

**ACHIEVING MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS :
PARTNERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION**

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*As human beings, we cannot be neutral, or at least have no right to be,
when other human beings are suffering. Each of us ... must do what he or she can help those in need,
even though it would be much safer and more comfortable to do nothing*

- Kofi Annan
UN Secretary General

Introduction*

As the world was entering a new millennium, acknowledging the centrality of human development, the United Nations General Assembly, in its Millennium Summit in 2000, adopted the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) - a time bound set of goals to overcome some basic human deprivations (**box 1**). These goals are the culminations of various global summits and international conferences of the 1990s. Both the goals and the targets of MDGs reflect the desire and commitment of the humankind to ensure basic human development for all people on this planet by 2015.

The MDGs are a powerful framework, not only because nearly 150 Heads of States and Governments have endorsed them, but also due to the fact they have some inherent strength. The power of the MDGs lie in *five* facts :

- They are based on some core values on which everyone agrees. In fact, countries for decades have incorporated in their plans and strategies many of the goals included in the MDGs and have been pursuing them in their desire to enhance the well-being of their people. The universality of the MDGs represents a powerful symbol of solidarity, reflecting a shared commitment of the developing and the developed world.
- By focusing on human impoverishment and deprivation, the MDGs can help set the terms of a world in which development is driven not only by the interests of the rich and the strong but also is managed in the benefit of poor people and the weak.
- The MDGs, by themselves, do not represent any analytical framework, but they are derivatives of a sound and powerful analytical framework – the human development

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Box 1 : Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

By 2015 all 189 United Nations member States have pledged to :

Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

- Reduce by half the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day
- Reduce by half the proportion of people who suffer from hunger

Achieve universal primary Education

- Ensure that all boys and girls completes a full course of primary schooling

Promote gender equality and empower women

- Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, and all levels by 2015

Reduce child mortality

- Reduce by two-thirds the mortality rate among children under five

Improve maternal health

- Reduce, by three-quarters the maternal mortality ratio

Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases

- Halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS
- Halt and begin to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases

Ensure environmental sustainability

- Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes; reverse loss of environmental resources
- Reduce by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water
- Achieve significant improvement in lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers, by 2020

Develop a global partnership for development

- Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system
- Address the least developed countries' special needs
- Address the special needs of landlocked countries and small island developing states
- Deal comprehensively with developing countries' debt problems
- In cooperation with the developing countries. Develop decent and productive work for youth
- In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries
- In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies – especially information and communications technologies

Source : <http://www.undp.org/mdg>

paradigm. By being time-bound quantitative targets in some basic dimensions of human development, the MDGs are strongly anchored in the conceptual framework of human development.

- Flexibility is a powerful dimension of the MDGs. Even though at the global level, MDGs are often presented in generic terms; at the country level, they have to be contextualized, and tailored in specific country situations. Furthermore, even within countries, the achievements of national targets would require their disaggregation of in terms of regions, locations, ethnicity, gender, and socio-economic groups.
- The MDGs are public, open and hence potent devices for mustering the political will to tackle human poverty. The political power of MDGs has been shown in the Brazilian Presidential election last year when Luis Ignacio da Silva, universally known as *Lula* won the presidency with a campaign, which emphasized *zero hunger* as the goal of his government. The quantity of the MDGs makes them capable of being monitored and their time-boundness helps identify the unfinished path to be covered.

The MDGs represent a set of development objectives and like any other set of development objectives, the achievement of the MDGs requires, among other things, conducive policy frameworks, sufficient resources and enabling institutional environments – all important governance issues. The realization of the MDGs crucially hinges on good governance, which encompasses participation and partnership. And all these issues are even more significant in new or restored democracies, with all their serious economic, social and political problems. Achievement of the MDGs in such situations would require even stronger commitments, additional efforts and bonded partnerships.

The present paper raises key issues and challenges for creating collaborative partnerships and participation, particularly in new or restored democracies, in achieving MDGs, exploring on the *how to* issues – *how to develop a road map, how to ensure government and civil society organization collaboration, how to promote innovative mechanisms for collaboration*. In addressing these issues, the paper provides recommendations for action-oriented next steps.

Achieving the MDGs : the constraints

It is true that MDGs reflect a global commitment to address the issue of human poverty in a time-bound manner. But even with all the good intentions of the world, realization of commitments is not easy and the path towards achieving the MDGs is not a smooth one. In today's world there are several trends that are acting as major structural constraints towards achieving the MDGs. No

doubt, there are regional as well as country variations in terms of these constraints, yet a few key common ones can easily be identified :

- *Persistent human poverty* : Over time, even though the world overall has made good progress in reducing human poverty, those achievements are very much region or country-specific. Thus in the 1990s, East Asia and the Pacific has been able to reduce its income poverty from 31% to 16% and South Asia reduced its child mortality rate from 84 to 69 per 1,000 live births. Yet, even in 2000, more than 1.2 million people in the developing world were struggling to live on less than \$1 a day – more than twice, 2.8 million on less than \$2 dollar a day. Again, in developing countries, nearly one in every five people is undernourished, more than 850 million adults are illiterate, more than 1 billion people are without access to safe water and about 2 billion people are without electricity.

Furthermore, poverty in today's world is no longer a southern problem; it is increasingly becoming a northern issue as well. If there is a North in the South, there is also a South in the North as well. More than 130 million people in OECD countries live in income poverty and one in five adults in the Ireland, UK and USA is functionally illiterate (UNDP, 2003).

- *High inequality* : Inequality takes many forms – in terms of access to basic social services or productive resources, income, human development outcomes, and on many planes - regional and rural-urban differences, between borders and between socio-economic groups. There are certainly overlaps and mutual reinforcement of various dimensions.

Over the years, even though progress has been made in a number of areas, disparities persist in many others. The child mortality rate of 13 per 1,000 live births in OECD countries is less than one-seventh of that of 92 in developing countries. The richest 5% of the world receives 114 times the income of the poorest 5%. In 2000, while 92% of the urban population in the developing world had access to safe drinking water, the corresponding figure for rural areas was less than 70% (UNDP, 2003). Nearly 70% of energy use in Sub-Saharan Africa comes from traditional sources. Majority of the more than 2 million annual deaths from indoor pollution are poor people. In Canada, the life expectancy of an Inuit male is 58 years, 17 years less than that of all Canadian males. In

Nepal, the adult literacy rate at 24% among the Untouchables is less than half of that of 58% among the Brahmins (UNDP, 2001).

- *Economic stagnation* : At constant inequality levels, a country needs to grow by 3% or more to double income in a generation. Yet of 155 countries with data, only 30 had annual per capita income growth rates above 3% in the 1990s. Among the rest, 54 countries saw annual average incomes fall, and in 71 countries annual income growth was less than 3%.

In terms of regions, during the 1990s, only East Asia and the Pacific (6.4%) and South Asia (3.3%) had an annual per capita income growth rate of more than 3%. And during the 1990s, these are also the two regions where the income poverty has been reduced – by 15 percentage points in East Asia and the Pacific and by 8.4 percentage points in South Asia (UNDP, 2003). Thus the presence of the falling or less than the required growth rate in 125 countries act as a major constraint to income poverty reduction and also to the achievement of other MDGs.

- *Gender disparity* : Any development that bypasses half of humanity cannot be conducive to reaching the MDGs. Even though progress for women is manifested on several fronts, the discrimination against women remains universal. In the developing world, female enrolment lags male enrolment at all levels. In most countries, women's wages are significantly less than those of men. Women continue to be extremely discriminated on political corridors, which are still dominated by men. Worldwide women constitute less than 10% of the legislators.

Gender disparities are also evident in outcomes. Half a million mothers die every year from childbirth, that is one every minute. Of the 854 million illiterate adults, two-thirds are women. Nearly 80% of more than 2 million annual deaths from indoor pollution are women and girls (UNDP, 2002).

Women are the major victims of domestic violence, rape, genital mutilation and cross-border trafficking for prostitution. Around the world, the percentage of women experiencing violence in an intimate relationship varies from 10% to 70%. About 1.2 million women and girl under 18 are trafficked every year for prostitution (UNDP, 2000).

- *Social exclusion* : Even though in recent years, people's participation has increased on many fronts and the value of people's power has been demonstrated, a process of exclusion persists in many parts of the world. Social exclusion takes place at several levels. At one level, in many societies, ethnic minorities, races or religious faiths, tribal and indigenous people, people belonging to lower castes are excluded from the mainstream activities as well as the benefits of many societies. At another level, women and children, elderly people and disabled people, and people with different sexual orientations are also discriminated against. Yet at the third level, people who are economically depressed also cannot take part in the processes that affect their lives. All these are often reflected in unequal human outcomes, some of which have already been mentioned.

Ethnic minorities and races in many societies are not only are excluded from the mainstream, rather they become subjected to something more. Genocide occurred in Europe and Africa, with 200,000 people killed in Bosnia in 1992-95 and 500,000 killed in Rwanda in 1994 (UNDP, 2002). In many parts of the world, xenophobia is on the rise. Social and political forces frequently work against women, ethnic minorities, and people with disability. Some of the exclusions are also due to economic forces. For example, opening up of markets can erode the security and social safety nets, thereby excluding the elderly, children and others from the social protection system. During financial crises also, poor people often suffer the most.

Social exclusion denies the potentials of groups of people to make significant contribution to the development process. Second, it excludes people from participating in the decisions that affect their lives. Third, it raises the fear of human insecurity among affected groups. All these denials and exclusions also make the achievement of MDGs quite difficult.

- *Environmental degradation* : Environmental degradation poses a serious threat to MDGs, not only in terms of Goal 7, but also on other goals through its human impacts. In terms of the first issue, in the developing world, with 154 million hectares of tropical forests (covering almost three times the land area of France) having been lost and 1.9 billion hectares of land (almost the total land area of Russia and Indonesia) having been degraded over the last decade, and about 650 million poor people currently living on

marginal and ecologically-fragile lands, the goal of environmental sustainability remains all but a mirage. Environmental degradation also negatively affects human well-being (**box 2**). The adverse impacts of environmental degradation on human health come out quite clearly from box 2 and they have implications on health-related goals of MDGs.

Box 2 : Human impacts of environmental degradation in the developing world

- Water-related diseases, such as diarrhoea and cholera, kill an estimated 3 million people in developing countries, the majority of which are children under the age of five.
- Vector-borne diseases such as malaria account for 2.5 million deaths a year, and are linked to a wide range of environmental conditions or factors related to water contamination and inadequate sanitation.
- One billion people are adversely affected by indoor pollution.
- Nearly 3 million people die every year from air pollution – of which more than 2 million from indoor pollution. More than 80% of these deaths are those of women and girls.
- Nearly 15 million children in Latin America are affected by lead poisoning.
- As many as 25 million agricultural workers – 11 million of them in Africa – may be poisoned each year from fertilizers
- More than one billion people are affected by soil erosion and land degradation. Some 250 million people are at risk from slash crop yields.
- Desertification already costs the world \$42 billion a year in lost income

Source : UNDP (2002, 2000 and 1998)

- *HIV/AIDS* : Today, about 42 million people are living with HIV/AIDS, not counting the 22 million who have already died of the disease. More than 70% of those affected today are in Sub-Saharan Africa, but the epidemic is spreading quite rapidly in the Eastern Europe and the CIS as well as in South Asia. It has also left 13 million orphans in its wake.

HIV/AIDS is not a health problem - it is a human development concern. During the last thirty years, Zimbabwe has lost 23 years in life expectancy and Botswana, Malawi and Zambia have lost more than 15 years. In 1998, Zambia alone has lost 1,300 teachers – two-thirds of those trained each year. Because of HIV/AIDS, the Human Development Index (HDI) has dropped during the 1990s in Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Lesotho, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe (UNDP, 2003). The epidemic also affects a country's labour supply and employment, agricultural production, earning capacity and economic growth. Overall MDGs including Goal 6 on HIV/AIDS cannot be achieved unless this epidemic is tackled urgently.

- *Debt burden* : The total external debt of the developing world today exceeds \$2 trillion. By 1996, the total debt of the 41 heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC) was more than \$245 billion and they were spending more than \$11 billion a year for debt servicing. In countries like Angola, Guyana and Nicaragua, debt servicing as a percentage of GNP exceeded 20%, while their expenditure on health and education, as a percentage of GNP was less than 5% (UNDP, 1999). With such huge resource outflows for debt, there may not be enough resources to initiate growth and human development for achieving the MDGs.

In 1999, the HIPC) spent one-third of their tax revenues in servicing their debts. In some countries this ratio was much higher - Angola (84%), Cote D'Ivoire (62%), Guyana (48%) and Sierra Leone (50%). In Cameroon, debt servicing accounts for 40% of government budget as against less than 10% of basic social services. Even after it began to get debt relief, in 2002, Tanzania's debt servicing was \$144 million, two-thirds of the additional spending required to meet the basic social service goals. In Sub-Saharan Africa, governments spend twice as much on complying with their financial obligations vis-à-vis external creditors that on complying with their fundamental social obligations vis-à-vis their people (UNDP, 2003).

Achievement of the MDGs in HIPC) , most of which are poor and LDCs, is of critical importance for various reasons. It has been estimated that for the 39 of the 42 HIPC) , even without taking debt service payments, total external financing needed for MDGs will amount to \$30 billion to \$46 billion per year. This means that even with total debt cancellation, the HIPC) will need between \$17 billion and \$31 billion in additional resources each year if the MDGs are to be met. All these imply two straight facts : first, the resource requirements in HIPC) for MDGs are quite large and two, debt cancellation can provide significant amount of resources to cover most of those requirements. With debt cancellation, these countries may need less than \$30 billion every year to achieve the MDGs (UNDP 2003).

- *Conflicts* : In many parts of the developing world, conflicts are frequent; most of these conflicts are intra-country, rather than inter-country. Conflicts result in some extreme outcomes. In the 1990s, nearly 4 million people, majority of whom are minorities, were killed in wars within states. Half of all civil casualties are children and there are an

estimated 300,000 child soldiers worldwide. Today, worldwide, there are more than 17 million people who are either refugees or internally displaced (UNDP, 2002). Displaced from their land, deprived of their livelihoods, these people face serious impoverishment and exclusion. Conflict thus breeds inequality, social exclusion, and slowly creates a situation that leads to terrorism. Such a situation is a serious impediment to the achievement of MDGs.

In a world with so many constraints, one may ask several questions. Even though MDGs reflect global commitments, are commitments enough for their realization? In earlier decades, world has made several development commitments, but then forgot all about it – what is so magical about MDGs? Are MDGs achievable after all? The answers to these questions are not that difficult :

- No, commitments may be necessary conditions to achieving the MDGs, but definitely they are not the sufficient conditions. But they represent the first step in the right direction.
- True, in the past the world has made commitments and has forgotten all about it. But we are also paying the price of it. Since we did not honour our commitments, poverty and inequality have deepened, human frustrations have increased and terrorism has gained ground. Today, we live in an integrated world – human frustration anywhere is a threat to human security everywhere. So the world as a whole – developed and developing – must join hands in this new opportunity, provided by the MDGs, to deal with human frustrations.
- Yes, the question whether MDGs are achievable or not, may be asked, but that is not the right question. The relevant question should be : what need to be done to achieve the goals by 2015, given the fact that if we carry on business as usual, MDGs would never be achieved.

Achieving the MDGs at the country level : six critical tasks

Human poverty is like a many-headed dragon and slaying it would need more than one sword. The eight goals of the MDGs recognizes the many-headedness of the dragon, and the areas of

interventions to deal with them need to identify the required more than one sword. Achieving the MDGs by 2015 would need *six* critical tasks :

- *Contextualizing MDGs* : At the global level, the MDGs have been set in more generic terms, which need to be translated into national contexts of each country. This means tailoring the targets of the MDGs to reflect national aspirations and realities. It would also require, if need be, prioritisation of goals for the country concerned in terms of emphasis, sequencing and timing. There is another layer to the contextualization of MDGs – that is to go beyond national levels to sub-national levels. Poverty always has deep pockets – in rural areas or in urban slums, and human deprivations often are more severe for some groups – for ethnic minorities, for older people or people with disabilities, more acute in some areas - in disadvantaged regions. Achieving national targets for MDGs would require a bottom-up approach – disaggregating national targets into local ones, mobilizing local efforts, targeted interventions for pockets of impoverishment and local monitoring.
- *Advocacy and awareness building* : The acronym MDGs not only stands for Millennium Development Goals, but it should also mean Movement for Development Goals. MDGs are not only a set of goals, but they are also a movement. Campaigning for MDGs is thus critical – first, to create awareness and hope in favour of its importance; second, to mobilize policy support and resources for it and third, to identify actors and forge partnerships for implementation. Unless there is a social movement in favour of MDGs across national and international boundaries, they would remain notional, rather than effective. More importantly, as has been observed by McGee et. al. (1999, p.19) :

The poorest people, in whose name the objective of poverty eradication is pursued, have never heard of the MDGs. Until they do, they cannot hold anyone accountable for achieving them. While they remain ignorant of them, they are not empowered by them.

- *Setting pro-poor policy framework* : One critical pre-requisite for achieving MDGs by 2015 is to have a conducive policy structure. A pro-MDG set of strategies must fulfil three criteria. *First*, since MDGs are all about overcoming human poverty, the relevant strategies have to benefit poor people more, i.e. they have to be pro-poor. *Second*, such strategies must focus on both the short-run and the long-run. As far as achieving the MDGs are concerned, there should not be any zealous concentration exclusively on short-run stabilization at the cost of sacrificing long-run strategy needs, nor should there be any exclusive focus only on the long-run, ignoring the short-term realities altogether. There is no inherent tension, as is stressed in

some quarters, between the short-run and long-run strategies, and the real issue is that of a proper balance between the two. *Third*, the selection of strategies should be such that the synergies among them are maximized and captured. Policy instruments should be identified which can contribute to more than one goal. For example, policies for enhancing girls' education will directly contribute to Goal 3 : eliminating gender disparity in education, but they will also, through creating a cadre of educated women and mothers, significantly contribute to Goals 4 and 5 covering child and maternal mortality.

- *Mobilizing resources* : Achievement of MDGs would require resources. Some cost estimates are currently available – both at the global as well as at regional and country levels - for various goals. At the global level, it is roughly estimated that for the attainment of all MDGs, the total resource requirements, taking the synergies of achievement of goals in various areas, would amount to about \$96 billion to \$116 billion per year. But the good news is that the world has the necessary resources - military spending in the world is about \$800 billion, agricultural subsidies in OECD countries amount to \$327 billion a year and total expenditures on alcoholic drinks and cigarettes in Europe are more than \$150 billion. (UNDP, 2003). The task in question is how to mobilize necessary resources – internally and externally – for the MDGs.
- *Developing Institutions* : Achievement of MDGs is not only a policy issue, nor is it a resource concern, it is also related to the issue of proper institutional structure. Humane governance with inclusive democracy, structures for effective participation by people, rule of law, free press, space for civil society with a vibrant NGO movement, decentralized public administration with transparency and accountability are some of the dimensions of the required institutional set-up. Furthermore, each dimension of the institutional framework has to be sensitive to MDGs in terms of their centrality, core values and power. The advocacy and awareness building in favour of MDGs, therefore, assumes significant importance with regard to institutions.
- *Monitoring and reporting* : The task of monitoring and reporting on MDGs is critical on several fronts. First, it presents a balance sheet as to what has been achieved and what remains to be the unfinished path – a snapshot of progress and remaining challenges. Second, such a balance sheet is important for further debates and dialogues on future courses of action, for deciding upon the required policy and strategy package, for re-evaluating the

resource envelope and the institutional structures. Third, it helps all actors to identify the constraints that lie in the path for attaining MDGs. Fourth, regular monitoring is also essential for transparency of the process and accountability of relevant actors – what was supposed to be done, who have done what and who have not. Finally, reporting can be a powerful tool for advocacy and awareness building, for starting friendly competition among various actors or even among neighbouring countries in their race for achieving the time-bound MDGs and also for sharing experiences and lessons as well as best practices.

Participation and partnership : crucial dimension for achieving the MDGs

For the many-headed dragon of human poverty, identifying more than one sword is necessary, but not sufficient. Only joining all the hands holding those swords can ensure that those many heads would be eliminated. Participation and partnership is thus crucial for the achievement of the MDGs. Why is participation and partnership so important? At least, *five* reasons can be put forward :

- First, MDGs represent the commitment of every country and the entire world to objectives, which reflect some core human values. MDGs affect every life on the planet and every one of us should participate in the process that influences its direction, nature and success. As a Brazilian farmer said, *if poverty is halved in 2015, I would like to make sure that I am in the right half.*
- Partnership is necessary for MDGs as the goals represent a too big and too complex a task to be left to one development actor. Partnership brings actors, even those who have traditionally held opposing views, together and contributes to a unifying force for MDGs.
- One major contribution of partnership is that various partners with their diversified expertise and experience bring different value-added to the process, which creates a strong synergy in initiatives towards achieving MDGs. For example, civil society, because of their grassroots work and experiences in movements, uniquely bring to the process participation by common people, a touch of realism, demand for transparency and accountability.

- Partnership can also bring sectoral coherence as various actors work in diversified sectors. Partnership provides a forum within which relationships are formed, which could then improve intra- and inter-sectoral coherence and coordination towards attaining the MDGs.
- Due to the long-term nature of the MDGs, partnerships for it may result in on-going and equal relationships over a longer period of time. Such compacts have externalities in terms of building social capital and enhancing social cohesion, which can also be beneficial to the society in other initiatives as well.

In fact, the six essential tasks to achieve MDGs highlight the cross-cutting nature of participation and partnership. In order to accomplish each of these tasks, development actors will have to partner with each other. For example, a partnership of media and NGOs can be a very effective tool for *advocacy for awareness*. Again, civil society along with the governments, both national and local, can take the lead in *contextualizing the MDGs* in the relevant country perspective. Some UN agencies like the UNICEF, which has done some path-breaking work in collaboration with NGOs for *delivery of basic services*, may bring about new dimensions and insights in setting the pro-poor policy framework. The Private sector and the external donors should be deeply involved in *resource mobilization*. The government at all levels may take the first step in reforming public administration and the legal framework, and civil society and international organizations may join them in assisting them in these areas as well as in *developing democratic institutions*. One important issue is that not every actor has to be involved in every task; rather there should be effective partnerships on the basis of comparative advantage of each. As stated by Kofi Annan, the UN Secretary General, to the opening of the general debate of the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly, September 2000 :

Governments can bring about change, not by acting alone but by working together with other actors...with civil society in the broadest sense. Governments can define norms and principles, and plans of action, after carefully listening to the views of civil society. But then they need to work with appropriate partners to put those norms into practice.

With regard to participation and partnership, three observations are critical :

- First, participation and partnership for MDGs are not only essential for the goals themselves, but they are also beneficial to the actors as well. For example, it provides the civil society organizations a platform to hold their governments accountable; it

legitimises their advocacy that poverty reduction should be the over-riding objectives of all national policies; it provides them with an opportunity to link their work in broader contexts; it given them a chance to forge relationships and finally, it helps them developing new skills. For national governments, the partnership provides them with a means to draw on others' resources, both human and financial, to fulfil their commitments. The MDGs gives the developed world the chance to prove that it is serious about eradicating human poverty in the developing world, they care about the development of this world and they are firm in fulfilling their commitments. It provides the UN system with a common platform in which it can harmonize and coordinate their action in a unifying way.

- Second, for various development actors, participation and partnership for MDGs is not an option, it is, in fact, mandatory for *two* basic reasons :
 - Human poverty fundamentally represents violation of human rights of poor people. The MDGs, being goals to overcome basic human poverty, symbolize the commitment to restoration and protection of human rights of poor people. It requires a rights-based approach to development, in which people can make a *claim* for the protection of their rights and all the development actors, as the *duty holders*, are bound to fulfil that claim. It is, therefore, mandatory for all the development actors – governments, private sector, civil society, international community including bilateral and multilateral donors and the UN system – to undertake initiatives to fulfil their respective duty to meet the claim, i.e. the achievement of MDGs.
 - Nearly 150 Heads of States and Governments have signed the Millennium Declaration on behalf of their states and people. This has committed all the signatory countries and all the institutions within those countries liable to work for that commitment. These institutions not only include the government, but also civil society and the private sector.
- Participation and partnership should not end in blame games whenever there are problems. This can only happen if commitment and sincerity are the basis of participation while mutual respect and trust, clear identification of each partner's respective roles and

responsibilities, based on broad-based dialogue and consensus, and transparency and accountability are the basis of partnerships.

It goes without saying all these issues assume a greater importance in new and restored democracies. With economic, social and political problems that they face – economic stagnation, erosion of physical and social infrastructure, lack of inclusiveness in democracy and of space for civil society, emergence of new issues such as conflicts, the tasks and the institutions needed for achieving the MDGs may be more difficult in these societies. But on the other hand, MDGs may provide them the unique framework to address these issues and overcome the problems.

Participation and partnership for achieving the MDGs : issues, challenges and lessons

Given the six generic tasks, identified earlier, for the achievement of the MDGs and given the inevitable need for participation and partnership among actors, the three crucial *how to* issues are : *how to* develop a road map, *how to* ensure government and civil society collaboration and *how to* promote innovative mechanism in each of those six tasks.

Contextualization of MDGs and Advocacy for MDGs

The major challenges with regard to contextualization of MDGs are basically getting a broad-based consensus on the tailoring of the goals to the country relevance and realities, national ownership of these goals, translating them further to the local level with strong local ownerships, ensuring consistency between the national and local goals and targets. In areas of advocacy and awareness building, the issues are to remove scepticism about the MDGs and to create excitement about and commitment to them, taking the policy advocacy to the highest level to ensure political will towards the MDGs, to develop an effective advocacy and awareness building strategy. For both those tasks, the big challenges remain : how to bring in all important actors together, have a meaningful dialogue, ensure collective commitment from them, get their endorsement of the tailored MDGs and the advocacy strategy, and engage them in the implementation process.

Most of the experiences so far have indicated two things. First, the tasks of contextualization of the MDGs at the country level are closely linked with the task of advocacy and awareness building. This is because a meaningful contextualization needs an open and broad-based debate and dialogue. Second, in building the partnership, some actor or actors must take the lead and

facilitate the process. For better national ownership this particular role should be undertaken by national entities with the UN system acting as the catalyst of the process. The quite rich country experiences, with regard to contextualization of the MDGs and advocacy represent a two-pronged approach (**boxes 3 and 4**).

Box 3 : Contextualization of MDGs : at national as well as local level

- In Timor-Leste, nearly 40,000 adults and young people across the country voiced their views on the MDG goals, prioritising basic health and primary education.
- Reviewing its development priorities, Bahrain, in close consultations with the ILO, has decided to focus on its 12% unemployment rate (even though it is not part of the generic global MDGs), and reduce it drastically.
- Zimbabwe set in motion a broad-based consultative process, including private sector organizations, supported by the UN Country Team, to review the MDGs in the Zimbabwe context.
- In Ukraine, the country's 2002 Youth Summit, comprising 250 leaders between the age of 15 and 19, was the occasion for one-page report by each on a specific MDG, specifying conclusions and recommendations.
- In Rwanda, using the goals as common grounds, the government and civil society groups discussed issues related to post-conflict recovery.
- In Honduras, an initiative has been undertaken to diffuse the MDGs at the local level. During November and December 2002, broad-based dialogues with various actors including local communities were held. The pilot programme has started in Departments of Cortes, Copan, Lempira and Valle.
- Pakistan has embarked on a training programme to sensitize the country's 120,000 district councillors, with 40,000 women, to the MDGs.
- In Bulgaria, in the municipality of Plovdiv, a local MDG benchmarking workshop with minority population, to localize MDGs at the community level, was undertaken with a group of students from Columbia University.

Source : www.undp.org/MDG

Given the changes in areas of contextualization of MDGs and advocacy and awareness building, these rich experiences may help to identify some key elements of probable strategy in undertaking these two tasks :

- Adopt a two-pronged strategy at the outset. The first prong should focus on the awareness building in favour of MDGs and the removal of scepticism about development goals. Partnership between media, civil society and the UN Country Team,

Box 4 : Advocacy and awareness building for MDGs

- Armenia's public awareness campaign, featuring a series of TV programmes and interviews, along with production of a documentary on nation-wide MDG status, have spurred the joint preparation of a new national set of indicators by focal ministries and the civil society organizations.
- In Albania, a series of MDG Regional Advocacy Tours were organized, in collaboration the UN Country Team, to bring MDGs to the local level. To ensure large-scale participation, Public Internet Access Points, Hotline TV Programmes, local stakeholders meetings were arranged.
- Mauritius used civil society forum on MDGs to do publicity for the MDGs.
- In Ukraine, 250 youth leaders in the age range of 15 and 19, constituting themselves as the *Ukraine MDGnet*, prepared a report on MDGs, specifying conclusions and recommendations, and presented it to the parliament.
- There have also been various *innovative* instruments used in different countries for advocacy and awareness building : postage stamps based on eight MDGs and eight stalls on eight MDGs in the public exhibition on the UN Day 2002 (Uganda), MDG Desk Calendars 2002 (Ukraine), MDG Graffiti Day for younger people and T-shirt for the (Bulgaria), a 15-minute cartoon (Mauritius), UN Mobile Training Team (Albania).

Source : www.undp.org/MDG

building on the rich experiences of some UN agencies like the UNICEF, can be quite effective. The second prong has to emphasize that the global MDGs are only generic and they need to be tailored in the context of the country relevance and realities. For this campaign, partnership can be built between the UN Country Team and the civil society, and various advocacy and media tool can be used.

- Arrange broad-based debates and dialogues on the issue of what goals make sense in the country context. Use the means of workshops, seminars, conferences for this purpose and engage academia and research institutions to create the space for such dialogues. Make sure that relevant government ministries, civil society organizations, the private sector as well as in-country external donors take part in it. These constituencies are likely to be attracted to such workshops, seminars and conferences because of the respectability and the objectivity of the organizers. But three things must be ensured.

First, governments and civil society are to be steered to take committed leading role in the process. Second, it may be useful to use some of the consultative processes, which are still on the ground, e.g. consultative process for PRSP. Third and most importantly, the issue of gender equality must be reflected in the dialogues and be represented in the tailored set in ways that make sense.

- Build the whole process from bottom-up – take the process to local levels. It is important to engage local communities in the process and to be sensitive to their aspirations and problems. Such problems may encompass such issues as local environmental degradation or long-term unemployment. Use the local methods of engagements as much as possible.
- For the advocacy and awareness-building task, it is necessary to ensure who the audience is and then to spread MDG message according to specific target groups. Distinction must be made between policy advocacy and advocacy for awareness building. Sufficient emphasis must be given to policy advocacy, particularly to such constituencies to parliamentarians, and local level public representatives. Forge partnerships with actors who have access to and credibility with those constituencies.
- For awareness advocacy, use simple languages in commonly used local languages to relate each goal to day- to- day livelihood. Target women for awareness building campaigns, as the pay-offs are higher. In communicating MDGs to communities, there should be a clear vision of what the responsibilities of the communities will be towards the achievement of the MDGs. This will avoid false expectations and later on conflicts. Three points are important. First, avoid reinventing the wheel. There is already a wealth of materials and process, including the indigenous ones, to communicate. Build on them.

Second, forge partnerships with effective agents in public relations – media and grassroots organizations are critical. Third, keep on innovating instruments, which may range from formal ones to puppet shows, cartoons, story telling, and drawings. Visuals are always more powerful means.

Policy framework for MDGs

The major challenge in the area of policy framework is to ensure that it is pro-poor. Formulation and implementation of pro-poor policies face some burning issues. First, the conventional macroeconomic policy instruments – whether in monetary, fiscal, commercial or trade areas – even though claim neutrality, have inherent pro-rich bias. More work is needed to come up with an alternative set of policy instruments, which are pro-poor, a term which unfortunately has still remained rhetorical in many areas. Second, the power base within the government in most countries is still pro-rich and adoption of pro-poor policies would mean sacrifices by the power base. This has often acted as a deterrent to pro-poor policies. Third, many institutions have come up with idea of supremacy economic growth, the magical solution to all problems, and also the absolute need for short-term stabilization policies at all cost. But there is no automatic link between growth and poverty reduction and unqualified growth may not be desirable. There may not be any inherent conflict between proper short-term stabilization policies and long-term poverty reduction strategies, but sometimes, the former is blindly prescribed; with a narrow perspective, which may be harmful to poverty reduction initiatives. With the power and money of these institutions, countries, particularly poor countries, find themselves unable to pursue any alternative.

The process challenges in this area are quite varied, ranging from internal to external sources. First, in many countries, there is hardly any open discussion on various options or alternatives on macroeconomic policies. Such policies seem to stay within the four walls of the Central Bank and the Ministries of Finance and Planning. Public discourse on macroeconomic issues, bringing in Citizens' Groups, NGOs, Academia and Research Institutions, are still absent in many societies. Second, there is a lack of transparency in the process as well as the policy advice countries receive from both bilateral and some multilateral donors. Sometimes, external actors dominate the entire development agenda of a country, without any knowledge by its people.

In recent times, many countries have used MDGs as an overarching structure to bring it to their macroeconomic framework, which at least raise the possibility of integrating pro-poor focus into their policy framework (**box 5**). As box 5 indicates that slowly the World Bank's initiated Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) of various countries are integrating MDGs in those papers. This is what is expected : MDGs, being long-term goals, should form the objectives of the PRSPs and the papers themselves should outline the strategy to attain those goals.

Box 5 : MDGs influencing the macroeconomic and social policy framework

- Bolivia has aligned its social policy to the MDGs, launching a programme for Education for All, along with Universal Maternal and Child Health Insurance.
- In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the 2003 National Human Development Report (NHDR) will be devoted to the MDGs and its conclusions will be used as input to the country's PRSP.
- Armenia will use its MDG targets in its Social and Economic Development Programme.
- In Yemen, the 2003 budget responds to MDG priorities, increasing allocation for education by 25%, for health 56% and for water and sanitation by 66%.
- In Tanzania, MDGs have provided a long-term planning framework, an important element in view of the fact that the PRSP, which operates within a three-year framework, has now taken centre stage.
- In Rwanda, MDGs have become the basis of country-specific indicators and targets for an interim PRSP.
- The MDG Report 2001 in Senegal stimulated significantly greater participation in the PRSP process, along with an effort to conceptualise joint programming on the part of the international community by testing the MDGs at the local level in a particular poor region with significant promise.
- In Haiti, the interim MDG Report has been used to prepare the country's 2003/2004 budget.

Source : Alarcon (2003)

Taking the challenges and the issues of policy framework for MDGs, a probable strategy in this area may contain the following elements :

- Engage in formulating various elements of pro-poor policies in more operational terms. The process can build on the outcomes achieved in various initiatives undertaken by UNDP on policy issues and by UNICEF on delivery of basic social services such as education, mother and child health care, and safe drinking water. Some of the ILO's work on employment-poverty nexus and on the 20:20 work by UNICEF may also be useful. Studies done on poverty and inequality in WIDER, UNRISD and OXFAM also have

relevance. In the country context, the academia, think tanks and research organizations may take the lead.

- Arrange for wider dissemination of the results of such initiatives and organize public discourses on the negative sides of some conventional prescriptions, on the need for discussing alternatives and on the elements of the alternatives. Take this discourse at all levels – to parliaments to local bodies. Forge partnerships with NGOs and media. Use the policy messages of the Human Development Reports (HDRs) to mobilize support in favour of options and alternatives in policy formulation.
- Initiate movements for openness with regard to the macroeconomic policy formulation and on the advice and prescriptions coming from some multilateral organizations. Use the media to communicate the aspirations of people at the local level. Partnerships with trade unions and grassroots NGOs may be of great help.
- Push the agenda for a wider dialogue both on the content and the process of the PRSP formulation and putting MDGs as the core objectives of the PRSPs. Argue for the case that the issue between short-term stabilization and long-term poverty reduction is not that of diametric opposition, rather it is that of a proper balance.
- In the area of service delivery for the achievement of the MDGs, some well-formulated involvement of the private sector as well as community action may be beneficial for poor people (**box 6**). Explore such possibilities.

Box 6 : Service delivery for poor people by private sector and community action

The Bolivian Government consciously chose to award concessions for water and sanitation services in La Paz and El Alto to the private operator willing to make the largest number of new connections to low-income neighbourhood. The bidder was then obliged to connect 72,000 families to piped water and 38,000 families to sanitation over a five-year period. It worked because of the political will of the Government.

Community-based initiatives can also be fruitful. Through the Bamako Initiative that pools community resources to finance health care, after ten years of implementation, community action in most rural health centres in Benin and Guinea has enabled nearly half of the population to be regular users of the services. It also raised and sustained immunization levels close to Year 2000 Health for All targets.

Source : Mehrotra and Delamonica (forthcoming)

Resources for MDGs

Resources for MDGs would encompass both with the mobilization of resources to achieve these goals as well as with the efficiency in resource use or users' charges. Most of the issues with regard to efficiency and the user charges' are generic and well-known. With regard to resource mobilization itself, some of the challenges are generation of sufficient resources from domestic sources with the tax/GDP ratio being small, direct taxes being insignificant and indirect tax base shrinking with economic openness, resistance to restructuring budgetary allocations, declining ODA, absence of significant private investments going to poorer countries and so on.

Some of the strategies to mobilize resources for MDGs may focus on the following :

- Formulate and implement tax reforms with more direct taxes including income tax and reforming the tax administration process
- Revive the 20:20 initiative both in recipient and the donor allocations so that a critical minimum amount of domestic and external resources are directed towards basic human priorities
- Enhance the absolute amount of ODA, as the present situation is not going to contribute to the achievement of the MDGs (**box 7**). Provide debt-relief and reduce the developed world subsidies and tariffs for generating resources for MDGs (**box 8**).

All these strategies would require alliances and partnerships among various actors. Tax reforms are not politically palatable, yet necessary. Thorough dialogues and discussions, arbitrated by international development partners, governments may be persuaded to do so. Exchanges of experiences, facilitated by the UN system, can also convince the unwilling partners to go ahead with the reforms. The same is true for reviving the 20:20 initiatives. Stronger sectors like defence and physical infrastructure may not be too sympathetic to directing more resources to such soft sectors as health and education. Civil society organizations can partner with communities to initiate social movements in favour of reviving the 20:20 initiative. The issues of enhanced ODA, and the generation of resources through different mechanisms described in box 8 would require partnerships across borders. Developing countries through regional compacts can make a stronger

Box 7 : ODA – a critical element for achieving MDGs

But while the importance of ODA has assumed a new dimension because of the MDGs, unfortunately, the trend of ODA over the years has been quite disappointing. Net ODA as percentage of donors' GNP has declined from 0.33% in 1990 to 0.22% in 2000, not only far from the agreed 0.7% yardstick, but also highlighting a reverse trend. Between 1990 and 2000, the flow of per capita ODA to the LDCs has almost halved, from \$36 to \$19 (in constant prices).

Recent studies have shown that achieving MDGs would require doubling of ODA flows. For the 30 or so African countries judged to be in position to use external assistance effectively, it is estimated that an increase of between \$20 billion to \$25 billion in ODA – from the current \$13 billion to \$33 billion to \$38 billion – would be required to enable them to reach the MDGs.

There is thus a strong case for enhancing the absolute amount of ODA. In fact, adherence to the agreed target of 0.7% of donor GDP going to ODA would enhance the absolute amount of ODA significantly. Today, only Denmark, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway and Sweden meet that criterion. Thus a significant scope remains from other critical donors.

In recent times, the UK Chancellor of Exchequer has proposed a new scheme to double aid flows from \$50 billion to \$100 billion per annum to meet the resource requirements of MDGs. The proposed 'International Financing Facility' would enable donor countries to borrow from the international capital markets in order to provide increases in aid flows between now and 2015. The donor country up to around 2032 would pay back the money borrowed in this way out of its long-term aid budget. This proposal deserves further discussion and dialogues.

Source : Jahan (2003)

Box 8 : Mobilizing resources for MDGs

In 1999, the Highly-Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) spent one-third of their tax revenues in servicing their debts. Achievement of the MDGs in HIPC, most of which are poor and LDCs, is of critical importance for various reasons. It has been estimated that for the 39 of the 42 HIPC, even without taking debt service payments, total external financing needed for MDGs will amount to \$30 billion to \$46 billion per year. This means that even with total debt cancellation, the HIPC will need between \$17 billion and \$31 billion in additional resources each year if the MDGs are to be met. With debt cancellation, these countries may need less than \$30 billion every year to achieve the MDGs.

Today the total annual agricultural subsidies at \$327 billion is more than the total GDP of \$323 billion of Sub-Saharan Africa and 6 times more than the ODA going to the developing world. The annual EU dairy subsidies per cow are \$913 is nearly twice the average annual income in Sub-Saharan Africa and more than 100 times than the annual \$8 annual per capita EU aid to that region. While the US domestic cotton subsidies per day are \$10.7 million, US aid to Sub-Saharan Africa per day is \$3.1 million. One of the greatest contributions of the developed world towards the MDGs would be to reduce such subsidies and channel it to the realization of MDGs. For example, the richer countries can decide to halve their agricultural subsidies and devote the resultant \$164 billion to achievement of MDGs in the developing world.

Every year, Bangladesh exports about \$2.4 billion worth of textiles to the US and pays 14% of it in tariffs. On the other hand, France exports to the US more than \$30 billion worth of textiles and pays only 1% of it in tariffs. The developed world may consider reducing such unequal tariffs against developing countries provided they use the new resources for MDGs. For example, the US may halve the 14% tariff against Bangladesh, if it agrees to devote the resulting \$168 million to realization of MDGs.

Source : Jahan (2003)

case for increased ODA as well as on issues of debt relief, reductions of subsidies and tariffs in the developed world. Particularly in global fora, their solidarity and a common course of action can put pressure both on the developed world and the international system to cater to the demands of the developing world. On the debt issue, alliances between civil society organizations in the developing and the developed world have contributed in Jubilee 2000 for the debt cancellation of a number of highly-indebted countries. Alliances between these two constituencies can also be very effective on other issues as well. Intelligentsia and development activists can also mobilize public opinion in favour of the agenda for developing countries. These countries should also make use the services of the offices of the MDG Campaign Managers in pushing forward their causes.

Monitoring and Reporting on MDGs

The main challenges in the area of monitoring and reporting on MDGs are well-known. In monitoring, the absence of benchmark surveys, robust and reliable data, disaggregated information, proper methodology; weak institutional mechanisms and proper identification of responsibilities; the quite common desire on the part of the Governments to hide realities and present a rosy picture of situations; uncoordinated and non-harmonized signals from international organizations including the UN system; turf battles among various stakeholders pose as major constraining issues. In terms of MDG Reports, the problems of data, proper methodology and weak statistical capacity are all there. Added to them are the issues of diverse understanding of the objectives of the MDG Report in different countries, non-inclusive process of report preparation, the absence of disaggregated information, the problem of quality assurance, tension between among different reports, e.g. NHDRs, PRSPs, non-ownership of the MDG reports by the Governments, weak dissemination of the findings of the Report in the absence of a proper advocacy strategy and the proper mechanisms.

In October 2002, the Secretary-General presented his first Report to the General Assembly on the Implementation of the Millennium Declaration. Other monitoring reports have been prepared or are in the pipeline: on Africa, supported jointly by UNDP and UNICEF, produced for the G8 Summit in 2002; on Asia and the Pacific, produced by ESCAP with funding from UNDP; and upcoming reports for the Arab States and Eastern Europe. UNDP is also assisting the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) Secretariat to monitor and report on the MDGs. So far 40 country-monitoring reports had been prepared and another 60 were close to publication.

The experiences with regard to Country MDG Reports, in terms of process, content and impacts are quite varied (**box 9**).

Box 9 : MDG monitoring, reporting and dissemination of findings

- In Mongolia, the National Statistical Office is establishing an MDG database website for public access.
- In Yemen, the Government's monitoring and reporting system uses the MDGs as the platform of its database.
- The 2002 MDG Report of Egypt carried out disaggregated analysis of poverty. There was, however, widespread lack of confidence in official statistics. Representatives from the civil society organizations expressed a desire to see an impartial, independent institution take the lead in analysing MDG-related policy and data and in MDG projections and reporting.
- Armenia's 2002 MDG Report has spurred the joint preparation of a new set of national indicators by local ministries and the civil society organizations.
- Guatemala's 2002 MDG Report led to a follow-up initiative for preparing such reports on each goal. Local level Governments are preparing provincial and municipal strategies for tracking MDGs at those levels.
- In Zimbabwe, the MDG Report preparation process went through a broad-based consultative process, including civil society and private sector organizations, supported by the UN Country Team.
- Following its first MDG Report, Philippines held a workshop, intended to confirm the indicators or additional suggested indicators, generate an action agenda by goal, and also to develop a plan for communications and advocacy.
- In order to do publicity for its MDG Report, Mauritius used a 20 minute video on the essence of the Report, along with posters, banners, brochures, CD Roms.
- Bosnia and Herzegovina and Bolivia are devoting their 2003 NHDR to the MDGs. In 2004, the NHDR of Dominican Republic, the Pacific NHDR by Fiji and the Sub-regional NHDR on Central European countries (Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia) are proposed to be on the MDGs as well.

Source : Alarcon (2003) and www.undp.org/MDG

With regard to MDG monitoring, reporting and dissemination and use of its findings, the following strategies may be useful :

- Clearly identify the scope of work and responsibilities of each UN agency in the UN Country Team. Build an inclusive process and find the most effective ways of coordination.
- Ensure the involvement of the relevant Government agencies and units in all aspects of MDG monitoring and reporting as well as in dissemination and use of its results through

continuous engagements with them in terms of meetings, dialogues, discussions and if needed, trainings and workshops. Engage NGOs and civil society throughout the entire process, and not at the end in the review process only. Get from experiences from other countries as to what worked and why.

- Through collective efforts, try to develop monitoring methodology, identify the benchmark surveys as well as mobilize data, including disaggregated ones. Draw on the existing pool including the NHDRs, poverty assessment studies, household expenditure surveys etc. Through partnerships with national, regional and international organizations, plan to develop the statistical capacity of the relevant entities. Identify the data gaps, particularly those of disaggregated data, in terms of gender, regions, ethnicity and socio-economic groups, so that future initiatives can concentrate on those gaps.
- Decide on the frequency of monitoring and identify the role and responsibilities of each relevant actor. Use civil society as watchdog for the process and the outcome.
- Plan early on as to how to produce the country MDG Report. A clear idea about the scope for such a Report and an appreciation of the fact that it has complementarities with NHDRs and PRSPs can make things easy. Interaction with other UN Country Teams in other countries, which have successfully done so may be a worthwhile investment. Drawing from the experiences of the NHDR and the PRSP processes can also be helpful. Assistance from the MDG Report Guidelines from the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) and technical backstopping from the BDP Policy Advisers at SURFs can also be beneficial. Using the UNDG Guidance Note and serious Peer Review for the MDG Reports can assure quality products. Preparation of MDG Reports in local languages can really be extremely effective.
- Develop a strategy for dissemination of the findings of the MDG Reports using both conventional and innovative mechanisms as identified in box 4. MDG Reports should be used as a mirror for the concerned society – how much the society has achieved, how far it has to go and what the situation with regard inequality and disparity is. Partnerships with media and the civil society organizations can be very effective in disseminating the pictures to the people, who in turn would put pressure on the Government to undertake necessary steps.

- An early-on engagement and discussion with the Government may pave the way for using the findings of the Report in policies and strategies (e.g. PRSPs), both at national and local levels. The findings of the Report can also be used for setting priorities with necessary resource allocation, for measures like pro-poor policies and gender-sensitive budgeting, and for programmes for disadvantaged groups and regions. Initiatives like presenting the MDG Report before the parliament, having policy dialogues with technocrats, roundtables with various constituencies may add to such process.

The issue of participation and partnership building has been addressed throughout the entire preceding discussion in terms of identification of challenges as well as of proposed strategies in various tasks. The issue now may be : are there any other innovative mechanisms for collaboration and how to promote them? Some proposals may be put forward :

- *A country consortium for MDGs* – Within a country, there can be a consortium with the representation from governments at all levels, private sector, institutions of civil society including NGOs, academia, think tanks, media and members from the donor community. Such a consortium will coordinate within the country all aspects of tasks for the achievement of the MDGs. The mandate for this consortium can be extended for interacting with entities across borders and around the globe.
- *A Global Fund for MDGs* : With the money mobilized through the proposals, made in box 8, on debt relief and reductions in the developed world's subsidy and tariffs, a global fund can be created for channelling resources to the developing countries to help them in their efforts to wards realization of MDGs. If agreed in principle, the structure and the modus operandi of such a fund can be detailed out later on. But again, partnerships among institutions from both the developed and the developing world and representations from international organizations may be the key for its operation and success.
- *Regional and sub-regional forums of civil society* : UNDP organized initiatives like Campaigning for Action – Forum for the MDGs in Central and Eastern Africa has clearly shown that such regional and sub-regional forums not only provide a serious platform for collective advocacy, networking, and exchanges of lessons and experiences. It can be a powerful partnership instrument for pushing forward the agenda for MDGs.

Conclusions

The problem is not that we tried to eradicate poverty and failed, the problem is that no serious and concerted attempt has ever been made

- Jim Grant, 1991

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), to which the whole world has made commitments, is a response to the seriousness issue. Partnership, on the other hand, represents a scope for the concerted effort. We thus have a choice – to rise to the occasion or not to do that. If we make the wrong choice, then we shall have to repent in this generation, not so much for the evil deeds of the wicked people, but for the appalling inaction of the good people. And who does not know that in the ultimate analysis, human destiny is a choice, and not a chance.

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