

**THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**  
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**REMARKS TO PRESS CONFERENCE LAUNCH OF  
2010 MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS REPORT**  
**(including questions and answers)**  
**New York, 23 June 2010**

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you very much for joining us.

Today, we are releasing the 2010 Millennium Development Goals Report. It pulls together the latest analysis and data from more than 25 United Nations and international agencies around the world.

As the report shows, despite the financial crisis, the food crisis, the fuel crisis, the world is still making progress on reducing poverty, albeit more slowly. The overall poverty rate is expected to fall to 15 per cent by 2015. That means about 920 million people will be living below the international poverty line. That is half the number in 1990.

Yes, the sharpest reductions are in Asia. But the report also finds that the greatest progress in primary education is in Sub Saharan Africa. We have seen important headway in child health and gender equality in Latin America and the Caribbean.

There is bad news, as well. Around the world, across the MDGs, progress has been uneven. In some areas, we are sliding back. Take poverty, for example. Even before the food and financial crises, hunger and malnutrition in South Asia were on the rise, taking us in the wrong direction. Stubborn gaps persist between rich and poor, between rural and urban, between males and females.

As this report shows, a girl in one of the poorest households is 3.5 times more likely to be out of school than a girl from the richest household. And if girls are out of school, economies won't make the grade. That is just one finding. But it illustrates a much larger point: Meeting the MDGs goes beyond development. At bottom, it is about generating growth – global economic growth.

And here, we must recognize a simple fact: in today's world, economic dynamism lies in emerging economies. Like never before, global economic recovery depends on growth in developing countries. That is why I am paying three visits to Africa this month — to highlight the importance of meeting the MDGs for all of us.

I will also take that human development message with me to the G-20 Summit in Toronto later this week. We need to strengthen our focus on three areas: priorities, political will and partnerships.

Job one is jobs. Today, world unemployment is the highest on record. Two hundred and eleven million people are unemployed – and the world needs to create 470 million new jobs in the next ten years simply to keep pace.

It is time to focus on decent work, not only in wealthy nations, but everywhere. That means common sense investments in green jobs, economic opportunity for women, and more help for the biggest workforce in the world, small farmers. Economic recovery can't be sustainable without job recovery.

Similarly, we must focus on food security. Delivering on L'Aquila commitments is a good starting point. We must also use the crisis as an opportunity to plant the seeds of a green recovery: investments in clean and sustainable energy.

Second, we need greater political will. Success begins at home – and developing countries must lead in national plans to meet development goals. But success doesn't end there. The world's largest economies have pledged to double development aid to Africa. Smart, reliable investments can make the difference.

One of the most effective places is maternal and child health. In Canada, I will urge leaders to support our global action plan on women's and children's health. In the 21st century, it is unacceptable that mothers should be dying during childbirth.

Third, partnerships. We need to expand the coalition for action. That is why I am announcing, today, that we will establish the MDG Advocacy Group -- some of the world's leading thinkers and doers coming together to combat poverty. The Group will be led by co-chairs President Paul Kagame of Rwanda and Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero of Spain.

The Group will include: Muhammad Yunus of Bangladesh; Stine Bosse of Denmark; former President Michelle Bachelet of Chile; Philippe Douste-Blazy of France; Hiromasa Yonekura of Japan; Wangari Maathai of Kenya; Dho Young-Shim of the Republic of Korea; Julio Frenk of Mexico; Akin Adesina of Nigeria; Sheikha Mozah Bint Nasser of Qatar; Jan Eliasson of Sweden; Graça Machel of South Africa and Mozambique; and from the United States Ray Chambers, Bill Gates, Ted Turner and Professor Jeffrey Sachs. Distinguished personalities from China, India, Japan and the United Kingdom will also join the Group. As you can see, a real collection of superheroes in defeating poverty.

We need to emerge from the September Millennium Development Goals Summit with concrete national action plans for realizing the goals. These Advocates can help get us there. They will help generate political will and mobilize a global grassroots movement to meet the MDGs. Prime Minister Zapatero of Spain will host the first meeting in Madrid next month, where I will participate myself.

To sum up, this report shows that economic uncertainty cannot be an excuse to slow down our development efforts. It is a reason to speed them up.

By investing in the MDGs, we invest in global economic growth. By focusing on the needs of the most vulnerable, we lay the foundation for a more sustainable and prosperous tomorrow.

Thank you. This report will be available to all of you.

Q: Mr. Secretary-General, thank you very much for this press conference. As you have mentioned in your own opening statement, the economic disaster of the last couple of years has greatly affected the developing countries. Now, can you please tell us whether some of the developed countries which had not agreed to the 0.7% of ODA [official development assistance] have agreed to do that, and, out of the one trillion in dollars that you have asked of the international community to give to the United Nations to mitigate the suffering of the countries, will that be coming? And you will share that with them?

SG: It is true that the financial and economic crisis worldwide has impacted on the capacity of Member States, and the United Nations as a whole, in meeting these MDGs and other development and other global challenges. But that must not give an excuse for the developed countries to slow down their commitment and that is also applied to developing countries. They should never slow down their commitment and political will to meet these MDG goals. That is exactly what I have been discussing with leaders of the developed countries, OECD [Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development] and Member States, and that is the message that I am going to carry to the Toronto G20 Summit meeting this time. I am encouraged that, despite these economic difficulties, the Member States are committed to that. Member States have already begun their negotiations on the text of an action plan, which contains a concrete, achievable action plan which will be adopted in September. There must be mutual accountability in fact - accountability on behalf of developed countries, and also developing countries. I would emphasize this mutual accountability. In fact, I was able to see for myself during my visit to Africa, that most of the African countries are very much committed to meet this target. Simply, they have a problem of capacity and resources and these resources and capacity building should be helped by the developed countries. You know that there were very serious discussions during the London Summit meeting, mobilizing \$1.1 trillion. Of course, all of that \$1.1 trillion will not come directly to developing countries or the United Nations, but by strengthening the capacity of international financial institutions and trade systems, that kind of a framework will all help developing countries, first of all, to sustain these economic policies and strengthen their capacities.

Q: Mr. Secretary-General, in your preliminary remarks just now, you touched a little bit upon the message you are going to take to the G20 Summit. Could you maybe elaborate, spell out the detail of what more specifically you might be asking them this time? I know that you are going to ask them to keep up their commitment, in general;

you say also support the global action plan on women and children's health. Perhaps you could spell it out, more specifically, what you have in mind?

SG: This G20 Summit in Toronto, the main themes and subject, their agenda is more or less focussed on the financial situation - how to consolidate these financial systems, as well as deal with international financial mechanisms, strengthening their capacity. But, at same time, there will be an opportunity of discussing development issues and climate change issues and maternal and health issues. Now, it is encouraging that the Canadian Government, as Chair of the G8 Summit, has taken up maternal and child health as a most important theme, a priority agenda. As you know, I launched the global campaign on maternal and child health issues in April and early this month I attended a very important international event called 'Women Deliver' in Washington D.C. We adopted this joint action plan in which we needed to have additional funding for at least \$15 billion to reduce maternal mortality and child mortality by the end of next year and an additional \$45 billion by the end of 2015. On other Millennium Goals we need and we urge donor countries to deliver what they have pledged already. This is my message and I will engage in bilateral [meetings] and also at the G20 Summit meeting to discuss these issues.

Q: You touched on many things, and obviously here there is nothing mentioned on the disregard of human rights and the spread of wars in many parts of the world with regard to the spread of poverty. Also, what is the impact of aging societies, especially in the north of the globe on the economic growth?

SG: In fact, the human rights issue is a cross-cutting issue. Even though you may not see any agenda as such, on human rights, human rights is a part of all of our lives and therefore you will see that the United Nations will continuously promote and protect human rights. On the issue of vulnerable societies, vulnerable states, there is clearly some disregarding or not properly promoting human rights issues – on that, we never lose our sight on this, including aging issues in many parts of the developed world. This needs a broader and comprehensive approach.

Q: Regarding human rights, today's edition of the New York Times stated, to the surprise of human rights activists, Russian delegates to the Council of Europe's parliamentary assembly approved a sharply critical draft resolution on Russia's policy in the North Caucasus, which include Ingushetia, Chechnya and Dagestan. Since you spoke about impunity and other issues, how do you feel about this part of the world, which very often is largely ignored?

SG: I hope you will understand that this press conference is now focussed on the MDG report. I am concerned about all of these human rights violations which happened in the past and which may happen in many parts of the world. We have taken all necessary action urging, raising the attention of the international community and bringing [up] those matters – I'm not going to discuss any specific issues which you raise now. As appropriate, we have taken all necessary measures, as you have seen, and you will continue to see from the United Nations and from me,

that we will engage to do all that we can to protect human rights, including accountability.

Q: Mr. Secretary-General, the report says that, in many countries, educating girls is widely perceived as being of less value than educating boys, and, given that ODA money alone can not solve this problem, what is the United Nations doing, and you personally, in providing moral leadership to try to change these perceptions that interfere with the achievement of Goals 2 and 3, and particularly where those perceptions are codified in law of the countries involved?

SG: Providing decent primary education opportunities to both boys and girls equally -that is one of the principles. In fact, we have seen some progress, even in African states – providing primary education. In some countries they have achieved more than 90% of primary education. There are now nearly universal primary education opportunities, including girls. [Other panelists gave more details]

Q: To assure that resources that the UN is receiving for these purposes reach the world's neediest and to ensure the donors keep continuing to give money for these purposes, would it not make sense for the United Nations to improve its ability to keep an eye on major fraud and corruption? Those abilities, I have been writing about since the beginning of the year, have been deteriorating of late.

SG: Ensuring accountability on both ends, as I said, is a very important one. Addressing corruption as a way of enhancing good governance – that is a very important area – the United Nations is putting emphasis on that. Whenever I meet the leaders of the world and also wherever I visit, I emphasize the importance of the enhancement of good governance, including fighting against corruption. We have seen so many corruptive practices prevalent in many parts of the world, which really hampers the smooth implementation of the MDGs. All the money which is used goes into the wrong pockets for private/personal purposes, that's what we have to really stop and prevent. The UNODC [UN Office on Drugs and Crime] are paying a lot attention to those priorities. And I think you will see, again, that the United Nations will constantly and persistently assist the world leaders, particularly in the recipient countries, to enhance and develop good governance.

Q: Mr. Secretary-General, you mentioned that you were asking for a total of \$6 billion extra funds for maternal health from donor countries presumably. Why do you think you will get that money, given that many donor countries haven't met the pledges they've already made? And, can you just give us a bit of an overview about what the shortfall is, in terms of pledged money and actual donations?

SG: As you will see in the report, MDG goals no.4 and no.5, namely child health and mortality and maternal mortality, are the slowest moving targets. We have invested time and energy and resources on reducing abject poverty, HIV issues - we have been able to raise significant resources to fight against HIV/AIDS, against malaria and tuberculosis, we have raised a lot of money for food security issues. Somehow,

during the last 10 years not much attention has been given to these particular two areas. We have taken note of these very serious circumstances and we really want to create some balance among these 8 goals. That is why we are focussing more attention on aid this year and in the coming 5 years for maternal health and child health. We believe that maternal health, mothers, they are foundation of our society. When mothers are healthy, families are healthy, the children are healthy. That means we have a very sound and healthy community, and community means country and the world. Therefore, I am encouraged that we are receiving quite positive responses from major developed countries. That is why I have discussed this matter with Prime Minister [Steven] Harper during my visit last time, and the G8 is specifically focussing on this issue.

Q: You mentioned your intent to have bilateral meetings [at G20]. Will you have a bilateral meeting with the King of Saudi Arabia, King Abdullah, being the only Arab leader there, and, if so, what are the topics on your list of priorities with him? And, secondly, you mentioned the importance of resources -how do you think differently and what do you project when you see a situation such as what's happening in Afghanistan, where there has been a discovery of immense resources? How would that change the equation from your point of view, in terms of the use of such resources or the fear that it may bring about further disintegration of the country? ...

SG: I have requested a bilateral meeting with the King of Saudi Arabia and this request has already been conveyed through the Ambassador here. I am looking forward to meeting him. And for your second question, it is quite encouraging and good news that in some countries, in Afghanistan and I read in the newspaper in Zimbabwe, they have found huge natural resources and deposits - this is very good and I sincerely hope that they will be able to explore all these natural resources for economic development, but I think that the international community may provide some technical assistance. I was very excited to see that news. If it is scientifically proven that they have such huge deposits of natural resources, that is good news...

Q: What do you mean by the international community playing a role in that?

SG: I'm not sure whether this will be an immediate agenda [item] of our talks on July 20th International Conference on Afghanistan, but, basically, I hope that talks will continue on how the international community, together with Afghanistan, can help on this matter.

Thank you very much for your support on MDGS, and this evening and tomorrow, we are going to have another very important meeting – the Global Compact Leaders' Summit – we expect more than 1,200 world business leaders are gathering here. They will play a very important role – support for the success of the Millennium Development Goals. They are an important pillar, together with the United Nations and governments and NGOs [non-Governmental Organizations] to make our MDG goals [be] realized successfully.