

2015

2010

Towards 2015:

Meeting our

Millennium Commitments



The North-South Institute

CANADIAN DEVELOPMENT REPORT 2005



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Millennium Commitments

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Canadian Development Report 2005

Towards 2015: Meeting our Millennium Commitments

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Foreword to CDR 2005

By Roy Culpeper,
President

Development cooperation is a relatively new phenomenon in international relations, having emerged only since the end of World War II. In an era that pays scant attention to history, it is easy to lose sight of this simple fact, particularly since most of the world's population has been born after that war. But it is a fact that until the 1940s the world had never seriously considered the transfer of resources from wealthier countries, along with a more equitable international economic order, in order to facilitate the economic and social development of poorer countries.

Cynics might say that development cooperation is simply old wine in new bottles—an inventive form of neo-colonialism. Certainly there is much evidence from the Cold War era, and even more recently, to support that view. Nonetheless it would be excessive to dismiss the entire project as simply a manifestation of the struggle for geopolitical hegemony. Even if such motivations remain fundamental, it is quite plausible to argue that, despite some serious setbacks, international cooperation for development has significantly improved the social and economic circumstances of the poorest half of humankind.

Given the relative newness of the enterprise, it should not be surprising that it has taken several decades of research, debate, and trial and error to clarify fundamental issues: what are the key objectives of development

cooperation? And how are they to be achieved?

As to the first of these issues, the “what” of development cooperation, the World Bank initiated a “focus on poverty” in the 1970s only to see it yield to the debt crisis and structural adjustment in the 1980s. However, in the 1990s a series of international conferences convened by the UN generated an in-depth policy agenda ranging from environmental sustainability, to gender equality, to social development and human rights. The UN's Millennium Summit in September 2000 codified these objectives in a Declaration which contained, among other things, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

This edition of the Canadian Development Report undertakes a dispassionate analysis of the Millennium Declaration and its Development Goals. In many respects, as this report points out, the Declaration and the MDGs represent a retreat from the much more ambitious policy agenda that had emerged in the 1990s. Furthermore, there is a basic question as to whether the MDGs constitute the “right” objectives. At the same time, the MDGs and the Declaration provide a critical platform on which to build future development cooperation efforts, and perhaps even more important, to monitor and evaluate the efforts of governments and international agencies around the world.

As to the issue of “how” development objectives are to be achieved, there is considerably less agreement. First and foremost, it is clear that foreign aid is not the only policy instrument for development cooperation, nor is it even the most important one. Economic and social development can also be enhanced

through international trade and foreign direct investment. It is also clear that peace, security and the maintenance of basic human rights are preconditions for development. But in each case there are questions as to impact. Is foreign aid effective? How do foreign trade and investment actually contribute to human development? How can peace be sustained and fresh conflict prevented, through economic and social development?

Considerable debate surrounds these “how” questions and is likely to do so for some time. Many policies, for example economic liberalization, advocated over the past two decades by OECD countries and the International Financial Institutions, are ostensibly aimed at increasing economic growth. Yet the relationship between growth on the

one hand, and on the other poverty reduction, gender equality, social development, peace and security, and environmental sustainability, remains unclear and hotly contested.

This edition of the Institute’s Canadian Development Report aims to shed some light on these debates and, in so doing , help to inform policy-makers and all those who are committed to genuine human security, sustainable and equitable development.

Roy Culpeper, PhD
President and CEO
The North-South Institute

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**About the
2005 Canadian
Development
Report**

John W. Foster

About the 2005 Canadian Development Report

John W. Foster

The North-South Institute's (NSI) flagship annual publication, the *Canadian Development Report* (CDR) for 2005 offers a review of Canada's response to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in the context of the Millennium Declaration.

Governments, including Canada's, are submitting official reports in preparation for the Millennium Review Summit in September 2005. A number of research institutes and civil society organizations (CSOs) are preparing evaluations and shadow reports. The United Nations-initiated Millennium Project has published a major report on current progress and the way forward, supported by 10 thematic studies. The UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, has released his own report, *In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all*, which will form the key background document for the Summit's agenda, and the UN Development Programme (UNDP) is compiling national progress reports from around the globe.

The Institute's *CDR* is a stock-taking, providing preliminary and independent assessments of Canada's contribution to the implementation of the MDGs. We also examine one key dimension of the Millennium Declaration which could be decisive in whether or not the goals are reached and the vision of the Declaration is accomplished.

The Institute has been engaged with the Declaration and the goals since the period of their formation:

- We have published, jointly with the World Federation of United Nations Associations (WFUNA), four annual reviews of civil society engagement with the goals: *We the peoples...2002, 2003, 2004, 2005*.¹ The 2005 review—*Mobilizing for change: Messages from Civil Society*—is an expanded examination of civil society concerns and proposals.
- Our recently released paper on the International Policy Review—*Human Security, Sustainable and Equitable*

Development: Foundations for Canada's International Policy—proposes the adoption of the Declaration and the goals as a policy framework to be adopted by the Prime Minister and operationalized in the strategic priorities and plans of all departments and agencies.

- A *Benchmark for the 5-year Review of the Millennium Summit* was recently released by the Social Watch, an international civil society network with more than 50 national components, monitoring Copenhagen and Beijing implementation, in which the Institute is one of two Canadian partners.
- Institute researchers have contributed to three of the regional preparatory processes for the 2005 global conference on civil society and the prevention of armed conflict.
- NSI is also completing a brief comparative review of the responses of the four Commonwealth donor governments to the MDGs.

Several specialized studies from the Institute on trade, HIV/AIDS, inequality, debt, gender equality, and the relationship of macroeconomic policy and poverty provide useful background on a number of dimensions of the MDGs.

The Canadian Development Report 2005 seeks the following:

- To encourage the Canadian government to actively support the implementation of the MDGs and Millennium Declaration agenda in a coherent fashion.

- To provide Canadian civil society organizations with data and analysis for use in advancing this agenda.
- To contribute to broader debates about assessment methodologies, implementation priorities and the limits of the enterprise
- To provide a platform for policy dialogue and collaboration between the Institute and the broader development community.
- To lay the foundations for an ongoing assessment of Canada's performance, with a view to producing a more complete and robust evaluation in coming years.

This Report brings together a series of essays by Canadian researchers, three country case studies, and our annual statistical reference compendium.

This edition provides a brief context in which the assessment of progress and debate of future initiatives occurs in 2005, as well as an overview of the approach of the Canadian government.

Rodney Schmidt outlines some of the key overall policy choices which should inform not only Canada's bilateral role but also the positions Canada advocates in major multilateral organizations which increasingly define the direction of assistance and policy advice to developing nations. Do Canadian policies target the inequality gaps which characterize so many societies, or simply push a growth model which may make them worse?

Brian Tomlinson provides an overview of Canada's official development assistance (ODA) from the viewpoint of the MDGs,

with a focus on poverty, providing a critical assessment of the expenditures Canada has been and will be making.

Ann Weston and Bill Morton examine Canada's performance on the trade and debt dimensions of the "development partnership" envisioned in Goal 8.

Given the centrality of the impact of poverty on women and the contribution of women to its eradication, Heather Gibb examines the importance of integrating the comprehensive framework for gender equality developed at the Beijing Women's Conference and redefining the MDGs in that light.

As the development impact and massive human cost of HIV/AIDS is more adequately understood, the measure of the response required is much more challenging than originally imagined when the goals were first defined. John Foster outlines elements of Canada's response to Goal 6.

Stephen Baranyi focuses on the contribution Canada is making in peace and security, within and beyond the UN system, noting key developmental and geopolitical dimensions and policy questions.

Our intention is to provoke continued South-North collaboration in the evaluation and reorientation of policy. In this year's Report, we present country studies on three priority Canadian partner countries. Each essay examines Canada's contribution to MDG achievement in the context of the overall approach to the goals experienced in that country.

- Jakir Hosain and Rashed Al Mahmud Titimur provide details on **Bangladesh's** MDG and poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSP) engagements, specific areas of MDG implementation, and Canada's support in the areas of education, agriculture, gender equality, health and governance.
- Beatriz Muriel H. and Gonzalo Chávez A. examine **Bolivia's** difficult course, and Canada's contributions in health, water and sanitation, and government reform.
- Boukary Barry outlines the government's poverty relief approach in **Mali**, and Canadian contributions to youth education, strengthening the judiciary, and internal resource mobilization against a backdrop of 30 years of cooperation.

The annual compendium of relevant statistics and tables, organized by NSI researcher Luigi Scarpa de Masellis rounds out the volume and provides essential reference material for researchers, officials and activists.

JOHN W. FOSTER is a Principal Researcher (Civil Society) with The North-South Institute. He joined the Institute in 2000. His earlier career included 17 years as a social justice policy officer with the United Church of Canada and more than seven years as CEO of Oxfam-Canada. He served as an NGO representative on the Canadian delegation to the Copenhagen Summit on Social

Development in 1995 and the General Assembly Review of that Summit in 2000. He holds a PhD in History from the University of Toronto and has done post-graduate work as a visiting scholar at the Center for US-Mexican Studies at the University of California, San Diego.

Endnote

- 1 These and other reports from the Institute are available at www.nsi-ins.ca.

2015

**The Millennium
Declaration and
the Millennium
Development Goals**

John W. Foster

The Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals

John W. Foster

“Four years ago, world leaders did something they had never done before. They agreed on a set of goals to improve living conditions for the world’s poorest. They made a road map for fighting poverty, and they made a commitment to clear deadlines and measurable results.”

Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Global Partnerships for Development*. Progress Report by Norway 2004.¹

The Millennium Declaration of September 2000, now adopted by 191 nations, provides a welcome vision and ambitious agenda for the 21st century. With a foundation in values including freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, respect for nature, and shared responsibility, it raised hopes as bright as the fireworks accompanying the New Year and new Millennium celebrations.

The Declaration highlights seven areas for action, including peace, security and disarmament, development and poverty eradication, and strengthening the United

Nations, among others. Within the agenda for action, a list of eight goals for development were established, including the so-called “partnership” goal, outlining areas of commitment on the part of wealthy and powerful nations to global objectives.

More specific targets were established by the United Nations for the seven goals which pertain principally to developing countries.

The Declaration’s hopes for peace and security were the first to be deeply challenged by events and by the actions of major Member States. While the Declaration has been taken as a launching pad for investigations and proposals which could strengthen the UN, enhance its relations with civil society and other partner sectors, inform development strategies and re-establish the UN at the centre of action for collective security, the commitment of Member States to implement the promises of the Declaration and the accompanying MDGs remains to be proven.

“The reforms we propose will not by themselves make the United Nations more effective. In the absence of Member States reaching agreement on the security consensus contained in the present report, the United Nations will underachieve. Its institutions will still only be as strong as the energy, resources and attention devoted to them by Member States and their leaders.”

A more secure world: Our shared responsibility. Report of the Secretary-General’s High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change.²

Goals in debate

“The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are the world’s time-bound and quantified targets for addressing extreme poverty in its many dimensions—income poverty, hunger, disease, lack of adequate shelter, and exclusion—while promoting gender equality, education, and environmental sustainability. They are also basic human rights—the rights of each person on the planet to health, education, shelter, and security as pledged in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the UN Millennium Declaration.”

UN Millennium Project, *Investing in Development*.³

The Millennium Development Goals, as such emerged from the Millennium Declaration of 2000, and came to be endorsed in the succeeding Monterrey (Financing for Development) and Johannesburg (Sustainable Development) world conferences. The first seven goals

deal with aspects of development, the eighth deals with the roles and responsibilities of Northern countries and is less specific in terms of targets and dates than the others. The parentage of the goals, however, precedes the new millennium, and has affected the way in which they have been regarded.

While representatives of governments, South and North, and tens of thousands of civil society representatives debated and decided programs of action on gender, social development (including poverty), human rights, the environment, habitat, and other key matters in the World Conferences of the 1990s, the rich countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) unilaterally defined their objectives for development in the 1996 report, *Shaping the 21st Century: The Contribution of Development Co-operation*. By doing so, they broke the compact of North-South negotiation embodied in the conferences. This break was dramatically demonstrated when, early in the 2000 Geneva Special Session on Social Development, the OECD, together with the UN and the Bretton Woods Institutions, issued a further report, *A Better World for All*, encapsulating a number of the goals which became part of the MDGs, and eliciting outrage from many civil society spokespersons. Nevertheless, and despite an ambitious NGO Millennium Forum at the UN in 2000, the input of civil society was not integrated, and the broader, more far-reaching objectives of the programs of action of the conferences of the 1990s, in such areas as gender, remained on a separate track, only partially touched by the more limited MDGs.⁴

The reservations of a number of civil society organizations (CSOs) were only one of the limitations on the response to and implementation of the Declaration and the goals. The United States refers to “agreed development goals” rather than recognizing the MDG formulation as such. While some governments, principally the Scandinavians, the Dutch, and the United Kingdom, have been relatively quick off the mark in relating their policies and priorities to the goals; others, five years after the Declaration, are still catching up.

Geopolitical factors, principally the 9/11 attacks on the US, the war in Afghanistan and what has become known as the “war on terror” shifted attention and resources to matters of hard security. The “coalition of the willing” which initiated war on Saddam Hussein’s Iraq, undermined the authority of the Security Council. Political attacks on the United Nations together with apparent weaknesses in the administration and effectiveness of the organization and continued financial limitations restricted the leadership that the organization could take. The United Nations enters the review year of 2005 in what many term a situation of crisis, and at a minimum what could be a decisive turning point for the institution.

The goals and the way forward

While recognizing the scope of the Millennium Declaration as the foundation for a comprehensive foreign policy orientation, the debate over the MDGs in particular raises a series of important issues for consideration as plans for the next five to 10 years of implementation emerge.

The goals do not represent a full development agenda. They have been criticized as inadequate in two general ways: they address symptoms and effects to a much greater extent than *causes and structural roots of poverty* and environmental ruin; but they fail to fully integrate and prioritize *gender equality*, especially relevant to the eradication of poverty.

More particularly, the following areas for deeper and more radical examination emerge:

- The *poverty* goal (Goal 1) in focusing on “absolute” poverty and the US\$1 a day rule of thumb is a retreat from the goals set by the 1995 Copenhagen World Summit, not only by reducing the scope of poverty addressed but in focusing only on developing countries rather than on the responsibility of all countries to their poor. Further, the goal does not address issues of inequality and growing gaps which relatively impoverish many.
- The *environmental* goal (Goal 7), ignores climate change, perhaps the most serious and universal environmental threat, and ignores the potential conflict between the growth model assumptions that underlie the MDGs and the limits to growth necessary to human survival and environmental sustainability.
- The attention to aid, trade, and debt (Goal 8), while clearly welcome, fails in addressing *structural causes of poverty* and the extent to which the macro-economic guidelines of the past two decades have failed to address them.
- The goal dealing with *HIV/AIDS* (Goal 6) is scandalously modest, based on an inadequate analysis of the

developmental and human impact of the disease and was developed before access to treatment became a real possibility for millions, frustrated by lack of resources and dominant intellectual property protections.

While the first seven goals are accompanied by fairly specific targets and dates for achievement, Goal 8, which describes the responsibility of the rich, lacks this precision. The rich seem to avoid the accountability required of the poor.

A further and widespread concern is that at ground level the goals and the primary framework for multilateral assistance, the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) may lack coherence. The recent report of the Millennium Project recommends that the PRSPs be redeveloped in terms necessary to achieve the MDGs. Rodney Schmidt and Brian Tomlinson question the fundamental assumptions of the PRSP exercise later in this volume.⁵

Some governments appear to recognize that something more than the goals as expressed in 2000 and 2002 is required. As the Norwegian Foreign Ministry declares: "however, establishing a more just and equal relationship between developed and developing countries on a global basis required developed countries to adopt a broader agenda."⁶

The promises of peace and security in the Millennium Declaration were interrupted by two wars, the eruption of terrorism, and the "war" responding to that eruption. The overall distortion of investment of available resources in military and armament expenditures (almost US\$ 1 trillion per year, almost one-half of which is expended by one country, the US) continues to dwarf

annual development assistance (approximately US\$78 billion)⁷ and debt relief.

Commitments in question

Some five years after the Millennium Summit, the follow-through on commitments made on that occasion, and later in Monterrey and Johannesburg, remains seriously lacking, the potential for cynicism and doubt stronger than ever.

As UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan pointed out in March, "Sub-Saharan Africa is at the epicentre of the crisis, falling seriously short on most Goals, with continuing food insecurity, disturbingly high child and maternal mortality, growing numbers of people living in slums and an overall rise of extreme poverty despite some important progress in individual countries." In Asia, nearly 700 million people, he points out, still live on less than US\$1 a day, and in regions like Latin America, the transition economies, and the Middle East and North Africa, records are mixed, often hampered by growing inequality. HIV/AIDS, gender inequality, and environmental degradation continue as blatant challenges.⁸

The Millennium Review Summit

When the General Assembly convenes its high-level session September 14, it will have before it the comprehensive report by Secretary-General Annan reviewing progress in implementing the vision of the Millennium Declaration, *In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all*. Important contributions to that report include the extensive studies prepared by the

Millennium Project, *Investing in Development: A Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals*, and the Report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, *A more secure world: Our shared responsibility*.⁹

The report of the High-level Panel seeks to meet the challenges to the global system for preventing conflict and assuring security, particularly those that have emerged in the early years of the new century. The Panel takes a broad view of security, including many elements of the “human security” agenda, which brings its report close to a number of themes pioneered or supported by Canada in the late 1990s and more recently. It recognizes as central threats to security a number of elements addressed, as well, by the development agenda and the MDGs: poverty, HIV/AIDS and environmental degradation. In this context, the panel addresses conflict prevention, weapons proliferation, terrorism, collective security, the use of force and the reform and strengthening of the United Nations. “In describing how to meet the challenge of prevention, we begin with development because it is the indispensable foundation for a collective security system that takes prevention seriously. It serves multiple functions. It helps to combat the poverty, infectious disease and environmental degradation that kill millions and threaten human security.”¹⁰

The report of the Millennium Project comprises one of the most ambitious and detailed studies ever of the status of development, assessments at the country level, and projections and recommendations of international, country, and sector-specific actions to be undertaken and resourced. The report and its related

sectoral studies may be criticized for a rather economic approach; however, it provides detailed resources for those advocating the urgency of significant increased assistance and has a welcome emphasis on the importance of human capacity-building. “We have the opportunity in the coming decade to cut world poverty by half. Billions more people could enjoy the fruits of the global economy. Tens of millions of lives can be saved. The practical solutions exist. The political framework is established. And for the first time, the cost is utterly affordable. Whatever one’s motivation for attacking the crisis of extreme poverty—human rights, religious values, security, fiscal prudence, ideology—the solutions are the same. All that is needed is action.”¹¹

Presidents, prime ministers and other high-level participants will be asked to evaluate progress in the major areas of the Millennium Declaration’s commitments, including the development goals. Dozens of Southern governments have submitted annual reports of their implementation of the goals, which have been compiled by the UN Development Programme (UNDP), and contributed to the annual reviews of progress made by the Secretary-General. Some Northern governments have already submitted reports dealing with their contribution to the achievement of the MDGs. While Canada has a report in preparation, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom have already circulated major reviews.

Other governments have initiated focused public investigations in attempts to enrich the policy discussions in 2005 and mobilize political support for action. The UK government has sponsored an

expert UK Commission for Africa, with the Canadian Minister of Finance as one of its members. The Finnish and Tanzanian foreign ministries initiated the Helsinki Process on Globalization and Democracy, which included a track panel on the "Global Economic Agenda," producing a report early in 2005, *Mobilizing Resources for The Millennium Development Goals*.¹²

While observers have predicted that 2005 will exceed expectations in the number and volume of studies and reports produced, a prediction which appears vindicated, the more important issue is whether the richness of information, proposals and rhetoric will boil down into unprecedented steps forward.

Responsibility of the rich

"The pressure on the G-7, magnificently applied by the Jubilee Coalition and its allies in the NGO community, has forced the financial aristocrats of the donor world to make promise after promise about dealing with African debt. In fact, the parade of promises is unrelenting. Virtually every gathering of G-7 leaders or Finance Ministers since the turn of the century has held the prospect of change. On every occasion we get a twitch in the right direction, but all the twitches in the world do not a cancellation make."

Stephen Lewis, UN Special Envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa, Ottawa, February 11, 2005.¹³

The challenge of the Millennium Declaration and the MDGs at the five-year review in 2005 is two-fold: the provision of magnificently increased

resources whether through innovative forms of financing, debt cancellation or expanded aid; and a significant alteration in policies and conditionalities which restrict the ability of the governments of poor countries to address poverty, hunger, environmental ruin, human rights, and the demand for decent livelihoods, and which sustain and recreate poverty by unjust international and national trade and investment practices.

Governments of a number of prosperous countries continue to invest their resources in distorted and destructive fashion, rather than in human development. *The New York Times* recently took the US government to task, noting, "America launched its war on terror after September 11, but did not bother to look at some of the deeper causes of global instability. This country is going to spend more than \$400 billion on the military this year, and another \$100 billion or so for military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. But that amount is never going to buy Americans peace if the government continues to spend an anemic \$16 billion—the Pentagon budget is 25 times that size—in foreign aid that addresses the plight of the poorest of the world's poor."¹⁴

The Canadian federal budget embodies proportions less embarrassing but which parallel the heightened investment in defence in comparison with that in international assistance.

The most recent (February 2005) meeting of the G-7 Finance Ministers failed to agree on cancellation of Africa's debt, for example. As Stephen Lewis, the UN Special Envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa commented, "It seems to take the G-7 no effort to cancel huge chunks of Iraqi debt, or to instantly fashion an offer of

moratorium on the servicing of debt for the countries devastated by the tsunami. But when it comes to Africa, everything takes forever.”¹⁵

Occasion for initiative: Financing development

“The stakes are high: either we come out of this process with a renewed and strengthened financing system for fighting poverty; or we will, in fact, have given up on achieving the MDGs.”

Joint statement by Brazil, Chile, France, Germany, and Spain, February 11, 2005.¹⁶

At the level of global policy, there are initiatives that spur some hope: Presidents Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva of Brazil and Jacques Chirac of France launched “Action Against Poverty and Hunger” in 2004. UK Exchequer Chancellor Gordon Brown has pressed for an International Financing Facility to bring greater security and predictability to international assistance, and the UK and Canada have promised relief on debt servicing to the poorest countries to 2015 if others among the rich will pitch in.

The Action Against Poverty and Hunger initiative was launched by Brazil, France, Chile and Spain, and gained initial support from more than 100 heads of government. Renewed in 2005 with the added support of Germany, the initiative emphasizes *innovation*, recognizing the need for more resources from diverse sources, endorsing objectives of stability and predictability in resource flows, endorsing the International Finance Facility and calling for the creation of

international taxes, nationally applied and internationally coordinated. The absence, to date of active participation by Canada and the United States from the initiative is regrettable.

The initiative’s most recent expression, a joint statement by Brazil, Chile, France, Germany and Spain, underlines the need for more resources, and the opportunity to use a variety of channels to assure them, with emphasis on new channels.

To this end, the proponent leaders suggest a menu of options, including the International Finance Facility as proposed by the UK. But they also renew the call for the creation of *international taxes*, nationally applied and internationally coordinated. Their priorities for consideration are a levy on international financial transactions (a currency transactions tax or Tobin tax); a tax on conventional weapons purchases; and a levy on air transport. To provide greater stability and predictability for aid-receiving countries, they propose that just as governments finance international financial institutions (IFIs) through statutory or mandatory contributions, based on explicitly burden-sharing rules, that the same principle be applied to the granting of funds to “those programs and global funds most directly involved in the fight against hunger and poverty and the implementation of the MDGs.”

While universal participation would be optimum, the proponents suggest that in the short run, a differentiated approach, using the full opportunities in their menu in a coordinated manner, with coalitions of those countries sharing common objectives, would be a way of securing a breakthrough to a new era. “While working on establishing the bases for an integrated approach along the lines described above, and, ultimately,

creating financing schemes with universal participation, we believe that the launching of pilot projects in the next few months would both meet urgent needs and help to trigger a more broad-based and general process.”¹⁷

The July meeting of the G-7/-8 heads of government in Gleneagles, Scotland is likely to have a decisive effect on any proposals for innovation and on the prospects for a successful result at the Millennium Review Summit. The G-7/-8 Summit, hosted by the UK government, and informed by the report of the UK Commission for Africa presents a signal opportunity for initiative and innovation.

While G-7/-8 meetings often occur in secure settings, far removed from public access or participation, a global people’s campaign to elicit decisive action on debt, trade and aid is gaining widespread support. Whether the experience of the Jubilee campaign, in raising debt on the international agenda, can be repeated or exceeded hangs in the balance.

Civil Society, the Declaration and the Goals

The North-South Institute is in the fifth year of a major project monitoring and reviewing the state of civil society engagement with the Millennium Declaration and the MDGs. The project —*We the peoples...*—has been developed in partnership with the World Federation of United Nations Associations (WFUNA) and in collaboration with the UN’s Millennium Campaign, the UN Department of Public Information, and the UN Non-Governmental Liaison Service (NGLS). *We the peoples...* involves an e-survey of hundreds of civil society

organizations worldwide, review of key CSO statements and studies, and annual reports on civil society engagement.¹⁸

The contributions to *We the peoples...* testify to an *engagement* that is increasingly intense and remarkably diverse. Whether reclaiming land for agriculture, defending forest reserves and public control of water services, extending AIDS prevention, CSOs are contributing mightily to the accomplishment of targets, particularly where governments and international bodies are providing encouragement, recognition and support.

This engagement, in many cases, is a critical one. Many CSOs have long been working in the areas of poverty, health, education which are focuses of the MDGs, and have noted the limitations of the goals, both in the manner in which they were developed and in their modest and relatively narrow objectives.

Critical engagement has led some CSOs to reject the MDGs, while others approach them in a tactical fashion. A number of organizations and coalitions have developed approaches best summarized as “MDGs +”. In some cases, the Pacific islands, for example, this has meant adapting the goals to regional realities, raising targets in some areas, or adding in dimensions where they are lacking. In others, like the Philippines, it has meant going both broader and deeper, establishing nationally appropriate criteria for the quality of development and life, and engaging academic and other expertise in taking the goals from the national to regional and municipal levels, and posing challenges to authorities at each level for their accomplishment.

Rapidly multiplying networks are utilizing the MDGs and the Declaration as an opportunity for *monitoring and evaluating* government performance. Whether in Dar es Salaam or Brussels, “shadow” reports on policy and implementation are emerging, and advocacy in national as well as international theatres is intensifying.

We are witnessing the development of global and national coalitions *campaigning* for significant change North and South. The Global Call to Action Against Poverty (GCAP) internationally, the “One” Campaign in the United States, “Make Poverty History” in Canada and the UK, among others have launched campaigns for debt cancellation, more and better aid and trade justice in 2005. Sector-specific networks in such areas as trade, “Make AIDS History,” and Education Action Week are animating campaigns. The G-8 meeting in Gleneagles, Scotland in July, the General Assembly Millennium Review Summit in September, and the WTO Ministerial in Hong Kong in December are the targets of worldwide “white band” action days, July 1, September 10, and December 10.¹⁹

Civil society organizations have also responded to the post-Declaration call of the UN Secretary-General for initiatives regarding their contribution to peace and security.

Through a series of 15 regional consultative processes, the experiences of civil society networks in preventing and resolving conflicts, reconstruction and building peace are being reported, evaluated, and utilized in building proposals for global action. The Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict is bringing these contributions together in a global conference at the

UN (July 19-21, 2005) *From Reaction to Prevention: Civil Society Forging Partnerships to Prevent Armed Conflict and Build Peace*.²⁰

The response in many countries to the humanitarian emergency in the wake of the Indian Ocean tsunami demonstrated a reserve of positive energy and public support for a more generous and effective response to poverty, hunger, environmental threat, and the provision of decent livelihoods. The year 2005 began with the response to the tragic shock of the tsunami, a dramatic challenge to the global community. Perhaps the response in policy change, resource enlargement, and strengthened solidarity during 2005 will mean that the year ends with hope radically reinforced.

Beyond 2005

As the UN Secretary-General and others have repeatedly stated, 2005 may yield failure. Failure to meet the demands necessary to meet even the modest targets of the MDGs. As has often happened, those with resources and power may express “MDG fatigue” and change the game.

Much more advisable would be a modification, deepening, and radicalizing of the goals and the policy frameworks which might enable their fulfilment. The Secretary-General proposes that the September 2005 Summit agree on a “pact for action, to which all nations subscribe and on which all can be judged”. He further suggests that the Economic and Social Council hold **annual ministerial-level** “assessments of progress towards agreed development goals, particularly the Millennium Development Goals”.²¹ Will Canada champion definite targets and timetable

and regular ministerial review? It could play a vital role in building a coalition of willing nations.

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Endnotes

- 1 Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Global Partnerships for Development. Progress Report by Norway 2004. Oslo. 2005.
- 2 United Nations, *A more secure world: Our shared responsibility*. Report of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change (New York: UN, 2004).
- 3 UN Millennium Project, *Investing in development: A practical plan to achieve the Millennium Development Goals* (New York: UN, 2005), p.1.
- 4 Mirjam van Reisen, *The Millennium Development Goals. A Reality Check* (Brussels/Montevideo: EEPA, September, 2004).
- 5 Further elaboration of the limitations of the MDGs can be found in *We the peoples...2005. Mobilizing for change: Messages from Civil Society* Available at www.nsi-ins.ca.
- 6 Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, p. 2.
- 7 OECD. "Official Development Assistance increases further—but 2006 targets still a challenge" PAC/COM NEWS 2005) 12. Paris. 11 April 2005.
- 8 United Nations, *In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all*. Report of the Secretary-General.A/59/2005. (New York: UN, 2005).
- 9 *Ibid.*, and UN, *A more secure world: Our shared responsibility and UN Millennium Project, Investing in development*.
- 10 UN, *A more secure world*, p. 2.
- 11 UN Millennium Project, p. 2.
- 12 Colin Bradford, rapporteur, *Mobilizing Resources for The Millennium Development Goals*. Report of the Helsinki Process on Globalization and Democracy Track on "Global Economic Agenda" (Helsinki: Finish Ministry of Foreign Relations, 2005).
- 13 Statement issued by Stephen Lewis, UN Special Envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa, on the occasion of the launch in Canada of the "Make Poverty History" campaign, at a press conference in Ottawa, February 11, 2005.
- 14 "Thousands Died in Africa Yesterday." Editorial, *The New York Times*, February 27, 2005.
- 15 Lewis. February 11, 2005.
- 16 Joint statement by Brazil, Chile, France, Germany, and Spain, February 11, 2005.
- 17 *Ibid.*

- 18 *We the peoples* has benefited from the generous support of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, CIDA, the Foreign Ministry of Sweden, the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace, Rights and Democracy, the UN Millennium Campaign, and the Commonwealth Foundation.
- 19 Information on the Global Call can be found at www.whiteband.org. The Canadian element in the global effort is found at www.makepovertyhistory.ca.
- 20 The Global Partnership maintains a website at www.gppac.net. See also the European Centre for Conflict Prevention www.euconflict.org.
- 21 UN, *In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all*, pp. 22, 44.

