

WE CAN END POVERTY BY 2015: ACCELERATE THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS!

The UN Millennium Campaign and United Cities and Local Governments together for the Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals

On September 20-22, the United Nations will host the largest gathering of heads of state since the Millennium Summit in the year 2000, to review progress on the MDGs. In particular, the United Nations Summit on the Millennium Development Goals, also referred to as the MDG+10 Summit, will bring together world leaders to assess progress, identify gaps, and commit to a concrete action agenda to accelerate the pace towards the achievement of the MDGs.

In this context, it is crucial that Local Authorities raise their voice and reassert their role as key actors and advocates in the fight against poverty, in order to be truly listened during the MDG+10 Summit.

Building on a series of successful initiatives over the past years, this year on 17-18-19 of September, the United Nations Millennium Campaign and United Cities and Local Governments are again calling on Local Authorities everywhere to show their commitment and support to the Millennium Development Goals.

HOW CAN LOCAL AUTHORITIES GET INVOLVED

Local Authorities in the South are already involved in the achievement of the MDGs in delivering their services to the citizens, but they can improve their action and get better and faster results through the preparation of a five-year local government breakthrough plan for the achievement of the MDGs by 2015 in their locality/province/region. It is well accepted that existing national MDG plans will require additional targeted efforts at local level to accelerate and scale up MDG progress within the next five years. Local Authorities in close collaboration with their national associations could mainstream and integrate MDGs into their local development plans and prepare localized MDG breakthrough plans with a focus on reaching out to the most vulnerable and poorest individuals in their communities. In developing such action plans, and being supported and allocated the adequate resources to do so, Local Authorities should identify successful, innovative, and sustainable approaches and interventions which could be replicated and contribute to accelerated progress of the MDGs.

Local Authorities in the North, that are already mobilized to work with their southern counterparts, should fully support the efforts of their peers in the South by providing them with the assistance they may request to develop and implement their breakthrough plans. They should implement and strengthen decentralized cooperation in a peer to peer spirit in order to contribute significantly to the achievement of the MDG at local, regional and global scales.

Local Authorities from the South as from the North have to be involved and to actively participate in national level processes in the build up to the September 2010 Summit:

- Participate in the preparation and discussion of national MDG reports and action plans being prepared by national governments.
- Consult with and lobby national governments with proposals for inputs into the Summit's Outcome document.
- Mobilise citizens during Stand Up initiative on 17-19 September to call on leaders to keep the promises made to the world's poor in 2000.

Local Authorities have a clear role to play to raise awareness amongst citizens. This is why all cities are encouraged to engage in a global mobilisation and campaign:

Prepare large White Banners – the international symbol of the fight against poverty – with the message to their respective national governments: that **“WE CAN END POVERTY BY 2015: ACCELERATE THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS!”**. Display the white banner visibly in the City Hall and other local government buildings (see enclosed designed and “ready to print” template) to inform your local citizens about your commitment to the MDGs and the promises made—and not yet delivered—on the Goals by your national government.

Sign a Public Statement, Pass a Resolution in their Plenary Halls or Send a Petition to their national Heads of State or Governments and also to National Parliaments (see template provided) to actively demand from their national government to empower and strengthen local level capacity, so that Local Governments are able to fulfil their mandate, and effectively deliver MDG-related services to their communities.

Organize a Press Conference and Send a Press Release (see template enclosed) explaining the role of Local Authorities in the achievement of the MDGs and their own particular contribution at the local level to End Poverty by the set deadline of 2015.

Send a communication to their own City Hall's personnel (see template provided) with information on the MDGs and on their local commitment to the fight against poverty. In these communications, the highest local authority political office holder must ask his/her own public servants to actively participate in the STAND UP and “Make a Noise for the MDGs” mobilization that will take place on September 17-18-19. “Making Noise for the MDGs” in a creative and synchronized way during the weekend prior to the MDG + 10 Summit taking place at the United Nations in New York has the potential to call the attention of the local and national media on the urgency of National Governments delivering on their own MDG promises.

THE ROLE OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE MDGS

The expressed commitment from the outset of Local Authorities to the Millennium Development Goals is reflected in the success of the Millennium Towns and Cities Campaign promoted by United Cities and Local Governments and the UN Millennium Campaign in the run up to the United Nations MDG + 5 Summit in 2005.

Local Authorities are again invited to show their commitment to the MDGs and ensure that the Goals are kept high on the agenda of national governments.

Local Authorities are key because poverty and exclusion are experienced locally. It is primarily at the local level that the services and programmes to tackle poverty and under-development are delivered. They are the front line actors who receive citizens' demands and concerns and respond to those voices, and the best placed to raise the understanding and mobilization of the citizens. Moreover, Local Authorities, through the growing movement of decentralized cooperation, are crucial players in generating the political pressure necessary for national governments to ensure that the pledges on the Goals are honoured.

Local authorities – in both rich and poor countries – have the legitimacy to hold national governments to account for the achievement of the Millennium Goals on behalf of their local constituents.

On the other hand, because of this unique position, and in order to really achieve the MDGs, a strong local governance need to be recognized as a true accelerator for development and Local Authorities should be empowered and allocated the adequate resources.

THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS:

-  GOAL 1: ERADICATE EXTREME POVERTY AND HUNGER
-  GOAL 2: ACHIEVE UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION
-  GOAL 3: PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER WOMEN
-  GOAL 4: REDUCE CHILD MORTALITY
-  GOAL 5: IMPROVE MATERNAL HEALTH
-  GOAL 6: COMBAT HIV/AIDS, MALARIA AND OTHER DISEASES
-  GOAL 7: ENSURE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY
-  GOAL 8: DEVELOP A GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR DEVELOPMENT

THE WHITE BANNER:

“WE CAN END POVERTY BY 2015: ACCELERATE THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS!”

The white banner is the international symbol of the fight against poverty. By displaying a white banner on the facade of the City Hall and other Local Government buildings you also send a “reminder” to world leaders that their promises to achieve the Millennium Development Goals are still pending to be delivered and that the efforts to accelerate the achievement of the MDGs have to be redoubled as we move towards the MDG+10 Summit in September 2010.

Since Local Authorities are the political institutions closest to the citizens and responsible for providing services to the poor, you have the political and moral legitimacy – and the responsibility – to remind national governments that they have to deliver on the promises made specially when it comes to eradicating poverty.



FOR FURTHER INFORMATIONS PLEASE CONTACT:

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