

# Recommendations

## A civil society Benchmark for the 5-year Review of the Millennium Declaration

From 14-16 September 2005 the implementation of the Millennium Declaration will be assessed in the light of developments that have taken place since its adoption in 2000. At the time of the Declaration's adoption it was seen to contain the agenda for eradicating poverty in the first part of the new Millennium.

The Millennium Declaration built on commitments adopted by the international community in the preceding decade at a series of conferences and summits - including those addressing the environment; human rights; gender equality and equity; social development; the rights of children; population; sexual and reproductive rights; the right to shelter and the elimination of racism and discrimination. As part of these commitments the 1995 UN Social Summit acknowledged that the eradication of poverty was achievable and adopted a strategy to meet this objective. This strategy was based on an all embracing concept of development which not only included a focus on poverty but also saw full employment and social inclusion as equally important aspects of the strategy. Civil society played an active role around the conferences of the 1990s, calling on governments to adopt time-bound commitments to promote development through ending poverty, achieving full employment and diminishing social exclusion. The engagement of civil society with these processes has resulted in the establishment of coalitions of organizations across the world that actively monitor the implementation of the commitments made by governments.

Since the 2000 Millennium Summit, critical events have taken place - from the 2001 attacks on the United States and subsequent military interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq, to the Asian tsunami - that have shaken the international community.

A military concept of security is prevailing, not based on a notion of security for all - human security in all its dimensions - but promoting security for some through a concentration of power in the hands of a few. In addition, by avowing a doctrine of unilateral pre-emptive military action, and going to war without the authorization of the global community based on a decision of the UN Security Council, the United States and its allies have undermined the very purpose for which the UN was created.

A unipolar world order is being created in which the dominant power promotes a single set of values covering all aspects of life, whether economic, political, cultural, religious or ethical. Differences are inevitably emphasized, re-enforcing divisions and intolerance on which conflict is built.

Security cannot be assured through force. Conflict cannot be resolved with a gun. It is only when we seriously confront the inequalities that divide us,

promote social justice and assure the human rights of all that we can hope to achieve a stable future.

The urgency of doing so cannot be underestimated. The very real threat of destruction to human life in its current form, and to contemporary flora and fauna, posed by global warming has yet to be sufficiently addressed. Its impact on people is starting to be felt, with the most marginalized communities being affected most. While the devastating effects of the Asian tsunami may not be the result of climate change, it certainly emphasizes the vulnerability of communities when nature's forces are unleashed by changes to the natural world in which we live. Without doubt, we all share responsibility for ensuring that the threats to life and the sustainability of our planet are overcome, not least by adopting responsible lifestyles. However, governments, and those in positions of power, have a particular responsibility to ensure that the practices promoted and allowed by government are consistent with the continued sustainability of our environment.

The colossal destruction of the Indian Ocean earthquake and resulting tsunami, together with the consequences that followed, not only increased awareness of international responsibility but also highlighted the different realities of security for people living in different contexts. This is in contrast to the consequences of other crises, such as that in Darfur, that have an equal impact on people directly affected. And equally to the silent, but ongoing deaths of millions of people that could be prevented. At least the tsunami has sharpened the public eye for the complexity and the ethical intolerance of inequality between the very rich and the very poor.

These events emphasize the interconnected nature of the world in which we live where the consequences of decisions, actions, and events occurring in one part of the world increasingly impact on people and communities globally. They also graphically illustrate the consequences of the gross inequalities that exist today, not only in the distribution of wealth and income, but also in access to decision makers and power, and to the resources that sustain life itself. These inequalities, which directly contribute to and sustain poverty, are central to the creation and maintenance of instability.

The review of the Millennium Declaration, and the positions taken by governments in preparing the review, will be seen in the light of these events.

In September 2005, and during the preparations for the review in the preceding months, the international community has a chance to address the crucial challenges of our time and put in place the ambitious strategy that is needed to secure the future of the world for generations to come. Recognition of all

human rights must be a guiding principle. Success requires the involvement of all stakeholders, both in the preparations for the High Level event in September 2005 and around the event itself.

People throughout the world know what is at stake. Those who lived through the Asian tsunami understand the fragility of life. Refugees in Darfur understand the consequences of insecurity. Communities decimated by HIV/AIDS struggle to survive. Farmers who lose the livelihood on which they and their families depend know what it means to be absolutely destitute. For these, and the millions of people like them, the inequalities of our world have real consequences.

It is on the basis of this kind of experience that civil society organizations call on the leaders of the international community to take bold and decisive action when they meet in New York in September. In particular we urge world leaders to make the following commitments:

### **Benchmark 1: From poverty eradication towards diminishing inequality**

The world has the means to eradicate poverty. It can and must be done. Hunger, malnutrition and being condemned to a life in poverty are an affront to humanity and a denial of basic human rights. We therefore have an obligation to eradicate poverty and must take all possible actions to ensure that this objective is achieved. What is lacking is the political will to make it happen. The international community must not only re-affirm its commitment to eradicating poverty worldwide in the shortest time possible, but each government must also recognize its individual and collective obligation to put in place effective strategies for eradicating poverty.

Poverty is not a statistic and is not defined by USD 1, or even USD 2 a day. There is no benefit in singling out the very poor from the almost very poor or the poor among the rich in developing countries from the poor among the rich in developed countries. All must be addressed. Poverty is based on radically unequal distribution of income, but also in similarly unequal distribution of assets, unequal access to opportunities for work and employment, social services and benefits, and in the unequal distribution of political power, access to information and political participation. This is largely the result of deep-seated and persistent imbalances in the current workings of the global economy which according to the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization is *ethically unacceptable and politically unsustainable*. Women are most often among those who suffer these inequalities.

Inequality and social injustice are major sources of national and international instability and conflict. Those struggling to survive seek the means to live, while those who have more than enough protect what they have and all too often seek to accumulate more. An adequate response to poverty will only be found in comprehensive and redistributive initiatives which address all aspects of inequality, where particular attention is given to the gender dimension. A concerted emphasis on social development constitutes a major contribution to the eradication of poverty, with emphasis on the provision of basic health, basic education, water and sanitation. Achieving the MDGs within the agreed time lines is only the most urgent part of what is necessary to meet this requirement.

Security and stability can only be achieved when social justice is assured, when everyone's rights to the means of life - water, health, food, shelter, etc - are respected, and when everyone has access to the means to a livelihood for themselves, their families and their communities.

*Governments should commit themselves to eradicate poverty and to achieving social justice.*

This benchmark requires:

- a re-affirmation of the conviction that poverty can be eradicated, as they did 10 years ago in Copenhagen;
- a commitment to eradicate poverty in each and every country by 2025, where poverty is defined within each country on the basis of different national realities;
- a commitment that national strategies for eradicating poverty be defined within each country by 2007, drawn up through a transparent and consultative process, in which the poor are actively engaged;
- the implementation of policies dedicated to reducing inequalities, including assuring universal affordable access to quality core public social services, redistributive tax policies, respect for the core labour standards;
- a halt to policies of privatization and "liberalization" which lead to the concentration of public resources in fewer and often non-national hands;
- strengthening of the reporting and review requirements of the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights to ensure more frequent and thorough reviews of states' fulfilment of human rights obligations to their citizens;
- a commitment to report regularly to the UN ECOSOC on progress in implementing these strategies. The first such reports to be made no later than 2007.

## Benchmark 2: Better strategies for development: the role of the International Financial Institutions (IFIs)

A country's development strategies should be informed by the experiences of its people. Over the past decades extensive macroeconomic conditions have been attached to the provision of development aid and loans as well as for the cancellation of debt with disastrous consequences for social development. Policies of structural adjustment, liberalization and privatization have increased inequalities, not diminished them, impacting most severely on communities and families with least access to decent work and the means to a sustainable livelihood. For the majority of the people living in poverty, of which a disproportionate number are women and children, agriculture and fisheries provide the only viable livelihood for themselves and their families. Economic reforms imposed on developing countries have promoted export-oriented production, particularly of primary products for which world prices have dramatically declined, and an increased control over agriculture and fisheries by corporate interests. The result has been increased impoverishment for large sections of developing country societies for whom there are no alternative options.

The notion that measures to increase trade will lead to the eradication of poverty has not worked, as can be seen from various statistical analysis covering the 20 years since the imposition of trade liberalization policies and export-led growth models of economic development. While Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) of the IMF and the World Bank were supposedly introduced to address these negative effects, they have not done so.

In theory their aim to ensure an adequate poverty focus in a country's development strategies and the allocation of development aid with an increased sense of ownership on the part of the recipient country is in line with the spirit of MDG 8 and its "global partnership for development". Experience shows, however, that this remains far from reality with numerous macroeconomic conditions still being attached to aid. World Bank loans support specific programmes of reform which include actions (conditionalities) considered critical by the World Bank and IMF to the success of the programme. Loan negotiations are still conducted behind closed doors within Ministries of Finance and Central Banks. The failed macroeconomic policies of the past continue to be promoted. Not surprisingly, the "ownership" of national development strategies has not lived up to its promises.

The withdrawal of the state and the privatization of service provision - of health care, water, edu-

cation - increasingly deny access to those unable to pay for what constitutes a basic human right. Globalization and liberalization of trade, the corporatization of agriculture and other forms of production should not be the guiding frameworks for agriculture. Instead, sustainable local livelihoods, food sovereignty, environment regeneration and social concerns should be the guiding principles.

*Governments should promote development strategies based on the needs and experience of people.*

This benchmark requires:

- the strengthening of national policy making, based on nationally defined needs and priorities identified through participatory processes. These should be defined in a rights based framework and allow the self-defined interests and objectives of street sellers, industrial workers, fishers, and field-workers to be clearly reflected in national development strategies;
- transparency in the process for establishing national development strategies that supports the effective participation of national stakeholders in the formulation of national policy;
- the establishment of PRSPs that respect real ownership through nationally defined decision making, with the effective participation of civil society, and accountability to national parliaments;
- agrarian and aquarian reforms to be carried out to ensure farmers, fisherfolk and other rural communities have access, control, ownership and management of productive resources. A special focus needs to be given to women ensuring the maintenance of their control over, and access to resources such as seeds.

## Benchmark 3: Achieving gender equality and equity

Poverty reduction and the empowerment of women are interconnected in many ways. Women constitute the majority of the world's poor and often carry the social and economic burden of looking after the most vulnerable members of the community, such as children, the elderly and the sick. Women and girls living in poverty are also at greater risk of becoming victims of gender based violence, are more likely to be infected with HIV/AIDS, to die at childbirth and to be sold into slavery. Economic reforms that dismantle social obligations of the state and privatise public goods, impact disproportionately on women and deepen gender inequality as women are pressed into filling the gap. At the same time women constitute crucial active agents in any strategy to eradicate poverty. Denying full and free access of



women to the economic sector and labour market is not only a denial of their basic human rights but is also detrimental to a country's economic development. Poverty cannot be tackled successfully without ensuring equality of access to the means of livelihood between women and men, and equity of opportunity. While gender equality and equity are fundamental objectives in themselves, they are also an essential pre-condition for eradicating poverty.

The MDG targets relating to women's empowerment (MDG 3 and MDG 5) must be achieved, but are insufficient alone. To achieve true gender equity, the concept must be understood in a comprehensive way and cannot just be limited to the indicators included in the MDGs.

The political declaration adopted by governments at the 10 year review of the Beijing Women's Conference in March 2005, "emphasize(d) that the full and effective implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action is essential to achieving the internationally agreed development goals, [...] and stress the need to ensure the integration of a gender perspective in the high-level plenary meeting on the review of the Millennium Declaration."

*Governments should fully recognize the centrality of gender equality and equity for any development strategy to be successful.*

This benchmark requires:

- *increased emphasis to be given to achieving gender equality in implementing national, regional and international development strategies, through establishing meaningful targets and indicators to measure its progress;*
- *increasing primary school completion rate and secondary school access for girls; ensuring secure tenure of property, land and inheritance rights for women; ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive health services, and promoting and protecting the full enjoyment by women of all human rights; promoting equal access to sustainable employment and adequate labor protections; promoting gender balance in government decision making; and expanding efforts to combat violence against women and girls.*
- *the identification of explicit measures for achieving gender equality in the context of MDG Goal 8, particularly to ensure that gender equality is promoted within PRSPs and the new aid architecture;*
- *a compact between donors and their partners to allocate 10% of resources specifically dedicated to promoting gender equality and in*

*support of specific activities to promote women's empowerment;*

- *each and every government to implement its commitments on promoting gender equality made in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1978) and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA, 1995) as well as the adoption of an optional protocol to CEDAW.*

#### **Benchmark 4: Taking urgent action in the face of climate change**

The complex ecological balance of our planet, which provides the basis for life itself, is facing unprecedented threats, largely as a consequence of development strategies pursued by humankind. Our very survival may depend on immediate radical action being taken to combat the unsustainable pressures that we have created. We can already see increasing threats to communities around the world. Those most effected by the immediate consequences of ecological degradation and environmental change are those already most vulnerable - particularly marginalized communities and people living in poverty.

While many aspects of the world's ecological balance needs to be addressed, Global warming and changes to the global climate represent a significant threat. Increased temperatures have already accelerated glacial melting in the Arctic and recent scientific studies predict it will diminish by 50% by the end of the century. Predictions estimate that by 2050 more than a million distinct life forms will have been lost.

While actions are being taken these have been slow and insufficient, particularly given the potential calamitous consequences that may occur. The reluctance of some nations, particularly those disproportionately responsible for global warming emission, to sign up to the Kyoto Protocol must not prevent urgent action being taken. With the Kyoto Protocol entering into force in February 2005, implementation of emission reduction and funding commitments must proceed urgently. Furthermore, given recent indicators on the speed and depth of global warming new more stringent reductions of greenhouse gases must be established quickly.

Development patterns pursued by humankind over the past three centuries, and in particular during the past few decades, are the principal source of green house emissions responsible for climate change. Wealthy nations, and the lifestyles of their populations, have generated most of these emissions. The threat that climate change poses to all

humanity requires a common response, with radical and immediate actions being taken to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and to address its consequences. The primary responsibility for doing so must be borne by those that have benefited most from the causes.

As part of the need for urgent and radical action to be taken, future strategies for energy generation must give priority to renewable safe and non polluting sources.

Given the life threatening nature of this threat, the interests of the global community must not be held hostage by those few countries that do not join the common effort.

*Governments should take urgent and bold action to address climate change and the environmental degradation of our planet.*

This benchmark requires:

- *explicit recognition of the serious and immediate threat that climate change poses;*
- *immediate implementation of measures for reducing emissions included in the Kyoto Protocol;*
- *an urgent start in negotiations for the immediate revision of existing commitments and to agree on long-term action in an equitable global framework that will prevent the most dangerous impacts of climate change;*
- *the provision of the necessary additional financial resources by a substantial increase of the funding level of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the introduction of emission related user charges for international airspace and the oceans, and the introduction of an international aviation fuel tax aimed at doing justice to the climate damage caused by flight traffic and, at the same time, overcoming the indirect subsidy to the aviation industry via the previous zero tax rate on aviation fuel;*
- *measures to be established to prepare the most vulnerable communities for those impacts that can no longer be avoided - as well as measures to protect the world's flora and fauna;*
- *a commitment to the principal of common but differentiated responsibility, as agreed in the Rio Declaration, where people and countries bear the costs of addressing climate change in proportion to their contribution to the causing factors;*
- *a commitment to increasing use of renewable forms of energy generation.*

## Benchmark 5: Stopping militarization and the proliferation of weapons

The much hoped for “peace dividend” from the end of the cold war has failed to materialise. New forms of militarization have emerged as governments, opposition movements and other groups seek to impose their will through the force of arms. Whatever the justification given, in almost all circumstances military intervention has not brought the stability sought. On the contrary the result is less stability, as is seen in Iraq. In addition the provision of humanitarian aid, that should be available on a non discriminatory basis for people directly affected by disasters and conflict, is increasingly being associated with military objectives through the use of military personnel in its distribution.

The associated global trade in arms has an enormous human impact, fuelling and sustaining conflicts, promoting insecurity and undermining development across some of the poorest regions of the world. At least every minute a person is killed somewhere in the world due to armed violence. In a number of countries precious natural resources such as diamonds and copper are being exploited in exchange for weapons used to commit terrible atrocities. Women and children are particularly vulnerable; women and girls are raped at gun point; and an estimated 300,000 children have become soldiers in conflicts around the world. The proliferation of the arms trade is a cruel example of the incoherence in international donor policy.

The states that profit most from this trade are the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, which together make up around 80% of all reported exports of conventional arms. Between 1998 and 2001 the United States, United Kingdom and France earned more from the arms trade than they contributed to international aid. Furthermore the relaxation of controls on the sales of arms following the 11 September is leading to a new proliferation of weapons. Arms continue to be channelled to countries with poor human rights records or developing countries which spend more on defence than on basic social services, thus diverting resources from these areas such as health and education.

The international community must demonstrate coherence with its own commitments to promote peace and stability in the world.

*Governments should commit to a real and drastic reduction in military spending, and to put in place a stringent, legally binding control on the sale of arms.*

This benchmark requires:

- a binding commitment to at least halve military spending in each and every country by the

*year 2015 and use the resulting “peace dividend” for social and environmental purposes;*

- a binding commitment to promote general disarmament and the ban of all nuclear arms and of all weapons of mass destruction;
- the adoption of the global Arms Trade Treaty which can provide some safeguards in what is, at present, an unregulated market. The Treaty would ensure that all governments control arms according to the same international standards;
- a commitment for the removal of the millions of illegal and surplus arms which are already in circulation;
- a commitment to respect the neutrality and impartiality of humanitarian aid, both towards its distribution and the humanitarian organizations entrusted with this task.

## Benchmark 6: Financing of development

Generating the financial resources necessary to achieve sustainable development where basic needs of all are met and everyone has the opportunity to lead fulfilling lives is a responsibility for all governments and people everywhere. The greatest responsibility falls on wealthier nations, corporations and individuals. As clearly identified in the report of the Millennium Project, current levels of finance for development are insufficient to meet even the minimum targets set by the MDGs. In addition, many forms of finance that are supposedly provided for development are in reality working against the goals that they are supposed to promote. While recognising the crucial importance of trade and investment in generating resources necessary for ensuring sustainable forms of development, these will remain insufficient for developing countries, particularly those with low incomes.

### Generating international development financing

For the international community to meet its commitments and obligations to eradicate poverty there needs to be a substantial increase in the availability of finance for development. This can only be achieved by ensuring real increases in transfers of finance from the rich to the poor. In particular:

- Increasing aid

For many low income countries aid is the most important source of finance for development. For these countries it is also the only real source of investment for the basic social infrastructure that is vital for assuring the welfare and

well being of its people and for effectively addressing poverty. Aid will only be effective when it is sustainable and predictable, contributing to the development strategies defined by a nation itself. It needs to be free from ties imposed by donors, which not only distort its value but also prejudices a nation’s commitment to development policies imposed from outside.

*Governments should ensure that levels of aid are increased substantially so that adopted development strategies can be implemented.*

In particular, this requires:

- a commitment for an immediate doubling in the provision of ODA by 2006 in order to finance the MDGs;
- a commitment by every donor government to provide at least 0.7% of GNI, by 2015 at the latest;
- each donor government that has not yet reached the UN target to present plans to the September summit on how they will reach the target.

- Cancelling debt

While there is clear recognition that for many developing countries their debt servicing obligations undermines development, insufficient action has been taken to ensure that levels of debt are sustainable.

*Governments to adopt measures that will once and for all remove unsustainable levels of debt to all low and middle income developing countries. Debt sustainability has to be measured, among others, against the needs of indebted countries to achieve the MDGs.*

This requires, in particular:

- the complete cancellation of debts where not to do so will undermine the country’s ability to achieve the MDGs;
- further substantial debt cancellation for low and middle income developing countries beyond the HIPC initiative;
- the immediate setting up of a fair and transparent arbitration procedure to address unsustainable debt burdens, which gives the right of all stakeholders to be heard, the protection of debtors basic needs, and the institution of an automatic stay of debt servicing. This procedure must be based on a neutral decision making body independent of the IFIs, WTO and other similar institutions;



- ensuring that funding of debt cancellation is additional to donor's targets to achieve its commitment to provide 0.7% GNI;
- the cancellation of debt to be done free from economic policy conditions, such as on privatization and liberalization.

- **Instituting international taxes**

The need for new forms of international finance for development has been increasingly recognised. Commitments now need to be made to bring these into reality. Many proposals have been made that are both justified and feasible. In most instances the implementation of the proposed taxes would not only provide additional resources for development, but also play a constructive role in regulating actions that cause instability in global economic systems or impact negatively on the environment. These international taxes should address the use of global environmental commons, short-term financial and foreign exchange transactions, and on trade of items that have negative international impact - such as on global ecological balances, the promotion of conflict, etc.

*Governments should establish mechanisms for international taxation that will not only provide additional financial resources for development but control unsustainable and damaging processes.*

In particular this requires:

- a commitment to establish international taxes based on one or more of the current proposals, in particular a Currency Transaction Tax (CTT) and an international aviation fuel tax;
- a commitment to develop systems for sharing information on trans-border financial transfers, and increase the global coordination of taxes so as to increase tax revenues, as well as to control corruption;
- a commitment to take measures that will lead to the immediate abolition of all tax havens.

### **Generating domestic finance for development**

All governments have an obligation to generate financial resources from within their countries that can help finance development strategies. They also have an obligation to use financial resources efficiently and in the most effective way possible, and to account for their use in a transparent and accessible way to their own people. Mobilization of domestic finance is an important means to address

national inequalities, particularly through progressive taxation and the taxation of corporations.

*Governments should establish equitable systems of taxation in each and every country.*

In particular:

- support for the strengthening of domestic progressive taxation systems;
- commitments to establish transparency in national budgets and accounts, including the integration of gender budgeting, so as to increase accountability of governments to local citizens in using resources;
- an international convention to facilitate the recovery and repatriation of funds illegally appropriated from national treasuries of developing countries;
- a multilateral agreement on an effective sharing of information on taxation between countries, to stem tax evasion.

### **Benchmark 7: Making trade fair**

It is repeatedly emphasised that trade has substantially more potential to finance development than aid ever can. This can only be the case when international rules of trade make effective provision for the rights and needs of developing countries and their producers. At present trade is the vehicle for the indiscriminate liberalization of developing country economies and the imposition of harmful conditions, instead of supporting sustainable development, poverty eradication and gender equity. Trade policies need to be re-oriented to promote fair trade and to foster sustainable development. Trade rules and policies must ensure the right of developing countries to pursue their own development agendas, putting their people's interests first. This includes enabling measures to protect public services from enforced liberalization and privatization, to secure the right to food and affordable access to essential drugs, and to strengthen corporate accountability. Farmers' knowledge and indigenous technologies should be given due recognition and research should be re-oriented to include this.

For many developing countries the export of one or two commodities remains the source for most of their export earnings. The decline of commodity prices has eroded their income by up to 50%, thus aggravating their dependence on aid and increasing the unsustainability of their debt.

*Governments should ensure that the global trade system is fair and just.*

This benchmark requires:

- an end to conditions imposed by the International Financial Institutions and other donors

*on aid and debt cancellation that determine trade policies of developing countries;*

- effective and transparent special treatment for developing countries within the global trading system;
- the abolition of all forms of subsidy by rich countries that damage developing countries' agricultural production and markets;
- increased accountability and transparency of governments and international organizations to their grassroots constituencies in the formulation of international trade rules and national trade policies, while ensuring consistency of trade policies with respect for workers' rights, and human rights more broadly;
- effective and transparent international mechanisms to support the prices of commodities, and to compensate developing countries for price fluctuations.

### **Benchmark 8: Fighting HIV/AIDS and other pandemic diseases**

Death and incapacity resulting from disease is a continuing and often preventable human catastrophe which dwarfs almost all others. It is also a serious constraint on development. It strikes poor and marginal communities disproportionately, particularly those who have inadequate access to health care. HIV/AIDS poses a particular threat. The MDG relating to HIV/AIDS is scandalously modest and inadequate in its recognition of the potential for life-extending access to treatment. At the 2001 United Nations General Assembly on HIV/AIDS member states expressed their concern that the global HIV/AIDS epidemic constituted a global emergency. Since then the situation has deteriorated. At the International AIDS Conference in 2004 world leaders confirmed that over 38 million people in the world were living with AIDS and that the epidemic was spreading in every region.

HIV/AIDS affects poorest countries disproportionately. The most affected region is Sub-Saharan Africa where almost 40% of all deaths are from the disease. The enormous impact on HIV/AIDS on the human capital of these states stands as a grave threat to development. Through its effect on those directly affected as well as on their children, relatives and communities it undermines productive capacity both in the present and future. Other treatable pandemic diseases, such as malaria and tuberculosis, compound the threat to the life and livelihoods of millions of people in developing countries.



Treatment of the infected is available and possible, but while millions need it only a few hundred thousand have access. Providing access to treatment has been not only held back by social and cultural attitudes, the stigma associated with disease, and by the reluctance of governments to take energetic leadership but also by deference to the privileges and protections accorded to pharmaceutical corporations. Only sustained and widespread civil society campaigning and demonstration projects have led some governments, like that of Brazil, to provide free access to the affected, and to a grudging recognition by the WTO of the claims to the right to health. The vast majority of those needing treatment still wait for the ramping up of services and funds which would stop thousands dying each week.

At the International Conference in Bangkok in 2004 world leaders admitted that they had not done enough to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS or to mitigate its effects. A renewed commitment backed by political will is therefore necessary to combat this disease, which stands as a serious obstacle to global development, and to reduce its impact. All interventions must be gender sensitive since figures show that 60% of adults affected by HIV/AIDS in Africa are women - making women's empowerment a critical issue in the fight against HIV/AIDS. In addition, a special emphasis should be given to policies and interventions that address children affected by HIV/AIDS, including those orphaned through the disease. A "Free by 5" campaign, to assure equitable access to all, free of user fees, has been initiated in Africa and is expanding around the world.

*Governments should recognize the critical fight against the pandemics devastating countless communities and to ensure adequate priority is given to address them.*

This benchmark requires:

- *a radical increase in financial support for the 3 by 5 initiative<sup>1</sup> of the World Health Organization, followed by the inauguration of a 6 (million) by 7 (2007) sequel in extending treatment. In addition sustained and predictable funding for the Global Fund to fight AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria must be assured;*
- *the inauguration of a global emergency service response and publicly administered supply facility for the provision of accessible and freely available anti-retroviral treatment - and vaccination should an effective vaccine be developed;*

<sup>1</sup> "Treat 3 million by 2005" (3 by 5) is the global initiative of the World Health Organization and UNAIDS adopted in 2003 to provide antiretroviral therapy to 3 million people with HIV/AIDS in developing countries by the end of 2005.

- *a re-commitment to the long-established vision of "Health for All" combined with substantially increased funding for rebuilding and extending health systems in all developing countries;*
- *a moratorium on any further extension of the terms of patent protection for pharmaceuticals and on further TRIPS clauses in bilateral and regional trade agreements. No TRIPS "plus";*
- *the inauguration, using emergency security provisions, of a publicly-owned support for a world-wide "Free by 5" initiative to ensure free, non-discriminatory access to treatment.*

### **Benchmark 9: Promoting corporate accountability**

Transnational Corporations (TNCs) are the main protagonists and beneficiaries of globalization but they are not held globally accountable. TNCs are continuously entangled in the violation of social, environmental and human rights standards. Corporations and governments have responded to the widely recognized negative impacts of corporate activity through the development of hundreds of sectoral and company codes of conduct and voluntary "partnership" initiatives. The Global Compact initiated by UN Secretary General is the best example of a political strategy aimed predominantly at the voluntary self-regulation of industry. With the aid of *best practice* examples, the companies involved are expected to demonstrate their sense of responsibility towards society. However, industry's influence and the impacts of transnational corporate activities reach way beyond these "soft" policy fields. Behind the curtain of partnership initiatives and dialogue processes, many corporations and business associations continue to ruthlessly pursue their own specific interests in the "hard" areas of politics. Their activities seriously affect the human security of people all over the world. There is a need, therefore, for legally binding international instruments that will ensure that the activities of TNCs are consistent with globally agreed conventions and standards.

At the Johannesburg Summit 2002, governments clearly committed themselves to "actively promote corporate responsibility and accountability, based on Rio Principles, including through the full development and effective implementation of intergovernmental agreements and measures"<sup>2</sup> In 2003, the UN-Sub-Commission on the Promotion

<sup>2</sup> Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, para. 49. Johannesburg, September 2002.

and Protection of Human Rights approved the "Norms on the Responsibilities of Transnational Corporations and Other Business Enterprises with Regard to Human Rights"<sup>3</sup>. These Norms represent a landmark step providing a succinct, but comprehensive restatement of the international legal principles applicable to business with regard to human rights, humanitarian law, international labour law, environmental law, consumer law and anti-corruption law.

*Governments should commit to making transnational corporations and other business enterprises accountable to the global community and to future generations.*

This benchmark requires:

- *a commitment to support the "Norms on the Responsibilities of Transnational Corporations and Other Business Enterprises with Regard to Human Rights" and to take concrete steps towards their full implementation;*
- *an international binding instrument to increase the transparency of financial flows between TNCs, particularly in the extractive industry, and governments, as proposed by the international campaign "Publish What You Pay".*

### **Benchmark 10: Democratizing international governance**

A system of open, transparent and accessible governance in which human rights and the rule of law are respected is critically necessary for ensuring equitable global development. Ensuring that human rights are observed and the rule of law is enforced is primarily the responsibility of national legal authorities within a nationally established legal framework that is consistent with international agreements and obligations, not least those that define internationally agreed human rights. However, the application of national laws is not always sufficient for justice to be carried out and there is a growing need for the international legal framework to be strengthened so that governments, corporations and individuals can be held accountable for acts that contravene human rights and other international agreements.

The legitimacy of our system of international governance is at stake. Global power carries responsibility and accountability of those that assume it - whether they are governments, corporations or even individuals - must extend to the international community as a whole. However, the effective domi-

<sup>3</sup> UN Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, resolution 2003/16.



nation of our multilateral institutions by a minority of governments who use their position to promote their own specific interests above all others is no longer acceptable, particularly when those very governments themselves fail to adhere to the will of the international majority. A reform of our international system of governance is long overdue. It needs to be re-built so as to adhere to principles of justice and democracy. The United Nations remains the most legitimate and representative institution for assuring an effective system of international governance, yet the management of the global approaches to economic, monetary and trade policies effectively lie outside the UN within the IFIs and the WTO. This disconnection from the UN has led to structural imbalances in the global governance system that favours economic paradigms over human development, undermining political priorities defined in the UN framework. This needs to change so that the UN regains global political centrality based on new mechanisms ensuring effective democratic, transparent and accountable decision-making. The World Bank, IMF and WTO must be brought fully within the UN system, with their roles being redefined. Their governing structures must also be reformed to reflect changes in the global economy.

*Governments should commit themselves to a radical reform of the multilateral system of governance and the strengthening and democratization of the United Nations.*

This benchmark requires:

- *the re-establishment of a reformed Economic and Social Council of the United Nations in which membership is based on the principles of representation, accountability and common responsibility. The new Economic and Social Council should be the ultimate legal global authority for economic and social affairs, whose decisions are enforceable;*
- *a transformation of the membership of the Security Council so that the same principles of representation, accountability and common responsibility apply;*
- *a reform of the World Bank, IMF and other International Financial Institutions, together with the WTO to adhere to these principles, but with their ultimate accountability being to the reformed Economic and Social Council. Their roles should be redefined such that the World Bank is a development bank within the UN sys-*

*tem, the IMF's mandate focuses on safeguarding global financial stability, and the WTO restricted to regulating international trade;*

- *the establishment of regular public parliamentary reviews of the policies and actions of multilateral economic institutions, and the role and approach undertaken by the national government concerned, with participation from civil society;*
- *a strengthening of the legal institutions - International Court of Justice and International Criminal Court - responsible for implementing the international rule of law.*

### **Benchmark 11: Involving civil society**

The participation of stakeholders lies at the centre of successful development strategies. The concept of ownership that is promoted so vigorously in the Millennium Declaration, in PRSPs and in development assistance strategies requires the involvement of actors at all levels. National processes for participation should form the basis for engaging civil society in the identification, formulation and implementation of strategies that address the countries specific needs and national context. Governments need to facilitate the engagement of civil society that is open, transparent and inclusive. Making local government an effective democratic institution is vital for communities in order to safeguard their material and political interests, where key resources, such as water, can be safeguarded and used in a sustainable way. Equally, the participation of civil society also needs to be facilitated at regional and global levels.

The process of the Review of the Millennium Declaration should reflect the crucial role of an interaction of governments with civil society - and give ample space for civil society organizations to meaningfully engage with the review process. Ultimately, if the Millennium Declaration - and the MDGs - is to have real political significance, the ownership and support of civil society will be a crucial factor in its promotion. While civil society is ready to engage, governments negotiating the review of the Millennium Declaration must listen and take on board the concerns of its citizens. The UN should ensure space for this interaction to be meaningful and productive in a true spirit of common goals promoted in an open, transparent and accountable manner.

*Governments should ensure that engagement with civil society in the process of decision making - nationally, regionally and at the international level - is effectively facilitated.*

This benchmark requires:

- *a commitment to ensuring that national processes of engagement are transparent, open, accessible and consistent;*
- *the establishment and strengthening of participatory mechanisms for regional organizations;*
- *the establishment of mechanisms at the level of the United Nations and other international organizations that give transparency to the processes of debate and decisions, access to agendas, papers and reports, as well as to meetings themselves - including those of the General Assembly;*
- *to provide facilities to work and engage within the premises of the UN;*
- *the implementation of the proposal of an expanded trust fund to support civil society participation in UN processes, whether they take place at regional level or at the UN headquarters;*
- *a meaningful and effective engagement with civil society organizations in the preparations of the September Summit, and at the Summit itself which recognises the legitimacy and crucial role of civil society in assuring effective, acceptable strategies and policies, as well as their implementation.*

### **Conclusion: No more broken promises, no more excuses**

The time has come for bold and decisive action. Anything less is irresponsible. We recognise that at September Summit, and in the preceding preparations, our leaders will face difficult decisions. All too often short term political interests take precedent over longer term needs. Agreements made by the international community are full of compromise. Yet the threats and challenges to our common heritage are more urgent than ever before. The resources and technology exist. The world's heads of State and Government must show a common political will to succeed, not only in collectively committing to a bold and radical agenda, but in pursuing its implementation. The failure of a few to meet this challenge, pursuing instead their individual short term interests, could condemn us all. We cannot afford to fail. ■

