

PROJECT VIE/02/007

STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITY OF PEOPLE'S ELECTED BODIES IN VIET NAM

Supported by Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, UK Department for International Development
and Canadian International Development Agency

Engaging Parliaments in the Millennium Development Goals: a Key Part of National MDG Strategies



Project Technical Series: Parliamentary Affairs

Series Editors

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Publication

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Communication Specialist ONA-UNDP Project VIE/02/007
Quan Phuong Thao. Cover design
New World Company, Ha Noi. Layout and Art Design

Translator for the Vietnamese Version

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OFFICE OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY – UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Project VIE/02/007

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Engaging Parliaments in the Millennium Development Goals: a Key Part of National MDG Strategies

Project Technical Series of Publications: Parliamentary Affairs

Ha Noi - Viet Nam
2006

The PDF file of this publication is available at
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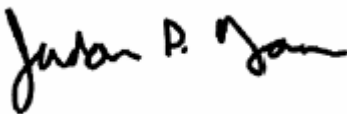
FOREWORD

The Millennium Declaration marks a watershed in the history of the United Nations and the struggle against poverty and want. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) included within the Declaration sets out concrete, global development objectives and, for the first time, a timetable for their achievement. But the importance of the Millennium Declaration is not limited to the MDGs. In linking development, freedom and human rights, the Declaration stands as a succinct statement of humanity's shared vision of a world in which all people enjoy prosperity, freedom and peace.

The Millennium Declaration and MDGs provide the framework for co-operation between the Government of Viet Nam and the United Nations agencies, including UNDP. The achievement of all of the MDGs and the full realization of the values of the Millennium Declaration motivate all of our work together. Viet Nam's representative institutions at the national and local levels have a vital role to play in drafting and approving legislation that reflects the principles of the Millennium Declaration and raising public awareness of the Declaration and MDGs.

As this book moves towards publication, the world's leaders are preparing to meet in the United Nations General Assembly to assess progress towards the achievement of the MDGs. The Government of Viet Nam will report on the country's tremendous success in poverty reduction. Developing countries from the region and beyond will look to Viet Nam for advice on policies to accelerate progress towards the MDGs. Viet Nam's representative bodies can take pride in their part in the development of these policies.

But even as we celebrate past achievements we must all recognize that the job is not finished. We cannot rest until all Vietnamese people enjoy the 'larger freedoms' described so eloquently by United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan. The National Assembly and the United Nations in Viet Nam pledge to work together towards our common vision of a nation, region and world in which all people enjoy freedom from want, freedom from fear and the freedom to live in dignity.



Jordan Ryan
UN Coordinator in Vietnam
UNDP Resident Representative



Nguyen Si Dung
VIE/02/007 National Project Director
Deputy Secretary-General of the
National Assembly of Viet Nam

PREFACE

This publication has been prepared with the contribution of several people and organizations. Its origins lie in the dialogue that took place between the Secretariat of the National Assembly of Vietnam and UNDP around the Project VIE02007 work plan 2004. ONA authorities, UNDP management and Project staff did make significant contributions to shape the initial ideas and to visualize potential uses for this report.

Next significant input was made by several UNDP specialists around the world, who kindly shared their experiences and information about how UNDP has supported parliaments in several countries in engaging in one way or another in the promotion and achievement of MDGs. These inputs were gathered through a query made through UNDP global networks – MDGNet and DGPN. The consolidated reply was prepared by Elham Seyedsayamdost and correspondingly distributed through the networks again on the 19th of August 2004 (see details of the contributions on section 4). This section clearly demonstrates the universality of the issues at hand and the breadth and depth of experiences and knowledge that are being generated everyday in relation to parliaments and the MDGs. Its inclusion in this publication is also demonstrative of the tremendous benefits that can be had from regional and global knowledge networks and from national partners and UNDP working together to maximise their utility in pursuit of local development

Afterwards, a paper was commissioned by the Project VIE02007 to Alicia Philips-Mandaville, at the time with the National Democratic Institute – USA. She was selected for this task due to her work and several previous publications with UNDP and the World Bank linking the work of parliaments with national poverty reduction strategies. This paper (see section 2) has been published also as a self-standing paper in the English language. It takes an innovative and illustrative approach to the issue by basing its comparative analysis on the outcomes of parliamentary engagement on the issue of the MDGs.

Later on, the final shape of this report was complemented with contributions made by Mrs. Eveline Herfkens, the UN Secretary General's Executive Coordinator for the Millennium Campaign. As part of the public campaign to support MDGs Mrs. Herfkens did make several presentations addressing members of parliaments from developing and from developed countries raising their awareness about the way parliaments and parliamentarians can actively engage in the achievements of MDGs (see sections 1 and 3). These two sections are of particular value to parliamentarians seeking exposure to both the means at their disposal in pursuit of the MDGs and the most pertinent and strategic policy areas on which their efforts could be focused. In that sense these sections and that of Alicia Philips-Mandaville are suitably complimentary. Exchange of information and coordination with Mrs. Herfken's Office took place thanks to the active involvement of Chato Ledonio-O'Buckley, Lucille Merks and Marina Ponti.

The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) did also contribute to this publication by authorizing the inclusion of several of their resolutions. This was done through active and very positive contacts with Mr. Martin Chungong – IPU Director for the Promotion of Democracy. The IPU resolutions have been considered important, to support the familiarization Vietnamese MPs with a series of international initiatives that have raised the importance and strengthen the roles and commitments of Parliaments in the fight against poverty and in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

The publication would have not been possible without the permanent and constant support from Project Manager Mrs. Pham Bich Ngoc and Project Staff Nguyen Thu Nhan and Nguyen Thu Huong, as well as from our colleague in UNDP Jonas Lovkrona. The translation from the English to the Vietnamese language was done by Pham Thi Nguyet. The design and publishing company New World put all the parts together and produced the final layout and art of the publication under the guidance and supervision of Truong Phan Viet Thang the Project Communication Specialist

To all of them thank you.

It is the hope of all those who contributed to this publication that it will have uses which go beyond informing the debate among those who work every day on the theory, rather than practice, of linking governance issues to development. The intent is to provide a publication that will serve as a practical tool and resource for parliamentarians and those who work in support of them and their institutions. We hope its uses will extend from being an advocacy and sensitisation tool to being a publication which can inform and play a role in training activities. Most importantly, we hope it will prove useful to parliamentarians who are trying through their daily work to promote the MDGs and give effect to policies and legislation that will help their country to achieve them.

The Editors,

Lenni Montiel
UNDP Senior Technical Adviser

Shane Sheils
UNDP Governance Programme Officer

ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
DGPN	UNDP Democratic Governance Practice Network
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MP	Member of Parliament
MDGNet	UNDP Millennium Development Goals Network
NA	National Assembly of Viet Nam
NDI	National Democratic Institute
ONA	Office (Secretariat) of the National Assembly of Viet Nam
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Process
PIW	Parliamentarians Implementation Watch at the World Bank
PNOWB	Parliamentary Network on the World Bank
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

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SECTION 1

The role of parliamentarians in rich and developing countries in meeting the Millennium Development Goals

By Eveline Herfkens

I. Introduction

When 189 Governments from the North and the South, representing their citizens, signed the Millennium Declaration at the UN's Millennium General Assembly in September 2000, there was a sense of urgency. Urgency to 'free our fellow men, women and children from the abject and dehumanizing conditions of extreme poverty, to which more than a billion of them are currently subjected'. They committed to work together to build a safer, more prosperous and equitable world for all its citizens by 2015 and they adopted the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that put a people-centered development at the heart of the global, national and local agendas.

The Millennium Development Goals committed rich and poor countries to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, eliminate gender inequality and environmental degradation, and ensure access to education, healthcare and clean water, all by 2015. Since then the MDGs have had a catalytic effect on global development, because of their simplicity, measurability and accessibility. Anybody can understand them, grasp that they matter, judge whether or not his or her country and the wider world is doing enough to achieve them and take action if they are not.

The MDGs bring together for the first time a shared vision in the development community that was earlier characterized by nearly four decades of disagreements and debate between rich and poor countries. They represent a global partnership based on shared responsibility committing rich and poor countries, the UN system and key institutions that determine the economic fate of the developing world: the World Bank, the IMF and the World Trade Organization. Poor countries pledged to improve

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

governance and reform policies, channeling their resources towards the first seven Goals. Rich countries, for their part, promised to deliver more and more effective aid, faster and deeper debt relief, more trade opportunities and fairer trade rules, and increased technology transfer to poor countries (expressed in Goal 8).

The Goals explicitly recognize that eradicating poverty can be achieved only through the global partnership for development. Terms for this “global deal” were reaffirmed at the Financing for Development Summit in Monterrey in 2001 and in the Summit on Social Development in Johannesburg in 2002. Poor countries cannot achieve these Goals, unless rich countries deliver on their end of the bargain well in advance of 2015.

However, there is a deficiency in this global partnership. While poor countries committed to specific targets and deadlines for meeting Goals 1 through 7, there are no such benchmarks to measure targets or monitor specific deadlines of rich countries for delivering on Goal 8. Only recently debates have started in the OECD/DAC (the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) about benchmarks to measure and monitor rich countries efforts.

Issues relating to international development have long been absent from the national political debate in many OECD countries. However, we are currently witnessing an awakening in terms of increased acknowledgement of the fact that poverty is not merely a problem for the poor. The world came to realize that what happens in a poor village in Afghanistan matters to all of us. No issue is as vital for the future of everybody on this planet as is poverty and inequality. Poverty snatches hope and opportunities away from the people and this boulevard of broken dreams feeds and breeds instability and insecurity.

We are all linked by trade, finance, migration, disease and financial crises which do not recognize national boundaries. Neither does terrorism. Indeed, poverty and inequality is our common enemy; one can't win peace unless we win the fight against poverty. The MDGs are the road to win that fight and they provide us with a unique opportunity to build an inclusive global community for a better and safer world.

Public opinion polls show people in all countries are in favor of their government taking action against world poverty. Thus, leadership for politicians on these issues could actually be a “vote getter”.

From a global perspective, progress in achieving the Goals is promising: a significant number of countries are in the process of achieving at least partially the objectives set by the Goals while some countries (in East Asia, including Vietnam and Latin America are actually surpassing the objectives set).

However, even while there is progress, it is not adequate. The situation in Sub-Saharan Africa and in the least developed countries is particularly worrisome. This continent on average will not achieve the Goals for another century. But even here, some Least Developed Countries (LDCs) can achieve Goal 2 and get all their kids to school. Tanzania is on track on the water goal; Uganda and Senegal are able to reverse the AIDS pandemic; as for Mozambique, both the poverty and the child mortality goals are

within reach. Success stories can simply be explained as cases where the global compact is implemented. The government concerned has reasonably good policies and rich countries have been relatively generous and helpful with aid and debt relief. So the global deal can work. If some of even the poorest countries in Sub-Saharan Africa can achieve some of the goals, I will not give up believing that the goals are achievable in all of Sub-Saharan Africa and in all the least developed countries.

We have now reached a critical junction in our fight against poverty and inequality – just 10 years from the deadline set by world leaders to eliminate poverty, the year 2005 is the year for the stock taking summit at the United Nations in September. Countries need to reconcile rhetoric with action and take concrete steps forward and adopt concrete deadlines to fulfill their commitment. The UN can provide the platform for governments to reach agreements and make commitments – but the UN cannot enforce compliance with these. Only parliaments and citizens of the countries that make up the membership of the UN can hold their governments to account. As Secretary General of the United Nations Kofi Anan says: *'It is not in the United Nations that the Goals will be achieved. They have to be achieved in each of its Member States, by the joint efforts of their governments and their people'*. In his recent report for the preparation of the coming September summit the SG notes "while there has been real progress towards some of the goals in some countries, too few governments – from both the developed and the developing world – have taken sufficient action to reach the targets by 2015". While stating that the world has the resources and knowledge to achieve the goals, the SG calls political will the crucial ingredient to make it happen and stresses that commitments are already in place. Thus Parliamentarians hold the key to make their governments accountable for their promises. It is now implementation that matters.

II. The Role of Parliamentarians in Rich Countries

Let me now first focus on what the "global deal" implies for the rich (OECD) members of the Commonwealth¹: the UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

What are the issues:

1. More and More Effective Aid

Quantity of Aid

The world has never before seen so much prosperity and the donor communities have never been richer. Wealth per person has more than doubled between 1961 and 2000. But the aid given per person is actually less than it was four decades ago. The good news is that after the Monterrey Consensus, ODA (official development assistance) began to climb again in 2002, after nearly a decade of decline. But still

¹ Information based on most recent OECD/DAC figures and Peer Reviews.

only 0.25% of donor's GNP instead of the pledged 0.7% has been achieved. And even if the commitments are met, ODA will still be far short of the additional aid that the World Bank, the UN "Zedillo panel" and the Millennium Project estimates suggest would be needed if the MDGs are to be realized.

In 2004 Australia (0.25%), Canada (0.26%), New Zealand (0.23%) and the UK (0.36%) were all below the average DAC country effort (0.42%). While all four have long ago endorsed the 0.7% ODA/GNI target only the UK has promised to increase ODA annually to achieve the 0.7% deadline by 2013. Australia and New Zealand were (except for Japan) the only rich countries that did not make commitments at or since the Monterrey Financing for Development Summit to increase aid. In absolute terms, Canada (smaller than Sweden), New Zealand (smaller than Luxembourg; less than half of Greece) and Australia (size of Belgium) are modest players in the donor community.

Quality of Aid

The issue of delivering high-quality and more effective aid is as important as ODA volume. Too much bilateral aid has been driven by strategic geo-political objectives to countries that do not need external concessional assistance to reach the Goals.

Moreover, often, aid is provided in ways that benefited the donors' exporters and visibility and did not contribute to reducing poverty. Thus, it is no surprise that public opinion is skeptical of aid effectiveness. In many Northern European countries, MDGs have been helpful for governments to link aid flows to achievement of the Goals, strengthening the pro-aid constituency by changing the image of ODA from giveaways that support corrupt regimes to concrete programs that can, for example, reduce child mortality or provide primary education.

To increase aid effectiveness, donors should target poor countries, encourage increased ownership, improve donor coordination, untie aid and make MDGs the organizing focus of all aid.

The United Kingdom (DfID) is a shining example of what can be achieved in improving aid quality (the more it is to be regretted that UK ODA is still below the EU average).

- **Donors should channel ODA to poor countries.** particularly Sub-Saharan Africa and the least developed countries and, among those, to the countries that are relatively well governed. The UK, Australia and New Zealand have a strong focus on LDCs and other lower income countries (be it that in the case of the latter two an extremely low percentage of aid goes to Sub-Saharan Africa, the continent most off track in achieving the goals and most in need of external concessional resources to do so). However, Canada lacks focus on the poorest countries. While it pledged that half of its ODA increases would benefit Sub Saharan Africa, for years to come Canada will continue to be a smaller donor there than e.g. the Netherlands or any of the Nordics. This is the more disappointing given Canada's active role in the G8 action plan for Africa.

- **Respect national ownership of developing countries.** Aid has to back homegrown strategies and has to be demand-driven. Donors need to understand that it is not the donors that develop countries, but that countries develop themselves. Canadian aid is very much supply-driven. Moreover it is one of the most widely dispersed programmes and as such Canada has no critical mass in any recipient country. For Australia there is the risk that ODA is too much driven by an Australian law and order agenda at the expense of local priorities and ownership. Moreover the high reliance on technical assistance through Australian managing contractors and civil servants, placed in recipient-government positions might also undermine local ownership. New Zealand is moving toward integrating its programming process with the national development strategies of its partner countries.
- **Make MDGs the focus of all aid.** This is likely to require further reorientation of aid programs and budgets, both in their country focus and the types of programs supported. This would enable donors to demonstrate aid effectiveness to taxpayers. While the UK, Canada and New Zealand are making efforts to use the MDGs as an overall framework for its development cooperation, Australia has not (yet?) done so. New Zealand's focus on poverty reduction and primary education is consistent with the MDGs.
- **Harmonize Aid Procedures.** Donors need to simplify and harmonize the complex procedures that overburden poor countries' institutional capacity. The impact of foreign aid is too often weakened because it is delivered by many high-cost small individual bilateral programmes, governed by multiple and complex requirements. Because of these different procedures, countries like Tanzania were required to write more than 2000 reports annually just to handle and justify the use of its aid funds to its various donors.

Donors need to harmonize procedures with each other and align these with those of partner country systems to improve the effectiveness of development assistance.

In the follow-up of the March 2005 Paris High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, donor countries should set, by September 2005, timetables and monitorable targets to do so. While the UK is in the lead of forging international consensus on this subject, and New Zealand actively promotes harmonization and sector support in the Pacific; Canada is less supportive of this. Australia agrees with the need to do so but given the fact that its aid is increasingly administered by different government departments and agencies, its own aid might actually add up to an increase of administrative requirements for recipients. Efforts for delegated co-operation between Australia and New Zealand in some of the Pacific countries are commendable.

- **Untied Aid.** Aid tied to procurement in the donor country reduces the value of aid by 25%, according to World Bank estimates. Tied aid is financially costly for recipients, limits options in maximizing use of resources, invites corruption, and leads to the most onerous procedures.

Aid should finance local and recurrent costs including financing budget support. Achieving the MDGs, particularly in health and education, requires cash to finance salaries of teachers and nurses, and basic medical and school supplies, among other needs.

While the UK has totally untied all of its ODA budget, Australia (43%) and Canada (39%) have among the highest percentages of tied aid.

2. Debt relief

The Jubilee debt relief campaign generated strong support worldwide for debt cancellation for poor countries. However, debt relief still falls far short of what is needed. Debt sustainability should be redefined as the level of debt that allows a country to achieve the MDGs. For most poor countries this requires 100% cancellation of all (bilateral and multilateral) debt. The UK is leading a new initiative for 100% debt cancellation of multilateral debt for poor indebted countries. It announced that it will pay its share (10%) of the debt service from eligible countries to the World Bank and the African Development Bank's concessional financing windows on behalf of eligible countries until 2015. Canada has joined this initiative, which would, if fully financed, provide up to \$20 billion of additional financing over the next ten years.

3. Trade

International trade has a tremendous potential to reduce poverty worldwide and drive economic growth. A 1% increase in the developing countries' share of world exports would lift 128 million people out of poverty. But present trade policies discriminate against developing countries and hinder poor country participation in the global economy. Key issues here are agricultural policies and market access.

4. Agriculture

The most trade-distorting policies are in the agriculture sector.

Agriculture subsidies lead to worldwide overproduction that effectively depresses world prices, floods poor country markets and undermines earning opportunities for farmers in developing communities. As two-thirds of the world's poor live in rural areas and depend on agriculture, putting an end to the distortion of international and local agriculture markets is a crucial ingredient to achieve the first Millennium Development Goal.

The worst offender on this issue among rich countries is the European Union. While Britain has for years made strong statements about the need to eliminate these subsidies it has not been very successful in convincing the EU membership to effectively reduce these. Australia and New Zealand actively fight EU agriculture protectionism, where, by the way their own interests coincide with those of developing countries. Canada should take a more proactive approach in analyzing the impact on developing countries of non-aid policies such as trade and agriculture.

5. Market Access

Developing countries continue to face restrictions to market access. Despite significant liberalization in recent decades, trade barriers are still high-especially on labor-intensive goods and services in which developing countries have a comparative advantage.

Poor country exports are locked out by high tariffs (concentrated on agricultural products, textiles and clothing), by tariff escalation (whereby the tariff increases the moment a commodity is processed) and by non-trade barriers. Barriers on products from developing countries are twice as high as those on developed country products. Reducing tariff peaks on products that are of export interest to poor countries will be essential for them to trade their way out of poverty.

Both Australia and the UK are deeply committed to increase market access for products from developing countries. However as the UK is part of the EU's common trade policies it has not been very effective as yet to change these for the better.

III. Suggested Approaches for Parliamentary Action in Rich Countries

Obviously, Parliaments in rich countries need to increase the quality and quantity of debates and parliamentary questions on development issues. In some rich countries there is hardly any parliamentary involvement in development cooperation policies.

Comprehensive debates with the government can be organized around relevant reports. The most informative of these are the regular OECD/DAC Peer Reviews of individual donor efforts. These focus particularly on aid but increasingly include the question if other government policies (trade, debt) are coherent with development objectives. OECD/DAC peer reviews provide a goldmine of information for Parliamentarians regarding where their governments' aid policies need to be improved. OECD/DAC Peer Reviews are public (www.oecd.org).

More general on MDG 8 policies: by now more than half of OECD countries have published reports evaluating their own progress towards achieving Goal 8. Parliamentarians should not only promote preparation of these reports but also prominently debate them to ensure concrete and comprehensive action on Goal 8.

On aid volume obviously parliamentary budget committees should ensure a multi-year commitment to achieve the 0.7% and credible annual increases in order to do so. On both increased quality of aid (harmonization, untying), debt relief and trade, Parliaments need to make governments accountable for positions taken at international meetings. Parliamentarians should scrutinize these by having debates in advance of major international meetings (WTO ministerials, DAC high-level meetings, IMF/World Bank Development Committee and UN General Assembly). Afterwards Parliaments need to monitor the commitments made and demand, wherever relevant, national action plans to actually implement these.

As parliamentary systems differ, a “one size fits all” approach is not possible, but following are some best practices.

In Sweden the government launched a bill “Shared Responsibility: Sweden’s Policy for Global Development” which aims to bring all components of Sweden’s development policy together, taking a comprehensive approach to policy areas such as debt, trade, agriculture, education, environment and migration. This legislation ensures that the country speaks with one voice in international fora, contributing to a coherent and consistent development policy. This bill was debated and improved upon by the Swedish Parliament, by adding consistent criteria for arms export. The Parliament also demanded an annual report on progress on implementation of this new policy.

The Netherlands Parliament over the last twenty-five years has established a practice of Parliamentary debate in advance of all major international meetings including WTO Ministerial and IMF/World Bank meetings, to ensure the development focus in these.

The UK Parliament has become very active in scrutinizing all the government’s international policies to be consistent with development objectives. In a “pre-Cancun” report the International Development Committee of the House of Commons identified key components that should constitute a genuine development round. A “post-Cancun” report was also prepared by the Committee to hold the government to account for positions taken.

In Ireland, an agreement was reached in Parliament across party lines to achieve the 0.7% ODA by the year 2007. Thus, whoever wins future elections, the government will be committed to follow through.

In Italy a multi-party Parliamentary Working Group on the Millennium Development Goals was established to help ensure that the goals are central to Parliamentary debates and future legislation. This group organizes a series of MDGs debates and hearings.

IV. The Role of Parliamentarians in Developing Countries

Even with progress among rich countries on delivering Goal 8, the Millennium Goals will not be achieved unless concerted action is taken by developing countries themselves. Even the poorest country can perform better. There is no excuse for lack of action to make policies and public expenditure management more pro-poor, transparent and participatory. The Millennium Goals provide Parliaments with a perfectly tailored internationally agreed framework to hold their governments to account for these efforts. The Goals sum up the aspirations of their electorate in dealing with concrete measurable “pocketbook” issues which everybody can relate to: to have a school nearby with a teacher who turns up at work and books and pencils for students to use, to have at least a hand pump which provides safe water which women can walk to easily, and a health clinic with drugs and a doctor and a nurse.

Public opinion polls worldwide show a lack of trust of people in their national legislatures and majorities feel that their country is not governed by the will of the people. Making the Millennium Goals part of

their political platform can help Members of Parliament bridge this credibility gap, regain confidence and reconnect with their electorate.

As Parliamentary systems differ a “one size fits all” approach is not possible. Moreover, there is a huge difference in institutional capacity of Parliaments in developing countries to monitor their governments’ policies. Parliaments should seek to improve their institutional capacity and, when necessary, seek support from relevant international agencies to do so.

Many developing countries prepare regularly National Millennium Development Goals progress reports. The reporting process helps to contextualize the MDG targets to the country-specific situation and to take stock of progress and challenges. It is meant to be an open and transparent process but unfortunately the processes leading up to the reports produced so far have not been fully participatory.

Parliaments need to seek an active role in the reporting process. They also should organize annual debates with their government on achievement of the goals within their national poverty reduction strategies or their national development plans. National MDG country reports can be vehicles around which these Parliamentary debates take place. As such they can help shape policy decisions reflected in broader development strategies by showing where more attention and resources are most needed and they can assist Parliamentarians and their constituents in helping to ensure that governments remain accountable for commitments they made.

a. *The Budget Process*

Accountable and effective management of public financial resources constitute one of the most fundamental responsibilities of governments. Scrutinizing these is the most important mandate for Parliaments. Still, according to recent World Bank estimates approximately 5% of Global GDP disappear through corruption and mismanagement. This figure is much higher in developing countries that are lagging in achieving the goals. If the Millennium Goals are to be achieved scarce resources must be spent on the needs of the people and to get there we need full transparency in budget processes. The national budget is the main vehicle of national policies. Scrutinizing the budget to ensure that policies are indeed pro-poor, gender-sensitive, as well as allowing for sufficient public expenditures for basic social services is maybe the single most important tool at hand for MPs. The goals need to be reflected in the Poverty Reduction Strategies or National Development Plans and these, in turn should be aligned with the budget process. Direct involvement by legislators can lead to greater consensus on the right strategies and pave the way for smoother implementation over time. Parliamentarians should ensure that public expenditure management is accountable and transparent and that public spending accrues to the poor, instead of to the rich, as is actually the case in most developing countries.

Public finance is not just about expenditures. It is also important to maximize revenues, e.g. by fair and effective tax legislation. For resource-rich countries, Parliaments should ensure their country joins the

Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (EITI) to demand disclosure of all revenues from multinational mining companies. In countries that are highly dependent on aid, Parliaments should approve all grants and loans to ensure that these are consistent with achieving of the Millennium Development Goals and urge their governments to reject any aid with onerous conditions attached.

b. Sectoral Policies

Furthermore, Parliamentary committees, in their debates with sectoral ministers, should ensure the goals figure prominently in sectoral policies. More importantly, sectoral policies need to be translated in effective service delivery (in health, education, sanitation, water, etc.) for all citizens all over the country.

- Both government and Parliamentarians need to provide leadership to tackle the debilitating impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. (See information kit “What Parliamentarians can do about HIV/AIDS” available at the following website: http://www.unicef.org/publications/index_19021.html)
- Parliamentarians should monitor if their governments live up to their commitment to spend 15% of their budget on health.
- In debates with trade ministers for agriculture and rural development should ensure that all policies (including trade and tax), do not discriminate against the rural poor in their constituencies and that the government invests enough in rural development. Also, small farmers need support to get access to credit and markets. In debates with trade ministers, Parliamentarians should ensure that trade policies are sufficiently pro-poor. In many developing countries trade barriers in fact protect the rich, at the expense of the poor. Parliamentarians should urge their governments to remove trade barriers within their own region.

While conducting debates with individual ministers it is important not to lose the synergy offered by the goals but ensure coherence through government policies and avoid compartmentalization in different Parliamentary committees. Particularly the gender goal should not be “ghettoized” but mainstreamed in all the goals.

c. Legislation

Parliamentarians also need to ensure that legislation becomes a relevant and effective tool in reducing poverty and meeting the goals. In many countries inheritance, property and tax laws urgently need to be renewed to ensure women can fully participate and contribute to development. Also, in order for poor people to lift themselves out of poverty by unleashing their entrepreneurial spirit, legal reform is needed to improve the business climate particularly for domestic investors. In many developing countries the volume of capital flight is actually larger than that of aid received. Legislation is no panacea for the intractable problem of poverty, but can be an indispensable base for, and compliment

to the social mobilization required to achieve the goals. By establishing e.g. health care and primary education as basic rights one implies corresponding duties that in turn demand accountability. This is an approach that gives preference to empowerments of the citizens over charitable responses and which has proved widely successful in a number of countries.

d. Governance

Last but not least, the cross-cutting issue of the need to improve governance, to create the capable state that is needed to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by improving quality and efficiency of the public sector, by modernizing and reforming the bureaucracy, by decentralization through empowerment of local authorities, and by ensuring that political processes are inclusive, not just politically representative through elected parliaments. Robust public participation through media and civil society, particularly those groups that give voice to minorities and women that are at risk of missing the goals, is key. Experience has shown that the greatest success stories are where the Millennium Goals have been debated, adapted, and owned locally and have become part of a national vision for 2015, not just by the government but by the public at large. Only then the goals can be successfully integrated into national plans, poverty reduction strategies, sectoral policies and national and sub-national budgets, only then can they be successfully mainstreamed into the sinews of government at every level, ensuring that all resources (human and financial, external and domestic) can be mobilized and invested in achieving the goals. African Parliaments should urge their government to participate in the NEPAD peer review process and monitor implementation of the recommendations resulting from these reviews. The ultimate test of course is for these policies and plans to be translated into real services and benefits at the local level. Active participation of citizens and their organizations at both the planning and implementation stages can help to ensure transparent and accountable government mechanisms that are responsive to the needs of all sections of the population. Only then can corruption be effectively fought and the huge “integrity dividend” be redeployed for achievement of the goals.

In a speech to the G77 last summer Kofi Annan told developing countries’ governments, “by clearly upholding your responsibility you will not only help your people you will also put greater pressure on the developed countries to take the steps towards the true partnership that they have preached but not yet practiced fully”.

V. Conclusion

This September, world leaders will reconvene at the UN to review progress towards the Millennium Development Goals. The MDGs are still achievable if we break with business as usual and dramatically accelerate and scale up action. It is up to Parliamentarians to act upon their mandate and to close the glaring gap between commitment and delivery. With still ten years to go it is late, but not too late. We are the first generation that can put an end to poverty and should simply refuse to lose this opportunity.

SECTION 2

Legislatures in Pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals: A Key Part of National MDG Strategies

Good International Practices

Alicia Phillips-Mandaville

1. Introduction

There is universal agreement that effective global pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) requires a strong commitment from national governments. At a domestic level committing to the MDGs builds a set of reference points that enables countries to tailor or adjust policies and initiatives to consistently address domestic development needs. The goals can provide an effective way to coordinate policy priorities, implementation efforts, and the effective use of resources across ministries, bureaucracies, branches and levels of government, and civil society. To date, resources that outline effective strategies or describe best practices have focused primarily on the executive branches of national and local government, and on their attendant administrative and technical bureaus. For national commitment to MDGs to be wholly effective however, some attention must also be given to a country's most representative branch of government: the legislature.

Box 1: Millennium Development Goals

At the turn of the Millennium, all 191 UN Member States adopted and pledged to pursue eight Millennium Development Goals. They are:

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Promote gender equality and empower women
4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve maternal health
6. Combat HIV/Aids, malaria and other diseases
7. Ensure environmental sustainability
8. Develop a global partnership for development

Directly elected legislatures are constitutionally intended to represent the geographic and ethnic diversity of a country. In many cases, even if there is significant social distance between elected leaders and the citizenry at large, the assembly remains the branch of government that is closest to the people.

Geographic constituencies link MPs to a specific portion of the public in a way that executive officials do not encounter. Because of this, the actions taken by a national or state assembly could contribute substantially to bridging the gap between stated national commitment and public understanding of the steps taken to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. It may also help to promote popular understanding of how the MDGs themselves reflect critical domestic issues such as poverty, health, and education.

Consequently, the purpose of this document is to provide an overview of actions taken by various legislatures to support national pursuit of MDGs. However, the paper must recognize the diversity of legislative rights and practices across countries. In an effort to delineate the range of activities that may be undertaken, while still highlighting best practices, this document has been organized according to the *effect* intended.

2. The Role of Legislatures in Pursuit of MDGs

The technical authority and capacity of a legislature varies tremendously from country to country. Despite this diversity, all legislative bodies are assigned three main constitutional responsibilities:

- *Legislation:* In addition to the act of approving new laws or resolutions, the legislative function includes the introduction of new bills; debate, review and/or amendment of legislation proposed by the executive; and review and passage of the national budget.
- *Representation:* As the directly elected representatives of a geographic constituency, legislative assemblies are also responsible for ensuring that the needs and concerns of a specific portion of the population are included in the policy making process. Consequently, activities that fall under the representation function range from direct communication with citizens to the incorporation of local issues into national policy debates or legislation.
- *Oversight:* Legislatures are also intended to serve as built in mechanisms to monitor and evaluate executive implementation of national policy. In this capacity, national or regional assemblies seek out information on the prioritization of specific policies or issues, the allocation and use of funds, and the effectiveness of specific initiatives. To do this, legislatures rely on such mechanisms as committee investigations, requests for regular briefings or testimony from ministerial representatives, and public hearings to gather information from non-government sources on a specific issue.

Although easy to separate conceptually, these responsibilities are substantially intertwined in practice. It is, in some ways, easier to think about the role of legislatures in pursuing the Millennium Development Goals if assembly actions are categorized by their effect instead. There are three potential outcomes of legislative efforts to support national MDG efforts.

- *Demonstration of national commitment:* While all UN member states have already pledged their commitment to pursue the MDGs, reinforcing legislative actions demonstrate that support for the goals extends deeper than executive government offices. In addition to making an international statement about commitment to the MDGs, such legislative action as passing resolutions, hosting high profile events or meetings, or participation in MDG networks or working groups may also demonstrate to the general public that the MDGs are a priority for all branches of government.
- *Raising national awareness:* As a directly elected representative body, legislatures can also take effective action to increase public understanding of the MDGs. Whether an assembly chooses to promote awareness of the MDGs as a group, or to increase public knowledge about what must be done to address a specific goal, public education is an important potential impact of legislative action.
- *Enabling (or directly pursuing) progress toward specific goals:* Although the implementation of MDG related initiatives is the mandate of the executive branch, legislative action to adjust current policies or budgets is often needed. In countries where issue committees are expected to review all legislation relevant to their issue area, an assembly is particularly well situated to evaluate newly proposed legislation in the context of national commitments to the MDGs. Furthermore, the right of legislative investigation enables legislators to consider current issues or concerns even when there is no pending legislation on the issue.

Box 2: Localization of MDGs enables countries to tailor development efforts

The Millennium Development Goals are designed to be universal. This enables global focus on eight key areas, while leaving room for individual countries to tailor development efforts to national priorities. Several countries, including Viet Nam, have already localized the goals by reviewing progress to date and setting specific targets and deadlines for each goal. While this makes it easier for policy makers to focus resources on national priorities within the MDGs, localization of the goals also informs legislators how the government has planned to pursue each goal. In some cases, this can serve as a sort of announcement regarding the government's policy agenda. Legislatures with such information on the government's policy or reform agenda are often better prepared to review proposed laws and to conduct oversight more effectively. In such cases, legislatures may find it useful to ensure that members of the relevant committees are briefed on the content of the MDG localization effort and the most recent MDG country report in advance of each legislative session.

From here forward, this paper is organized around these three potential impacts. One useful feature of conceptualizing the best MDG practices of legislatures in these terms is that they flow logically from the three core responsibilities of a legislative assembly. As illustrated in the figure below (figure 1), legislative contributions to national achievement of the MDGs stems directly from the conduct of basic legislative functions. Parliamentary activity to demonstrate national commitment to the goals invariably uses the tools of legislation or public outreach (representation) to make commitment publicly known. Awareness raising

similarly brings together communication with the public and the use of oversight mechanisms to draw information on implementation into the public sphere. Finally, legislators are themselves often in a position to enable or pursue the Millennium Development Goals directly through the strategic use of enabling legislation or application of oversight practices to MDG relevant programs or budget expenditure.

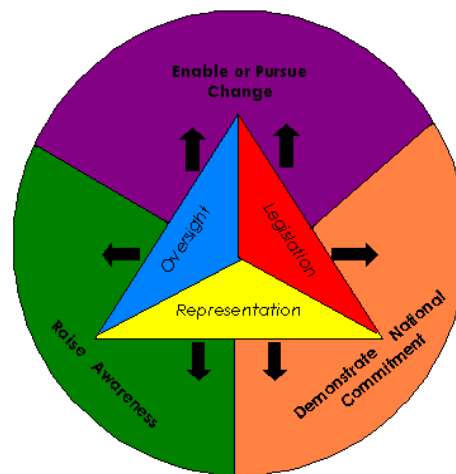


Figure 1: Legislative responsibilities and pursuit of MDGs

3. Legislative activities that demonstrate national commitment to the MDGs

Beginning with their initial pledge to prioritize the MDGs in 2000, the level of commitment made by each national government can be traced relatively easily. Presidents, prime ministers, and their cabinets can demonstrate senior-level commitment through the introduction of new policy initiatives, assessment of current MDG standings, localization of the MDGs themselves, or collaboration with international development organizations to implement MDG achievement strategies. While such activities indicate the government’s formal commitment to these goals, complementary activities by the most representative branch of government indicates a deeper, national commitment. In countries where national politics also includes some substantial disagreement between political factions or parties, legislative efforts to demonstrate commitment to MDGs are one way of demonstrating that the goals are a priority across all faction lines.

3.1 Extraordinary events or public consultation among senior legislative officials

One way to demonstrate legislative commitment to supporting the MDGs is to hold an extraordinary event that highlights one or more of the goals. While legislatures meet regularly in plenary and in

committee to address issues of national importance, an atypical or less traditional event can publicly indicate specific priority issues. Whether hosted by the legislature as a whole or relevant leadership figures, such events are also an effective way to generate domestic media coverage of the issue while reinforcing parliamentary commitment to it. Such events may range from very simple working sessions to elaborate cultural or gala affairs.

It is important to note that this technique is not effective when conducted in isolation from other legislative activities in support of the MDGs. As demonstrated in the examples, the described high-profile events are either preceded or followed by concrete action to address the goal in question. Without this accompanying activity, citizens and international partners may believe that the legislature is substituting high-level events for pursuit of more difficult, concrete action.

Legislators participate in a dinner-debate and working groups - Mauritania

To launch a series of advocacy and coordination events for senior officials involved in the MDGs, the Legislature of Mauritania participated in a “dinner debate” on the MDGs in early 2003. Attended by the several ministers, senators, members of the National Assembly, and prominent civil society leaders, the evening included a discussion of the MDGs and reflection on the findings of the country’s first MDG monitoring report. As an event with significant media coverage, it provided public venue in which the legislature was also able to demonstrate its pro-poor commitment along side other key stakeholders².

This event was unique in that it marked the beginning of greater parliamentary involvement in debate regarding MGD strategies. Further high-level meetings were organized over the following year, including two extraordinary meetings with the National Assembly and the Senate. Following MDG presentations to the National Assembly and Senate, each chamber formed a parliamentary group to support mainstreaming of the goals. In sum, these public events helped to demonstrate that members of the Mauritanian legislature were committed to the mainstreaming of the MDGs at a policy level³.

Gala event and ‘poster of concern’ mark commitment to fight HIV/AIDS - Nigeria

In 2003 in Nigeria, the National Assembly relied on a gala evening and the unveiling of a “poster of concern” to draw national attention to legislators’ ongoing efforts to address the spread of AIDS. This was particularly notable because the disease still carries a stigma through much of West Africa, and is therefore very rarely publicly discussed. To counter the perception of HIV/AIDS as a taboo topic, the

² “Mauritania launches campaign network with songs.” 1 April 2004. What's New? December 2004 <http://mirror.undp.org/africa2015/news_archive/1apr04.html>

³ “UNDP MDGNet/DGPN Consolidated Reply to Viet Nam/Comparative Experiences & Consultants /Engaging Parliaments in the Millennium Development Goals.” ed. Elham Seyedsayamdost, 18 August 2004. The Web-page of the UNDP Project to support the legislature of Viet Nam. November 2004. http://www.undp.org.vn/projects/vie02007/MDGs/engaging_parliaments_mdgs.htm (“Mauritania” entry)

dinner gala was attended by the leadership of the National Assembly, both House and Senate standing committees on HIV/AIDS, the President of Nigeria, and several members of the diplomatic community. Even more notable, the event was used to unveil a billboard sized poster expressing political leaders' concern about the spread of AIDS. Attending leadership demonstrated their public commitment by signing the poster, which was then replicated and posted all over the country⁴.

This event was a particularly effective way of demonstrating commitment to MDG number six for two reasons. First, it broke the political silence of HIV/AIDS by involving leadership from all political parties and branches of government in a very public expression of concern about the spread of a previously unacknowledged disease. The poster campaign further ensured that citizens all over the country would be made aware of this commitment. More importantly, the fact that Members of the National Assembly had been actively promoting HIV awareness since 2001 lent a factual basis to an otherwise very social event. Heavy media coverage and attendance by senior officials also re-energized the legislative staff that had been coordinating HIV-related constituency outreach.⁵

**Box 3: National Assembly of Nigeria
continuing commitment to HIV/AIDS**

Since 2001, Members of the Nigerian House and Senate have been preparing for and participating in constituency outreach designed to educate Nigerian citizens about HIV and AIDS. Following a series of NGO-organized briefing sessions for the Members themselves, they began participating in health fairs, local public rallies, meetings with traditional leaders, and other constituency outreach efforts. These events not only inform Nigerians about methods of preventing HIV/AIDS, they also provide the Legislators with effective ways of interacting with their constituents.

Parliamentary Poverty Reduction Committee holds public meeting - Serbia

Public demonstrations of legislative commitment to the MDGs do not have to be elaborate or formal events nor must they be attended by all parliamentary leaders. In some cases, hosting and attendance by the relevant committee demonstrates recognition of the need for specific action in addition to general parliamentary commitment. In Serbia on World Poverty Day 2004, the Poverty Reduction Committee of the National Assembly held a public working meeting with representatives of the UN and UNICEF. Hosted by the committee chairperson, participants and speakers included the Chairman of the National Assembly; the Deputy Minister for Labour, Employment and Social Issues; and the UNICEF Director for Serbia and Montenegro.

While this event stressed the need for the parliament to keep the MDGs consistently in mind as they consider all forms of legislation, it particularly highlighted the Assembly's commitment to addressing issues of youth and poverty. Noting that 30% of Serbia's children live below the poverty line, the Poverty Reduction Committee chair announced the formation of a sub-committee to deal specifically with children's issues. In conclusion, participants agreed to continue collaboration among parliament,

⁴ "Rep begins hearing on proposed agency for HIV/AIDS" The Guardian. Lagos, Nigeria. November 19, 2002.

⁵ Nigeria Page, the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs. 2004 <http://www.ndi.org/worldwide/cewa/nigeria/nigeria.asp>; Mike Egbo, "Partnership with legislators in the fight against HIV and AIDS." Pathfinder International presentation at the 131st meeting and Exposition of the American Public Health Association; San Francisco, CA. Nov 18, 2003. <<http://www.pathfind.org/site/DocServer/256,1>>

ministries, and the international community with regard to the MDGs. Following the meeting, the parliament issued a press release detailing its outcome⁶.

3.2 Resolutions

A formal legislative resolution, passed by the national legislature can also be a tremendously effective way of demonstrating commitment to the MDGs across multiple political factions. Although they are non-binding in terms of government action, resolutions serve as a public statement of intent or concern on the part of legislators. The formality of the measure also makes national commitment visible to both domestic and international actors. In addition to reinforcing government intentions to address prioritized MDGs, a resolution can also inform citizens that both branches of the national government see the goals as critical to national progress.

Legislative resolutions require different procedures in different countries, but can almost universally be introduced by the legislature itself. Even assemblies with very limited parliamentary authority have the right to publicly resolve to take a position on specific issues. With regard to the MDGs, legislators may choose to pass a resolution supporting the MDGs as an entire set of development objectives, or they may wish to focus on specific goals. If for example, a country was on track to meet many of the goals by 2015, but found that maternal and child mortality ratios were not declining sufficiently, the legislature may wish to pass a resolution expressing concern and resolving to support prenatal care initiatives.

Parliament of Albania resolves to support the MDGs

In July of 2003, the Parliament of Albania approved a resolution expressing support for the Millennium Development Goals as development tools. In addition to pledging parliamentary support and assistance for government efforts to achieve the goals by 2015, the resolution acknowledged that responsibility for success rests with both branches of national government, local administrative structures, and civil society.⁷


In addition to the symbolic expression of support, the resolution was timed to coincide with other MDG implementation initiatives. An independent baseline report assessing implementation to date was also launched in 2002 to stimulate dialog among Albanian decision-makers for prioritizing goals and targets. At the time of the resolution, concrete millennium development targets and indicators had been incorporated into both Albania's PRSP, and its sectoral strategies. With the resolution, the Albanian Parliament asked stakeholders to track progress towards the MDGs on a regular basis through national monitoring and evaluation systems and the preparation of annual progress reports. Their

⁶ "Press Statement: Working Meeting to mark World Poverty Day." October 19, 2004. [Web site of the Parliament of the Republic of Serbia](http://www.parlament.sr.gov.yu/content/eng/aktivnosti/skupstinske_detalji.asp?id=304&t=l). http://www.parlament.sr.gov.yu/content/eng/aktivnosti/skupstinske_detalji.asp?id=304&t=l

⁷ "Albanian parliament endorses resolution on Millennium Development Goals." [UNDP Albania mission web-site](http://www.undp.org.al/?news,0,12). "News and Events" -; July 29, 2003. <<http://www.undp.org.al/?news,0,12>>.

demonstration of commitment encouraged public debate and offered recommendations on ways to improve national and regional development policies⁸.

(Excerpts)⁶



REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA, PARLIAMENT
Tirana on 29.07.2003
RESOLUTION

The Albanian Parliament, sustaining efforts of the Albanian society towards a comprehensive and sustainable development, supports all initiatives of the country's authorities in achieving such long-term development goals. The signature by the Albanian President of the Millennium Declaration (September 2000) represents a positive step in this direction.

The Millennium Declaration, which includes a set of Millennium Development Goals, is an important covenant of our country towards development, progress and integration.

Responsibilities undertaken before the international community under the Millennium Declaration require the total commitment of both state structures and civil society to achieve the Millennium Development Goals in Albania by 2015...

Concrete Millennium Development targets and indicators are already included into the National Strategy of the Social and Economic Development, as well as into sector strategies and programs, and are in complete harmony with the reforms undertaken in the framework of the EU stabilization and association process.

Aware of the need to fulfill obligations of Albania towards the international community and to address the development priorities reflected in the Millennium Development Goals on behalf of the Albanian people, we encourage the government, other institutions and civil society to work together to achieve these objectives.

Albanian Parliament encourage these same actors to track progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals on a regular basis through national monitoring and evaluation systems and the preparation of annual progress reports that encourage public debate and offer recommendations on ways to improve national and regional development policies.

We are confident that achieving the Millennium Development Goals strengthens further the regional and international cooperation, which Albania is part thereof.

Albanian Parliament will assist in every way possible the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in Albania.

Resolutions in European Parliaments demonstrate domestic and international commitment

In Europe, multiple parliaments have responded to *No Excuses 2015* campaigns with resolutions expressing support for global achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The *No Excuses 2015*

⁸ UNDP Albania is, in the meantime supporting regional MDG reports throughout Albania, the first such report already launched in Elbasan earlier this year, with the aim of contextualizing the eight global Millennium Development Goals. Among these initiatives, a UNDP sponsored MDG capacity building project is assisting the Albanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the reporting process towards the achievement of the MDGs.

campaigns are nationally based initiatives to pressure wealthy to countries to commit sufficient funds to make 2015 MDG targets possible. In Italy, the campaign included a demonstration of more than 100,000 marchers from the city of Perugia to Assisi, some 20 km away. Banners and props used during the march were later displayed at the Museum of Sciences and Technology in Milan, prompting several members of Parliament to sign a resolution on increasing Italy's official development assistance budget. Their actions prompted a draft resolution to be proposed and discussed in plenary later that year. In Spain, regional assemblies seized the initiative and responded to effective advocacy from several civic actors involved in the *No Excuses 2015* campaign. In Catalonia, a resolution supporting the Millennium Goals was passed in 2003, prompting the Vasque region and the Community of Madrid to propose similar resolutions⁹. In this way, national and local level assemblies in Europe have not only voiced their concern to the government ministry responsible for administering the development budget, but have also demonstrated their own commitment to the MDGs.

3.3 Participation in networks of parliamentarians that have an emphasis on the MDGs

Since the Millennium Declaration in 2000, the actions of international or regional parliamentary networks have become increasingly focused on coordination for pursuit of MDGs. Whether support for achievement of the goals is explicitly stated as an objective of the network or not, participation in seminars or annual meetings of such organizations demonstrates legislative commitment to international pursuit of the MDGs, particularly the number eight, with its emphasis on global partnership for development.

Africa/Asia Parliamentarian Forum

In March 2002, the Africa/Asia Parliamentary Forum held its first forum on Human Security and Gender in Marrakech, Morocco. Members of 24 Asian and African parliaments participated in this forum, the goal of which was to "Promote the formulation and adoption of gender responsive poverty reduction strategies and develop national capacity for the monitoring of the Millennium Development Goals"¹⁰. The event was constructed to address both "freedom from fear" and "freedom from want," and offered parliamentarians a forum in which to discuss opportunities, challenges, experiences, and lessons learned regarding the legislative promotion of gender equality in the context of human security. In conclusion, participants called for mechanisms to strengthen and sustain cross-regional parliamentary networks, emphasizing the

⁹ United Nations Millennium Campaign. "Millennium Campaign Buzz: Setting Sights on 2005 October 2004 Newsletter. November 2004 <<http://www.unausa.org/pdf/Millennium%20Campaign%20Buzz%20-%20October%2025%202004.pdf> >

¹⁰ Proceedings from The First Africa/Asia Parliamentarian Forum on Human Security and Gender, March 26 2002: "The Role of the Legislature." <<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/meetings/forum/AfricaAsia/Agenda%20FINAL.htm>> The first of its kind, the Forum was organized by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Division for the Advancement of Women (UN/DESA/DAW), in collaboration with the Moroccan Parliament and the Ministry in charge of the Promotion of Women and Protection of the Family and Childhood and Integration of Handicapped, and funded by the Japanese Government through the Japan Women in Development (JWID) Fund in UNDP.

need for support for efforts to mainstream gender issues in the work of the legislature. Several specific recommendations were made on using the MDGs as a development framework, and attendees agreed to pursue them as effectively as possible once home¹¹. Additional forums have since been held in Asia.

Parliamentarians' Implementation Watch

The Parliamentarians Implementation Watch (PIW) was established by the Parliamentary Network on the World Bank (PNOWB) in 2003. Created as a global effort to involve parliamentarians in monitoring actual progress towards achievement of the MDGs, the PIW is a unique network. While its efforts can not replace the role of individual national parliaments in monitoring a government's efforts to keep their own country on track to meet the MDGs, PIW activities are an excellent complement to legislative action at home. The network's resources may also provide useful insight for legislatures searching for ways of mainstreaming MDGs into their normal parliamentary business. PIW activities have included such events as a February 2004 video-conference on "The Role of Francophone Parliamentarians in the Struggle against HIV/AIDS," as well as a July 2004 exchange of views on global progress towards the MDGs.

PNOWB itself was established in 2000, as a means to involve Parliamentarians in development more effectively. It serves as the World Bank's primary means of interacting with global legislative concerns. Membership is open to parliamentarians from any of the World Bank member states, and currently stands at more than 450 from over 90 countries. One interesting component of this network is that members represent themselves and their constituents, rather than their countries, parliaments or governments¹². In this way, participating in the Parliamentary Implementation Watch can be a very effective way for individual legislators to demonstrate their commitment.

4. Legislative action to Raise Awareness about MDGs

In addition to demonstrating that national commitment to the MDGs extends beyond the government itself, national legislatures have a tremendously valuable role to play in raising awareness of the goals and efforts to achieve them. As the constitutional link between the population and national governing structures, Legislatures may serve as a natural communication vehicle. Even when unintended, media coverage of the MDG-related statements or activities of individual members or groups of legislators can also go a long way toward raise awareness of MDGs.

For the MDGs to be seen as a set of nationally owned development goals, there must be a level of general awareness at executive, legislative, local, and citizen levels. Legislatures have a key role to play here, as they are uniquely capable of generating public debate, educating their political or administrative colleagues, and educating the public. As can be seen in the following examples, this awareness raising may focus on the MDGs themselves, or on the implementation of specific policies that can lead to achievement of goals.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² The Parliamentary Network of the World Bank. 2004. November 2004. <<http://www.pnowb.org>>

4.1. Motivating public debate

Although the right to introduce or amend legislation varies from parliament to legislature, all national assemblies are intended to provide a venue in which laws, policies, and response to national situations can be debated. Consequently, legislatures are ideally positioned to generate public debate on the MDGs themselves. Ranging from plenary debate to the activities of sub-legislative bodies, a variety of legislative actions can be relied on to generate media coverage, and consequently raise awareness or the level of public debate of MDGs.

MDG working group in Chile recognizes value of regular MDG debate in Congress

In a 2002 effort to localize the MDGs in Chile, a working group composed of civic and official actors expressed concern that, because Chile had great achievements in many of the MDG areas, it would be difficult to generate public awareness of those goals which still remained. While statistics could be used to demonstrate the types of progress that were still needed, the working group realized that statistical information was unlikely to resonate with a majority of the public. This would make it nearly impossible for the group to meet one of its goals; enabling the kind of public debate that would educate citizens about the MDGs themselves, while still gathering information about public opinion on development priorities.

One suggestion for generating public awareness and debate was to establish a mechanism for the MDG monitoring to provide major input for regular Parliamentary discussion of the country's development goals and targets. Recognizing that the political debate likely to occur in plenary would prompt media coverage and generate public debate, the working group established a partnership with the Public Affairs Institute of the University of Chile in order to prepare the information that would be required for such a debate. In Chile's case, preparation required a survey of existing national targets; identification of development areas in which there are no national targets or ineffective monitoring mechanisms; and construction of a national MDG template from that information¹³.

Armenian MPs form multi-party parliamentary group on HIV/AIDS

While not as obvious as a public debate, efforts to coordinate across party lines within the parliament are another useful way of raising awareness of a specific MDG. Particularly when political factions are typically perceived to disagree strenuously over reform measures, the creation of cross-party or cross-faction committees and working groups can generate public interest in the issue that has prompted such cooperation.

In June 2002, the National Assembly of Armenia established an inter-factional parliamentary group on HIV/AIDS. With 14 members, the group encompasses all seven parliamentary factions and includes

¹³ "UNDP MDGNet/DGPN Consolidated Reply, ("Chile" entry)

members who sit on the parliamentary committees for social, legal, fiscal and external relations. Initiated by the parliamentary committee on social, health and environmental protection issues, the group's goal is to ensure that the national budget—and the legislative framework at large—adequately support implementation of the National Strategy on HIV/AIDS. While incidence of HIV/AIDS in Armenia is still quite low relative to other countries, the epidemic nature of the disease prompted Armenia's parliament to place it high on the legislative agenda in an effort to prevent it from taking root. Public hearings on HIV/AIDS have been planned in an effort to increase the awareness of MDG number six, combat the spread of HIV/AIDS and other diseases.¹⁴

4.2 Raising MDG awareness among parliamentary colleagues

Often, even after a legislature has expressed a commitment to the MDGs, several members will find that they need more information about the goals to mainstream achievement effectively. Organizing briefing sessions or workshops is one way to ensure that legislators have access to the information or technical resources they need. When covered by the media, it may also demonstrate MDG commitment on the part of attending legislators.

Mongolian Parliament hosts a special session on MDGs

Some countries have opted to hold briefing sessions or seminars for their legislators immediately following the publication of new data on MDG progress. For example, Mongolia published its first national Millennium Development Goals Report in fall, 2004. That November, a special session was held for the Mongolian Parliament to talk about the report, and the opportunities it presented to align national development policies with the vision and strategies agreed upon in the Millennium Declaration.

By way of example, the session provided information about the critical role that MPs were playing in other countries, including Mauritania, Morocco, Albania, Niger, Rwanda. Speakers referenced the role MPs can play as individuals—by participating in public MDG campaigns at national and provincial levels—or as members of

Box 4: Legislators around the world briefed on MDG and strategies¹⁵

Briefing sessions for legislators on MDGs has become common in many places. Where many of the legislators are new to the office—or the office itself is new—these sessions primarily introduce the MDGs in general, and touch on legislative options for demonstrating support, reviewing proposed legislation, and exercising oversight of MDG initiatives. In other countries, where legislators are already familiar with their roles, they may be briefed on localized MDG targets; specific, pending policy proposals; or progress towards specific goals to-date. In these cases, greater attention is also given to more technical legislative activity, such as budget processes, or actions by the public accounts committee. Seminars to inform legislators themselves about the MDGs or relevant technical applications have been held in Zambia, Paraguay, Sri Lanka, Georgia, Sri Lanka, Nigeria, Bosnia, Ghana, Mongolia and Albania, among others.

¹⁴ "Armenian Legislature Supports the Implementation of the National Strategy on HIV/AIDS." UNDP Armenia Bulletin. 2002. November 2004. <www.undpi.am/bulletin/bul_13/undp.html>

their standing committee. Special attention was given to ways in which standing committees on Budget could use MDG costing to conduct effective budget review, oversight, and MDG monitoring¹⁵.

Seminar on development for clerks of Pacific parliaments met in Fiji

Legislators' efforts to mainstream the MDGs often require complimentary briefings for legislative staff. As technical and administrative staff support members on a day to day basis, they must also recognize opportunities to support the MDGs as they arise. For the most part, this sensitization must take place in country, as it is based on the country specific details of the MDGs. However, this in-country work can be complemented by regional seminars designed to reinforce cross-regional cooperation on MDGs. In August, 2004, the Pacific Parliamentary Association held a seminar for parliamentary clerks to brief them on population and development issues and to discuss the clerks role in promoting pacific parliamentary involvement regional development efforts. In addition to receiving information, participating clerks had an opportunity to discuss intervention strategies and ways to mobilize resources for MDGs¹⁶.

Chinese Provincial Assemblies gather information through public hearings

In March 2002, the National People's Congress of China passed the Law on Legislation, which formally established public hearings as a method for members and legislative drafters to gather public input on draft legislation. Although the law is not specifically intended to promote the MDG per se, Provincial Assemblies and Municipal Administrative Bureaus have both used public hearing to gather information needed to address specific environmental and health concerns. In 2002 Qinghai province held its first public hearing to discuss the environmental protection of Qinghai Lake, China's largest salt lake, which had begun evaporating at alarming rate. The same year, the Municipal People's Congress of Guiyang also conducted a public hearing to address the protection of the Naming river. Two years later, the Standing Committee of Gansu's Provincial People's Congress held the provinces first legislative public hearing to address pending changes to the province's law on provision of medical services. In all cases, witnesses representing various positions on the issue provided information through their testimony, thus increasing the information available to the assembly members who would be dealing with these MDG-related issues. In Guiyang and Gansu, media coverage of the events also helped to educate citizens who were unable to attend the hearing directly¹⁷.

¹⁵ Mehta, Pratibha. Opening Remarks at the Special Session of Parliamentarians on Millennium Development Goals. Government House, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. 02 November, 2004 <<http://www.un-mongolia.mn/modules.php?name=News&file=print&sid=302>>

¹⁶ "Asian Forum Newsletter." August 2004. The Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development Nov. 2004. <http://www.afppd.org/Newsletters/Issue_Jul_Aug%2704/Issue_Jul_Aug%2704.html>

¹⁷ National Democratic Institute. "Supporting Governance Reform in China: Final Report to US Department of State, Grnad no. S-LMAQM-02-H-0094." submitted September 2004.

While none of these hearings directly addressed the MDGs, the practice of legislative hearings to gather input on draft legislation is still new to China. As can be seen in the topics selected for the hearings, provincial and municipal bodies are making use of this new mechanism to enhance their own knowledge of different perspectives about what must be done to ultimately achieve the MDGs. Because they involve the public by requesting their input on critical MDG issues, these hearings may also strengthen national commitment to the goals as a whole.

4.3. Raising public awareness of the MDGs

More than any other contribution, legislators who have been elected by local constituencies to represent them in national government have the ability to increase public awareness of the MDGs. Particularly in countries with great quality of life discrepancies among urban and rural residents, direct legislator to citizen communication about national MDG priorities and efforts is the single most effective method of enhancing public awareness of the goals. As these examples demonstrate, legislatures can tailor this direct communication based on the characteristics of each constituency. Literacy levels and geographic accessibility affect the method and frequency of communication, but never prevent it entirely.

Whether legislatures refer directly to the MDGs or not may depend on the audience with which they are communicating. While colleagues in administration or ministerial positions may find it useful to hear how legislative actions are related explicitly to the MDGs, this may not be the case with the general public. Citizens are indeed anxious to hear how the issues of the MDGs are being addressed, as these are the issues that most affect their lives (poverty, health, education, environmental damage, etc). However, for the most part, the poorest citizens are unconcerned with the official name of the initiatives.

4.4. Timor Leste Parliamentarians visit constituencies to answer citizen questions

The constitution of Timor Leste, adopted in March 2002, was heavily influenced by the goals of the millennium declaration, and includes education, gender equality, environmental security, and development as objectives of the state (see box below)¹⁸. At independence, the 88 members of the constitutional assembly became the new country's first parliament. Thus, while the new legislators had been heavily involved in drafting the new constitution and were therefore very aware of the MDGs, their position in the National assembly had been by party appointment to the electoral list. In part to address popular sentiment that there was a significant discrepancy between the activity of the new parliamentarians and the needs of the citizens—and in part to ensure that even citizens in remote rural areas understood their rights and responsibilities under the new constitution—the parliament decided to participate in a series of public meetings around the country. In agreeing to have these public meetings, parliamentary leadership had four specific goals: present and explain the new constitution;

¹⁸ "The Constitution of East Timor." May 2002. [The Constitution Society. www.constitution.org](http://www.constitution.org/cons/east_timor/constitution-eng.htm) November 2004. <http://www.constitution.org/cons/east_timor/constitution-eng.htm>

report on and explain Parliamentary activities since independence; discuss local concerns; and establish communication links which will be needed over time. While none of these goals overtly referenced the MDGs, much of the basis of the constitution was tied to MDG ideals, many of the local concerns discussed fall under one of more of MDG targets, and the established communication channels could be used in the future to monitor progress towards the goals themselves.

Working with facilitators from civil society and international organizations, MPs attended meetings in every sub-district of East Timor; nearly all meetings were held in rural areas. Over 2 years, 80% of the MPs participated, visiting 220 villages, meeting more than 14,000 people, and distributing more than 65,000 copies of the constitution. This not only enabled legislators to explain the MDG related actions of the parliament, but also to hear directly from citizens about their immediate development concerns.

Box 5: The fundamental objectives of the State [of Timor Leste] shall be:¹⁸

- ❖ To defend and guarantee the sovereignty of the country;
- ❖ To guarantee and promote fundamental rights and freedoms of the citizens and the respect for the principles of the democratic State based on the rule of law;
- ❖ To defend and guarantee political democracy and participation of the people in the resolution of national problems;
- ❖ To guarantee the development of the economy and the progress of science and technology;
- ❖ To promote the building of a society based on social justice, by establishing material and spiritual welfare of the citizens;
- ❖ To protect the environment and to preserve natural resources;
- ❖ To assert and value the personality and the cultural heritage of the East Timorese people;
- ❖ To promote the establishment and the development of relations of friendship and co-operation among all Peoples and States;
- ❖ To promote the harmonious and integrated development of the sectors and regions and the fair distribution of the national product;
- ❖ To promote and guarantee the effective equality of opportunities between women and men.
- ❖ Serbian Mobile Parliament for environmental reform

Serbian Mobile Parliament for environmental reform

Legislatures that make effective use of public consultations can also increase popular understanding of the need for specific reforms to in order to achieve the MDGs. In Serbia in 2002, parliamentarians participated in a series of public meetings on draft environmental legislation. Called the “mobile parliament” these consultations allowed citizens all over Serbia to discuss a piece of draft legislation before it was considered by the parliament. Over the course of several consultations in a variety of cities with significant environmental and industrial damage, more than 3,000 environmental activists and NGO representatives commented on the draft. Several of their suggestions were integrated into the final legislation.

This outreach was conducted as a joint initiative between members of the Serbian Parliament and relevant ministerial officials. In addition to increasing citizen awareness of the environmental issues themselves, the “mobile parliament” showcased effective cooperation between legislative and executive actors. Over time, the model was also used to gather public input for legislation on educational reform¹⁹.

Radio programming to reach inaccessible or illiterate communities

In Timor Leste and Niger, members of parliament used radio shows to communicate with citizens in villages that had become unreachable due to natural travel constraints (washed out roads and desertification, respectively). In Timor Leste, recordings of the public hearings described above were converted into informative radio shows and distributed to radio stations all over the country. In sum, 12 broadcasts were produced in a variety of local languages, and played by community radio stations. Citizens in areas cut off due to the heavy annual rains were received information they would otherwise not have heard. In many cases, the radio shows also explained that parliamentarians would visit their area when the rains had passed.

In Niger, the Parliamentary Committee for poverty reduction worked with theatre troupes to write and record radio plays on the role of the Parliament in reducing poverty. Although the MDGs were not explicitly mentioned, these plays marked the Parliament’s first effort to communicate with highly illiterate communities in northern Niger that have been cut off due to advanced desertification in the center of the country. Played in multiple local languages, the plays parodied a conversation between a member of parliament and his wife in order to explain the different responsibilities of a parliamentarian with regard to budget oversight, legislation, and constituency outreach on poverty related issues²⁰.

5. Enable or Pursue Goals

As a lawmaking and oversight body, legislatures’ ability to support the MDGs is by no means limited to expressions of commitment or awareness raising. In some cases, legislative action is actually required before MDG-related reforms can occur. The assembly may need to pass enabling legislation for new development programs or to approve new budget allocations that reflect the prioritization of MDGs in national policy. Similarly, legislative oversight of government activity also provides an effective domestic monitoring system to ensure that MDG goals have been truly integrated into national policies and strategies. While it can not replace internal ministerial monitoring efforts, legislative use of oversight mechanism to evaluate the implementation of MDG-related initiatives—or to investigate obstacles to MDG achievement—can also bring to light information needed to keep goal specific efforts efficient and on track.

¹⁹ National Democratic Institute. “Quarterly Report: October 1 to December 31, 2002. Serbia: Political Party Building and Civil Society Development. Cooperative Agreement No. 169-A-00-01-00115-00 ” Submitted to USAID January 2002.

²⁰ National Democratic Institute. “Final Report: Building Legislative Capacity to Engage in the PRSP Process. UNDP Contract number GLO/99/616” submitted to UNDP July 2003.

5.1. Budget review and process

Though the degree of legislative budgetary authority varies tremendously from country to country, all national assemblies are ultimately responsible for approving the national budget. Since genuine efforts to achieve the millennium development goals require strategic adjustments to previous years' budgets, the budget approval process is one point of entry for legislatures wishing to ensure national achievement of the MDGs. The mechanisms each legislature would use to ensure that MDG priorities have been embedded in the national budget are directly based directly on the constitutional and budgetary rights of the national assembly. They include such measures as:

- Requiring ministerial explanation or justification of line item allocation within ministries. This is already an official part of the budget process in many countries. Asking ministerial spokesmen also explain how MDG priorities have been reflected in the proposed budget can be an effective way of using this step to mainstream the goals.
- Including notification provisions in the budget. This can require the government to alert the legislature if funds are to be spent in a different manner than has been described in the annual budget. Such reports can help standing or sub-committees to ensure national MDG efforts remain operationally funded after the budget is passed.
- Include report-back provisions in the budget requiring ministries, sub-ministries or agencies to report on the results achieved by expenditure on specific programs. While not an option for all legislatures, building oversight measures like this into the budget itself can be a powerful way of ensuring the government regularly evaluates its MDG programs for effectiveness.

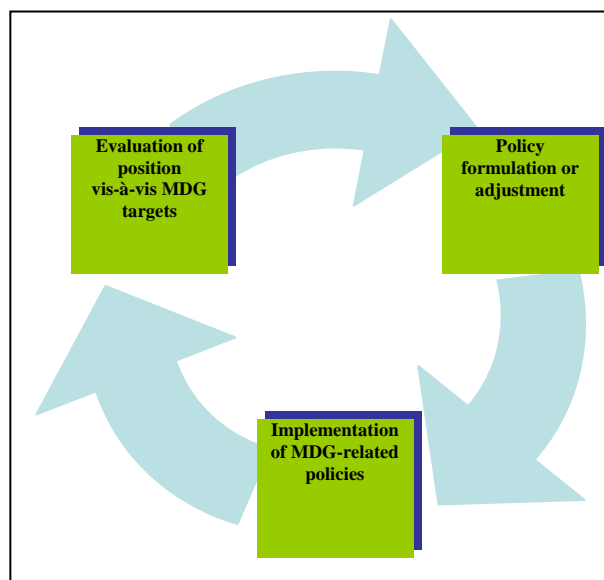


Figure 2: The policy cycle for mainstreamed MDGs

For the most part, legislative application of budget authority to support national achievement of MDGs occurs on an issue-by-issue, or goal-by-goal, basis. Particularly where sectoral budget responsibility is delegated to separate sub-committees, it can be difficult for a legislature to promote the MDGs in their entirety. This challenge could be overcome by requiring MDG analysis with ministerial budget presentation, or by inviting a MDG coordinator or liaison from the government to testify separately. In some cases, such as Morocco, technical assistance for legislators is enabling them to be a driving force for mainstreaming MDGs into national policies.

Box 6: Gender-Budgeting as a Model

The practice of evaluating national budgets to determine their gender impact has been used in many places as a way of mainstreaming gender issues into national policies. Consequently it may be a useful model for legislators to consider when determining how best to mainstream MDGs. In May 2003, the Parliament of Sri Lanka and the Inter-Parliamentary Union held a regional seminar to promote deeper understanding of this mechanism, and to enable parliamentarians to make use of gender budgeting in pursuit of MDG number three. Entitled, "Parliament and the budgetary process, including from a gender perspective," the event was organized with support from the UNDP and the World Bank Institute, and brought together members and staff from the legislatures of Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Iran, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Parallel sessions for members and staff introduced the concept of gender budgeting and covered the tools available to conduct gender analysis of national budgets.

5.2. Legislation regarding MDGs

Although legislation is not always necessary to initiate new programs in pursuit of priority MDGs, it is occasionally needed. Where legislators have the authority to introduce laws themselves, this can make the national assembly a powerful actor for mandating pursuit of the MDGs. Even parliaments that can only consider legislation proposed by the government can use the legislative process to create national legislation that supports attainment of the goals.

Legislation in Bangladesh enabled greater gender equality in education

In addition to demonstrating political will, legislation can mandate specific responses to a recognized challenge on the part of an agency or the public. In Bangladesh, legislation passed by the Parliament in 1990 has had a tremendous effect on the country's effort to eliminate gender disparity in primary education.

In 1990, the parliament of Bangladesh passed legislation making primary education compulsory.²¹ With this law, the parliament enabled the government to mandate that families in specific send all of their children to school²². This marked a critical step in Bangladesh's progress toward both universal primary education, and gender parity in education: it prevented families from keeping their daughters out of

²¹ "Media Release, April 20, 2004" Global Campaign for Education <www.campaignforeducation.org >

²² Elaine Unterhalter, Jake Ross, and Mahmudul Alam. "A Fragile Dialogue? Research and Primary Education Policy Formation in Bangladesh, 1971–2001." *British Association for International and Comparative Education*. 2003. Vol. 33, No. 1:7. Cambridge Education Consultants.

school in order to tend the house. The law was also a catalytic first step which prepared the way for tremendous progress towards educational targets over the course of the 1990s.

By 1993 primary education was compulsory for the entire country. This was followed by a National Campaign for Social Mobilization for Basic Education, the elimination of school fees for rural girls, discontinuation of school uniforms, and food-for-education and stipend schemes²³. In 2000, the parliament endorsed the prime minister's national education policy, again demonstrating their commitment to educational development. Although a 2001 political re-appointment of the education commission and subsequent re-consideration of the mechanisms in use has slowed the reform process somewhat, the impact of the initial legislation mandating primary education is still visible in Bangladesh's elementary enrollment numbers²⁴.

Box 7: Bangladeshi MPs Participate in the Global Campaign for Education²¹

As part of the Global Campaign for Education in April 2004, Members of Parliament participated in a question and answer session with 30 school children. The children themselves included a diverse combination of working children, disabled children, ethnic children, and children from non-formal schools. Through such efforts, MPs are able to attract media attention to the need for further action on the achievement of educational goals.

Legislation in Mongolia secures domestic resources for immunization costs

Mongolia has made tremendous progress towards achieving the 2015 target for MGD number four, reduction of child mortality. Here, as in Bangladesh, parliament played a role by passing the Law on Immunization in 2001. Although Mongolia had been implementing an Expanded Program on Immunity with support from the international donor community, the law also established a national fund for vaccination programs. In this way, the legislation contributed to the sustainability of what has become a very successful immunization effort in Mongolia. In one estimate, the fund should enable Mongolia's domestic resources to maintain delivery of 95% immunization levels, so long as international organizations supply the vaccines²⁵. To date, the successful immunization program has contributed to the reduction of child mortality to just below 30 deaths per live 1000 births²⁶.

Constitutional amendment moves Rwanda towards gender equality goal

In 2003, the Parliament of Rwanda approved a new constitution stipulating that at least 24 seats in Parliament should be occupied by women, and requiring greater gender balance among political

²³ "Political commitment to basic education in Bangladesh." *Info Change India*, October 2004. <<http://www.infochangeindia.org/bookandreportsst76.jsp>>

²⁴ Manzoor Ahmed. "Why have the reforms failed?" *Star Weekend Magazine*, March 26, 2004 <<http://www.thedailystar.net/magazine/2004/03/04/education.htm>>

²⁵ Japanese International Cooperation Agency. "Outline of the project: Maternal and Child Health Project (in Mongolia)." Oct 1997 – Oct 2002. <http://www.jica.go.jp/english/evaluation/report/terminal/14-1-28.html>

²⁶ "Goal number four: reduce child mortality." The National Statistics Office of Mongolia. 2003. November 2004 <http://www.nso.mn/mdg/eng_goals4.htm>

leadership positions. For the ensuing elections, 24 seats were reserved for women. However, parties also ran a greater number of female candidates for unreserved seats, and voters returned a parliament with almost complete gender equality. Rwandan women now occupy 48.8% of the seats, and hold nine of 28 ministerial positions. These numbers make Rwanda the most gender-balanced parliament in the world²⁷. Although the 2015 targets for the MDGs do not include an explicit focus on increasing the number of women in the national legislature, it is widely accepted that improving gender balance within the national assembly is critical for the empowerment of women, and thus the achievement of MDG number three.

5.3. Oversight of progress toward goals

Once policies that pursue the MDGs are underway, Legislatures can monitor progress toward the goals by exercising oversight of relevant projects. This not only confirms efficient use of resources, but may also identify areas in which a different approach could be used for a better effect.

Indian Parliament investigates lack of progress on environmental goals

At times, legislative investigation into a long-standing or incomplete development project can uncover information needed to adjust the program appropriately. In February 2004, the Indian Parliamentary Public Accounts Committee tabled a report detailing multiple scale and timing flaws in an 18 year-old initiative to clean up the Ganga River. The Ganga Action Plan (GAP) had been initiated in 1985 in an effort to improve water quality and halt pollution by dealing with municipal sewage, which accounts for 75% of the river's pollution. Originally scheduled to be complete by 1990, the deadline was pushed to 2000, 2001, and eventually, 2008.

Concerned with the pace of this program, the Public Accounts Committee investigated the rate at which sewage treatment infrastructure was being developed in each of the states in the Ganga basin. They discovered that a lack of

Box 8: Oversight can have an Impact on Anti-corruption efforts

In some cases, legislatures wish to conduct corruption investigations to determine if national resources have been used appropriately by policy makers. While direct investigation of corruption allegations by a legislative ethics committee is one option, is not the only way to ensure resources are being used for public good. Oversight mechanisms such as sectoral committee investigations into policy impact, public hearings on the delivery of recently funded services, and parliamentary site visits can be useful for bringing information to the surface where corruption or mismanagement of resources has been a concern.

While oversight tools can contribute to a corruption investigation, legislative use of these mechanisms does not inherently imply mistrust by the parliament. Typically such activities are simply for monitoring and evaluation purposes.

²⁷ Helen Vesperini. "Rwanda's Parliament Now Leads World in Gender Parity." UNDP Choices Magazine. March 2004. <<http://www.undp.org/dpa/choices/2004/march/rwanda.html>>

established timelines for the administration of GAP were preventing it from moving on to phase II, and expressed concern that money intended to finance GAP projects had been diverted to other purposes.

Upon tabling the report, the committee also called up the Ministry of Environments and Forests to explain the diversion of funds, and suggested several measures that could be used to speed the projects completion. These included the establishment of concrete reporting deadlines to enable progress to phase II, the establishment of an autonomously administrated river regulation zone, and a redesign of the projects financial management in light of erratic expenditure from state to state²⁸.

Although this parliamentary oversight initiative was not explicitly intended to promote the MDGs as a full set of development goals, it offers an excellent example of legislative action to improve the country's ability to meet MDG number seven. As the Ganga river basin covers some 25% of India landmass, reversing the effects of pollution throughout the basin is critical for achievement of environmental sustainability and the provision of clean drinking water²⁹. By proposing solutions to identified environmental challenges in their committee report, the Parliamentary Public Accounts Committee of India very specifically supported national progress toward the environmental MDG.

6. Conclusion: Promoting Positive Legislative Action

For many countries, commitment to the MDGs was initiated by the executive branch. As time passes however, it becomes increasingly evident that effective pursuit of the eight development goals will require support and participation from the legislative branch. Constitutionally established to pass legislation and budgets, to represent the population in national decision making, and to monitor executive implementation of national policies, a national assembly has many potential roles to play in ensuring national achievement of the goals. Using the mechanisms established to fulfill their basic legislative responsibilities, national assembles are able to demonstrate national commitment to the MDGs, raise awareness of the goals, and — in some cases — enable more efficient pursuit of a particular goal.

The tools available to each parliament to support the MDGs vary tremendously. However, and each parliament must tailor its actions the to the national development context. This is most effectively done by ensuring members — particularly members of relevant committees — are fully briefed on localization efforts, as well as MDG related policies that are presently being implemented. From this information, legislative leadership will better be able to determine the legislative tools that can be applied most effectively.

²⁸ "19 years on, Ganga Action Plan is nowhere near completion." InfoChange Environment reprint from Source: The Asian Age. February 8, 2004. November 2004.

<http://www.infochangeindia.org/Environment/story.jsp?section_idv=6&recordno=2826#>

²⁹ "Rivers in India." IndianChild.com data from Library of Congress. 2003. November 2004

<http://www.indianchild.com/rivers_in_india.htm >

In cases where legislatures' efforts to support the MDGs are bringing certain tools to bear for the first time, legislators may seek information on effective process from colleagues in international parliamentary networks, or from international technical assistance bodies. For example, as China has only recently established the legality of legislative hearings, they are now working with legislative colleagues and experts from elsewhere on the 'scientification' of the hearing process. This includes an analysis of lessons learned elsewhere in addition to the provinces where assemblies are testing a variety of techniques for conducting hearings. Similar efforts to determine the most effective way of bringing legislative tools to bear on national MDG targets in other countries have included work supported by the UNDP, the World Bank Institute, the UK Department for International Development, the Japanese International Cooperation Agency, and the US Agency for International Development. Many of the examples cited in this paper are, strong examples of collaborative national-international efforts to enable legislative support for the MDGs.

The executive branch and its administrative offices are ultimately responsible for implementing national policies in pursuit of MDG targets. However, the constitutionally defined legislative, representative, and oversight responsibilities of the assembly position it to play a critical role for the nation as well. In most cases, legislators are not only national political leaders and participants in the policy making process, but are also often public opinion leaders. This combination makes their support for MDGs doubly powerful.

SECTION 3

Best Practices for European Union Parliamentarians to meet the Millennium Development Goals

Eveline Herfkens

1. Best Practices for European Union Parliamentarians to meet the Millennium Development Goals

In the 1980s, the Parliament Assembly of the Council of Europe organized a North-South Campaign, together with NGOs and local authorities, in member countries of the Council of Europe. The Campaign focused on aid, trade and debt. However, 17 years later we are still discussing these same issues and there has been very little progress since then.

But now we have the Millennium Development Goals-these Goals are putting human development back at the heart of the global agenda. Many important steps have been taken around the world since 189 world leaders signed the Millennium Declaration in September 2000, pledging to "free our fellow men, women, and children from the abject and dehumanising conditions of extreme poverty" by 2015. Already a number of countries have reached some of the Goals more than 10 years ahead of schedule! But some countries are only making progress on individual Goals, and many countries, particularly the poorest, are far from making adequate progress on most of the Goals.

2. We have the Resources

We know that today's world has the resources and know-how to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. But if we carry on with 'business-as-usual', we will fail to meet these Goals. What has been lacking until now is the firm political will of world leaders to deliver on their Millennium pledges.

The global partnership for development explicitly recognizes in Goal 8, that eradicating poverty worldwide can be achieved only through a global deal. It is clear that it is the primary responsibility of

poor countries to work towards achieving the first seven goals. They must do their part by ensuring greater government accountability to their citizens and more efficient use of resources. But for poor countries to achieve the first seven goals, developed countries must deliver on their end of the bargain and adopt specific targets and deadlines—well in advance of 2015—for meeting their Goal 8 commitments (i.e. more and more effective aid, more sustainable debt relief and fairer trade rules). According to World Bank estimates, poor countries are doing a better job in meeting their Millennium pledges, but rich countries are lagging on their commitments.

3. Why Now?

In 2005, Heads of States will come together again at the UN for the five-year review of the Millennium Declaration. This is an important opportunity for Parliaments in the North to ensure that their governments deliver on their Millennium pledges. But important decisions on Goal 8 will be undertaken in advance of the 2005 Millennium Summit—including at relevant Councils under the Luxemburg presidency, the Paris Harmonization meeting, the DAC High-level meeting, the Spring World Bank and IMF meeting and the UK G8 Summit.

What needs to happen at the September 2005 Millennium Summit (as it did at the Financing for Development Conference in Monterrey) is for the EU to take a generous position on Goal 8 policies and to demonstrate by example, and shame other developed countries into more concessions than would otherwise be the case.

4. Parliamentarians can make a Difference

It is Parliamentarians that set the laws and hold the purse strings. They are in charge of making governments accountable to their Millennium and other commitments. We know what needs to be done. What is lacking is coherent action by governments in delivering on their promises, and by parliamentarians in holding their governments to account.

Here are some best practices and policy approaches for Parliamentarians in the North to consider aimed at promoting the right policies to achieve the Millennium Goals:

1. Scrutinize your Government
2. Monitor Progress towards 0.7% ODA
3. Monitor Aid Quality
4. Pressure Governments to live up their Doha Commitments
5. Scrutinize Positions taken at International Meetings
6. Improve Coherence at Home
7. Promote Goal 8 Progress Reports

5. Scrutinize Your Government's Goal 8 Policies

Parliaments need to make the Millennium Development Goals part of their debates and scrutinize their government's Goal 8 policies.

For there to be any meaningful progress on the Millennium Goals in industrialized and donor countries, parliamentarians must have open and frank dialogue on development issues. In some countries, these issues are not even part of current agendas.

Parliamentarians need to scrutinize their government's Goal 8 positions on an on-going basis to ensure that they are in line with what their government signed in the Millennium Declaration and Goals. These debates should extend beyond the issue of aid volume and also address aid quality, trade and other related issues.

National Millennium Goals Campaigns in some Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries have galvanized political action. In Italy, for example, a Parliamentary Working Group on the Millennium Goals was established to help ensure that the Goals are central to parliamentary debates. This working group will promote a comprehensive and coherent Italian development policy fully aligned with the Millennium Goals, by organizing a series of MDGs debates and hearings, and by sharing best practices across OECD countries in order to help draft the new law on development cooperation.

6. Monitor Progress Towards 0.7% ODA

Parliaments need to monitor their country's commitments to increase aid volume. It is absolutely critical for parliaments in the EU to monitor their country's commitments to increase the volume of aid.

Member states agreed several decades ago to work towards 0.7% ODA/GDP over time, but it is only at Monterrey that they recommitted themselves to increase Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) to the EU's average of 0.39% GDP by 2006 with a concrete, time-bound framework for individual member states presently below the average.

Five European countries (Denmark, Belgium, Luxembourg, Sweden, Norway and the Netherlands) have already surpassed the 0.7% commitment to 0.8-1% while five others committed to achieve the 0.7% by a concrete deadline well in advance of 2015 (Ireland by 2007, Belgium by 2010, France and Spain by 2012, and the UK by 2013). Recently (May 29th, 2005) the EU committed itself to achieve a collective threshold of 0.56% by 2010, and for the "old" 15 EU members states an individual minimum of 0.51% by 2010, and to reach the 0.7% collectively by 2015.

- a) Parliamentarians should encourage the European Council of Finance Ministers (ECOFIN) and General Affairs and External Relations (GAER) Council of Ministers to monitor annually progress

on their government's pledges and ensure credible annual intermediate targets to increase ODA by their own government to meet these pledges.

- b) Parliaments should aim for agreements across party lines. Such agreements help to ensure that governments are bound to follow through on promises-no matter who is in office. In Ireland, an agreement was reached in parliament across party lines to achieve the 0.7% ODA target by 2007- so whoever wins future elections-the government will be committed to follow through. Similar cross party agreements are or were in place in Sweden, Norway, Denmark and the Netherlands.

7. Monitor Aid Quality

Parliaments need to monitor their country's commitments to increase aid quality. It is as important for parliamentarians to discuss the issue of aid volume, as it is to discuss the issue of delivering high-quality and more effective aid, in order to ensure that aid actually helps achieving the Millennium Goals.

The OECD DAC Peer Reviews that monitor individual donor countries' policies and efforts in the area of development co-operation provide high-quality assessment of development policies on a country-by-country basis (approximately every four years per country). These Reviews offer a goldmine of information and recommendations on how your government can perform better.

Until now, these Reports are only debated in a few Parliaments; I encourage Parliaments in every donor country to reflect on and debate the recommendations in these reports. Too much bilateral aid has been driven by strategic geo-political objectives to countries that do not need external concessional assistance to reach the Goals. Aid is provided in ways that benefit the donors' exporters and visibility rather than contribute to reducing poverty.

It is no surprise that public opinion is skeptical of aid effectiveness.

The Millennium Goals have been helpful for governments in many Northern European countries to link aid flows to achievement of the Goals, strengthening the pro-aid constituency by changing the image of Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) from giveaways that support corrupt regimes to concrete programs that can, for example, reduce child mortality or provide primary education. To increase aid effectiveness, political debate in parliaments should focus on:

- a) The need for aid to target poor countries (particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa) that most need external concessional resources to achieve the Millennium Goals, and on those sectors and delivery mechanisms that enables ODA to do so.
- b) The need for aid to respect national ownership of developing countries and support home-grown strategies; and the need for donors to understand that it is not donors that develop countries, but countries that develop themselves.

- c) The need for individual member states to end the practice of tying aid that reduces its effectiveness by 25%, according to World Bank estimates. Tied aid is financially costly for recipients, limits options in maximizing use of resources, invites corruption, and leads to the most onerous procedures. Aid should finance local and recurrent costs including financing budget support. Achieving the MDGs, particularly in health and education, requires cash to finance salaries of teachers and nurses, and basic medical and school supplies, among other needs. The European Commission has ruled that tying procurement to individual member states is inconsistent with the directives on the internal market and competition in the European Union. Now is the moment for the EU to untie aid among its member states and to table the issue at OECD DAC in order to agree on OECD-wide untying.
- d) The need to encourage governments to adopt action plans for implementing the Rome and Paris Declarations on Harmonization aimed at streamlining institutional policies and procedures to improve the effectiveness of development assistance, and ensuring that these action plans are actually implemented.

8. Pressure Governments to live up to Doha Commitments

Parliaments should encourage governments to deliver on the Doha promises.

The practice in the World Trade Organization (WTO) is to negotiate *quid pro quo* commitments; however the promise of Doha means that, as the UK trade minister states in white paper to British Parliament:

"International trade policy should support the economic development of poorer countries, through policies appropriate to their needs. We should not expect poorer countries to pay a 'price' for any 'concession' on subsidies, tariffs or market opening by a developed country, as trade negotiators too often imply. . ."

To make governments live up to their promises made in the Doha Round, I encourage parliamentarians to address the following issues:

- a) Parliaments should encourage governments to open their markets to developing countries. Despite significant liberalization in recent decades, trade barriers are still high—especially on labor-intensive goods and services in which developing countries have a comparative advantage. Poor country exports are locked out by high tariffs (concentrated on agricultural products, textiles and clothing), by tariff escalation (whereby the tariff increases the moment a commodity is processed) and by non-trade barriers.
- b) Barriers on products from developing countries are twice as high as those on developed country products. Reducing tariff peaks on products that are of export interest to poor countries will be

essential for them to trade their way out of poverty. Furthermore, even when 'preferential' market access privileges are available, rules of origin make it extremely difficult for poor country exports to profit from them. Giving least developed countries free market access under Everything But Arms, for example, has delivered very little and this and other agreements need to be evaluated to ensure they are made more effective by simplifying and relaxing the rules of origin.

- c) Encourage governments to reform agriculture policies. Three-quarters of the world's poor-900 million people-live in rural areas and depend on agriculture or related activities.
- d) Rich countries-the EU is among the worst offenders-grant large support to their domestic agricultural producers, totaling \$300 billion annually. These subsidies lead to worldwide overproduction that effectively depresses world prices, floods poor country markets and undermines incentives and earning opportunities for farmers in developing communities. Agriculture policies in OECD countries cost consumers and taxpayers \$300 billion every year-five times annual OECD spending on ODA. Rich countries have to commit to a deadline to put an end to agriculture subsidies that distort poor countries markets. It would be wonderful if committees in all European parliaments would further promote this idea.
- e) Encourage government to stop pushing Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) until the Doha Development Round is concluded. Poor and small developing countries have limited negotiating capacity in the trade arena and it should be their priority to develop their own markets by regional integration (i.e. Sub-Saharan Africa countries in the African Union). Thus, the EU should consider not pushing EPAs until the Doha Development Round is concluded. Furthermore, these Agreements seem inconsistent with promises of the Commissioner that the G90 countries would not be forced into new disciplines. Developing countries perceive EPAs as a vehicle for the EU to require reciprocity and reintroduce disciplines on investment and competition that have been explicitly excluded from the Doha Round last summer.

9. Scrutinize Positions Taken at International Meetings

Parliaments need to make governments accountable for positions taken at international meetings.

In the Dutch Parliament, for the last 25 years, we have an established practice of parliamentary debates in advance of major international meetings (World Trade Organization Ministerial, EU Councils, International Monetary Fund/World Bank Meetings or the UN General Assembly) which give parliamentarians an opportunity to scrutinize positions taken by their government, and debate government instructions.

A very noteworthy effort by the International Development Committee of the House of Commons in the UK parliament was undertaken just prior to the Cancun WTO Ministerial. In a 'pre-Cancun' report, the Committee identified key components that should constitute a genuine Development Round. A number of recommendations were proposed to the government, including reduction in trade-

distorting domestic support, export subsidies and tariffs, ensuring real market access for developing countries. A 'post-Cancun' report was also prepared by the Committee to hold the government to account for positions taken in Cancun, and to challenge the government to the pressing task of ensuring a genuine Development Round.

10. Improve Coherence at Home

Parliaments need to improve global governance and deliver on their Goal 8 promises, and this requires coherence in international decision-making.

People talk about coherence as if it is an international problem. But the lack of coherence starts at home. It is not a problem of coherence between the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the UN and the World Bank. We, Member States, create problems of coherence. (e.g. the TRIPs Agreement was reached on patent protection at the WTO, at the same time that World Health Organization Health Ministers in the Annual Health Assembly agreed on a strategy to have affordable basic medicines for everybody.

Similar problems arise when what the Central Bank says at the International Monetary Fund (IMF), differs from what the Foreign Affairs Minister says at the UN. Thus, the outcomes of the decisions of the different government bodies from different international institutions are inconsistent, as Health and Trade Ministers do not talk at home before they travel to Geneva. Unless you get coherence at home, you yourself are exporting disagreements into the international arena, and it is at home that Parliamentarians can scrutinize consistency of what their Government does.

But sometimes Parliaments are as compartmentalised as the Government. The Economic Committee in Parliament talks the language of the Trade Minister and the Foreign Affairs Committee talks the language of the Foreign Affairs Minister, and the Health Committee talks the language of the Health Minister. We need more coherence there, and we need more coherence through parliamentary groups and parties.

A groundbreaking initiative was launched in Sweden. The government bill "Shared Responsibility: Sweden's Policy for Global Development" was debated and improved by Swedish parliament, the "Riksdag", that aimed at bringing all components of Sweden's development policy together, taking a comprehensive approach to policy areas such as debt, trade, agriculture, education, environment and migration. The legislation will help ensure that the country speaks with one voice in international fora, contributing to a coherent and consistent development policy. As part of the initiative, an annual report on the progress on implementation of the new policy will be presented to Parliament.

Another very important initiative undertaken by the UK's Parliamentary International Development Committee was a recent report on that calls on governments to enhance policy coherence for development: "The Commission for Africa and Policy Coherence for Development: First Do No Harm."

11. Promote Goal 8 Progress Reports

Parliaments should encourage their governments to monitor progress on their Goal 8 commitments.

A major step forward taken by many OECD countries is the Goal 8 progress reports. By now most European countries have published reports evaluating their own progress towards achieving Goal 8.

It would be helpful if parliamentarians would not only promote preparations of these reports but also prominently debate them. The consolidated report that the EU decided to prepare on MDGs 7 and 8 for the UN General Assembly 2005 meeting, presents a unique opportunity to shame other rich countries into action. Furthermore, all OECD countries have committed themselves in the last DAC High-level meeting to inform their publics on the outcome of their efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

In conclusion, the Millennium Development Goals are achievable. We do have the knowledge and resources. What we are lacking is the political will and you are about galvanizing political will. We are the first generation that can put an end to poverty. Please refuse to miss this opportunity.

SECTION 4

References on Parliamentary work and MDGs around the world

Compiled by Elham Seyedsayamdost, from contributions³⁰ made by members³¹ of the UNDP Democratic Governance Practice Network – DGPN and the UN Millennium Development Goals Network -MDGNet

1. Summary of Responses

There seem to be some very good initiatives and tools out there, when it comes to sensitizing governments (in this case more specifically members of Parliament) to the MDGs. To start with tools, Threshold 21 (T21) was suggested as a useful model, through which progress toward the Goals can be tracked for various development and budgetary scenarios considered by a parliament. T21 has already been successfully used in over 15 countries, including Mozambique, where it was used for the preparation of the Agenda 2025, which passed parliament unanimously. Another useful tool recommended is a toolkit by UNICEF and others on “What Parliamentarians Can Do about HIV/AIDS,” which calls on parliamentarians to use their influence and resources in halting the spread of this disease.

2. Country Experiences

Members shared some country experiences, which shed light on the initiatives taken or ongoing. **Mauritania** country office informed us that they have been engaging members of Parliament in a process of upstream public policy formulation, in order to make the policies more pro-poor while mainstreaming the MDGs at the policy level. A number of activities have already been initiated, including the creation of various groups within the Parliament, two of which support the MDGs at the

³⁰ See original query at the end of the section.

³¹ Amina Tirana, BRSP/UNDP New York; Gerald O. Barney, Millennium Institute, USA; Mohamed Ali Lemrabott, UNDP Mauritania; Howard Wilson, UNDP Timor Leste; Nanette Svenson, Latin America and Caribbean SURF, UNDP Panama; Haley Horan, BDP/DGG, UNDP New York; Nabila Zouhiri, UNDP Morocco; Randi Davis, BDP/DGG, UNDP New York.

Senate as well as at the National Assembly level. Though they were only recently created, these two groups have been quite active, in particular in Arab and African areas. They are currently in the process of establishing a network of Parliamentarians of the South for the MDGs. Further, MDG focal points are created within the various key ministries, and a civil society network around the MDGs has been set up while another one was created among journalists. Various high-level meetings around the MDGs have also taken place, including two extraordinary meetings with the Senate and National Assembly as well as a dinner debate with several ministers, members of Parliament and senior officials. These initiatives and activities have helped create a favorable environment for the work done on the MDGs.

CO Morocco shared a project document entitled 'UNDP Support to the Parliament – Phase II,' which aims to enhance the capacity and substantive knowledge of Parliamentarians and Committees in order for them to effectively participate in the legislative process, to better exercise oversight, and to increase citizens' input in the ongoing democratic process in this country. The end result is for the Moroccan Parliament to acquire the necessary tools to perform their legislative functions, to play an active role between the government and civil society, and to adopt sustainable legislation towards the achievement of the Goals. One of the main objectives of this second phase is to strengthen the capabilities of the Parliament in order to contribute to the achievement of the MDGs. Some of the outputs include the integration of the MDGs within the legislative process; identification of projects and legal proposals that are related to the MDGs; organization of debates on MDGs and their effectiveness and coherence with the mandate of the Parliamentary Committees; implementation of social programmes corresponding to the MDGs; and seminars on budgetary procedures, assessment and monitoring, factoring in budget indicators related to each of the Goals.

Timor Leste is an interesting case, as its constitution has taken the MDGs into consideration, and also because civil society participated in its formulation. However, it is yet to be seen how much of this MDGs framework will be endorsed as Timor Leste comes out of the UN-interim period and as the economic and financial situation changes.

In Paraguay, an interesting joint UNDP-UNICEF project *Invertir en la Gente* (Invest in the People) analyzes different public spending from the standpoint of exactly what various expenditures are accomplishing to advance each MDG. The information, much of which is available in Spanish through the project website <http://www.gastosocial.org.py>, has been widely utilized in advocacy activities with numerous audiences, particularly with different parliamentary committees to raise MDG awareness, advise current progress and promote certain budgetary recommendations with the potential for further advances.

In Brazil, UNICEF recently presented "A Brazil fit for Children: The Brazilian civil society monitoring the Millennium Development Goals" to the Brazilian Government, the National Congress and the National Council of Children rights. This report was developed under the direction of UNICEF and the Abrinq Foundation in conjunction with numerous national and international NGOs (Save the Children, Plan International and World Vision, among others) and other UN agencies. The report analyzes historical

trends (1990 to 2002) for each goal, national and international targets, and indicator tendencies to estimate which of the MDGs will likely be met. The report also analyzes public policy and budgets put in place by the Federal Government to improve human development and children rights. The report is currently available in Portuguese at www.redeamiga.org.br; an English version will be released by the end of this year.

Another UNDP Brazil research piece on “The Brazilian Parliament and Human Rights” was presented last May at the Inter-parliamentary Union Conference in Geneva. Though not specifically MDG-oriented, the report provides a good analysis of the potential effectiveness of Parliament when working in conjunction with civil society groups, and may provide applicable references.

Finally, a list of resources was provided, including examples of countries that have incorporated or are in the process of incorporating MDGs into national legislation. Some of these include the text of a resolution on the Millennium Development Goals endorsed by the Albanian Parliament; a decision by the Bolivian government to align social policy with the MDGs in health and education which will represent a substantial increase in the national budget when approved by the Parliament; the new Rwandan constitution which guarantees a minimum of 30 percent of parliamentary seats and other leadership positions to women; and other examples of seminars aimed at the sensitization of members of parliaments on MDGs, and institutions involved in monitoring country progress toward the MDGs. Please find this list below followed by additional resources.

3. Related Resources

Parliamentarians' Implementation Watch. Parliamentary Network on the World Bank.

<http://www.pnowb.org/html/index.php?module=htmlpages&func=display&pid=24> The mission of the Parliamentarians' Implementation Watch (PIW) is to promote and monitor that things are actually being done to put countries on track to meet the MDGs. Includes resources such as a link to a February 2004 videoconference on “The Role of Francophone Parliamentarians in the Struggle against HIV/AIDS.”

<http://www.pnowb.org/html/modules.php?op=modload&name=News&file=article&sid=100&mode=thread&order=0&thold=0>

Consolidated MDG Success Stories. Features briefs on 55 countries.

<http://mdgr.undp.sk/PAPERS/Consolidated%20MDG%20Success%20Stories.doc>

Albanian Parliament Endorses Resolution on Millennium Development Goals – UNDP News and Events, July 29, 2003 <http://www.undp.org.al/?news,0,12>. See Albanian Parliament Resolution on MDGs at <http://www.undp.org.al/?elib,525>

UNDP Rwanda: Millennium Development Goals <http://www.unrwanda.org/undp/mdg.htm>. The new Rwandan constitution guarantees a minimum of 30% of parliamentary seats and other leadership positions to women. This policy is demonstrated by the fact that the Rwandan parliament is now composed of 49% women, the highest proportion of women parliamentarians in the world.

2003 MDG Campaign and Advocacy in Moldova

http://www.un.md/mdg/apc/mdg_compagne.html Goals include: "Advocate for and organize regular UN days in the Parliament," in which all UN Agencies would participate through making thematic presentations on each Goal, achievements and challenges.

Press Release: Advocacy for the MDGs- Presentation of UNCT to Niger Parliament Member, 30 April 2004 <http://www.pnud.ne/pnudfr/actualites/ADVOCAVY%20FOR%20MDGS%20-%20%20UNCT%20TO%20NIGER%20PARLIAMENT.doc>. This meeting highlights the partnership between the Parliament and the United Nations System in capacity building and advocacy for MDGs.

Bolivia and The Millennium Development Goals

<http://www.pnud.bo/WebPortal/Default.aspx?tabid=36> The government has taken the decision to align social policy with the MDGs in health and education which will represent a substantial increase in the national budget when approved by the Parliament. Two national public programs have been created to achieve the fulfillment of these goals: the SUMI (Universal Maternal and Child Health Insurance) and the EFA (Education for All).

Parliament and the Budgetary Process Including from a Gender Perspective, Colombo (Sri Lanka) 26-28 May 2003. Regional Seminar for the Parliaments of South West Asia, Organized by the Sri Lankan Parliament, UNDP and the Inter-Parliamentary Union. <http://www.ipu.org/splz-e/srilanka03.pdf>

Localizing the Millennium Development Goals: Some Examples. South and West Asia SURF, 12 September 2002. http://www.interaction.org/files.cgi/988_Localising_the_MDGs.doc Notes that Zambia has held two broad stakeholders workshops on the NHDR where the MDGs have been explored in further detail and one specifically for members of Parliament. Chile proposes its idea to have the MDGs be a major input for a regular (e.g. biennial) discussion in Parliament of the country's goals and targets.

MDGs: Taking Root at the National Level? United Nations Non Governmental Liaison Service, September 2003. <http://www.un-ngls.org/documents/pdf/roundup/ru106nl.pdf> Notes that UNDP Ukraine organized a youth summit on the MDGs, where 250 young delegates prepared recommendations and appeals that were then passed on to the President and parliament.

Africa/Asia Parliamentarian Forum on Human Security and Gender, Marrakech, Morocco, 24-26 March 2002 – COMMUNIQUÉ.

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/meetings/forum/AfricaAsia/Communique-e.htm>. The first of

its kind, the Forum was organized by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Division for the Advancement of Women (UN/DESA/DAW). Participants in this high level event included members of Parliaments of 24 African and Asian countries. Participants agreed, inter alia, to “Promote the formulation and adoption of gender responsive poverty reduction strategies and develop national capacity for the monitoring of the Millennium Development Goals” and set specific recommendations.

Gender and HIV/AIDS: Mobilizing African Leadership for Prevention and Access to Treatment.

Pretoria 03-04 May, 2004. Gender Issues in HIV/AIDS Prevention: Prevention Policy and the Role of Parliamentarians. Presentation by: Hon. Dr. Khauhelo Raditapole, M.P (Lesotho), Chair of SADC Parliamentary Forum HIV/AIDS Committee
http://www.csa.za.org/filemanager/download/83/09_Panel%201%20Raditapole%20Prevention

Global Key MDG Events. UNDP, Millennium Project, Millennium Campaign.

<http://www.surf-as.org/Calendar/Global%20Key%20MDG%20Events%20June-September.doc>
Includes reference to Bundestag Parliamentary Session on MDGs, Berlin, Germany

What Parliamentarians Can Do about HIV/AIDS – UNICEF, UNAIDS, European Parliamentarians for

Africa, The Parliamentary Network on the World Bank, 2003. This information kit calls on parliamentarians to use their influence and resources in halting the spread of HIV/AIDS. Decisive action by political leaders has proven to be a common, critical factor in changing the course of the pandemic. Leadership by elected officials - whose actions must include breaking the silence, educating their constituencies and lobbying for AIDS legislation and budgetary allocations - is key to controlling the disease. Find it at
http://www.unicef.org/publications/index_19021.html
http://www.unicef.org/publications/Parliamentarians_AIDS.pdf

Threshold 21 (T21) – The Millennium Institute. The Millennium Institute’s Threshold 21 (T21)

Integrated Computer Development Model is a quantitative tool for integrated, comprehensive development and policy planning. The model is transparent, collaborative, interconnected, valid, and customizable. Its purpose is to support the larger process of planning by facilitating information collection and organization and analysis of development strategies. It can provide insight into the potential impact of development policies and strategies relative to desired goals and objectives. View at <http://www.threshold21.com> and <http://www.millenniuminstitute.net/>

A Brazil fit for Children: The Brazilian civil society monitoring the Millennium Development Goals – UNICEF.

For each international goal, this report analyzes the historical tendency from 1990 to 2002, the national and international goals and the indicators tendency to state how many and which MDGs Brazil will probably meet. Indicators were disaggregated by race/ethnicity, gender, income, mother’s education and by each of the 27 States to show the huge inequity existing in Brazil. Moreover, the report analyzes the public policy and the public budget the Federal Government put in place to improve Human development and children rights. The report and

all the maps, graphs and tables produced with DevInfo can be downloaded at www.redeamiga.org.br in Portuguese. The English version will be ready end of this year (probably November).

The Brazilian Parliament and Human Rights – UNDP. This report provides a good analysis of the potential effectiveness of Parliament when working in conjunction with civil society groups. If you are interested in obtaining a copy of the report, please contact Luiza Carvalho at luiza.carvalho@undp.org.br.

Strengthening Parliament Involvement in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Process and the Millennium Development Goals – UNDP

Toolkit 1: Legislative-Executive Communication on Poverty Reduction Strategies

Toolkit 2: Parliamentary-Civic Collaboration for Monitoring Poverty Reduction Initiatives

Toolkit 3: Legislative Public Outreach on Poverty Issues

These resources are also available in French, Spanish and Russian. Visit

<http://intra.undp.org/bdp/parldev/hbktoolkit.htm>

Parliamentary Development Practice Note – UNDP, September 2002

The ANNEX of this practice note includes a list of countries with ongoing UNDP sponsored parliamentary development programmes according to the UNDP Results Oriented Annual Report (ROAR), 2001. Find it at

<http://intra.undp.org/bdp/policy/docs/parliamentarydevelopment.doc>

The Blue Book: A Hands-On Approach to Advocating for the Millennium Development Goals – UNDP 2004

Also available in French and Spanish -

<http://intra.undp.org/mdgs/common/thebluebook/home/index.shtml>

From DGPN Archives

Lesotho/ Comparative Experiences/Establishment of Thematic Parliamentary Committees. October 3 2003 <http://groups.undp.org/read/messages?id=57764#57764>

Afghanistan/Comparative Experiences/PAR/Affirmative Action within the civil service. 4 August 2004. <http://groups.undp.org/read/messages?id=92866#92866>

Parliaments and Human Rights Experience in COs. 26 May 2003. <http://groups.undp.org/read/messages?id=46919#46919>

Lao PDR/Comparative Experiences/Gender Mainstreaming Strategy for Parliament. 19 May 2005. <http://groups.undp.org/read/messages?id=46331#46331>

Nepal/Lessons Learned on Affirmative Action. 30 December 2003. <http://groups.undp.org/read/messages?id=65869>

India/ Comparative Experiences / National Strategies for Urban Poverty Reduction. 13 February 2003.
<http://groups.undp.org/read/messages?id=73574>

Comoros/Comparative Experiences/Institutional Strengthening - Parliamentary Support and Training.
21 May 2004. <http://groups.undp.org/read/messages?id=85049#85049>

4. From MDGNet Archives

Youth and MDGs Campaign. 7 July 2004 -
http://www.undg.org/documents/4694-Youth_and_MDGs_Campaign.htm

MDG Reporting Process. 30 April 2004 –
http://www.undg.org/documents/4320-MDG_Reporting_Process.htm

Comparative Experiences/MDGs at the sub-national level. 17 March 2004 -
http://www.undg.org/documents/3651-Comparative_Experiences_-_MDGs_at_subnational_level.htm

INFO: Sensitization of Parliamentarians on MDGs. 7 January 2004 –
<http://groups.undp.org/read/messages?id=66455#66455>

Resolution on MDGR. 16 August 2003 -
<http://groups.undp.org/read/messages?id=53573#5357>

MDG Advocacy Specialist. 15 February 2004 –
http://www.undg.org/documents/3550-MDG_Advocacy_Specialist.htm

Sao Tome & Principe / Joint PRS-MDG Implementation - Project Document. 6 August 2004 -
http://www.undg.org/documents/4759-Sao_Tome__Principe__Joint_PRS-MDG_Implementation_-_Project_Document.htm

Other useful Consolidated Replies on MDG Campaigning in general can be found at
<http://www.undg.org/content.cfm?id=660> (you must be an MDGNet member to access this page).

From: Elham Seyedsayamdost [mailto:elham.seyedsayamdost@undp.org]

Sent: Thursday, August 19, 2004 3:38 AM

To: mdg-net

Subject: [mdg-net] Consolidated Reply: Vietnam/Comparative Experiences&Consultants/Engaging Parliaments in the Millennium Development Goals

MDGNet/DGPN Consolidated Reply

QUERY: Vietnam/Comparative Experiences & Consultants/Engaging Parliaments in the Millennium Development Goals 18 August 2004 Prepared by Elham Seyedsayamdost

Original Query

Lenni Montiel, UNDP Vietnam

Key points:

- Examples of work by parliaments around MDGs
- Initiatives on sensitization of parliamentarians on MDGs
- Examples of countries having incorporated MDGs into national legislation
- Examples of parliamentary oversight on government's progress regarding achievement of MDGs at national levels

Query in full:

Dear All

This is to request your assistance in providing information related to the "work of parliaments and Millennium Development Goals". With the information provided we will prepare a "brief note" or hand-out (maximum 4-6 pages length) on what is the international experience in this area, incorporating concrete cases and examples. The final idea is to translate the paper into the Vietnamese language and to use it as an advocacy tool in several activities that UNDP Vietnam and our project will be conducting with the National Assembly and Provincial Representative Bodies (People's Councils) of Vietnam during the coming months.

We would like to get, among other possibilities references to:

- seminars and documentation aimed at the sensitization of elected members of parliaments on MDGs;
- cases and tools for the advocacy of MDGs within parliamentary structures and parliamentary staff;
- examples of countries that have incorporated (or are trying to incorporate) MDGs or Millennium Declaration into national legislation;
- cases and experiences of parliamentary oversight on the progress of governments' efforts towards the achievement of MDGs at national levels;
- the participation of legislatures in MDG campaigns at national levels;
- any other initiative involving the consideration of MDGs in the work of representative bodies at any level of government (national/provincial/ municipal, etc) in any region/country.

Activities and initiatives supported by international bilateral/multilateral organizations is also an issue of our interest. Reference to specialists, consultants and authors of materials in the area will be highly appreciated. Once the document will be ready we will make it available to all of you (English version), who will express interest.

Kind regards

Lenni

APPENDIX 1

United Nations Millennium Declaration

*Resolution adopted by the General Assembly
55/2. United Nations Millennium Declaration*

I. Values and principles

1. We, heads of State and Government, have gathered at United Nations Headquarters in New York from 6 to 8 September 2000, at the dawn of a new millennium, to reaffirm our faith in the Organization and its Charter as indispensable foundations of a more peaceful, prosperous and just world.

2. We recognize that, in addition to our separate responsibilities to our individual societies, we have a collective responsibility to uphold the principles of human dignity, equality and equity at the global level. As leaders we have a duty therefore to all the world's people, especially the most vulnerable and, in particular, the children of the world, to whom the future belongs.

3. We reaffirm our commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, which have proved timeless and universal. Indeed, their relevance and capacity to inspire have increased, as nations and peoples have become increasingly interconnected and interdependent.

4. We are determined to establish a just and lasting peace all over the world in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter. We rededicate ourselves to support all efforts to uphold the sovereign equality of all States, respect for their territorial integrity and political independence, resolution of disputes by peaceful means and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, the right to self-determination of peoples which remain under colonial domination and foreign occupation, non-interference in the internal affairs of States, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, respect for the equal rights of all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion and international cooperation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character.

5. We believe that the central challenge we face today is to ensure that globalization becomes a positive force for all the world's people. For while globalization offers great opportunities, at present its benefits are very unevenly shared, while its costs are unevenly distributed. We recognize that developing countries and countries with economies in transition face special difficulties in responding to this central challenge. Thus, only through broad and sustained efforts to create a shared future, based upon our common humanity in all its diversity, can globalization be made fully inclusive and equitable. These efforts must

include policies and measures, at the global level, which correspond to the needs of developing countries and economies in transition and are formulated and implemented with their effective participation.

6. We consider certain fundamental values to be essential to international relations in the twenty-first century. These include:

- Freedom. Men and women have the right to live their lives and raise their children in dignity, free from hunger and from the fear of violence, oppression or injustice. Democratic and participatory governance based on the will of the people best assures these rights.
- Equality. No individual and no nation must be denied the opportunity to benefit from development. The equal rights and opportunities of women and men must be assured.
- Solidarity. Global challenges must be managed in a way that distributes the costs and burdens fairly in accordance with basic principles of equity and social justice. Those who suffer or who benefit least deserve help from those who benefit most.
- Tolerance. Human beings must respect one other, in all their diversity of belief, culture and language. Differences within and between societies should be neither feared nor repressed, but cherished as a precious asset of humanity. A culture of peace and dialogue among all civilizations should be actively promoted.
- Respect for nature. Prudence must be shown in the management of all living species and natural resources, in accordance with the precepts of sustainable development. Only in this way can the immeasurable riches provided to us by nature be preserved and passed on to our descendants. The current unsustainable patterns of production and consumption must be changed in the interest of our future welfare and that of our descendants.
- Shared responsibility. Responsibility for managing worldwide economic and social development, as well as threats to international peace and security, must be shared among the nations of the world and should be exercised multilaterally. As the most universal and most representative organization in the world, the United Nations must play the central role.

7. In order to translate these shared values into actions, we have identified key objectives to which we assign special significance.

II. Peace, security and disarmament

8. We will spare no effort to free our peoples from the scourge of war, whether within or between States, which has claimed more than 5 million lives in the past decade. We will also seek to eliminate the dangers posed by weapons of mass destruction.

9. We resolve therefore:

- To strengthen respect for the rule of law in international as in national affairs and, in particular, to ensure compliance by Member States with the decisions of the International Court of Justice, in compliance with the Charter of the United Nations, in cases to which they are parties.
- To make the United Nations more effective in maintaining peace and security by giving it the resources and tools it needs for conflict prevention, peaceful resolution of disputes, peacekeeping, post-conflict peace-building and reconstruction. In this context, we take note of the report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations and request the General Assembly to consider its recommendations expeditiously.
- To strengthen cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, in accordance with the provisions of Chapter VIII of the Charter.
- To ensure the implementation, by States Parties, of treaties in areas such as arms control and disarmament and of international humanitarian law and human rights law, and call upon all States to consider signing and ratifying the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.
- To take concerted action against international terrorism, and to accede as soon as possible to all the relevant international conventions.
- To redouble our efforts to implement our commitment to counter the world drug problem.
- To intensify our efforts to fight transnational crime in all its dimensions, including trafficking as well as smuggling in human beings and money laundering.
- To minimize the adverse effects of United Nations economic sanctions on innocent populations, to subject such sanctions regimes to regular reviews and to eliminate the adverse effects of sanctions on third parties.
- To strive for the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, and to keep all options open for achieving this aim, including the possibility of convening an international conference to identify ways of eliminating nuclear dangers.
- To take concerted action to end illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons, especially by making arms transfers more transparent and supporting regional disarmament measures, taking account of all the recommendations of the forthcoming United Nations Conference on Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons.
- To call on all States to consider acceding to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, as well as the amended mines protocol to the Convention on conventional weapons.

10. We urge Member States to observe the Olympic Truce, individually and collectively, now and in the future, and to support the International Olympic Committee in its efforts to promote peace and human understanding through sport and the Olympic Ideal.

III. Development and poverty eradication

11. We will spare no effort to free our fellow men, women and children from the abject and dehumanizing conditions of extreme poverty, to which more than a billion of them are currently subjected. We are committed to making the right to development a reality for everyone and to freeing the entire human race from want.

12. We resolve therefore to create an environment – at the national and global levels alike – which is conducive to development and to the elimination of poverty.

13. Success in meeting these objectives depends, inter alia, on good governance within each country. It also depends on good governance at the international level and on transparency in the financial, monetary and trading systems. We are committed to an open, equitable, rule-based, predictable and non-discriminatory multilateral trading and financial system.

14. We are concerned about the obstacles developing countries face in mobilizing the resources needed to finance their sustained development. We will therefore make every effort to ensure the success of the High-level International and Intergovernmental Event on Financing for Development, to be held in 2001.

15. We also undertake to address the special needs of the least developed countries. In this context, we welcome the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries to be held in May 2001 and will endeavour to ensure its success. We call on the industrialized countries:

- To adopt, preferably by the time of that Conference, a policy of duty- and quota-free access for essentially all exports from the least developed countries;
- To implement the enhanced programme of debt relief for the heavily indebted poor countries without further delay and to agree to cancel all official bilateral debts of those countries in return for their making demonstrable commitments to poverty reduction; and
- To grant more generous development assistance, especially to countries that are genuinely making an effort to apply their resources to poverty reduction.

16. We are also determined to deal comprehensively and effectively with the debt problems of low- and middle-income developing countries, through various national and international measures designed to make their debt sustainable in the long term.

17. We also resolve to address the special needs of Small Island developing States, by implementing the Barbados Programme of Action and the outcome of the twenty-second special session of the General Assembly rapidly and in full. We urge the international community to ensure that, in the development of a vulnerability index, the special needs of Small Island developing States are taken into account.

18. We recognize the special needs and problems of the landlocked developing countries, and urge both bilateral and multilateral donors to increase financial and technical assistance to this group of countries to meet their special development needs and to help them overcome the impediments of geography by improving their transit transport systems.

19. We resolve further:

- To halve, by the year 2015, the proportion of the world's people whose income is less than one dollar a day and the proportion of people who suffer from hunger and, by the same date, to halve the proportion of people who are unable to reach or to afford safe drinking water.
- To ensure that, by the same date, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling and that girls and boys will have equal access to all levels of education.
- By the same date, to have reduced maternal mortality by three quarters, and under-five child mortality by two thirds, of their current rates.
- To have, by then, halted, and begun to reverse, the spread of HIV/AIDS, the scourge of malaria and other major diseases that afflict humanity.
- To provide special assistance to children orphaned by HIV/AIDS.
- By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers as proposed in the "Cities Without Slums" initiative.

20. We also resolve:

- To promote gender equality and the empowerment of women as effective ways to combat poverty, hunger and disease and to stimulate development that is truly sustainable.
- To develop and implement strategies that give young people everywhere a real chance to find decent and productive work.
- To encourage the pharmaceutical industry to make essential drugs more widely available and affordable by all who need them in developing countries.

- To develop strong partnerships with the private sector and with civil society organizations in pursuit of development and poverty eradication.
- To ensure that the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communication technologies, in conformity with recommendations contained in the ECOSOC 2000 Ministerial Declaration, are available to all.

IV. Protecting our common environment

21. We must spare no effort to free all of humanity, and above all our children and grandchildren, from the threat of living on a planet irredeemably spoilt by human activities, and whose resources would no longer be sufficient for their needs.

22. We reaffirm our support for the principles of sustainable development, including those set out in Agenda 21, agreed upon at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

23. We resolve therefore to adopt in all our environmental actions a new ethic of conservation and stewardship and, as first steps, we resolve:

- To make every effort to ensure the entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol, preferably by the tenth anniversary of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 2002, and to embark on the required reduction in emissions of greenhouse gases.
- To intensify our collective efforts for the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests.
- To press for the full implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa.
- To stop the unsustainable exploitation of water resources by developing water management strategies at the regional, national and local levels, which promote both equitable access and adequate supplies.
- To intensify cooperation to reduce the number and effects of natural and man-made disasters.
- To ensure free access to information on the human genome sequence.

V. Human rights, democracy and good governance

24. We will spare no effort to promote democracy and strengthen the rule of law, as well as respect for all internationally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development.

25. We resolve therefore:

- To respect fully and uphold the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- To strive for the full protection and promotion in all our countries of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights for all.
- To strengthen the capacity of all our countries to implement the principles and practices of democracy and respect for human rights, including minority rights.
- To combat all forms of violence against women and to implement the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
- To take measures to ensure respect for and protection of the human rights of migrants, migrant workers and their families, to eliminate the increasing acts of racism and xenophobia in many societies and to promote greater harmony and tolerance in all societies.
- To work collectively for more inclusive political processes, allowing genuine participation by all citizens in all our countries.
- To ensure the freedom of the media to perform their essential role and the right of the public to have access to information.

VI. Protecting the vulnerable

26. We will spare no effort to ensure that children and all civilian populations that suffer disproportionately the consequences of natural disasters, genocide, armed conflicts and other humanitarian emergencies are given every assistance and protection so that they can resume normal life as soon as possible.

We resolve therefore:

- To expand and strengthen the protection of civilians in complex emergencies, in conformity with international humanitarian law.
- To strengthen international cooperation, including burden sharing in, and the coordination of humanitarian assistance to, countries hosting refugees and to help all refugees and displaced persons to return voluntarily to their homes, in safety and dignity and to be smoothly reintegrated into their societies.
- To encourage the ratification and full implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its optional protocols on the involvement of children in armed conflict and on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.

VII. Meeting the special needs of Africa

27. We will support the consolidation of democracy in Africa and assist Africans in their struggle for lasting peace, poverty eradication and sustainable development, thereby bringing Africa into the mainstream of the world economy.

28. We resolve therefore:

- To give full support to the political and institutional structures of emerging democracies in Africa.
- To encourage and sustain regional and sub-regional mechanisms for preventing conflict and promoting political stability, and to ensure a reliable flow of resources for peacekeeping operations on the continent.
- To take special measures to address the challenges of poverty eradication and sustainable development in Africa, including debt cancellation, improved market access, enhanced Official Development Assistance and increased flows of Foreign Direct Investment, as well as transfers of technology.
- To help Africa build up its capacity to tackle the spread of the HIV/AIDS pandemic and other infectious diseases.

VIII. Strengthening the United Nations

29. We will spare no effort to make the United Nations a more effective instrument for pursuing all of these priorities: the fight for development for all the peoples of the world, the fight against poverty, ignorance and disease; the fight against injustice; the fight against violence, terror and crime; and the fight against the degradation and destruction of our common home.

30. We resolve therefore:

- To reaffirm the central position of the General Assembly as the chief deliberative, policy-making and representative organ of the United Nations, and to enable it to play that role effectively.
- To intensify our efforts to achieve a comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all its aspects.
- To strengthen further the Economic and Social Council, building on its recent achievements, to help it fulfill the role ascribed to it in the Charter.
- To strengthen the International Court of Justice, in order to ensure justice and the rule of law in international affairs.

- To encourage regular consultations and coordination among the principal organs of the United Nations in pursuit of their functions.
- To ensure that the Organization is provided on a timely and predictable basis with the resources it needs to carry out its mandates.
- To urge the Secretariat to make the best use of those resources, in accordance with clear rules and procedures agreed by the General Assembly, in the interests of all Member States, by adopting the best management practices and technologies available and by concentrating on those tasks that reflect the agreed priorities of Member States.
- To promote adherence to the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel.
- To ensure greater policy coherence and better cooperation between the United Nations, its agencies, the Bretton Woods Institutions and the World Trade Organization, as well as other multilateral bodies, with a view to achieving a fully coordinated approach to the problems of peace and development.
- To strengthen further cooperation between the United Nations and national parliaments through their world organization, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, in various fields, including peace and security, economic and social development, international law and human rights and democracy and gender issues.
- To give greater opportunities to the private sector, non-governmental organizations and civil society, in general, to contribute to the realization of the Organization's goals and programmes.

31. We request the General Assembly to review on a regular basis the progress made in implementing the provisions of this Declaration, and ask the Secretary-General to issue periodic reports for consideration by the General Assembly and as a basis for further action.

32. We solemnly reaffirm, on this historic occasion, that the United Nations is the indispensable common house of the entire human family, through which we will seek to realize our universal aspirations for peace, cooperation and development. We therefore pledge our unstinting support for these common objectives and our determination to achieve them.

*8th plenary meeting
8 September 2000*

APPENDIX 2

The role of Parliaments in establishing innovative international financing and trading mechanisms to address the problem of debt and achieve the millennium development goals

*Resolution adopted unanimously by the 112th Assembly
(Manila, 8 April 2005)*

The 112th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

Recalling the Declaration adopted on 1 September 2000 by the Presiding Officers of National Parliaments entitled The Parliamentary Vision of International Cooperation on the Eve of the Third Millennium,

Recalling also the Millennium Declaration of 8 September 2000, which sets out eight time-bound and measurable goals collectively known as the Millennium Development Goals, as criteria established jointly by the international community for the elimination of poverty, and also the Human Development Reports drawn up by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP),

Recalling the final declarations of specialised United Nations conferences, in particular the International Conference on Financing for Development, held in Monterrey, Mexico in 2002, the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg, South Africa in 2002, and the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, held in Brussels, Belgium in 2001,

Recalling the Declaration adopted in New York on 20 September 2004 by 120 countries at the end of the Summit for Action against Hunger and Poverty, the September 2004 report by the Technical Group on Innovative Financing Mechanisms and the final reports of the UN Millennium Project, delivered on 17 January 2005,

Recalling the resolutions of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, particularly those adopted by the 73rd Inter-Parliamentary Conference (Lomé, 1985) on the role of parliaments and their contribution towards the

elimination of poverty by eliminating the burden of international debt; the 74th Inter-Parliamentary Conference (Ottawa, 1985) on the contribution of parliaments to the search for measures and actions aimed at removing the burden of foreign debt that weighs on the developing countries; the 88th Inter-Parliamentary Conference (Stockholm, 1992) on the need for a radical solution to the problem of debt in the developing world; and the 102nd Inter-Parliamentary Conference (Berlin, 1999) on the need to revise the current global financial and economic model, as well as the Final Document of the Inter-Parliamentary Conference "North-South Dialogue for Global Prosperity" organised by the IPU in Ottawa in 1993, and the resolutions adopted by the 107th Conference (Marrakech, 2002) on the role of parliaments in developing public policy in an era of globalisation, multilateral institutions and international trade agreements, and also by the Parliamentary Meeting on the occasion of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, 2002), by the 108th Inter-Parliamentary Conference (Santiago, 2003) on parliament's role in strengthening democratic institutions and human development in a fragmented world, and by the 109th Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (Geneva, 2003) on global public goods: a new challenge for parliaments,

Greatly concerned by the fact that 1.2 billion people – or one in five persons in the world – survive on less than a US dollar a day in purchasing power parity per capita, below the international poverty rate set at a dollar a day, and that in the 1990s, poverty worsened in 54 countries, including 35 African countries, leaving them poorer at the end of the decade than in 1990,

Concerned by the fact that even if the proportion of people in extreme poverty were to be halved by 2015 in comparison with 1990, it is clear that hundreds of millions of people in the developing world would continue to live in complete destitution,

Recognising that the role of parliaments in championing the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is crucial, and that the adoption of the corresponding legislation and appropriate budgetary allocations is indispensable,

Stressing the need for assistance and support to improve the institutional capacity of parliaments in developing countries, with a view to enabling them to exercise effectively the legislative, oversight and budgetary functions related to the MDGs,

Recognising the importance of ensuring environmental sustainability in achieving the MDGs, stressing the role of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development and the International Decade for Action: Water for Life, starting in 2005, and *welcoming* the entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol on 16 February 2005 as a significant step forward,

Deeply concerned that in the current state of affairs, the financing of efforts to achieve the MDGs, and thus their implementation, is not ensured,

Noting that economic growth, debt relief and public development assistance - the three main sources of funding for development - are in the current circumstances unable to generate the extra 50 to 100 billion dollars required annually to achieve the MDGs,

Noting that the official development assistance (ODA) commitment (provision of 0.7 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP)) is still not being met by most countries, but *noting with satisfaction* the undertakings by several countries to meet these commitments within the next decade,

Noting that despite the progress made on debt cancellation, relief and rescheduling both bilaterally, and multilaterally in the framework of the Bretton Woods institutions, the burden of the debt remains a major constraint and an obstacle to economic growth and human development,

Convinced that increased development assistance funding can only be beneficial if the receiving countries promote democracy and good governance,

Convinced that globalisation is at the same time a source of opportunities and challenges for all countries, and that it has an impact on people's everyday lives,

Noting that many developing countries are increasingly excluded from international trade and capital flows, which results in poverty,

Noting the growing importance of international trade and investment and their direct influence on the development and well-being of the nations of the entire world, and *concerned* at the fact that the current international trade and investment system is distorted in many sectors in favour of the developed countries, and poses problems for many developing countries,

Noting that awareness of the importance of trade and investment to furthering countries' development has grown since the Fourth Ministerial Meeting of the World Trade Organization (WTO), held in Doha, which sought to place the needs and interests of the developing countries at the centre of international trade negotiations and drew up the Doha Development Agenda,

Welcoming the Geneva framework agreement of July 2004, a breakthrough in the negotiations conducted by the WTO, following the failure of the Cancún meeting,

Nonetheless concerned about the many uncertainties that remain in those negotiations, in particular with regard to issues of great importance to developing countries,

Noting the striking lack of resources currently available to achieve most MDGs by 2015, and *underscoring* the responsibility of governments and the parliaments which provide them with oversight to respect the commitments made at the Millennium Summit in 2000,

Strongly believing that 2005 will be the key year for governments to act to achieve the MDGs, at such high-level meetings as the G8 summit, to be held in July, the high-level plenary meeting to review the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration of the sixtieth session of the United Nations General Assembly, to be held in September, and the Sixth WTO Ministerial Conference, to be held in December,

Looking forward to the forthcoming Millennium+5 Summit, to be held in New York from 14 to 16 September 2005, and strongly wishing that the event will re-energise global partnerships for the achievement of the MDGs;

1. *Urges* the parliaments of the countries that adopted the Millennium Declaration which are Members of the IPU to support the implementation of the MDGs in their countries by allocating funds for this purpose in their national budgets;
2. *Encourages* the parliaments of developed countries to demand that their governments fulfill their commitments to allocate 0.7 per cent of their GDP for ODA, as set out in the Millennium Declaration and the Monterrey Consensus;
3. *Urges* the parliaments of the developing countries to make sure that their governments mobilise the resources required for development, combat corruption, continue institutional reform, adopt the economic and social policies appropriate to stimulate growth, establish national strategies which place the MDGs at the centre of their policies, and promote democracy and human rights, paying special attention to the implementation of the new World Programme for Human Rights Education, and follow the principles of good governance;
4. *Encourages* the parliaments of the developing countries to defend the interests of their people in WTO negotiations and to strengthen their mutual cooperation;
5. *Urges* the governments of the developed and developing countries to provide annual reports on the application and implementation of these strategies to their parliaments;
6. *Suggests* that such reports should give rise to a parliamentary debate at the national, and if possible, regional level;
7. *Suggests* that provisions should be made for the same kind of approach, involving a strategy and a report, at the regional level;
8. *Urges* donor countries, in particular members of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), to draw up reports on the implementation of Goal 8 of the MDGs (develop a global partnership for development), specifying the action they have taken to achieve such objectives both quantitatively and qualitatively;
9. *Calls for* efforts to enhance the effectiveness of aid at the international and regional levels, through better harmonisation of procedures and improved donor coordination;

10. *Urges* donor countries to pursue collaboration with United Nations organisations, international financial institutions, other donor countries, NGOs and the private sector;
11. *Underscores* the unbearable nature of the debt for a large number of developing countries; and *calls urgently for* effective debt cancellation and viable rescheduling procedures to be speeded up while measures are taken to avoid new over-indebtedness among developing countries;
12. *Suggests* that a vital link be established between debt cancellation and the earmarking of resources thus freed up for investments related to the MDGs, in particular in the fields of health, education and gender equality, as set out in each country's Poverty Reduction Strategy;
13. *Recommends* the study of other mechanisms to help countries that have serious debt crises, but that have too high a per capita income to qualify for the assistance afforded to the heavily indebted poor countries (HIPCs);
14. *Expresses the wish* that the needs of the developing countries be systematically taken into consideration in international trade negotiations under way in the framework of the WTO, in particular in respect of poverty alleviation, food security and sustainable income;
15. *Emphasises* the central role of parliaments as the incarnation of popular sovereignty in expressing the will of peoples in international forums;
16. *Recommends* the establishment by IPU Member Parliaments of specialised committees to follow up on international trade negotiations and on the actions of the international financial institutions, and to provide oversight of government action;
17. *Requests* governments to inform their parliaments fully of the state of relevant international negotiations and the stakes involved;
18. *Requests* the IPU, working with the WTO, to help strengthen the capacities of parliaments in this field;
19. *Suggests* that governments include parliamentarians in the delegations that they send to take part in WTO ministerial meetings;
20. *Welcomes* the adoption at United Nations Headquarters of the Declaration on Action against Hunger and Poverty by 120 countries on 20 September 2004, aimed in particular at supporting the establishment of new international financing tools for the MDGs;
21. *Recommends* that a new resource should be set up, additional to existing mechanisms, and that it should be at the same time predictable and stable;
22. *Supports* further work on proposals for international financing mechanisms as a creative and at the same time realistic way of providing additional resources for development;
23. *Requests* that the Second World Conference of Speaker of Parliaments, to be held at the United Nations in 2005, follow up on this matter.

APPENDIX 3

Toward Sustainability: Implementing Agenda 21

Parliamentary Declaration on the occasion of the World Summit on Sustainable Development Adopted by acclamation on the occasion of the Parliamentary Meeting organized jointly by the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the Parliament of South Africa (Johannesburg, 29-30 August 2002)

1. Preamble

While the rich twenty percent of the world's population consume eighty percent of the world's resources at an unsustainable rate, some three billion people must struggle to survive on less than two dollars a day, without adequate access to education and health care, food, water, sanitation and shelter, decent employment, productive technologies, clean energy sources, and ultimately a livable environment.

Poverty must be acknowledged as a serious threat to humanity. Not knowing where the next meal will come from, the fact that one's children and their children will be condemned to a life of abject poverty, starvation, illiteracy and ill health is inhumane, unjust and unacceptable.

In spite of progress on many fronts, the ten-year old *Agenda 21* remains for the most part unfulfilled: oceans are more polluted and fish stocks depleted; forests are being cut faster than they can regenerate themselves; some agricultural lands are overexploited; land degradation and desertification continue unabated; natural disasters are occurring with greater frequency and intensity; global warming and climate change threaten to undermine livelihoods, political stability, and the quality of life for entire populations. The cost, human and environmental, of all this damage is incalculable and, increasingly, irreversible.

To correct the dangerous course on which the world is now set, it is more than ever incumbent on us, the representatives of the legislative branch of government, to work together toward the common objective of sustainability - social, economic, and environmental. Setting aside our individual differences, and in the name of the people we represent, we declare our commitment to the following principles and means of action.

2. Principles of Implementation

We renew our commitment to the Rio Declaration, and particularly to the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities inscribed therein. We likewise commit ourselves anew to the war on poverty, as declared at the Copenhagen Summit.

We reaffirm the need for governments, acting in partnership with civil society and the productive sector, to promote sustainability without abdicating their fundamental responsibilities to the disadvantaged and most vulnerable both within domestic jurisdictions and globally.

We consider that investing in the environment and in people is key to creating a more prosperous economy capable of providing for the needs of everyone on the planet today and in future generations.

We are committed to building a society based on the fundamental principles of solidarity, equality, nondiscrimination and tolerance, as well as respect for all human rights. We recognise the primordial importance of education in this regard.

We recognize the necessity for all public policies in the area of sustainable development to include implementation targets and deadlines in order to force effective action and provide for measurable results.

3. Priority Actions

Given the key role of financing in the implementation of *Agenda 21*, we endorse the spirit of the Monterrey Consensus of the United Nations as a starting point for mobilizing additional resources for the developing world. With the aim of implementing that consensus to promote sustainability, we will:

- Channel a greater portion of ODA into projects that integrate the environmental, social, and economic dimensions of development, including poverty eradication, and ensure that export credit guarantees are limited to such projects;
- Promote initiatives aiming at eliminating the debt of both poor and middle income countries, including through debt for sustainable development swaps, in order to enable them to meet the Millennium Development Goals, and as an additional measure to increasing ODA;
- Regulate investments to protect nature and bio-diversity so as to promote sustainable livelihoods in local communities and vulnerable groups, including indigenous peoples;
- Move forward with the full implementation of the Uruguay Round of Agreements to bring about a fairer trade regime, consistent with the principles of the WTO Agreements, facilitate further trade negotiations to enhance market access for developing country exports, and ensure that respect of intellectual property rights does not impede access to life-saving drugs.

Recognizing the evolution of civil society over the last ten years, we stress the importance of partnerships between government and civil society organizations, including private business entities, as a way of further implementing sustainable development in both developed and developing countries. To this effect, we will:

- Enact the necessary guidelines and legal framework to promote such partnerships and ensure transparency, fairness, and accountability, as well as add value to national and local capacities;
- Help strengthen innovative local and workplace partnerships;
- Give our support to regional partnerships such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

Noting the inter-relationship between human security and sustainable development and the fact that human security as a relative concept is perceived and experienced differently in the North and the South, we will give our greatest priority to the following human security issues in implementing the economic and social aspects of *Agenda 21*:

- Realizing the *Millennium Development Goals* by the required deadlines by, *inter alia*, giving due priority in our budgets to education for children, ensuring equal access for boys and girls, as well as life-long education, food security, access to reproductive health services, people with disabilities, safety nets for all people, and amenities such as safe water and sanitation and cleaner energy sources;
- Taking strong preventive and curative measures, based on UNAIDS guidelines and with a particular focus on young people, women and people with disabilities, to counter the HIV/AIDS pandemic, reduce its effect on human suffering and sustainable development, and meet the global targets for the year 2015;
- Similarly, taking measures to counter the increase in diseases such as malaria, TB and other epidemics that threaten the survival of communities;
- Implementing measures conducive to peace at all levels, including in the domestic sphere, and to the prevention of conflict. Reducing the worldwide annual military expenditure of \$ 900 billion so as to release more resources for sustainable development;
- Recognising cultural diversity and promoting the rights of cultural, linguistic and religious communities;
- Promoting human security as a universal interdependent concept that incorporates early prevention of conflicts and poverty eradication, gender equality, empowerment and protection, and which requires fair and equitable trade and a rights-based approach to human needs;
- Ensuring a shift away from a national state-centred security approach to one that places people at the centre of sustainable development and, to this end, consider the enforcement of second and third generation socio-economic rights on the same basis as first generation political and civil rights.

As members of parliament, we consider it our foremost duty to strengthen governance by reforming its institutions, including parliaments and decision-making processes to meet the imperative of sustainable development. We recognise the unique role of parliamentarians in scrutinising, monitoring and holding national governments to account in respect of the implementation of international agreements. We will work to put into place:

- New regulatory and administrative foundations to make the integrated approach of sustainable development permeate every act of government;
- National strategies for sustainable development that include a measure of decentralisation of public and private institutions for appropriate local decisions to provide a coherent policy framework and measurable targets;
- Requirements for thorough environmental and social impact assessments based on sustainable development indicators and procedures for land and coastal planning, as well as legal frameworks to adjudicate environmental disputes;
- Systems that provide access to relevant information to people and decision makers;
- Regulations to implement new and rigorous methods of green accounting in both public and private sectors;
- Democratic institutions and processes that are accountable, allow for consultation with and input from civil society, abide by the rule of law and respect fundamental human rights and human dignity.

4. Our Pledge

We, the members of parliament gathered in Johannesburg on the occasion of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, pledge our continued support for *Agenda 21* as the blueprint for parliamentarians working for a more prosperous, equitable, and sustainable world, and to work towards ratification of multilateral environmental agreements, including the Kyoto Protocol.

We pledge to formally review in our respective parliaments the *Plan of Implementation* of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and to speedily implement, through legislation, including budgetary measures, the provisions of the *Plan* that come under our purview.

We commit ourselves further to working through our world organization, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, for a more sustainable and equitable world, and to bringing a parliamentary dimension to the United Nations, the WTO, the Bretton Woods Institutions and all such multilateral organizations engaged in implementing the outcome of the Summit.

APPENDIX 4

Financing for development and a new paradigm of economic and social development designed to eradicate poverty

*Resolution adopted without a vote by the 104th Inter-Parliamentary Conference
(Jakarta, 20 October 2000)*

The 104th Inter-Parliamentary Conference,

Recognising that poverty is the result of various economic, political, social and institutional processes that interact with each other and may reinforce each other in ways that can make the poor even more destitute,

Further recognising that, more than inadequate income or human development, poverty is also vulnerability and a lack of voice, power and representation,

Conscious that, today, more than a billion people live in absolute poverty and have been marginalised within society, thus being denied the opportunity to participate in productive economic life, and that in particular the number of women living in poverty has increased,

Deploring the fact that, whereas three billion men and women live on less than two dollars a day, the official development assistance provided by the majority of rich countries has declined sharply in recent years, thereby depriving the poor countries of the means to finance their development,

Affirming that far too much money from the funds received for development aid goes into repaying debts, particularly in the case of heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC),

Considering that the private capital flows that have grown rapidly in the past two decades are concentrated in a few developing countries, leaving most of the others largely dependent on official aid,

Noting that the domestic savings of the poor countries are all too often invested in unproductive expenditure and are attracted by the large capital markets of the rich countries,

Considering that trade barriers erected by industrialised countries and between developing countries severely impair the latter's economic growth and that the resulting loss of income is more than double the total amount of development assistance,

Convinced that, in some developing countries, progress is hampered by a lack of good governance,

Recalling IPU resolutions, particularly those adopted by the 73rd Inter-Parliamentary Conference (Lomé, 1985) on the role of parliaments and their contribution towards the elimination of poverty by eliminating the burden of international debt; the 74th Inter-Parliamentary Conference (Ottawa, 1985) on the contribution of parliaments to the search for measures and actions aimed at removing the burden of foreign debt that weighs on the developing countries; the 88th Inter-Parliamentary Conference (Stockholm, 1992) on the need for a radical solution to the problem of debt in the developing world; and the 102nd Inter-Parliamentary Conference (Berlin, 1999) on the need to revise the current global financial and economic model, as well as the Final Document of the Inter-Parliamentary Conference "North-South Dialogue for Global Prosperity" organised by IPU in Ottawa in 1993,

Approving the solemn commitments made by the United Nations, the World Bank and the IMF to make poverty eradication and debt alleviation for the least developed countries one of the essential priorities of their activities,

Welcoming the preparations under way for the High-Level Intergovernmental Event on Financing for Development to be held by the United Nations in 2001, and *also welcoming* all regional initiatives that seek to combat poverty and that mobilise a large number of countries with the support of international financial institutions,

Noting that the Fourth World Conference on Women defined equality between men and women as a human rights issue and as a condition for the existence of social justice,

Calls on both developed and developing countries to pursue development with a human face through economic development measures such as credit facilities for small and medium-sized enterprises, small-scale financing initiatives and household debt relief, and through initiatives in fields such as the development of health and education systems and services, the protection of human rights and environmental conservation, in the interests of human security;

Supports the introduction of such new approaches to sustainable development in the context of globalisation as would ensure economic growth, environmental protection and social development, including the creation of new jobs, while preserving the resources necessary for future generations;

Urges both developed and developing countries to promote policy dialogue on development, to aim at establishing democratic systems, good governance and high standards of transparency and to acknowledge the role of civil society and NGOs;

Urges the developed countries to provide efficient official development assistance tailored to the conditions of developing countries and to honour the commitment they have made several times to devote 0.7 per cent of their GNP to official development assistance;

Urges the developing countries to take measures to ensure that such assistance benefits the truly needy;

Stresses that debt cancellation for HIPC countries and debt relief for other developing countries should be granted immediately and focus almost exclusively on poverty reduction measures that take account of the predicament of women, especially in rural areas, and on the eradication of inequalities;

Endorses proposals aimed at stemming short-term capital flows which have especially dramatic consequences for production in developing countries, and in particular *supports* the idea of a tax on short-term capital flows that could be allocated to a world solidarity fund managed by the United Nations, and *requests* the Inter-Parliamentary Union to invite the international financial institutions to present a report on the technical arrangements for, and the consequences of, the establishment of such a tax at the next Inter-Parliamentary Conference in Cuba;

Urges recipient countries to develop legal and social frameworks to ensure that the funds made available are effectively used for social and economic development and for the welfare of the people;

Endorses the call made by the international community in the 20/20 Initiative for 20 per cent of donor countries' official development assistance to be used to combat poverty and 20 per cent of the recipient countries' public expenditure to be used for basic social services, such as education, health and housing;

Stresses the need to direct national efforts away from military priorities and international trade in weapons, and towards more productive and peaceful objectives, bearing national security implications in mind;

Reaffirms that the struggle against poverty and inequality requires the existence of an effective, democratic and transparent State which is respectful of human rights; and emphasises that this struggle must promote civil and political liberties in order to empower the poor to claim their social, economic and cultural rights, and must also combat corruption, which always hits the poor hardest;

Urges the world's parliamentarians to play a central role in the implementation of development assistance measures, both at home and in the international arena.

ONA - UNDP PROJECT VIE/02/007

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