

Chapter One

People Speak on their State of Well-being

Of course the task will not be easy. But not to do this would be a crime against humanity against which I ask the humanity now to rise up.

– Nelson Mandela





Introduction

"Only when you can find a place where you can put your bottom, can you sit down." A Somali proverb recited by a cattle herder reporting his perceptions of the state of well-being and services.

- Are people finding a place in the development process within their locations, countries and regions?
 - where is the participation of the people and the space for their voices in the entire framework of the MDGs?
- What are people's views about
 - the state of their development?
 - the services and promises of their governments?
 - the state of their basic rights in the context of the Millennium Declaration?
- Are people's freedoms being enhanced or diminished?

In preparation for the September World Summit in New York, ActionAid posed some of these questions to people across the developing world. The answers on how the poor perceive and record the realities they face constitute the 'people's report' to be presented at the summit to an audience of world leaders and others.

In the months of June, July and August 2005, the release of the UN Secretary-General's Report took place, the draft outcome documents were developed and strategies for the UN summit constructed. Meanwhile, 342,225 people from 5,000 villages/settlements in 100 provinces and states across 18 countries came together in small groups in their own villages and locations, to discuss their state of well-

being and development. They reflected on the rights they enjoyed and their access to basic services, including the promises inherent in the MDGs.

The 5,000 villages covering parts of Afghanistan, Pakistan, Nepal, India, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Vietnam, Ethiopia, Senegal, Malawi, Sierra Leone, Kenya, Tanzania, Somalia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Brazil and Guatemala present a large diversity in terms of ecology, culture and social setting. People have reported from areas that face flooding and drought; where particular groups face exclusion and discrimination on the grounds of gender and descent; from communities torn apart by conflicts, and from locations where conflict is an intimate memory and arduous processes of reconstruction are just beginning.

The villages were the venue of the consultations. Together with the location-based groups, the entire exercise had 342,225 participants, which included 153,935 women. If those who did not record their presence were included, an estimated 450,000 persons would have been involved in these discussions. These voices could be considered representing about 9 million persons living in these locations, and contain views of approximately 2 million families.

The methodology has as its base, the premise that it is important in the current context to hear and understand peoples' views and perspectives, rather than engage in surveys that yield much data but serve only to generate controversies in academic ivory towers. As this report will document in the following chapter, such surveys have been available in abundance from across the world, without helping very much to understand the realities of poverty and deprivation. Annexure 1 has a note on methodology.

The present exercise seeks to consolidate people's reflections and reports on the state of their well-being, services and rights, in a manner that:

- encourages discussion and debate
- builds up local points for action
- designs a reality check for decision-makers and civil society organisations.

In these reports lie the collective message from the people, demanding freedom from want and fear, and articulating their hopes for a life of security and dignity. Through their perspectives on livelihoods and income, access to basic services, quality of social infrastructure, and the level of fulfilment of fundamental rights to food, water, health and education, people bring forth current realities of their villages and town settlements. Here the harsh realities of life stand in stark contrast with their aspirations, where a single drought, a mosquito bite, and a few wage less days, could mean a difference between life and death. These are locations where, particularly, for those traditionally excluded from access and opportunity, like the *dalits* and minorities of India, even minor assertions of basic liberties – demanding equal wages, or access to water – can lead to years of social boycott and severe retribution.

For the people, the experience of being consulted and having their opinions recorded on issues of governance, their rights, basic services provided for on health, education, food, water, and so on, was absolutely novel. The September World Summit would have these statements presented as part of the people's voices. This was truly unheard of for the people until now. Never before did such an opportunity come their way. What was hard hitting was that even now when the heads of state and government were proceeding for the September World Summit, where they would be presenting progress reports and debating on the MDGs, that related and mattered to the poor, they were never consulted. The heads of state and government would once again decide on policies after debating on behalf of the poor without even informing them and with the voices of the people neither heard nor represented.

Reports on poverty, hunger and livelihoods

The global epicentre for extreme poverty is the small farm and the wage earning agricultural labour force in rural communities. According to the FAO's Special Programme for Food Security, nearly 70 per cent of the people at risk of hunger and starvation come from this group alone.

People who participated in discussions viewed poverty and hunger as wounds that refuse to heal. If there was any change at all, it was only for the worse. Change was squashing their destinies even as external forces in the name of technology, modernisation and governance invaded their lives. The global market merely sucks the milieu they inhabit. Poverty for them was not merely earning the meagre 'dollar a day' that has become the global benchmark for their condition. Rather, it was a debilitating condition, suffocating their capabilities, and those of their future generations.

San Carlos, Alzatate town, department of Jalapa, Guatemala

San Carlos Alzatate, one of the smallest towns of the department of Jalapa, is 176km from Guatemala City. In Guatemala, Jalapa ranks high among the poorer departments in Guatemala and 93.1 per cent of the population of San Carlos Alzatate is below the extreme poverty¹ line. A well-known historian of the town, Juan Antonio Pérez Gómez, called it 'the town of the 10 hills'.² The first settlers of the Alzatate town were Xinca and Pipil, and then the Poqomam population arrived, with their respective traditions and ways of life. The inhabitants of the town are organised through the Indigenous Community of San Carlos Alzatate, legally constituted since 1946, with its statutes reformed by Governmental Decree 741-90 dated January 29, 1990. According to the 2002 population census conducted by the National Institute of Statistics, the town has 12,207 inhabitants, of which 88.81 per cent speak Castilian.³

Although it is a town located close to the principal city of the department of Jalapa, its economic, social, political and cultural conditions reflect severe poverty, segregation and exclusion. There are no job opportunities and the only income families receive is from the sale of agricultural produce. Production is usually not even enough to meet family needs, leaving families with little or no surplus and hardly any incomes.

A high percentage of the population is illiterate, with women representing 70 per cent of illiterate people. The 2002 census points out that no adolescent in the community has finished his/her secondary and/or high school education due to the lack of educational institutions.

People reported an unrelenting pattern of ‘casualisation’ of work, of small and marginal farmers losing their small patches of land because they no longer provided a viable livelihood. Small patches, without provision of water and other resources, were not enough to provide food for more than a few months.

Small farmers and agricultural workers accustomed to a certain rhythm of production and settled into an accepted relationship of exchange in the local marketplace, report an invasion by forces unseen and unknown. They report that their land has become a terrain where corporations seed their profit calculations; the vast multinationals have displaced them from the local marketplace after buying the produce from the locals at prices over which the

latter have little say. The benevolent government, which was there to hand out a modest subsidy through its local functionary, is now nowhere in sight. It is from the ‘free market’ that sells at extortionate rates that the people now have to buy the implements of their trade and the inputs they need to raise a crop. State services have begun retreating even from the peripheral role they played in their lives.

Survival becomes a struggle for many families unable to obtain enough food. People in over 24 per cent (1,230 of 5,000) of the villages report seeing hunger and starvation deaths as an intimate reality. For others, everyday brings a calculation on which meal to skip. Whether it is the Khar Khan Kach village in Loralai areas of Pakistan, or villages in Kampang Speu province of Cambodia, Kigali Ngeli in Rwanda and Balkh in Afghanistan, poverty can claim its final price at any time. In Bangladesh, peoples’ perceptions from 633 villages in 32 districts indicated strong correlations between poverty deaths and the months that people had to skip

‘Boom time for us is now fear time’

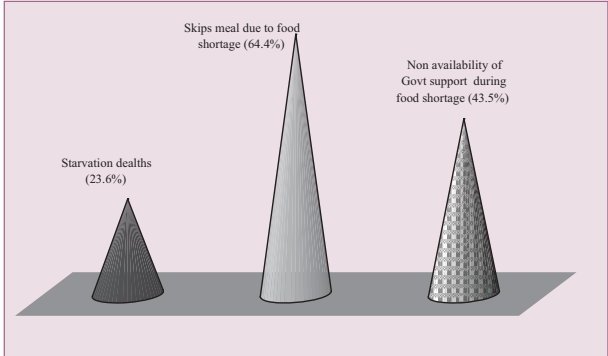
Robin Mtitu has been tilling his land for many years. He remembers times when he had to just grow and sell coffee, days when the coffee marketing season was boom time for the people of Igelehedza village in Njombe district of Tanzania. This was the time when government provided subsidies on inputs. Suddenly some years back, the government decided to stop subsidies, and he started having a hard time buying pesticides and other inputs. He was overjoyed, as also were all farmers in his village, when two European corporations – one from the UK and the other from Germany – arrived at the scene offering subsidies that the government had been compelled to stop. The corporations provided the further incentive of food coupons for the lean summer months when hunger and starvation would be rampant. Little did they know then that the costs of all the implements and food coupons would be deducted from the sale of coffee. Having got all the farmers under their yoke, the corporations started fixing coffee prices.

Prior to the coming of two companies, the price the growers obtained for their coffee was \$1 per kg. It is now half that. This is a local manifestation of all the difficulties of life and livelihood posed by the global commodity price crash.

“Boom time for us is now fear time,” people say. They have to supplement coffee farming with other forms of farming and labour when available. The two companies make huge profits. They have registered themselves as Tanzanian crop marketing companies, enjoying the preferences normally denied to foreign companies. From the poverty-stricken grower in Africa to the consumer in the affluent West, the companies have the entire chain sewn up.

Robin blames his government, which he says neglected the urgent need of establishing an effective crop marketing system that would serve the needs of the small grower.

Graph 1: Hunger across the developing world (villages reporting in %)



meals.

Hunger deaths and starvation are grim symbols of the harshness of peoples’ existence. An even more painful reality is the decision to skip meals. In 64 per cent of the villages covered, people reported they had to skip meals to make ends meet. Families sometimes even skip two meals when work is not available, or in times of seasonal shortages when, having run out of food stored from the harvest, there is no option but to go hungry.

Whether it was the villages of Cambodia, Bangladesh, Nepal, Somalia, Ethiopia, Tanzania, India, Nigeria or Sierra Leone, people reported skipping meals. In Afar Region of Ethiopia, over 48 per cent of the households (with an average family size of 4.8, of 601 randomly selected from five Kebeles) reported food shortages, which they mentioned was aggravated in harsher months. In Pakistan, villages from the Loralai Region highlighted the harshness of agriculture, which being

countries, mentioned that they engage in four main strategies in their bid to overcome food shortages. They engage in manual labour and/or non-farm work, if these are available. Alternatively, they take loans and sell off productive assets to meet needs. One-third to half the number of the households reported that they engage in manual labour, depending on specific need. Seeking non-farm work when it is available is frequent. A large number of families take loans on high interest and soon are sucked into an endless and vicious circle of indebtedness. This is another reported survival measure that casts a long shadow over the future of these families. In many cases, families sell their productive assets. The micro study on the pro-poor services in Ethiopia by the Poverty Action Network Ethiopia, randomly selected 3829

Running on empty: Ksisi villagers spend long nights on hollow stomachs

“For more than ten years now we have been having only one meal a day, but the year 2004 was worse,” narrates Mateo Jummane of Ksisi village in the Ruangwa district of Tanzania. “I mean in the summer of 2004 the families of Ksisi village could not even afford one meal a day. In nearly every family in the village, there was a child suffering from chronic hunger and malnutrition, and we have lost children in hundreds to this slow killer. Funerals are the order of the day in the village now. Left with no chance, people have resorted to eating roots and wild plants and, often, toxic tubers that kill more. The food situation has deteriorated so much that we have to go to nearby refugee camps to ask for food”.

“All this is due to poor government policies of food storage and distribution. This famine is a manmade disaster. We are running on empty and there is not much longer we can hold out.”

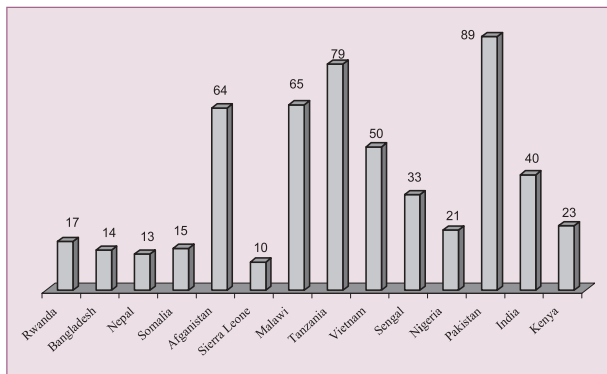
Chronicles of Chhorn Phaly and her son, Nak, in Cambodia

Chhorn Phaly has suffered ceaseless hardships from childhood and sees little chance of respite now. She makes Chhneang (baskets) and her husband works as a farmer in the rainy season. From 1990, Chhorn has been tending to a son called Nak, born without fingers on his right hand. This means that she had to work still harder to generate sufficient family income to feed her son and send him to school. She wanted to ensure that he enjoyed at least sufficient good nutrition and did not end up illiterate and uneducated, deprived of any chances that may come his way.

Chhorn Phaly has to walk many kilometres carrying bamboo on her shoulder. She often takes a whole day to return home. When she comes back, she has to net fish from the nearby pond for cooking it with water lily and other wild vegetables, to ensure that they have the energy to see through another day. Her husband can make 2000 riels (\$0.50) per day but sometimes there is no work for him at all. Coupled with this, he also suffers from chronic sickness.

With conditions of livelihood and subsistence deteriorating for the family, Nak, barely out of grade four, decided to go to Phnom Penh to beg for money, even though his parents and teacher pleaded with him to change his mind. Now Nak lives in Phnom Penh, a nameless statistic among the several homeless. He visits home every week or two, bringing with him up to 10,000 riels (\$2.50). Sometimes he brings sickness too from the hard life of the city where he enjoys little nutrition and no protection against the elements. Nak wishes to be a technician, but having sacrificed his opportunities to gain an education, life seems an endless tunnel for him.

Graph 2: Percentage of villages reporting starvation deaths



entirely monsoon-dependent, did not often generate enough food or employment for them.

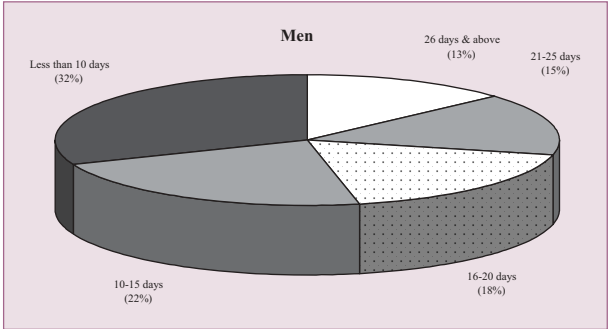
Small and marginal farmers, who demographically comprise the single largest occupational group in all these

households. Of these, to meet food needs, 15 per cent sold productive assets.

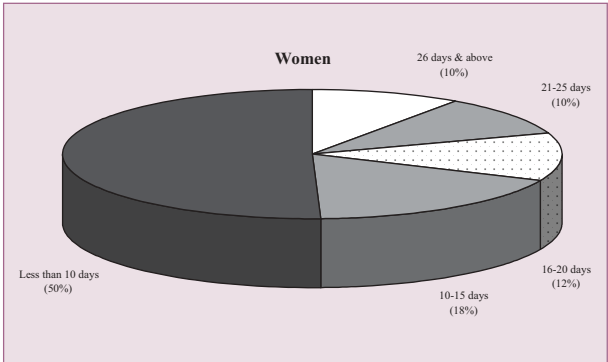
Small and marginal farmers and the landless – both women and men – continuously discussed the problems of non-availability of work and lack of opportunities to earn a living. In majority of the settlements where work is not available, a large number increasingly have to face days of hunger. 83 per cent of the marginal farmers and landless reported that work is not available throughout the year.

In nearly 50 per cent of the locations, agricultural and wage work was available for less than half the month. In nearly 30 per cent of the locations, this work was available for less than a third of the month. Only 12 per cent of the villages mentioned month and year round availability of work and hence these people enjoyed the human and material security it offers.

Graph 3: Monthly availability of agricultural and other wage work for men (all villages)



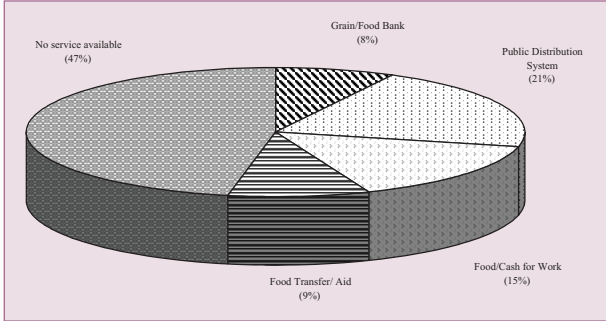
Villages reporting availability of work in month for women working as landless people and agricultural workers



Micro-studies in some countries, such as the one conducted among rural landless workers in parts of Andhra Pradesh in India, not only confirm the above trend, but also present another very disturbing picture – the number of wage days available is actually falling, from a third of the year to a level closer to a fourth. Similarly, reports from 14 districts of mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar (including the twin islands of Unguja and Pemba) highlight that very few residents of the 357 villages where discussions were held, had three meals a day; most scrape together only one meal a day. In 2004 alone, 189 from 357 villages reported starvation deaths, since work was simply not available for them to meet their food needs. People from 93 per cent of these villages said they never earned even the statutory minimum wage of Tanzania Shillings 4,800 (approximately \$50) per month.

Safety nets, in the form of state welfare and social security measures to meet the needs of families in months of food shortage, are minimal in their spread and effectiveness. Out of the villages involved in the

Graph 4: Support services in months of food shortage (all)



study, 47 per cent had people who reported not having any access to support services in general and specifically in the lean months, when needed the most.

A public distribution system, providing food at slightly subsidised prices for those most in need, is available only in about 21 per cent of the villages. It is in the villages in India, Vietnam, Bangladesh and Brazil that this system is mentioned to be most effective. 15 per cent of the villages mentioned the availability of drought

Hunger tales of Lebigin in Somalia

"Three of my family have already died of starvation and the rest are barely surviving," says Ahmed Abdi Dualeh. Ahmed is 77 years old with 15 children and two wives. The family own 25 heads of sheep and two camels. Ahmed reports that his family is very poor and none of his children is able to work. In the years gone by, when the family owned 300 sheep and 6 camels, life was better. However, much of the livestock was lost in the drought of 2004, because of the lack of pasture and diseases caused by hunger. The family wonders, even as it appeals for the emergency supply of food, water and health care, whether they will ever be able to regenerate the livestock that alone can guarantee them independence and livelihood security.

Seynab Saleban in Bilcilweyso village in Somalia has a similar tale. She has three children and a husband who is mentally disturbed. He could not take the loss of 50 heads of sheep due to the drought and thereby the loss of all semblance of security for his family.

At the Nasiye base, Nageeya Hamud's mother sets out to surrounding nomadic households to solicit the help that alone can see her family of six through for a few days. There are no support services, health centres or schools in the villages and the family cannot move there. In any the case, the father gets no work in the village and the 19 heads of sheep the family owns are pitifully inadequate to yield any income.

schemes such as cash or food for work; 8 per cent had food transfers while 7 per cent had grain banks. Overwhelmingly, the poor report that the infrastructure of social protection is weak.

In India, the figures on food subsidies and transfers show a higher coverage. Ration shops cover, as reported by the people surveyed, nearly 48 per cent of the villages. In Brazil, Vietnam, Somalia and Seirra Leone also this number, though modest, is significant. In Vietnam, for example, subsidised food supplies are available from government departments in 16 per cent of the villages who reported. There are interesting cases of assertion, with the India having the most widespread and notable one. Here, weak and withdrawing government services are encountering stiff resistance by civil society campaigns to institute employment guarantee schemes, food provisioning, midday meals in schools, and other welfare programmes. Building pressure from both the people and the media and with interventions from the judiciary, the Right to Food Campaign in India has been able to institutionalise the

midday meals scheme in all government-funded primary schools. The Indian Parliament recently responded to pressure from the grassroots by passing a bill that will guarantee employment for 100 days for every family that needs it, in the 100 poorest districts of India. The wage fixed is \$1.30 (or INR60 under current exchange rate) per day. Funding sources for the employment guarantee are now being assessed. In particular, the debate is on whether funds should be raised through fresh taxation, or by redirecting existing subsidies.

Villages that had no services were obviously located in places where access was very difficult. In villages where the services were available, communities – depending upon gender, caste and economic power – enjoyed differential access. In effect, in the perception of people, the poorest had the least access to the minimal services offered by the State.

While discrimination is often not openly evident or discussed in village groups for fear of reprisals, people from as many as 20 per cent of the villages reported some form of discrimination. Nepal and India documented cases of discrimination based on caste, where different forms and manifestations of social discrimination and 'untouchability' were noted. No fewer than 80 different forms of untouchability practices in both public and private spheres were reported against *dalits* in India. These range from untouchability based practices in tea stalls, in drinking water utensils, in public distribution shops and post offices, to practices that prevented access in schools, in health facilities, and the food supply system. Thus, in spite of the socio-economic vulnerability of dalits, which has a direct bearing on their dependence on the Public Distribution System and other such schemes, the data from ActionAid International India's survey shows that they are hugely disadvantaged when it comes to accessing the same. Only 15 per cent of the PDS outlets were located in dalit hamlets (dalits in most parts of India stay in distinct hamlets, and there is a physical segregation), as against 85 per cent in the upper caste hamlets.⁴

**Only the forms of discrimination change, not our lives:
The story of Muthaya**

Muthaya is a dalit worker in R Vegadesapuram village in Thuthakudi district of Tamil Nadu, which according to the human development indicators is one of the more developed states of India, according to human development indicators. The same state has seen a history of discrimination against dalits, and frequent atrocities against these communities.

Muthaya, 74 years old now makes match frames, and earns up to \$5 a month. In a long life that has included rearing four sons and a daughter, he worked a large part as bonded labour, ultimately standing up for his rights and freedom. He says he has seen change in his lifetime in the lot of the *dalits*, but they are very meagre. His life in poverty has never changed. His sons and daughters continue to carry the burden of history and yoke of poverty. His four sons, all married, continue to work in match works earning meagre sums. His daughter is a casual agricultural worker, whose daily labours fetch considerably less than the statutory minimum wage. Like their father, they spend their lives toiling for someone else's aggrandisement, with no end in sight to their state of poverty.

In most of these villages, the needy are left to fend for themselves; they solicit food from better off relatives elsewhere, or just beg when acute food scarcity hits them. One of the most frequently mentioned survival strategies of people in these conditions was migration in search of food and dignity.

The poor often chose to take on the entire responsibility for their condition. Responses from the group discussions frequently reflected this sense of self-deprecation. They have a low self-esteem and accept it as their fate – it does not matter – since life cannot

Dying village

Tuli Village in Masasi district of Tanzania some years back had 500 households. Now there are 150 left.

Severe hunger has forced families to leave the village and join the rootless urban immigrants. Those staying back report that they subsist on less than 50 US cents a day. Women work 16 hours to supplement family incomes. There are no government support programmes.

be any better or kinder for them. According to them, all these years of hardship and being able to gain status in society, have only proved that they are not competent to serve the world effectively and efficiently in order to ensure themselves a decent livelihood and living, from the beginning.

The citizens' report cards in Ethiopia indicate that 10 per cent of the rural households in five sub-regions were forced to move out. Farming communities are not insured against the loss of productive assets. This leads to hunger and in many cases, forced migration. In the 3,829 households surveyed in Ethiopia, 51 per cent reported having lost livestock and 68 per cent had suffered serious crop losses, while 15 per cent mentioned selling productive assets to meet food needs. Among an estimated 100,000 homeless street dwellers in the Indian capital of Delhi, nearly 20 per cent beg, and of these 60 per cent are from families who have been pushed out of rural areas, where they could not meet their basic food needs⁵

People from nearly 64 per cent of the villages reported destitution that varied with seasons. Welfare and safety nets included pensions for widows and the aged, disabled, and poorest – like the Antyodaya Anna Yojana of India. Some countries offered crop and other insurance schemes.

However, most countries and areas did not have accessible or meaningful social security and welfare provisions in place. In a few countries that did report social safety nets and schemes, people in half the villages mentioned that these did not extend to more than 20 per cent of the eligible population. An almost universal sentiment by all the villages was that the safety nets were nowhere able to meet the basic needs of the people. The better off invariably cornered the social security programmes.

In countries that reported maximum access to these schemes, the amount involved ranged from \$3 to \$5 a month. This was inadequate to cover basic provisioning for even a few days. In their design, operation and intent, these schemes did not seem targeted at meeting the needs of people. What more could be expected when there never was any consultation with or participatory input from the intended beneficiaries.

Reports on the problems of agriculture, the availability of work, and the state of welfare and social security record the livelihood crisis the poor are facing. Where enough work is not available for families to meet their basic needs, frequent and recurring tradeoffs are made on costs, education, gender of child, and medical treatment. However, there is not much room for tradeoffs. Where all else fails and financial ruin, hunger, and illness seem inevitable, suicides are often the only recourse.

All else failed for us.....the pain of Bangi Iswaramma

Bangi Iswaramma (25), the widow of Bangi Narayanappa, a 28-year-old dalit in Dadireddy Palli village of Anantapur district, Andhra Pradesh in India, is a living witness of corporate farming and privatisation process in the agricultural sector.

Narayanappa, a small farmer possessing 2.5 acres of dry land, committed suicide leaving behind his two small children with Iswaramma. Due to repeated failure of rainfall and unavailability of government support as loans or subsidies, he was forced to borrow Rs50,000 from different local moneylenders at an exorbitant interest rate of 36% per annum. All his hopes revolved around the rains, which failed again. He was unable to repay the loan. The moneylenders started making rounds of his home, which was a very humiliating experience for him. Unable to bear the burden of indebtedness, he consumed pesticide and committed suicide on 7 March 2003.

Iswaramma describes her life after the suicide of her husband: "I remained in my in-laws' house along with my two children. Due to old age, they found it difficult to feed us. I am now forced to work as a maid in households of upper caste people to feed my two children. The school where my daughter studies provides the children a midday meal. She feeds my son during daytime when I am not at home. Perhaps this is our fate.

"On the one hand, Iswaramma curses her fate, but at the same time, she gathers all her courage and plans for her future. She only hopes that some philanthropist will come by one day and help her repay the loan. While she works in a household as a maid, she also intends to join a self-help group and use the revolving money to start vending vegetables. At present, her monthly income is only Rs150 to Rs200 a month. She gets depressed often and that affects her health. But she is determined to carry on with life.

In no villages was land redistribution taken up in recent times. This, despite the fact that land redistribution is part of the official policy in several countries, especially in South Asia. Where it has been undertaken, it has remained in the margins of official policy and efforts

do not go beyond redistribution of government wasteland and common property resources. Efforts in such cases have not questioned the control and consolidation of land in the hands of large landowners. Small holders continue to be denied their rights over their livelihoods.

Will my future generations ever get to live a life of some ease?

In Nepal, Suntali and her husband never had land or education. Their only recourse was labour, which was sporadic, uncertain and ill paying. Chronic hunger was a part of their lives. When Suntali gave birth to a son, her husband, Chandra Bahadur, decided to go to India in search of work. There was he thought, a chance of getting regular work in India.

That was 18 years ago. Bahadur was never seen or heard of again. With a three-month baby, Suntali went to work as a wage labourer. Earnings being irregular, she started cutting down trees in the surrounding forests, much as the men did. With all the hard work, she managed to send her son to school and he actually went through till class seven before dropping out. But patriarchy is a backbreaking burden, she says. For all the limited reward she earned for her years of toil, the village elders suspected her earnings came through prostitution.

Khedual, the son who dropped out of school after class seven, now works as agricultural worker. Work is seasonal and uncertain. He too may leave for India at some stage. Suntali wonders whether or any succeeding generation of her family will enjoy a life free of hunger.

When there have been occasions where the government has redistributed land in the past, powerful landowners, in connivance with corrupt officials, have attempted to subvert the implementation of the policy, it was mentioned.

Peoples' reports from various countries testify to the growing concentration of land in the hands of a few, on the one hand, and a growing population of rural landless, on the other. These reports indicate a reversal of the land redistribution agendas followed – in word more than deed – in more than 50 countries across the world, in the effort to create land markets that will facilitate the consolidation of land. Such programmes ascribe to the poor, the marginal farmers, small holders and landless, the role of eking out a living by labouring on vast farms created by land consolidation, or force

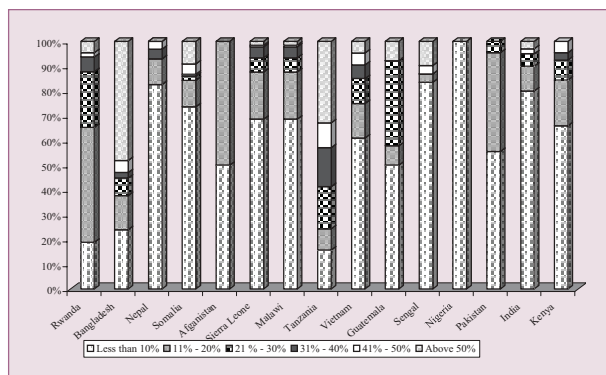
them to migrate to occupations in the secondary or tertiary sectors. The process pays little attention to the fact that, deprived of the security that the small patch offers, people join the utterly unorganised sector of workers, where they are completely deprived of the protections of law and the State, deprived of the option of tilling their land in situations of extreme adversity.

Securing social and economic rights is a distant dream for people. Yet it is a strong need asserted universally by both women and men. The common retort is that even though governments ignore us, as humans we need health, education and food rights.

Reports on rights of women

People from 51 per cent of the villages report that women own land. In a vast majority of these villages, fewer than 30 per cent of the households have a woman owning land. When women report ownership of land, what is most frequently reported is joint titles and ownership.

Graph 5: Percentage of women owning land in villages



Reports from the villages tell us that in 77 per cent of the total villages across 18 countries, households headed by women do not get even minimal welfare support or protection in any form – food transfers, financial support, cash pensions or any other.

While some countries have pension schemes and others have policies for financial transfers, these have a very small coverage. They do not serve the need of women and both the amount and coverage are very low. In India, for example, where the Widow Pension Scheme is in operation for decades, 64 per cent of the

reporting villages confirmed that benefits under the scheme were being received by some widows in their village. However, the amount given as support was very low and coverage very narrow. In more than 75 per cent of the villages, the widow pension scheme covered less than 30 per cent of the eligible households. Once again the poorest were usually last to get access.

Table 1: Widow pension scheme in India: A peoples' picture

Percentage of eligible households in a village covered by the widow pension scheme	No. of villages
Below 10 per cent	219
11–20 per cent	426
21–30 per cent	155
31–40 per cent	79
41–50 per cent	43
51–60 per cent	29
61–70 per cent	46
71–80 per cent	14
81–90 per cent	20
Above 90 per cent	16
Total	1047

Patterns of availability of work reflect the deeply embedded structure of patriarchy and discrimination. In over 47 per cent of the villages, women report that either no work is available, or if there is work, it is for less than 10 days a month. In another 17 per cent of the villages, work is available for women on an average for 10 to 15 days. Women from across the world reported a constant struggle for livelihoods, which they see as a manifestation of the control men have on their lives.

In drier areas and especially during droughts, when the supply of jobs is less, women find employment with great difficulty. Especially when it is scarce and more intensive, work is considered a male preserve.

Women mention that not only do they have to struggle to get work, but they also get lower wages. In nearly 70 per cent of the villages covered, women reported not getting as much money as men for common agricultural operations.

The reality is even harsher in a third of the 4,400 villages where women get 50 per cent less wages than men for identical work. In each country and location, women get lower wages for similar work. The hours of work they

Food security in Brazil: a constant struggle for Venancia

Lack of jobs is one of the main issues reported by the indigenous communities in Brazil. This is a constant factor in their lives, which is aggravated during increasingly frequent droughts. With job opportunities drying up, other problems like lack of food crop up, and people invariably have to depend on the incomes of retired people or from government grants.

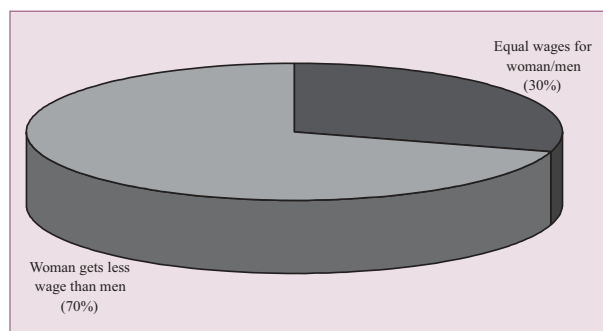
Venancia is a 60-year-old woman from the community of Mandacaru, Pernambuco, located in the semi-arid region of North-east Brazil. Venancia never learned to read or write. "I don't even know how to sign my name." Her livelihood depends on the land, which yields little. "It is not sufficient to eat all year long," she says.

She plants beans and corn, but plagues destroyed all her crops in 2004. The land is rocky and hard, and drought a recurrent threat. Despite an effort to adopt an innovative technology of rain-water collection, she is assured of water for only five months of the year, and that too, only for drinking, cooking and for the small potato crop she raises around her house. The fields on which she tries to raise a crop depend entirely on rainfall. And when the water in her tank dries, she has to buy water, paying the equivalent of \$36 each time the tank is refilled.

To meet her food needs, she puts in the occasional day's work gathering beans in the neighbourhood. "Right now we were at the fields collecting the beans," she told the group. "We stopped for the meeting and we will return presently. I do this here and there and in return people pay me with beans." When it is dry and there are no beans to collect, Venancia searches for other jobs. The two sons that live with her do the same. The daily wage earned is between \$2.50 and \$3, below the minimum wage. She is able to find these daily jobs only once or twice a week. Her other income comes from government grants, because one of her grandsons is at school. This grant is around \$32 for the year. Though meagre, it is essential for assuring the basic needs of the family. Venancia's greatest anxiety is that this grant may cease. Then her family would be hard pressed to meet its basic needs.

put in caring for children, adults and the old and infirm are not ascribed a value, and are treated essentially as unpaid labour. In a third of all locations, women earn half of what men earn, and they have less work available. In some of the Baloch villages in Pakistan, the concept of payment for women simply does not exist.

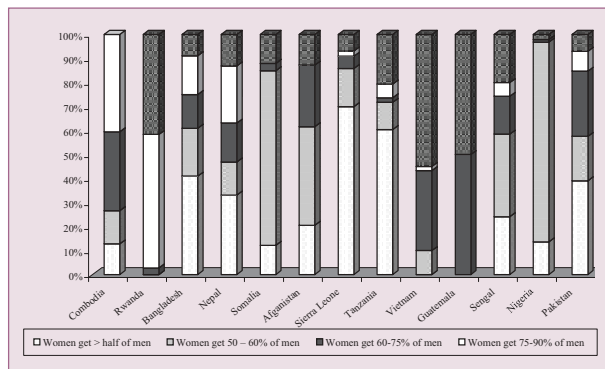
Graph 6: Wage disparity between women and men (all villages)



Peoples' reports and testimonies surfacing from the 18 countries speak powerfully of the discrimination faced by women, and its deepening in the context of poverty, when the roles of rendering care to the family and bearing the burden of domestic chores gives them few opportunities to do anything else. Women's stories from each location illustrate how with each drought, more women have to solicit help from neighbours or enter the vast army of mendicancy. With each illness in the family, the role of rendering care is taken up by women, and with each birth, there is the role of nurture involved. Each basic service that fails to deliver, and every privatisation measure which curtails access to the essentials for the poor, intensifies the woman's responsibilities. Whether it is the distance travelled to collect drinking water or fuel wood, or the extra hours put in to tend to ailments and other debilities within the family, every additional responsibility only adds to the reduction of one half of humanity to the role of serving the needs of others. As reported from the villages, on an average, women work nearly 30–40 per cent more than men do.

These stories of women illustrate the challenge of being mothers, daughters, wives and companions, apart from being instruments of social reproduction and breadwinners. A poor record of support from the state, in this context of social disadvantage multiplied by cultural prejudices, is evident in the peoples' reports and testimonies.

Graph 7: Women's wage rate compared to men (all villages)



One of the dimensions of deep-rooted patriarchy is violence against women. As revealed in the discussions, violence takes many shapes, both in the domestic arena and outside: rapes, assault, physical abuse and battering. Strong political and cultural medicines can remove these social evils.

No land, little work

Jamal Gual is one of the 8 children of Gurban, and the only one who works in the family. She is from Pul Barak, Sholagarah village in Balkh province of Afghanistan. The family does not have any land and gets work during the season of work only, where she earns up to 600Afs or about \$12 a month. She does not own any land. No different from other women in her village who own no land.

Patriarchy manifests itself in other forms too, which are equally dismal for women, particularly the young. In Nepal, young girls and widows are subject to the worst of human trafficking; it is estimated the 12,000 women are illicitly transported every year into neighbouring India for prostitution. Village reports from India reveal that women, particularly from the *dalit* and other backward castes, are more likely to be picked up for trafficking if their families are in economic distress. In other forms of caste-based prostitution, women from specific socially disadvantaged castes are handed over to the ritual temple traditions of Mathammas and Yellamas as temple prostitutes. In most of the world, the face of poverty is that of a woman.

Concentration of wealth is a particularly strong feature of social structures – originating from land property concentration in colonial and feudal times, and

manifesting equally strongly in the neo-liberalised market economy. With women being largely outside the formal economy, and involved in household and social reproduction, they have been completely denied the benefits of asset ownership. They continue to remain marginalised as the neo-liberal pattern of growth has been grafted on to the older oppressive structures.

My own life took a beating – Oun Phun

Along a meandering gravel road 15 km from Phsar Chouk is located Stock Thlok village of Kompat province of Cambodia. A broken cottage that barely affords protection from weather belongs to Oun Phun. Now 45 years old, she got married in 1984 to a man named Oun Sok, then 45 years old. They have four children aged between 9 and 20. The third child is a daughter. Her three older children were able to study till grade 2 and 3 only. Now, all of them have dropped out of school.

When he has nothing to do, Oun Sok either gambles or drinks with other villagers. When he comes back home, he invariably ends up picking up quarrel, and beating his wife and children. Such violence happens in Oun Phun's family almost every day. She reveals that because of his addiction to alcohol and gambling, her husband has sold the family's 25-acre rice field. Since the family can no longer rely on him. The whole burden of sustaining it falls on her.

We were once a full family; A family from Busia District, Western Province, Kenya

She trudges towards the low stool with the pain of her eighty years. Her name she says is **Josephine Juma**, an old widow for ten years now, formerly a co-wife, mother and grandmother in an impoverished family in Busia district, Western Province of Kenya. She depends on her aging co-wife **Mathelida Oketch** for food, shelter, clothing and other amenities. 'That used to be my house,' she says, pointing to some rough mound of earth and grass in a corner of the compound. There is a story behind the collapse of the structure. It almost buried alive the old lady and her five grandchildren. Villagers still marvel at how they cheated death on that fateful day.

'I only dislocated my backbone,' the old lady says as though this was by itself something good. Their plight moved the villagers to put up some makeshift shelter for the houseless family after the near-fatal incident. Government came in the form of a village elder shortly after the incident and pledged to address the family's plight but has never been seen ever since.

She owns about two acres of land, which has come to her due to the deaths of all her sons and from which she earns part of her living. 'People come and pay me Kshs50 and I show them where to dig for a season,' She is too old to cultivate the land herself. 'Instead of digging where I showed

them, people dig the whole garden throughout the year for their 50 shillings,' she laments bitterly. I am too old and infirm to stop them,' she says with a moving helplessness.

There are other people in her family, but then they are in circumstances no better than her own: all widows, powerless women whose men, both husbands and sons, were dead.

There is **Margaret Adhiambo**, a daughter-in-law whose husband died in 2002. She has three of her own children and two of her late brother's that depend on her for their basic needs. Her living she earns from casual garden work which amounts to non-stop physical digging from 6a.m. to 10a.m. each morning. This earns her Kshs50 per day from which she and her dependents meet their daily needs. Her house collapsed. The local government in the person of the local councillor was prompt in promising to put up a replacement for her, but forgot as soon as he walked out of the compound and ever since then, she, like her old mother-in-law, lives with her dependents in a structure constructed for her by well-wishers. And she hopes the family's circumstances do not make them fall sick, for she dreads the thought of not being in a position to spend money for medical attention if such a calamity was to befall them. It has happened before and the person who bailed the family out was a kind-hearted Community Health Worker who lives nearby. As for her dependents, they in generating the family income by earning, having dropped out of school for lack of school uniform and inability to pay annoying school fees.

Then there is **Florence Akoth**, a grand daughter of the old widow. A school dropout in class two for lack of fees, she sees her three children replicate her own miserable life. The young ones attend school interminably due to inability to pay levies on desks and food and lack of uniform. Florence's rough look is in striking contrast to her relatively young age of 31 years. She is a widow, having lost her husband in 2002 due to AIDS-related complications. Her husband's people chased her away shortly after the husband's burial, telling her to go and 'die where you came from,' as they picked all conceivable property off her. She found refuge in her late father's compound where she lives today with her three children, balancing between life as a vulnerable PLWHA and as the sole earner for her family. She gets her anti retroviral therapy (ART) from Busia District Hospital, though there are numerous occasions when she skips the medication due to lack of bus fare to the hospital, which costs her a princely sum of Kshs200. Her three children, Roseline, Brian and Stephen have resigned to a bleak future. For neither do they see their ailing mother in a position to raise the money needed at school for levies and to buy school uniform nor to even stay long enough to see them through the roughness of life. Their immediate worry however, remains the question of how to deal with the massive hunger at home.

Meanwhile their grandmother's caregiver **Mathelida Oketch** is herself weakening due to age. She is 70 years old and knows that it will not be long before she is also in need of help. Her four sons are dead. HIV/AIDS has claimed their lives. All her daughters-in-law ran away soon after their husbands' deaths, probably to get married elsewhere. So goes on the existence of a family whose way of living can barely place any claim to the title 'life'.

Reports and views on education

During the village discussions, education was considered an important service. Despite hardships, families reported efforts to send children, especially boys, to school when they could manage the costs.

People reported a number of important concerns on education and the rights of children. Important concerns were availability, accessibility and affordability of education, and relevance of education for employment.

People of 68 per cent of the villages surveyed reported that primary schools were located within the boundaries of the village, and children did not have to travel extra distances to access primary education. Where these schools were located away, distance and ease of access (including transportation) were important factors determining enrolment. In over 10 per cent of the villages, children had to walk over a kilometre and half to reach primary school.

Rabiatu Umaru's Education in Ungwaisa, Nigeria

"Rabiatu Uraru, 10-year-old daughter of Mallam Umaru Isa. She lives with her parents at Arugaba Ungwa Isa. Her village doesn't have a school and she has to trek more than one hour to reach the school located in Tako. This distance discourages her from school. Now she is looking forward to get married. Marriage will give them some kind of respect in the community. She also wants to be respected as a married woman. "Girls in her community are brought up for marriage and household chores", she says.

Secondary schools are in a majority of cases located away from the villages. In over 71 per cent of the cases, schools are located away from the village, and for nearly 27 per cent of the villages, the distance was more than 3 km away. These are difficult for children to access and in many instances, unaffordable for families.

In a number of the countries, primary education was free, supported by the State. However, when questions of affordability of education were raised, various other costs were flagged. These included the costs of school dress, books and other material, and travel. At the same time, given that children in most villages are

The entire family contributes to send the boys to school

The Yalchacti Community in the Department of Verapaz, Guatemala, has about 54 families and 330 inhabitants. It is 40km from the town of Chisec. The conditions of this isolated community are poor, and infrastructure development virtually non-existent. There is one water supply source, which families find highly contaminated. Some families have opted for piped water from an oil company, which is also polluted. There are continuous health problems and ailments fuelled by water contamination and air pollution from the oil company. Both the health centre and secondary school are located in Chisec. The primary school is located across the river, and does not serve any meals (that being one of the proposals of the community).

To find any job is difficult. There are no places of work, and no farms within a reasonable distance that would hire labourers from the community.

Domingo Cas plants beans and corn, twice a year when possible. His entire family works, including his seven sons, and a daughter who is now married. Since his land is on flat surface, he gets more crop than others do. With the minimum surplus, he is able to buy soap, sugar and a few other things. The surplus also enables Domingo to send his older sons, 'patajos', to study to beyond primary school.

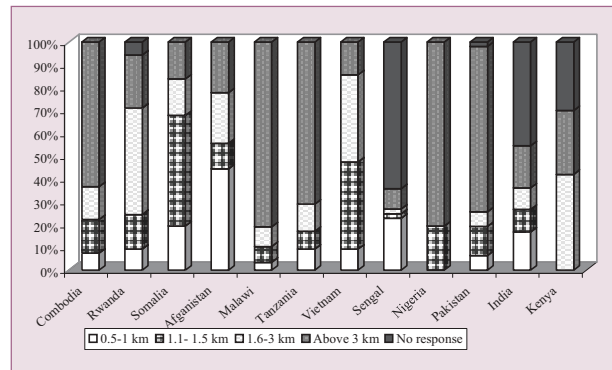
The entire family works from Mondays to Fridays, and they go to Chisec only on Saturdays when the sons are given 45 quetzals (around \$6) for transportation and food. If they study, the boys believe, they will get a chance to do more things in life. In keeping with the tradition, the girl did not study, nor did Cas think about it then.

wageworkers, or contributors to the work burden involved in the sustenance of their homes and farms, there is a large potential loss for the family involved in sending them to school.

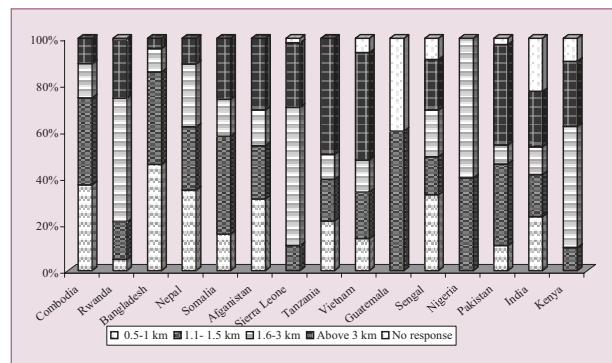
People in 71 per cent of the villages reported that there were children in their villages working for wages, and contributing to family incomes. Particularly during difficult times such as drought, or in cases of adverse family conditions, children worked, often taking responsibilities of families with their elders.

From 56 per cent of the villages, groups opined that education was not affordable, given the costs incurred in one form or another. In each location, reports outlined how children have had to drop out due to circumstances in the family.

Graph 8: Distance of secondary school from village (all villages)



Graph 9: Distance of primary school from village (all villages)



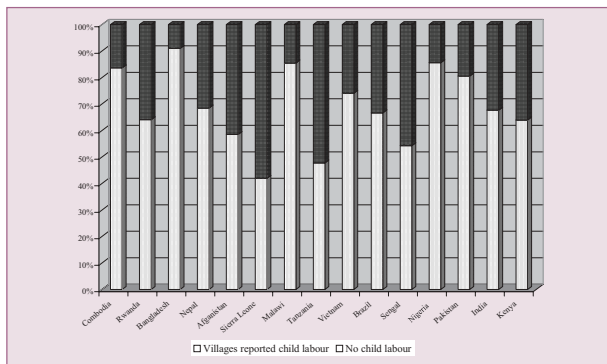
In this context, girls face more difficulty. In nearly 87 per cent of the villages, there are girls of school-going age who have not been enrolled. The target for achieving gender parity in primary education has already been missed by a wide margin.

Girls also have to face sexual harassment. Even parents' fear of some form of harassment keeps girls out of school. In many cases, investment in the education of girls is seen as providing no returns to the family, as after marriage, the girl ceases to be a member of the family and hence it is better to have her now as a working asset.

People in more than 50 per cent of the villages reported that they were not satisfied with the education services. The reasons varied. While people in 67 per cent of the villages said that teachers came to work regularly and their children attended school daily, they also said that the quality of teaching aids and school infrastructure

needed to be improved. In Ethiopia, for instance, two-thirds of the areas surveyed reported acute drinking water scarcities in schools.

Graph 10: Villages/locations reporting child labour



Tears, tobacco farms or death in Tanzania

Shabani Juma of a village in Tanzania has a plaintive story to narrate. "On January 7, 2005 my father told me to stop going to school, and instead work on the tobacco farm. I did not obey him because I was of the opinion that school was more important than tobacco farming. When I refused to stop going to school, my father told me to leave school and work on the farm or be killed."

Shabani was in class seven when his father asked him to stop. Juma Shabani, the father, says: "What can a worker's son do? Ten years since the village school was built, no one has gone beyond primary to secondary school. Moreover, the cost of uniforms and educational material is too high. I would rather earn whatever money I can from tobacco and buy food for myself and my family."

With under-funding being the norm in the education sector, school infrastructure is poorly developed. With governments in retreat, communities are expected to contribute to the upkeep of school buildings and infrastructure. In one of the locations, there was even an attempt to compel people to contribute to building schools. People responded by making 'voluntary' community contributions, beyond the expectations of the law.

Only 40 per cent of the primary and secondary schools have toilets for girls; the remainder do not provide access within the school premises or even at a reasonable distance. This was one of the most frequently cited concerns, preventing families from sending their girl children to school.

Vietnam's Ly Thien Kiem chooses work

Kiem is a twelve-year-old girl whose father died six years back. Her severely challenged mother was alone to raise three children. Selling lottery tickets, the mother found that she could not safeguard her meagre daily earnings. She had to choose to stay at home and make beads as an alternate source of livelihood.

The Red Cross offered Kim 5000 dong a year as scholarship for studies, but she has had to stop at class four, afraid that her mother's earnings will not enough to support the family.

"With the food left over from the night we have the morning meal. I wish my family were less poor and my siblings could go to school. I wish I could too!"

Ly Thien Kiem was one of the participants at a children's discussion forum on education held on 26 May 2005 in Ward 15, Go Vap District, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.

Teachers' lust harms girls' future (a school in Malawi)

Khuzi is one of the villages in Ntcheu district in the central region of Malawi. As in many parts of the country, the village faces massive challenges in education, especially for girls. The Government of Malawi introduced free primary education in 1995 but it is still struggling to improve standards. There are very few qualified teachers in most schools (in most schools there is only 1 teacher for over 70 pupils) and teaching aids and learning material are woefully inadequate. With limited school infrastructure, many children learn under trees or in open grounds. Being a rural setting, where issues of rights, especially of girls and women, are not well articulated, girls face an uphill task to enrol and complete their school education. Teachers take advantage of this ignorance. Abusive behaviour is common. Girls face sexual harassment and that invariably destroys the motivation to continue schooling. Flora Jangaza relates:

"I started school in 1995 when I was 6 years old. My problems started when I was in standard 7 and I was only 13, when my teacher told me he was in love with me. I refused, but he persisted. He told me I would only pass his exams if I accepted him as my lover. He tried to use my close friend, Ethel Thengo, to persuade me but I did not give in, and the result was that I failed my final exams twice in standard 7. I brought this issue to my parents' notice, but they were told off because the school management committee did not understand me and sided with the teacher.

"The teacher picked quarrels with some boys in the village over the same issue. As a result, two other girls, six boys and I were openly told that we would not succeed in our education even if we forced ourselves to go to school. The root cause of all this was because the girls refused the teachers' advances. The teachers refused to provide me with a transfer letter to enable me to enrol in another school in another village, and I was forced to stay at home when I was repeating standard 7.

"There are 7 teachers at the school at the moment and 5 of them have married young school girls. Many girls in my village remain at home because of these stories, and instead get married and become mothers while young. I appeal to our education authorities to do something about the teachers at Khuzi. I and many other girls in our village want to be in school. But our teachers' lust for sex with young girls has been a deterrent. Somebody please come to our rescue."

Gender parity in education in Afghanistan

The constitution of Afghanistan specifically outlines the need for gender equity in education. Article 44 of the Constitution states: "The State shall devise and implement effective programs for balancing and promoting of education for women." More specifically, goal 3 of the MDGs aims to promote gender equality and empower women. The target under this goal is to "eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005 and to all levels of education no later than 2015". However, a number of obstacles have to be overcome if these promises, goals and targets are to be realised.

The long road that Afghanistan needs to travel to achieve balance and promote education for women is outlined by the disparity between the sexes that now exists. For example, in both Jawzjan and Kandahar, the table below clearly shows that access to schooling was far less for girls than for boys. Girls and women had less access to schooling across the board compared with boys and men.

An exception to this finding can be found in Fathe Abad village in Jawzjan (see table), where girls were three times more likely to have access to education (or to be educated) than men. This unique situation was explained in some degree by the fact that in this village, girls were allowed to go to school in the mosque. However, at this stage, this is a mere speculation. The specific socio-cultural factors are unknown, and further research would be required to ascertain why the villagers of Fathe Abad village Jawzjan have managed to educate their daughters while other communities have not.

Table 2: Education access by gender – Jawzjan and Kandahar (on score of 10)

Group	Fathe Abad, Jawzjan	Khogiani, Kandahar	Hotel, Kandahar	Shoorgala Village, Jawzjan	Jungal, Jawzjan
Men	1	2	3	2	1
Women	0	0	0	0	0
Girls	3	0	0	0	0
Boys	6	3	7	6	4

Three major challenges around women's access to education were found in this study. Firstly, girls in villages face restrictions to access educational facilities. In Sadmarda village, one person

commented: "There is no school in this village...They [students] go to Baba Qumber Village, which is three kilometres away – but the girls don't go because of the distance." The lack of educational facilities, specifically for girls was another factor. As Abdul Hamid, the head of the school in Ghazi Aiob Khan High school in Kandahar, suggested, "We don't have girls [studying here as]... we don't have a female teacher." Thirdly, even when girls do go to school, they do not reach the levels that boys do. For example, in Foad Village in Balkh one villager in a group discussion said, "Girls study up to class four, and the boys study up to class six." However, a number of villagers interviewed, indicated that they understood the importance of sending girls to school. For example, when asked to state the most important problem they faced, one villager in Khogiani village answered: "The problem is having no schools. Our daughters will be uneducated." In Shorabak village in Samangan, Abdurrahman said, "There needs to be a girls' school, so that [our] daughters will be educated."

From the testimonies of communities, the trends that emerge are that enrolment rates of girls are much lower, with a very high number of villages reporting that girls do not go to school. The education infrastructure itself does not respond to the needs of girls. The distances involved to get to school, the fear of violence and a lack of basic amenities, such as toilets for girls, were cited as reasons for denying them education.

The education systems of all the countries from where reports were obtained, display gross disparities at all levels. At the time of entry, young girls are socialised into the role and responsibility of taking care of their siblings. This sets the stage for stopping their education early and starting to work or getting married. The gender disparities in education intensify with each level, and then explode full-blown in the labour and skill market, both locally and externally.

When viewed from the perspective of affordability, another important indicator of the state of education services is school feeding. School meals, people reported, would be an important factor that would help them send their children to school. When there are continuous tradeoffs between sending children to school and costs, children's wage-earning capacity and their contribution to the domestic workload, school meals tilt the balance significantly.

Difficulty in continuing in school (as told by Zaina Shuda from Makangale village in Zanzibar)

"The main development issue here is education. This is because out of the 60 plus children who enter grade one, only 5 manage to get to grade 7.

"In the earlier years of school from standard 1 to 5 all is well, but when most children reach standard 5 and 6, they have already reached the age of 16 and therefore start understanding how the world around them is like.

"Most are faced by the dilemma of continuing with school or opting out to do clove farming or cargo porting at the harbour – two of the most common activities that Zanzibar youth are engaged in.

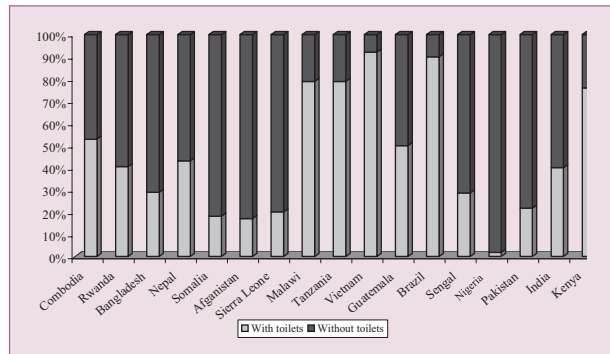
"In most cases, boys are lured by their friends, some of who make up to US\$2 per day when they leave school and work at the harbour or clove plantations.

"The girls have no choice. Those from poor families do not have a choice because they may have already been married even at such a tender age as 5. All they await is the day they come of age when their husbands will come and take them away. This happens to about 80 per cent of the girls in the village.

"Even those who would like to go to school drop out because of the harsh conditions that they go through. Apart from walking more than 5 to 10km to and from school, most stay hungry the whole day, and upon arrival home, they have to go some 2km more to collect food from the family farm.

"Most people prefer to pursue farming and labouring at the port to education. Moreover, when you are not sure of passing the examination, why gamble?"

Graph 11: School with toilets for girls (all villages)



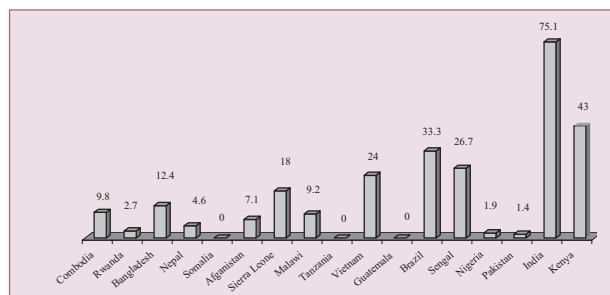
A promising beginning... and an uncertain future

All 116 pupils sit in two rooms on the floor during lesson time in a school which the people of Dabaqabad, Somalia, and an international NGO constructed, says Saed Usman, the school teacher:

"The school consists of 2 classrooms and an office and 2 dry-pit latrines. An informal type of education is provided, with a range of age groups and a flexible timetable, to enable as many young people as possible to benefit from the education. One hundred and sixteen children and adults attend the school daily – 48 female, 68 male and all of them are at grade 1 as the school is less than a year old. There are no facilities for accommodating grades 2, 3 and 4. The local community cannot afford to foot the bill, so international agencies are asked to help. The school also needs a supply of clean water."

Meal programmes supported by the State are marginal. Overall, 1,535 schools in the villages where these discussions were held reported some form of school feeding or nutrition supplementation programme. A large number of these schools are in India, where the country's Supreme Court recently ordered state governments to provide midday meals in all publicly funded schools. Kenya also showed a larger coverage of the programme.

Graph 12: Schools with meal programme (all villages reporting on this issue in percentage)

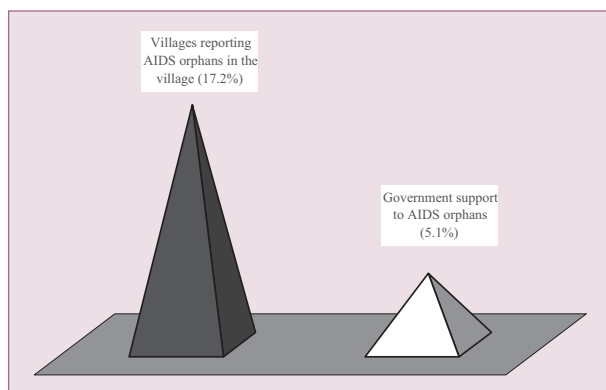


Discrimination in access for the children of certain social strata and the disabled further depresses enrolment rates. *Dalit* children in India face a range of discriminatory practices. A study carried out by ActionAid International India points even to strong discrimination in the location of education services. *Dalits* live in segregated settlements in villages and schools are rarely located in *dalit* hamlets. In a random survey in 10 states of the country in 2002, covering 600 villages, ActionAid India found that only 24

per cent of *dalit* hamlets had primary schools; the majority of primary schools (76%) were located in upper caste hamlets. *Dalit* children face insults and discrimination. In many cases, they are made to sit in separate rows, or not allowed to drink water from the same pots. They often face verbal abuse from upper caste school personnel who perform the school functions. 21 per cent schools make separate seating arrangements for *dalit* children

within the same. They may be asked to get their own mats. There are also instances when dalit children sit outside the classroom, and listen to the lectures through the window.

Graph 13: HIV AIDS orphans and government support (all villages reporting on this issue in percentage)



Not all countries and villages reported orphans whose families have suffered from AIDS. People from 855 villages in Cambodia, Rwanda, Malawi, India, Tanzania, Guatemala, Sierra Leone, Kenya, Nepal and Afghanistan reported that they had orphans whose parents had passed away. At each group discussion in these locations, people mentioned inadequate support provided by governments; children suffer multiple denials.

People of 213 villages (from 4,155 locations reporting on this issue) listed some form of government support scheme for AIDS orphans. People had no comments on the suitability and adequacy of these programmes. However, a few case studies of children suffering in this manner, such as the Adini siblings, put forth in the village discussions, illustrate the point strongly.

Report on health and water facilities

Dimensions of availability, access and affordability frame peoples' reflections on health services. These dimensions are applied to the range of services, from basic health care to treatment available for ailments that are more serious.

The seeds we sow today will yield fruit tomorrow. Peoples' reflections on health and their worries about

Achinga Adini and Kondwani Adini – Our story has just begun

"We would beg for food during the day and at night go and sleep in a kiln.

"Our names are Achinga Adini, female, 8 years old and Kondwani Adini, male, 6 years old. We live in Mchacha James village, TA Mlolo in Nsanje district in Malawi. We have not yet started school. We have never been to school and we are orphans.

"Both our parents died of AIDS in 2002. Since there was no one to take care of us, we went to live with our grandparents but there was no support of any sort. We therefore decided to leave and stay in the bush and we were sleeping in a kiln built to burn bricks. In the morning, we would go to the village to beg for food. However, life was very tough for us and that's when one night we decided to sleep on the veranda of one of the houses in the village, which happened to belong to an old woman by the name of Gogo Nabanda. When she found us there, she took us into her house. There is no relationship between Gogo Nabanda and us. She is just looking after us." Before living with Gogo Nabanda, we were getting food and money by begging in the village. She fails to take care of us properly in terms of food and clothes because with our joining, the number of orphans under the care of this poor and indigent woman has increased from 10 to 12."

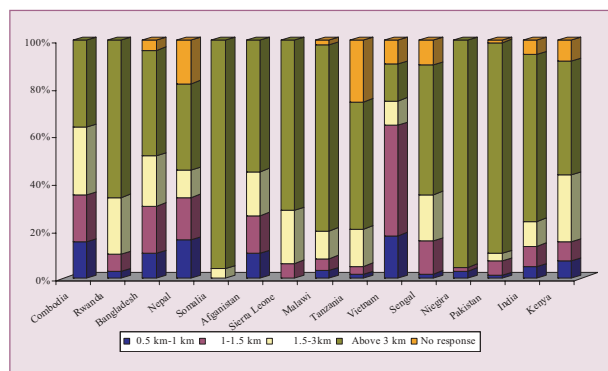
We do not go to school because of this situation. We have nothing to use as a blanket during the night, and we do not have clothes to wear to go to school. Survival in this situation is very difficult. Most of the time we think of our late mother and father who passed away some three years ago. There is no support that we get from other people apart from the old woman and neighbours who assist her. We shall be very grateful to receive any support from any person or organisation."

the state of health of their children have to be understood in this context.

One of the basic indicators of the state of well-being of services is the presence of health centres. Without a basic health infrastructure in place, even minor ailments can end up as major health hazards. While schools have come closer to people in recent years, in the opinion of communities, health facilities have remained distant. Women, children and men have to walk long distances to access even basic health facilities. Only 23 per cent of the villages in all the countries are served by primary health centres located within the village. Residents in all the other villages have to walk long distances to access even basic health care. In nearly

50 per cent of the villages, people have to walk more than 3km to access the health utilities offered by public centres. In many cases these distances are in the range of 10km. Particularly in Africa, rural road connectivity is very poor, and as it is very costly to hire transport, people walk even in times of emergencies.

Graph 14: Distance of health facility from villages



The distances people have to travel to get to health centres vary from country to country. In Rwanda, people from 93 per cent of the villages said they do not have health centres in their villages. In 66 per cent of the villages in Rwanda, residents have to walk between five and ten kilometres to reach the nearest health centres. In Tanzania, Nigeria, Kenya and Cambodia, the situation is no different. In Nepal, the mountainous terrain makes access difficult and time consuming. Access is relatively good only in a few countries, such as Vietnam: 76 per cent of the villages had health centres located within the village or commune area, but in most cases curative and referral services are far.

In general, village reports highlighted that trained doctors were in short supply, both in public health centres and otherwise. This handicap is especially acute for people who cannot afford to pay and in areas where lifestyle adversities are high. Reports from people on the availability of trained midwives and nurses varied. Overall, 34 per cent of the people reported they had trained doctors available at the health centre; in Bangladesh, the figure was 76 per cent. The availability of trained nurses was much higher: Nearly 62 per cent of the villages reported the availability of trained nurses at health centres.

Peoples' report cards on health and sanitation in Ethiopia
(From five regions, covering 3,829 households randomly selected from kebeles in these woredas)

Incidence of illness is quite common in rural Ethiopia. Two years prior to this survey, nearly 75 per cent of the rural population reported falling ill and requiring medical attention. Malaria was the most common ailment, accounting for 45 per cent of all reported ailments. The incidence of cough, colds and fevers was high.

Sixty-one per cent of the respondents said they were dependent on government health posts and hospitals, as against 28 per cent who reported going to private clinics and medical facilities. The problems most often reported with government health facilities were scarcity or the total absence of medicines; and uncertainty about whether the doctor would be available and the facility functional. Prohibitive distances were a deterrent to the utilisation of the facilities. And direct experience of the poor quality of care and service was invariably cited by the respondents.

While there are sub-regional differences in terms of distance travelled, in all the regions of Ethiopia, apart from Afar, people needed to travel more than 10km to reach the nearest facility. Given the transportation problems, nearly 65 per cent of the households walk to get to the health posts.

Where availability of medicines has been reportedly very good, they are invariably costly. Provision of free medicines is very low, with only 8 per cent of the respondents mentioning it. The average cost of consultancy and medicine worked out to 80 Birr per household for the most recent visit.

With increasing costs of medicines and the gradual withdrawal of State support leading to increasing numbers of defunct health centres, an increasing number of countries have set up health services for privatisation. China has moved on in the process, and other developing countries may have no option but to follow. In this context, peoples' reflections on the costs of services and the affordability of services are important.

Eighty per cent of the focal groups in more than 3500 villages across 16 countries felt that health services were not affordable and too costly for them. This is despite the fact that more than half the people depend on some form of public health utility, even if it is 62 km away as in the case of a Baloch village in Pakistan.

Living with the Fear of Death in a Sierra Leone Village

Abass Jeng, Yataya village, Wara Wara Yagala chiefdom, Koinadugu district:

"Ours is a challenging tale, for every day is like coming face to face with death itself. Our terrain is isolated, as it is located 7 miles from Kabala town, in the far Northern Province along the boundary with Guinea-Conakry. Jobs are virtually non-existent. I sell palm-wine. Some of our sisters fetch firewood, while others hawk palm oil to cash-strapped villagers. We farm using crude implements that yield very little and require intensive labour that leaves us mentally and emotionally exhausted for the next day, making it virtually impossible to fight hunger.

"Health centres are non-existent in the village. The greatest worry is falling sick and at night, it becomes worse. In order to get treatment, we walk 7 miles to Kabala (not to mention, carrying the infirm) and when we reach there, we find the drugs are expensive and sometimes not available. Complications arising from tuberculosis, anaemia and blindness, if not attended to immediately, could be fatal. Our children, wives and all of us are living in constant fear of death. And as a husband, the responsibility rests on my shoulders to constantly assure, console and provide for them. This is often a losing battle when death or poverty is the opponent."

Health centres are increasingly turning out to be interim referral points: People in 76 per cent of the villages said that medicines are not available at the health centres (7.3 per cent said that medicines are sometimes available). As a result, medicines have to be purchased at high prices from the retail trade.

Curative support was not provided as a regular feature. People from only 26 per cent locations (1,120 of the 4,361) where this discussion took place, felt that health centres provided curative care. People reported that in serious cases, adequate support was often not provided. According to the estimation of people from 282 villages, less than 5 per cent of the villages have the health centres that are capable of providing support in cases of serious health disorders.

Norah Harry's ordeal at the health centre (Malawi)

"My name is Norah Harry. I am 49 years old. I live in Nyathando village in TA Ndamera. I would like to tell you what happened to me when I was pregnant. My husband is poor and we depend on farming. When I became pregnant, I went to Ndamera health centre for my antenatal clinic. Everything went on well; I was given all the necessary vaccinations. The problem arose during the time of delivery. This health centre does not have electricity. Therefore, the patients are required to buy their own paraffin to light lamps during the night. Those who cannot afford to buy paraffin stay in the dark. When I went to the health centre, I had paraffin to last me for only one day. Unfortunately, I did not give birth on that first day but on the second day when I no longer had paraffin.

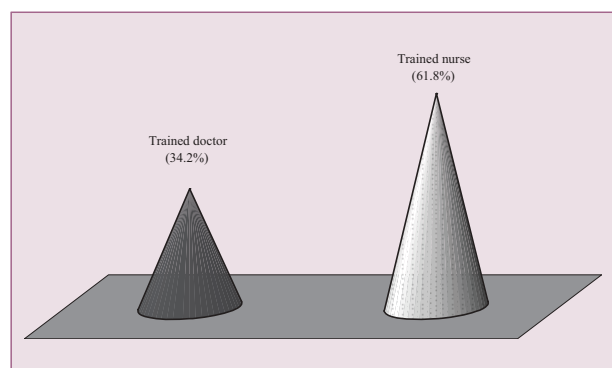
"I was in a dark room when my labour pains began. I tried to call for the nurse but she said that she could not come because there was no light. I delivered the baby all on my own in the dark. I kept calling for the nurse but she did not come. She eventually came when she heard the baby crying. She came in with a torch in her hand.

"I was lucky to have survived; I was worried about my life and that of the baby. Instead of assisting me when she came to my room, the nurse asked me to clean up the mess.

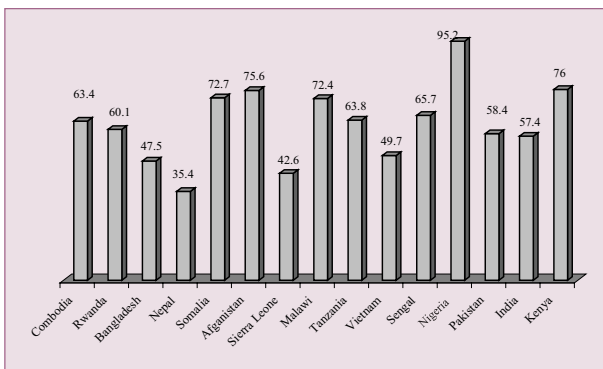
"This is still happening at Ndamera health centre. If you happen to be in labour at night and do not have paraffin and matches, you will deliver alone in the dark. I being one of those women who went through this ordeal, I would like to appeal to the government to consider providing electricity at the health centre.

While primary health care centres have trained nurses in 62 per cent of the cases, the number of instances where trained birth attendants are present is much less, and this is possibly correlated to the number of infant and maternal deaths during childbirth. People in 25 per cent of the villages reported maternal deaths and

Graph 15: Availability of trained medical staff in health centres (all villages)



Graph 16: Availability of safe drinking water



people in 54 per cent of the villages reported infant deaths at the time of childbirth.

From 5000 group discussions, and with inputs from local health centres (where a number of these discussions were held), the six most important reasons for morbidity that emerge are:

- Malnutrition and hunger
- Lack of health and hygiene practices and awareness
- Unavailability of safe drinking water
- Mosquitoes and malaria
- Unavailability of health facilities close by
- Poor sanitation.

On the issue of drinking water, peoples' prime indicators are availability and adequacy. While all countries have some form of water resources management policy and each country has its own goals on provision of drinking water, along with norms of distance and quality, the realities on the ground vary considerably.

Of the villages where people discussed the concern, 43 per cent reported that they had access to clean drinking water. For the other 57 per cent there were a number of concerns about the availability of drinking water. This ranged from very restricted availability to drought-like conditions where drinking water itself was at a premium to conditions where women have to travel long distances to fetch water.

People in 23 per cent of the villages said they could get drinking water at or near their doorsteps, though it was not necessarily clean; another 25 per cent said it was available within about half a kilometre and largely within the village boundary. People of another 23 per cent of the villages said they had to travel more than a kilometre (and in 6 per cent cases, more than 3 kilometres) to get drinking water. These were the conditions reported in normal times. The distances travelled and time spent in gathering water invariably increased during dry seasons and scarcity periods. Almost universally, it was predominantly women and girls who fetched water. It was only in times of acute shortages and drought that boys and men pitched in.

Water, water everywhere, but there are only a few drops to drink.

This is the reality of communities living in the coastal village of Badin in Pakistan. People in Badin do not have drinking water within a radius of two kilometres.

People in these communities wage a battle of a different kind everyday. All this, when the international decade for the action 'water for life' begins, where the UN and governments are seeking to galvanise efforts to meet the internationally agreed targets of the halving the number of people without access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation by 2015.

Badin is home to indigenous communities who have been staying here for generations. With no access to safe and clean drinking water, the villagers are compelled to drink drain water, which is highly contaminated and hazardous. The same water is also used for washing. Occurrence of diseases in such a situation is not surprising. The drain water that they drink affects pregnant women and children badly. Yet the government has always ignored their most basic needs.

The monthly cost of safe drinking water, per litre, in Pakistan is 30 times more expensive than in developed countries. In a typical Pakistani village or even in the outskirts of major cities, water availability is restricted and the network is ineffective even if it has been installed. Residents have to walk a considerable distance and carry water back to their houses. It typically takes an hour for a woman to collect two buckets of water (20 litres) considering that she has to wait in the long queue and then carry it back home.

During normal times, a third of the households have access to water within 300m of their houses. However, the picture completely changes in summer and scarcity months. During the scarcity period, only 10 per cent people report access to water sources within this distance. The percentage of people travelling more than 3km to get water goes up from 10 per cent to 45 per cent. While in normal times, people take an average of 44 min to fetch water, this goes up to an average of 56 min during a scarcity period.

Adult women (47 per cent) and young girls (24 per cent) are two main groups that fetch water. The corresponding figure for adult men and boys is 6 and 10 per cent. During times of scarcity, 14 per cent of adult men help in fetching water for the household.

The quality of water from public water sources, in peoples' view, has improved over the last 2 years. However, there are indications that the quality of water from unprotected sources has deteriorated.

Drinking water – Citizens' report cards from Ethiopia

Citizens' report cards in Ethiopia on pro-poor services show that nearly three-quarters of the rural population depend on non-potable sources for drinking and domestic use. Nearly 50 per cent of the respondents report scarcity; the users of ponds, unprotected and protected hand-dug wells report the highest level of scarcity. Invariably, people responded to the scarcity by shifting from whatever safe water sources were available to open sources: 54 per cent of the 3,829 households who filed their report cards were compelled to shift water sources. In times of recurrent scarcity, 82 per cent of the people reported depending on unprotected sources of water.

Pollution of rivers is a major concern; almost 70 per cent of the rural communities depending on rivers for their needs, report pollution.

Endnotes

1. Association of Communities in Development of San Carlos Alzate COMSCAL: *Municipal Diagnosis of San Carlos Alzate*.
2. Ibid
3. National Institute of Statistics: *Characteristics of Population and Habitat that participated in the census*. Population Fund of the United Nations - UNFPA July 2003
4. A study was conducted in 100 villages in 2001–2002 on the nature and extent of the forms of discrimination
5. Estimate of Ashray Adhikar Abhiyan, Campaign for Housing Rights, Delhi

Chapter Two

Poverty: Realities, Poverty: Realities, Rhetoric Rhetoric and Rights and Rights

“Massive Poverty and obscene inequality are such terrible scourges of our times... times in which the world boasts breathtaking advances in science, technology, industry and wealth accumulation- that they have to rank alongside slavery and apartheid as social evils...”

– Nelson Mandela





The government of Maharashtra admitted that 2,675 children died of malnutrition between April and July this year in five districts of Maharashtra- Thane, Nandurbar, Nashik, Amravati and Gadchiroli.

The report submitted by the state health department says that between April and July this year, 1085 infants not more than one year of age died due to malnutrition. It said that 1,590 children in the age group of one to six years old also died. It said that 2,860 children fall under grade three and 407 are in critical condition.

– The Asian Age, 25 August, 2005

Introduction

The admission by the government in the Indian state of Maharashtra about rampant child and infant mortality in a number of its districts provided a grim backdrop to the discussions that were underway in the national capital, Delhi. A World Bank delegation led by its newly installed president was negotiating terms with the Indian government for a massive nation-wide programme of infrastructure building, to be executed through public-private partnerships.

Ironically, Maharashtra is a state that is considered one of the most developed in India. It is home to the country's financial capital, Mumbai. The stock exchange in Mumbai did not pause for a moment in its dizzy upward climb, even as the city was paralysed for over a week by devastating floods in July 2005. The rural sector in Maharashtra is considered among the most progressive in India. It has capitalised on the opportunities for diversification offered by globalisation, successfully using thousands of acres of land for horticultural production. Unlike other regions, which see a quick drain of rural wealth, rural Maharashtra has managed to retain much of its newfound wealth through a vigorous program of agro-industrialisation. The state has a long-running programme of rural employment

guarantee and has instituted midday meals in most of its government-funded school.

That with all this running in its favour, Maharashtra should witness a human tragedy on the scale testified to by its government is a signpost to the nature of poverty in today's globalising world.

The 1590 children who died in Maharashtra were among the many thousands who die every day from poverty and hunger. They were also among the 150 million malnourished and underweight children in the world. In a world where more than 1.1 billion people live in extreme poverty, and one where every single day is a struggle for survival for 70 million – living in small holder farms, and another 40 million living with HIV/AIDS, or another 25 million internally displaced persons, it is a numbing reality that kills hope and destroys human possibilities.

In this context, the vision contained in the Secretary General's (SG) document on follow up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit "In Larger Freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all" is a notable one. It presents a needed direction to the MDGs, by advancing the notion of larger freedoms and

enlarging the freedoms. Also, as the SGs report outlines, the notion of larger freedoms encapsulates the ideas of development, security and human rights and dignity.

For all human beings, and especially so for those living in poverty and denial, freedom is intrinsically connected with the notion of rights. From the perspective of the impoverished, even as they interrogate the world and hope for another world, it is a question of “Whose freedoms and whose rights”.

Five years have passed since the shared vision of development embodied in the Millennium Declaration was adopted for implementation via the MDGs. This is about a third of the timeframe set to achieve many of the targets set in the MDGs, which as response to the challenge of poverty are not the most ambitious ones.

In this time the progress of achieving the MDGs has been far from uniform across the world. If figures from selected countries such as India and China are taken out, it could be said that MDGs are largely off track for achievement in 2005. Even the figures of India and China are contested.

As the world prepares to review progress made towards the MDGs and documents prepared by the UN Millennium Project (UNMP) cite a few hopeful statistics amid a wider mass of bad news, important questions confront us all. Can the world fashion adequate responses to these afflictions of the human condition without putting a face to these statistics? Is an approach to the MDGs which fails to recognise the poor as agents of their own freedom from want and disease, programmed for failure? Can an alternative approach that moves beyond discussions of bureaucratic mechanisms and assessments, and adopts an authentic discourse of human rights, bring the results that have so far eluded the UNMP and progress of MDGs?

A review of the available evidence on the incidence of poverty in today's world, challenges a comfortable assumption that extreme deprivation can be addressed without reference to relative poverty, on the grounds

that inequality and the structural biases it induces in the political system are significant impediments to radical improvements in the lot of the poor.

To look at poverty as income deprivation, rather than a deprivation of rights, is not particularly helpful. And in the MDG framework, this conceptual separation begins at the very source. Poverty, which was once regarded as the denial of the right to food, is now rendered distinct from hunger. From there, the MDG project manages to sunder poverty from every form of rights – to health, education, natural resources and the environment. And in seeking to fashion antidotes in isolation from one another – for this whole ensemble of maladies of the contemporary human condition – the MDGs fall back on the prevalent economic orthodoxy.

Numbers and poverty

Counting the poor has become a policy preoccupation in recent decades and more so since the World Bank appropriated the policy debates on poverty. To facilitate the international dialogue and establish comparable benchmarks on poverty, the standard of a dollar a day has become the official international measure.

The figures the UNMP has taken on board, speak of a decline in the poverty rate between 1990 and 2001, from 33 to 17 per cent in China and from 42 to 35 per cent in India. In China, the decline has been sharp enough to contribute – in conjunction with a lower population growth rate – to an absolute decline in the number of people living in poverty. In India though, relatively higher population growth meant that the number of people living in absolute poverty remained roughly unchanged at 360 million between 1990 and 2001.¹

The recent review document of the UNMP records that, poverty has not reduced elsewhere:

- the number of poor has risen ‘slightly’ in the Middle East (or West Asia, as it is known in certain parts of the world) and North Africa.

- Latin America and the Caribbean, 'saw fairly stagnant poverty rates', which means that the number of the poor must have increased proportionate with population growth.
- and Eastern Europe and Central Asia 'saw a stark increase in poverty over the period'.

One third of the deaths: some 18 million people per year or 50 thousand per day- are due to poverty related causes.

Since the 1990 – 270 million majority women and children have died due to poverty related causes. That is roughly equal to the population of the US

50 thousand people die of poverty related causes every single day. This means a silent Tsunami is happening every single day.

A child dies of poverty, every 3 seconds.

Source: *Make Poverty History*, Penguin Books, London, 2005

The picture in Latin America conforms to a pattern elsewhere- marginal progress being made in the battle against poverty till about 1997, after which the situation is one of stagnation or regress. Latest estimates, collated by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), suggest that over 220 million people in the continent, or 43.2 percent of the total population, could be classified as living in poverty. Of these, 98 million people, or 18.9 per cent of total population, fell in the category of "extreme poverty" or indigence.²

Assessing the recent economic performance against the poverty reduction criteria of the MDGs, ECLAC concludes that "Latin America has once again suffered a setback". Apart from Chile, which had met the goal for reduction of extreme poverty by 2000, only Brazil, Ecuador, Mexico, Panama and Uruguay seemed roughly on track towards meeting MDG targets.

With reference to Africa, these adverse outcomes have been identified by the report of the Commission for Africa (CfA) constituted by British Prime Minister Tony Blair.

"Poverty and hunger are deepening in sub-Saharan Africa", reports the CfA. The number of poor people is

expected to rise from 315 million in 1999 to 404 million by 2015. Some 34 per cent of the population is undernourished – almost double the figure for the rest of the developing world. The impact of hunger upon the health of Africa's children is hard to measure. Hunger kills more than all the continent's infectious diseases – HIV and AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis (TB) -put together.³

The eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) face their greatest challenge in Africa. So far, progress has been slow or non-existent:

Extreme poverty has increased from 44% to 46% since 1990. Even in countries that have achieved growth, extreme inequality means that the impact on poverty has been limited. In Uganda, which experienced average rates of economic growth of 6% between 1999 and 2003, poverty actually increased from 34% to 38%.

Hunger has been reduced by just 2% since 1990, despite a commitment to cut it by half. On current trends, the target for reducing the number of underweight children will not be reached until 2070.

Progress towards universal primary education is too slow to achieve the 2015 goal. Although some progress has been made in countries such as Zambia, Kenya and Uganda, on current trends 40 million African children will remain out of school by the target date. The goal of equal school enrolments for boys and girls by 2005 – the first of the MDGs to fall due – has already been missed. Sixty per cent of children being denied a basic education in Africa are girls.

The target of cutting infant mortality by two thirds is massively off track in Africa. Seventeen children in every hundred die before their fifth birthday, 43 times the rate in the European Union. On current trends the target will not be reached until 2250. In the year 2015 alone, 3.5 million children will die if the goal is missed.

Despite the target of a two-thirds reduction by 2015, deaths in pregnancy and childbirth are rising, with a 1 in 16 risk of death over an African woman's lifetime – 2,800 times the risk in a rich country.

Taking away India and China, the verdict is clear: In the decade-and-a-half since globalisation, the vast majority of the poor have remained where they were, or they are even worse off.

The case of India though is contentious, since recent years have seen a credible challenge to the official survey data that the UNMP and the World Bank rely upon to construct their narrative of declining poverty. Indeed there

is a strong suggestion that after a modest degree of progress in the first half of the 1990s, India fell back in the struggle against poverty in the following years.

China's achievements, though perhaps more solid, bring up another category of problems. In the reports of the champions of neo-liberal globalisation, China's progress against poverty is real and undeniable. Anecdotal evidence gathered by visitors to China's main cities seems to buttress the narrative of the official statistics. But further examination would reveal certain problem areas, even in the picture presented by official statistics. The poverty ratio in China, we are told, fell from 33 per cent in 1990 to 17 per cent in 1996. In other words, China had achieved the MDG target on poverty reduction, not in the stipulated 25-year horizon, but in less than a quarter of that time. Since then, however, the poverty ratio has stubbornly stayed at the 1996 level, even fractionally increasing in one of the intervening years.⁴

China's experience shows that targeting the top half of the population below the poverty line may be the easy part. It is when it comes to the bottom two deciles that poverty proves intractable to even the strongest medicine that economic growth can administer.

This should be a wake-up call for the MDGs, which set themselves the unambitious target of reducing poverty ratios by half by 2015.

Where China is concerned, anecdotal accounts of the boom that has rapidly diminished poverty need necessarily to be qualified by similar reports on widening disparities and growing deprivation. Reliable media reports just two years back, celebrated China's triumph in raising 400 million of its people above the poverty line, but in the same breath reported, that income inequalities had risen alarmingly. The average income of urban residents was 2.5 times that of rural Chinese in 1978. By the mid-1980s, that ratio had narrowed to 1.8. But since then, 'the countryside has fallen ever further behind'. Urban incomes today are on average, thrice as high as those in the rural areas.⁵

More recently, media reports, without disavowing claims that 400 million Chinese had successfully migrated out of the poverty trap, pointed out that '800 million people (or) about 60 per cent of the population' of the country, "live in the countryside on an average income of less than a dollar a day]. 'Unless something is done to make peasants happier', it concluded, 'China will be plunged into turmoil'" Assessing what it takes is not easy, since rural China remains cordoned off from the world by severe access restrictions. The dynamics of migration from rural to urban areas are themselves curtailed by official prohibitions.⁶ Prognoses for the future are not rendered any rosier by the visible collapse of the state-run health care system, and the endemic crisis of viability that local governments in the rural areas face.⁷

Inequality in China has been rising and the poverty ratio stagnating, even as a massive inflow of foreign direct investment (FDI) has fuelled an economic boom. In 1990, according to World Bank statistics, net FDI in China amounted to \$3.48 billion. By 1997, the figure had increased to \$44.24 billion. With minor year-to-year fluctuations, the figure increased to \$53.50 billion in 2004.⁸

The links between foreign capital inflows, and the creation of income and wealth, obviously need serious study in this respect. There is ample reason to believe that the 'wealth effect', by which an appreciation in assets prices leads households to increase consumption, could be at work in China. If so, the implications that any contraction of capital flows could have on economic activity and consequently on income and consumption levels, need careful analysis. It is known that poverty levels in Thailand and Indonesia increased rapidly following the financial meltdown of 1997. This should engender some well-merited scepticism about the sustainability of China's struggle against poverty.

A highly skewed distribution of income is recognised to be a part of the problem in Latin America. Absolute poverty it is increasingly being recognised, cannot be

remedied without redressing these. As the recent ECLAC report points out:

- 'The region's marked degree of income concentration has become one of its hallmarks and has earned it the dubious distinction of being the most backward region on the planet in terms of distribution'.
- Progress towards the first of the MDGs, would be more rapid if inequality were to be dealt with: 'improvements in income distribution can magnify the effect of economic growth'.
- Expert calculations show that the economic growth rate required to achieve the poverty target would be lower by a fifth of a percentage point for every single point by which the inequality index is reduced.⁹

Rising inequalities at all levels

The world has been an unequal place, and it is getting more unequal. Rather than reducing, concentration of wealth, resources and power has increased.

It cannot be disputed that personal consumption has been increasing in the two countries – China and India – that the UNMP identifies as canonical instances of growth driving a rapid decline in poverty. But rising consumption cannot be assumed to be an index of diminishing poverty. It could indeed, be merely an indication that inequality is increasing.

However the evidence that global inequality increased during the 1990s is compelling.

But in this new century, many of the world's poorest countries remain imprisoned, enslaved and in chains. They are trapped in the prison of poverty. It is time to set them free.

– Nelson Mandela

Economic globalisation, driven by rich countries, international finance institutions (IFI) and powerful corporations has been a polarising process, increasing the gaps between industrialised and developing countries on one side, and sharply widening the

disparities within classes in each of these countries. This issue, which has been little considered in the last quarter century, is now recognised as an integral part of the battle against world poverty. As Robert Wade put it in 2001

Many analysts apparently take it for granted that global inequality is falling. Others think it sufficient to focus on poverty, and ignore inequality as such. Both these views need to be challenged. New evidence suggests that global inequality is worsening rapidly. There are good reasons to worry about that trend, quite apart from what it implies about the extent of world poverty.¹⁰

An innovation that Wade makes is to classify the urban and rural parts of China and India separately in estimating trends in economic inequality. Though his study covers only a limited number of years ending in 1993, the trends it highlights have undoubtedly persisted since. The reasons for growing income inequality identified are several

- faster economic growth in the advanced countries of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)
- faster population growth in the developing countries
- slow growth of output in rural China, rural India and Africa

rapidly widening output and income differences between urban China on the one hand, and rural China and rural India on the other.

The ideological biases of the 1990s and beyond have tilted towards the celebration of economic globalisation and 'free' market, with few studies seeking to focus on its more iniquitous dimensions. That could now be changing. For instance, the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalisation (hereafter, WCSDG) in its report submitted early in 2004, found that

- Since 1990, global GDP growth rate has been slower than in previous decades
- At the very least this outcome is at variance with the more optimistic predictions on the growth-enhancing impact of globalisation.¹¹

The WCSDG has also found, on the basis of fairly definitive data, that income and wage inequality increased almost without exception, in the advanced industrialised countries. Following the mid-1990s, for instance, the highest paid 10 per cent of workers in the US were earning close to 4.5 times more than the lowest paid 10 per cent. This ratio had increased by over 36 per cent since the mid-1980s. The UK saw a similar order of increase, though in other countries like Italy, Finland, Australia, Canada and Sweden, the order of difference was more modest. Only in Germany, did the ratio actually fall.

These factors apart, the top one percent of income earners in the US increased its share to 17 per cent of gross income by 2000. This ratio was last seen in the 1920s. Similar sharp increases in inequality were seen in the UK and Canada.¹² Other studies, such as those by Piketty and Saez on income inequalities in the US, also conclude that in the US there has been a trend where there is a sharp increase in the share of the top 10 per cent of the U.S. population in total income, has been a feature of U.S. growth processes since the early-1980s.

The GDP (Gross Domestic Product) of the poorest 48 nations (i.e. a quarter of the world's countries) is less than the wealth of the world's three richest people combined.

source : Ignacio Ramonet, *The politics of hunger*, *Le Monde Diplomatique*, November 1998

An estimation of income inequality using individual income tax returns data for developing countries is impossible, in any case one which covers a wide range of population, since tax administrations in these countries typically cover no more than a minute fraction of the population. A recent study of computing income inequalities within the top one percent (or top percentile) of the Indian population reveals that there has been a rapid increase in the top income share since 1980–81 and a relentless increase in the share of the top 0.01 per cent of the population in total income since the 1981.

The conclusions drawn are interesting:

- The 'gradual liberalisation of the Indian economy', 'did make it possible for the rich (the top 1 per cent) to substantially increase their share of total income'.
- The 1980s and the 1990s were significantly different, in that in the former decade, 'the gains were shared by everyone in the top percentile', while in the latter, 'it was only those in the top 0.1 per cent who made big gains'.

"This suggests the possibility", the authors surmise, "that the ultra-rich were able to corner most of the income gains in the 1990s because they alone were in a position to sell what the world markets wanted".¹³

The shaky foundations of the claim that poverty in India declined through the 1990s, and the effort to establish the trend that inequality in fact increased, serves to focus on the broader infirmities of the UNMP. The economic reforms that were introduced in India in the 1990s have remained controversial, as have 'their effect on poverty'. This debate is not unique to India, says Deaton: "The worldwide controversy about globalisation and its effects on poverty and inequality has followed much the same lines as the internal debate in India". Because India "accounts for about 20 per cent of the global count of those living on less than \$1 a person per day", what happens in India "is not only a reflection of the worldwide trend, but is one of its major determinants".¹⁴

"The slice of the cake taken by 1% is the same size as that handed to the poorest 57%."

"The richest 50 million people in Europe and North America have the same income as 2.7 billion poor people."

Larry Elliott, A cure worse than the disease, *The Guardian*, January 21, 2002

The decade-and-a-half of neo-liberal globalisation has also been a period when obsession with celebrities has peaked. As the WCSDG has pointed out

- 'Global superstardom' is most often associated with the 'emergence of wealth' at one end of the social spectrum.

- Exceptionally high earnings, have typically been linked to compensation paid by (multinational enterprises), (and) development of new businesses with a global reach.¹⁵
- As with countries, so with the people. Those who benefited most from globalisation include 'those associated (as shareholders, managers, workers or sub-contractors) with successful (multinational enterprises) and with internationally competitive national enterprises.'¹⁶

As the bulk of the world's poor are confined to the agrarian sector, whether as smallholding peasants or agricultural workers, this formula for success has eluded them.

There is no global superstardom for them, it has only been a question of finding the next meal.

The total wealth of the top 8.3 million people around the world rose to \$30.8 trillion. They control of nearly a quarter of the world's financial assets.

Source: Eileen Alt Powell, Some 600,000 join millionaire ranks in 2004, *Associate Press*, June 9, 2005

In the context of inequities, what is more notable and indicative of the state of affairs is fact that open unemployment has been on the rise through the period of neo-liberal globalisation. While WCDSDG points this trend, statistics are unreliable in this respect and respondents to the occasional surveys on employment status often seek to minimise their perceived loss of status by reporting themselves as 'self-employed'. But despite this protective ring of self-respect that respondents seek to erect, the figures speak of an increase in unemployment rates that is moderate in all regions, but consistent enough to warrant serious suspicions about the claims made on behalf of globalisation.¹⁷ To this must be added the finding of the ILO, that 'increasing global unemployment has hit young people hard'. Young people, defined as those below 25 years age, make up a total of 47 per cent of all unemployed. This is particularly worrisome, since this age group makes up only 25 per cent of the global population.¹⁸

A deficit of rights and power?

The dollar a day measure of poverty has been closely examined and found wanting. However, it is still retained as an analytical convenience. A factor that has worked in its favour is its rough consonance with the official poverty line measure used in China and India, which are homes to much of the world's poor.

Unfortunately, an analytical convenience of using this income measure could also blot out certain inconvenient aspects of reality. Poverty is most appropriately viewed in terms of a population's access to and control over essential resources and assets, such as land and water. Also relevant would be its political entitlements, like access to the civic space or ability to determine the use of common property resources.

Global priorities in spending in 1998

Global Priority	\$U.S. Billions
Basic education for everyone in the world	6
Cosmetics in the United States	8
Water and sanitation for everyone in the world	9
Ice cream in Europe	11
Reproductive health for all women in the world	12
Perfumes in Europe and the United States	12
Basic health and nutrition for everyone in the world	13
Pet foods in Europe and the United States	17
Business entertainment in Japan	35
Cigarettes in Europe	50
Alcoholic drinks in Europe	105
Narcotics drugs in the world	400
Military spending in the world	780

In larger freedom is the title that Kofi Annan, the UN Secretary-General, chose for his most recent report to the world body on progress towards achievement of the Millennium Declaration. The phrase chosen, from the UN Charter, underlined the idea that 'development, security and human rights go hand in hand'. Consistent with this vision, UN reform is cast as a process that will enhance the capacity of member-states to meet these three imperatives of their peoples' needs. In the Secretary General's vision, the reform of the world body should be harmonised with member-states' effort to put in place institutions that would facilitate the achievement of the MDGs.

The point is very simply put:

"Even if he can vote to choose his rulers, a young man with AIDS who cannot read or write and lives on the brink of starvation is not truly free. Equally, even if she earns enough to live, a woman who lives in the shadow of daily violence and has no say in how her country is run, is not truly free. Larger freedom implies that men and women everywhere have the right to be governed by their own consent, under law, in a society where all individuals can, without discrimination or retribution, speak, worship and associate freely."¹⁹

When the ends of the UNMP are assessed against the means that have been adopted to achieve them, we must ask: whose rights and whose freedoms are really the issue here? The process of neo-liberal economic globalisation has enshrined a charter of rights for multinational enterprises and for finance capital, which is now free to roam the world in pursuit of profits. National governments have embraced these policies, in the belief that there is no alternative to liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation. But this conversion has been wholly or in large part, under duress. Growing debt and the problems associated with earning the money to service it have effectively coerced developing country governments into adopting these policies. Hence, it is crucial to ask: have the rights and freedoms of the people in the developing countries suffered?

And in this process of abridgment of rights, has the larger burden fallen on the poor within these countries?

If rights were to be restored to the heart of the discourse on poverty, then many of the redundancies in the MDGs could be avoided. The pursuit of the poverty goal would also be inclusive of most of the other goals. Social goals like extending health and education, and redressing gender disparities, as also environmental goals like ensuring sustainability of resource use, would be subsumed within the objective of eliminating poverty.

Have freedoms and rights enhanced small farmers, agricultural workers and women?

The smallholder farm and the agricultural worker are at "the epicentre of world poverty". Of all the people assessed to be at risk of severe malnutrition in the world, 70 per cent are either small farmers or landless labourers.

The decade of globalisation has seen policies based on the premise of an accelerated shift from small holder farms to corporate farming. These policies are also endorsed by the UNMP project, which envisages that such a shift would entail:

- A rise in rural productivity, an environmentally sound Green Revolution to raise food output and provide low-cost food for the rest of the economy.
- The transition to commercial agriculture and urbanisation (as there would be fewer households engaged in food production).
- The urbanisation and movement of human resources into non-agricultural productive sectors, which would diversify the economy and the export base.

The UNMP fails to address the tremendous concentration in agricultural markets, which impedes the entry of smallholders. Integration in higher value-added products, is increasingly being taken over by large vertically integrated firms and, in the retail sector, by global supermarket chains.

The whole setup and control from choice of crop to decision of the type of seeds, chemical and inputs are those of private corporations and dictated by the market. The small holder farmer has not much of a role even in the profits, which are made by people who control the critical points along the chain, and are not "small holders". Forces emanating from the market end up depriving people of their control over land, and access over assets. The pressure that is brought to bear on governments to stop procurement and buffer stocking operations, have their own consequences. Invariably, the removal of all propped of state support means the progressive marginalisation of the small farmer. And with him, those at the very bottom of the scale of rural income and wealth – the agricultural labourer – becomes proportionately worse off.

Smallholders are losing their livelihood. Policy conditionalities, tariff reductions, corporatisation and commercialisation of agriculture tend to further marginalise, and restrict the space, and displace that the small holder farmers have over their own agriculture and livelihoods, and are definitely not enhancing their freedom and rights

It is also increasingly the case that poverty is acquiring a feminine face. Increasingly, women are bearing the burden of keeping family and community structures intact in the face of the rampant advance of the market. The withdrawal of the State from basic services, imposes on this half of humanity, the onerous task of making good the entitlements deficit that family and community confront. Cultural stereotypes reinforce their role as care givers and nurturers. And in a context of diminishing public services, this role is often only performed at serious risk to their individual wellbeing and health. Opportunities for education also invariably pass them by, beginning with the very smallest age group, in such a context.

As a human rights approach for achieving the goals and targets has not been integrated into the MDG framework, the sole statistical target specified for redressing women's inequality- eliminating the gender disparity in primary education by 2005- remains woefully unfulfilled.

The MDGs fail to make the necessary connections. The means adopted to each of the ends tend therefore to be uncoordinated. To illustrate: till not far back, poverty was defined in terms of nutritional intake. But in the MDGs definition, poverty and hunger are defined as distinct afflictions of the human condition.

Inconsistencies between poverty and hunger estimates

As India and China are such a major feature in UN estimations of progress towards the MDGs, we need to consider the annual assessment of the Food and Agricultural Organisation, titled the State of Food Insecurity in the World (SOFI). The 2004 edition of SOFI points out that after recording substantial progress in the first half of the 1990s, both India and China fell back considerably in the second half in curtailing the incidence of chronic undernourishment. There is a degree of consistency here with the stagnation of poverty rates in China since 1996. When it comes to India though, the picture is incoherent.

In the FAO's categorisation of food insecurity, India is just a little better off than Honduras, Mali and Niger.

- India is one among 17 countries where the number of the undernourished decreased in the first half of the 1990s, before increasing in the second half, to almost completely offset the gains of the earlier part of the decade.
- Tracking the incidence of hunger in India over three reference periods: 1990–92, 1995–97 and 2000–01, the FAO plots an initial decline from 215 million to 203 million, before a rapid deterioration pushed up the number of the undernourished to 221 million.

The FAO figures on undernourishment are still below the figures on poverty that the UNMP relies on. There is obviously a problem of definition here, since the poverty line estimate is based on income criteria, while the FAO arrives at its figure by considering the total food budget of a country- production plus imports minus exports. The FAO also adjusts for inequalities in incomes and access to food.

This discrepancy once again raises questions about the adequacy of the poverty measure that the MDG has adopted, when the focus should more appropriately be on rights and entitlements - including access to food – as the basic determinants of poverty status.

The figures on food insecurity point towards a *process of impoverishment*. After diminishing in incidence through the first half of the last 15 years, undernourishment increased rather seriously in the next half. But World Bank estimates of poverty, represented by Chen-Ravallion, have not considered this serious setback in their formulation.

Poor families spend over 70% of their income on food. An average American family spends over 10%

Source: World Bank 1992; "School Feeding Works for Girls' Education", WFP

It is necessary to interrogate the sources of these discrepancies in the assessment of how the human condition has changed, for the better or worse, over the last 15 years. A sincere effort at pursuing the MDGs

would presuppose an authentic understanding of the current situation. The UNMP progress report released early this year takes on board the contrary figures on poverty and hunger, without a hint of irony or the effort at deeper interrogation. Poverty is a multi-dimensional malady of the human condition. It was once identified with hunger in policy debates. But that identity has become weak over time.²⁰ In separating from its intimate linkage with hunger and other denials, the UNMP loses an opportunity to raise the discourse to the plane of human rights.

Why neo-liberal economic prescriptions do not seem to work

The great divide in the development community today is between those who blame governments for contracting unsustainable levels of debt and then not using aid well, and those who blame the policies promoted by donors and creditors, policies which promoted liberalisation and privatisation in a context of strict budget discipline.

In general, those who blame governments place greater confidence in technocratic solutions to development dilemmas than in the power of democratic processes to make sound policy choices. The UNMP, as exemplified by the recent report, falls into the former camp. The approach outlined in this report has become the reigning orthodoxy on how the MDGs are best achieved. The argument that follows sets out a case that without discarding this approach and its basic premises, little progress is possible.

The approach, which is consistent with the prescriptions of international financial institutions (IFIs) like the World Bank and the IMF, overlooks the fundamental verity that the market should be a servant, not a master, of development. The rush to liberalise, to open markets in developing countries with little concern for the fate of small producers and landless labourers who stand to be driven to ruin, speaks of a disregard for human rights in practice. It perpetuates the dangerous manna that economic growth, rather than the restoration of human rights, may be the key to the elimination of poverty.

The 48 poorest countries account for less than 0.4 per cent of global exports

source: Human Development Report 2000 <<http://hdr.undp.org/reports/global/2000/en/>>, p. 82, United Nations Development

If markets were to serve people, rather than the other way around, trade rules would be forged within the context of human rights law. And the IFIs would not insist on recipient countries embracing free market orthodoxy when they contract loans for emergency bailouts or long-term development projects.

While the UNMP's recent report expresses respect for international human rights treaties and concedes the importance of countries complying with these treaties, it does not recommend any international system for enforcing compliance. Indeed, the prescriptions handed out by the IFIs, may in their essence, be singularly violative of basic human rights.

Compliance with international human rights law is undermined when, among other things, countries compete for foreign direct investment (FDI) by minimising or casting aside labour, social and environmental protections that impose costs on investors. The UNMP says that the World Bank is "in error" when it discourages competition among countries for foreign direct investment (FDI) by offering tax and other benefits. This stance implicitly endorses a "race to the bottom" as countries compete for investment. This is a mistake, as is the UNMP's failure to recommend any binding corporate responsibility standards. The UNMP's 'bottom line' would expand corporate rights without any binding protections of fundamental human rights.

Commission for Africa (CfA)

The CfA has earned some applause for being the first recorded instance of the rich countries of the North acknowledging that they owe a debt to Africa. But a closer scrutiny of its text would show that this is mere token acknowledgment. The CfA identifies the mechanisms of trade and aid as the solutions and then adds a vital additional condition: "governance". In other words, the way out of the morass in which Africa finds itself, is to reform the relationship between the citizenry and their

governments, making governance more transparent by investing people with the power to question, and compelling rulers to accept the burden of accountability.

There is a great deal of truth in this diagnosis, provided the element of self-serving propaganda is sifted out. Africa as a continent, since its agonised liberation from colonialism beginning in the late-1950s, was set on a path to progress till the 1980s. The 1980s, when the continent was beguiled, even overwhelmed by multinational bank propaganda on its endless economic potentialities, spelt the difference between unfulfilled promise and unmitigated catastrophe. The external debt of sub-Saharan Africa rose from just over 20 per cent of GDP in 1980 to 100 per cent in 1988.²¹ This was if anything, a 'governance' issue for the people of that continent to worry about.

According to the World Bank's statistics, total inward debt flows to sub-Saharan Africa through the decade of the 1980s was no more than \$3.2 billion. How the continent's debt in this period could have bloated to a figure in excess of its total domestic production, is a matter that the people surely have a right to be told about. If corrupt oligarchs and their patrons in the finance sector in the rich countries of the North colluded to bleed Africa white, that surely is a sin that the people of the continent should be spared the burden of expiating for.

Yet, the CfA devotes considerably less attention to the question of debt than it does to aid. In the little time it has to consider the question of debt, it concedes that there is a 'significant negative relationship between debt service payments and economic growth'.²² It follows up by characterising debt service as 'negative aid' and emphasises the need to provide additional liquidity upfront to indebted countries, while omitting to mention that the developed world led by the US has been the main obstacle to an issue of Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) that would have offered highly indebted countries an escape route from the enervating regime of austerity they were compelled to adopt by the IMF and the World Bank. It then proposes a debt-relief compact whose cost implications remain unclear. But it puts out a tentative figure of \$2 billion annually - less than a hundredth of the external debt that the people of sub-Saharan Africa have repaid several times over since they were sucked into the debt trap.

Basic service provisioning and issues of access and control over services and resources

Over these years, there has been a growing pressure from the IFIs, donors and at times even from the governments to privatise basic services. The private

sector already plays a significant and sometimes dominant role in the delivery of basic services around the world.

While the poor talk about the poor performance and remoteness of basic services, and clearly articulate the need for 'free' services, the costs for which they cannot afford in any case, the MDGs and the UNMP maintain neutrality on the question whether public or private service delivery is most appropriate.

Stating that it may be preferable for the State to confine its role to regulation of private service provision, the UNMP also recommends that the public sector should subsidise impoverished households so that the private sector can enter markets with guaranteed consumers. In fact, the UNMP appears to endorse a two-tiered service supply with a corporate segment focused on the healthy and wealthy and an aid-dependent public sector focusing on the poor and sick. While the suggestion that governments should maintain a role in service delivery is positive, this particular model is likely to create differential rights of access to basic services. It would undermine any approach to poverty premised upon human rights.

Many studies across the world have documented the enhancement of burdens for the poor as a result of privatisation of basic services.²³ A recent study of the World Bank on the record of the Public Private Partnerships in infrastructure (PPPI), finds that the efficiency gains of the project and service were achieved at the cost of increase in the burden imposed on the lowest income groups connected. It also refers to the "cream skimming in the design of the reforms which has often left poorer rural and suburban areas out of service obligations".

Privatisation of basic services offers no panacea to the poor. Most crucially, the UNMP fails to address the fact that, for 25 years, donors and creditors - especially the IFIs — have required developing countries to unilaterally liberalise trade and privatise assets with no reciprocal concessions from industrialised countries.

The wealthiest 20% of the world's people

- Use 58% of the world's energy.
- Consume 45% of all meat and fish.
- own 87% of the world's vehicles
- have access to 74% of all telephone lines.

Possible conflicts of interest are present in the drive for privatising basic services despite public opposition and the poor performance of public-private partnerships (PPPs). Governments should utilise democratic processes to make decisions about the appropriate modalities for service delivery. At present, donors and creditors employ strategies such as withdrawing finance from a sector until governments agree to privatise, or requiring governments to take a step-by-step approach to privatisation.

At the minimum, decisions that could seriously impinge on access to basic services should be preceded by consultations across all social strata.

- Public and private spending on health care spending in Finland is \$2,000 per person
- Public and private spending on health care spending in Vietnam is \$3 per person Excerpt from Human Development Report 1998, *UNDP*

In this respect, the warning inherent in the Final report of the UNMP's International Task Force on Urban Slumdweller (titled *Investing in Development*), that local governments and citizens need to be 'well-appraised of the advantages and pitfalls of privatising public services' needs to be built upon. The Task Force had warned that in 'few other fields of urban governance are transparency and accountability as vital'. Nor does the UNMP carry forward the recommendation of the Trade Task Force that governments should proceed with caution when determining ownership over environmental services, such as water. In these respects, the UNMP assessment fails to address one of the MDGs on environment, which requires that basic urban amenities be delivered to 100 million residents of urban slums by the year 2020.

How trade liberalisation is hurting people

Free Trade?

The rich countries call it free trade, but what is free about having your hands tied by poverty?

The United States paid its own cotton farmers \$3.9 billion in subsidies in 2000/2001- three times more than its entire aid budget for Africa's 800 million people.

In 2000 every cow in the European Union received \$913 in subsidy

while every Sub Saharan African person received \$8 in EU aid.

In contrast, countries like Ethiopia and Malawi have even been stopped from providing their farmers with subsidised seeds that would make easier for them to grow food crops.

According to estimates by the World Bank, reduction of trade tariff could be understood in the following manner

- 65 per cent of reduction in tariffs has been autonomous (usually as a result of an IMF/WB agreement)
- 10 per cent stemmed from regional agreements
- 25 per cent stemmed from multilateral agreements.²⁴

Reduction of tariff and ensuing liberalisation of trade is supported by UNMP. Although the UNMP opposes the negotiation of 'new' trade issues – investment, competition and 'transparency in government procurement' – it fails to mention that the IFIs are imposing binding policy conditions on loan agreements that require developing countries to implement these issues. In the liberalisation process, the creditors have imposed twice as many trade policy conditions on low-income countries as on more prosperous countries.²⁵

For instance, the World Bank exerts significant pressure on governments to liberalise government procurement as a backdoor technique of liberalising and privatising delivery of services, including basic services.

The UNMP, World Bank and IMF call for the scaling-up of 'aid for trade', especially 'trade facilitation infrastructure', such as ports, roads, railways, electricity

and water utilities. Much of the 'aid for trade' support is for infrastructure development and does not contribute to offset the losses small and marginal farmers incur as a result of trade liberalisation. 'Aid for Trade' support is highly iniquitous, since there is no proposal from anywhere to extend \$1 billion per day to developing countries to compensate them for losses arising from the equivalent amount of subsidies that industrialised countries provide to their farmers. When subsidised agricultural products are dumped in developing countries, domestic farmers often cannot compete, and suffer losses of livelihoods and hunger.

Export subsidies that destroy livelihoods

The EU, USA and other G8 countries are giving direct and indirect export subsidies to their farmers and corporations worth \$300 million a year. These subsidies encourage over-production in G8 countries, with much of the surplus then dumped below cost in developing countries. Together the EU and US account for half of all wheat exports. On average, they export at prices one third the real cost of production. EU dumping of sugar has pushed world prices down by 17%. Poor farmers cannot compete against such unfair rules. In Swaziland alone, an estimated 36,000 livelihoods in sugar were destroyed when the export market

to South Africa was lost as a result of EU dumping. There is an urgent need to

- prohibit all dumping
- call publicly for the right of all developing countries to protect against dumped goods, without having first to prove injury to farmers, industry or other groups
- agree an early end date for all export subsidies
- agree to swift reform of agricultural subsidies, to shift domestic support away from production to sustainable farming, environmental protection and support for small scale farmers
- support measures to developing countries that depend on cheap food imports, so that they're able to meet their food security needs

G8 The ActionAid Report, ActionAid International, 2005

What 'Aid for trade' does is that it offers short-term financing to 'buy' the agreement by developing countries to trade deals, as cited in the case of the Central American Free Trade Agreement. Compensatory arrangements are important. However, unless the conflicts of interest implicit in the aid endeavour are addressed and the

whole issue is seen from the justice standpoint, developing countries will continue to feed on the 'crumbs' that rich countries throw from their table.

The emphasis of UNMP on some level of compensatory funding for the losers is a step in the right direction, in as much as it recognises the losses of the developing countries and poor farmers, and calls for a range of funds to compensate at least some of the losses suffered by the poor.

However, the main problem with the compensatory fund policy remains that it converts an issue of rights into an issue of aid dependant welfarism. Also the compensation for trade losses comes laden with problems because of the conflict of interest represented by the developed countries employing multilateral channels to continue to hand directions to the government on how to liberalise trade, especially when liberalisation enriches them, sometimes at the expense of the recipients.

For instance, Mexico's experience under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), shows that as resources were shifted to commercial farmers to help them compete, about 400,000 wage labour jobs were created in commercial farming. But, between a million and 1.3 million small-scale agriculture jobs were destroyed, creating a situation of significant net job losses. Since NAFTA came into effect, 600,000 maize farmers in Mexico have gone out of business.²⁶

There is a long-standing, simmering debate about the relationship between aid, 'good' policies, growth and poverty reduction.²⁷ World Bank economists Dollar and Kraay have issued reports that have helped industrialised countries sell the purported benefits of trade liberalisation to developed countries.²⁸ Their findings conclude that 'good policies', such as 'openness', foster growth and that 'globalisers', such as China and India, do well and 'non-globalisers' fare badly.

What the study fails to mention is that, for the most part, it is commodity-producing countries that are

dubbed 'non-globalisers' and commodity prices have plummeted over the last two decades. In 2005, the World Bank conceded that the institution oversold the benefits of exporting commodities. The UNMP contends that low-income countries are caught in a 'poverty trap', vicious circle of impoverishment and disinvestment, and that significant injections of investment capital will jumpstart a 'virtuous circle' of growth and poverty reduction. To some extent, what UNMP calls a 'poverty trap' might more accurately be called a 'commodity trap' - signified by a long-term decline of commodity prices, especially relative to the cost of manufactures.

Industrialised nations abandoned all commodity stabilisation programs in 2000. While the Blair Commission for Africa proposes reintroduction of commodity stabilisation efforts, the UNMP does not. The UNMP gives the false impression that a decade – until the year 2015 – is sufficient to achieve the MDGs, while historical analysis shows that developing countries would need to make progress at a rate exceeding any historical precedent in order to achieve many of the goals.

Trade-related losses

Adverse 'terms of trade', arising out of a fall in prices of exported commodities in relation to prices of imported products, account for \$400 billion in losses to the countries of sub-Saharan Africa every year. This represents 6 times the annual development assistance they obtain. Low-income countries have experienced plummeting commodity prices as compared to manufactures.

A fallout of liberalisation and economic globalisation has been an enormous loss of trade taxes. This range of taxes comprised up to a third of budget revenues in low-income countries. As this source of revenue is eroded, national budgets are depleted. Using a panel of 125 countries over 20 years, Baunsgaard and Keen find that low-income countries 'typically recover at most 30 cents for each dollar of lost trade tax revenue, even over the longer-term'.²⁹

Business and industry in low-income countries continue to lose markets and sales revenues due to premature trade liberalisation policies induced by policy conditionalities attached to IMF and World Bank loans. Domestic businesses sometimes wither in the face of international import competition.

Open capital accounts are an invitation to capital flight, money laundering and tax evasion. In 1997–98, the torrential outflows of capital from Southeast Asian countries which had prematurely opened their capital accounts inflicted a terrible human price.³⁰

Figures for 2004 confirm structural shifts in development assistance from loans to grants. Foreign aid grants have increased by a cumulative total of \$20 billion over the past three years, while net official lending (to both middle and low-income borrowers) has declined by \$52 billion, implying a \$32 billion decline in net official flows (aid and lending combined), due to net declines in IMF and World Bank flows.

Official development assistance (ODA) increased by just over \$10 billion in 2003 to \$69 billion (although after accounting for inflation and exchange rate changes, the real increase was only 4 percent). Sub-Saharan Africa has received 60 per cent of increases in ODA disbursements over the five-year period 1998–2003. However, most of these funds were allocated for addressing post-conflict situations, leaving little for development aid.³¹

Financial globalisation and the loss of peoples' autonomy

The UNMP report talks about increasing savings rate to meet essential social infrastructure and human capital needs in the developing countries. But it overlooks the grim irony of a situation in which developing countries have begun to run persistent current account surpluses, indicating an excess of savings over investment.

This excess, evidently cannot be used to meet the social and human needs of developing countries that cry out for attention. Rather, a quarter century since the debt

crisis, developing countries have been led into ploughing their savings into the US economy, to support its consumption expenditure.

As the World Bank has admitted, this is an investment decision that is not free of costs. But these costs borne by the developing countries are perhaps the *reductio ad absurdum* of neo-liberalism: the transformation of the developing countries of the South, in the space of one generation, from relatively debt-free capital importers, to debt-burdened involuntary exporters of capital as in the 1980s and 1990s, and finally to debt-burdened voluntary exporters of capital, as in the first 5 years of this millennium.

In essence, financial globalisation has meant that resources have slipped out of the control of people, essential needs of social infrastructure and human capital are sacrificed in favour of the profit imperative. And the rising tide of aspirations of the poor of the world is beaten back with illusory signs of progress in the struggle against poverty.

Debt and Development:

Malawi spends more on servicing debt than on health care, even though one in five Malawians are HIV positive.

Zambia pays \$25 million a year to IMF although 40% of rural women are unable to read and write.

Nigeria borrowed US\$5 billion, has paid \$16 billion to date and still owes \$32 billion!!

In an unwitting admission of the compromised outlook that it brings into the engagement, the UNMP cannot think beyond the aid paradigm in setting out the instrumentalities that could be deployed to achieve the MDGs. It does not grapple with the debt problem, except to suggest voluntary debt forgiveness or write-offs on a selective basis. It chooses not to engage with the issue that the debts of the South have been repaid several times over, and that it is a minimal requirement of restoring global justice, that these be written off.

There is also little doubt that the resource accrual for meeting the MDGs cannot be addressed without

attending to the crisis of commodity prices. Developing countries should use the low-interest rate regime that prevails to start buffer-stocking operations in critical commodities, so that prices are restored to a level where producers are assured of a decent livelihood. There has been much talk of diversifying out of traditional occupations by primary producers in the South. But there is little chance of successful diversification under conditions of acute distress, when subsistence itself becomes a singular preoccupation.

Two approaches to estimating the value of aid

The UNMP enjoins donors to set clear targets to reduce administrative costs, move into capacity building, untie aid, increase budget support, focus aid on low-income countries and on poverty reduction. It enjoins donors to make multi-year and rising commitments to countries where budget transparency and anti-poverty efforts are high. In July 2005, donors issued the 'Paris Declaration' announcing their intentions in this regard. However, the donors fail to address basic conflicts of interest in their provision of aid. For instance, there are no targets for the reduction of tied aid, which may comprise 60 per cent of all aid. Some estimate that tied aid reduces the value of aid to recipient countries by 25 to 40 per cent, by requiring them to import over-priced goods and services. The UNMP seems to believe that donor and creditor institutions can abandon their 'old ways' and, with much higher aid levels, harness their fortunes to the pursuit of MDGs.

A recent study by ActionAid International suggests that 61 per cent of aid flows are 'phantom' rather than 'real'. This figures to almost 90 per cent in the case of France and US.³² These findings are based on an analysis of the 'failure to target aid at the poorest countries, runaway spending on overpriced technical assistance from international consultants, tying aid to purchases from donor's firms, cumbersome and ill-coordinated planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting requirements, excessive administrative costs, late and partial disbursement, double counting of debt relief and aid spending on immigration services'.

Aid: Some facts

globally, only 40% of aid goes to low-income countries, despite their accounting for more three quarters of all people living in poverty

only one third of aid goes to sub-Saharan Africa, the region where poverty is deepest and most widespread, and where the MDGs are furthest off track

there are no sub-Saharan African countries among top ten aid recipients of the EC, which gives almost three quarters of its aid to middle-income countries

three of the top five Japanese aid recipients are middle income countries.

20% of the aid promised by European Union arrives more than a year later – a year in 11 million people will die due to the lack of food or medicine.

Aid to 28 countries with the highest HIV adult prevalence rate declined by a third between 1995 and 2000.

Another approach to assessing the value of aid would begin with the premise that to ascertain what proportion is effective in promoting sustainable human development, the UNMP must consider net rather than gross flows of aid - aid minus debt service and profit repatriation. According to a coalition of African NGOs, the Highly Indebted Poor Countries initiative of the World Bank has delivered more than \$48 billion debt cancellation, but no participating country has achieved debt sustainability. Low income countries still owe a total of \$523 billion in debt to all creditors. Africa alone has a debt stock of \$330 billion and still spends \$15 billion in annual debt service to industrialised countries and international financial institutions.

The promises of partial debt cancellation that the G-8 have offered to 14 countries are muted by the fact that, if the debt initiative is actually financed, the rise in oil prices is going to be greater than the debt relief given to sub-Saharan countries this year. According to the International Energy Agency officials, the rise in crude prices will double the bill for oil imports to \$20 billion a year.

How this will squeeze African nations can be seen from the example of Ghana. Prices of its principal exports (cocoa and gold) have declined and the oil bill has risen. Even in this dire situation, donor and creditor

support remains unpredictable. It has often waned as a signal of displeasure at the country's supposedly "weak" disinvestments and privatisation performance.

Profit repatriation is another significant issue confronting developing countries. Citigroup earns 10 per cent of its consolidated profits from ownership of the Mexican bank, Banamex. In comparison, it makes a mere 5 percent of its profits from Japan, which has an economy five times the size of Mexico's economy. Ghana's Anglo-Ashanti Corporation will not pay tax for over 25 years and is allowed to hold as much as 80 per cent of its foreign exchange earnings in overseas accounts.

The net resources position of developing countries is also determined by factors such as capital flight, trade-related losses, and losses due to speculative flows. Collier and his associates point out that 39 per cent of African private wealth is held abroad.³³ While the CfA constituted by British Prime Minister Tony Blair endorses the idea of policing corrupt payments and returning funds deposited by Africans in European banks, the UNMP does not. It offers in short, little by way of constructive suggestions on the crippling burden of debt that developing countries carry, when international justice demands that the people of the South be spared the consequences of a debt that they had no part in incurring.

Missing the mark: cost estimates of the MDGs

There are conceptual flaws in the formulation of MDGs, such as the first one: the goal of halving, 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.

The MDG framework neglects the need for a productive economy and job creation, which would drive achievement of the MDGs. Moreover, since the vast majority of the world's poor are farmers, most of whom are women, their livelihoods depend not upon \$1 per day, but access to resources: land, water, credit, and agricultural inputs and a current consumption 'basket', including fees for health care, education and utility

services. Researchers have found that 'while the link between income inequality and lower subsequent growth may indeed be tenuous...asset inequality appears to remain as a major causal determinant of countries' growth performance'.³⁴

As it is, the dollar a day norm is static over time and hence, inaccurate and misleading. Importantly, the norm also underestimates global poverty. By the dollar a day standard, only 11.3 per cent of Bolivians and 15.2 percent of Indonesians are poor. But then in many countries, half of the 'non-poor' have children who are malnourished. If the poverty line were the weighted average of the poverty lines that each country uses, then the global poverty line would be about 10 times higher than the existing standard.³⁵

The UNMP argues that there is a 'financing gap' – the gap between available resources and the resources needed to jumpstart growth and achieve the MDGs – and that, closing the gap is all that is required to set the economy on the path to growth. Donors and creditors continue to employ the 'financing gap' theory, notwithstanding the point that it has been widely discredited.³⁶ Basing itself on this fallacy, the UNMP promotes a concept that the donors and creditors already acknowledge as a failure. The UNMP asserts that, in calculating the financing gap, agencies have never before taken into account the needs of the poorest and the natural environment.

In addition to its flawed and simplistic 'financing gap' approach, the UNMP makes many missteps in its calculation of costs to achieve the MDGs. Reddy and Heuty argue for instance, that:

The supposition that solutions to complex world problems can be known in advance does no service to the cause of identifying relevant and applicable actions and policies. Such solutions can only be identified in the crucible of experience... An alternative to the technocratic approach to strategic planning is needed, in view of the potential damage from the use of erroneous analytical models.³⁷

In addition, the relationship between expenditures and outcomes needs further examination. Poor outcomes may be related to the focus on privatisation of basic services, including health care, education, water, irrigation, electricity and agricultural extension.

Military Spending: Implications for MDGs?

The average annual rate of increase in world military expenditure over the 10-year period 1995–2004 was 2.4 per cent in real terms. This average encompasses two distinct trends: first, the post-cold war reduction in military spending which culminated in 1998; second, an increasing trend since 1998, accelerating to an annual average increase of around 6 percent in real terms over the three-year period 2002–2004.

The major determinant of the world trend in military expenditure is the change in the USA, with 47 per cent of the world total. United States military expenditure has increased rapidly during the period 2002–2004, as a result of massive budgetary allocations for the 'global war on terrorism', primarily for military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. These have been funded through supplementary appropriations on top of the regular budget. The supplementary appropriations for this purpose allocated to the Department of Defence for financial years 2003–2005, amounted to approximately \$238 billion and exceeded the combined military spending of Africa, Latin America, Asia (except Japan but including China) and the Middle East in 2004 (\$214 billion in current dollars), that is, of the entire developing world.

The region in which military expenditure increased most in 2004 is South Asia, where spending increased by 14.3 percent in real terms. Other regions with strong increases in 2004 are North Africa (12 per cent) and North America (9.9 per cent). In Central America and Western Europe regional military expenditure declined in 2004. ...

The share of global resources used for military purposes has increased steadily during the period 2000–04. As a global average, the military burden, as expressed by the share of GDP spent on the military, increased from 2.3 per cent in 2001 to 2.5 per cent in 2003. This represents a rate of increase of a full 0.1 percentage point per year, a significant rate considering the large size of world GDP. Estimated world military expenditure in 2004 corresponds to 2.6 percent of world GDP, which suggests a continuation of this rate of increase. ...

Assessments of the economic and social impact of the significant rise in US military expenditure have evolved around two major and interrelated issues: its impact on the USA's economic growth and its impact on non-military government spending. The first issue concerns the extent to which military expenditure contributes to the budget deficit and the impact of the deficit on future economic growth. The second issue concerns whether military expenditure is crowding out non-military government expenditure or will do so in future. ...

Security is a prerequisite for sustainable development. Several donors of development assistance are now favourably disposed to treating the security sector as a legitimate area of support in many recipient countries, particularly those that are conflict prone.

While all major donors of development assistance seem to agree on the need for security as the basis for sustainable development and accept the broad development goals underlining the agenda of security sector reform, they differ in the ways in which they approach support for the security sector.

Some countries fear that extending the definition of official development assistance (ODA) to cover security-related issues may diminish the overall support for real (social and economic) development efforts since security problems abound in several aid-receiving countries. Others fear that including security in ODA may result in the cold war-style assistance, with the strategic interests of donors dictating the direction of their aid policy or with assistance skewed in favour of the military sector....

Source: SIPRI Yearbook 2005: *Armaments, Disarmament and International Security*, Oxford University Press, Oxford and New York, for the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2005, pp. 311–343.

Blindspots in diagnosing development dilemmas

The UNMP states that it practises “clinical economics” that assesses development needs of a country from a number of factors, including its history, geography, and ethnography. However, the UNMP fails to grapple with the fact that in many developing countries, progress toward some human development goals stopped or reversed since 1980. In some countries and sectors, progress has resumed.

Conflicts of interest in the aid system, as we know them today, arose in the early-1980s when plummeting commodity prices and debt crises led donors and creditors to impose “structural adjustment” policy conditions (e.g., trade liberalisation, privatisation and low inflation rates) on financial transfers. With the goals of capturing foreign markets and recouping debts, the US and the UK led a pursuit of Northern interests using bare-knuckles power. Recipient governments slashed budgets, liberalised and privatised their economies.³⁸

The UNMP acknowledges that, “policy-based development lending to Africa over the past 20 years, known as ‘structural adjustment lending,’ did not solve the problem.” Indeed, the IMF’s World Economic Outlook (WEO) 2000, stated that (from 1980–2000) “too many countries and nearly one-fifth of the world population have regressed in relative and sometimes even absolute terms. This is arguably one of the greatest economic failures of the 20th Century.”

UNMP lauds the benefits of openness and economic globalisation, just as most mainstream economists do, using the examples of India and China. ‘By now, the anti-globalisation movement should see that globalisation, more than anything else, has reduced the numbers of extreme poor in India by 200 hundred million and in China by 300 hundred million since 1990. Far from being exploited by multinational corporations, these countries and many others like them have achieved unprecedented rates of economic growth on the basis of foreign direct investment and the export-led growth that followed’.

Moreover, the Indian and Chinese cases are ambiguous triumphs at best, as we have seen. And finally, neither India nor China is an ‘open’ country in the sense that the term is generally used. There is a strong temptation to argue from here, that their success would be the greater, if they were to shed these residual reservations about opening up. But the evidence suggests that the sliver of policy autonomy that they hold on to has been responsible for their relative political stability.

Structural adjustment policies have generally benefited powerful governments and their transnational corporations, while dramatically slowing growth in developing countries. Consider these facts:

- Growth in developing countries in fact – with perhaps the exception of China – slowed dramatically from 1980 to 1998 as compared to the period 1960-1980.
- Meanwhile, the *sales of the 500 largest firms in the world nearly tripled between 1990 and 2001.*

- Foreign affiliates of TNCs account for a tenth of world GDP and *a third* of world exports.
- Due to increasing emphasis on improving the 'investment climate' for foreign direct investment (FDI), 82 countries made 220 regulatory changes more favourable to FDI between 1995 and 2003.³⁹

Meanwhile, developing countries neglect the potential of liberalising trade between their formal and informal domestic sectors. Governments are failing to marry the dynamism of the informal sector where poor people work as traders, hawkers, or in small enterprises, with the capital and technology of the formal sector.

Importantly, the UNMP endorses the important 'publish what you pay' initiative that attempts to track resource revenues and hold oil, gas and mining companies accountable by demanding transparency in tax payments license fees and royalties. This is critical because many corporations repatriate profits and leave developed countries bereft of benefits and burdened with all the pollution. However, the UNMP fails to endorse any legally-binding measures for holding corporations accountable, as does Joseph Stiglitz in his call for giving foreign consumers the right to take action in foreign courts against corporations that abuse their market power, and the rejection of trade provisions (e.g., Chapter 11 of NAFTA; TRIPS) that grant rights to investors that compromise the rights of government to provide for the general welfare through health, safety and environmental regulations.

In courts of international law, trade laws trump human rights law. When cases go to binding international arbitration, these tribunals are often weighted in favour of private investors.

Who owns MDGs, who will deliver and who is accountable?

It is universally agreed that national "ownership" is the critical ingredient in successful development. In the context of the MDGs, the Secretary General's report outlines the framework and a need for national strategies which States need to adopt to scale up investments for

achieving at least quantitative targets of MDGs. To that end, "each developing country with extreme poverty should by 2006, adopt and begin to implement national development strategy bold enough to meet the MDG targets for 2015". The SG's report also suggests that poor countries cannot afford basic investments needed to move onto a new path of prosperity unless they received targeted external support.

Targeted support in the form of aid is not free of conditionalities. And conditionality has a record of undercutting "ownership," in general, and democratic processes in particular. The UNMP does not call for an end to the practice of attaching policy conditions to loan arrangements, as does the Blair Commission for Africa.

Policy conditionality practices are deep rooted and manifest in many direct and indirect forms. Donors use conditionality in a number of ways: as a financial accountability device, a commitment device, and as a way of inducing policy change. But the underlying concern that leads to conditionality is always the same: lack of confidence in either the commitment or the capacity of the recipient. While it may be right for the donor countries to report and demonstrate to their parliaments and citizens that aid is well spent, conditionality has now moved far beyond what is necessary for basic fiduciary accountability. Since the 1980s, IFIs backed by key G7 shareholders have become increasingly preoccupied with the structural obstacles to growth and poverty reduction, and have sought to use loans to leverage the kinds of reforms that their economists have deemed desirable. As a result, the average number of World Bank conditions per programme tripled between the early 1980s and mid-1990s. By the 1990s, the IMF mission with its own structural conditions bolstered the World Bank's efforts.

As conditionality has escalated and structural reforms have become more complex, donor countries have sought to micromanage many of the day-to-day functions of government by specifying the detailed steps countries must take to improve policy. Donor countries are using Technical Assistance to place staff, many of

them expatriates, in key government positions where they can implement and monitor change.

There is also growing consensus that the impact of conditionality on poor countries has often been negative. This impact is felt in at least four key ways:

- distortion of democratic processes
- imposition of inappropriate policy choices
- generation of transaction costs
- stop/start financing and threats of reprisal.

In fact, legislatures have no jurisdiction over grant resources and little jurisdiction over loan resources. The IMF and World Bank work with executives and finance ministries in recipient countries to determine policy goals. Donors and creditors (and their consultants) often draft new laws or amendments to existing laws. Aid flows are undercutting democratization and will continue to do so unless legislatures reclaim their authority.

Donors and creditors espouse the myth that they do not pressure governments to accept their preferred policies. However, in its report for the World Bank, Princeton Survey Research Associates⁴⁰ found that:

Most opinion leaders think the World Bank forces its agenda on developing countries. This finding is consistent and overwhelming in all regions and in virtually all countries...for one in three opinion leaders, "forcing the Bank's agenda" is a clear criticism of the Bank's development efforts. These opinion leaders believe that the Bank forces its agenda on developing countries in a way that irresponsibly affects development efforts in their country...one in two opinion leaders in South Asia say the Bank forces its agenda and that the Bank is often irresponsible in its development efforts in their country. Less than half of opinion leaders in Sub-Saharan Africa say that the Bank gives high priority to helping their country with poverty reduction.

As elected bodies do not always pass the legislation drafted by creditor officials and their consultants, the multilateral development banks frequently require heads of states to issue "Supreme" or "Executive Decrees." For example, a loan agreement to Mali notes that a key aspect of the civil service pension reform will be executive

authority to set pension parameters by decree. Drafts of a new pension regime law and a decree determining pension parameters have been prepared. A policy condition calls for a reduction in budget subsidies to the pension fund by end-December 2005.

Realising the MDG Target: Government of Indonesia

Indonesia will need support from the international community, particularly from developed countries as development cooperation partners. Due to insufficient domestic capital, Indonesia needs a continued net inflow of foreign capital. To retain current foreign investments and attract new investment, Indonesia has taken concrete steps to improve its investment climate, including reforms in the business legal and regulatory framework and other measures provided in the Government's IMF exit strategy, otherwise known as white paper. There is a net outflow of ODA loans, as debt service payments (principal and interest) for outstanding ODA loans exceed new inflows.... without such cooperation from developed countries- as asked for in the Millennium Development Compact – the realisation of MDG targets by Indonesia would be jeopardised.

Progress Report on the Millennium Development Goals, Govt of Indonesia, Feb 2004, pg 21

When donors and creditors talk of the need for countries to be in the "driver's seat" of the development process, it appears more a case of back seat driving. The UNMP also calls for much greater national participation in policy-making. However, historically, there has been almost no peoples' participation in crucial decisions about macroeconomic and structural policies.

If at all, attempts at national participation are only cosmetic. The IMF and World Bank require that each low-income country government prepare a medium-term Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) setting forth its development strategy, which must be endorsed by the executive boards of both institutions. The intention was that PRSPs would foster national ownership. In theory, IMF and World Bank programs are executed within the parameters and priorities set forth in PRSPs. The World Bank reports that it derives its policy advice from its own assessments of government performance and, to the degree that it is useful, from the PRSP.⁴¹ The veto power of the IMF and World Bank executive boards over the PRSP has a 'chilling effect' on participatory decision-making.

Civil society organizations provide little, if any, input into formulation of macroeconomic and structural policies. As some non-governmental organizations (NGOs) put it, the way to conjugate the verb “to participate” is as follows: “I participate, you participate, s/he it participates, we participate, they decide.”

Against this background, the UNMP takes a step forward when it states that public investment programmes need to be guided by bottom-up assessments of needs rather than ex- ante budget constraints set by the donor countries.

However, the term “bottom-up” appears to signify that the UNMP begins with the MDG-related needs of a given country rather than the budget limitations imposed by creditors. The UNMP does not apparently use the term to mean that citizens will lead the assessment process, or that “bottom up” needs assessment would be conducted by governments and citizens.

Ethiopia’s case is illustrative of how in bottom up assessments, citizens are left out of the process of assessments. In Ethiopia the UNMP joined the IFIs and the UN in conducting the “bottom-up assessment” for the country.

Policy conditions attached to aid financing carries implicit “threats of reprisal.” IFIs can suspend credit, aid and debt relief when countries, particularly low-income countries, fail to comply with policy conditions. Debt relief is withheld from countries that failed to expedite privatization processes - as in the cases of Nicaragua, Benin, Mali, Chad and Nigeria. Donors and creditors have withheld credits from Mali because of that government’s opposition to privatizing the government’s cotton marketing board.

The problems with these reprisals are political as well as economic. On the economic side, donors and creditors can withdraw resources from poverty-stricken countries, as they did in case of Malawi from 2002 until mid-2005. By their action, they threw the country into economic chaos for adopting policies that other countries, such as Pakistan or India, can implement

without reprisals because of their geostrategic importance and deep markets. On the political side, threats of reprisal undermine democratic governance.

Ownership of MDGs and MDG-based PRSPs can only be skin deep at best in this macro economic environment. The call for sustained targeted external support and for each developing country to implement a national development strategy will remain illusory, as the MDGs and the UNMP chose the instrument of aid expansion over the more fundamental restructure required to stop

- the massive capital outflows from developing countries on account of their debt servicing
- profit repatriation of transnational corporations
- capital flight, and
- losses on account of adverse terms of trade and capital account liberalization.

Yet another reality to consider is that within developing countries too, the poorest and the most marginalized are most voiceless. With participation in their local and national governments severely restricted and the accountabilities weak, how much do people really matter in the MDGs?

In a scenario like this the questions of accountability get muted. In the name of accountability we have a litany of broken promises everywhere - donors not holding up their promises of aid and government frequently breaking theirs to the people.

Donors are reluctant to be accountable for results, similarly they are unwilling to adopt targets that would allow them to be identified individually for what they have and have not delivered. Some donors have also rejected accountability mechanisms at the country level. Neither are they transparent. This behaviour suggests that for all the talk of ‘partnership’ and “development compacts’, there are serious limits on the extent to which donors wish to be answerable for their actions.

A poor person in Pakistan, while presenting their charter of demand, reflected this sentiment well "*O White collared! Be "considerate" towards the children and their young mothers upon whose shoulders you are resting"...***he was not expecting more!!!**

Charting course away from the lost decades

It is hence clear that none of the UNMP strategies will work unless the MDG process is fully democratised. To chart a viable course away from the lost decades, developing countries need to bring their people into the dialogue. This is a question of restoring to the poor not the formal rights of voting and choosing their political representatives, but the substantive rights of access to the basic necessities of life. This alone would make

people active agents in the betterment of their condition, rather than passive recipients of the generosity of others. The means adopted for the MDGs cannot be separated from the ends. The bureaucratic means that currently enjoy favour with the UN and with national governments, would imprison the MDGs in a narrow discourse of statistical disputation.

On the other hand, a rights-oriented approach would make the MDGs an objective owned and implemented by the poor people themselves. The periodic reviews of progress in the sterile conference halls of the UN would become superfluous, since the review would be an ongoing process conducted by the people in farms, factories and homesteads across the world.

Endnotes

1. The U.N. Millennium Project, *Investing in Development, A Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals*, Report to the Secretary-General, New York, 2005, page 14. (Hereafter, the *UNMP Report*).
2. ECLAC, *Social Panorama of Latin America, 2004*, page 6.
3. Commission for Africa, *Our Common Interest*, March 2005, page 102.
4. The data can be downloaded from the U.N. statistics website, at the following URL: http://unstats.un.org/unsd/mi/mi_series_results.asp?rowID=580
5. 'Rich man, poor man', *The Economist*, September 25, 2003.
6. 'The silent majority', *The Economist*, April 7, 2005.
7. 'China's growing pains', *The Economist*, August 19, 2004; and 'And there 's another country', *The Economist*, December 13, 2001.
8. The World Bank, *Global Development Finance, 2005*, Volume II, page 140.
9. *Ibid*, pages 8, 11.
10. Robert Wade, 'Winners and Losers', *The Economist*, (By Invitation), April 26, 2001.
11. *A Fair Globalisation: Creating opportunities for all*, Report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization, the International Labour Office, Geneva, 2004, page 30.
12. *Ibid*, pages 42-3.
13. *Ibid*, Section 6 (conclusion).
14. Angus Deaton and Valerie Kozel, 'Data and Dogma: The great Indian poverty debate', Research Program in Development Economics, Princeton University, January 2005, available at: http://www.wws.princeton.edu/~rpds/downloads/deaton_kozel_datadogma.pdf.
15. *A Fair Globalisation, op cit.*, page 42.
16. *Ibid*, page 46.
17. *Ibid*, page 40.
18. International Labour Office, Geneva, *Global Employment Trends for Youth, 2004*.
19. *In Larger Freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all*, Report of the U.N. Secretary-General, Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit, March 21, 2005, page 5.
20. *The UNMP report* records the rather different estimates of poverty and malnutrition in its main assessment (chapter 2) and goes on without seeking to analyse the reasons for this discrepancy, or commenting on the adequacy of a poverty measure that is wholly premised upon income criteria and fails to capture the socially determined entitlements that are conferred on the individuals and social groups concerned.
21. The essential figures can be found in *The Challenge to the South*, the report of the South Commission, OUP, Oxford, 1990, page 229.
22. *Our Common Interest*, page 329.
23. "PPI partnerships versus PPI divorces in Developing Countries", World Bank and Universit e Libre de Bruxelles, January 2005
24. World Bank, *Trade Progress Report: Focus on Country Trade Policy*, 3 March 2005.
25. 80 percent of Extended Structural Adjustment Facility/Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility programs included trade conditions as compared with 42 percent in countries with Stand-by Arrangements, according to the IMF, "Trade Conditionality Under Fund-Supported Programs, 1990-2004, 14 February 2005.
26. Sandra Polaski and Scott Vaughan, *NAFTA's promise and reality: Lessons from Mexico for the Hemisphere*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington DC, 2004.
27. The UNMP, as well as donors and creditors, concur with the reading that aid contributes to growth if it is well-targeted and administered as direct support for country-level investments in countries that meet minimal government requirements.
28. David Dollar and Aart Kraay, 'Trade, Growth and Poverty', World Bank. Initial draft: October 2000; Final draft: July 2002.

29. *Commodity Dependence, Trade, and Growth: When "openness" is not enough*, CGD Working Paper #7, May 2002. Indeed, 'non-globalising' countries are a proxy for commodity-dependent countries.
30. IMF, *Dealing with the Revenue Consequences of Trade Reform*, 15 February 2005, page 19.
31. N Birdsall, "Asymmetric Globalisation: *Global Markets Require Good Global Politics*", Centre for Global Development, Paper Number 12, 2002.
32. *Global Development Finance 2005*, "Summary for Sub-Saharan Africa," World Bank.
33. ActionAid International, *Real Aid*, July 2005.
34. Paul Collier, Anke Hoeffler and Catherine Patillo, 'Flight Capital as a Portfolio Choice', World Bank *Policy Research Paper 2066*, February 1999.
35. Klaus Deininger and Pedro Olinto, *Asset distribution, inequality and growth*, The World Bank, Washington DC.
36. Lant Pritchett in *Who is not Poor? Proposing a Higher International Standard for Poverty*, (Center for Global Development Working Paper #33, November 2003) states that his proposed poverty line in current purchasing power adjusted currency units is about 10 times higher than the existing standard.
37. Easterly, William, *The Ghost of a Financing Gap*, World Bank, 1999.
38. Sanjay Reddy and Antoine Heuty, *Achieving the Millennium Development Goals: What's Wrong with Existing Analytical Models?* June 23, 2005.
39. More on this in succeeding paragraphs.
40. UNCTAD, *World Investment Report, 2003*.
41. *The Global Poll: Multinational Survey of Opinion Leaders 2002*, Princeton Survey Research Associates for the World Bank, May 2003

Chapter Three

Realising Rights or Chasing Mirage?

Like slavery and apartheid, poverty is not natural.
It is man made and it can overcome and eradicated
by the actions of human beings

– Nelson Mandela





The Millennium Development Goals have galvanised unprecedented efforts to meet the needs of the world's poorest, becoming globally accepted benchmarks of broader progress embraced by donors, developing countries, civil society and major development institutions alike.

Kofi Annan

Aspirations to achieve MDGs will have to be seen in light of a series of development promises in the last few decades. In spite of all the policy rhetoric, there has been a lack of political will, financial resources and accountability to realise the Millennium Declaration and make the MDGs possible.

In the landscape of broken promises, MDGs can very well be seen as an act of chasing a mirage. On the one hand, macroeconomic policies consistently undermine the peoples' rights and aspirations to live with dignity, and on the other, governments of rich and poor countries and international institutions consistently fail to be accountable for the promises made to the people.

The key question is whether the MDGs are a million miles away from the 800 million people who go to bed hungry every single day.

This chapter seeks to examine each of the MDG goals from the perspective of human rights and social justice.

MDG 1

Eradicate extreme hunger and poverty

Target

Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than \$1 a day

Indicators

- Proportion of population below \$1 (1993 PPP) per day
- Poverty gap ratio [incidence x depth of poverty]
- Share of poorest quintile in national consumption

Target

Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger

Indicators

- Prevalence of underweight children under five years of age
- Proportion of population below minimum level of dietary energy consumption

Between 1990 and 2001 the percentage of the population living in less than \$1 a day fell significantly in East Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia, and North Africa. The percentage remained stagnant in Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean, and it increased in West Asia and the Commonwealth of Independent States. In 2001 poverty rates were highest in Sub-Saharan Africa, at 46 per cent of the population, and in South Asia, at 31 per cent.

Hunger, still high in several regions of the world, is rising in a few. A third of the population in Sub-Saharan Africa and 27 per cent of the population in Oceania and CIS countries are undernourished. Undernourishment is rising in West

Asia and CIS Asia. And though malnutrition rates are falling on average in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, they are rising in some African countries.¹

The first of the MDG goals actually plans to only reduce poverty, hunger and malnutrition by half. Thus, the target is not about reducing the number of people living in poverty, but the proportion of people. This is an extremely modest target, especially given the fact that poverty and hunger is the very basis of the project.

It brings to the fore two central and closely linked issues that question the very premise of the project. One is the definition of poverty employed by the MDGs Project. The other is the contradiction in reconciling this approach to the human rights framework referred to in the Millennium Declaration and the many human rights declarations before it.

The notion of poverty used by the project is based on an income projection of dollar a day. To use such a notion is to ignore that poverty is about marginalisation and denial of rights. From a human rights framework, the goal of removing poverty cannot be half targeted; the basics of removing poverty from this framework would need to be located in rights - over food, water, livelihood and employment, as well as over other basic services. From this perspective, poverty is both rights and gender neutral.

Devoid of a strong rights agenda, the attempt to remove poverty and hunger is weak. Driven by neo-liberal "trickle down" economics, it focuses only on measurable changes and ignores structural problems such as access and control over resources. It ignores the fact that a substantial percentage of humanity located at the epicentres of poverty does not have enough means and assets to secure food and protection from poverty.

The failure to root the MDGs in general and Goal 1 in particular in previous commitments such as Declaration of Rights to Development or the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights leaves huge gaps in conceptual understanding and poses severe

obstacles to implementation of the agenda. Many previous resolutions such as the right to food and work have been reduced to this one goal. As we see from peoples' demands (see Appendix3) and realities presented in this study, this one goal does not even come close to focussing on the issues of priority to the poor. The approach adopted by the Secretary General's report and the Millennium Project is similar in that it does not adopt a human rights based understanding of poverty and hunger.

It is in this context that the various proposals put forth by the Millennium Report and the SG's report must be placed.

Food and nutrition

Several proposals to augment the availability of food and address nutrition deficiencies have been presented in the UNMP and the SG's report. Principally, they propose a rise in rural productivity with an environmentally sound African Green Revolution, which would raise food output and provide essential wage goods and the means of subsistence for the rest of the economy. Part of the blueprint is an acceleration of the transition to commercial agriculture and urbanisation, so that fewer households are engaged in food production and a higher surplus is available for a growing non-agricultural sector. This process would fuel the process of urbanisation and occupational diversification. It would expand the productive base of the developing country's economy and provide it with more options for export growth.

Commercialisation and linked corporatisation of agriculture and shift in cropping patterns, prove to be long-term disasters for small farmers from the perspective of their food security. There are no signs that transnational agriculture corporations have incentives to farm in environmentally sound or participatory ways, and for the benefit of poor. The continued acquisition of the land and resource assets of small farmers will not help countries meet the MDGs; they will not bring about any changes for the better in the 'epicentres of poverty'. In general, assets such as

water, credit, seeds and fertilisers are being systematically re-allocated from low-value users (e.g., subsistence farmers) to high-value users (e.g., agribusiness and industry).

These concerns apart, it is obvious that small farmers are ill prepared for manufacturing jobs in cities, even if jobs materialise. And it is surely relevant here that the new trade rules (for example, the Trade Related Investment Measures, or TRIMS proposals being considered in multilateral trade talks) end up preventing developing countries from industrialising.

Thus, while proposing liberalisation of agriculture, the MDGs strategy would take away rights of small holders, forcing them out of agriculture. Investments on agriculture in most developing countries remain woefully inadequate and are not showing an increasing trend. Agriculture subsidies are being rolled back, making it difficult for the farmers. Some studies project that small-scale farmers will benefit from higher prices after liberalisation of agriculture. But this is not borne out by experience. Competition in a country should lower prices. However, the elimination of an agricultural monopoly is altogether different. In practice, economies of scale and the role of marketing intermediaries transfer much of the benefit of any price increases that do occur to large-scale firms and trading firms rather than to the rural poor.

Farmers who are ousted from agriculture are ill prepared for a life in the manufacturing or services sector. Micro studies show that with the weight of history against them, farmers thus affected are not skilled enough to find employment. They often end up joining the ranks of farm workers in search of minimum wages.

Liberalisation of agriculture markets has other negative impacts for the poor. An FAO research states that after the trade liberalisation of agriculture, food import bills of countries like Brazil and India doubled, while imports of Pakistan and Bangladesh increased by more than 50 per cent. Since trade liberalisation took effect, 600,000 maize farmers in Mexico have gone out of business. The World Bank takes the position that Sri Lankans would be better off if they liberalised imports

of rice (e.g., subsidised US rice), particularly since growing rice is water-intensive.

Even as UNMP urges rapid conclusion of Doha round and SGs report is silent on impact of trade and financial liberalisation on food security, there are concerns on the anti-development and anti poor outcomes that the WTO negotiations may deliver. On one hand, it is very unlikely that the talks will deliver a pro-development outcome. On the other, the negotiations may not only neglect the Doha mandate but actually contradict it altogether. The negotiations may contribute to further increase in poverty levels in developing countries. Without resolving fundamental issues emanating from the Uruguay Round (UR) Agreements, WTO Members are about to add a new layer of commitments that would further burden developing countries, marginalise the poor and impact growth and development in regions where it is needed most.

The UNMP proposes to compensate developing countries for losses due to agricultural liberalisation, particularly countries in the sub-Saharan region, through Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers subsidising basic services for poor and payment to farmers to rehabilitate resources. The offer is a very raw deal. The decline in Africa's export market share represents an income loss of \$70 billion annually, an amount equivalent to 21 per cent of the region's GDP – and more than five times the \$13 billion it receives as aid!² True compensation will never happen since aid system will never match Northern agriculture subsidies. The UNMP drowns out its message for trade reform through its call for doubling aid.

MDG 2

Achieve universal primary education

Target

Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling

Indicators

- Net enrolment ratio in primary education
- Proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reach grade 5
- Literacy rate of 15–24 year-olds

Global and regional primary school completion rates have improved since 1990, but many regions are far off track for meeting the Goal. There are many regions that are far from meeting the goals. Latin America and the Caribbean, Middle East and North Africa, and South Asia have all seen increases in the primary completion rates between 1990 and 2002, though the overall levels are not very high. Those rates in East Asia and CIS countries of Europe and Asia remained more or less constant over the same period, albeit at high levels. The greatest challenges are in Sub-Saharan Africa, with average primary completion rates at around 50 per cent between 1990 and 2002³.

The goal for universal primary education has been set for 2015. Only one goal was set for 2005: the achievement of gender parity in primary and secondary education. There was good reasoning behind this. Over 100 million children have never been to school and almost two thirds of them are girls.

Education for girls is a basic right and is critical in itself, irrespective of the arguments on development returns it offers. In some respects, the right of girls to education is the most critical of all rights – because education plays such an important role in enabling girls to access and secure their other rights. The achievement of the other MDGs depends on getting girls into school. But it takes years to get returns from girls' schooling. For this reason, the goal of gender parity was set ten years in advance of all other MDGs.

Despite its centrality and importance in the scheme of MDGs, 70 countries will fail to achieve the goal of gender parity in education in 2005 and very little progress has been made in the past five years. This failure means that countries will be off track from achieving all the other MDGs in the longer run. Neither the UNMP nor the SGs report, analyses the failure or proposes new strategies for this critical goal and there is fear that if this has not been taken seriously enough, what is the chance that other targets will be taken seriously?

Apart from the fact that a critical target has been missed, progress on the girls education front presents a grim picture. Over 100 million children in the world are out

of school and 59 per cent of them girls. Over 1 billion adults are unable to read and write – two thirds of them are women. Over 700,000 lives a year could be saved if all children were in school⁴. Girls are the most vulnerable to HIV infection – but their vulnerability decreases with each year of schooling they receive. Children out of school are at the highest risk of infection.

Even in this context, parents in 92 countries will have to pay to send their children to school⁵. When parents have to pay for education, girls are systematically excluded.

When countries abolish school fees, girls flood into school, in millions. In recent years, we have seen this happen repeatedly – in Uganda, Tanzania and Kenya. Just in these 3 countries, the abolition of user fees has brought 7 million children to school. There are other policies that can be adopted to dramatically improve the enrolment and retention of girls in schools, such as the subsidy schemes in Bangladesh. The schemes have played a key role in making Bangladesh one of the few countries to have progressed on gender parity indicators in recent years.

Gender parity in education is only one of two MDGs set on education. The other is to achieve Universal Primary Education by 2015. Most agencies interpret this as meaning that all children will have completed a course of primary education by 2015. That is, that they should all be enrolled in school by 2010.

Unfortunately, this goal and the gender parity goal were plucked out of the framework within which they made real sense. In 2000, just a few months before the Millennium Summit that set the MDGs, governments pledged themselves to the Education For All (EFA) framework in the World Education Forum in Dakar. This framework specified 6 goals, including goals on adult literacy, early childhood education, lower secondary and youth education, and quality. These other four goals are ignored by the MDGs though they are clearly interdependent in a number of ways. For example, education of girls is linked to education of mothers, a decision to send a child to school is also dependant on

women's voice in household decision-making processes, early childhood education can be essential to get children from the poorest backgrounds onto the first rung of the primary education system. The reductionism of the MDGs undermines their prospects of success. One simply cannot look at primary education alone.

Furthermore, there is a need to look at exclusion of children. In any country, there are clear categories of children who are excluded – who never enrol and those who drop out in the first couple of years. Disabled children are almost uniformly excluded, as are street children, the children of pastoralists or migrant labourers, those from linguistic or ethnic minorities, from low caste families or those who are HIV orphans. There is a growing body of good practice about how to get these children into school – but often such attempts remain confined to small projects of specialised organisations. These experiences remain to be converted into learning that can change policy and practice at a national level.

How progress can be achieved

Although the MDG framework is a reductionist and inadequate one, accelerated progress can be made towards achieving the education and gender goals if these are prioritised by the governments. It would mean adequate resourcing, adopting new policies and practices can lead to opening up of schools to completely new groups of children and sustained pressure and support from civil society to hold their promises.

International donors will need to find something like \$7 billion a year in new aid to get all children in school. However, this figure depends on national governments increasing their own spending, and the costs are significant. Abolishing user fees in education brings a double cost. New spending is needed as enrolments go up (more classrooms, more teachers, more textbooks, etc.) New spending is also needed to cover the lost income (user fees were often a key part of revenue for education). No country has yet succeeded in fully covering the double cost - so that, as enrolment rises so do class sizes. This has led to dropping quality. To sustain quality requires even more resources than most estimates suggest.

However, this presents a problem since, often strategic decisions on education are taken by ministries of finance which are themselves constrained by IMF conditions and an all-pervasive monetarist ideology. Fundamental positions around low inflation targets (under 5 per cent) frame almost all decision making. If inflation has to be kept low, sudden increases in public spending are not possible, as that would be inflationary. Public sector wages have to be capped and a large number of new teachers cannot be recruited. Countries cannot even accept large amounts of new aid for education as that will increase inflation. In this way, there is a direct contradiction between IMF macroeconomic frameworks and the MDGs. No country will be able to achieve the education MDGs unless it significantly increases spending. But most countries will not be able to accept new aid and will not be able to increase public spending. Employing new teachers or building new classrooms will contradict the IMF's number one commandment.

However if education is seen as a right, then each State is obligated to ensure education is delivered to all its citizens. National governments must be allowed to decide for themselves the tradeoffs between modest increases in inflation and increased spending on education or health.

Also it is essential to establish clear quality parameters (e.g., regarding class size, teacher numbers, provision of materials, etc) to ensure that this expansion does not lead to a deterioration in quality. All calculations of the cost of achieving universal primary education should factor in the substantial increases in spending required to ensure that there is no loss of quality. Most countries should also tighten regulation of privately run schools – to ensure consistency with key values (tolerance/inclusion) and to channel the middle classes/upper income groups back into the government system. This is required if there is to be a sustained commitment to quality State education from all sectors of society.

Each government should establish minimum standards applicable to all schools, whether they are government-run or not. For example, governments must establish

standards to ensure children's rights, linguistic and cultural rights, and to prohibit discrimination and indoctrination. This does not involve a shutting down of existing private schools but a systematic integration of them into a coherently planned government run system.

The progressive liberalisation of education and expansion of private schooling that has been evident in many countries in recent years, which has led to a significant exodus of the middle classes, should be actively opposed. Voucher-based systems will not increase access or equity, and they are more likely to do the opposite. 'Choice' and 'competition' are not viable organising principles for education and are likely to lead to a violation of rights. The weak regulatory capacity and environment in most countries (especially those where access needs to be expanded) means that alternatives to state provision (sub-contracting to the non-profit or private sector) will not be as cost effective or equitable – and may diminish people's capacity to secure their right to education..

One of the most effective ways we have seen to improve school quality is to increase the accountability of each school and also of district education authorities and other duty bearers at local and national level. Local and national parents associations and civil society education coalitions have a crucial role to play in influencing education policies, scrutinising implementation and independently monitoring government budgets. Improving education for all children requires the active collaboration of everyone in society – but this in no way diminishes the central obligations of government.

Addressing HIV/AIDS in education

Of all sectors of society, education has a special role to play in fighting this epidemic, due to its potential to teach people how to avoid HIV infection and how to live in a world with HIV and AIDS. Unfortunately, schools are currently incapable of delivering the 'education vaccine' to the children and young people who need it most. This will have a serious impact not only on the education MDG but also on the HIV MDG. We need a

coordinated and integrated response but to date this is not in evidence. Recent research by ActionAid and GCE, undertaken in 18 countries at the request of the UNAIDS Inter-agency Task Team on AIDS and Education, shows that only two of these countries have a coherent education sector AIDS strategy that is actually being implemented.

Some of the hardest-hit countries are falling at the first hurdle – unable to keep children in school, and teachers teaching, as the epidemic takes hold. Enrolment rates, already falling in communities struggling with the poverty and hunger that AIDS brings, will probably decline further unless governments abolish school fees and introduce extra support, such as school feeding programmes. But few donors are delivering the coordinated large-scale assistance that would be needed to implement such measures.

Education's potential to halt the spread of HIV is also being underexploited. Progress towards effective AIDS education in the classroom has been painfully slow in all countries: typically, implementation remains piecemeal, insufficient quantities of materials are reaching schools, the realities of sexual transmission are not covered, and training to enable teachers to handle the new topics is woefully inadequate. In only three of the 18 countries had Ministries of Education made systematic attempts to train teachers on HIV and AIDS. There has also been a significant lack of leadership and political commitment by the international donor community. Education NGOs are also surprisingly under-informed about the epidemic, even in high-prevalence countries, and their contributions have been patchy at best. But if donors, governments and civil society groups act together, it is yet not too late to break the deadly inertia surrounding HIV/AIDS and education.

MDG 3

Promote gender equality and empower women

Target

Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015

Indicators

- Ratio of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education
- Ratio of literate women to men, 15-24 years old
- Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector
- Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament

Progress on gender equality targets is limited and uneven. The world is still far away from achieving gender parity and will miss the education parity target for 2005—with the ratio of girls to boys in secondary education just 0.77 in South Asia and 0.79 in West Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa in 2001. North Africa and East Asia have seen strong progress on gender parity in gross enrolments. The ratio of literate women to men is still low around the world, and trends suggest that South Asia, Oceania, and West Asia are especially off track. Meanwhile, the share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector increased in 93 of 131 countries measured. The share of women in national parliaments increased significantly in Latin America and the Caribbean between 1990 and 2004. It has also risen in other regions of the world, though at a slower rate. But overall levels remain very low in Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, and the Middle East and North Africa⁶

The last two decades have seen unprecedented organising, strategising by women's rights and feminist movements throughout the world. In all these processes, gains were made because women's movement fought valiant battles to get governments worldwide to understand and take bold steps. However, as the Beijing +5 review process in 2005, clearly showed that not much progress had been made in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. Similarly, Cairo +10 in 2004 showed there were still many hurdles to be overcome towards women enjoying their sexual and reproductive rights. Side by side with these developments, conservative forces mobilised to prevent women getting rights. Conservative forces on sides seemingly on opposite ends of the religious spectrum always end up finding common ground on the control of women's bodies and women's behaviour.

It is within this context that MDGs must be placed and analysed to the extent that they uphold or water down the struggle for women's rights. Also, any evaluation of progress on MDGs must not be confined to the 8 goals as currently set, since they are but only a part of the story and do not capture all the commitments governments made since 1985.

Within the MDGs, poverty is not understood in a rights-based framework and is therefore not considered in its very essence— as a violation of human rights.⁷ Moreover, poverty is presented in the MDGs as gender-neutral. The fact that globally women are more impoverished than men is not factored into either the MDGs or their targets and indicators. For example, in many countries, female-headed households are often the worst hit by poverty, disease and want.

While references to 'rights' are found in the Millennium Declaration, these are not infused in the MDGs. There is no mention of either violence against women, which was recognised as a violation of women's basic human rights at the Vienna Human Rights Conference in 1993, or sexual and reproductive health and rights, which were adopted at the International Conference on Population and Development in 1994.

The MDG agenda narrowly focuses on measurable changes and ignores structural problems. For example, getting equal numbers of girls and boys in schools is in itself a major leap forward. But it is not all. Violence in school, on the way to school and within the wider community is a major factor affecting girls' access, participation and retention in schools. This is not factored into the analysis that underlies the MDGs, let alone the assessment of successful implementation of goal number 3. There is a simple focus on parity and numbers of girls in schools with an assumption that all is well if girls reach school.⁸

There is however no magic solution to gender inequality. Education is not the only answer to women's exclusion and injustices. Governments have tended to make very simplistic arguments such as more education=more

empowered women=less number of babies they will have more productivity=more growth=less poverty! Such notions reduce women to vessels of change without women benefiting from rights and entitlements as citizens.

Further, the intersection of gender, race, ethnicities, caste, class, sexual orientation, age and geography are not taken into account in the goals and indicators. The measurement of development progress is located in an agenda that is based on a neo-liberal framework of production and consumption, which inherently leaves out diverse/alternative ways of addressing progress that are outside the market economy. Diverse people and their lifestyles are unaccounted and development is contextualised 'for all'.⁹

The failure to root the MDGs in previous commitments leaves huge gaps in conceptual understanding as well as effective implementation of the agenda. Previous resolutions, platforms, declarations and international commitments dealing with women's human rights have been reduced to one MDG (#3). This MDG does not come close to highlighting priority issues or setting targets to ensure progress towards development goals for women's human rights issues. For instance, the overall goal of universal access to sexual and reproductive health by 2015 that came out of the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo is not even mentioned in the MDGs. This has serious implications for women globally. Sexual and reproductive rights are essential in ensuring that women have rights to adequate health care services and information; the right to bodily integrity and the right to choose with who, how and when they engage in sexual activities. Women's rights to political participation ensures that the disparity between women and men in political life is addressed through the recognition and promotion of women in decision-making and leadership positions within governments and the rest of society. Women's property and inheritance rights affirm that women have the right to own, control and inherit land. All these issues were adequately articulated in various UN conferences in the

last two decades. Without clear focus and strategies to achieve these goals, these will at best remain at the sidelines.

By ignoring previously agreed women's human rights commitments, the MDGs do not directly address the underlying violations that are causing poverty, illiteracy, hunger, infant and maternal mortality, disease and environmental degradation to continue unabated. The Millennium Report recommends 7 strategic priorities identified by the Task Force on Education and Gender Equality, but fails to integrate them throughout the 10 key recommendations suggested for action.¹⁰ The SG's Report reduces the commitments to one single recommendation. This commitment is that governments 'take action on strategic priorities identified by the Millennium Campaign Task Force on Education and Gender Equality'.¹¹ However, the strategic priorities that were identified by the Task Force are watered down in the SG's report.

All these deficiencies perhaps emanate from the lack of an integrated gender approach in the MDGs. While the third of the MDGs specifically calls for the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment, it fails to recognise that gender equality is not an objective in itself. It is key to achieving the other 7 Development Goals. By choosing to refer to gender equality in only one of the MDGs, the development agenda has not taken seriously the critical nature of ensuring women's rights as a vehicle to development for all - women's rights, and human rights in general, are indivisible, interrelated and interdependent.

Although gender equality is mentioned in the Millennium Report in 2 of the 10 key recommendations (2 and 5), this does not constitute an integrated gender approach. Most of the recommendations are suggested in a gender-neutral manner, ignoring the vulnerability of women and the need to focus strategies and resources on vulnerable populations. For instance, while the report does make the case for debt relief and an increase in official development assistance (ODA), it does so in a way that does not take into account the

gendered implications of such actions. It fails to specifically state how the quality of ODA and aid can be improved and focused so that women's rights and gender equality are promoted through these resources.

Similarly, although the Millennium Project recommends protection of sexual and reproductive health and rights and calls for gender equality and sexual and reproductive health (particularly in terms of poverty-reduction), this does not translate into an integrated gender approach through the rest of the 10 key recommendations.¹²

The SG's report also fails to integrate gender equality or gender analysis. It fails to acknowledge that the MDGs cannot be achieved without gender equality, women's empowerment and women's rights. Gender equality is mentioned in the development section; however, it is absent from sections on security, human rights and institutional reform. Again, we can use the example of violence against women. It is a critical security concern for women during conflict and peacetime situations (in the latter, women experience violence in the domestic sphere and states have obligations to address these forms of violence as per various UN declarations and agreements). Similarly, there is very little analysis and recommendations on how to reform UN institutions so that they can more ably promote and protect women's human rights.

Approaches of financing MDGs and of aid, debt and trade can undermine the realisation of women's rights.

Global trade and finance structures and institutions, as well as global governance in general, remain largely unquestioned in the MDG framework and the ways forward suggested in the recommendations.¹³

Free trade binds women in tighter chains. Trade justice from a women's rights perspective implies

- equitable terms of trade
- guaranteeing women's rights such as land and labour rights

- decent jobs
- protecting women's agricultural activities
- maintaining food security, livelihoods and traditional knowledge
- ensuring essential public services for all, and
- developing policies that ensure the benefits of trade advance development objectives and reach the most marginalised members of society, particularly poor women.¹⁴

Concerns and critiques of women's organisations have not been taken on board and neither the UNMP nor the SGs report place emphasis on regressive effects current proposals of trade liberalisation will have on poor women.

Another problem is private sector and private-public partnerships in strategies for achieving the MDGs. Civil society is unable to hold private sector accountable, because unlike States they have not committed to international human rights declarations and treaties. This will inevitably affect women, as they are the majority of unpaid/ underpaid workers in poor economies. They work at the whim of the private sector in conditions and policies the employers deem appropriate.

Similarly, the silence on the privatisation of services is of critical concern for women. Publicly provided services are important because these respond to the needs of the entire society. Through their unpaid drudgery, they try to make good for the retreat of the State from essential services and the shrinking of access to livelihood resources. Without these services, women's work burdens will increase.¹⁵

If higher aid is to be promoted, as suggested, aid should prioritise empowering women and achieving gender equality; else, all things remaining the same, the burdens on women will increase. Women's organisations are calling for the volume of development assistance given by rich countries to be increased to 0.7 per cent of GNP. Aid should not be tied to any precondition that limits women's access to safe, affordable and accessible sexual and reproductive

health services. This is of particular concern as some aid conditionalities limit women's rights to access these essential services.

Concerns around issues of debt cancellation emerge from the SG's report. For instance, there is no mention of heavily indebted middle-income countries, such as Philippines and Brazil,¹⁶ and the potential impact on women if the debt remains. The report is silent on the negative impacts of the high costs of debt servicing on national budgets.

Too often debts are serviced by cutting back on essential services, which is known to impact on women in detrimental ways – especially poor women who depend on State-funded services. The way in which debts are serviced (cutting back on essential services and other resources) is not acknowledged in the SG's Report; therefore, recommendations dealing with this reality are few and far between.

The recommendations surrounding debt in the SG's report and the UNMP do not acknowledge the fact that much of the debt of developing countries is being paid by poor women. Women are providing healthcare, education, child and elder care, and other services that support families, societies and economies as part of their unpaid labour. In order to eradicate poverty and advance human rights, debt must be cancelled, resources must be shared equitably to meet the needs of the poor, especially women, and essential services must be provided by the State.¹⁷

Directly addressing the gender equality question could take us a long way towards dealing with poverty and deprivation. The restoration of women's rights often has the salutary effect of bringing equity and justice strongly to the forefront in wider debates on the wider social domain. The failure to place gender equity at the centre is a serious diminution to the MDGs.

MDG 4

Reduce child mortality

Target

Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate

Indicators

- Under-five mortality rate
- Infant mortality rate
- Proportion of 1-year-old children immunised against measles

Child mortality rates fell in every region except the CIS countries – even in places that did not achieve much economic growth or reduction in poverty. But child mortality remains extremely high at 174 per 1,000 live births in Sub-Saharan Africa and 93 in South Asia. In every developing region, child mortality is still many times higher than in the developed world. At current rates, many regions are unlikely to meet the target. Only North Africa, Southeast Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean appear to be on track.¹⁸

The first of the considerations on health security is related to equity. There is inequity among regions, sub regions and within countries.

The estimated child mortality rate for Africa is 174 deaths per 1000 live births per year – above 17 per cent of all children born on that continent die before reaching their fifth birthday. In South Asia, the risk of a child dying before five years of age is about 10 per cent, and in Latin America, it is about 4 per cent. In the industrialised countries, the death of a child is a rare event – only 6 per 1000 live births per year. These regional averages mask important disparities within countries, rich and poor alike. For example, vaccination coverage of children of the poorest 20 per cent of the population in developing countries is 35–40 per cent, half that of the richest fifth of the population.

In Brazil, an infant from the Northeastern part of the country has a risk of dying that is 5.2 times higher than that of an infant from Southern Brazil. Furthermore, an analysis of 24 countries using data from the demographic and health surveys showed that the gap

in the under-five mortality rate between rich and poor quintiles actually increased between 1980 and 1990.

While the data indicates high inequities in health-intervention programmes around the world, the MDG targets on health, and for child mortality does not consider this. It is quite possible that a large part of this MDG could be met by reducing child mortality only in the higher-income quintiles of the population. Serious consideration should be given to stating the MDG targets for child health in equity terms.

Another major issue necessitating a deeper exploration of health goal is the regression in terms of infant mortality in the last 15 years. Data on infant mortality interpreted by the Advance Social Watch and World Health report indicates that in 14 African countries infant mortality has increased since the 1990s. Reversion of the progress on child mortality in African countries indicates that a range of causes linked to child mortality is not being adequately covered. Globally, acute respiratory infection (pneumonia), diarrhoea, measles, malaria and malnutrition account for a majority of the approximately 10.8 million deaths of children under the age of 5 that occur each year. Perinatal deaths, i.e., stillbirths and deaths during the first week after birth, account for the majority of the remainder.

Diarrhoea and pneumonia are each estimated to account for about 18 per cent of childhood mortality, each responsible for more than all the child deaths from HIV and malaria combined. Although diarrhoea deaths have fallen substantially over the past 20 years, there are indications that the drop may not be as much as had been thought. Pneumonia incidence and mortality has remained constant. Malaria is responsible for nearly 10 per cent of child deaths, with almost all malaria deaths occurring in sub-Saharan Africa. AIDS currently accounts for 300,000 to 350,000 deaths of under-fives per year, mostly in central and southern Africa.

These leading causes of death are largely constant in different settings, although the proportion attributable to each cause varies. In some southern African

countries, AIDS accounts for a very high proportion of child deaths, while in other tropical countries deaths from malaria represent a higher proportion of under-five mortality.

These trends and analysis point to another important gap that needs to be addressed –disease specific interventions may not be stable and sustainable enough unless the more difficult and meaningful task of building up the health infrastructure is taken up. In an effort to show numbers, campaigns end up targeting the easier-to-reach populations. Also given the reciprocal causality between health and poverty, the successful achievement of each of the other MDGs – including poverty reduction, trade, water and sanitation, protection of the environment, education and gender equity – is likely to have a significant impact on women's and children's health. But, as one commentator put it, the benefits for health that derive from these aspects of socioeconomic development do not fall like manna from heaven.

MDG 5

Improve maternal health

Target

Reduce by three-quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio

Indicators

- Maternal mortality ratio
- Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel

Maternal mortality remains shockingly high in every developing region of the world, reflecting the low priority for women's needs and inadequate access to the emergency obstetric care. Maternal mortality ratios in East Asia, which has made significant progress on many of the Goals are still approximately twice the ratio of the developed world. While data on maternal mortality are unreliable and do not permit time series analysis, the best available evidence suggests that Sub-Saharan Africa, South East Asia, South Asia and Oceania, are unlikely to meet the targets on current trends.¹⁹

There are approximately 529,000 maternal deaths every year, or worldwide 1600 women die every day²⁰. While sub-Saharan Africa accounts for 53 per cent of all deaths,

South Asia accounts for 42 per cent of maternal deaths. 99 per cent of these deaths are in developing countries, where it is estimated that only 40 per cent of the childbirths take place at the health centres with some kind of a health care and not all are attended by skilled health workers. While there has been progress in a significant number of countries, vast inequities still exist between countries in better of situations and worse of situations. Maternal mortality rates are remarkably unequal since they reach 959 deaths for every 100,000 live births for one group of 31 countries, where only 33.6 per cent of births are attended by skilled personnel, while for the other group they reach 41 for every 100,000 live births, where over 98 per cent of the births are attended by skilled personnel.²¹

The definition of health in the MDGs is conceptualised as disease or death and the link between health and wider issues of poverty and inequality is not drawn.

From this understanding, MDG 5 reduces the broader issue of reproductive health to maternal health, and sets up simple targets such as maternal mortality ratio and percentage of births attended to by skilled health personnel. Such reductionism is not only questionable from a health perspective, but is also problematic from a women's rights one.

The wider understanding of reproductive health is about having a safe sex life and ability to reproduce. It rests on notions of choice and freedom to decide to have or not have children. Reproductive health implies a right to receive adequate health care for women to have healthy and safe pregnancies.²²

The exclusive focus on only "maternal" aspect of health and that too mortality brings the issue closer to inadequate understanding of women's rights.

The MDGs on health seek to solve critical problems with measurable targets but without adequately addressing the root causes of these problems. There is a notable absence of any substantial discussion of

the non-disease elements of health, including issues related to women's health, such as abortion, contraception, and violence. In particular, gender based violence is not included in the MDGs as a health or a gender issue.

The reality of women's health issues, and of wider issues of the community are not acknowledged by the health related MDGs. Health facilities are difficult to access for a major part, and for a majority of the people. They run without adequate numbers of trained personnel and doctors. They are increasingly unable to provide basic care and medication. They are also becoming costlier and unaffordable, with huge burdens to the community. A recent IMF Working Paper notes the relation between ill health and poverty (see Hsiao 2000). It suggests that the cost of serious illness is the major generator of poverty in many lower-income countries. Around 20–30 per cent of households have to borrow or sell assets each the year to cover health care expenses and a significant share of national health expenditure, often close to half, is paid directly by patients. The cost to the poor themselves of improving their health are not acknowledged in the MDGs.²³

The progressive privatisation of health services presents an impossible environment in which the poor people could secure their basic rights. Each State is obligated to ensure health is delivered to all its citizens. Reports from various parts, including those of the poor communities, show that health services could be delivered by government programmes, if they have any chances of being accessible, available and affordable to the poor.

By simple calculations, it means that substantial investments are required in the public health programme. These investments would be needed to

- supporting eroding government supported health services
- expanding and improving quality of the health infrastructure, and supply chains

- training and building capacity and number of personnel
- providing free medicines.

Increased spending on health directly contradicts the dictum of the IMF, of capping wage bills, reducing public spending and checking inflation to single digits. The alternative – progressive privatisation - has led to a two-tier health system today: an eroded one for the poor and a better serving one for the people who can afford it.

MDG 5 thus adopts a technical approach to health rather than a holistic approach that recognises issues of poverty and power as affecting people’s health.

The other context is that health spending in countries is biased towards the rich and middle classes. While improved health may mean a higher potential to earn, health spending to date has been found on average to be pro-rich (see Davoodi, Tiongson and Asawanuchit 2003). MDG related spending may not reverse this trend. Despite progress, serious gaps will remain in health care attention to poor and especially for women, and will continue to be reflected in high morbidity and mortality indicators for women.

Unless structural issues are set right, women from the developing world will continue to be burdened most.

Target

Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases

Indicators

- Prevalence and death rates associated with malaria
- Proportion of population in malaria-risk areas using effective malaria prevention and treatment measures
- Prevalence and death rates associated with tuberculosis
- Proportion of tuberculosis cases detected and cured under DOTS

HIV, now affecting about 40 million people, is pandemic in parts of Sub-Saharan Africa and poses a serious threat in other developing regions. The Caribbean has the second highest HIV prevalence rate, and India has the second highest number of HIV infected people in world after South Africa. Many countries are struggling to contain new infections and to treat people already infected. Infections are increasing in East Asia, South Asia, Oceania, and the CIS countries of Asia and Europe

The incidence of TB remains extremely high around the world, increasing as an opportunistic infection associated with HIV/AIDS. It is increasing most precipitously in Sub-Saharan Africa, Oceania, and the CIS countries of Asia and Europe. Meanwhile malaria, and ecologically based parasite, kills well over a million people a year, the vast majority of them children. It remains a significant threat to human health and productivity in many tropical regions, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, which accounts for 90 per cent of all malaria deaths.²⁴

The greatest impediment to people living with HIV/AIDS in the developing world is poverty. Poverty causes ill health and AIDS has demonstrated that ill health deepens poverty. This is largely because people living with HIV/AIDS are paying a high share of HIV/AIDS costs themselves.

The way developmental dilemmas around HIV/AIDS are framed in the Millennium Project limit the feasibility of progress. MDG 6 was structured to combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases. It has one target related to HIV/AIDS –Target 7, which should result in halting of HIV/AIDS by 2015 and reverse its spread. Since the time the goals were framed in September 2000, there has been little change in the absolute numbers of people living with HIV; nor has there been a decline in new infections. The death toll remains at

MDG 6

Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases

Target

Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS

Indicators

- HIV prevalence among pregnant women aged 15–24 years
- Condom use rate of the contraceptive prevalence rate
 - a. Condom use at last high-risk sex
 - b. Percentage of population aged 15–24 years with comprehensive, correct knowledge of HIV/AIDS
 - c. Contraceptive prevalence rate
- Ratio of school attendance of orphans to school attendance of non-orphans aged 10–14 years

about 3 million per year. Thus, it can be argued that the goal and its target were either inadequately articulated, grievously unrealistic or simply impossible.

Whatever the case, global AIDS advocates understood that the MDG campaign would be of little use against this crisis if member-states did not have a framework for pursuing a nationwide trans-sectoral response to the pandemic. In June 2001, a UN General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS was convened and a Declaration of Commitment agreed by heads of state and representatives of the highest levels of government. It provided a sophisticated measure of progress to review the national implementation of this framework – in many ways, a far more sophisticated measure of progress against HIV/AIDS than indicators set out to in the MDGs.

At the time of both these breakthrough agreements, policy makers and major donors were largely focused on prevention of new infections. But HIV has continued to spread in countries that until now have not experienced generalised prevalence rates.

In countries where the epidemic is still at an early stage, programmes targeted at the most vulnerable must be prioritised. This requires promotion of a range of scientifically proven prevention techniques including condoms and needle exchange programmes, to interventions that have recently experienced a loss of support from major donors pursuing moralistic political agendas.

The other main concern is provision of care for those with compromised immune systems that leads to disability and premature death. The concept of rolling out antiretroviral treatment (ART), which since the late nineties had transformed AIDS from a death sentence into a chronic manageable disease, was considered unmanageable and economically unviable in the developing world.

Recent achievements to secure political will from the world's richest countries have moved towards the recognition of universal access to AIDS treatment as a

human right. After vigorous campaigning by civil society organisations, the communiqué from the Gleneagles G8 Summit committed to 'develop and implement a package for HIV prevention, treatment and care, with the aim of as close as possible to universal access to treatment for all those who need it by 2010'.

The greatest obstacle to delivery of this promise is the poor state of health systems in much of the developing world, including the acute shortage of skilled health workers in many developing countries. A substantial share of funds to meet the MDGs should go to strengthening health systems, both to reach AIDS treatment targets and to ensure that treatment efforts do not divert staff and other scarce resources from the delivery of other vitally needed health services.

Upgrading health systems in the poorest countries will require focused, long-term funding and support for the public health programme apart from consistent political commitment from donors and recipients. Although funding for global public health, especially the fight against AIDS, has expanded in recent years, it remains insufficient, largely short-term, poorly coordinated and unpredictable. This is evident in the funding shortfalls continually faced by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

Health services must be financed equitably and user fees, which are a significant barrier to health-care access for the poor, should be abolished. At the same time, developing countries must be able to increase their own investment in health systems.

Success in all these areas requires more than increased public funding. Public/Private partnerships must be set up, under regulation from the government, to increase access to high-quality services and to help compensate for the shortage of human resources in the public sector. The Millennium Declaration also encourages the pharmaceutical industry to make essential drugs widely available and affordable.

One could argue that HIV/AIDS is only one of the challenges facing poor people. Only strong, integrated health systems can provide a platform to sustain a successful fight against the disease and its cohort TB, while advancing other health priorities of developing countries, including child and maternal health and chronic disease.

How health is linked to other issues

Health remains tightly linked to the full range of development challenges, including food security, education, gender equality, and poverty reduction. These too must be addressed to ensure groundbreaking advances needed in health.

The first goal focuses on eradication of extreme poverty and hunger and thus is a cross cutting goal that cannot be considered in isolation. HIV/AIDS impacts anti-poverty programmes as it increases consumption needs and depletes household assets. Labour losses due to illness reduce income and increase household poverty. The impact of the disease also weakens public services needed to reduce poverty due to loss of personnel.

Lower productivity of subsistence agriculture increases food insecurity, especially for women and children. Reduced food intake and absorption undermines other treatment and care initiatives. As the food crisis in southern Africa grows, HIV/AIDS emerges as a major factor driving the famine. Thus, HIV/AIDS makes eradication of extreme poverty and hunger an unmet goal in highly affected countries.

With regards the second goal that seeks to achieve universal primary education, the significant developmental effects of HIV/AIDS undermine the supply of educators through teacher absenteeism and deaths.

Children from households with lost income and increased demand for caring drop out of school. Education, especially for girls, is critical in delaying sexual activity and relaying HIV prevention messages, but in the worst affected countries, education quality and enrolment is already reduced.

The third goal is concerned with promoting gender equality and empowerment of women. Overcoming social and economic gender inequality is a critical factor in reducing risk of HIV transmission, providing equitable treatment and easing the burden of care giving on women. This leads to examination of the link between women's control over their own bodies and potentially risky sexual encounters in society.

Where the pandemic is fuelled through sex, responses call for a focus on power dynamics between the genders in personal relationships as well as in the structures of society and institutions. Also, in most health systems, women face unequal access to treatment. Fewer women than men are treated for STDs, increasing the spread of HIV and of other opportunistic infections, which increase the suffering of women with AIDS.

The only target of MDG 3 is the elimination of gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005 and in tertiary education by no later than 2015. As the education section of this report explains, this goal cannot be met in seriously affected countries where nearly 50 per cent of children who lose one or both parents to HIV/AIDS have to drop out of school. Girls are more likely to be kept out of school to provide care to ill family members, tend land or seek work.

The fourth goal to reduce child mortality will obviously continue to increase for the next decade, and possibly longer, due to mother-to-child HIV infection. Prevention of mother to child infection is preventable but severely underutilised as a basic health service. Without action, the target will not be met. In some countries, there will be greater child morbidity.

Thus, unless pragmatic and joined approaches are adopted across the MDG campaign, from 2005 onwards, HIV/AIDS will remain the greatest developmental threat that will undermine the entire project. The statements released in advance of the Millennium Review Summit appropriately raise HIV/AIDS as a concern but fail to devise a global response to the epidemic that considers a long-term horizon.

Interventions must be designed to make a difference throughout the next ten years that the MDG project will be pursued and into the decades beyond as AIDS is both an emergency as well as a long-term development challenge. The welcome statements contained in the SG's report and the draft outcome document need to be backed by clear signs of commitment to develop integrated and equitable health systems both through the reform of macroeconomic policy constraints and removal of user fees. This will require significant and substantial additional funding and concrete proposals for getting beyond disjointed vertical initiatives pursued by major donors and the insecurity of voluntary replenishments of multilateral mechanisms.

TB, malaria and other diseases

Each year, malaria causes at least one million deaths and an additional 300 to 500 million clinical cases, the majority of which occur in the world's poorest countries. More than 41 per cent of the world's population is at risk of acquiring malaria, and the proportion increases yearly due to deteriorating health systems, growing drug and insecticide resistance, climate change, and war.

High-risk groups include children, pregnant women, travellers, refugees, displaced persons, and labourers entering endemic areas. Ninety per cent of malaria deaths occur in sub-Saharan Africa where nearly 3,000 people die from malaria each day; most of them are children.

Prompt and effective treatment of malaria, which can reduce death rates by 50 per cent, should be included in routine child and maternal health care. Insecticide spraying, bed nets, and other cost-effective measures can help prevent malaria. Only 2 per cent of children in Africa sleep under a bed net treated with insecticide.

In some areas, malaria parasites have developed resistance to the cheapest and most common drugs used to treat the disease. However, resistance to treatment can be delayed by using therapies that combine different medications.

According to the report of the Commission on Macroeconomics and Health, up to \$2 billion will be needed each year to achieving the goal of halving the burden of malaria by 2010. Currently, only \$600 million is being spent.

Tuberculosis (TB) kills about two million people each year, making it one of the world's leading infectious causes of death among young people and adults.

One-third of the world's population is infected with TB. Five to 10 per cent of people who are infected with TB become sick with TB at some time during their life.

Due to a combination of economic decline, the breakdown of health systems, insufficient application of TB control measures, the spread of HIV/AIDS and the emergence of multidrug-resistant TB (MDR-TB), TB is on the rise in many developing and transitional economies.

UNAIDS estimates that between 2000 and 2020

- Nearly one billion people will be newly infected with TB.
- 200 million people will become sick from TB.
- TB will claim at least 35 million lives.

Poverty, a lack of basic health services, poor nutrition, and inadequate living conditions all contribute to the spread of TB. In turn, illness and death from TB reinforces and deepens poverty in many communities.

The critical connections between HIV/AIDS and TB must be recognised at every level. Scaling up access to ART should not be undertaken as another vertical intervention but should develop within existing TB testing and treatment facilities. Community outreach must be improved along with a holistic approach to health management through good nutrition and safe water.

TB and HIV/AIDS and HIV/AIDS and TB form a lethal combination, each speeding the other's progress. HIV promotes rapid progression of primary TB infection to active disease and is the most powerful known

risk factor for reactivation of latent TB infection to active disease.

For the control of TB, the World Health Organization (WHO) recommends the DOTS strategy that combines five elements: political commitment, microscopy services, drug supplies, surveillance and monitoring systems, and use of highly efficacious regimes with direct observation of treatment. Drugs for DOTS can cost only \$10 per person for the full treatment course (6 to 8 months).

MDG 7

Ensure Environmental Sustainability

Target

Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources

Indicators

- Proportion of land area covered by forest
- Ratio of area protected to maintain biological diversity to surface area
- Energy use (kg oil equivalent) per \$1,000 GDP
- Carbon dioxide emissions per capita and consumption of ozone-depleting CFCs
- Proportion of population using solid fuels

Target

Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation

Indicators

- Proportion of population with sustainable access to an improved water source, urban and rural
- Proportion of population with access to improved sanitation, urban and rural

Target

Have achieved by 2020 a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers

Indicators

- Proportion of households with access to secure tenure

Environmental degradation is eroding the natural resource base that many communities and economies depend on. Few reliable indicators exist to measure environmental sustainability, and data coverage tends to be poor. As a result, environmental degradation does not show up in many official statistics. But the data on forest cover show that deforestation is increasing rapidly and threatening biodiversity in Sub-Saharan Africa, Southeast Asia, Oceania, and Latin America. Other natural resources have come

under strain, with damage to marine and coastal ecosystems worsening rapidly in Latin America and the Caribbean, Southeast Asia, and Oceania. Per capita water availability is reaching critical thresholds in many parts of the world. Desertification and soil deterioration have become critical issues, especially in Asia and Africa.

Urban access to drinking water is relatively high in most regions, with the exception of sub-Saharan Africa. But rural access to improved water supply remains limited in most regions, with sub-Saharan Africa, the CIS countries, and Oceania especially off track. Access to sanitation improved in many regions but remained stagnant in West Asia and the CIS countries, and fell in Oceania. Coverage in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia remains extremely low, at 36 and 37 per cent, respectively, contributing to widespread and preventable diarrhoeal disease. The problem is particularly severe in rural areas, where coverage rates are much lower than in urban areas.

The number of people living in slums and slum-like conditions in the world's cities is growing. Rapid rural-to-urban migration has produced massive slums in many developing country cities, where inhabitants lack secure tenure to their land and may not have access to basic water and sanitation services. Between 1990 and 2001, the slum population grew in every region except North Africa and the CIS countries of Europe. An estimated 900 million people live in slum like conditions; more than 250 million of them in South Asia, where roughly 60 per cent of the urban population lacks secure tenure. In sub-Saharan Africa, more than 70 per cent of the urban population is estimated to live in slums. The problem is also severe in Latin America, where roughly a third of the urban population lives in slums²⁵.

The concept of economic poverty employed in the UNMP is at crossroads with the concept of ecological poverty. Economic poverty is measured largely in terms of cash incomes and is almost irrelevant in a biomass-based subsistence economy. The approaches to deal with ecological poverty²⁶ and economic poverty are vastly different. While economists talk of welfare measures to deal with economic poverty, people dealing with ecological poverty advocate institutional, legal and financial empowerment with a strong emphasis on community-based property rights over ecological resources. Current global processes of structural reforms, economic globalisation and privatisation are making life difficult for the poor and the marginalised, particularly those who live off natural resources and also conserve

the environment. To them, poverty is not just about the lack of money but also the lack of access to and control over natural resources. For 75 per cent of the world's poor who live and work in degraded rural areas, it is an issue of rights and entitlements over control and management of natural resources.²⁷

Closely linked to the concept of poverty is a proper understanding of the concept environment protection. It is not a challenge only of forest conservation, and the percentage of areas protected to maintain biological diversity. It is a challenge of equity based sustainable use of the natural resources, upon which millions of poor and ultimately the whole world is dependent. It is not a matter of excluding the poor and marginalised from the forest areas and reserves, upon which their lives and livelihoods depend, but rather a question of their access and control and their involvement in the management of the natural resource.

In the context of rights and entitlements and the agenda of sustainable development, the silence of the Millennium Project and the SG's report on addressing the crucial patterns of consumption and the race to over-exploit natural resources is a serious one.

Another major problem with the goal is that it overlooks the challenge posed by climate change and the agreements of the Rio Declaration of 1992, which enshrines a commitment to the principal of common but differentiated responsibility, where people and countries bear the costs of addressing climate change in proportion to their contribution to the causing factors.

There is a danger that the vision of sustainable development outlined in the agenda 21 of Earth Summit in 1992 will shift to the concept of sustainable market led growth. The danger can be seen in the MDG formulations. The refusal of United States to sign the Kyoto protocol, which places an obligation on industrialised countries to reduce greenhouse gas emission, brings the case to point.

The danger can only be offset by a clear recognition of poverty in its human rights, gendered and ecological framework. Only long-term action in an equitable global framework will prevent most of the dangerous impacts of climate change. Without such action and to combat desertification/drought and land degradation, even goal 1 of the MDGs cannot be achieved.

Water and sanitation

Even the modest goal related to water and sanitation cannot be achieved. There has been little progress in achieving water supplies in the 1990s. In rural Africa, water supply improved by 9 per cent, bringing the coverage to 46 per cent of the rural population; in Asia, it improved by 12 to 74 per cent and in Latin America it improved from 56 to 58 per cent coverage. The uncovered gap is large. The world will have to come up with serious plans for sub-Saharan Africa, where 42 per cent of the population remains unserved. Apart from a high population growth rate, the obstacles include conflict, political instability and low priority assigned to investments in water and sanitation.

Nearly 7 per cent of the world's population (1.1 billion people by last estimates) still do not have access to water and 40 per cent of the world's population still lacks basic sanitation.

As with the goal related to hunger and nutrition, the goal related to water is a half measure, although the 'right to water' is recognised by the UN Committee of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

While the situation is near desperate in the rural areas, there are growing concerns that for the poor the situation may become even more difficult. Increases in population coupled with the ongoing process of industrialisation, urbanisation and privatisation of water will lead to an increase in demand and a decrease in supply of clean water, especially in the absence of measures to regulate pollution.

Even in urban areas piped water is contaminated, and communities, especially the poor have to contend with increasing costs induced by privatisation of water services and imposition of user fees.

Another important issue is that the goal completely overlooks the gender discrimination in obtaining water. Peoples' reports from across the world reveal that it is young girls and women who have to travel long distances to fetch water for domestic use, drinking or production of food. These burdens increase with reform-induced burdens the poor have to face.

Sanitation is also a difficult goal to achieve globally. An estimated 2.6 billion people, living mostly in the developing world and in rural areas, lack toilets and other forms of improved sanitation.

The MDGs call for pumping in massive investments in sanitation. Otherwise the number of people without sanitation in 2015 will roughly be the same as the number today – a massive 2.6 billion. The MDGs do not answer an overarching question: Who will provide this massive investment for sanitation? An investment that, according to Social Watch, implies 370,000 people will need to be covered every day until 2015²⁸

A minimalist response

By 2007, the number of people living in cities is expected to exceed the rural population in developing regions. Nearly 1 in 3 city dwellers – almost 1 billion people – lives in slums, in overcrowded conditions, with little employment, poor water, poor sanitation and health services, widespread insecurity including violence against women. Without security of tenure, slum dwellers are victims of forced evictions and demolitions that result in displacement and homelessness.

Disease, mortality and unemployment are considerably higher in slums than in planned urban settlements. Surveys suggest that in some African cities, the death rate of children under age 5 who live in slums is about twice as high as that of children in other urban communities.

The MDGs will not only have to address the conditions in cities and urban centres but also in rural areas. Unless livelihood opportunities are increased and basic facilities like health and education are established in rural areas, migration of the rural poor to cities will not stop. This calls for improved governance, better agricultural practices and water management.

The MDG of achieving a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers is not enough. It is a minimalist, charity-based response to the challenge.

MDG 8

Global partnership for development

Target

Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, nondiscriminatory trading and financial system

Target

Address the special needs of the Least Developed Countries

Target

Address the special needs of landlocked developing countries and small island developing states

Target

Deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries through national and international measures in order to make debt sustainable in the long term

Indicators

Official development assistance (ODA)

- Net ODA, total and to LDCs, as percentage of OECD/Development Assistance Committee (DAC) donors' gross national income
- Proportion of total bilateral, sector-allocable ODA of OECD/DAC donors to basic social services (basic education, primary health care, nutrition, safe water and sanitation)
- Proportion of bilateral ODA of OECD/DAC donors that is untied
- ODA received in landlocked developing countries as a proportion of their GNIs
- ODA received in small island developing States as proportion of their GNIs

Market access

- Proportion of total developed country imports (by value and excluding arms) from developing countries and from LDCs, admitted free of duty
- Average tariffs imposed by developed countries on agricultural products and textiles and clothing from developing countries

- Agricultural support estimate for OECD countries as percentage of their GDP
- Proportion of ODA provided to help build trade capacity

Debt sustainability

- Total number of countries that have reached their Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative (HIPC) decision points and number that have reached their HIPC completion points
- Debt relief committed under HIPC initiative
- Debt service as a percentage of exports of goods and services

Target

In cooperation with developing countries, develop and implement strategies for decent and productive work for youth

Indicators

- Unemployment rate of young people aged 15–24 years, each sex and total

Target

In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries

Indicators

Proportion of population with access to affordable essential drugs on a sustainable basis

Target

In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications

Indicators

Telephone lines and cellular subscribers per 100 population
Personal computers in use per 100 population and Internet users per 100 population

Overall, the goals and targets under MDG 8 are not set in tangible time frames, and with exception of some indicators, tangible targets are also not set.

Aid and financing for development

Aid has a critical role to play in securing the rights and entitlements inherent in the Millennium Declaration. Aid can make a significant difference when deployed effectively as a part of development strategy. However, financing needs of poorest countries clearly show that aid is not enough. The massive scale of unmet basic needs in poor countries would require aid at levels that are substantially higher than the current levels. The MDG Project estimates that meeting the MDGs will alone require \$ 135 billion every year by 2006. And meeting the MDGs is not all that is needed in terms of rights and entitlements.

Aid needs to be dealt within the overall resource flow to the poorest countries. When compared to the reverse flows from countries in the South to the North, it is clear aid reform needs to happen as a part of the redistribution of resources and power between the North and the South.

Official aid in 2003 was only 0.25 per cent of the combined GNI. Further, a large portion of this aid was 'phantom aid'; it was diverted for other purposes within the aid system. Actionaid International²⁹ estimates phantom aid to be about 61 per cent of total aid; real aid in 2003 accounted for just 0.1 per cent of the combined income.

There are other issues within the aid system such as

- aid not being targeted for poverty reduction – globally only 40 per cent of the aid goes to poor countries though three-fourths of the people living in poverty live there
- aid spent on overpriced and ineffective technical assistance system with more than a quarter of aid tied to TA (2003)
- unpredictability of aid
- double counting of debt relief
- gap between actual aid disbursements and projections
- aid spent on administration and projections.

Moreover, donors are not accountable when they break their promises, and they are not responsible for results. There are other issues of conditionality where the impact has been felt in at least four ways:

- distortion of democratic processes
- imposition of inappropriate policy choices
- generation of transactions costs, and
- conditional financing.

Generation of finance for development can be linked to other governance issues such as

- Reduction in military spending. A small reduction in annual military spending of nearly \$1 trillion could provide primary education for all children in the world.

- Prevention of capital flight and losses on account of capital account liberalisation
- Trade justice. It could provide enough for the artificial resource scarcity that development faces.

Thus, the G-7 announcement on aid enhancement and write-off of debts falls far short of what is needed. Only 18 countries have had their debt cancelled, leaving 40 more waiting. Like aid, debt cannot be viewed in isolation.

Debt cancellation

While the HIPC initiative has delivered more than \$48 billion in debt cancellation, no participating country has achieved debt sustainability. Low-income countries still owe \$523 billion in debt to all creditors. African countries alone owe \$330 billion and spend \$15 billion in annual debt servicing to industrialised countries and IFIs.³⁰

Trade and market access

The MDG targets of duty free imports in developed countries, tariffs on agricultural and textile products, agricultural subsidies and development of trade capacities are a small part of the issue of trade justice. We have to look at the other significant dimensions.

Trade liberalisation and trade related losses are of three kinds:

- Adverse terms of trade, which account for loss of an estimated \$400 billion per year
- Trade tax losses, which often account for a third of budget revenue lost due to trade liberalisation, and
- Premature trade liberalisation that leads to death of domestic businesses.

Trade justice involves looking at some of these power relations. For example, over the last three decades, Africa's share of world exports has dropped by nearly 60 per cent, from 3.5 per cent in 1970 (4.1 per cent in 1980) to 1.5 per cent by the end of the 1990s. Even in raw materials, its share in world trade dropped from 8 per cent in 1980 to 4.4 per cent in 2000. This decline in Africa's export market share represents a staggering income loss of \$70 billion annually, an amount equivalent to 21 per cent of the region's GDP and to

more than 5 times the \$13 billion annual aid flows to Africa.³¹

On this issue, the aid for trade system does not propose extending \$1 billion per day to developing countries to compensate them for losses arising from an equivalent amount of subsidies industrialised countries provide to their farmers.

There are other implications in terms of privatisation and private provision of public services and public-private partnerships. An increasing number of studies³² show that these measures place considerable additional burdens on the poorest, and support projects that leave the rural poor and suburban areas out of service obligations.

Likewise, there are other issues on market access raised in the WTO that need to be addressed.

The World Trade Organisation is the only multilateral institution that is meant to regulate the trade. However, in the last ten years WTO has failed to serve the interests of poor countries and became a safe heaven for the unfair trading practices of rich countries. The current negotiations at the WTO are supposed to reach an agreement in December 2005 to conclude the Doha Development Round. However, the current negotiation package is anti-development and anti-poor.

The anti-development elements in current negotiations are contradicting the Doha 'DEVELOPMENT' agenda. For example, there is no movement on development related issues like strengthening of Special and differential treatments for poor countries and the commitments of rich countries to address the implementation related issues of poor countries. Moreover, the process of negotiations is exclusive (Ministerial meetings, Five Interested Parties (FIPs), General Councils taking decisions of ministerial level, Green rooms) and poorer countries are isolated.

The anti-poor elements of current negotiations are, among others are:

- Cotton Issue: no movement by US to address the issues of 10 million West African cotton growers who suffer because of heavy subsidies to US farmers;
- no space for poor countries to protect their food security, livelihood of small farmers and rural development as there is no willingness from rich countries to provide
- substantial numbers of Special Products and Special Safeguard Mechanism to poor countries.

Moreover, the current text on industrial tariff (under NAMA – Non Agriculture Market Access) would jeopardise the industrial sector of poor countries due to higher tariff cuts. That would result in unemployment, drastic shortfall in government revenues, labour issues etc. Similarly, the basic rights such as water, health and education would be privatised through GATS.

Endnotes

1. The UN Millennium Project 2005, 'Investing in Development: A Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals,' pg 23
2. *Economic Report on Africa*, UNECA, p. 55.
3. The UN Millennium Project 2005, 'Investing in Development: A Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals,' pg 23
4. Estimates of Global Campaign for Education and Global Aids Alliance
5. Documented by the former UN Special Rapporteur on the right to education, Katarina Tomasevski,
6. The UN Millennium Project 2005, 'Investing in Development: A Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals,' pg 23
7. MADRE (2005) 'Comments on the Secretary-General Report "In Larger Freedom: Towards Development, Security and Human Rights for all" and Issues of the UN Millennium +5 Summit' see www.madre.org/articles/hra/inlargerfreedom.html
8. See AAI policy 'Brief on Violence against girls as a barrier to education', 2004
9. DAWN (2005) 'Critical Comments on the 'Freedom from Want' Section of the UN Secretary-Generals' Report for the Millennium +5 Summit, see www.peacewomen.org/un/September_Summit/DAWNLargerFreedom.doc
10. See Annex 4 for the seven strategic priority areas suggested by the Task Force on Education and Gender Equality.
11. Secretary-General of the United Nations (2005) *In Larger Freedom: Towards Development, Security and Human Rights for All*, see www.un.org/largerfreedom/.
12. Barton, Carol (2005) 'Women's Movements and Gender Perspectives on the Millennium Development Goals,' *Civil Society Perspectives on the Millennium Development Goals*, see www.choike.org/documentos/mdgs_cso_barton.pdf
13. DAWN (2005) 'Critical Comments on the 'Freedom from Want' Section of the UN Secretary-Generals' Report for the Millennium +5 Summit, see www.peacewomen.org/un/September_Summit/DAWNLargerFreedom.doc
14. Global Call to Action against Poverty (2005), 'A Global Call to Action for Women's Rights' brochure.
15. Ibid
16. Ibid
17. Ibid
18. The UN Millennium Project 2005, Investing in Development: A Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals, pg 24
19. Ibid, pg 24
20. Unkept Promises, Advance Social Watch Report, 2005. pg 40
21. Ibid, pg 40
22. Ibid
23. The Millennium Development Goals and the Global Gender and Health Agendas, Sarah Bradshaw. <http://www.dgroups.org/groups/hivos/nopoverty/docs/02>
24. The UN Millennium Project 2005, Investing in Development: A Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals, pg 25
25. Ibid, pg 26
26. Narain, Sunita(2005) 'MDGs: Linking Poverty and Environment for Sustainable and Equitable Growth', *Civil Society Perspectives on the Millennium Development Goals*
27. Ibid
28. 'Unkept Promises', Advance Social Watch Report, 2005
29. ActionAid: *G8 Report*, 2005
30. 'African NGO statement on Recent Debt Cancellation Proposals', 31st March, 2005
31. *Economic Report on Africa*, UNECA, p. 55
32. Antonio Estache, *PPI Partnerships versus PPI Divorces in Developing Countries*, World Bank and Universite Libre de Bruxelles, January 2005

References

African Action Resource (2005). Africa's Debt.

See <http://www.africaaction.org/resources/issues/debt.php>

Archer, David and Marphatia, Akanksha (2005). How the IMF Blocks Progress on Girls' Education.

Antrobus, Peggy (2003). Presentation to Working Group on the MDGs & Gender Equality at UNDP Caribbean Regional Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) Conference.

See <http://www.whrnet.org/docs/issue-mdg.html>

Barton, Carol (2005). Women's Movements and Gender Perspectives on the Millennium Development Goals. Civil Society Perspectives on the Millennium Development Goals.

See www.choike.org/documentos/mdgs_cso_barton.pdf.

DAWN (2005). Critical Comments on the 'Freedom from Want' Section of the UN Secretary-General's Report for the Millennium +5 Summit.

See www.peacewomen.org/un/September_Summit/DAWNLargerFreedom.doc

GCAP-Women Archives (2005).

See <http://mailman-new.greenet.org.uk/pipermail/gcap-women/>

Grown, Caren; Rao Gupta, Geeta and Kes, Aslihan (2005). Taking Action: Achieving Gender Equality and Empowering Women.

See www.unmillenniumproject.org/documents/Gender-chapters1-3.pdf.

Kerr, Joanna (2003). Are the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) Relevant to Women's Movements?

See <http://www.awid.org/go.php?list=analysis&prefix=msg&item=00150>

MADRE (2005). Comments on the Secretary-General Report "In Larger Freedom: Towards Development, Security and Human Rights for all" and "Issues of the UN Millennium +5 Summit".

See www.madre.org/articles/hra/inlargerfreedom.html

Millennium Project (2005). Investing in Development: A Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

See www.unmillenniumproject.org

NGOWG (2005). Response to the Secretary-General Report, "In Larger Freedom: Integrating Gender Equality into National-level Priorities for September Summit". See www.peacewomen.org/un/ngo/ngopub/InLargerFreedomresponse.html

Secretary-General of the United Nations (2005). In Larger Freedom: Towards Development, Security and Human Rights for All.

See www.un.org/largerfreedom/.

The Center for Women's Global Leadership (CWGL), Development

Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN), NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, and Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO) (2005). Proposed Language Amendments on the Draft Declaration for the UN High-Level Event, 14-16 September 2005.

See www.cwgl.rutgers.edu/globalcenter/policy/millsummit/WomenSeptLangDoc.pdf

UNAIDS (2004). Facing the Future: Report of the Secretary-General's Taskforce on Women, Girls and HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa.

See <http://womenandaids.unaids.org/regional/default.html>.

WEDO (2005). Comments on the UN Secretary-General's Report

"In Larger Freedom: Towards Development, Security and Human Rights for All".

See <http://www.wedo.org/files/commentsSGsreport.doc>

Civil Society Action Plan for Achieving the Gender Equality and Education Millennium Development Goals'

Chapter Four

Reclaiming Freedoms and Rights

- Charters of People
and Calls for Action
- Charters of People
and Calls for Action

Overcoming poverty is not a gesture of charity.
It is an act of Justice. It is the protection of fundamental
human rights, the right to dignity and decent life...

– Nelson Mandela





If our world has to become a more just and equitable place that guarantees freedom from want and fear, and a possibility to live in dignity, then radical, pro-poor changes in international and national systems of governance are needed.

Peoples' charters of demands from communities collated from this study (*see Appendix 3*) as well as those supported by regional and international assemblies illustrate the changes that are urgently needed for defining the contours of the world that will ensure such freedoms.

The peoples' charter of demands in this report also underline the fundamental rift between action plans made for the poor, and the needs, perceptions and insights of the poor themselves. Indeed, the people's charters expose the fallacies of framing purely statistical goals. For instance, while the MDGs set 'targets' for universal primary education, the people's charters mention no statistics. Instead, they typically demand that primary schools should be located within villages; schools should have adequate teachers and infrastructure; special provisions should be made to ensure that girls join school and do not drop out early. Unarguably, the MDGs' target of universal primary education cannot be achieved without meeting these conditions – and even if the target was to be somehow met, it would be an illusory achievement, as dropout would be high. The people's charters are thus more 'realistic' in their assessment of what needs to be done – and can be done – to attain the ultimate goal of removing poverty.

These charters and calls are agendas for action for the heads of states as they meet for the World Summit,

as also for the subsequent formulation of international, regional and national policy frameworks.

Based on the people's charters collated by this report, ActionAid International and a range of other civil society organisations from across the developing world place this charter of demands before the World Summit:

We call for:

Interrogation of poverty statistics and definitions from peoples' perspectives, and reformulation of the Millennium Development Goals

- Definition of poverty explicit and implicit in the MDGs is anchored firmly in a framework of human rights. This was the promise inherent in the Millennium Declaration, which referred explicitly to human rights. The questionable decision to dilute this emphasis by omitting human rights from the MDGs needs to be reversed.
- MDGs explicitly acknowledge the facts of exploitation, economic and political disenfranchisement, arising out of diversities such as gender, caste, class, ethnicity, ability, sexual orientation, age, geography and history.
- MDGs should be invested with mechanisms for participatory reviews and reflections, and should accurately mirror the views of the poor in whose name they have been framed.

Active welfare, protection and development role of the State

The active welfare and development role of the State needs to be strengthened and appropriate accountability mechanisms have to be instituted to ensure that the

State fulfils its functions especially in the realms of health, education, housing, and social protection.

- Actively provide welfare and protection for its most vulnerable citizens, through social security schemes such as food transfers, pensions, and basic income/employment guarantees, especially since it has been unable to provide the basic rights often promised to its citizens;
- Recognise and guarantee full realisation of social and economic rights – such as right to food, health, education, employment, housing, water and land, on an urgent basis;
- Restore and uphold the rights of citizens and communities to control and access natural resources and basic services;
- Regulate markets and direct public investments in enhancing the quality of basic services such as health, education, welfare, electricity, housing, water and sanitation; delegitimise the privatisation of basic services and natural resources such as land, water and forests;
- Ensure that multilateral trade agreements are consistent with international human rights commitments and treaty obligations;
- Uphold the principles of transparency and accountability in its functioning
- guarantee every citizen the right to information as one of the means of operationalising all other rights.

Protection and promotion of rights of women

Women's rights should be fully integrated into the MDGs and gender equity made a part of its agenda. This is essential to ensure that women are free from want and fear, and free to live in dignity. Education and better maternal and childcare are not the only means to empower women, or to address the issues of exclusion and injustice that half of humanity has always faced. The MDG framework needs to go beyond these issues.

- Keeping promises already made. National governments and the international community must ensure the inclusion of all critical areas of concern in the Beijing Platform for Action and other covenants such as the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Vienna Declaration of Human Rights, the Programme of Action agreed at the International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, and the 1985 Nairobi agenda of 'forward looking strategies';
- Promoting and protecting of women's rights in conflicts, through the adoption of laws which hold to account perpetrators of violence against women and combat the culture of militarization that poses a major threat to women's security; the condemnation and effective punishment of all violations of the human rights of women and girls in situations of conflict; the integration of gender perspectives in conflict resolution principles and the meaningful involvement of women in decision-making processes which have a bearing on peace and security.
- Upholding and promoting of women's sexual and reproductive health and rights through all government policies and actions.
- Adopting laws and policies to protect and enhance women's rights to access and control over land, property and housing and productive resources while ensuring the right of inheritance of women and girls over agricultural, non-agricultural and domestic property.
- Adopting laws on the political representation of women and ensuring an appropriate gender balance at levels of political representation;
- Protecting women's rights from the threat of fundamentalism, so that women's rights are not co-opted by any form of conservatism or fundamentalism using religious or economic messages.
- Investing in environmentally sound infrastructure necessary to reduce the time women and girls spend to access water, wood, fuel and other necessities.

- Promoting mainstreaming of a gender perspective in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic, environmental and social spheres.

Strengthening education

While there is a consensus around the education-for-all framework, our specific call is that the MDG programme needs to:

- Acknowledge the failure to reach the gender parity target in 2005, and interrogate the reasons for slipping behind targets on gender parity in education and agree on an accelerated timetable for achieving parity between boys' and girls' educational achievement, before the terminal date of 2015.
- Deliver on promises of increased funding in education. This includes meeting the promises for providing sufficient technical and financial resources for education, spending the allocated money more transparently and affirming a commitment, in word and deed, to free universal primary education. The indirect costs involved in universal primary enrolment, such as the loss of earnings for poor families, should be met through social welfare budgets in all countries.
- Strengthen the accountability mechanisms for unkept promises. This includes promoting government accountability to its people on the promises made, as well as monitoring of donor funding and practices.
- Ensure that education is a fundamental right and link the MDGs programme to earlier covenants like the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, so that the element of accountability is strengthened and the principle that people should have a right to free education is emphasised.
- Push harder for the Universal Primary Education target and assess progress to ensure that matters are on course before expanding the scope of the programme to take in secondary education too.
- Aim for quality of education and transform schools

in terms of environment and value orientation. Reform the conditions of teachers, invest in teachers' needs and also learning material, and restore their status as leaders in society.

- Support as an end in itself, the cause of education for women of all age groups; place special emphasis on women's literacy.
- Stop the privatisation of education, which has become an increasing threat to the capacity of the poor to secure their educational rights and a virtual abdication of responsibility by the State.

Investments in agriculture, instituting land reforms, right to food and work

Much is at stake for developing countries in agriculture, which is the main source of livelihood for large majorities of their populations. Urbanisation and the transition to commercial agriculture mean the acquisition of land and resources from small farmers, who are at the very bottom of the value chain. It means the extinction of a way of life for small farmers and their transition to wage labour in the manufacturing or services sector, occupations that they are ill-suited to perform on account of the burden of history. There is firm evidence that agricultural 'reforms' as they are now conceived – contract farming, the removal of barriers to entry by corporate entities and the consolidation of small, fragmented holdings into large commercial-scale farms – works against the interest of the majority of the poor, and also seriously impair ecological assets and common property resources. In addition, small farmers stand to lose their rights over land and water, and their livelihoods too.

- Reversing trends of corporatisation of agriculture, promoting and enhancing pro-poor land reforms to ensure access and control of communities over resources. The same principles should be applied in fisheries and other sectors. The focus in the agricultural sector should be on meeting the needs for mass consumption items before a shift to high value commodities is undertaken or promoted.

- Augmenting public investments in agriculture and water/moisture security, making this a priority in national planning and resisting the involvement of the private sector in agriculture and agriculture extension services. Efforts to bring in privatisation as a part of the negotiations process under the General Agreement on Trade in Services should be resolutely opposed.
- Promoting and protecting women's right – and access and control over land, seeds and water
- Ensuring the realisation of the right to food and the right to work. These have been part of the constitutional promise in several countries, but have rarely, if ever, been delivered. Governments should resolve to make the goals of full and productive employment and decent work for all a central objective of national and international macro-economic policies as well as poverty reduction strategies. These measures should also encompass the elimination of child labour, and labour protections as agreed in the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights to Work. Governments should also resolve to protect the human rights of workers and free movement of persons across borders and countries.
- Promoting of policies for sustainable agriculture, which means, above all, that the grower's access to essential inputs, common property resources and ecological assets should be safeguarded and proper redress should be made for the loss of autonomy suffered so far.
- poverty rather than meeting the strategic, commercial or political objectives of the donor.
- Technical assistance that often accompanies aid packages should not be used to steer the country towards liberalisation and privatisation. Technical assistance should be procured locally and should be focused on capacity building.
- Aid must be untied and policies put in place for local procurement with regular monitoring; the purpose of aid is not to build up markets for suppliers in the donor countries.
- Aid conditionalities should be ended, particularly those that require economic liberalisation and involve the denial of public goods or reproductive and sexual health services to women and girls.
- National governments must implement gender sensitive budgeting and use aid that promotes a women's rights agenda.
- There must be a new international aid agreement by which donors and recipients are held mutually accountable; recipient governments should develop policies for holding donors to account, shifting away from a donor imposed conditionality to mutual accountability.
- For making mutual accountability work, aid committed should not be withheld except under extreme circumstances and a time-stream of aid should be guaranteed, making these flows predictable, reliable, and adequate as a basis for long-range planning.

Transparency and accountability in aid

Aid is neither the only solution to the poverty challenges faced by governments and poor people, nor is it even the principal one. Aid has to be seen as rightful restitution rather than as a matter of altruism, and it is required that

- Donors must commit to provide 0.7 per cent of their national income.
- Aid must be allocated according to poverty needs, explicitly for supporting the agenda of fighting

Going beyond aid

The UNMP has missed an opportunity to address the debt burden yet debt continues to hamper developing countries in their efforts to finance development. The UNMP chooses not to engage with debts from the South that have been paid several times over. It is an imperative of global justice that these are written off unconditionally.

The mission of raising resources for fulfilling the MDGs also requires that considerable attention be paid to the basics of budgeting at the national level. The dogmas of 'supply-side economics' need to be decisively rejected and a serious effort at tax reforms undertaken, in terms of both rates and administration.

Developing countries have lost tremendously in terms of resources because of the collapse of commodity prices over the last quarter of a century. This is not a consequence of supposedly ineluctable laws of economics, but a reflection of the poor bargaining power of the developing countries, and the ability of the industrialised countries to fix the rules of international finance for their exclusive benefit. It is essential that the crisis of commodity prices be credibly addressed, if necessary by resuming buffer-stocking operations in certain commodities.

Debt servicing undermines development. The debt of nations is paid by the poor, especially by women who seek through their unpaid labour and drudgery to remedy the damage caused by the retreat of the State from basic services and social welfare.

- Cancellation of all debts of the world's poorest countries. For low and middle-income countries, all illegitimate debts – debts that have been paid after adjusting for currency depreciation and interest rate effects – should be written off.
- Funding for debt relief must be in addition to aid budgets.
- Cancelling debts should not be tied to economic policy conditions, like the privatisation of services and resources.
- A process of debt and aid monitoring should be set up outside the purview of the international financial institutions and the World Trade Organization. A Commissioner for Aid and Debt, reporting to the UN Secretary-General, should provide impartial monitoring and arbitration functions on mutual accountabilities. This office should also work on

issues related to sustainable debts and interrogate the legitimacy of debts.

- Ensuring that additional savings accruing in developing countries are ploughed into poverty reduction and developmental programmes, including public services, instruments, and agendas that benefit women and promote gender equality by instituting a debt cancellation conditionality.
- Exploring innovative mechanisms of redistributive international taxation based on principles of ecological, economic and social justice.
- Ensuring that large payment imbalances in the world economy, focused especially on the U.S. current account deficit, are redressed to the benefit of the developing countries by augmenting public investments. The irrational and perverse flow of capital should be reversed.
- Addressing the crisis of commodity prices through a transparent mechanism. This would mean setting a threshold price for producers and compensation for fluctuating prices for the developing countries.
- Tracking down of Illicit capital flight from the developing countries and returning these resources to the countries from which they were smuggled, to finance investments, subsidies and public services.

Trade justice

Throughout its history, trade has served the interests of richer nations. Yet it is expected that trade can finance development. The movement towards free trade has had disastrous consequences for developing countries. Countries that have managed to deflect these pressures and retain some autonomy and flexibility have fared better.

- THE RIGHT TO PROTECT where every developing country, in whatever trade negotiations, must have the right to protect its small holders agriculture as well its food security.
- Respect the principle that trade negotiations shall not undermine the ability of developing countries

to promote rural development and food security. Reorientation of trade policies to ensure that they support development and gender equity, and do not become a vehicle for forced liberalisation and privatisation of services and resources.

- Abolition of all forms of trade distorting subsidies by rich countries, which strongly and adversely affect the livelihoods of small and marginal farmers in the South. This call is for the Quad countries of the US, the European Union, Japan and Canada, which retain high subsidies for their producers.
- Ending dumping of agricultural products by rich nations.
- Transparent handling of commodity pricing and an arbitration mechanism.
- Basis of negotiations on services trade should be such that developing countries are not pressured to grant concessions on commercial presence. The key issue of interest to them – movement of natural persons across national frontiers – should be favourably considered.
- Negotiations on agriculture should not burden the developing countries with excessive market access requirements. The bulk of the population in these countries are dependent on agriculture for a livelihood. Opening up the doors for imports would lead to their ruin and without production and income, it is obvious, there cannot be any consumers.
- Right of poor countries to protect their local industries. The current WTO package on NAMA, if agreed, would create unemployment problems, loss of government revenues, and dumping of industrial products.
- Rich countries to stop imposing unfair conditions through bilateral and regional trading agreements, which have been rejected in the WTO negotiations
- Intellectual property regulations should exclude life forms from patenting.

● If a development friendly and pro-poor outcome is impossible from this process of WTO negotiations we call for:

- Halt the current negotiations
- Turn around – bring REAL pro-poor agenda back on the table
- Resume negotiations through inclusive and democratic processes.

Combating HIV and AIDS, malaria and other pandemics

While there is a growing recognition of the need to ensure universal access to treatment for HIV and AIDS, not enough has been done to reduce disease loads, though anti-retroviral treatment makes this eminently feasible. This is an outcome of the appalling state of public health systems in the developing world. The campaign on access to essential medicines, which had built up significant momentum around the turn of the century, has been dissipated and deflected off course by illusory promises made by international drug companies and advanced nations. The Doha Declaration on access to essential medicines remains a dead letter and the modalities agreed just on the eve of the Cancun Ministerial meeting of the WTO proved to be a form of tokenism.

In addition, health budgets of developing countries need to be considerably augmented, through a significant tax effort and a substantial infusion of aid. Accountability of health services and personnel should be ensured by providing communities with powers of monitoring and audit. Where generic manufacturing capacities exist, these should be activated to produce medicines specifically for diseases that take a heavy toll in developing countries. Every developing country should have the autonomy to decide on sources for imports of essential medicines.

At the same time, we are starting to see that the US religious conservative agenda is destroying the consensus that informed HIV prevention. Instead of building prevention programmes based on evidence and realistic approach to sexuality, we see US

organisations and politicians from developing countries taking the opportunity to promote their own agenda. Alongside behaviour change, condoms are only for those designated 'high risk' groups in denying people the choices and the opportunities to prevent transmission of HIV based on realistic assessment of their risks and vulnerabilities.

- Ensuring universal access to treatment and care by 2010 through sustained and substantial investments in public health infrastructure and national health systems in developing countries, drug procurement and distribution systems, and human resources; and the elimination of user fees, which presents a very significant barrier for the poor.
- Ensuring that the full resources needed towards prevention and treatment of HIV and AIDS are made available as soon as possible, with both donor governments and national governments of highly affected countries playing their part and reducing the unfair burden on poor communities and families for:
 - care and support of affected people
 - elimination of stigma and discrimination
 - enhanced access to affordable medicines
 - reduction in vulnerability of affected persons, in particular women, girls, orphaned children, caregivers and elderly persons.
 - Expansion of comprehensive response to HIV/AIDS
 - full funding of the Global Fund to fight AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria,
 - strengthening UN system agencies and programmes engaged in the fight against HIV/AIDS;
- Committing to transparent and accountable management of resources allocated in the fight against HIV/AIDS and other illnesses, at both donor and recipient level, and allowing full monitoring by civil society.
- Achieving universal access to reproductive health by 2015 as set out at the ICPD, integrating this goal into strategies to attain the international development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration aimed at improving maternal health, reducing child mortality, promoting

gender equality, combating HIV/AIDS and eradicating poverty. HIV prevention work must be based on objective evidence and should take a 'harm reduction' approach that gives people a full range of choices and tools to reduce their vulnerability to HIV reduction.

- Reaffirming and making a reality the right of poor countries to have access to medical technologies without paying the prices to patent holders and oppose all attempts by patent holders and by donor governments to discourage poor countries from exercising these rights.

Accountability of governments, global institutions – international finance institutions (IFIs) and corporate organisations

Macroeconomic conditionalities used by IFIs have had disastrous effects for poor nations and communities across the world. The conditionalities have given them no options. They have divested them of control over resources and curtailed their access to public goods and services.

- An immediate end to all policy conditionalities linked to aid and debts. Reprisals, whether as threat or reality, such as the withholding of credit, aid and debt relief to developing countries that fail to comply with policies attached to their loan agreements, should be outlawed.
- Pro-poor national policy and budget making process of governance from the perspectives of the poor should be strengthened.
- Governments must ensure corporate accountability and their adherence to economic, social and ecological justice norms, through incentives or instruments of legal compulsion.
- The 'publish what you pay' initiative that attempts to track resources and revenues should be encouraged.
- Transparency must be ensured in public-private partnership contracts, by making all conditions public, and having a participatory decision making

process. These contracts, which commit generations to provisions they had no role in evolving, are rarely known in public.

Ending militarisation and conflicts

A mere 1 per cent reduction in annual global military spending (nearly \$1 trillion), could provide primary education for all children in the world (estimated to cost \$9.1 billion). However, leaders in the United Nations and international financial institutions continue to see their national security achieved through military means. In 2002, arms deliveries to Asia, the Middle East, Latin America, and Africa constituted two-thirds of the value of all deliveries worldwide. The five permanent members of the UN Security Council accounted for 90 per cent of those deliveries. Arms supplied by Europe in Liberia and Sierra Leone fuelled conflicts in those countries, setting back the achievement of the MDGs by many years and generations.

Poverty and conflict are inextricably linked. Living on the edges of society or in societies in which the rule of law has broken down, violent conflict is part of the lives of poor people. They face violence precisely because they are poor and relatively unprotected. Among poor people, women face the most violence because they have the least protection. Very often, this violence is systematic and takes on the character of one group against another. It may involve organised crime, warlords or concerted resistance against the actions of the State. Violence is often used in a deliberate manner as a tool of exploitation. This can become part of a political, social and military system.

- Ensuring that poor people have the right to a life free from violence and the fear of violence. The human rights of the poor should continue to be protected even in times of violent conflict. Peace and conflict resolution mechanisms should be firmly instituted in developing countries. Underlying causes of conflict, such as competition for shrinking resources and collapsing public services, should be addressed directly.
- Banning trade in small arms and setting up mechanisms to remove and destroy millions of small arms already in circulation. This involves actions by the national governments and by all countries producing small arms.
- Military spending should be made transparent. There should be a drastic reduction in military spending to direct resources for public and productive investments.
- All countries should operationalise the principles declaring the use of weapons of mass destruction illegitimate in all circumstances. The nuclear weapons States – both the recognised and unrecognised ones – should deliver on the promise held out as far back as 1970 that they will work in good faith towards eliminating these weapons for all time.

Appendices

Appendices

“ For to be free is not merely to cast off one’s chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others

– *Nelson Mandela* ”



Note on Methodology for Whose Freedoms? MDGs as if people matter!

The methodology was based on the premise that it is important, and more so in the current context, to listen to peoples views and perspectives and bring these together as critical reflections and reports to encourage

Discussion and debate
Build agendas for local action
Present a reality check for decision makers

In order to encourage discussions in groups, a checklist and a simple focus group discussion instrument were developed covering aspects of livelihoods, education and health, with reference to basic services and rights. There was a specific focus on womens rights.

The village- focus group discussion instrument, was developed to encourage and facilitate discussions around the following key aspects. In addition country/region specific dimensions were added.

Pertaining to Education...

Access: Location of School, Distance of school and access, Social considerations and exclusions

Availability of Teachers and Teaching Aids in the Schools, toilets and drinking water facilities, existence of any discrimination in schools

Affordability of Education services: Can poor meet the school fees, how are the costs of education met

Status of education of girl children, can they go to school

Pertaining to Livelihoods...

Availability of work: In general, especially for the resource less, do you get work year round

Availability of Food: Do the poor in the village get food in all months, or are there months where food is not available, and meals have to be compromised

Coping methods

Starvation, and cases of hunger deaths or of families which face starvation and huge debts

Destitution: Are there families that can be called destitute. (*Destitute family is defined as a family which does not have any support base whatsoever, and have to depend upon state social security or support from neighbours for getting by*)

Support and Welfare Services of the Government: Are there any support services available for families which face hunger - food subsidies, grain banks, food transfer schemes in the village

Gender Discrimination in availability of work and wages: Are wages for men and women different. Wage labour availability

Child Labour: children in the village who work for wages

Ownership of Land : Do women own land, agricultural land

Discussion on other forms of livelihoods, discussion on migration

Pertaining to Health...

Access and Availability: Is a Health centre available in the village, if not distance .

Availability of trained doctor/s/nurses at the Health Centre, is there a trained nurse, how far is the government doctor

Availability of Supplies and Medicines: Are medicines available at the hospital/ health post

Public and Private Health Service

Affordability and costs: Is there a fee for doctor and nurses, are the services affordable

Who attends to child births in villages? Are the midwives (?) attending to child births trained in some way.

In the past year, have there been deaths of expecting mothers, or infants in the villages

Drinking Water Availability: Is clean drinking water available for families, or do people have to travel distances to obtain drinking water

Morbidity and Mortality - Discussions

The idea was discussion on each issue (this was not closed ended) and generation of action points, for local action, or for charters of demands. Specific guidelines were developed for village facilitators who were oriented on the nature and purpose of the process. In each village a facilitators spent a minimum of 4-5 hours, depending on the size of the village and group dynamics. Specific guidelines were developed to enable women, children and marginalised groups to participate and share views. Pretesting was carried out.

In addition to focus group discussions, specific information was also taken up after discussions at key points of the village – the school, the health centre, ration/food supply centre, local govt office/village centre. Recent village records were also seen to obtain some specific information on education, health, livelihoods and issues around services.

Peoples testimonies were also documented. People Speak – first person narratives of poverty, deprivation, and denial which people face reflecting their angst, struggle and assertion, were also used.

Sampling

A purposive random sampling was identified. Purposive, in the sense that we made an effort to reach out to the poor communities and regions within the country.

Within the country, each country team made an effort to bring out views from different regions, as also from different groups of marginalised communities. Locations for the discussions were selected from a wide range of provinces and states, regions and sub-regions within a country, and in areas where communities already had a contact and an existing rapport with civil society functionaries. The sampling adopted was purposive, to reach to people for whom the realities of poverty and exploitation have not changed.

Within the countries, the number and distribution spread is given below

1. Afghanistan: 41 Villages (Balkh, Samangan, Jawuzan)
2. Bangladesh: 633 Villages (all 63 districts)
3. Cambodia: 500 Villages (Prey Veng, Kampong Speu, Kandal, Kampong Thom, Kampong Chhang, Takeo, Kampot, Syay Rieng, Kg Cham, Pursat, Phnom Penh.)
4. Pakistan: 214 Villages (Sindh, Balochistan, NWFP, Punjab)
5. Nepal: 130 Villages (Eastern, Central, Western, Mid Western, Far Western)
6. India: 1541 Villages (Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chattisgarh, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Assam, Bihar, Arunachal Pradesh, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Orissa)
7. Vietnam: 171 villages Ninh Thuan, Quang Ngai, Tra Vinh, Ho chi Minh City, Ha Giang, Hai Duong, Ha Tinh
8. Nigeria: 104 Villages (Jiwa and Lafia)
9. Tanzania: 230 villages
10. Malawi: 76 villages (North, South, Central regions)
11. Sierra Leone: 317 villages (East, West, North and South regions)
12. Senegal: 105 Villages
13. Kenya: 230 Villages 14,15 Brazil and Guatemala: Reports from communities, a different methodology. Cross checked in form of 7 indepth discussions
16. Ethiopia: Estimated 150 locations Random Sampling, Citizens report card method used, to cover 3289 household from all regions.
17. Rwanda: 301 villages (Kegali Ngal)i
18. Somalia: 33 Settlements
19. Burundi: 300+ Villages from Rutana, Karusi, Bujumbura Municipality, Ruyigi Province). Burundi feedback could not be incorporated in all dimensions.

Ambiguities and anomalies in the Indian poverty case

Though the poverty figures on India that the UNMP relies upon are ostensibly based on official surveys, they differ considerably from Indian government estimates.

It is now the official orthodoxy in India that between 1993-94 and 1999-2000, when the 50th and 55th rounds of the National Sample Survey (NSS) on consumption expenditure, the number of people living in poverty declined by the order of 60 million, with the poverty rate itself falling to 26 per cent. In absolute numbers, the number of the poor in the latter period has been put at 260 million. This is considerably in excess of the FAO estimate of the incidence of undernourishment, though substantially below the figures the UNMP relies on.

Apart from this curiosity of official estimates, a serious definitional anomaly crept into Indian poverty estimates in the course of the 1990s. Surveys of household expenditure are based on a certain "recall period", with the respondent being asked to itemise and report the composition of his consumption basket over this defined time horizon. Where the standard practice in all earlier surveys had been to estimate consumption across the basket for a uniform 30-day reference period, the round conducted in the years 1999-2000 (which was the 55th round of the National Sample Survey or NSS) took both a one-week and a 30-day reference for food and a year-long period for all other items.

This engendered a problem of compatibility with the immediately preceding survey of consumer expenditure, the NSS 50th round conducted in 1993-94, as also all preceding rounds. In the interests of ensuring continuity in poverty estimates, the Indian Planning Commission, the apex governmental organisation dealing with issues of poverty and income distribution, chose to use the 30-day reference period but observed that the "estimates may not be strictly comparable to earlier estimates of poverty".

As the economist Abhijit Sen was the first to point out, responses to the one-week reference period tended to increase the reported consumption of food and other items of regular need, by about 30 percent relative to the 30-day recall.¹ Similarly, the one-year recall for items other than food yielded consumption estimates across income groups that were much less unequal than those arising from the 30-day recall. This had been established in the course of a series of experimental surveys conducted between 1994 and 1998, though there had been no definitive findings on which was the more reliable recall period.

The relevant point though, is that the consumer expenditure survey for 1999-2000 was rendered incomparable with earlier such surveys just on account of this methodological change. And the anomaly was not corrected by using a uniform 30-day reference period for inter-temporal comparisons. Economists suggest that the use of a multiplicity of reference periods could have engendered confusion among the respondents and "contaminated" the data: by concurrently canvassing two recall periods, the data was quite probably, vitiated at source.

Some efforts at correction through a reexamination of the primary data have arrived at the finding that the decline in poverty was real, though not as great as revealed in the survey. Angus Deaton for instance, used the limited range of items for which the NSS questionnaire did not change its method of canvassing between the 50th and 55th round. These were a significant group of commodities, consumed by "nearly all households", and the data did indicate that there had been a significant increase in consumption. "The extent of the increase", Deaton argued, "allows us to estimate how much poverty has fallen". And though initially incredulous at the official claim that India's poverty rate had fallen dramatically, Deaton was brought around to the conclusion that much of the decrease could have been real: the number of the poor as a proportion of India's total population, he inferred, "fell from 36 percent in 1993-94, not to 26 percent as in the official numbers, but to 28 percent".²

Another effort at data decontamination by Abhijit Sen and others has suggested that even if the incidence of poverty did decline in the 1990s, the preponderance of evidence suggests that the period following 1995 was a "lost half-decade" for India as far as alleviating poverty was concerned.³ Against an official claim that the poverty ratio fell by over 10 percent, Sen and his co-author suggest that the actual achievement could be closer to 2.8 per cent. Though the numbers do not tally in any significant manner, this finding of the direction of change in the numbers living in poverty, is consistent with the FAO inference that undernourishment increased in absolute terms in India during the second half of the 1990s.

The official Indian estimate and the various efforts to iron out the errors arising from an arbitrary change of definitions, have proved controversial for other reasons too. As the economist Utsa Patnaik, among others, has pointed out, the direct question canvassed by NSS surveys on nutritional intake yields a figure on poverty rate that is truly appalling: 70 percent of the rural population and 40 per cent of the urban population of India, by this estimate, fall below the minimum nutritional norms, of 2400 calories per day for the urban population and 2100 calories per day for the rural.⁴

The official estimates however, pay no attention to this direct method, but rather, depend upon an income estimate of the poverty line dating from 1973-74, which has been updated using price indices. This method obviously fails to capture the many material changes that have taken place in production and consumption patterns, including the increasing dependence upon commodity exchange rather than subsistence farming or payments in kind, the erosion of common property resources, and a variety of other circumstances. In the jargon of the missionaries of globalisation, these changes could collectively be described as an increase in the importance of tradables rather than non-tradables in the consumption basket of the poor.

The short point to be made here is that progress against poverty in India, cannot be taken for granted. Deaton has argued, after putting all the statistical controversy aside, that poverty must necessarily have diminished during the 1990s. The data pertaining directly to the issue has proved contentious, but all the information available from other sources – such as National Accounts Statistics compilations on economic growth and its distribution across sectors, and the increase of personal consumption expenditure through the 1990s – necessarily points to a decreasing incidence of poverty through the 1990s.⁵

If the broader picture were to be considered, it would be obvious that official estimates on poverty in the 1990s have stood in splendid isolation from all other economic parameters. To restore a semblance of logical consistency between the different sets of official figures, it is necessary to either reject the claim of a decline in poverty over the 1990s, or condemn as irrelevant most of the economic statistics collected in India. For instance, the growth rate in agriculture has fallen below the rate of growth of population through the 1990s, while the population dependent on agriculture for their livelihood has remained almost constant in proportionate terms.

All employment surveys carried out in this period, moreover, indicate a rapid erosion of opportunities, a decline in self-employment and the growing “casualisation” of labour. This growth in casual employment raises serious questions about the quality of employment growth, particularly since it has taken place at the expense of “self employment” as a category. It is widely recognised that the extent and incidence of self-employment is a fair indicator of the size of the informal economy. The trends observed in India point towards a shift within the vast expanse of the informal economy towards even lower quality employment.⁶

Further, all through the 1990s, the per capita availability of cereals has been on a steady downward course: from 435 grams per day in 1990 to 385 in 2001. Availability of pulses (or legumes, a staple of an ordinary Indian diet) has also gone down rapidly from 41 grams per day to 29 grams in the same period of time. These parameters are crucial, since the FAO has found that successful strategies to cope with poverty and undernourishment have invariably involved a high rate of growth in agriculture, increasing per capita food availability and significant official spending on public health.

None of these conditions has been met in India through the 1990s. The Planning Commission of the Government of India, has put it with rare and admirable candour in its mid-term appraisal of the ongoing Tenth Five Year Plan in India. Against a targeted annual growth rate of 4 percent in agriculture and allied activities in the five years following the 2002-03 fiscal (ending March), the actual achievement in the three ensuing years only averages 1 percent. This comes on the heels of a calamitous drop in agricultural growth rate from a niggardly annual average of 3.2 percent between 1980-81 and 1995-96, to a paltry 1.9 percent between 1996-97 and 2001-02.⁷

Where expenditure on public health is concerned, the picture is equally dismal. Budgetary statistics show that the Indian central government's outlays on health have stagnated at least over a 15-year period, if not more.⁸ At the same time, private expenditure on health increased as a percentage of GDP from 2.79 percent to well over 5 percent between 1989-90 and 2002-03.⁹

There has yet been no official effort at explaining how the declining public expenditure on health and the rising private expenditure could be consistent with poverty rates falling. But there has been an official response to the reality of the declining availability of basic items of nutrition, which has been to claim that a process of dietary diversification is underway, with growing prosperity and livelihood security propelling a shift towards fruits, vegetables and animal products. To bolster this claim, a new series of the National Accounts Statistics (NAS) was introduced in 1999, with the base year pegged at 1993-94, purportedly to correct the long-running tendency for official statistics to under-state the production and consumption of fruits and vegetables.

These claims have been roundly rejected in most informed circles. As the economist Utsa Patnaik has argued: “It is a grave mistake to think that the absorption of grain per head falls with rising income: on the contrary, all empirical evidence shows that the absorption of foodgrains for all purposes, always goes up with rising per head income under normal conditions (this includes both the direct use plus the indirect consumption through conversion of grain as feed into animal products).”¹⁰

Even with the new series of national accounts, it is evident that investment in agriculture has fallen sharply in the 1990s. While private investment has stagnated as a proportion of gross domestic product, public investment has collapsed. This is an outcome of fiscal adjustment and the rapid erosion of government revenues. The bottom line of the structural adjustment program that was launched in 1991 is simply this: the agriculture sector, which provides a livelihood to over 60 per cent of the population of India, has simply not been a priority. If the trend in investment in agriculture were to be plotted, there is a distinct dip in the latter half of the 1990s, when fiscal pressures on the government mounted as a result of the implementation of a new package of pay and allowances for its employees. Although much further inquiry remains before it can be advanced definitively, it is a plausible hypothesis that the reversal of the niggardly progress made till then in reducing poverty and undernourishment, could have been a consequence of this cutback in investment.

With all these figures indicating otherwise, it is scarcely credible that a substantial dent could have been made in poverty through the decade-and-a-half that has followed India's decision in 1991 to shed all reserve and compunction and to integrate with the global economy.

1. Abhijit Sen, 'Estimates of Consumer Expenditure and its Distribution: Statistical Priorities after the NSS 55th Round', *Economic and Political Weekly*, December 16-22, 2000.
2. Deaton, in 'Data and Dogma: The Great Indian Poverty Debate', available at: http://www.wws.princeton.edu/~rpds/downloads/deaton_kozel_datadogma.pdf, reports both his conclusions and those by the Delhi University economists, K Sundaram and Suresh Tendulkar, who "obtain very similar results using entirely different methods".
3. Abhijit Sen and Himanshu, 'Poverty and Inequality in India', Parts I and II, *Economic and Political Weekly*, September 17, 2004 and September 24, 2004; available at <http://www.epw.org.in/showArticles.php?root=2004&leaf=09&filename=7698&filetype=pdf> and <http://www.epw.org.in/showArticles.php?root=2004&leaf=09&filename=7731&filetype=pdf>
4. Utsa Patnaik, 'The Republic of Hunger', Public Lecture at Delhi, April 10, 2004, the Safdar Hashmi Memorial Trust, available at: http://www.networkideas.org/featart/apr2004/Republic_Hunger.pdf.
5. Angus Deaton and Valerie Kozel, 'Data and Dogma, The Great Indian Poverty Debate', Princeton University, research program in Development Studies, Princeton University, September 2004; downloaded from: http://www.wws.princeton.edu/~rpds/downloads/deaton_kozel_datadogma.pdf
6. Employment elasticity of output according to the NSS surveys, had gone down from 0.52 between 1983 and 1993–94 to 0.16 over 1993–94 to 1999–2000. Employment growth itself declined from 2.7 per cent annually to 1.07 per cent. And the proportion of the work force that was employed on a casual basis was up from 29.6 per cent in 1987-88 to 33.2 percent in 1999-2000. All these figures are from a Planning Commission study in 2002, carried out by a Special Group on Targeting Ten Million Employment Opportunities Per Year, and titled 'Employment Generating Growth'.
7. Planning Commission, Government of India, *Mid-Term Appraisal of the Tenth Five Year Plan*, Delhi 2005, p. 187.
8. According to the authoritative classification of budgetary expenditure published by the Union government every year, expenditure on medicine and public health by the Union Government stood at 0.24 per cent of GDP in 1989–90. It fell sharply to about 0.19 per cent in 1996-97, but recovered to 0.26 per cent by 2004–05.
9. Computed from Government of India, Central Statistical Organisation, *National Accounts Statistics*, various years.
10. Utsa Patnaik, 'The Republic of Hunger', *op.cit.*

People's Charter of Demands from Communities presented by civil society organisations based on community needs

Pursat Province in Cambodia

- Wells in all villages must be cleaned.
- Health centres should be established near villages with enough medicines and free treatment.
- Poor and disabled persons should be provided help, through (grant of) rice fields for farming and food subsidies.
- Food for work programmes and food transfers or pensions for women- headed households and widows must be introduced.
- Government must provide inputs such as water pumps, rice and vegetable seeds and water for irrigation.
- Government must set up schools in villages and provide transportation to schools where these are not possible.
- Better education should be ensured through support to teachers and provision of food to schoolchildren.
- Government must support families suffering from HIV/AIDS and children with no parents.

El Matazano, Laguna Verde, Yalchacti and Verapaz communities in Guatemala

- Government must promote policies that create employment. These include State support for productive projects, which open possibilities of employment and resources for families in the communities.
- There should be specific policies on wages that force employers and owners of farms, who hire people to do agricultural activities, to pay the minimum salary in the field.
- Performance of State-supported education must improve. Secondary education needs to be made more accessible. School infrastructure should be improved.
- More health centres should be set up and more medical staff should be appointed to attend to needs of people. People should get medicines at lower cost – there should be a subsidy for medicines.
- Snacks or midday meals should be provided in schools to help families send children to school.
- Overall, there should be bigger outlays and budgetary investments of the government- particularly the Municipal Councils of Development for poorest people, with clear benchmarking of social security needs.

Sierra Leone

- Peace, security and stability are the hallmarks of a democratic

system. Development and the enjoyment of rights and liberties within acceptable minimum standards can only be guaranteed when peace and security prevails; ensuring their subsistence is thus necessary for the proper and efficacious implementation of MDG goals in Sierra Leone.

- An accountable, transparent, service-driven and communitarian government is an essential regime for the maintenance of a rights culture.
- Protection of basic economic, social and cultural rights and welfare (such as the right to basic education and primary healthcare, the right to a livelihood or work and the right to participate in decision making, especially those decisions that affect daily lives and livelihoods) together with civil and political rights should be guaranteed in the national constitution.
- A truly independent, fair, robust, efficient, informed and entrenched judicial system is a desired prerequisite for the attainment of an MDG standard in addressing, curbing and preventing right denial issues in Sierra Leone.
- As Sierra Leone is classified as one of the poorest countries in the world and two-thirds of its people depend on agriculture for livelihood, there is a case for allowing the country greater flexibility in protecting her agriculture sector from unfair or unbalanced competition.
- Basic education and basic health are powerful instruments for assisting the poor: therefore, substantial resources should be earmarked for both sectors.
- Human capital development is the key to poverty reduction. A healthy and educated nation leads to increased productivity, better income distribution and a generally improved standard of living.

Specific demands under various sectors:

Agriculture and livelihoods: Construction of durable feeder roads and improved road networks. Efficient farming tools and equipment to be provided by government as subsidy to farmers groups or farming communities. Timely provision of improved seeds and effective extension services for farmers. Storage facilities and drying floors to be provided. Accessibility to bank loans and or credit facilities for farmers.

Education: Prompt payment of teachers' salaries. Training and posting of qualified teachers to remote communities and with incentives to stay there. Construction of appropriate school buildings with furniture. Adequate provision of teaching and learning materials. School feeding programmes.

Health: Construction of health centres in remote communities and supply of essential drugs. Training and deployment of health personnel to run the health centres with incentives for staying on.

Provision of safe drinking water by providing wells that are fitted with hand pumps.

Malawi

- Subsidies for farmers and the Government Marketing Agency "Agricultural Development Marketing Corporation", which helps farmers sell their products without intermediaries, should be reintroduced.
- Government must ensure provision of drinking water.
- People have the right to access quality education. Lack of infrastructure, inadequate teachers, learning materials, and cultural factors are the causes for dropout of children, especially girls. The government should provide free education along with better facilities.
- The school curriculum should include subjects on HIV/AIDS to create awareness among young.
- Government should take initiatives to stop abuse of teachers towards girl students.
- Government should empower women to check gender disparities and violence against women.
- More health services, especially pre-natal delivery and post-natal services, should be set up.
- Government should train more medical staff and make provision for adequate supply of drugs and other health facilities.
- Privatisation process in employment sector should be stopped. Privatisation creates more unemployment.

Pakistan

- Government must provide free and quality education along with better infrastructure. Government must take steps to improve enrolment of girls in schools. There should be some system to monitor performance of teachers in schools.
- Free health facilities should be available for all.
- Drinking water should be supplied to all households.
- Government must assure employment guarantee, right to food and natural resources, and redistribution of land.
- Government must stop privatisation programmes in the areas of water and livelihood, which directly hit the poor.
- Government must provide social security and financial support to people who do not have any source of income.

Uganda

- The national budget ceiling on education should be raised by increasing funding from both internal and external sources. (This demand makes a case for disadvantaged children who access non-formal education.)
- Laws that protect children, especially girls, from early marriages, sexual harassment, domestic violence and defilement (statutory rape) should be enacted and enforced and a violence-free environment should be created in schools.
- Government must ensure sustained availability and access to

affordable and quality condoms; and affordable gender-responsive treatment, care and support.

Villages of Ho Chi Minh City

- Human resource in agriculture sector should be developed through training.
- People should have equal opportunities in education and information, so that they can have a chance to be trained workers who contribute to the social development of the community.
- Work should be generated in non-agriculture sector.
- Small and medium rural enterprises should be developed at the community level.
- Handicraft clusters must be developed.
- Export of labour must be facilitated.
- People should have the right to participate in decision-making, especially on issues directly affecting their daily life and livelihood.
- Bank/Fund should be linked with Community Agriculture Extension or Farmer Union members, so that the poor use loans effectively.
- People should be given an opportunity to participate in development policies for achieving MDGs. Participation should be in form of assessing, planning, budgeting and monitoring.
- Government should rely more on local NGOs and allow them to bid for activities/projects/infrastructure for development works.
- Local governments should provide public services like healthcare more effectively. The insurance budget and allocation, which could help remove the risk in farming, should be increased. Local governments must have more responsibilities.

Somalia

- Food transfers and food and drinking water support are needed from development agencies. Borewells are not enough to meet water needs.
- Fodder and water for cattle and camels should be ensured. Sustenance without livestock is very difficult in the arid region.
- Development of health care systems is an important need. Health facilities are few and far, and medicines are not available.
- Primary education facilities should be closer to settlements. Often due to the nomadic lifestyle and unavailability of work, adults are unable to settle down in a village and look after their children's education.
- Water for irrigation along with storage facility for agricultural use should be ensured. Land is available for cultivating fruits and vegetables but water is not.

Gambia

Poverty and Hunger

- Diversification of agriculture must be promoted to increase income, food security and reduce poverty

- Emergence of corporate farms must be controlled and regulated.
- Sustainable agricultural policies that are responsive to the needs of the poor must be developed and implemented.
- Government should not abdicate its obligation to provide essential services like extension, provision of inputs, etc. to the farming community, or any form of support necessary.

Education

- The learning and school environment should be made friendlier and more supportive, especially for girls.
- The 1997 Constitution call for Compulsory Education should be made enforceable.
- Access and quality of special needs education – for girls and people with disabilities- should be improved.
- Government should build capacity for decentralized educational planning and management.

Gender equity and empowerment of women

- Gender sensitive learning situations should be created and both male and female role models should be portrayed in gender sensitive terms.
- Appropriate technology should be transferred to improve productivity in agriculture.
- Representation of women in top management positions and other key decision-making roles should be increased.

Child mortality

- Policies and strategies to reduce morbidity and mortality from malaria, diarrhoea, acute respiratory tract infections and malnutrition should be implemented.
- Government must ensure adequate supplies of essential drugs.
- Government must promote insecticide-treated mosquito nets.

Maternal health

- Women's reproductive health issues, especially those with a gender-specific nature such as early marriage and inheritance, should be given top priority.
- Policies to protect and enhance the reproductive health of women and the girl child should be introduced.
- Family planning services should be made available to women and adolescents.

- Adequate funding should be provided for more services to address women's reproductive health needs and make health available and affordable to poor and marginalized women.

HIV/AIDS

- Voluntary counselling testing services should be set up in all major health centres.
- Prevention of parent to child transmission services should be scaled up.

Rwanda

Health

- Government must provide medical assistance in child delivery (many mothers are delivering without the assistance of qualified and competent medical personnel).
- Government must ensure access and affordability of health services.
- Adequate medical treatment should be provided for HIV/AIDS patients, especially those who need anti-retrovirals, and expectant mothers.

Primary Education

- Government must train more teachers and nurses.

Poverty and Hunger

- Government must invest in agriculture, infrastructure and other productive sectors. (Rwanda cannot reduce poverty by only investing in the social sector - education, health, social protection, etc. are not wealth-creators in the short term. In the long term, education yields something, but it will take years before children finish school and contribute to national growth.)
- A strategy for increasing availability of water, energy, roads and others facilities should be developed.

Gender equality

- Political will should be developed to promote gender, particularly the provisions of the Constitution of 2003.
- The rate of participation of Rwandan women in decision-making bodies at the level of Parliament, the Executive and the Judiciary should be increased.

MDGs not Possible, without a Bold Overhaul of Global Governance

Joint Statement by African and International Civil Society Organizations
Ahead of the UN Millennium +5 review summit
Nairobi, Kenya 19th August 2005

Next month, 189 world leaders re-convene in New York to attend the UN Millennium (+5) Summit and discuss reforms to the UN's Security Council, Economic and Social Council, the General Assembly, strategies for achieving human rights, conflict reduction, food security, climate change and combating global terrorism. The Summit will also review progress in implementation of the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Ahead of this Summit, 25 African and International civil society organizations from the East, Great Lakes, The Horn and Southern regions of Africa, met in Nairobi, Kenya to study the draft outcome text and formulate messages for Governments and regional institutions

Studying the Draft Outcome Document (August 5th) within the context of the political, cultural economic context of Africa in 2005, it is clear that the document does not as yet present a credible agenda for the bold overhaul of the multi-lateral system and the realisation of human rights and the MDGs in Africa.

Over the next four weeks, there is still time to change this.

We, members of the civil society in discussions with representatives of Common Market for East and Southern Africa (COMESA), Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), East African Community (EAC), East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) and African Embassies based in Nairobi, identify the following key issues to be of relevance to Africa.

We call on national delegations, regional inter-governmental organisations and civil society organisations to strengthen the draft text in the following manner;

Security and Global Governance:

We note that the issue of human insecurity is related to the abuse of power and human rights violations. Half a century after its inception, the performance of the UN in keeping peace and intervening in situations of emergencies and food insecurity has been wanting. Without regulating the production and trade in arms, placing people's security over the security of national states and increasing cash support for regional peace initiatives, Africa will not be able to capitalise on the important gains of the last five years.

Consequently, we call for:

- Explicit recognition in the text that the primary focus of state security and human security is to ensure protection of citizens and peoples;
- The proposed ten-year programme of support to strengthening the African peace-keeping should go beyond technical assistance and training to provide actual finances to African Governments to underwrite stand-by operations;

- OECD countries to prioritise financing for development over military spending and desist from including military spending in the same category as development assistance;
- A standing Panel of Experts should complement the proposed Peace Building Commission with mandate over issues of conflict and emergencies. These two entities should be put in place to strengthen existing Early Warning Mechanisms. Their mandate should include independent investigation and verification of incidents. Further, there is need for clarify the criteria of membership, roles and responsibilities of the Peace Building Commission;
- The UN Observer and Peace Keeping mandates should be broadened to allow UN forces to disarm combatants and to protect civilians.

The current discourse on UN Reforms needs to be seen in the broader questions of global governance. We share our Governments concerns that African states are under-represented in key decision-making structures such as the Security Council. We share the view also that the Security Council should be expanded to ensure equal geographical representation, transparency and accountability.

Nevertheless, national delegations need to address with the same degree of urgency as the Security Council, important issues of global financial and economic governance. Negative policy conditionalities from the international finance institutions continue to impact on the productive capacity of our economies to grow and diversify in an equitable manner, guarantee domestic savings, employment and basic social services. In the last year, we have seen important recognition placed on the removal of fees for education and education, trade tariff and fiscal and budgetary ceilings as ways of halting the deepening of poverty in Africa and decimated capacity of African states to deliver quality public services.

Reforms to the multi-lateral system must establish mechanisms that ensure state accountability to the citizenry and multi-laterally agreed international norms and standards. Reforms to the multi-lateral system will have very little relevance to Africa, unless stronger mechanisms for regulating multinational non-state actors such as corporations, international financial institutions and trade institutions are instituted.

For the proposed UN reforms to be meaningful:

- African representatives in the expanded Security Council must reflect Africa's interests rather than narrow national interests. Mechanisms should be established to increase the accountability of African Security Council members to regional, sub regional and national legislatures;
- The multilateral system must go beyond mere token consultation to facilitate the full participation of CSOs in the UN reform process.

Human Rights, Justice and Reconciliation:

While recognizing the critical role of UN System for establishing impressive rights norms in the areas of global security, ecology, democracy, human rights and development, there has been inadequate credible enforcement of these norms. As an example, UN expenditure on human rights remains unbelievably low.

The draft text should:

- Retain the clear link between the implementation of the MDGs and the international human rights framework developed by the UN and existing regional human rights instruments, especially the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights;
- Urge the UN to strengthen the International Criminal Court, the office of the High Commission for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the Human Rights Council with a view to making them more effective in acting in cases where states violate human rights;
- Reaffirm the supremacy of the UN in the multilateral financing, investment and trading system by ensuring that there is put in place enforcement mechanisms to protect and promote human rights.

Transitional justice mechanisms that seek to balance justice and reconciliation should be strengthened. In both post and pre-conflict societies there must be a deliberate effort to address questions of justice, reparations and rehabilitation as the foundations for sustainable peace. In particular transitional justice process should aim to address ethnicity, racism and the concept of inclusivity across all forms of social stratification. Africa is a leader in this respect, having excellent examples from Rwanda, South Africa and Sierra Leone that the entire international community could learn from.

It is important to:

- Specifically re-affirm the linkage between sexual violations during times of conflict and the spread of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Comprehensive mechanisms must be put in place to prevent and eradicate these tendencies and vigilance in the investigation and prosecution of perpetrators on one hand and compensation and rehabilitation of survivors on the other.

Socio-Economic Development:

African Heads of State and national delegations must not lose the opportunity to press for greater policy space and freedom from external conditionality in areas such as privatisation of basic services that have had adverse effects on African citizens. Specifically, the draft text should:

- Explicitly acknowledge the failure to meet the first target for the MDGs namely gender parity in primary and secondary education this year;
- Should not allow for African governments which have already set higher development goals to adjust them downward to meet the minimalist framework contained in the MDGs;
- Accelerate the UN's work with African countries to address the problems of food insecurity, conflict and emergencies in a comprehensive way;
- Recognise that MDGs remain unachievable unless industrialised nations remove subsidies that they give to their farmers. These agricultural subsidies have and continue to impact negatively on Africa's agricultural development and food security;

- Explicitly recognise the odious nature of debts owed by some Governments to bi-lateral institutions. These should not be repaid while others should be totally written-off to release funds for development;
- Mandate the UN to establish a multi-lateral framework that allows for the return of funds and other assets siphoned by corrupt African leaders held in European and other foreign countries without conditionalities.

Environmental Governance:

We stress the importance of ensuring sound ecological governance policies. There is need to recognise the interrelationship between natural resource management external interests that often lead to protracted conflict within Africa. The UN must ensure therefore that these conflicts do not occur and where they do, that the capacity of African states is built so that they can respond in a timely and effective manner. Further environmental governance within the UN system must specifically address the question of toxic waste dumping particular northern governments must sign relevant international instruments regulating environmental protection.

Women's Rights:

The full participation of women in all aspects of development is important in the promotion of women's rights. The draft text should assert:

- The primacy of women's participation in politics and decision-making, particularly in peacemaking and peace building processes;
- Women's ownership of and control over, property and other productive resources should be included as indicators of poverty eradication in the MDGs;
- That sexual offences against women and girls in situations of conflict, peace-keeping and military operations (training) are crimes against humanity at all stages and should be treated as such in terms of investigation, prosecution and reparations;
- Women's universal access to sexual and reproductive health information and services, expanded use of effective drugs for HIV and AIDS and national campaigns to stop violence against women are critical strategies for comprehensively addressing the impact of HIV and AIDS on African women.

Signed, August 19, 2005 by:

ActionAid International, African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET),

African Women's Economic Policy Network (AWEAPON), Centre for Minority Rights and Development (CEMIRIDE), CIVICUS, Inter-Ecclesiast Committee for Peace in Angola (COIEPA), Co-ordinating Assembly of Non-Governmental Organisations (CANGO)-Swaziland, The CRADLE Children's Foundation-Kenya, Centre for Empowerment and Rehabilitation of Women-Kenya (CREAW), Elimu Yetu Coalition-Kenya, Institute for Justice and Reconciliation-South Africa, Institute for Security Studies (ISS)-South Africa, Kenya Association for the Advancement of Children's Rights (KAACR), Kenya National Commission on Human Rights, Kenya Youth Empowerment and Community Development Programme (KYCEP), League of Kenyan Women Voters, Legal Resources Foundation-Kenya, Maasai Education-Kenya, MDG Coalition-Kenya, NEPAD-Kenya, Oxfam, SEATINI-Kenya, Solidarity Africa, UNDP, Urgent Action Fund-Africa, World Vision-Rwanda, Young Women Christian Association (YWCA)-Kenya, Zambia MDGs-GCAP Network

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[without reference to a Main Committee (A/55/L.2)]

The General Assembly Adopts the following Declaration:

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 1 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.²
- 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,³ as well as the amended mines protocol to the Convention on conventional weapons.⁴

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 5 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,⁶ 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 21,⁷ 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 Diversity⁸ and the Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa.⁹
- 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.¹⁰
- 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 12 and its optional protocols on the involvement of children in armed conflict and on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.¹³

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 subregional 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 fulfil 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.¹⁴
- 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*

Civil Society Organisations, including ActionAid Partners who supported and involved in the process:

Ethiopia: Poverty Action Network Ethiopia (PANE),

Cambodia: CEDAC, CSF, Global Campaign on Education (GCE), KNKS, WNP, and WDA

Kenya: Civil Society Campaign on MDGs, Nairobi,

Brazil: CONVIVER, and Associação Quilombola Conceição das Crioulas (AQCC - Quilombola Association of Conceição das Crioulas) Brazil,

Guatemala: Association of Communities in Development – COMSCAL, and Association for Education and Development – ASEDE (Guatemala),

Nigeria: Bassau Jiwa Community, Project Agape (Nigeria),

Tanzania: TANGO (Tanzania).

India: SCNI (Southern Collective for New Initiatives on Childhood), ANKITA, Ananatha Paryavarana Samarakshana Samithi (APPS), APWAD, Action In Rural technology and Services (ARTS), CARE-Chattisgrah & Jharkhand, CECODECON, Collective Action for Drought mitigation, Commitments, COVA, CYSD, Chetna Kendra, MORE, Nav Bharat Jagriti Kendra, Network of voluntary organizations of Kurnool (NOVOK) Pragati Gramin Vikas Samiti, PRAYAS, Pragathi seva Samithi (PSS), Sai Jyoti, Samajik Sodh Evam Vikas Kendra, SAMARTHAN, Sathee, Social discrimination projects (SDP), Singhbhum Legal Aid and Development Society, Sneha Samuday, THE HUNGER PROJECT, Trust for Community Development and Research, UPVAN, Vikas Sahyog Kendra, Welfare Center for Women and Children, YUVA, NPDO - Network of People with Disability Organisation, SDP - Social Discrimination Project, ORRC - Organisation for Rural