



August 22, 2008

All Permanent Representatives of Missions to the United Nations

Dear Ambassador,

The Global Call to Action Against Poverty (GCAP), as the world's biggest anti-poverty coalition, welcomes the UN Secretary-General's leadership in calling for 2008 to be a year of 'unprecedented progress for the poorest of the poor,' and his convening with the President of the UN General Assembly the High Level Event on the Millennium Development Goals on September 25th.

The Global Call to Action Against Poverty (GCAP) represents tens of millions of people and thousands of organisations in more than 100 countries. On October 17, 2007, 43.7 million people "Stood Up" in support of the MDGs and against Poverty and Inequality.

In order to ensure that the High Level Event re-energises the MDG process and places the world on a good footing to meet and exceed the MDGs, we urge your Government to strongly support the following.

Delivery on commitments: Specific existing commitments from donor and recipient countries on the MDGs need to be put into action through a human rights-centred approach to the key themes of the MDGs, broadly about poverty, and specifically through health (including child and maternal mortality), education, climate change and the environment, trade, agriculture, water and sanitation, hunger and gender. All commitments must be matched by the funding necessary to deliver them. This requires a reversal of the fall in aid levels, and urgent attention to the quality of aid.

Systemic solutions: MDG action plans must address systemic barriers to achieving and exceeding the MDGs, and to realising rights such as human rights violations which are a cause and a consequence of poverty. These systemic solutions must include investment in agriculture and particularly small-scale sustainable farming, support for women farmers, an increase in available, accessible, acceptable and quality health services, the scrapping of unfair agriculture export subsidies and equal access to basic resources. Vertical solutions such as bednets and school feeding programmes, while commendable, are insufficient to address systemic solutions.

Getting the MDGs back on track: To ensure that MDG action plans work for the poorest people, are achievable, and comply with human rights, they must :

- **Strengthen Government Accountability:** Governments have the primary responsibility for meeting, and where possible exceeding, the MDGs. To ensure this, efforts to achieve the MDGs should be built on the bedrock of legally enforceable human rights obligations, and subject to effective public accountability. All efforts to achieve and exceed the MDGs must address the human rights violations that drive and deepen poverty. They must come with clear benchmarks, and adequate resources for monitoring and evaluation at all levels



- **Advance equal access to human rights and ensure non-discrimination:** All action under the MDGs should prioritise the poorest and most marginalised people. There should be a renewed focus on the need to ensure non-discrimination and advance equality, including gender equality, to ensure that apparent progress does not mask continuing or deepening inequalities. To do so requires accurate data on progress, disaggregated according to internationally prohibited grounds of discrimination.
- **Respect the right to active participation of people in poverty:** The active participation of civil society, and especially people living in poverty, must be guaranteed in the development and delivery of MDG plans, including at the High Level Event on September 25th. Particular attention should be paid to the active participation of the most vulnerable, including women, young persons, older persons, and persons with disabilities.

We urge your Government to engage in open dialogue with your population in the build-up to this High-Level Event and to report back publicly afterwards. We also urge you to engage transparently with your population for the long-term to make sure that any plan of action agreed at the United Nations in New York is effectively implemented in a way that will improve the lives of marginalised people and people living in poverty.

Furthermore, the signatories to this letter call for a summit on MDGs to be held in 2010, with full participation of civil society, to review progress on the MDGs, including the extent to which action under the MDGs is advancing human rights in practice, and to identify a post-2015 agenda.

We would be glad to discuss these recommendations with you or your designate and look forward to your active support for these around the crucial High-Level Event on September 25th.