

Europe Fails to Announce Concrete Action Plan to Achieve MDGs

United Nations Millennium Campaign - Europe regrets the limited commitment in the EU's official position for the UN MDG Summit in New York in September

While Europe boasts that it is the world's largest donor of development aid, its recently-announced position for the upcoming UN MDG Review High Level Plenary Meeting in New York on September 20-22 undermines its role in accelerating progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

This announcement is particularly disappointing as it critically diverts from the credible pathway the Commission had outlined in April on how to deliver on aid commitments. **The conclusions of the EU Council fail to propose concrete actions on how to scale up efforts to increase the quantity of aid to 0.7% of Gross National Income (GNI), improve the effectiveness of aid by implementing a better division of labor, and reform EU trade and agricultural policies so that they are consistent with development objectives.**

With only five years left before the MDG target date of 2015, these critical issues require immediate action by European donor countries.

"I would have expected EU donor countries to announce – at a minimum - national action plans and timetables to meet their existing aid commitments and to propose actions to ensure a better division of labor, to improve the way they deliver aid," said Eveline Herfkens, Founder of the UN Millennium Campaign. "On the contrary, the common position agreed at the Council does not even make reference to the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action."

The Council decision contains only a vague affirmation of already-agreed commitments towards the 0.7% target. This is most disappointing, as now is the time to translate words into concrete actions in order to reach the MDGs. Binding measures and a peer review mechanism to ensure enforcement - as originally proposed by the European Commission - would have been sound solutions to ensure that timetables and individual commitments would be put in place and be respected. The UN Millennium Campaign-Europe believes that the dismissal of such proposals is detrimental to the MDGs and the poor.

EU Member States have weakened the European Commission's recommendations. Many of them are busy focusing on domestic challenges and are less willing to honor their development commitments to properly address poverty and hunger. In this context, **the EU will miss its 2010 intermediate target to reach 0.56% of GNI as official development assistance.**

The UN Summit in September will be a critical opportunity to ensure that the MDGs are achieved, despite the current world financial and economic crisis. Further efforts are needed to untie aid, make aid more transparent and predictable, ensure that innovative financing mechanisms and funds to fight climate change are additional to existing ODA commitments,

improve aid effectiveness and ensure that trade and agricultural policies do not hinder development objectives.

As 2015 rapidly approaches, we yet again call on Heads of State and Government to keep their promises.