



*Development works: A young girl gets an education in the village of Puepue in Mozambique. Her school was built under a local development plan supported by the UN Capital Development Fund, which is administered by UNDP. With focused development strategies, Mozambique has cut poverty by a third in the decade since the end of its civil war. Like other governments around the world, it is now adopting concrete plans to achieve the development basics embodied by the MDGs.*

## 2015: Ten Years to Change the World

Imagine a world where every child eats. Where everyone votes. Where every home enjoys clean water. Where no unemployed youth picks up a weapon instead of a future. This is the world of the MDGs. It is within our reach.

In 2000, at the Millennium Summit, all 191 UN Member States signed the [Millennium Declaration](#), an agreement on the common values of peace and security, the protection of human rights, and the basic dignity of decent living standards for all peoples. Drawing upon the Declaration, the eight MDGs subsequently embedded these values in an ambitious global development agenda. With a deadline of 2015, countries would work together on specific targets to reduce poverty, and cut the roots of inequity and instability.

Since 2000, individual countries and the global community have come far in determining what the goals require. By 2005, with only 10 years left on the timeframe of the MDGs, we seem poised for rapid advancement. Governments have intensified their efforts to put in place the right plans, policies and resources to achieve the goals, following a decade of global progress that has seen child mortality rates fall and life expectancies rise. And an emerging understanding of the inextricable links between a developed world and a safe one heralds a time of unprecedented global partnerships among governments, international institutions, the private sector and civil society organizations. In this climate of growing solidarity, a grand bargain has begun to emerge. It pairs two great human desires—for peace and prosperity—into one universal need for collective human security.

**“A world mired in poverty cannot be a world at peace.”**

*Kofi Annan, Secretary-General  
of the United Nations*

### Global Momentum

Now is the time to strike this bargain, because in 2005, the world faces a historic opportunity to do so. It is the year of the UN's five-year review of the Millennium Summit, one of a series of events spurring momentum on global issues, including the MDGs. These run from the Group of 8 meeting in Gleneagles, Scotland to the World Trade Organization's next ministerial talks.

The UN itself has spearheaded a series of landmark reports that chart the ways to achieve shared global prosperity and a safer world for all, starting in late 2004, when the UN High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change comprehensively assessed global security issues in *A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility*. The UN Millennium Project's visionary *Investing in Development: A Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals* followed in early 2005. The UN Secretary-General brought the key conclusions of both together in his report for the Millennium Summit review, *In Larger Freedom: Towards Development, Security and Human Rights for All*. It also delves into the reform of the United Nations, on a scale not seen since the founding of the organization.

already reached the longstanding target of allocating 0.7 percent of gross national product, which was reaffirmed in the 2002 Monterrey Consensus, the agreement forged by the International Conference on Financing for Development. Another group has agreed to go even further by setting the bar at one percent. In some corners, there is talk of a new Marshall Plan. Debt relief to the tune of US\$54 billion has been committed under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative, and impetus has grown around reforming world trade to build a more open and equitable system. The ranks of donor countries have swelled in recent years with the addition of the Eastern European and some rapidly progressing developing countries. Nations in the global South are pioneering models of development cooperation among themselves that could prove to be a tipping point in achieving the MDGs.

Looking around the world today, we know that development can work. In fact, at a moment of widely available technology, practical solutions, affordable costs and political consensus, development can work better than ever before. Stretched across all countries, the MDG agenda is a large one, but in an interconnected world, it is the only desirable one.

## “If we fail against hunger and poverty, what else could bring us together?”

*Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, President of Brazil*

The backdrop to these and other events is that we live in the midst of a profound global opening to the recognition that conditions in the rest of the world matter, ethically, economically and in security terms. If we refuse to take action, one person's poverty is, in a sense, the impoverishment of us all. Just as security threats, whether from war or infectious diseases, so easily ripple across continents.

This awareness of our interdependence has spread among world leaders, across the covers of international news magazines, and in the hearts of the millions of people who watched the horror of the tsunami in December 2004 and initially outpaced even governments in the volume of their contributions. It has helped rally new global and national advocacy networks determined to fight poverty by connecting the formidable strengths of existing social justice campaigns as well as labour unions and religious groups. It has prompted governments to reorient discussions on development from what can be done at current rates of progress to what must be done to achieve the MDGs.

Among donor countries, official development assistance (ODA) continues a steady climb upward. Five countries have

### Embracing the Future

In fighting poverty and seeking to build stable nations, some developing countries are already making the most of domestic resources, and could absorb a massive infusion of new resources—whether from ODA, debt relief or trade, in line with the notion of global partnership spelled out in the MDGs. These funds could shore up fledgling democracies, jumpstart public services, reinvigorate entire economies, and put these countries in a position to reach the goals by 2015. In countries with a proven record of managing their development well, international donors are already putting more money directly into national budgets, rather than scores of individual donor-run projects. This is a step that supports national initiatives, reduces administrative burdens and signals a time of more equitable international collaboration.

But the starting point is different for many nations with large percentages of their people living in extreme poverty. They run up against a very basic constraint: they are unable to effectively manage existing resources to reach the MDGs, much less new ones. Their challenges are deeper, yet they must not be left behind.

At UNDP, from our presence on the ground in 166 countries, we know that development has a chance even in the most difficult situations—with the right forms of support. Above all, these must target the fundamentals of well-governed, equitable societies. When people lack jobs, education and a voice in shaping the conditions under which they live, they lack the capacities to contribute to a healthy and prosperous nation. When countries are cut off from the world economy, struggling with the loss of workers to HIV/AIDS, governed by weak institutions and mired in debt, they lack the capacities to create a working state. If conflict results, all development problems inevitably worsen. The cycle is a vicious one, and once it starts, hard to control.

A different scenario can unfold if countries can start to reverse these constraints and unleash the potential of their people, institutions and natural resources. In doing so, they begin constructing a platform for reaching the MDGs. As a leading advocate for the goals and as the UN's global network for development, UNDP helps bring countries and the international community together to take these efforts forward. Working with existing national plans and poverty reduction strategies, we assist countries with formulating practical 10-year MDG strategies that aim for scale and innovation. These identify financing gaps, assess needs for policies and institutions, commit to improving governance and public administration, and prioritize social services.

UNDP then helps countries connect to the knowledge, resources and partnerships they need to implement these plans, whether the issue is building better statistical systems or hooking up electricity grids, sound policy design or cooperation with civil society. Once this process begins, so does development with a real chance to improve national prospects and people's lives.

### 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 Right Choice

The last decade, with its booming global economy, has offered unparalleled opportunities for people in every region—from Asian economic successes to the steady growth rates taking hold in some African countries. More than at any prior time in history, it has also been a decade of democracy—1.4 billion more people now enjoy the right to choose their government. The recent stirrings of political reform in the Middle East offer room for more optimism, as do the calls in Latin America for deepening democracy to deliver more equitable development.

Hopeful as these changes are, they must accelerate in ways that allow many more people to reap their benefits. With 10 years to go on the MDGs, over a billion people still live in extreme poverty. Widening economic disparities offer cause for concern both among and within countries. Dozens of nations suffer some form of conflict, with fragile states the first to fall prey to widespread discontent expressed through confrontation and violence.

Internationally and nationally, the struggle to reduce poverty and tame instability has always been intensely political. It is also a choice. In 2005, more resources and more political will, heightened public interest and greater national ambition are all great new signs that the world will make the right choice. For both the poorest and the richest people and countries, the MDGs offer a roadmap for our common future, a tool for quickened and meaningful change.



*In Kosovo, UNDP has worked closely with local communities, supporting their efforts to restore stability by repairing damaged infrastructure and creating jobs. Women in one village pitch in to dig drainage channels, a sign of their investment in the return to peace.*