

Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization—2006

The following excerpts highlight the Secretary-General's closing remarks about the UN Millennium Project and the various efforts it was involved in, notably its work on the Millennium Development Goals.

Chapter 2: Development

Internationally agreed development goals and the Millennium Development Goals

Paragraph 21. Recent global political debates have rightly shifted the emphasis from principles to practicalities. In January 2005, the Millennium Project presented to me its report entitled *Investing in Development: A Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals*, stressing the need for practical measures and the feasibility of major success. I welcomed the analysis and the recommendations of the Millennium Project. In March of the same year, I submitted to the General Assembly my report entitled "In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all", which set out a strategic vision for collective action to achieve universal freedom from want, as well as freedom from fear and the realization of dignity for all. Both reports stressed that breakthrough action was required at all levels if implementation were to proceed at a scale commensurate with countries' development needs. Other Secretariat reports, such as the *Report on the World Social Situation 2005* and the *World Economic and Social Survey 2006*, have focused on the growing inequalities that are emerging both within and among countries and that make it challenging, but all the more imperative, to reach the Millennium Development Goals.

Paragraph 22. As the first major checkpoint since the Millennium Summit, 2005 saw a number of important commitments to a global development agenda, culminating at the 2005 World Summit. All Member States emphasized the vital role played by the major United Nations conferences and summits in shaping a broad development vision and in identifying commonly agreed objectives, and strongly reaffirmed the Millennium Development Goals as the shared, time-bound, integrated and measurable framework for development cooperation. For the United Nations system, it has been extremely encouraging to see the Goals gain political momentum with each passing year. Citizens around the world are rightfully calling upon their Governments to be ever bolder in following through on the Goals. As a result, international development efforts have regained ambition, fusing the possibility for success with a heightened sense of urgency.

Paragraph 23. At the 2005 World Summit (see General Assembly resolution 60/1), Member States agreed to a practical framework for decade-long action when they committed to embedding the global goals into the country-level processes where operational and budgetary decisions are made. In particular, Member States agreed to adopt, by the end of 2006, comprehensive national strategies to achieve the internationally agreed development goals and objectives, including the Millennium

Development Goals, supported by the global partnership for development agreed in Monterrey. Member States also committed to launching “quick-impact initiatives”, immediate steps that can save and improve millions of lives within the span of only a few years. These include actions to distribute anti-malaria bed nets, free of charge, to eliminate user fees in basic education and health and to expand school meal programmes using locally produced food.

Paragraph 24. World leaders further agreed to several other important targets at the 2005 World Summit. I am therefore recommending the incorporation of these commitments into the set of targets used to follow up on the Millennium Declaration. This includes: a new target under Millennium Development Goal 1: to make the goals of full and productive employment and decent work for all, including for women and young people, a central objective of our relevant national and international policies and our national development strategies; a new target under Goal 5: to achieve universal access to reproductive health by 2015; a new target under Goal 6: to come as close as possible to universal access to treatment for HIV/AIDS by 2010 for all those who need it; and a new target under Goal 7: to significantly reduce the rate of loss of biodiversity by 2010. The existing target on developing decent and productive work for youth, now under Millennium Development Goal 8, would be encompassed by the new target (under Goal 1). Technical work to select the appropriate indicators would be undertaken by the Inter-agency and Expert Group on Millennium Development Goal Indicators. In this work, the system will be able to build on the Ministerial Declaration on Employment Generation and Decent Work adopted at the 2006 session of the Economic and Social Council, which calls for the development of 10-year action plans and assigns the Council a clear role in monitoring progress in its implementation.

Paragraph 26. Of much greater quantitative importance for development finance, 16 of 22 members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee have now either met the official development assistance target of 0.7 per cent of gross national income or set timetables for doing so by 2015. In May 2005, the 15 Development Assistance Committee members that are members of the European Union each agreed to meet a minimum target of 0.51 per cent of gross national income by 2010, en route to 0.7 per cent by 2015. Admirably, Member States that joined the European Union after 2002 set a development assistance target of 0.33 per cent of gross national income by 2015. The Group of Eight summit held in Gleneagles, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, built on this momentum with an agreement to augment total annual development assistance by \$50 billion by 2010, with half of the increase directed to Africa. An increasing number of donors are meeting the target to provide at least 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of their gross national income to assist the least developed countries, and official development assistance to least developed countries has thus increased sharply in recent years. Innovative sources of financing have also been explored and various initiatives are being implemented.

Paragraph 27. If history judges 2005 for its promises, then 2006 must be judged on implementation. Are we on course to look back, in 2015, and say that no effort was spared? So far the record is mixed. The words of 2005 have yet to have a direct impact on the lives of the poor people they are meant to help. Nor have they produced the implementation breakthroughs required to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. The challenges remain most pressing in Africa, particularly sub-Saharan Africa, where the proportion of people living in extreme poverty is essentially unchanged since 1990 and the absolute number has increased dramatically.

Paragraph 28. There has been progress, however. For example, the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative has followed a prompt timetable towards completion; international malaria control efforts are gathering speed, backed by increased donor assistance; momentum is under way to launch the African Green Revolution agreed upon at the 2005 World Summit; and recent global commitments have also prompted new notions of investment scale-up to tackle broader development priorities. To ensure that Member States can respond to their countries' development priorities, last year I personally wrote to all Heads of State and Government offering United Nations assistance and support. I am heartened to note that the United Nations country teams are currently helping many countries to prepare and implement Millennium Development Goal-based national development strategies.

Paragraph 29. Putting the Millennium Development Goals into action, the United Nations has collaborated with Governments and other stakeholders to support so-called millennium villages throughout Africa. The project began with a single village in Sauri, Kenya, in August 2004 and has expanded to 12 sites in Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania. Among other successes, the villages are transforming themselves from areas of chronic hunger, tripling their crop production in a short time. Using scientific technology and understanding the agro-ecological zones of the areas, villagers are now able to sell their produce in nearby markets.

Paragraph 31. From the work of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues to ensure that policies to attain the Millennium Development Goals reach out to indigenous people to the likely conclusion of the first ever convention on protection and promotion of the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities this year, progress towards policy implementation is evident. Another key issue from the 2005 World Summit — how to realize the great potential of migration to advance worldwide development — will be addressed at the forthcoming high-level dialogue in the General Assembly. This offers a unique opportunity for the Organization to move policies towards economic and social progress for migrants and their countries of origin and destination.

Paragraph 33. In spite of these advances, progress remains much too incomplete. Most fundamentally, international financial commitments remain inadequate in terms of

timing, volume and quality for achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. Many of the new promises will take years to materialize, so it is difficult for low-income countries to begin real investment scale-up. Aggregate official development assistance reached a record high of \$106 billion in 2005, up from \$69 billion in 2003, but only a small fraction of this nominal increase actually represented additional finance to support real ground-level investments in the countries that need them most. Even multilateral debt relief yields little immediate gain for qualifying countries, since benefits are backloaded and additional financing is still necessary to ensure that multilateral development banks are adequately resourced to finance scale-up programmes. It therefore remains as important as ever for developed countries without timetables for achieving the 0.7 per cent aid target to set them as soon as possible. Moreover, aid delivery mechanisms require dramatic improvement, building on the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.

Paragraph 34. Another cause for concern is the suspension of negotiations of the World Trade Organization's Doha Development Round. Developing countries require greater market access and support for capacity development in order to develop the longterm competitiveness that sustains economic development. Following the Ministerial Conference held in Hong Kong, China, in December 2005, which produced few areas of agreement and little momentum, the talks were stalled in July 2006. In the coming months, leadership will be required from all sides, particularly the developed countries, if negotiations are to be saved. It is also important that the Aid for Trade Initiative endorsed at Hong Kong be pursued.

35. The costs of delay and inaction are borne globally, not just locally. One need only consider the challenges posed by emerging diseases such as avian influenza to understand the shared and urgent global interest in supporting practical development steps in all countries. We must recognize the nature of global trust at stake and the danger that many developing countries' hopes could be irredeemably pierced if even the greatest anti-poverty movement in history is insufficient to break from "business as usual". As we move towards implementation in 2006 and beyond, we still must spare no effort.

Paragraph 42. World leaders made an unprecedented commitment in the Millennium Declaration to recognize and provide for the special needs of Africa. The need for urgent and concerted action was compelling, as Africa continues to suffer more than its share of the hardships caused by violent conflict, poverty and disease.

Paragraph 43. It must be recognized, however, that encouraging developments have taken place in Africa during the past 10 years. The number of democratically elected national Governments in Africa has increased significantly, and economic growth in some African countries is relatively strong and sustained. There has been a marked resolve by African leaders to take control of the continent's destiny. The Organization of African Unity has been transformed into the African Union, which continues to strengthen its peacekeeping and mediation capacities and its peerreview mechanism, and implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) is moving ahead.

Paragraph 44. Yet major challenges remain. Sub-Saharan Africa lags behind the rest of the developing world in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. About half of the world's armed conflicts, and the vast majority of United Nations peacekeepers, are in Africa. There is a high prevalence of HIV/AIDS in many countries.

Paragraph 46. The Africa Fertilizer Summit held in June 2006 in Abuja mapped out a common strategy for the continent to achieve food self-sufficiency and launch the rural economic transformation required to overcome extreme poverty. African leaders set targets for 2007 and 2008 en route to a 2015-based plan of action to help farmers move to higher-yielding land practices, with increased use of improved seeds, fertilizers and irrigation.

Paragraph 47. Meanwhile, the Millennium Project launched the Millennium Villages initiative, which aims to identify how recent global commitments can be translated to Government- and community-led development efforts to further the Millennium Development Goals. Ten countries so far are partnering with UNDP in the initiative.

Paragraph 53. During my tenure, I have seen a greater understanding among Governments that human security is also threatened by environmental degradation. The continuing increase in the number of ratifications of major multilateral environmental agreements shows the growing commitment of countries to address global environmental issues. Ensuring environmental sustainability is one of the main pillars of the global fight against poverty, and it is essential for achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The United Nations has been active in seeking ways to improve and sustain the environment.