

Mobilising Towards The World We Want:

Five Point Action Plan for the Millennium Development Goals Review
Summit September 2010



Introduction

At the dawn of the new Millennium, the 192 member states who make up the United Nations agreed on Eight Key Goals to eradicate poverty and set themselves a deadline of 2015 to reach these goals. It was an unprecedented moment – marking the first time that a global agreement was reached to eradicate poverty through collaborative multilateral action including with specific targets and indicators.

For many of us, these Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) become the centre of our campaigning work. They have helped us build public opinion and organise political will for action to end poverty and inequality. In many cases we have seen real and significant change taking place. There have been advances in access to education, in particular primary education, as well as in health, in the prevention of diseases such as tuberculosis and in the reduction of child mortality.

Significant gaps continue to exist. Many donor countries have not kept their aid commitments, many developing countries have not reached their committed targets and the absence of a focus on social exclusion, discrimination and human rights has slowed the progress of the MDGs in many parts of the world. And indeed, many have criticised the MDGs for focusing too strongly on financing for development aid.

In addition, the repercussions of the global financial and economic crisis as well as the food crisis, the feminisation of poverty and the ever more apparent affects of climate change have pushed the MDGs way of track. In 2009 alone, an estimated 90 million people – mostly women and girls - were pushed into poverty as a result of these crises.

As we arrive at the two third mark of the MDGs, a major high level plenary MDG Review meeting has been scheduled by the UN Secretary-General as part of the 65th General Assembly on the 20-22 September at the UN in New York.

This meeting represents a unique opportunity for groups who have been working on the MDG agenda since its inception, to revitalise the process, not only to get the goals back on track but to address significant gaps such as the lack of a focus on social exclusion, discrimination and human rights, to the lack of accountability or legally binding mechanisms.

We must work to ensure that this historical review paves the way for a decisive plan to accelerate the fight against poverty in the next and final period of 2010-2015, and that the MDG framework itself is reviewed to reflect more comprehensively the human rights agenda and linkages with other concerns of social justice, gender equality and global governance.

For this reason, the unifying framework of “The World We Want” has been chosen for our mobilisations around the MDG process¹. This concept enables us to demand MDG Breakthrough Plans as the outcome of the September MDG Review meeting, while at the same time enabling us to begin to define the broader transformative economic and social agenda that the world so urgently needs, now and in the post 2015 period.

¹ The concept of using a unifying framework The World We Want emerged during a MDG+10 strategy sharing meeting held in South Africa on 15-16 February 2010. The meeting was convened by Amnesty International, CIVICUS, GCAP, Social Watch and UNMC Africa and it brought together representatives of various civil society networks.

By beginning to define as civil society organizations The World We Want, we have a clearer vision of the reality we are working towards and how we want to shape it. Mobilising around this concept we begin to work from the bottom up, setting and defining global economic and development priorities, and demanding that leaders follow our priorities.

It is up to all of us to make 2010 another unprecedented moment. Working together we can get the MDGs back on track and build our movement of people demanding change and holding leader accountable to the promises they made.

What follows is a five point action plan as to how you can get involved in mobilisations and lobby around the MDG process over the next few months. The areas of action are:

- 1. Monitor the MDG Reporting Processes**
- 2. Create your own The World We Want Charters**
- 3. Lobby your Government Delegation**
- 4. Demand Emergency Parliamentary Debates on the MDGS**
- 5. Stand Up and Take Action 17-19 September 2010**

1. Monitor the MDG Reporting Processes

Objective: To ensure objective and informed reporting on the MDGs at National and International Level and contribute to the formulation of an MDG Breakthrough Plan.

There will be much pressure on both the UN and Governments to present a positive picture of the progress of the MDGs in the run up to the summit. While reporting of success stories is important, to ensure a positive outcome from the summit there is a need to also highlight the major gaps in the MDG Framework in terms of both its content (e.g. lack of human rights and social justice focus) as well as the reporting process itself (over focus on statistics, no mechanisms to enforce implementation) and to raise the alarm at the lack of progress on many of the goals as well as the rising levels of poverty and inequality as a result of the financial, economic, food and climate crises.

Civil society organizations have a key role to play in highlighting these two interlinked issues – the gaps in the MDG framework and the serious lack of progress on most of the MDGS.

Organizations are encouraged to actively engage their governments in the MDG report related processes in the period April - September. You can do so through:

- Lobbying Government and/or UN Agencies to be part of the National Reporting process
- Creating your own Shadow report

Overview MDG+10 Review Summit Reporting Processes:

a) Secretary General's Comprehensive Review Report and Final Outcome Document

The UN Secretary General Review report will form the basis of the final outcome document which is to be discussed during the High Level Plenary in September. This was launched on 16 March 2010 and is available [here](#).

ACTION: Over 120 organizations signed a letter responding to this report and outlining key civil society demands for the MDG Breakthrough Plan. The letter is available [here](#).

Organizations are encouraged to send this letter to their Government and to request a meeting to discuss the demands in the letter and key priorities for the outcome document.

b) National Reporting Processes

All member states are required to submit a report on their progress towards the MDGS. These will in turn be fed into the Secretary General's outcome document. In addition, UNDP is supporting the development of 30 in depth country reports focusing on achievements, gaps, constraints and lessons learned. These reports will be carried out in:

- Africa: Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Central African Republic, Congo, DRC, Ethiopia, Ghana, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Mozambique, Senegal, Togo, Rwanda, Swaziland.
- Arab Region: Egypt, Iraq, Morocco, Mauritania, PAPP, Syria.
- Latin America: El Salvador, Uruguay, Guyana.
- Other regions: Nepal, PNG, Samoa, Ukraine.

Action: Contact your UNDP Country Office or the Government Department or Ministry responsible for the reporting process to find out what and how your organization can get involved.

c) MDG Task Force Reports

Thematic Papers on each MDG to be produced. The task force is chaired by UNICEF with UNDP and FAO as vice-chair. These will feed into the final outcome document as well as the thematic roundtables (see point e below)

d) Annual Global MDG Report (UNDP coordinated) and the MDG Task Force Report on MDG8

This is scheduled to be presented as documentation during the plenary meeting so will not be ready until early September.

e) Roundtables during the High Level Plenary

There will be six roundtables in addition to the High Level Plenary with 50 Governments participating in each one.

The themes are: 1) Addressing the challenge of poverty, hunger and gender equality, 2) Meeting the goals of health and education, 3) Promoting sustainable development, 4) Addressing emerging issues and evolving approaches, 5) Addressing the special needs of the most vulnerable and 6) Widening and strengthening partnerships

2. Create your own The World We Want Charter

Objective: Create a dynamic and unified global civil society voice shaping the MDG Breakthrough Plan and defining the course of action towards 2015 and beyond.

A charter is a powerful lobbying tool which works to convey the demands and aspirations of civil society, of excluded and marginalised groups in particular, who come together to discuss a particular issue or theme and agree on priorities and an agenda and action plan for change. The creation of a charter provides an opportunity for a wide spectrum of civil society groups across local, national and international levels to come together and create a platform for collective negotiation on the “people’s priorities” around the MDG Review Process.

Charters are particularly powerful as they reflect the realities and expectations of citizens and voters as they come together and work collectively to present clear and concise demands and an agenda for action to put pressure on Governments.

Each organization or group will have its own local definition of how to develop The World We Want charter based on their own experiences. Below is a by no means prescriptive guide but a number of suggestions on how the process may be carried out.

Quick Start Guide to preparing The World We Want Charter

1. Planning process– what will be the focus/thematic area of the charter? who will be the target participants?
2. Organise local level consultations to share stories, discuss concerns and define priorities. This can be via small focus group meetings, school or university campus discussions, larger public

meetings or door to door surveys. Based on this, develop a broad list of concrete, concise demands.

3. Present these demands in a public hearing where testimonies are presented by people directly affected by the different situations to be covered in the charter and invite participants to provide analysis and recommendations. Work collectively to draft the charter during this event.
4. The charter should include concrete demands and recommendations to targeted authorities illustrating how the MDGS can be achieved.
5. Call on citizens or organizations to sign on to the charter-inviting them to add their voice to shaping the MDG Breakthrough Plan and future development priorities.
6. Organize a national level event to submit the charter to the Government or UN Country Office
7. Invite the media to accompany the charter development process.

The charter should be as practical as possible and should include targeted demands and proposals to Governments' which will form the key components of a MDG Breakthrough Plan for the next five years.

Some sample demands could include:

The WORLD WE WANT is one in which:

- National Planning Process-policies, work plans and budgets (including gender budgeting) reflects the MDG's and include measures to insure civil society participation in the design, implementation and monitoring process.
- Poverty Reduction Bills which focus on inclusive participation of all actors and include set targets and annual reporting processes are signed in to law (see the "Poverty Reduction Bill" campaign by the International Cooperation Ethics Advisory Agency for more ideas on [this](#))
- Accountable and transparent relations between leaders, parliamentarians and civil society prevent corruption and ensure people based budgeting and monitoring of the delivery of services.
- Inclusion and equality are the heart of poverty reduction programmes and processes.
- Poverty is recognised as a human rights violation and as such, International and National human rights institutions have legal authority to monitor and hear complaints regarding the negation of those rights e.g. access to maternal health, education and other public services.
- Governments recognise that the neoliberal market driven policies have not only failed but have increased poverty, and as a result concrete steps to reform the global economy and financial architecture are put in place leading to the achievement of MDG 8 on genuine global partnership, trade and development.

Useful Links:

- [India People's Manifesto 2009](#)
- [System change, Not Climate Change People's Declaration](#)

3. Lobby your Government Delegation

Objective: Delegations feel direct pressure from civil society at national and international level in the run up to, during and after the summit.

While launching his "Keeping the Promise" report in March 2010, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon called on World Leaders to attend the High Level Plenary in September and to "engage fully in ensuring a successful, practical, action-oriented outcome that delivers results for the billions of people struggling to meet their basic needs and to live in dignity and peace."

In order to contribute to this process, it is important a strong message from civil society is delivered to delegations before they attend the summit, during it and in the period afterwards. It is also important to lobby for a civil society representative to be part of the official Government delegations that will be attending the summit itself.

Suggested Actions:

1. If you have not done so already, send the Open Letter to UNSG Ban Ki Moon in response to the launch of his "Keeping the Promise Report" to your Government. The letter outlines key civil society demands for the MDG Breakthrough Plan. The full text of the letter can be found [here](#).
2. In addition you should also lobby your Government around the draft outcome document which is currently being negotiated and will be the final statement launched during the High Level Meeting in September. Please email fionuala.cregan@whiteband.org to get a copy of the latest draft of this document or go to the documents section of www.theworldwewant.info
3. As part of your lobby work you can also organise a civil society courtesy visit to the official delegation to outline specific national and international demands ahead of the High Level Plenary. The civil society group could consist of people living in poverty, representatives of the major faiths, workers and union representatives, youth leaders, academics or celebrities. The group should be accompanied by the media to ensure that the public are better informed of civil society demands around the summit and delegations feel direct pressure.
4. Demand that civil society representatives are invited to participate in the official government delegations that will be attending the summit. Civil society representation during the High Level Plenary will be limited and thus, participating as part of the official Government Delegation will enable participation and the bringing of grassroots voices into the summit itself. If resources are available within your organization, you can offer to cover the travel costs of that civil society representative to participate.

4. Call for Parliamentary Debates around the MDGs

Objective: Engage Parliamentarians/ Government to promote urgent national level political dialogue on the state of progress on the MDGs ahead of the summit and the development of a National Action Plan 2010-2015.

It is important that the Official MDG Reports that national governments submit and the positions they take at the UN MDG Summit are publicly debated within each country and not just in New York, far from where people live.

There are several options that could be considered to enable national debate.

1. Parliamentary Committee or Government Commission hearings

Some parliaments (or legislatures) have committees that hold hearings where there is an opportunity for representatives of civil society to make presentations and where key issues can be debated. In other cases the government can appoint a Commissioner or a Commission of several prominent people to hold public hearings in order to get input on important issues. It would be ideal if the official MDG Report on progress made on the MDGs and plans for how to get back on track to achieving the MDGs by 2015 could be reviewed by such a committee or commission which could then get public input and scrutiny.

2. Parliamentary Debates

Many parliaments and legislatures have opportunities for parliamentarians or legislators to call for emergency debates on key issues. The MDGs could benefit from such a debate, especially if progress towards achieving them is off track in a country. The need for developing a Breakthrough Plan could be highlighted.

3. Popular Hearings

If it is not possible to organize official public hearings or Parliamentary debate, it may still be possible for civil society organizations to organize a Popular Hearing on the MDGs and invite parliamentarians or legislators to attend, listen to what the people have to say and then respond.

A Guide to engaging Parliamentarians on the MDGs has been developed by the UN Millennium Campaign and is available to download [here](#).

5. Stand Up and Take Action 17-19 September

Objective: Three days of mobilisations as a final global push on leaders to listen to our demands for an MDG Breakthrough Plan during the Review Summit.

The dates of Stand Up and Take Action have been changed this year from the usual date around 17 October to the weekend just before the High Level Plenary on the MDGs, 17-19 September. This enables our mobilizations to have a clear advocacy focus and mobilize millions of citizens all over the world to call on Governments to achieve an MDG Breakthrough Plan during the summit.

Over the three days, groups, organizations, constituencies and individuals are encouraged to organize and participate in a wide range of events and actions in support of the eradication of poverty and the achievement of the MDGs, with clear demands and proposals on how this can be done.

The second day of mobilizations will include a common global action with the message on 18 September being “Stand up, Take Action, Make a Noise for the MDGs.” Groups will be encouraged to find creative ways to make a noise and grab public, political and media attention and ensure the global movement in support of the achievement of the MDGs is heard in every corner of the world. This could include banging pots and pans as a way of illustrating poverty and hunger or the coordinated ringing of temple/ church bells across different cities and countries.

Topline messaging will focus on Accountability Mechanisms, Gender Justice and Social Inclusion. There will also be a focus on MDG 8 and the need for reforming the international financial architecture as a key step to achieving all the MDGs.

The GCAP Task Force on Social Exclusion will be working on mobilising socially excluded groups in and around Stand Up to ensure key mechanisms for reaching these groups are included in the MDG Breakthrough Plan. These mobilisations will continue after the summit to ensure follow up, including actions as part of the European Year against Poverty and Social Exclusion and the World Dignity Day on 05 December.

For more information contact GCAP outreach coordinator Rajiv Joshi rajiv@whiteband.org

The GCAP Feminist Task Force will also be carrying out specific actions focusing on gender justice, including organising Women’s Tribunals on Poverty in New York over the Stand Up weekend.

For more information contact GCAP Feminist Task Force Co-Convenor Rosa Lizarde rosaencasa@aol.com

While there will be no Guinness Record counting this year, the aim of Stand Up is to show world leaders the strength and energy of the global anti-poverty movement. Events will be counted and the pure scale and scope of these events will be communicated to Governments on the eve of the High Level Meeting. Event registration will be available in July at standagainstopoverty.org

A specific Stand Up toolkit with suggested messaging and advocacy asks ideas for making noise and the Stand Up Pledge will also be available shortly!

For any further information please contact GCAP Mobilisation Coordinator, Fionuala Cregan fionuala.cregan@whiteband.org

This guide has been compiled by the Global Call to Action Against Poverty (GCAP) – the world’s largest anti-poverty coalition which brings together social movements, international NGOs, trade unions, community groups, women’s organizations, faith and youth groups, local associations and campaigners working together across more than 100 national platforms to call for action from world leaders to meet their promises to end poverty and inequality.

