



United Nations Development Programme

# PRESS RELEASE

## **UNDP puts forward eight-point action agenda to reduce poverty and achieve sustainable development**

*Based on evidence from 50 countries, the MDGs can be achieved, says Report*

*New York, 17 June 2010*—The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) launched, today, an extensive assessment of what must be done to advance sustainable development and reduce global poverty. The report, titled *What Will It Take To Achieve The Millennium Development Goals? An International Assessment*, identifies a concrete action agenda to inform the outcome of the World leaders' MDG Summit in New York, this September.

“For the many people living in poverty, the Millennium Development Goals are not abstract and aspirational targets; they offer a means to a better life, and overall a more just and peaceful world,” said UNDP Administrator Helen Clark at the launch. “Our hope is that this evidence of tried and tested policies, and this agenda for accelerating the pace of success, informs a positive outcome at the world leaders summit on the MDGs in September,” Helen Clark added.

The MDGs are eight internationally-agreed targets which aim to reduce poverty, hunger, maternal and child deaths, disease, inadequate shelter, gender inequality and environmental degradation by 2015.

Drawing on evidence of what has worked in 50 countries, UNDP's report provides an eight-point MDG action agenda to accelerate and sustain development progress over the next five years. The eight points focus on supporting nationally-owned and participatory development; pro-poor, job-rich inclusive growth including the private sector; government investments in social services like health and education; expanding opportunities for women and girls; access to low carbon energy; domestic resource mobilization; and delivery on Official Development Assistance commitments.

From the abolition of primary school fees leading to a surge in enrolment in Ethiopia to innovative health servicing options in Afghanistan reducing under-five child mortality, the report brings forward concrete examples that have worked and can be replicated, even in the poorest countries, to make real progress across the Goals.

Rapid improvements in both education and health, the report illustrates, have occurred in countries where there were **adequate public expenditures and strong new partnerships**.

Evidence found in the Assessment also suggests that reductions in poverty and hunger occur when **economic growth is job-rich and boosts agricultural production**. Ghana's nationwide fertilizer subsidy programme, for instance, increased food production by 40 percent and reduced hunger by nine percent between 2003 and 2005.

Other examples include a national rural employment initiative in India which has benefited some 46 million households. The programme guarantees a minimum of 100 days of work for landless labourers and marginal farmers, with almost half being women. Such **robust social protection and employment programmes**, the report affirms, reduce poverty and reverse inequality.

Albania was praised for adopting a ninth MDG, reforming public administration, legislation and policies to promote accountability and enhance development results. **Country-led development and effective government**, argues the report, are at the root of achieving the MDGs.

*The Assessment* also denotes the linkages between many of the Goals. For example, **improving opportunities for women and girls** and **expanding access to energy**, both, have a multiplier effect on MDG progress. The provision of generators in Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali and Senegal, has helped to free up an average of two to four hours per day for women, which they have been able to spend on education, improving their health and generating additional sources of revenue.

This *Assessment* finds that **well-targeted and predictable aid** is a critical catalyst for meeting the MDGs and has produced significant results in Burkina Faso, Mozambique, Rwanda, Uganda and Vietnam by making more resources available for service delivery. Evidence, however, also suggests that countries need to **expand their own domestic resource mobilization** and to adjust their budgets to ensure maximum return on their investment.

The report, which will be shared with Member States as they prepare the outcome document for the September MDG Summit, also singles out the failure to conclude the World Trade Organization's Doha Development Round of trade negotiations as the most significant gap in formulating a global partnership for development. In addition, market access for developing countries is little improved and domestic agricultural subsidies by rich countries continue to overshadow policy coherence needed to accelerate MDG progress.

To work in tandem with this report, UNDP is also piloting an MDG acceleration toolkit. It is a framework designed to help governments, the UN at the country level and other development partners identify where the real bottlenecks to progress lie and, in tackling them, which policies can have the most impact on achieving the MDGs.

For a copy of the International Assessment, visit [www.undp.org](http://www.undp.org)

For more on the Millennium Development Goals, visit [www.undp.org/mdg](http://www.undp.org/mdg) or [www.kickoutpoverty.org](http://www.kickoutpoverty.org)

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