

General Assembly launches preparatory process for Doha Review Conference

The Road to Doha

A series of High-level Meetings on financing for development will lead up to the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD) in Doha, Qatar, in the second half of 2008.

- (1) Launch of the ECOSOC Development Cooperation Forum (Geneva, 5 July 2007)
- (2) GA High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development (New York, 22-23 October 2007)
- (3) Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) on theme "Financing for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women" (New York, March 2008)
- (4) Spring Meeting of ECOSOC with BWIs, WTO and UNCTAD (New York, April 2008)
- (5) UNCTAD XII on "Addressing opportunities and challenges of globalization for development" (Accra, Ghana, 20-25 April 2008)
- (6) ECOSOC Development Cooperation Forum (New York, July 2008)



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Facilitators propose three-phase approach leading up to Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development

At an informal General Assembly consultation of the whole, held at UN Headquarters on 8 June 2007, the Permanent Representatives of Norway and Egypt to the UN suggested moving ahead through a three-phased approach towards the Follow-up Conference in Doha, Qatar, in the second half of 2008.

The first phase is the period from now until the High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development to be held during the 62nd Session of the General Assembly. The ambassadors proposed that in the interest of ensuring the highest level of participation, the High-level Dialogue should be held back to back with the annual fall meetings of the Bretton Woods institutions held in Washington DC in October. It was therefore suggested holding the High-level Dialogue on Monday and Tuesday, October 22nd and 23rd, 2007.

The modalities for holding the 2007 High-level Dialogue will be the same as those used in the 2005 High-level Dialogue, as described in General Assembly resolution 59/293 of 27 May 2005. [Resolution 59/293](#) calls for the active participation of civil society in the event, in particular during interactive multi-stakeholder round table sessions. The second phase will consist of dealing with outstanding

procedural issues relating to the review process, such as the exact timing, the agenda, the format, the modalities of the preparation process, and the outcome.

This phase will start immediately after the High-level Dialogue during the 62nd Session of the General Assembly and is envisioned to conclude with the adoption of one resolution covering these issues by the end of year.

The third stage will deal with the substantive preparations, sometime very early in 2008. Depending on, among other things, what kind of an outcome UN member states will decide for the review conference, substantive consultations would start early in 2008. In accordance with resolution 61/191, the facilitators intend to carry out these consultations with the full participation of member states and all relevant stakeholders, including civil society.

The facilitators recalled that GA resolution 61/191 gives considerable guidance on a number of issues related to the Follow-up Conference. For example, the resolution stipulates that "the review conference should assess progress made, reaffirm goals and commitments, (...) identify obstacles and constraints encountered, actions and initiatives to overcome them (...), as well as new challenges and emerging issues". In that regard the facilitators expressed their hope that that the Follow-up Conference will not alter or re-negotiate the Monterrey Consensus but review all of the chapters in light of the paragraph quoted above.

Interview with Mr. Hazem Fahmy, Chief, Institutional Stakeholder and General Support Unit, Financing For Development Office (FFDO)

Mr. Fahmy chaired the Informal thematic Debate of the General Assembly on “Financing Development to Achieve the MDGs” (Doha, Qatar, 17-18 June 2007)

NGLS spoke with Mr. Fahmy about his experience at the recent Debate and what he thinks came out of it.

What do you think the principle outcomes of the Informal Thematic Debate were?

When the President of the General Assembly, H.E. Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa, initiated these [Informal Thematic Debates](#), the main purpose was to sustain international focus and discussions on the topics raised as a reflection of their importance and the priority they command in international economic and political affairs. This coincided with the traditional interest by the Government of Qatar to support the development efforts of developing countries, and the Qatari Government generously offered to host the meeting. The attendance of the meeting (97 countries and 167 representatives from different countries, civil society, international and regional institutions) is a reflection of the success of the meeting in fulfilling its intended purpose of advocacy and stimulating debate on financing challenges and country experiences in achieving the MDGs.

To what degree was civil society involved in the meeting?

Civil society was well represented in the meeting and they were an integral part of the debate that took place with member states and regional and international organizations, where they made valuable contributions to the discussions. The last session was centered on a [presentation](#) by a representative of civil society on the experience of the Millennium

Villages.

What aspects of the meeting do you think will be of particular use for the upcoming High-Level Dialogue and the FFD process more generally?

Some of the papers and presentations done on emerging trends in official development assistance (ODA) and forward looking strategies were quite useful. The [OECD](#) and [DIFD presentations](#) on how to utilize the commitments expressed for new ODA are some of the important contributions that were made during the meeting and form an integral part of the ongoing discussions on achieving the MDG's in general and financing development in particular. I expect them to be an integral part of the discussion on the ODA section of the Monterrey Consensus in the upcoming High-Level Dialogue.

Given that we are at the mid-point in the timeline for the achievement of the MDGs, were there some interesting insights from any presenters? Was there an assessment of the progress towards achievement?

Yes, indeed there was an interesting discussion about the progress and assessment of MDG implementation from various regional perspectives. There was an assessment [presentation on MDG achievement in the ESCWA region](#), as well as a [paper prepared by ECLAC](#) on emerging trends in ODA and its impact on financing poverty and hunger eradication in Latin America and the Caribbean, in addition to the traditional focus on Sub-Saharan Africa which was highlighted by many of the participants.

In her statement following the conclusion of the debate, the

President of the GA emphasized the need to work in partnership to achieve the MDGs; what role do you see for civil society in these partnerships?

Civil society has proven itself as a crucial and key player in financing development and the implementation of the MDGs. The well known facts and success stories of the debt relief campaign at the turn of the century, as well as the work of NGOs on the ground in various developing countries - particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa - in providing relief and advocating for development assistance from all sources, besides overseeing its distribution to the needy millions, speak for themselves. Also, the Monterrey Process was pioneering in dealing with civil society as an equal partner with all other stakeholders in the financing for development process. And since Monterrey we can see that approach being mainstreamed in all United Nations activities, including in the newly strengthened ECOSOC and its new innovative fora such as the Annual Ministerial Review and the Development Cooperation Forum.

What do you think is most useful for civil society to take away from the debate?

The active presence of civil society in the debate enriched it and - as usual - pushed the discussions to new heights that otherwise would not have been reached. Their continued active engagement is essential for the success of the MDGs.



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