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Secretary-General's words  
Millennium Development Goals

**Draft 20 June 2011**

1. More than ten years since world leaders established goals and targets to free humanity from extreme poverty, hunger, illiteracy and disease, the Millennium Declaration and the MDG framework for accountability that derived from it have inspired development efforts and helped set priorities and focus interventions. In resolution (A/Res/65/1), *Keeping the promise: united to achieve the Millennium Development Goals* Member States requested the Secretary-General to report on progress in the implementation of the MDGs and to make recommendations for further steps to advance the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015. Further, in resolution (A/65/L.12) the General Assembly requested the Secr









## **E. The global economic crisis has slowed progress**

24. *The impact of the economic downturn on all MDGs still needs to be fully assessed.* Developing countries suffered substantial deceleration in economic growth and affected the fiscal space available for investing in the MDGs during the global crisis of 2008-2009. Their economies also saw a rather swift recovery helped, in quite a number of cases by fiscal stimulus measures including for social protection and services supporting the MDGs. Soaring global food and oil prices from mid-2011 have affected large numbers of poor in countries that lack fiscal space and adequate social protections programmes to shield them from the rising costs of their basic needs. It has been estimated, that an additional 44 million fell into poverty as a consequence of the rise in food prices between mid-

most vulnerable people. Economic growth has helped developing countries advance in many areas, but policies and interventions have not always been effective in creating positive feedback effects to make simultaneous progress on all MDG targets in a way that is equitable and inclusive by reaching those segments of the population that are most in need or are marginalized because of their gender, geographical location, ethnicity or disability. Progress on most MDG indicators for such marginalized groups generally has lagged well behind that for the average of the population as a whole. Rural dwellers lag behind the urban populations on all MDGs.

29. ***The global economy has rebounded, but opportunities for full, productive and decent work remain limited.*** Persistent unemployment high unemployment is affecting many workers in the developed countries, with in some countries disturbingly high jobless rates among the youth. In many developing countries, in contrast, aggregate employment levels are back up to pre-crisis levels. The aggregate trend masks a rise employment in the more vulnerable types of jobs. The percentage of workers engaged in “vulnerable employment” (own-account and unpaid family

**Table 2. Number of people living on less than \$2.00 a day  
(Millions)**

	1992 (1990-1999)	
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*international support.* This is essential for peace-building. Strengthen national capacities are also needed for policy and financial management, including core government functions, basic safety and security, basic service provision, economic growth with employment generation, and natural resource management within an inclusive political process. Further support to the international dialogue for Peace-building and State-building initiated in 2010 will help to identify the specific areas of support required by conflict-affected and fragile countries as a premise towards better prospects to make progress towards the full MDG agenda.

**b) Create conditions to support dynamic growth in sectors that are relevant to the**

***resources.*** Accelerated diffusion of existent agricultural sustainable practices (like low tillage, crop rotation, water harvesting, among many others) and the development of new technology requires strengthen partnerships between developed and developing countries as well as greater collaboration from the private sector. This would help to improve crop yields by increasing the

free additional benefits (e.g. family allowances, f



needs to take priority in the international development agenda. In this context, the reduction of export and agricultural production subsidies in developed countries needs to be accelerated in order to enhance income opportunities for farmers in developing countries and allow them to better compete in international markets.

56. ***Enhanced debt restructuring and relief modalities are critical for supporting development efforts in debt distressed countries.*** Helped by the global recovery, the external debt burden of developing countries as a group fell to 22 per cent of GDP in 2010, down from 24 per cent in the year before. Ample debt relief provided to low-income countries under the HIPC and multilateral debt relief initiatives has helped reduce their debt burdens substantially. Yet, quite a number of low and lower-middle-income countries remain at high risk of debt distress. Yet, 18 low and lower-middle-income countries remain at high risk or are in debt distress, while many more have either high public debt ratios. Adequate debt management strategies are needed at the national level. But, volatile global markets may quickly change the outlook for debt sustainability. In order to avoid that debt distress becomes an impediment to development efforts the framework for debt relief and restructuring needs to be enhanced. The existing framework for poor countries (HIPC) formally has come to an end, but given continued debt distress its extension should be urgently considered and making it accessible to all low income countries with debt problems, while at the same time a more comprehensive framework is developed for orderly sovereign debt workouts for heavily indebted countries more broadly. This was also recommended as part of the 2010 MDG Summit outcome, but this still needs to be followed up on.

57. ***Greater efforts are needed to promote the use of quality-assured, low-cost generic medicines at low or even no cost to the poor..*** At present, access to affordable essential medicines continues to be precarious with only 42 per cent availability in public health facilities. The limited availability of essential medicines in the public sector is forcing patients to buy with private health facilities, where availability also tends to be limited (64 per cent), but when available, only at much higher cost. Median prices in developing countries were, on average, 2.7 times higher than international reference prices in the public sector, and 6.1 times higher in the







63.

engaging in strategies for mitigation and adaptation to climate change, including better mechanisms to minimize the impact of natural disasters. But these strategies are not always fully aligned with human development strategies. Furthermore, planned actions do not seem to add to global targets that would need to be met to avoid the potentially catastrophic risks of surpassing certain environmental limits.<sup>18</sup> The world community should consider how to enhance global mechanisms for sustainable development as an integral part of the new agenda.

69. **Food security.** A relative neglect of agricultural development has caused food supplies to fall short of growth in demand because of population growth and changing consumption habits. In order to feed a growing world population, food production would need to increase by an estimated 70 per cent from present levels by 2050. Doing so with existing technologies and production systems would further push the world's natural environment to its limits by adding further to land degradation, water pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. Ensuring food security as part of a post 2015 development agenda would require its alignment with the sustainable development objectives both at the national



General Assembly, where part of the meeting, held on 14 June 2011, was devoted to a discussion of a post-2015 development framework.

79. ECOSOC and its subsidiary bodies have taken the lead in the follow-up to the outcomes of several major UN conferences and Summit. They are hence well positioned to serve as an important forum for intergovernmental discussions on a post-2015 framework. In this regard, the

Sustainable Development (“Rio+20”) provides one important opportunity to rethink development by bringing together economic, social and environmental facets of development.

84. Member States also requested the President of the General Assembly to hold a special event to follow-up efforts made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals, to be held in 2013 during the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly. The question of how to best advance the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015 could also be addressed during this event.