

**Lansering av rapporten fra FNs tusenårsprosjekt, Oslo, 17.01.05.  
Utviklingsminister Hilde Frafjord Johnson.**

## **Hovedbudskap**

- The Millennium project has provided us with an important tool – thank you. The Millennium Project report is an invaluable source of knowledge and documentation. The overview is an impressive condensation of the work done in the Task Forces – 3 000 pages into a small booklet. Naturally, not all aspects can be reflected as thoroughly as each of us may have wanted for the elements we feel are more important than others – some of my questionmarks derives from this undoubtedly. But – this is an extremely important tool for our common endeavor to make the Millennium Development Goals come true.

Two remarks before I go into more detail:

- First: One an aggregate level - I read one bad and one good message in the report:

The bad news first: we will not improve the lives of sufficient number of poor people to a sufficient degree – if we continue as today.

The good news: We can reach the MDGs if we reform – deep enough and quickly enough. We can make it happen - if we really try.

Secondly: The report rightly stresses that people have rights – that the development goals reflect the basic human rights every single one has - right to education, health, shelter and security. Thus development policy is based on human rights - not charity, not usefulness to us – rights. That's the starting point. When we start here, we easily understand that the notion of empowerment, the ability to participate, the right to voice dissent, all are crucial

to the development process. We also understand that the development process is a political process, in which people and groups have different interests.

We are determined to work closely with the UN and all other partners to ensure that this opportunity is not lost.

We have a unique opportunity at the UN summit level meeting in September this year. We must take decisive steps towards poverty reduction and meeting the goals we have set for ourselves through the MDGs – this year.

Add that our success in beating world poverty would contribute to improving our collective security - as a bonus. For those who doubt the relationship between conflict and poverty I strongly recommend they take a look at fig. 1 on page 8 of the report. It demonstrates to which degree a decrease in poverty increases the outlook for stability. Talk about rate of return on an investment opportunity!

### **Kommentarer**

- The Indian Ocean tsunami has affected us all. The global response has demonstrated a strong public willingness to help the victims of this enormous tragedy that became so visible and so close. This is heartening to witness. Yet – we know it is not enough. Even more people than the high number of casualties from the tsunami die every week - much less visibly - from lack of food, HIV/AIDS and easily curable diseases.

The message: People now see the world as one. I hope that this wave of public commitment will endure and spread - to become a permanent commitment to reach poor people everywhere – a real partnership to fight poverty – everywhere. This report proves it is possible to fight poverty – we can make it reality.

- The report documents the large gains to be achieved for all of us by meeting the MDGs. It removes any excuses for not trying, not doing what we know is necessary and possible.
- The report stresses that sound policies and governance is a prerequisite for any developing country to reach the MDGs. I agree. I very much appreciate the conclusion that no country with sound policies and governance should be prevented from reaching the MDGs because of lack of resources. If they deliver – we should deliver – and increase aid-levels and provide market access.
- If I could comment one two of the governance-related aspects of the report:
  - 1) We know more or less what is needed in order to achieve good governance, and we stress the need to build proper institutions. We should also pay attention to what we can do on our side to reduce any incentive for bad governance: The reforms underway internationally to fight corruption and increase transparency is important: we realize now that rich country legislation and practice influences choices in developing countries. Bad governance has roots there – and here. One reason for optimism is that more people, more governments and more companies are

willing to talk about this today. Conventions have been agreed, laws are being revised, and voluntary efforts undertaken – I believe we move in the right direction here.

2) Another governance-related comment: I fully agree about the need to involve civil society, broadly speaking, in governance on all levels. The report also mentions democracy – in my opinion the crucial role of democratic institutions is key – and we could do a lot more to support democratic institutions like political parties and parliaments and include more into the web of international relations on that level.

- The report underlines that rich countries must deliver in their promise to reform in key areas; trade (market access, labor access), debt and aid. I could not agree more. Rich countries' promise to be more open to developing countries' needs should now be delivered upon. Actually – it should have been delivered upon yesterday. Without better market access for developing countries – we will not make it. I am not saying trade is everything – I am saying that trade is an important element – and no less important than other elements. I will enter a small New Year's wish here: we could use some more public demand for pro-poor trade policies in OECD-countries. That would be helpful.
- The report is admirably clear on one point: aid works. It is equally clear on the twin-point so to speak: aid works only if we do it right. The report teams up with our efforts to reform international donorship – I welcome it. Most recommendations stress the necessity to reinforce the reform agenda that we have started – I will mention some here. Some ideas are new – they are interesting – we will study them closely.

- I welcome that the report stresses the need to build donor activity on the developing countries own plans for poverty reduction. We should support the poverty reduction plans, assist in making the decisionmaking processes better and more inclusive, and use them as basis for our own aid-efforts. Many plans have shortcomings – my feeling is that they improve as the second generation is underway. But the important two elements here are: support, and use as basis for all aid-efforts. (Whether we can actually recommend the development of a new set of long term-plans – I need to examine in more detail).
- Secondly: better coordination of donor-effort. I believe that the Millennium project here delivers a very strong message and that this will help us move this agenda forward.
- Third – we need to reform the way aid is delivered – away from small projects – into support for recipient countries’ own work. We shall continue efforts to pool resources with recipient countries – so that they can use them where they feel it is most useful – provided we support their overall strategy and they have sound policies. Budget support and sector-programs are important tools here. This is difficult – but important.
- Fourth; donor-levels. Very simply the report demonstrates that if all OECD-countries delivered on their promise to provide 0,7 pst of Gross Domestic Income in international aid – the financing gap would disappear. The report is even a little bit more modest - if Official Development Aid were to rise to 0.54% on average for the OECD-countries – this should be sufficient to reach the MDGs – if all other elements were in place. This is the cost of a videogame for each person in

the OECD-area. Do you hear that – a video-game per person?

- Donors should also be more predictable; finance-ministers need to know approximately how much money they shall receive next year. Thus, in order to move this agenda forward – my government is currently exploring modalities for giving multi-year funding commitments.
- Fifth: donor reform includes UN-reform. Just as in the Tsunami- relief operations – the UN must lead. The UN is reforming to meet the new realities on the ground, but progress is uneven and too slow. There are too few examples of the UN joining forces in broader, joint undertakings, harmonized with other donors, aligned with national programs. This has to change. I welcome that the report deals with *some* of the challenges meeting the MDGs poses to the UN. Secretary-General Annan deserves the support of all member countries in his efforts to modernize the organization.
- Some areas where I feel the overview report could have been stronger – and where I assume the individual reports go into more detail and the follow up will be clearer:

Gender aspects. All MDGs have strong gender aspects, and two of them are gender specific. Thus, in addition to directly addressing the special needs of girls and women, gender equality and improved women's rights are basic and general premises for meeting the MDGs.

On environment: The report could have been clearer in addressing the need for all efforts to be environmentally sustainable. In addition to the

specific environment related MDG targets (*target 9-11*) the environmental sustainability of all efforts for all other MDGs should have been more clearly emphasized. In addition to the specific environment related MDG targets, the need for environmental sustainability of efforts for all other MDGs could have been more clearly emphasized.

The report does not in any great detail address the challenges of meeting the MDGs in countries under stress by conflict or other causes. The report therefore only to a limited extent amounts to a plan for achieving the MDGs in this, unfortunately, quite large category of countries. We know more, but not enough, about how to make assistance conflict-sensitive and how to prevent conflict from erupting into disruptive violence. My government issued a Strategic Framework for Peace Building last year – this is only a beginning. These issues will be central in the UN-reform agenda in the future.

- o Finally, let me just enter one small tone of reservation: the report suggests a number of useful “quick win actions” that to contribute towards the MDGs. Although alluring, I would like to caution against creating an impression that such “quick gains” can deliver the MDGs. We have witnessed already too many instances where a “quick-win” seem to be a success and help many people – only to witness that they collapse when institutions necessary to sustain the success are not up to the task. So – I need more conviction - so far I believe we need to be very careful when deciding whether a quick-win or the slower-but-systematic way is the more appropriate.

- Let me just thank the team behind the report – the Millennium Project:  
Thanks to you, we now have a stronger argument than ever - we can fight global poverty – if we reform. So – we just need to get to work – together.