

**COMMENTS ON THE UN MDG REVIEW SUMMIT'S
DRAFT OUTCOME DOCUMENT**

CIDSE SUBMISSION - 25 JUNE 2010

I. Lack of a Human Rights Perspective

CIDSE is alarmed by the absence of human rights and right to development references in the Draft Outcome Document (DOD). Human rights should not be made into instruments of political manipulation, at risk of becoming divisive and politicized, as governments contend. Well approached, human rights could provide a unifying platform that catalyzes the efforts of all governments. Much of the structural reform that underpins MDG achievement will not take place with a purely technocratic approach but through transparency, accountability and empowerment that a human rights approach can unleash.

CIDSE is also surprised by the DOD's failure to mainstream concerns and action on gender. This deficiency also reflects the DOD's overall failure to acknowledge that a systemic approach is a fundamental condition for MDG achievement: that all national and international policies and structures have an impact on a country's capacity to fulfil its MDG commitments.

Recommendations

- **There must be an explicit mention of the indispensability of the human rights framework to guide action to achieve the MDGs at the beginning of the section 'The Way Forward'. Preferably a new para 29.**
- **The right to development must be explicitly affirmed in the preamble.**
- **The preamble must explicitly acknowledge that all policies - in all sectors and at both the national and international levels - play a role in MDG achievement.**

II. Lack of recognition of the urgency and pervasive nature of the climate crisis, and of the responsibility of industrialised countries

The DoD acknowledges 'the continuing process of climate change' as presenting a profound challenge. It also recognizes that the climate crisis alongside the confluence of other crises, present the international community with a unique opportunity to tackle them together. Whilst this may be true, the DoD fails to acknowledge the urgent and pervasive nature of the climate crisis which is already hampering progress across the MDG framework.

Furthermore, although the document recognises that vulnerable populations, who have contributed the least to the problem, are experiencing the most severe impacts of climate

change, it avoids underscoring the responsibility of industrialised countries, whose fossil-fuel based growth has caused the current crisis. Developed countries have a historic and moral obligation to take the lead in the fight against climate change, as is recognised in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Kyoto Protocol and the Bali Action Plan. With their greater financial and technological capacities too, they are best placed to deliver urgently needed emission reductions and provide the support to developing countries to enable them to adapt and to pursue sustainable development. The failure to achieve a fair, ambitious and binding agreement in Copenhagen in 2009, which goes unmentioned in the DOD, was in large part due to the unwillingness of developed countries to accept their responsibilities.

The impacts of the climate crisis, as well as how industrialized countries are purporting to deal with it, reflect the very structural imbalances and uneven power relations that are responsible for the lack of progress on development in many countries.

Recommendations

- **The preamble should acknowledge the urgent and pervasive nature of the climate crisis and its impact across the MDG framework.**
- **Para 22 must acknowledge the responsibility of developed countries to take the lead in tackling climate change.**
- **There must be a clear call in the section ‘The Way Forward’, for a fair, ambitious and binding global agreement under the UNFCCC, including a commitment by developed countries to reduce their GHG emissions by more than 40% by 2020 based on 1990 levels as their contribution to avoiding the worst impacts of climate change.**
- **Para 50(s) should include a call upon developed countries to provide new and additional public finance that is sufficient, predictable, secure and accessible; and to share technologies and build capacities of developing countries to support and enable their mitigation and adaptation efforts.**
- **Para 50 (h) should call for specific innovative mechanisms to secure reliable, additional public financing for climate action, that can be scaled up according to future need. Priority should be given to mechanisms that internalize the costs of environmental damage of goods and services.**

III. MDG 1: The need to tackle the seeds of the food crisis

The DoD acknowledges the interrelated challenges of the multiple crises. However this approach is not reflected in the action plan for MDG 1. The action points seek to treat the symptoms of food insecurity without tackling its underlying systemic causes. The lack of any reference to the Right to Food which is legally binding and should form the basis for national and global responses to the food crisis is surprising and concerning.

The DOD refers to the need to increase food production, its availability and quality; it also proposes supporting increased productivity and sustainable agricultural practices by facilitating access of smallholders to markets. These points fail to acknowledge the fact that securing food security and the Right to Food is primarily a question of access, not availability. Increasing productivity and supporting smallholders to access markets is vital, but the means by which these are pursued must not undermine smallholders long term food security.

The DOD also proposes the provision of smallholders with credit and inputs, but fails to acknowledge crucial elements of creating an enabling environment for small-holders, including the need to increase their bargaining power vis-à-vis other stakeholders in the value chain, their access to land and water, as well as the need for demand and small-scale farmer-led research.

With regard to investment in agriculture and rural development, the DOD proposes commitment to increase investment, but avoids figures and timeframes. The commitments made in L'Aquila are important but a three-year plan falls far short of the substantial and sustained increases in investment needed to reverse years of neglect of these sectors.

Finally, a number of crucial elements of a sound as well as sustained response to the food crisis and a credible plan towards achievement of MDG1 are missing, including a lack of reference to the impact of international trade, agricultural and energy policies on food security in developing countries, as well as to the role of speculation in price volatility, the threat of an increase in large-scale land acquisition. There is also a startling lack of acknowledgement of the existing and forecast impacts of climate change on smallholder farming in developing countries. Finally, the lack of reference to political commitments to establish new global food governance following the failure of food systems which resulted in the food crisis, and the reform of the UN Committee on Food Security, now an inclusive, multi-stakeholder body with a mandate to develop a Global Strategic Framework for food security, promote policy convergence and accountability, should be addressed.

Recommendations

- **Para 42 should contain an explicit recognition of the Right to Food and call for its incorporation as a guideline for policy making.**
- **Para 42 (f and g) should promote:**
 - **Investment in creating the enabling conditions for sustainable small-scale food production, processing and trade in developing countries, including secure and adequate access for smallholders to land, water, credit, and markets;**
 - **The strengthening of smallholder capacity to organise and increase their bargaining power vis-a vis other stakeholders in the value chain;**
 - **Endorsement of the International Assessment of Agricultural Science and Technology for Development, and support for bio-diverse agricultural ecosystems – rejecting the prescription of specific global models for agricultural modernization;**
 - **More public funding for demand and small-scale farmer-led research that draws on gender-specific knowledge and promotes pro-poor solutions.**
- **Para 42 (l and j) should recognise the need for sustained national and international investment, and include a commitment by donors to equal the commitments made by African governments in the Maputo Declaration through their ODA allocations within the next five years.**
- **Para 42 should be expanded to include:**
 - **Commitment to addressing national and international policies impacting on countries's ability to achieve their MDG and human rights commitments, including:**
 - **Support for urgently needed national and international regulation on land acquisition;**
 - **Commitment to achieve the elimination of export subsidies by 2013, including agriculture.**

- **Commitment to trade policy reform, recognising developing countries' right to policy space in trade agreements and ensure the provision of an effective and accessible Special Safeguard Mechanism under all trade agreements with developing countries.**
- **Support for the development of the Food and Agricultural Organisation's (FAO) "Guidelines on Good Governance on Land and Natural Resource Tenure" and call for the guidelines to adopt a human rights approach based on the FAO Guidelines on the Right to Food, and include the recommendations of the International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ICARRD). There should also be a call for the land guidelines to be developed through a comprehensive participatory and democratic process and finally be endorsed by the reformed UN Committee on Food Security.**
- **An explicit call for effective regulation of speculative finance (including hedge funds) in food stock exchange and futures markets for food and agriculture.**
- **Commitment to effective global governance – with the UN Committee on Food Security at its centre - to ensure effective coordination and coherence between political, policy and financing initiatives.**

IV. MDG 8: The Global partnership for development remains elusive

Based on our conviction that a genuine partnership for development is crucial for the achievement of all the MDGs and overall human development in general, we are particularly alarmed at the weakness of Para 50. While MDG 8 is ridden with deficiency, we nevertheless hoped that the current crises would provide added impetus to reinforce the global partnership for development.

One positive element is the call for a time-bound, result-oriented accountability framework that consolidates global commitments and is linked to monitoring and compliance mechanisms (50b). All efforts should be made to make sure this paragraph survives the negotiations and remains in the final outcome document.

The paragraphs on ODA commitments are narrow. They fail to mention crucial conditions for effectiveness of development assistance including country ownership, participation of civil society and ending conditionality (particularly on finance and trade issues). Broader issues of development effectiveness are also not addressed.

On taxation issues, the document is surprisingly weak and out-of-date, given the increased recognition of the importance of international tax cooperation to development. The only noteworthy point is the call for the establishment of an 'Intergovernmental Commission on Tax Matters.'

While the DOD mentions important issues on tackling the debt crisis (additional concessional financing, standstills on debt obligations, debt relief and debt restructuring, with debtor and creditor participation), it fails to acknowledge the failure of the current ad-hoc approach and the need to move towards a more permanent, fair debt work-out mechanism.

Recommendations

- **The opening line of Para 50 must emphasise the need for forging a genuine partnership for development based on the principles of mutual accountability, subsidiarity and transparency.**

- **Para 50 (d) should call for donors to establish legally binding, time-tabled commitments to reach the 0.7% target.**
- **Para 50 (h) should be followed by a new 50 (i) that explicitly announces the intention to implement Financial Transaction Taxes globally.**
- **The present para 50 (i) should be more elaborated - if necessary broken up into separate sub-paras calling for:**
 - **Governments to ensure that all companies registered in their jurisdictions are required to report financial activities including profits and tax payments on a country by country basis;**
 - **Governments to ensure that the beneficial ownership of all companies, trusts and foundations are put on public record;**
 - **International judicial and tax cooperation must be strengthened to prosecute tax evaders.**
- **Para 50 (k) should include an explicit mention of the need for trade rules to be based on human rights obligations. It should call for comprehensive Human Rights Impact Assessments to be undertaken before concluding bilateral or multilateral trade agreements. It should state the need for trade agreements to respect national policy space to realize the Right to Food and other human rights and should contain human rights clauses that mandate the renegotiation of provisions that have shown to compromise human rights obligations of states.**
- **Para 50 (o) should explicitly state the need for the debt relief needs of a country to be determined not merely on the basis of the deeply flawed debt sustainability framework but on the needs of a country to finance its MDG targets. It should also explicitly call for the establishment of a permanent fair and transparent debt work-out mechanism which replaces the current ad-hoc approach to sovereign debt crises.**
- **Para 51 should contain a more precise accountability framework with time-lines for commitments made in this document and for the MDGs in general.**

CIDSE is an international alliance of Catholic development agencies. Its members share a common strategy in their efforts to eradicate poverty and establish global justice.

CIDSE's advocacy work covers global governance; resources for development; climate justice; food, agriculture & sustainable trade; and business & human rights.

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