



Open Letter to United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon in response to the launch of his "Keeping the promise report"

May 2010

Your Excellency,

As global civil society organizations we welcome the launch of your "Keeping the Promise" report in preparation for the High Level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals in September this year as well as your declared commitment to act, to deliver and to make 2010 a "year of results for people."

Collectively through our organizations, spanning all continents of the world and representing some of the poorest and marginalised communities, we have been actively engaged in the MDG process over the past ten years. In this way, we are also committed to working with you to ensure that the summit delivers clear and concrete results for people, and in particular, measures to realise the human rights of the 1.4 billion who continue to live in poverty.

In this instance, we would like to make the following recommendations and reactions to your report and look forward to a continued dialogue over the next four months.

1. Ensure meaningful civil society participation in reviewing and achieving the MDGs

Civil society participation must be central to assessing progress on the MDGs and most importantly to achieving them. It is the key to making decisions taken by world leaders legitimate and effective and is at the heart of the global partnership for development envisaged by MDG 8. We welcome the statements within the draft report on the need for civil society involvement as a key success factor, which is also important for the way forward and agree the need to work in tandem with government. However, in order to achieve this, we urge you to support calls for the space for civil society to operate securely within a democratic environment and a legislative framework that allows autonomy over management and resources, alongside the freedom to express opinions without fear of harassment.

We also welcome the June Civil Society interactive hearings but also call for broad civil society participation in the summit itself, noting with concern the reduced space for civil society in the COP15 in Copenhagen and the 54th UN Commission on the Status of Women in New York. We call on you to make social dialogue a reality during this summit, to ensure that civil society including community based organizations, NGOs and Trade Unions assume their rightful place in the process.

2. A Gender and Social Exclusion based Audit of the MDGs must be a key part of the MDG Review

Your report recognises the urgent need to address inequality and social exclusion to accelerate MDG progress (para.52) as well as the appalling lack of progress on gender equality (para.18). We call on you to ensure that the review process adequately addresses discrimination and inequality by calling on Governments to

collaborate with CSOs to carry out an audit to measure to what extent achievements under the MDG process have reached marginalised and excluded communities. This audit must also include an analysis of the adverse effects of the global economic and financial crisis on marginalized groups, and in particular on women and girls, migrant workers, people with disabilities and ethnic minorities. It must also include a focus on the impact of violence against women and girls on progress across all of the MDGs. Without a specific focus on discrimination and exclusion and a recognition of their role as key elements of the cycle of poverty, the MDGs will never be achieved. That is why comprehensive measures to put inclusion and equality at the heart of the MDGs must form a key component of the Global Breakthrough Plan.

3. Ensure effective accountability and monitoring processes

Creating an accountability mechanism (para. 111) at the high level plenary meeting is a welcomed step forward especially since the agreement to do so is longstanding. The challenges to creating a viable mechanism—reconciling national and international monitoring and resolving differences in methods and terms within countries—are not insurmountable. Overcoming these challenges depends on a robust, credible, transparent and inclusive monitoring and accountability framework at the global and national levels and such a mechanism must form a key part of the MDG Breakthrough Plan. It must balance collecting quantitative and qualitative data without preference for one over the other and civil society must be recognized as an active stakeholder within the mechanism. Most importantly, the framework must consolidate global commitments related to the MDGs, bind them to deadlines and include monitoring and enforcing mechanisms. Governments must also ensure an increased role of existing national and international human rights accountability mechanisms, including by providing such institutions with legal authority to monitor and hear complaints on human rights, reporting on their MDG performance to such bodies and complying with their decisions.

In addition the issues of comprehensive governance and anti-corruption work must be taken into account. We welcome recognition of this in your report (para.57) however note with concern that no concrete measures to address the issues are proposed. We call on you to ensure that the concepts of transparency, accountability and participation form the guiding principles of the MDG Breakthrough Plan and that concrete strategies to target the governance-corruption nexus and promote accountable and transparent relationships between leaders, parliamentarians and civil society are included in the plan.

4. More Finance For Development and Effective Aid

We firmly believe that achievement of the MDGs by 2015 depends on international aid commitments being met, especially in times of financial and economic crisis, and note with concern that your report includes no reference to the 0.7% ODA/GNI committed by many OECD countries. Given that the OECD indicates many aid targets are not on track to be met, we call on you to remind Governments of their commitments and demand their compliance by putting in place binding timetables at national level towards the attainment of these targets. Critically, the finances needed for adaptation to climate change should not be taken from aid budgets.

Further, it is clear that the emergency proportions and challenges of the inter linked global crises require support for new forms of financing for development, most notably a Financial Transaction Tax. Such a tax would accelerate achievement of the MDGs in areas of full and productive employment, providing resources for social protection, essential services, and the financing needs of developing countries in climate mitigation and adaptation. This tax could also contribute to reforming the financial architecture by reducing speculation and excessive liquidity, thereby promoting greater equity and stability of the financial system.

5. Ensure integrated approaches to tackling the MDGs with a focus on the interdependence of human rights, gender equality, environmental sustainability and peace and security

We welcome the recognition of “the imperative of a holistic approach” (page 15), yet believe that insufficient action has been taken to overcome the unevenness of progress across the MDGs or to ensure effective coordination between inherently interlinked objectives. A number of MDG areas, such as nutrition, sanitation and maternal and child health, are particularly far-off track. A failure to link action on different goals means reduced progress across all MDG targets – education goals cannot be met without action on nutrition; child health goals without action on sanitation; poverty eradication without gender equality.

Further, cross-cutting issues such as gender equality, climate change, education throughout life, HIV/AIDS, disability and human rights are insufficiently integrated into MDG targets or interventions. The current emphasis on numerical targets risks shifting the primary focus away from those most in need— marginalized and vulnerable groups - to groups that are more easily reached in order to meet these targets.

We call on you to ensure that the Global MDG Breakthrough Plan agreed at the Summit, and any individual country commitments, give priority to investing in the most off-track targets and promoting a more integrated approach across the MDGs – e.g. the integrated treatment of neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) is the only way that treatment of these and other diseases of poverty will be accomplished. Furthermore, we believe the human rights framework in its entirety is the primary underlying guarantee for a transformational change of our society and for an ethic of non-discrimination and a life in dignity for all people.

6. Achievement of MDG 8 – genuine global partnership, trade and development

We welcome recognition of the emergency situation of meeting commitments to MDG8 but believe that the response required goes beyond the “business as usual” approach. While referring to the Doha Rounds of multilateral trade negotiations, your report is silent about the negative impact of Free Trade Agreements on achieving the MDGs, specifically food security, employment, accessibility of health services and availability of generic drugs. Similarly there is no mention in your report of the IMF’s continued enforcement of conditionalities such as trade liberalization and insistence on ultra-low inflation targets. We believe that trade liberalization and the imposition of related conditionalities which only benefit wealthier countries, multinationals and the elites of developing and developed countries do not form the basis for an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system. We call for the MDG Breakthrough Plan to recognize the rights of countries to only enter trade deals which support the needs and interests of their own people.

The recognition of the need for standstills on debt obligations, debt relief and debt restructuring to help countries facing severe financial distress as a consequence of the global crisis (para 79) is welcomed and we call for Fair and Transparent Debt workout mechanisms to be included in the MDG Breakthrough Plan.

7. Quality affordable public services

The need to ensure universal access to social services (para.51) is particularly welcome given that lack of access to quality public services from safe water and sanitation to basic health services continue to be the daily reality

for over half the world's population. Access to public services has been exacerbated by the aforementioned trade agreements as well as by debt, the global economic and financial crisis as well as natural disasters and conflict – the situation in Haiti being particularly relevant in this case. We call for fully funded national plans to achieve universal access to health, education throughout life, water and sanitation to be a core part of the MDG Breakthrough Plans. In addition, while welcoming the mentioned Social Protection Floor as a beginning of the realization of the right to social security under article 22 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and as a potential tool for achieving minimum standards and core obligations of human rights, we believe it must be coupled with State commitments to the progressive realization of higher levels of protection as resources become available.

8. Creating full and decent employment for all

Your report recognises that 300 million jobs will need to be created to return to pre-crisis levels of unemployment (para.14), and that even this will not guarantee decent work for all. Decent work - defined by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) to include more jobs, social protection, employment rights and social dialogue – is key to eradicating poverty and giving ordinary people the power to shape many other areas of their lives. Achievement of productive employment has a direct impact on the achievement of other goals and their targets - access to food, health services, education throughout life, and sustainable use of environment. It should be at the heart of the MDG Breakthrough Plan. The ILO has already set out how this can be achieved in its Global Jobs Pact and consequently should be engaged to play a central role on further work in this area including in particular, building skills in young people to access the labour market and gender equality measures to build on improved participation rates for women. The need for wage rises, the growing informalisation of work and jobless growth are other key issues which the MDG Breakthrough Plan must address.

9. Addressing Climate Change to achieve the MDGs

The recognition of the devastating impact of climate change on vulnerable populations (para.37) is welcomed however we would reiterate that unless concrete and urgent steps are taken to support mitigation and adaptation measures, progress under each MDGs risks being undermined. We call on you to ensure that any funds for climate change mitigation and adaptation are not a diversion from but are additional to development funds/ODA. In Copenhagen, over 100 nations agreed to mobilize \$30 billion dollars by 2012 and \$100 billion by 2020 for climate finance and clearly indicated that those funds would be 'new and additional.' While this is an important commitment, it still falls short of the necessary scale, and we call on you to remind leaders not only to meet but to increase this commitment and to ensure that countries do not back track on this pledge for 'fast start' financing. We also call on you to ensure that Your Advisory Group on Climate Finance recommend alternative sources of revenue not already designated as ODA to meet the Copenhagen obligations and ensure the achievement of the MDGs.

We note with concern that while referring to the need to reduce emissions to combat climate change (para.39), no reference is made to the commitment made by world leaders in Copenhagen to limit global average temperature rise to below 2 degrees Centigrade, nor to the fact that while this is an important first step, the more appropriate goal to avoid the worst consequences of climate change is 1.5 degrees.

SIGNED:

International

1. Action Aid International
2. ATD Quart Monde / Fourth World Movement
3. Alliance2015
4. CIVICUS - World Alliance for Citizen Participation
5. Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd
6. Congregation of the Mission
7. Dominican Leadership Conference
8. End Water Poverty
9. Education International
10. Family Care International
11. Franciscans International
12. Global Call to Action Against Poverty (GCAP) / Child and Youth Task Force
13. Global Call to Action Against Poverty (GCAP) / Feminist Task Force
14. Greenpeace International
15. Global Aids Alliance
16. Global Campaign for Education
17. Global South Initiative (GSI)
18. HELIO International
19. International Council for Adult Education (ICAE)
20. International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)
21. International Presentation Association of the Sisters of the Presentation.
22. Jubilee Debt Campaign
23. LetsStopAIDS
24. Loretto Community.
25. Marianists International
26. Micah Challenge
27. Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate
28. OneClimate
29. Oxfam International
30. Passionists International
31. Salesian Missions
32. Sightsavers International
33. Sisters of Charity Federation
34. Sisters of Mercy
35. Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur
36. Transparency International
37. Tear Fund
38. The Hunger Project
39. UNANIMA International
40. Water Aid
41. World Aids Campaign
42. World Toilet Organization (WTO)
43. Women's World Summit Foundation (WWSF)
44. World Christian Life Community
45. World Wildlife Fund (WWF)

Regional / National

46. 1Sky, USA
47. Abibimman Foundation, Ghana
48. Acción Internacion para la Salud (AIS), Bolivia
49. Ação Educativa, Brazil
50. African Network for Environment and Economic Justice (ANEJ)
51. AMCP/ GCAP France
52. Arab NGO Network for Development (ANND)
53. Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education
54. African Youth Initiative on Climate Change
55. Alliance Sud | Swiss Alliance of Development Organisations
56. Awaz Foundation Pakistan
57. Campaña Ningún Hogar Pobre en Argentina (GCAP Argentina)
58. Campaign for Good Governance - SUPRO, Bangladesh
59. Carmelite NGO
60. Canadian Labour Congress (CLC)
61. Centro de Investigación para la Acción Femenina (CIPAF), República Dominicana
62. Coordinadora Civil – GCAP Nicaragua
63. Energy crossroads-Ghana
64. EEN /GCAP Netherlands
65. Destiny Africa
66. Environmental Challenge Organisation, Singapore
67. FOCO Foro Ciudadano de Participación por la Justicia y los Derechos Humanos, Argentina
68. Fundacion SES, Argentina
69. GCAP El Salvador
70. GCAP Ghana/MDGs
71. GCAP Italy
72. GCAP Pakistan
73. GCAP Peru
74. GCAP Liberia
75. GCAP Mexico
76. GCAP South Africa
77. Ghana National Youth Coalition on Climate Change (GNYCCC)
78. Global Green, USA
79. Greening the Beige / 点废成绿, China
80. Humanitarian Organization for Migration Economics (HOME), Singapore
81. Indonesian Youth Network for Millennium Development Goals (Youth MDGs)
82. Indonesian Youth Forum for Climate Change (IYFFCC)
83. IndyACT, Lebanon
84. Instituto de Desarrollo Social y Promoción Humana (INDES), Argentina
85. Instituto para o Desenvolvimento da Cooperação e Relações Internacionais, Brazil
86. Jagaran, Nepal
87. Jubilee Centre Ndola, Zambia

88. KYCEP/GCAP Kenya
89. La Red de Encuentro de Entidades No Gubernamentales para el Desarrollo, Argentina
90. Lower Eastern NGOs Network (LENGO), Kenya
91. Make Poverty History, Canada
92. Mwangaza wa Kieni Women Rights Forum, Kenya
93. National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE)
94. Nektarina, Croatia
95. NGO Federation of Nepal
96. Niger Delta Women's Movement for Peace and Development
97. Noakhali Rural Development Society - NRDS, Bangladesh
98. Obama Health and Community Development Programme, OBACODEP, Kenya
99. Osukuru United Women Network, Uganda
100. ONE Singapore
101. Presencia Ciudadana Mexicana A.C, Mexico
102. Reseau Action Climat-France
103. Religions for Peace
104. Réseau des Organisations de la Société Civile pour le Développement, Burkina Fasso
105. Rwanda Initiative for Sustainable Environment and Agriculture (RISE)
106. South Asian Network for Social & Agricultural Development (SANSAD)
107. Seeds for Life, South Africa
108. Sri Lanka Association for Volunteer Effort (Save)
109. Sri Lanka United Nations Friendship Organization (SUNFO)
110. Taiwan Environmental Protection Union
111. The Seed Institute, Kenya
112. Vitae Civilis Instituto para o Desenvolvimento, Meio Ambiente e Paz, Brazil
113. Wada Na Todo Abhiyan (WNTA) / GCAP India