

## A TIME TO ACT

In 2003, crisis rippled around the globe. To a large extent, this was because so many people still have so few opportunities to secure the basic aspirations of a decent life. As a global community, we know what could carry us part of the way along the road to greater peace and stability: the eight Millennium Development Goals, agreed on by all UN Member States four years ago.

Before it is too late and too difficult, we must take the steps to make them happen, understanding that we face a historic opportunity. We can either continue trying to patch up the world's problem spots. Or we can decide to pursue a more hopeful vision for our future. Lasting peace can come when growing economies and stable democracies deliver the education, health care and other staples of human security that every man, woman and child deserves.

For this, the global community has the resources—relieving debt and easing unfair trade subsidies alone would free billions of dollars. We have the will—wealthy countries are starting to deliver on their commitments at the 2002 Monterrey International Conference on Financing for Development to increase official development assistance, and a number of devel-

oping countries have implemented reforms that could flourish with a moderate influx of funds. We have the way forward—the MDGs, which are being embraced as an inclusive, comprehensive development strategy in countries around the world.

In 2003, developing nations able to systematically focus on development results started to move forward: Bangladesh sent more children to school; Ghana offered more people clean water; Uganda reduced HIV infection rates. But for those countries locked into worsening poverty or seared by crisis, the prognosis seemed grim.

### EVERY COUNTRY COULD MEET THE MDGS

The world is still at a point, however, where we can work towards a brighter outcome: one of universal attainment of the MDGs. The goals are about the fundamentals of functioning, secure societies, and as the UN's global development network, UNDP is committed to this vision. As our *2003 Human Development Report* documented, with strong, nationally owned policies as well as sufficient international support, nearly every country can still meet the goals by 2015—but only if we redouble our efforts, starting now.

Next year, the UN General Assembly will review progress towards the MDGs. This will be an important chance for developing countries to advance costed plans of action, grounded in careful, thorough analysis. It will also provide an occasion to further the kinds of local initiatives that will breathe life into the goals where they matter most: within people's homes and communities. At the same time, the MDGs are the voice of the global community. While the agenda of the goals is much larger than any one person or organization, it requires a strong and coordinated UN, one that can fulfill its mandate for leadership in peace and development, and can be charged with upholding the universal spirit of the goals.

In taking up its share of this responsibility, UNDP plays a double role. Internationally, we head the UN



Under the UN Collaborative Action Plan in Thailand, UNDP launched projects to improve livelihoods for the poor in five provinces. The strategy proved so effective that it has now been adopted nationwide. In Ban Laem, villagers have cooperatively organized patrols against poachers, a serious drain on their income from cockle gathering.

## MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

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

Development Group (UNDG), the body that coordinates the major UN development agencies. Nationally, our Resident Coordinators lead UN Country Teams, which represent the organizations present in each country. On both levels, we are a leader and a partner in an array of UN MDG advocacy initiatives that are mobilizing people and actions around the world. We also connect countries to available knowledge and advice, so they can better determine what combination of development strategies, partners and resources they need to take charge of their future.

### OUR PRACTICES, GLOBAL GOALS

UNDP has a long history as the developing country's development organization. Today, after more than four years of extensive internal reform, we are better positioned to support countries than ever before. Rising core resources and increasing requests for assistance confirm global confidence in our transformation. Governments and others know that they can turn to UNDP and expect an effective, responsive development partner.

With knowledge networks that crisscross the globe, we now offer unprecedented access to our rich development experience in 166 countries. One set of networks is structured geographically around nine sub-regional resource facilities. Another series is based on our five practice areas: democratic governance, poverty reduction, crisis prevention and recovery, energy and environment and HIV/AIDS. Others focus on the MDGs, information and communications technology, gender, management and our renowned series of global and national human development reports. By 2003, there were over 12,000 members of these networks, including experts from across UNDP, other parts of the UN and outside institutions. Thousands of queries are now flowing into the system, and thousands of responses flow out, including lessons learned and information about potential partners.



Through its partnership with UNDP, the UN Capital Development Fund has helped local governments build their capacity to care for their environment. In Niger, women have built walls from local materials to halt the desert's spread.

To further enlarge this pool of expertise and resources, UNDP is also brokering an expanding number of alliances every year. A major new global initiative with Microsoft will promote job creation by melding our development know-how with their technology expertise, for example. UNDP cooperation with the Governments of Brazil, India and South Africa has yielded a South-South initiative for funding MDG projects. The third meeting of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development was convened in 2003 by the Japanese Government, UNDP, the Office of the UN Special Adviser on Africa, the Global Coalition for Africa and the World Bank. It broadened the scope for Africa-Asia cooperation, including in education. Between its own grants and co-financing from other sources, the Global Environment Facility, a partnership between UNDP, the UN Environment Programme and the World Bank, directed over US\$800 million during 2003 into environmental protection and sustainable livelihoods for the world's poorest people. UNDP's contribution included a portfolio of projects on such issues as biodiversity, climate change and land degradation.

Around the globe, in these and other initiatives, UNDP gears its activities towards the thread that runs through all eight MDGs: helping countries develop their capacity to develop themselves. As one starting point, we assist governments in reprioritizing their national budgets around the goals. After estimating the costs of reaching the MDGs, Yemen increased spending on education by 25 percent, on health by 56 percent, and on water and sanitation by 66 percent. UNDP expertise is also being used to devise MDG tracking systems. The Government of Albania is setting up an integrated database that will provide the

## RALLYING THE WORLD TO REACH THE TARGETS

The MDGs reflect the needs people must fulfill everywhere to lead free and satisfying lives. Achieving them is everybody's business: presidents and parliaments, community organizations and civil society, local governments and the private sector. As basic tools that can be easily adapted and readily understood, the goals help people determine where they are on the development scale, and plan where they would like to be, from individual villages to entire continents.

In close partnership with other branches of the UN system, UNDP leads a number of research, outreach and advocacy efforts related to the MDGs. These stir broad understanding of the goals as an agenda for solving common concerns, provide practical solutions, and inspire commitment to reaching them on time. Major UNDP-supported initiatives include:

**The Millennium Project:** Accomplishing the MDGs requires first understanding how to reflect them in the mechanisms that mould development, particularly national policies and development strategies. Credible action plans, embedded with national

*2003 Human Development Report: Millennium Development Goals—A Compact Among Nations to End Human Poverty.* The report surveyed all developing countries, and identified those most at risk of missing the MDGs. It outlined a Millennium Development Compact, which sets forth the need for a new global balance between poorer countries improving their governance, and wealthy countries opening markets and providing more aid. Looking ahead to the 2005 review summit, the Millennium Project is now working with governments, international financial institutions and other partners to conduct a series of country-level pilot projects that will look at what each country needs in terms of policies, resources and economic growth to reach the MDGs.

**The Millennium Campaign:** From parliaments to community groups, in countries North and South, the UN's Millennium Campaign is rousing broad-based popular support for the MDGs. It works with constituencies in the North to gather political momentum behind goal eight, which calls for

tions and local authorities in Italy to make the MDGs a theme of the country's biannual October peace march. Over 100,000 people streamed through eight arches emblazoned with the goals, chanting, "There will be no peace until the MDGs are achieved."

In late 2003, the Millennium Campaign geared up its work on national campaigns in developing countries. It is now working with civil society networks across the South to spark public commitment to national policies in line with the first seven MDGs. Simultaneously, a BBC partnership has begun airing television and radio programmes on successful pilot initiatives in Africa and Asia, a project that will soon expand to other regions as well.

**The MDG Reports:** Since reaching any goal requires defining the starting point, UNDP is coordinating UN Country Teams to assist governments in the production of national MDG progress reports, and to convene coalitions of governments, civil society organizations and regional institutions to prepare regional versions.

*We are part of the first generation that can eradicate poverty. Let's refuse to miss this opportunity.*

— Eveline Herfkens, Executive Coordinator, Millennium Campaign

priorities, must chart the course to 2015. Towards this end, the UN's Millennium Project brings together over 150 policy experts, development practitioners and top scholars from around the world to research alternative approaches. Its first major task was to contribute research to UNDP's

increased aid, meaningful debt relief and expanded access to trade and technology. In 2003, the campaign gave presentations to the Cancun trade meeting and the high-level UN session on financing for development. It also joined a network of nearly 1,000 civil society organiza-

Summarizing basic data on each goal, the reports are an overview for policy makers and a tool for more general audiences. They help drive country level advocacy campaigns and inform political debate.

Over 60 country and regional MDG Reports have been published so far,



At Italy's biannual peace march, over 100,000 Italians made the case for the MDGs. The Millennium Campaign worked with civil society and local authorities on the theme: "No Excuse 2015".

and in 2003, UNDP held a series of regional meetings on report preparation that brought in government and civil society representatives from over 100 countries. Starting in 2004, we will more closely align UNDP support for the MDG Reports with our well-known national human development reports, so that the two can reinforce each other through the exchange of information and ideas. While the MDG Reports will remain tailored specifically to the goals, the national human development reports will continue to feature in-depth analysis offering detailed data and policy options on a broad, often provocative range of development issues.

**Africa 2015:** While UNDP launched the Africa 2015 campaign in 2003 to promote all of the goals, we also chose to focus on poverty and HIV/AIDS—two of the continent's

biggest challenges. The epidemic already affects more than 27 million Africans, and is rapidly rolling back years of social and economic achievement. Africa 2015 brings together people who can catch popular attention: celebrities, singers and sports stars, as well as the media and political leaders. Key messages on the fight against HIV/AIDS were splashed across the 2004 Africa Cup of Nations soccer tournament in Tunisia, for example. They appeared on stadium billboards featuring soccer heroes and UNDP Goodwill Ambassadors Ronaldo and Zidane, on the jerseys of ball boys, and on a giant banner presented to the Tunisian President. Radio France Internationale is now partnering with UNDP on a monthly broadcast to popularize the MDGs.

## HARNESSING THE POTENTIAL OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR

Economic growth rests at the core of the MDGs; without it, ending poverty will remain perpetually out of reach. Already, the pursuit of the goals is prompting exploration of new economic resources—including among small- and medium-sized enterprises. Their potential contributions to development have been overlooked, even as they often serve as a primary engine of job creation and domestic commerce.

At the UNDP Administrator's suggestion, the UN Secretary-General in 2003 formed a high-level commission to identify obstacles to domestic private enterprise in developing countries, especially the poorest nations. Chaired by Canadian Prime Minister Paul Martin and former Mexican

President Ernesto Zedillo, and managed by UNDP, the Commission on the Private Sector and Development drew upon the perspectives of business leaders from around the world for a major report in early 2004.

*Unleashing Entrepreneurship: Making Business Work for the Poor* looks at how the business community as a whole can advance development. It highlights the need to open opportunities for the indigenous business that already serve and employ most of the world's poor—from street vendors to car repair shops—and recommends specific actions for governments, development agencies and the private sector itself. Relaxing prohibitive business regulations, easing access to financial services and sourcing goods

locally would be among a series of important first steps.

Given the inextricable links between sustainable development and long-term private sector growth, the potential benefits of releasing the power of local entrepreneurial energies are great, including stronger economies and more vibrant business communities. Consumers at the bottom of the current pyramid who miss out on economies of scale—including the four billion who earn less than \$1,500 a year—would enjoy greater access to higher quality, affordable goods and services. Most importantly, the infusion of jobs and higher incomes could transform many impoverished communities, bringing prosperity into millions of lives.

first reliable numbers on infant and maternal mortality, while Malawi has included MDG indicators in its Social Economic Database, the backbone for monitoring its poverty reduction strategy paper.

UNDP also supports thousands of other development projects clustered around our five practice areas. Our democratic governance practice promotes political participation and accountability, and serves as the foundation for much of the rest of our work. It absorbs 60 percent of our global technical assistance expenditures—UNDP is now the world's largest multilateral provider of governance assistance. Our poverty reduction practice helps countries develop pro-poor policies based on participatory processes, connect the MDGs to national budgets and poverty reduction strategies, and improve MDG monitoring. The goal of our crisis prevention and recovery practice is to link relief and development, while addressing the root causes of disasters and conflicts. Integrating environmental resources management with poverty reduction is central to our energy and environment practice. Through our HIV/AIDS practice, we assist countries as they move the issue to the centre of their national development agendas, support leadership initiatives

and aid in implementing responses to the epidemic.

### AN AGENDA FOR ALL

For UNDP and all the agencies of the UN, the past few years of working on the MDGs have opened room for great optimism. The goals are the most clear-cut and widely accepted set of development priorities the world has ever known.

We can already see the difference they make and the potential they carry, and so despite the tumultuous events of 2003, our resolve to move forward has only grown stronger. Everyday, we witness what happens when the MDGs remain an abstraction. But we can also testify to the tremendous possibilities unleashed by development founded within local realities and dedicated to achieving results.

Our task is now the fulfillment of the MDGs, country by country. Together, UNDP and many other members of the global community are already acting in terms of this progressive human development agenda, available to all. With the MDGs as our guide, we are shaping policies, institutions and infrastructures truly concerned with the welfare of our citizens—and the security and well being of our world.