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5 to 2015 – Time for an action plan to meet the MDGs

Civil society demands to the Federal government of Germany

Summary

Time is running out. The world only has **5 years left** to show that it is able to meet the goals for poverty reduction it set by 2015. In 2000, 189 United Nations member states, including Germany, adopted the Millennium Declaration, from which the eight **Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)** are derived. The MDGs declare the intention of the international community to reduce poverty, hunger and diseases significantly by 2015. The fact remains however that in the ten years since the MDGs were adopted, some regions, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, have hardly made any progress – if at all.

The MDGs may be ambitious; but they are achievable. At the latest in September, when the member states come together in New York for the UN MDG High Level Event to deliberate on the *status quo* and the future of the MDGs, will it be clear whether or not the willingness to exchange half-heartedness for decisive action prevails. The current attitude of “business as usual” will not help us reach the MDGs.

Germany has always been committed to the MDGs, with the Federal government emphasising again this year that every effort must be made to attain them. What is missing, however, is a concrete “action plan” for the remaining five years, in which **Germany’s role** in the fight against poverty and for the achievement of the MDGs is clearly defined. VENRO, the umbrella organisation of development NGOs in Germany, urged the new Federal government during the last Federal elections in 2009 to draw up a **MDG action plan** for the remaining five years until 2015. In the meantime, the European Commission has also submitted a suggestion for the drafting of a MDG action plan.

Poverty can only be reduced if its causes are comprehensively tackled. Enabling access to education, health services and food is a state obligation vis-à-vis human rights and a key prerequisite in reducing poverty. This alone, however, will not achieve the task. The world needs to become a more just place, with structures which do not stimulate poverty, but give people the opportunity to escape poverty. The global partnership for development, as formulated in the MDGs, expresses exactly what it is all about: a mutual commitment between industrialised and developing nations, which provides the necessary conditions for humane living conditions throughout the world.

The report “5 to 2015 – Time for an action plan to meet the MDGs. Civil society demands to the Federal government of Germany” focuses on the contribution Germany needs to come up with in order to do justice to this commitment. The German GCAP Campaign “Deine Stimme gegen Armut” (“Your Voice Against Poverty”) and partner campaigns such as the Jubilee Debt Campaign Germany, Action for Global Health and Action against AIDS among others want to spell out how the journey towards achieving the MDGs is progressing, and, by calling for an action plan for the MDGs, outline central political and practical recommendations.

What the Federal government needs to consider in a MDG action plan:

Improve global structures – enable development:

- EU agricultural subsidies must be abolished immediately and developing countries must be supported in the protection of their markets.
- The establishment of a patent pool must receive political and financial support, and the tightening of intellectual property rights via free trade agreements prevented.
- The necessary resources for climate change adaptation in developing countries must be mobilised – in addition to funding already promised for development aid.

Secure solid financing for development – advance development:

- The 0.7 percent by 2015 goal must be obligatory. An expenditure plan for Official Development Assistance between 2011 and 2015 must be drawn up.
- More commitment for the introduction of a financial transaction tax in Germany and the Eurozone is needed.
- More commitment to international insolvency procedures for states.

Assert the right to food – fight hunger:

- Rural development must become a key focus of development cooperation, thereby prioritising smallholder production as well as regional self-supply with food.
- The Food and Agricultural Organization's (FAO) "Voluntary guidelines to support the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security" must become a guiding principle of development policies.
- The FAO must receive support in the further development of the "Voluntary guidelines to support the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security."

Empower women – assert gender equality:

- International agreements and political processes, especially in the fields of economic, trade and agricultural policy, must be formulated in a gender-sensitive manner.
- Political dialogue aimed at integrating gender perspectives into national development plans and budgetary procedures, as well as the empowering of women's organisations, must be strengthened.
- The "Gender Action Plan" of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Co-operation and Development (BMZ) must be consistently implemented together with other relevant Federal Ministries. Furthermore, the action plan should receive specified financial resources, as well as provided with clear mechanisms and impact assessment indicators.

Education for all – securing the future:

- The aims of the "Education for All" action plan, especially primary education, must become the focus of educational support in the development sector.
- The quality of education, adult illiteracy and vulnerable population groups, such as people living with disabilities, must receive more attention.
- Fast Track Initiative (FTI) reform and the establishment of a "Global Fund for Education for All" must get under way.

Support family planning - promote maternal health:

- By means of political, programmatic and financial consolidation, family planning should be placed on an equal footing with other sexual and reproductive health measures.
- The setting up of decentralised and efficient public health systems (health system strengthening) in partner countries must be given top priority.
- A binding “code of conduct” to regulate the targeted recruitment of medical personnel from developing countries must be supported and advanced.

Strengthen health systems – reduce infant mortality:

- Decentralised and effective public health systems must be supported and vaccine campaigns expanded.
- Access to clean water and sufficient food supplies for mothers and children must be improved.
- The blanket provision of insecticide-impregnated mosquito nets to prevent malaria must be expanded.

HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis – fight poverty-related diseases

- HIV/AIDS and malaria prevention must be strengthened in development co-operation and closely aligned and integrated with interventions which promote sexual and reproductive health.
- The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria must receive sufficient financial resources; as a donor country, Germany must abide by her commitments.
- Intensify public research and development into new and innovative methods of prevention, diagnostics, vaccines and medication for HIV/AIDS, TB and Malaria, as well as other poverty-related neglected diseases and promote reduction of treatment fees and costs.

Contact

Campaign team “Deine Stimme gegen Armut”
c/o VENRO Office Berlin
Chausseestr. 128/129
D-10115 Berlin
Germany
Tel: +49 (0) 30 2463 2105
Email: deinestimmegegenarmut@venro.org
Website: www.deine-stimme-gegen-armut.de

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