work programme on PCD** for the 2010-2013 period is developed with a view to attaining the MDG targets and to assessing the impact of all relevant EU policies on the progress made towards the MDGs.

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