

Report on Developments at the United Nations
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1. TWO HIGH LEVEL MEETINGS ON THE GLOBAL FINANCIAL CRISIS:

➤ **Special high-level meeting of ECOSOC with Bretton Woods institutions, World Trade Organization and United Nations Conference on Trade and Development**

This meeting was held on 18 and 19 March 2010 at UN Headquarters. The overall theme was “Building on Monterrey and Doha: towards achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals”. The meeting consisted of a short opening plenary, which included brief statements by relevant inter governmental representatives, and presentation and discussion of three thematic debates, as follows:

- a. **Thematic debate 1:** “Mobilizing domestic and international resources to fund existing and emerging MDG implementation gaps”;
- b. **Thematic debate 2:** “Supporting rehabilitation, recovery and development efforts of developing countries with special needs and those facing humanitarian emergency situations”;
- c. **Thematic debate 3:** “Enhancing coherence and consistency of the international monetary, financial and trading systems in support of development”.

The thematic debates were held consecutively in an informal setting of the whole, in order to facilitate a dynamic and interactive dialogue and to promote an open exchange of views and experiences among all stakeholders, including civil society and the business sector.

The meeting resulted in a summary by the President of ECOSOC as a substantive input to the preparation of the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on MDGs (New York, 20-22 September 2010).

Learn more:

<http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/ecosoc/springmeetings/2010/index.htm>

➤ High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development

The Dialogue's overall theme was “The Monterrey Consensus and Doha Declaration on Financing for Development: status of implementation and tasks ahead”. The first day of the Dialogue consisted of plenary meetings chaired by the President of the General Assembly, at which ministers and high-level officials were able to make formal statements. The second day was devoted to three interactive multi-stakeholder round tables followed by an informal interactive dialogue with the participation of all relevant stakeholders. The themes of the 3 round tables and the interactive dialogue were as follows:

1. **Round table 1:** “The reform of the international monetary and financial system and its implications for development”;
2. **Round table 2:** “The impact of the current financial and economic crisis on foreign direct investment and other private flows, external debt and international trade”;
3. **Round table 3:** “The role of financial and technical development cooperation, including innovative sources of development finance, in leveraging the mobilization of domestic and international financial resources for development”;

Informal interactive dialogue: “The link between financing for development and achieving the Millennium Development Goals: the road to the 2010 high-level event”.

The Dialogue resulted in a summary by the President of the General Assembly as an input to the preparation of the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on MDGs (New York, 20-22 September 2010).

Further information at:

<http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/hld/HLD2010/index.htm>

Having followed these meetings closely, several members of the NGO Committee on financing for Development found some small positive signs, such as:

The International Financial Institutions (IFIs) recognize they were caught off guard by the crisis, and they now need to review their mandates;

IFIs need to reform their structures that they become more representative;

One way to do the latter would be for the IFIs to work more closely with the UN which has a legitimacy based on representation and inclusion;

The Dean of the Development Committee of the World Bank invited the President of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) to be present at its major meeting in April and “take a seat at the table.”

The tone of the discussions marked a much more cordial relationship among the bodies (i.e., UN and IFIs);

Several speakers repeated the suggestion made at the UN Conference on the Impact of the Financial and Economic Crisis on Development of June 2009 that the member states consider setting up a Global Economic Council within the UN framework as still needing to be explored;

Speakers also pointed out that although it was helpful that the G20 (an informal grouping of developed and emerging countries) tried to respond to the short-term needs at the time of the crisis, it is an inadequate body to serve in the longer term as on-going over-seer since it is not representative and does not have the legitimacy of the United Nations;

NGOs suggested that a positive step in this direction would be for the G20 to set up within the UN a regular structure for consulting with other member-states so that their voices could be brought to the table;

Many speakers put strong emphasis on the importance of an economics for a sustainable development;

The NGOs called for an 'economics of solidarity' which put people first, not money, and the development of human capital.

2. SUMMIT ON MDGS + 10 REVIEW

- a. 2010 will be a critical year in determining which development pathways our world will pursue. In 2000, UN Member States agreed to the Millennium Declaration and committed themselves to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015.
- b. Only five years remain to achieve the MDGs, and despite some progress, collectively we are falling short. The consequence of our collective failure is that improvements in the lives of the poorest are slow to be realized – or not at all – and are now being further eroded by the onset of the global crises, including the economic, food and climate crises. However, the MDGs are achievable.
- c. UN Member States will again come together this September in New York for an 'MDG summit' (High-level Plenary Meeting), with the primary objective of accelerating progress towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015, taking into account the progress made towards the internationally agreed development goals. As a part of the process leading to the summit, the General Assembly will also convene 'Hearings' with representatives of civil society and the private sector from 14-15 June. The outcomes of these hearings will be integrated into discussions at the summit and the outcome document.
- d. With the aim of keeping interested civil society stakeholders informed on the latest developments related to the summit process, the UN Millennium Campaign and the UN Non-Governmental Liaison Service (UN-NGLS) have launched a dedicated website: www.un-ngls.org/mdg2010

This website will report on all the latest developments related to the summit, give voice to perspectives from civil society and provide information on how to be engaged in the summit process.

3. EXTREME POVERTY, AN AFFRONT TO HUMAN RIGHTS

- a. In relationship to the Review of the MDGs +10 mentioned immediately above, Amnesty International has published an excellent book *The Unheard Truth: Poverty and Human Rights* by their Secretary General, Irene Khan.
 - a. Setting out that poverty is the world's worst human rights crisis, it argues for human rights to be at the centre of poverty alleviation strategies. The publication is part of Amnesty International's Demand Dignity campaign which will initially focus on a few key areas and patterns of human rights abuse which show particularly sharply the interplay of deprivation, insecurity, exclusion and voices ignored. The overall goal is to end the human rights violations that keep people poor. See website: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/demand-dignity> (available as well in French, Spanish and Arabic).
 - 1. Amnesty argues that governments must “address the social exclusion, insecurity and voicelessness that drive and deepen poverty” (Khan, op. cit., p. 225). The benchmarks which Amnesty is emphasizing as the core of evaluating the MDGs as a means of eradicating poverty are:
 - a. Accountability of governments for their commitments, especially those in the ‘north’
 - b. Participation of people themselves who are living in poverty
 - c. Addressing of discrimination to ensure programs reach the marginalized
 - b. A useful guide for both educators and youth on the MDGs, can be found at www.takingitglobal.org