49th UNITED NATIONS GRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMME (GSP)

Geneva, 4 - 22 July 2011

"The United Nations working towards the Millennium Development Goals: successes and challenges"

Report of the Working Groups

UNITED NATIONS

49th United Nations Graduate Study Programme (GSP)

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INTRODUCTION

The Graduate Study Programme

Each year, as part of the educational outreach programmes undertaken by the United
Nations, the Information Service at Geneva organizes a Graduate Study Programme. This
seminar provides an opportunity for outstanding young postgraduate students from all
over the world to deepen their understanding of the principles, purposes and activities of
the United Nations and its related agencies through first-hand observation and study at
the United Nations Office at Geneva.

The 49th Graduate Study Programme was held at the Palais des Nations from 4 to
22 July 2011 and studied the theme "The United Nations working towards the Millenium
Development Goals: successes and challenges". It comprised lectures given by senior
members of the United Nations and the Geneva-based specialized agencies. Three
working groups were established, each led by a moderator, as follows:

- Working Group on Human Rights
- Working Group on Economic and Social Development
- Working Group on Environmental Issues

Each Working Group was provided with selected documents and publications on the
theme under discussion and presented ideas in the context of their working group's remit.
The reports of each Working Group are published herewith.

UNITED NATIONS

Remarks by Mr. Kassym-Jomart Tokayev
United Nations Under-Secretary-General
Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva
Geneva Graduate Study Programme

Palais des Nations, Room VII
Friday, 22 July 2011 at 9:30 a.m.

Ladies and Gentlemen
Dear Students:

It is a pleasure to have the opportunity to address all of you upon the completion of your Study Programme. I am sure that the past three weeks that you have spent here at the Palais des Nations have been interesting and thought-provoking. I know that you were quite active – visiting various organizations, talking with experts, participating in working groups. You have also, in honour of Nelson Mandela International Day, shared your proposals for the best public service ideas related to the Millennium Development Goals. I look forward to seeing the final compilation. I enjoy this opportunity to be here with you, as the coming generation of leaders in international affairs.

I know that the theme of your study programme relates to the Millennium Development Goals. Intensifying our efforts to meet the MDGs is one of the key priorities of the United Nations. During the past weeks, you have met with a number of UN agencies, funds and programmes who are working to do just that. As you know, so far, progress has been uneven. In order for progress to be made, through 2015 and beyond, there needs to be strong political will that affirms that the MDGs are the universally accepted blueprint for economic growth, decent jobs, education, health care, women's empowerment, clean water, and a clean environment. 2015 is only four years away. For this reason, we also need to make sure that we work with all our partners to sustain the momentum and to carry on with an ambitious post-2015 development agenda.

In his speech at the World Trade Organization this past Tuesday, the Secretary-General Mr. Ban Ki-moon highlighted that sustainable development is a top priority as we work towards the MDGs. This means finding ways to lift people out of poverty while tackling climate change and ensuring that economic development is environmentally friendly. The environmental health of our planet is vital not just for us, but for our future generations as well. The issue of climate change is especially important. Its critical nature is highlighted by the current emergency situation in the Horn of Africa, caused by draught. Somalia, a country already plagued by conflict and lack of development, is now experiencing a famine in two regions. Nearly half of its population is facing a humanitarian crisis and is in urgent need of assistance. On Wednesday, the Executive Director of the UN Environment Programme addressed the Security Council during their debate on climate change and security. He concluded that "there can be little doubt today that climate change has potentially far-reaching implications for global stability and security in economic, social and environmental terms which will increasingly transcend the capacity of individual national States to manage." It is for this reason that the international community must act collectively to address these developments.

The MDGs also recognize the relationship between human rights, good governance and development. It is clear that the objectives of human well being and dignity for all, enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, will not be achieved if the MDGs are pursued in isolation from human rights. It is therefore essential that to renew our commitment to a human rights-based development approach, including for the post-2015 agenda.

Another important issue that is also linked to the MDGs, and one that is a personal priority of mine, is nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Although it may not be an obvious linkage, disarmament is critical in the context of international peace and security. And without peace and security, it is difficult for development to take place. The elimination of weapons of mass destruction, illicit arms trafficking and weapons stockpiles advance both peace and development goals. In addition, last year, global military spending cost nations over $1.6 billion. Imagine the impact if these financial resources had been put towards development instead.

Geneva is unique as the world's disarmament capital. It is home to the Conference on Disarmament, the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum of the international community. The Conference on Disarmament, however, is at a crucial juncture. There is growing frustration felt by a majority of its Members over the long standing impasse in general and the incapacity of beginning negotiations of a fissile material treaty. In order to make progress and revive the body, Members need to work within the existing construction and be as politically flexible as possible. The real protection of national security interests lies in the process of negotiations, and later, in the legal process of signing and ratifying a treaty. My stance as Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament is to make every effort to preserve the Conference as the single platform for conducting discussions and negotiations on disarmament issues.

These issues need to be seen as interlinked. As the Secretary-General has also stressed, we are in an age of integration and interconnection where climate change, the food crisis, global health and gender empowerment, as well as other development objectives, cannot be addressed in isolation. The United Nations is a unique in that it can pull together a number of actors, including its own agencies, funds and programmes, to address these global issues. The "Rio plus 20" conference next June will provide an opportunity for the international community to look at all of these issues together.

Dear Students:
We have many challenges in front of us, and it is only with the energy, imagination and initiative of young people that we can address them. Especially now, as the International Year of Youth comes to an end, we look to your generation for commitment and dedication to progress – for the Millennium Development Goals and for a better future for us all. It is your generation which can contribute to enhancing the potential of the United Nations. We need you to make your voices heard; speak out and speak up about your expectations for the UN and what you can do to support the UN. Get involved locally – in government or in NGOs – to address the challenges of today. More importantly, raise awareness of the UN; of what we do and how we help people across the world. Each individual counts. We need you to support us. I hope that your participation in the Geneva Study Programme has encouraged you to become ambassadors for the United Nations, and represents the beginning of a life-long engagement.

Thank you very much.

PART I: HUMAN RIGHTS

Report of the Working Group on Human Rights

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NCD	Non Communicable Diseases
NTD	Neglected Tropical Diseases
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
WHO	World Health Organization

I. INTRODUCTION

In 2000 all 189 member states of the UN General Assembly adopted the UN Millennium Declaration - a defining moment for global cooperation in the 21st century. The declaration sets out the key challenges facing humanity at the wake of the new millennium within a single framework and outlines a response by the establishment of concrete evaluation measures to judge performance. In recognition of the need to translate this set of inter-related commitments, goals and targets on development, governance, peace, security and human rights into action, a broad interagency consultation arrived at the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which are time-bound, quantified targets addressing extreme poverty in its many dimensions – income poverty, hunger, disease, lack of adequate shelter, and discrimination – while promoting health, gender equality, education, and environmental sustainability.[1]

Ten years along the road, in 2011, the MDGs have undoubtedly led to considerable progress. However, certain loopholes and areas of human rights concerns have become increasingly evident, raising the question of whether the MDGs and in particular their quantitative measurement approach are adequate to put the initial commitment of States into action. And in what way (if at all) the MDGs actually redress the key challenges that the UN General Assembly unanimously agreed upon. With this in mind, this working group has taken a critical look at the MDGs beyond 2015 based on the following hypothesis: 'What if the set targets were to be met.'[2] Would this, on a global scale, translate into an improvement in the respect for human rights? Or could it even have adverse effects?

Accepting the fact that the MDGs are not directly 'about human rights,' the analysis of each MDG from this hypothetical vantage point will reveal how human rights issues are part of the underlying fabric of key challenges. Therefore MDGs without an adequate human rights-based approach will be unsuccessful – even if fulfilled.

The following section will give a succinct review of all eight MDGs in this regard, followed by a final part on general tendencies and recommendations.

II. REVIEW

MDG 1: Eradication of extreme poverty and hunger

MDG 1's targets correlate with basic human rights. Therefore Target 1.A of reducing the proportion of people whose income is less than $1 a day and the right to an adequate standard of living are closely linked. Meanwhile Target 1.B on full and productive employment and decent work goes hand in hand with the right to work, and a connection can be established between Target 1.C to cut down on the proportion of people who suffer from hunger and the right to food.[3] Yet, even if these targets were fulfilled by 2015, major barriers to the 'eradication of extreme poverty and hunger' would continue to exist, particularly from a human rights perspective.

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[1] United Nations Development Group, "The Millennium Declaration and the MDGs" see <http://www.undg.org/index.cfm?P=70> [accessed 20 July 2011]

2 Extensive debates on achievability by 2015 and on the validity of measurement were deliberately barred to the utmost extent possible.

[3] United Nations, "Claiming the Millennium Development Goals: A human rights approach", United Nations – New York and Geneva (2008), p.3

With respect to Target 1.A, substantial State practice indicates that the focus of action is assigned to those living close to the poverty line i.e. those whose income is closer to the $1 a day mark; the most impoverished, the "poorest of the poor" who are furthest away from that target, and so harder to shift beyond the set indicator.

As such measures to fulfil the MDG target have an adverse effect on the original motive, which is to elevate the lowest income group above extreme poverty and so work towards lessening the polarisation of wealth in a country. Furthermore, actions may result in problems of social exclusion as the gap is being created not only between rich and poor but also between the poor and the poorest. In addition, discriminatory and detrimental legislation by the respective government contributes to maximisation of the gap, and impedes the realization of human rights by providing less income-earning capabilities for the poorest quintile[4].

The phenomenon of extreme poverty is particularly common in rural areas and those living in such an environment are often placed at the fringes of society and denied the privileges of education and adequate health care. It is evident, then, that not all humans enjoy equal access to a satisfactory quality of life[5] and the risk persists that these victims of human rights violations may become authors of violations themselves. In this context, women and children are often the main victims, and governments do not sufficiently prioritize public policies that assure gender equality or eradicate child labour. Many individuals still suffer from injustice based on their gender, disability, age or ethnicity. In some countries this may occur due to insufficient provision of State budget to ensure gender equality.

Target 1.B does not address other vulnerable groups such as minorities (e.g. indigenous people) and individuals with disabilities.[6] A person who lives in extreme poverty has a right to decent, dignified, productive, safe and appropriately remunerated employment. The State should guarantee their right to employment, to labour rights, to appropriate welfare provision and to security systems enabling them to cope with unemployment and crisis. Regarding access to this right, the State and societies must strive to abolish all forms of discrimination.[7]

Target 1.C on the eradication of hunger causes great concern as it only guarantees halving the proportion of those suffering. This limits the universal right to food to a certain percentage of individuals, which raises fundamental questions about the feasibility of a de facto universal right. Moreover, this target fails to address the fact that it is not only the right to food that must be achieved, but also the right to have access to adequate food at reasonable prices. High global food prices remain a significant obstacle, and countless individuals still have their basic right of access to food violated on a daily basis. States must act promptly to meet their citizens' needs. For example, governments should provide populations with immediate food needs with emergency help (in addition to long-term planning) with the aim of empowering and enabling the population to always have the resources available to buy or grow

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[4] see United Nations Statistics Division, United Nations Millennium Development Goals Database, "Poorest quintile's share in national income or consumption, percentage" <http://data.un.org/Data.aspx?d=MDG&f=seriesRowID%3A585> [accessed 20 July 2011]

[5] United Nations, Human Rights Council "Draft Guiding Principles on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights", United Nations - Geneva (2006), p.17

[6] Jentoft, Minde, Nilsen, "Indigenous peoples: Resource Management and Global Rights", Eburon (2003), p.5

[7] United Nations, Human Rights Council "Draft Guiding Principles on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights", United Nations - Geneva (2006), p.17

their own food.[8] Moreover, in respective national development policies, nutrition as a subject should be given higher priority.[9]

Finally, MDG 1 does not mention minorities, yet there are numerous cases where particular groups are discriminated against.[10] Countries in conflict and post-conflict situations face immense difficulties in implementing effective policies to combat poverty. In Côte D'Ivoire, for instance, severe malnutrition is measured at 6.9 per cent among children fewer than five years, according to UNICEF.[11]

It is therefore vital that the quantitative measurements are not only calculated for the world in total, as this method allows the proportion of those in most urgent need to be severely underrepresented. Instead there should be regional or even national indicators to ensure that aid reaches those who need it most. This illustrates a grave shortfall in the MDGs and causes innumerable cases of discrimination around the world against particular populations.

Supplementing the existing indicators with more 'relative' measurement seems advisable – for instance the capturing of the status-quo by a 'national poverty index' and the measurement of its appreciation would encourage governments to focus on the lowest income groups for highest effect.

MDG 2: Achieve universal primary education

The international community has recognized through various human rights instruments that equal access to education and the quality of education is essential in order to achieve the right to education for all[12]. Efforts must also continue beyond the targets in MDG 2 set for 2015. The right to education is interrelated with the right to equality and conducive to the enforcement of many other rights and freedoms. Furthermore, the right to education must go beyond primary schooling to include lifelong education[13] as it contributes to the achievement of other MDGs, such as employability and the fight against poverty.

And although teachers are the key to provision of quality education, unfortunately they often lack sufficient resources or training, which would facilitate more efficient responses to students' needs.

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[8] Rogerio Waldrigues Galindo, "Fighting Hunger in Brazil", Perspectives in Health - The magazine of the Pan American Health Organization, (2004).
<http://www.paho.org/english/dd/pin/Number20_article05.htm> [accessed 15 July 2011]

[9] "The United Nations, "Millennium Development Goals Report 2011", United Nations – New York, 2011, p.13 <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/11_MDG%20Report_EN.pdf> [accessed 15 July 2011]

[10] United Nations, "Millennium Development Goals: 2011 Progress Chart, United Nations (2011) <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/(2011E)_MDReport2011_ProgressChart.pdf> [accessed 15 July 2011]

[11] UNICEF Briefing Pack, "Côte D'Ivoire" 2009-2013, Unicef (2009), <http://www.unicef.org/cotedivoire/UNICEF_Briefing_Pack_2009_2013_En.pdf> [accessed 14 July 2011]

[12] The right to education became part of international human rights law in 1948 when it was mentioned in Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Confirmed in 1960 in the Convention against Discrimination in Education and, in 1966, in the Recommendation Concerning the Condition of Teacher, Article 13 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights details the right to education.

[13] Article 13 (2) of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly resolution 2200A (XXI) of 16 December 1966, entry into force 3 January 1976

Bearing in mind that education is a preventive measure against future human rights violations, and an important tool to improve human rights all over the world; special training in human rights education must be provided to everyone. This should include teaching and promoting values, beliefs and attitudes which encourage all individuals to uphold their own rights and to respect the rights of others.[14]

The issue of access to education becomes particularly important in the context of emergency situations, which may involve both conflicts and natural disasters. In either case, free and safe access to quality education is severely impeded. In a post-conflict situation, for example, regardless of if it was an internal or cross-border conflict, children are not only deprived of their right to education but also of access to key food resources.[15] A similar situation accrues after floods or tsunamis which may destroy school buildings and educational facilities. But it is not only a material, economic issue i.e. lack of funds and infrastructure. Instead here, the interdependence between the right to food (MDG 1), education (MDG2) and development (MDG 8) is most discernible, and the right to development is severely infringed upon.

In many areas of the world today, conflicts may prevent children from accessing school buildings that are perfectly intact. The psychological impact of emergency situations on children must not be underestimated either,[16] as they often generate such an intense fear that children and their families are rendered unable to claim such a fundamental right. The creation of a safe educational environment in emergency situations requires timely and effective international response based on sufficient political will and the measures taken must be addressed primarily to vulnerable groups. The sad reality is, however, that in such emergency situations the goals and targets of MDG 2 are rarely fulfilled.

Despite the incorporation of the non-discrimination principle in important human rights treaties[17], which requires the equal treatment of an individual or group irrespective of their particular characteristics, the main vulnerable groups (children, women, persons with disabilities and minorities) are exposed to discriminatory treatment. Often access to education is denied because of discriminatory policies or due to cultural norms and economic needs which govern each society. And even if women and men are determined to have equal rights, in the field of education[18], unequal treatment between boys and girls persists. This means a significant number of children are not enrolled in primary school because they work for their economic survival and, in particular, girls stay at home to help their mothers. In addition, access for persons with disabilities is limited due to a lack of adequate educational infrastructure and sufficient policies to promote and protect the rights of this group.

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14 Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Human rights education and training <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/education/training/index.htm> [accessed 19 July 2011]

15 United Nations Human Rights, Office of the HCHR, "Claiming the MDGs: A human rights approach, United Nations, New York & Geneva 2008

16 UNESCO EFA Global Monitoring Report. Education for All, "The hidden crisis: Armed conflict and education" 2011

17 For example, in the UNESCO framework, the Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960) and the Protocol Instituting a Conciliation and Good Offices Commission were adopted to ensure the respect of the right to education and the settlement of any disputes which may arise between States Parties to the Convention.

18 According to the UN Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979)

Yet this is imperative so that persons with disabilities may develop their personality, talents, creativity and ability to effectively participate in society.[19]

Another vulnerable group is minorities, where small numbers of citizens wish to preserve their ethnic, religious or linguistic traditions or other characteristics which differ from the rest of the population. Often, minorities lack access to an educational system in their mother language and are impeded from expressing and developing their cultural identity and their right to choose an appropriate educational system, according to their particular characteristics.

MDG 3: Promote gender equality and empower women

Various human rights dimensions of gender equality and the promotion of female empowerment have not been adequately considered in the conceptual framework of MDG 3. This leaves loopholes by which women continue to face violations of their human rights on a daily basis beyond 2015.

The targets set attempted to tackle gender inequality exclusively through measures to improve women's access to education. While girls' and women's education is fundamental to their empowerment, contributing substantially to economic independence and acquirement of political power, it does not suffice to improve gender equality in a broader sense. For instance, women are outnumbered four to one in legislatures around the world. At the current rate, it will take women 40 years to reach 40 per cent parliamentary representation in developing countries.[20]

The dominant development approach embraced by the MDGs neglected to address the root causes of gender inequality, doing little to challenge women's existing social roles. Indeed, the MDGs' development strategies are vital to improve living conditions and contribute to girl's and women's empowerment. But if women still face discriminatory attitudes in social institutions based on gender roles, stereotypes, and patriarchal structures that conceive women as inferior to men during the exercise of their rights, and provided that practices for the effective promotion of gender equality are not institutionalized in the day-to-day work of States and their citizens, women's voices will remain silent. Currently only 4 per cent of international aid is devoted to projects that primarily aim to promote gender equality[21].

The recognition of women's rights as human rights – and their enforcement in practice – is at the heart of an effective strategy towards gender equality and requires (i) women's ability to make their own free choices – such as the age of marriage, the quantity of children they want to have and the type of work they want to engage in.

Worldwide, over 60 per cent of unpaid family workers are women[22]. Furthermore (ii) access to opportunities, which allow for the application of acquired skills and knowledge i.e. decent work, health services, political representation and capacity to influence; and (iii) the security needed to reduce the vulnerability women are exposed to is limited. Globally, up to six out of ten women experience physical and/or sexual

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[19] Article 24 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with disabilities
[20] Millennium Development Goals: Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, Progress Chart 2010, United Nations Department on Economic and Social Affairs (July 2010)
[21] Millennium Development Goals: Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, Progress Chart 2010, United Nations Department on Economic and Social Affairs (July 2010)
[22] Millennium Development Goals: Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, Progress Chart 2010, United Nations Department on Economic and Social Affairs (July 2010)

violence in their lifetime[23]. The indivisibility of human rights requires a holistic transformative approach that respects women's and girls' needs and enables them to achieve their full potential on a non-discriminatory basis.

MDG 4: Reduce child mortality

MDG 4 aims at reducing the mortality rate of children under the age of five by two-thirds. Many causes of death are preventable, such as malaria, pneumonia, diarrhoea, malnutrition, complications and infections during and immediately after birth.[24] In these situations children die in large numbers in the poorest and developing countries while these conditions rarely lead to death in rich countries.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Art. 25), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (Art. 6; Art. 24) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Art. 12) recognize that 'children have a right to adequate health care'. And a human rights-based approach is necessary to achieve a reduction in child mortality, improve child health, and reinforce interlinkages with other MDGs, especially with education (MDG 3) and the health-related MDG 5 on maternal health and MDG 6 on HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases. This section sets out the various problems that need to be addressed in terms of numbers, quality and target groups, even if MDG 4 as currently formulated will be achieved in 2015.

First, the international community faces a hidden problem within the standards that were set. A two-thirds reduction in child mortality on a global level does not mean equal improvement in every country. The great winners of this particular goal were developed countries and Asian countries which recently experienced rapid economic growth, while child mortality remains at a high level in Sub-Saharan Africa[25]. The measured progress on a global level has occurred without significant progress in the most vulnerable countries. Meeting the MDG 4 standard, as set by its current indicators, does not bring the situation of children closer to the ideals set within the Millennium Declaration[26] and the adherence to the above-mentioned fundamental human rights and rights of the child.

Second, the fundamental rights to life and accessible and adequate health care are not sufficiently addressed by MDG 4. The target of reducing child mortality by two-thirds is too modest, as it only implies the right not to die. The integration of a human rights-based approach should aim beyond the reduction child mortality, to provide equally to all children accessible health care services in order to live a healthy life.[27]

This issue strongly relates with the fact that MDG 4 does not take into account marginalized groups that are experiencing difficulties in accessing health care. There is room for both quantitative and qualitative improvement in reducing child mortality through a human rights-based approach. Even if child mortality would be reduced by

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[23] Millennium Development Goals: Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, Progress Chart 2010, United Nations Department on Economic and Social Affairs (July 2010)

[24] United Nations, The Millennium Development Goals Report 2010, (New York: United Nations), pp.26-28

[25] United Nations, The Millennium Development Goals Report 2011, (New York: United Nations), p.25

[26] United Nations: Millennium Declaration – United Nations <www.un.org/declaration/ares552e.pdf> [accessed 18 July 2011]

[27] OHCHR, Claiming the Millennium Development Goals: A human rights approach, (New York and Geneva, 2008). p.28

two-thirds, there are still four million children dying each year.[28] Based on the human right to life and accessible adequate health care, and especially given the fact that the causes of death are not unknown but the solutions are not reaching the most vulnerable populations[29], this is unacceptable.

To eradicate the remaining child deaths, a combination of factors should be addressed. In the most problematic areas, such as Sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia, malnutrition is an underlying cause of a third of child deaths. Furthermore, the latest UN report on the MDGs shows that poor and rural communities, which include refugee children and children in conflict areas, experience higher child mortality due to a lack of access to health care services. Poor children are more likely to be exposed to health risks than their better-off or urban peers, and they have less resistance to diseases because they are more likely to suffer from malnutrition and other hazards typical in poor communities.

These inequities are compounded by reduced access to preventive and curative interventions.[30] There is also a crucial lack of access to the lifesaving measles vaccine and shortfalls in resources and infrastructure. We also know that communicable diseases are easily spread when no adequate drinking water and sanitation are provided and people lack the knowledge on hygiene practices. Any successful policy should therefore combine health care, nutrition, water and sanitation.

One cause of child mortality that should be integrated into child health programmes is related to pregnancy and very young mothers giving birth.[31] Even though the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Art. 25.2) ensures that 'motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance'', very young mothers tend to be left out due to limited knowledge about safe birth control methods, safe abortion, prenatal and postnatal care and immunization programmes. Young mothers are also particularly vulnerable to social or cultural pressure, especially in poor communities.

MDG 5: Improve maternal health

MDG 5 on maternal health is addressing two problem areas related to womens' welfare: (i) reducing the maternal mortality ratio (MMR) by three quarters, and (ii) universal access to reproductive health. Yet, MDG 5 remains the furthest from realisation among all the MDGs. Only 23 out of 181 States are on track to achieve a 75 per cent decrease in MMR by 2015 although nine out of 10 maternal deaths would be preventable[32].

With the adoption of the 'Millennium Declaration' in 2000, all UN member states resolved to 'combat all forms of violence against women and to implement the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women.'[33]

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[28] WHO, Millennium Development Goals: progress towards the health-related Millennium Development Goals: Factsheet N°290, May 2011.
<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs290/en/> [accessed 18 July 2011]
[29] Save the Children, No child born to die: closing the gaps, (London, 2011). p.vii
[30] Cesar G Victora, Adam Wagstaff, Joanna Armstrong Schellenberg, Davidson Gwatkin, Mariam Claeson, Jean-Pierre Habicht, 'Applying an equity lens to child health and mortality: more of the same is not enough'. Lancet 362(2003): pp.233–41
[31] United Nations Population Fund and Ipea, Potential Contributions to the MDG Agenda from the Perspective of ICPD-MDG 4: Reduce child mortality, Brasilia, 2007.
<http://www.unfpa.org.br/lacodm/arquivos/mdg4.pdf> [accessed 18 July 2011]
[32] United Nations, The Millennium Development Goals Report 2011 (New York: 2011), p.29
[33] A/res/55/2 United Nations Millennium Declaration, V, 25

MDG 5 was meant to translate this commitment into action, specifically addressing maternal mortality. In this respect, continuing to consider one quarter of deaths acceptable is extremely disturbing when remembering the right to life and non-discrimination.

Furthermore, identifying the MMR as the indicator for measuring progress in the field of maternal health blatantly fails to (i) address the complexity of underlying issues, such as inequality and discrimination, which lead to the immediate causes for high mortality, and (ii) to take account of a whole range of deficiencies in the maternal health system, of which mortality is but one aspect. Above all, the equally pervasive issue of 'morbidity' (meaning illness or disease) seems to be disregarded completely, which in perspective erodes the credibility of mortality reduction after all. MMR as an MDG indicator should therefore be complemented by an adequate measurement of maternal morbidity.

The measurement of the proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel stems from the logic that the vast majority of maternal deaths are caused by obstetric complications and are avoidable through access to emergency obstetric care (EmOC). Only one out of four pregnant women receives skilled care during childbirth and over half a million women still die each year from treatable and preventable complications of pregnancy and childbirth[34]. However, the measurement does not account for whether a certain facility, which may flow towards the official MDG fulfilment record, is actually available, accessible, and of adequate quality. Most crucially, actual usage is not being considered. To be consistent with a human rights-based approach, the provision of basic and comprehensive emergency obstetric care should be used, such as the 'Guidelines for Monitoring the Availability and Use of Obstetric Services.'[35]

Discrimination and inequality against women is the root of the 'symptoms' which are being targeted by MDG 5 and have to be solved to achieve a 'real' improvement. The lack of general public awareness on this issue can be illustrated by the fact that even the UN only acknowledged the importance of MDG 5 two years ago[36]. As a consequence, some States do not use or have sufficient legal enforcement or policies related to women's rights and health.[37]

Despite the broadly accepted fact that the cooperation of all stakeholders plays a vital role in raising the awareness on this topic, a recent study on Nigeria has shown that most programmes on safe motherhood have been initiated by NGOs working with funding from international donors[38]. But the successful implementation of the targets continues to require government action. Budgetary allocations, however, which reflect prioritisations of national interests, illustrate the lack of political will. Governments seem to be more inclined to cost-effective measures and omissions, rather than cost-related actions when approaching MDG 5.

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[34] United Nations, The Millennium Development Goals Report 2011 (New York: 2011)
[35] Guidelines for Monitoring the Availability and Use of Obstetric Services (UNICEF, WHO and UNFPA, 1997)
[36] Personal communication, Melinda (LAST NAME) lecture on the 19th of July, 2011
[37] Example: Due to weak law enforcement, illegal abortions are conducted by traditional midwifes in Cambodia because legal education and information is limited.
<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/reports.htm> [accessed 19 July 2011]
[38] Okonofua, Friday "Reducing Maternal Mortality in Nigeria: An Approach through Policy Research and Capacity Building" African Journal of Reproductive Health, September 2010; 14[3]: pp.9-13

Maternal mortality and morbidity across the world cannot be addressed without taking into account the underlying situation of inequality and discrimination against women, perpetuated by formal laws, policies and harmful social norms and practices.[39] This requires collective attention on a national and regional level. In this respect, there is still a lack of coordination between national and community services. And even if universal access would be provided, in many cases women find themselves in situations where it is economically unviable to access adequate health care due to a lack of rights in employment – in particular, an adequate legal framework during the pregnancy period or after delivery.

MDG 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases

According to the WHO, access to the best level of quality healthcare is everyone's right[40]. This notion is further strengthened by the fact that every country in the world is party to at least one treaty that governs health-related rights. In this century, HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis and other major diseases (more recently chronic ones) have threatened vast segments of the world's population[41]. Accordingly they have been addressed by MDG 6 and some good progress has been made. There is, however, still plenty of room for improvement in terms of tackling these diseases from a human rights' perspective, bearing in mind that the original Millennium Declaration of 2000 aimed to 'respectfully uphold the declaration of human rights'.[42]

Even if the targets of MDG 6, which focus primarily on communicable diseases, were achieved, there remain some aspects that the scope of the current MDGs does not cover. One such issue is HIV/AIDS-related discrimination. Studies have shown that the stigma associated with HIV/AIDS usually leads to discrimination.[43] It is also identified as one of the barriers to tackling the epidemic successfully in terms of prevention, testing and treatment.[44] Yet, HIV/AIDS-related stigmatization and discrimination are usually relegated to the bottom of the agenda when it comes to creating policies and funding.[45] Over the years, different governments have made commitments to address this issue[46] since it violates the human rights of those living with HIV/AIDS.

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[39] "A Rights-based approach to address maternal mortality and morbidity" by Melinda Ching Simon, 2010

[40] World Health Organization (2011). Health and Human Rights. [Online] Available at: http://www.who.int/hhr/en/ (Accessed: 13 July, 2011)

[41] PATH (2011). PATH and our Partners are Fighting HIV/AIDS, Malaria, and Tuberculosis. [Online]. Available at: http://www.path.org/projects/mdg6.php. (Accessed: 19 July,2011).

[42] United Nations. General Assembly, 8th Plenary Meeting (2000).Resolution 55/2. Millennium Declaration. [Online] Available at: http://www.un.org/millennium/declaration/ares552e.htm (Accessed: 14 July, 2011).

[43] UNAIDS(2005). 'HIV-related stigma, discrimination and human rights violations: case studies of successful programmes'. [Online] Available at: http://data.unaids.org/publications/irc-pub06/jc999-humrightsviol_en.pdf (Accessed: 15 July,2011).

[44] Mahajan, A.P, Sayles, J.N, Patel, .A., Remien, R.H., Ortiz, .D., Szekeres, .G. and Coates, .T.H. (2008). 'Stigma in the HIV/AIDS epidemic: A review of the literature and recommendations for the way forward'. PubMed. [Online]. Available at: http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2835402/ (Accessed: 15 July,2011)

[45] Piot, P. (2006). Available at: 'UNAIDS Conference: 'How to reduce the stigma of AIDS Keynote address Symposium at the XVI International AIDS Conference', Toronto, Canada,12 August 2006 [Online]. Available at: http://www.unaids.org/en/media/unaids/contentassets/dataimport/pub/speechexd/2006/200608012_sp_piot_stigma-speech_en.pdf (Accessed: 15 July,2011)

[46] Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS, 2001

Another issue that needs to be considered beyond 2015 is the strong link between neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) and poverty.[47] Data show that more than 60 per cent of worldwide mortality occurs due to non-communicable diseases (NCDs), 80 per cent of which occurs in developing countries.[48] It has also been found that cancer accounts for more deaths in the developing world than HIV, malaria and tuberculosis combined.[49] Surprisingly then, neither NTDs nor NCDs were mentioned in the MDGs.

While it is imperative to address the primary cause of a disease and look for ways to prevent and treat it, it is - from a human rights approach - also important to have health systems in place that can handle the burden of any disease. An article on South Africa's current situation in meeting the MDGs by 2015 showed that the country lagged behind, with one of the reasons being the poor primary healthcare system. Political leaders should read the right to health as also including the right to a good healthcare system.

These are just a few select issues which require continued joint action beyond 2015. To sum up, States must remove financial, social and cultural barriers to enable greater access to health centres, projects and initiatives (i.e., family planning initiatives). Moreover, healthcare initiatives such as routine immunizations, hygiene improvement and nutrition programs must be expanded, without sacrificing quality. Combating increasingly widespread NCDs and NTDs must also be a priority issue, knowing that awareness and preventative programs need to be global in scope yet strong at grassroots levels.[50] Many healthcare systems must also implement better monitoring and evaluation procedures, in order to realistically measure and assess strengths and weaknesses in the system as a precursor to adequate reform.

MDG 7: Ensure environmental sustainability

Since MDG 7 was first envisioned, there has been increased recognition within the international community that a link exists between human rights and the environment. Numerous conventions, conferences, and partnerships address this link.[51]

Though several laudable achievements have been made with respect to MDG 7, two are most pertinent. One global success story lies in the drastic reduction in ozone-depleting substances following the 1987 Montreal Protocol.[52] According to the Millennium Development Goals Report 2011, international cooperation resulted in an unprecedented phenomenon: "as of end-2009, the consumption of 98 per cent of all ozone-depleting substances controlled under the Montreal Protocol had been phased

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[47] Payne, .L. & Fitchett, .J.R. (2010).'Bringing neglected tropical diseases into the spotlight'. PubMed Gov. [Online]. 26(9):421-3.Abstract only. Available at: http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/20591739(Accessed: 15 July, 2011)

[48] Lodge, M. (2009). 'Non communicable diseases (NCDs) and the millennium development goals'. Available at: http://www.challengefund.org/node/33 (Accessed: 15 July,2011).

[49] ibidem

[50] In a recent press release (2011) the progress of MDGs by WHO (2011), it was stated that there are over 1 billion people suffering from NTDs, but there was no mention of how to address this situation. As for NCDs, chronic illnesses such as diabetes are increasing in both the developed and developing world.

[51] United Nations Environment Program (UNEP). High Level Expert Meeting on the New Future of Human Rights and Environment: Moving the Global Agenda Forward (2009). <http://www.unep.org/environmentalgovernance/Events/HumanRightsandEnvironment/tabid/2046/language/en-US/Default.aspx> [accessed 19 July 2011]

[52] Montreal Protocol 1987. Montreal.

out." This is a prime example of what collective international will can accomplish,[53] and it is an indirect success vis-à-vis the human right to health.[54]

The second major achievement with regards to MDG 7 is the increase in global awareness and action surrounding the right to water and sanitation. In terms of concrete results, approximately 1.1 billion urban-dwellers and 723 million rural-dwellers gained access to an improved drinking water source between 1990 and 2008.[55] Additionally, hundreds of NGOs have been set up to tackle this issue, and in 2008, the UN appointed its first Special Rapporteur on the Right to Safe Drinking Water.[56]

Even if one assumes that all MDG 7 indicators have been fulfilled by 2015, there remain a number of human rights concerns. Integrating sustainable development into country programs and policies will be a constant and indefinite challenge as political systems change and environmental shifts occur over time. In terms of biodiversity loss, even if we progress at a much slower rate than already seen (Target 7.B), the loss will undoubtedly continue to have negative effects on human health and well-being.

Although the world has seen an upsurge in awareness of the human right to water and sanitation, the scale of the problem is tremendous. Even after achievement of MDG 7 one person in four would still be without any safe place to go to the toilet,[57] and there would still be 800 million people without access to clean water.[58] Furthermore, accessibility and affordability of water would continue to be an issue for the world's poorest, especially those living in rural areas. For example, when corporations take over a community's water source, they may sell it back to the local population at such exorbitant prices that the poorest families would not be able to afford it. For some then, the only solution would be to draw water from the river (which may be contaminated and cause diseases such as cholera and diarrhoea.)[59] In this we see how the right to water and sanitation directly impacts other rights, such as the right to health.

Improving the lives of 100 million slum dwellers (Target 7.D) by 2015 would still leave 800 million people without the right to adequate housing. From a human rights perspective, the target to address only one eighth of the world's slum dwellers is appallingly inadequate, especially when taking into consideration that the target was fulfilled by 2.2 times on a global scale ten years before the deadline, demonstrating a lack of political will to adequately address this issue.[60] In addition, the term 'significant improvement' is a qualitatively flexible term of measurement. If a slum

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[53] United Nations, The Millennium Development Goals Report 2011 (New York: 2011), p. 50

[54] Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology, London, POSTnote 102, July 1997, Available at: www.parliament.uk/documents/post/pn102.pdf

[55] United Nations, The Millennium Development Goals Report 2011 (New York: United 2011), p. 50

[56] Right to Water, Ms. Catarina de Albuquerque, Special Rapporteur on the Right to Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation. <http://www.righttowater.info/catarina-de-albuquerque> [accessed 19 July 2011]

[57] WaterAid. Dying for the Toilet Report 2005. Available at: www.wateraid.org

[58] United Nations Development Program (UNDP), Human Development Report 2006, Beyond scarcity: power, poverty and the global water crisis., (New York: UNDP 2006), p.55

[59] For Love of Water. 2008. Irena Salina. California: Oscilloscope Laboratories.

[60] United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT), State of the World's Cities 2010/11: Bridging the Urban Divide, (London: UN-HABITAT and Earthscan 2010), p.12; Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Claiming the Millennium Development Goals: A Human Rights Approach (New York and Geneva: 2008), p.40

dweller's life is significantly improved, does this mean all of his or her human rights are fulfilled? This term is far from acceptable as it leaves ample space for human rights violations.

Finally, the indicators relating to the right to adequate housing in MDG 7 do not address the issue of discrimination. That is, even if the absolute number of slum dwellers is dramatically reduced, this does not guarantee protection against discrimination of particular ethnic groups that are often over-represented among slum dwellers. This includes indigenous groups in the United States, and the Roma population in Europe.[61]

MDG 8: Develop a global partnership for development

MDG 8 is undoubtedly the most controversial one due to its nature and targets. While the targets are quite vague and lack any quantitative measures, their theoretical basis is unique and clear: the right to development is a fundamental human right. According to Navy Pillay, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, 'The right to development embodies the human rights principles of equality, non-discrimination, participation, transparency and accountability as well as international cooperation'[62]

By looking at all the MDGs, it is easy to conclude that without economic development, a government: i) has no economic means to eradicate poverty, ii) cannot feed its population, iii) has no economic funds to improve its national health system (necessary to reduce child mortality, to improve maternal health and to combat HIV) or iv) to build an efficient educational system.

Starting from this assumption—that each individual and nation is entitled to the right to development—the entire framework of the MDGs becomes much clearer. The international community should take all necessary steps to allow each individual to exercise his or her right to development everywhere and in the best possible way.

At the launch of the MDGs in 2000, developed countries committed themselves to ensuring an increased flow of financial aid toward the developing world, particularly the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), in order to reach, by 2015, the goal of giving 0.7 per cent of their GDP as financial aid. Only a small number of countries have already achieved this goal: Denmark, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Sweden and Norway.[63] Instead, a large part of the global official development assistance (ODA) flow has been sent to countries that have experienced severe natural disasters, such as Pakistan and Haiti. Therefore, the majority of financial aid originally created to sustain long-term economic and technological development and address the special needs of the least developed countries, (Target 8.B)[64] has been used for short-term, post-disaster reconstruction.

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[61] Amnesty International, From Promises to Delivery: Putting Human Rights at the Heart of the Millennium Development Goals (London: 2010), p.11f

[62] The Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC-IV) 9-13 May, 2011, Istanbul, Turkey "No real development without human rights", see <http://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=11027&LangID=E> [accessed 19 July 2011]

[63] United Nations, The Millennium Development Goals Report 2011 (New York: 2011), p.59

[64] Target 8.B, available at <http://www.undp.org/mdg/goal8.shtml> [accessed 19 July 2011]

Moreover, with regards to Target 8.A to develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system,[65] data shows that more advanced developing countries have been privileged with greater access to the world market, while the LDCs still face heavy structural and legal barriers that prevent their goods from entering, or being competitive on, the global market (especially with regards to agricultural, textile and clothing products). To develop a global partnership for development States must work jointly to reduce protectionist policies which still characterize the economic regime of most developed countries. Furthermore, a reduction of national subsidies in certain sectors of the national economy could undoubtedly increase the exports of products coming from LDCs.

However, even with improvements regarding MDG 8, it should be emphasized that the economic development of a State does not necessarily lead to an improvement of the living conditions of the entire population, as the cases of India, China and Pakistan show. Consequently, this understanding should reinforce the principle of good governance, without which a more equitable distribution of national resources is hard to imagine. Furthermore, development should be available, accessible, affordable and adaptable for all.

Note that marginalized populations need special attention, as they are more likely to experience diverse forms of discrimination. Development policies should take into account their specific needs in order to make sure these are met. For a more equitable development of policies, an equal representation of the population should be promoted among the decision makers. For example, women must have a right to participate in decision-making processes that affect their sexual and reproductive health, including issues related to: family planning, contraception, pregnancy, childbirth and unsafe abortion.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

Having collated but a condensed account of criticisms for each individual MDG the following and final part of this work will attempt to identify general tendencies and further offer thoughts of recommendation. 'Looking beyond 2015' reasserts the importance of seeing the global campaign of MDGs within the context of the original commitments embedded in the Millennium Declaration. The joint responsibility to tackle the key challenges facing humanity at the wake of the new millennium does not end at 2015. The gravity of urgent action remains beyond the framework of the MDGs.

3.1   Loopholes of discrimination

What has become evident to this Working Group is that the quantitative MDG indicators which are set on a global scale i.e. for the world in total, do not guarantee any change in the situation of respect for human rights, which ever so often becomes implicitly associated with the MDG rhetoric. In fact, hypothetically speaking, it proves to be an easy task to fulfil the measured indicators of the MDGs without any consideration of human rights at all. What is even more alarming is the fact that in numerous cases, and as many points of criticism have highlighted, the successful achievement of targets can be more easily realised by disregarding people's rights.

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[65] Target 8.A, available at <http://www.undp.org/mdg/goal8.shtml> [accessed 19 July 2011]

As such, MDGs create a grave loophole of discrimination against those who are in most urgent need because these targets can be reached without guaranteeing protection against discrimination of particularly vulnerable groups. This means regional and national and even gender, ethnic et al. indicators should be implemented in order to ensure that aid is effectively provided.

3.2   Access

Another key issue across all MDGs is access. Safety is an indispensable condition to claim human rights. The right to education, the right to health and the right to water and sanitation are not enforceable without safe access to schools, health centres and toilets. Therefore quantitative measures such as the availability of infrastructure do not suffice. Instead the path must be secured, in particular, for the most fragile individuals including girls and women, minorities and people with disabilities.

3.3   Development and trade

For a truly effective global partnership for development States should make a clear distinction between the goal of providing 0.7% of their GDP in financial aid toward the developing world, particularly for LDCs, in order to sustain long-term economic and technological development, and financial aid for (short-term) emergency situations such as natural disasters. For certainly, States are the most important actors and must develop effective policies and create sustainable strategies to achieve the goals. Their political will becomes most evident in their budgetary allocation to the achievement of the MDGs and hereby States are called upon to ensure sound and sufficient resource allocation.

Development also requires developed countries to reduce protectionist policies and trade barriers, enabling export goods from LDCs to stand a fair chance on the global market. Correspondingly a reduction of national subsidies in certain sectors of the national economy such as agricultural goods, clothing and textiles could undoubtedly increase the exports of products from LDCs. However, it must be stressed that economic development through the achievement of MDG 8 does not necessarily translate into an improvement of living conditions for the entire population.

To ensure a more equitable distribution of national resources the principle of good governance must be reinforced. Development aid should be available, accessible, affordable and adaptable for all, while paying special attention to the needs of discriminated populations such as women, minorities and people with disabilities which are particularly prone to marginalization. In addition, decision makers should expedite more equitable development policies and promote equal representation of the population.

3.4   Poverty and hunger

To eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, governments should have contingency funds and food reserves available to provide the population with resources to buy or grow their own food, while nutrition should receive increased priority in national development.

Concerning the healthcare system, States must provide greater access to health centres and preventative programs e.g. for hygiene and nutrition, and initiatives to raise awareness as well as immunizations must be extended quantitatively while

maintaining the quality. To assess the real impact of the MDGs a maternal morbidity ratio should be introduced in addition to MMR. Further indicators for maternal health care on basic and comprehensive emergency obstetric care should, in line with a human rights-based approach, also be used.

3.5 Education

Another sector of high importance is the educational system. Education is an essential and, indeed the most economical tool, to prevent future conflicts as human rights education raises cultural awareness and sensitivity, thereby curtailing ab initio gender, racial and any other form of discrimination. Moreover, the outbreak and spread of diseases can be averted through education in sanitation, while hygiene and child and maternal health can best be preserved and improved through sexual education.

A human rights-based curriculum should be introduced in the educational system to raise awareness on many important topics, such as women's rights to equality and the evils of gender-based discrimination. This would necessitate the revision of textbooks and school programs and the adaptation of teaching methods, along with the elimination of any stereotyped gender roles at all levels. Education should also go beyond that provided in schools. States must not ignore the role of informal and non-formal education in teaching citizens how to exercise their rights. Training should therefore be available for teachers and community leaders, who could undertake an advocacy role to demand greater institutional accountability.

A special agency should be created with the aim of promoting the right to education, enhancing the educational system and delivering technical assistance and aid. The agency would ensure the training of personnel in human rights education and elucidate the need for educated citizens, especially in conflict areas, where education is neglected and children are drawn into participating in armed conflicts.

Safe access to universal, free, non-discriminatory education should be every State's aim and in emergency situations, be it in conflict areas or in the aftermath of natural disasters, special funds should be put in place to ensure the existence of educational infrastructure (i.e., buildings, educational personnel and material). Special attention should be paid to the rights of vulnerable groups by making education fully accessible to them and inclusive in nature, including people with disabilities. Minority groups should have access to educational programs in their mother tongue, whereby their cultural and linguistic identity is respected.

3.6 Protecting human rights

To enhance the MDGs' implementation State laws on human rights need to be strengthened and governments held accountable to uphold such rights. In as much this group believes governments should develop measures to promote human rights. The enhancement of such mechanisms should take into account the need to provide special human rights based training to those in charge of human rights compliance. Key officials, policy-makers, judiciaries and police forces must be the first to undertake a critical reflection on human rights and to receive technical assistance to guarantee that they understand the legal framework. For example, concerning gender equality, these measures should contribute to an optimal approach wherein women's and men's rights are both promoted.

Furthermore national and regional courts, such as the European Court of Human Rights, should be strengthened in order to build a solid legal system that the most vulnerable can rely upon for protection. In addition, regional committees could be created with the aim to protect human rights, especially of marginalized groups.

In conclusion, in order to fully achieve the MDGs, cooperation by all international actors (States, international organizations, civil society, etc.) is vital in the implementation of measures based on policies or legislation, or purely in informal/non-formal knowledge exchange. However, this paper has demonstrated that, even if all the targets and indicators of the MDGs are met by 2015, this would merely amount to a partial success unless a human rights perspective is applied between now and the completion date.

If the MDGs are genuinely aiming at responding to the key challenges facing the world today, they must be coherent with the original aims and intents of the Millennium Declaration and States must push forward the necessary amendments for legal enforcement and demonstrate their support and political will through the allocation of sufficient funds. We conclude, therefore, that for any development effort beyond 2015, a human rights-based approach is indispensable.

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PART II: ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Report of the Working Group on Economic and Social Development

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DeM	External Debt Management
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council of the United Nations
EFA	Education for All
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FTA	Free Trade Agreement
FTI	Fast Track Initiative (part of Education for All)
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
IEI	International Economic Institutions
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IPR	Intellectual Property Rights
LDC	Least Developed Country
MDD	Multilateral Development Diplomacy
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MtD	Multi track Diplomacy
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NIDA	New International Development Architecture
ODA	Official Development Assistance
PTA	Preferential Trade Agreement
RTA	Regional Trade Agreement
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/Aids
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WTO	World Trade Organization

I. INTRODUCTION

This report aims to address some of the shortcomings of the current MDGs, and to highlight areas that need to be addressed to ensure social and economic development for all beyond 2015. Five key topic areas will be studied in detail, with specific recommendations regarding what needs to be improved to help ensure progress for each.

Access and provision of education, modifying the curricula taught and teaching sustainable development are paramount to ensuring development beyond 2015. The creation and enforcement of land rights are important in ensuring food security, human rights and greater empowerment of women. If developing countries, in particular Least Developed Countries (LDCs) want to improve their ability to trade on an international level, improvements in access to technology and communications need to be urgently made.

Furthermore with regards to international trade, this report states that the potential for better formulated Regional Trade Agreements (RTAs) will be demonstrated, encouraging countries to reduce the overall number of RTAs they are members of, and drastically improving the remainder. Recommendations will also be made regarding the role of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank with regards to debt alleviation of LDCs. Finally, a call will be made for developed countries to better honour their aid commitments, which will provide developing countries with an instant increase in much needed capital to help reduce poverty, among many other aspects.

In conclusion, specific recommendations will be made as to how changes in the above spheres will help to achieve the MDGs by 2015, and continue to foster sustainable development beyond 2015.

II.   REVIEW

MDG 2: Achieve universal primary education

Education is a key factor in reducing poverty and the target set is to ensure that children everywhere have access to, and complete primary education by 2015. Despite significant progress made in increasing enrolment in the sub-Saharan African countries, only 87 per cent of children in the developing regions complete primary education.[66]

In order to improve the learning environment for children, domestic financing for primary education is crucial. In countries where domestic resources are lacking, maximum fiscal policy and external aid could be good solutions in order to fill the gap beyond 2015. In this sense, The World Bank should invest in basic education by giving out zero-interest loans as well as grants, focusing on countries that are not on track to reach the education MDGs by 2015.

In parallel to the subject of insufficient public investment in education, it is important to draw attention to the rural areas in LDCs, where basic primary education is not

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[66] Adjusted net enrolment ratio in primary education between 1998/1999 and 2008/2009(Percentage) with an 18-percentage-point gain between1999 and 2009 in Sub-Saharan Africa. The Millennium Development Goals Report 2011 United Nations.

guaranteed[67]. Mixed policies with the purpose of implementing food security and education for all are encouraged beyond 2015 and are urgently needed to be implemented.

The 2010 global report of the International Labour Organization (ILO) emphasized that child labour has increased in the regions of Sub-Saharan Africa, Southern Asia, and Latin America[68]. Therefore the role of global partnerships and South-South cooperation are very important in order to promote advocacy against child labour, and the creation and implementation of relevant policies[69].

Moreover, due to the lack of public policies and other factors, primary education in the poorest communities is still not guaranteed. The education sector currently receives about 2 per cent of humanitarian aid, which is already inadequately funded.[70] To fill this gap beyond 2015 it is necessary to try to eliminate the differences between emergency aid and long-term humanitarian aid. In addition, more development assistance should be channelled through nationally pooled funds. This group recommends that working through the reformed education Fast Track Initiative (FTI), donors should establish more effective multilateral arrangements for pooled funds, comparable with those operating in the health sector.[71]

Another important issue in education is the fact that living in a conflict zone[72] has a statistically significant effect on the access to primary education because it increases the probability of non-completion. Forty-two per cent of the children in the world who are not enrolled in primary school are living in poor countries that are suffering from conflicts. There is no justification for the attacks on children, widespread and systematic rape of girls and women, and the destruction of school facilities. This inflicts fear and insecurity on young children, specifically young girls, as well as untold damage on their education.

An additional point to underline is that even if MDG 2 has led to the increase in enrolment numbers in many countries by 2015, measurements of learning outcomes have found that too many children are graduating from primary school without having achieved competency in literacy or numeracy.[73] This means that beyond 2015 the MDG 2 should be replaced with a new goal that will take into consideration the quality of education and provide a measure of effective learning. This could involve including international languages such as English and Mandarin into the curricula, and emphasizing the importance of maths and science in particular as these will help foster technological innovation and promote development.

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[67] The 2009 UNESCO Global Monitoring Report indicates that four out of five of the at least 72 million out of school children are rural. And, The FAO (2007) indicates that food security and universal primary education of rural children are directly connected.

[68] Child labor in indigenous communities is requiring a particular attention, ILO 2010 Global Action Plan.

[69] 2010 Global Action Plan of ILO.

[70] Cfr. EFA Global Monitoring Report, Education for All, The hidden crisis: Armed conflict and education, 2011 http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0019/001907/190743e.pdf, online report p.i.

[71] Cfr. Eleventh Meeting of the Working Group on Education for All UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, 2-3 February 2011, Plenary Session III : Violent Conflict and Education http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/ED/ED_new/pdf/Session3%20Violent%20 conflict%20and%20ED_BN-EN.pdf , p 2.

[72] Rapport mondial de suivi sur l'EPT, UNESCO 2011.

[73] Cfr. Angeline M. Barrett, The Education Millenium Development Goal Beyond 2015: Prospects for Quality and LearnersI, University of Bristol, 2009 http://www.edqual.org/publications/workingpaper/edqualwp13.pdf,, p 9.

Knowledge of financial systems can also be advantageous to help countries become involved with international financial markets. It is also important that freedom of expression is encouraged across the board to maximize the benefits of education, and to increase tolerance and understanding. Furthermore, it is important that sex education is included, where appropriate, as this would help to increase awareness and prevention of HIV/AIDS. Finally, encouraging national unity, whether it be through academics or sports is also important, to help reduce the possibility of future conflicts.

MDG 3: **Promote gender equality and empower women**

In the current global context it is crucial to work on the elimination of gender disparities across all education levels in order to lead the world population, particularly the most vulnerable, towards sustainable development. According to Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations, there are three priority areas that call for urgent attention: job creation, food security and investing in women. The lack of attention to achieving gender equality and women's empowerment may put peace, security, and sustainable development in jeopardy. [74]

The empowerment and the education of women and girls are crucial in order to obtain poverty reduction, income growth, economic productivity, social justice and better governance. Evidence shows a strong correlation between educating women and girls and increases in women's earnings and improvements in child and family health and nutrition. In addition, increments in school enrolment, protection and prevention of HIV/AIDS, higher maternal and child life expectancy, reduced fertility rates and delayed marriage are also related to educating and empowering women. [75]

Beyond 2015 it will be of great importance to highlight the need for accountability on a global level, monitoring systems, honest dialogue, and transparency in order to promote good management of resources designated to development cooperation. Additionally, an analysis of the situation of each country will be required, choosing the appropriate indicators and regulations, as well as supporting local governments in order to make progress on women's rights and equal opportunities. [76]

All previous actions will encourage women to exercise their economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights. Furthermore, promoting educational programs about tolerance, human rights, and respect for others will help to raise awareness on these important issues.

MDGs have been the main focus in the recent meetings of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), in particular MDG 3 as discussed here. Whether this particular goal is to be realized in 2015 is up for debate because in light of wars and financial crisis, women are more vulnerable than men. Women, especially those in LDCs are the first to lose the most and the last ones to receive any

[74] United Nations , Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (2010). Achieving Gender Equality, Women's Empowerment and Strengthening Development Cooperation. United Nations New York, p.6.
[75] Ibidem p.129.
[76] Panel Discussions on Evaluating the UN System's Work on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment and on Effective Policy Responses to Counter Gender Discrimination and Negative Gender Stereotypes, Genève, 13 July 2011.
http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B9C2E/%28httpNewsByYear_en%29/C2E405D7666C0408C1257 8CC0053798B?OpenDocument

compensation or retribution following a crisis as well as being among the poorest in the world.

As such, the MDGs present a starting point to better the lives of women by giving them the tools they badly need in order to catch up with the rest of the world. UN Women said, "[it's a] well-recognized fact that investing in women and girls has a multiplier effect on productivity, efficiency and sustained economic growth."

A statement from Michelle Bachelet, the UN Women Executive Director, highlights that over 139 countries have constitutional guarantees of gender equality[77] and many other countries have laws specifically guaranteeing women one right or another. Why then are so many women suffering from violations of their basic human rights? Why do they still lag behind in education and development? Granting women their rights is not enough. Accountability mechanisms must be put in place to constantly measure the successes or lack thereof because mere words are no longer enough. Asha-Rose Migiro, UN Deputy Secretary-General urged ECOSOC to "hold countries and partners to their promises."

III. FORCED MIGRATION, LAND RIGHTS AND DEVELOPMENT

Land rights and forced migration have been neglected by the millennium development goals' agenda. These spheres are significant in their own right, yet they are inherently linked as the lack of land right can be a push factor for migratory flows. It has been noted that goals such as poverty alleviation, gender equity and effective resource management can be tackled through improved land tenure management[78]. Similarly, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) has outlined the link between migration and the eight MDGs, highlighting the same issues[79].

We will focus on forced migration in particular, both internal and international, as it has important implications for development that have yet to be fully explored. This includes migration due to conflict, state fragility, environmental concerns, and land tenure issues, some of which were highlighted in the 2009 Copenhagen Summit on climate change. Migration can have both positive and negative consequences, raising the importance of fostering the former and mitigating the latter.

Remittances

Regarding MDG 1, the IOM has said that poverty might be reduced or amplified by migration[80] as remittances have the potential to increase recipient household's welfare, however in the case of forced migration the flow of these remittances may be compromised. Technical assistance is therefore needed to secure these transfers and

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[77] ECOSOC Dialogue with Executive Heads of Funds and Programmes "The future of operational activities for development of Funds and Programmes: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats" Statement by Michelle Bachelet, UN Women Executive Director, Genève, July 15, 2011.

[78] Collective Action and Property Rights (CAPRi) (2006). 'Land Rights for African Development: From Knowledge to Action'. E. Mwangi, ed. CAPRi Policy Briefs. Available at http://www.citeulike.org/user/jago/article /3510947 [Accessed 10 July 2011].

[79] IOM Policy Brief (2010). 'Migration and the Millennium Development Goals' Available at: http://www.iom.int/jahia/webdav/shared/shared/mainsite/policy_and_research/policy_documents/polic y_brief.pdf [Accessed 13 July2011].

[80] IOM (2005), 'The Millennium Development Goals and Migration', Available at: http://www.iom.int/jahia/webdav/site/myjahiasite/shared/shared/mainsite/published_docs/serial_public ations/mrs20.pdf [Accessed 14July 2011].

legal mechanisms need to be put into place to ensure they reach their final destination to ensure a contribution towards the achievement of MDG 1.

Gender equality

In terms of MDG 3, migration can contribute in the promotion of gender equality as in the case of forced displacement, traditional power relationships can be dismantled and this provides a window of opportunity for gender empowerment. It is important for instance, that the delivery of humanitarian assistance be distributed equally between men and women regardless of pre-existing structures. Land rights for women would give them the ability to accrue revenue, to save, and would mean they are not at the mercy of male landlords. Such empowerment may also help to reduce the prevalence of HIV/AIDS, especially in cases where sexual favours may be demanded in return for land usage rights.

Infectious disease

Human mobility has also been a major driving force in epidemics of infectious diseases and in the event where there is a concentration of refugees, it is critical that adequate sanitation standards be met. Such sensitization about communicable diseases is of particular pertinence in light of the finding that contagion rates are highest in recipient countries[81]. This also provides the opportunity to educate a large group of people who might previously have been difficult to access. These measures will help reach MDG 6 (Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases).

Resource management

The relationship between internal displacement and MDG 7 (Ensure Environmental Sustainability) is of particular importance in the refugee camp setting. It is necessary to ensure the sustainable resource management of new settlements in order to minimize depletion. This can entail strategic resettlement location and resource provision. Even though this is not of primary importance in the short-term, sustainable practices may be crucial for survival in the medium to long-term. It is also critical to foster coordination between international and national actors to respond in a common way to environmental crises by developing a rapid response system. This will help to reduce the potential number of environmental refugees, thereby contributing to the achievement of MDG 7.

The resettlement of migrants forced to relocate can place increasing pressure on resources that may already be scarce. This can create or exacerbate food security issues, the potential for conflict rooted in ethnic-based violence, and xenophobia. These problems highlight the importance of land rights, not least in the case of women who are disproportionately affected in times of conflict[82]. Ensuring women's right to land fosters empowerment and provides income security, with positive spill

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[81] IOM (2005), 'The Millennium Development Goals and Migration', Page 21, Available at: http://www.iom.int/jahia/webdav/site/myjahiasite/shared/shared/mainsite/published_docs/serial_public ations/mrs20.pdf [Accessed 14 July 2011].
[82] Declich, Francesca. (2000). 'Fostering Ethnic Reinvention: Gender Impact of Forced Migration on Bantu Somali Refugees in Kenya (Inventionde l'ethnicité et modification des rapports de genre chez les réfugiés Somali du Kénya)'. Cahiers d'Études Africaines, 40 (157) pp. 25-53.

over effects for their offspring. These objectives can be achieved by focusing on land use rights rather than exclusively on legal ownership[83].

Fostering such a culture of land rights would help to combat the increasingly significant problem of land-grabbing. This phenomenon consists of governments leasing large portions of land to foreign investors thereby displacing the local population[84]. This is often done without compensation, exacerbating many issues which prevent the MDGs from being achieved. The objective is not to discourage foreign direct investment, but to regulate it in order to ensure that local communities benefit from the process, while ensuring the human right to development.

In addition, the creation of land rights would help to achieve sustainable use of the land. This is due to the fact that people would have more of a vested interest in the land that they use, and would be motivated to work towards ensuring it is used appropriately and remains arable, rather than overused. Land rights would also allow individuals to gain a personal income, which in turn could lead to an increase in rural investment, with a spill over effect of reducing the net migration flows to urbanized areas.

In light of the prominence of informal land claims, governments can often have the legal right to sell or lease land to foreign investors. These transactions are often lacking transparency and legally non-exhaustive, increasing the vulnerability of host governments and their citizens[85]. International actors, including the UN, need to provide an advisory role where governments can have access to information and tools necessary to mitigate such negative effects.

The above points and recommendations are not an exhaustive list of gaps in the MDGs, but rather a starting point for action. Nonetheless, as we are approaching the MDG deadline, they need to be taken into consideration for the any future development agenda and beyond.

IV. THE ROLE OF DEVELOPED STATES

Past 2015, developed states will have to play a greater and more dynamic role in achieving global development. Monetary aid reform must promote sustainable development in regions which need it the most. States must also create or integrate non-financial support programs such as professional training and technological transfer. The international community must also curtail harmful side effects of their actions such as brain drain. There must be greater coordination between national governments, the international community, and private non-state actors in integrating the principles of the MDGs even after their expiration date.

4.1 The future of direct financial aid

MDG 8 (Develop a Global Partnership for Development) sets objectives and targets for developed countries to achieve a global partnership for development by addressing the special needs of LDCs. This can be achieved by developing fair

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[83] Collective Action and Property Rights (CAPRi) (2006). 'Land Rights for African Development: From Knowledge to Action'. E. Mwangi, ed. CAPRi Policy Briefs. Available at http://www.citeulike.org/user/jago/article /3510947 [Accessed 10 July 2011].
[84] Cotula, L. (2011) "Land deals in Africa: What is in the contracts?" Published by the International Institute for Environment and Development (UK) in January 2011.
[85] ibid

trading of financial systems, debt relief for developing nations, and encouraging technology transfer[86]. In this developing nations are not seen as left to achieve the MDGs on their own, but as partners in the developing-developed partnership in reducing poverty.

4.2 The importance of trade in aid

Sound economic policies as well as aid have lifted millions out of extreme poverty, and provided the resources to limit the extent of starvation, diseases, and other visible signs of poverty. It is important to ask why such policies have not succeeded everywhere. Currently, most aid does not actually go to the poorest that need and would benefit from it the most. In addition, aid amounts are dwarfed by the denial of market access for poor country products.

Possible improvements of aid programs beyond 2015 could include the responsibility of the developed countries to support developing countries in the face of global challenges, not only through respecting their Official Development Assistance (ODA) commitments, but also through innovative redistributive funding mechanisms which would generate additional predictive finance and raise the output through a more productive use of aid. In this context the framework must recognize that international aid is only a part of a balanced approach to development, and should be reinforced with trade. This framework must also include mechanisms for mutual accountability, as well as transparency between governments and donors

4.3 The future of non-monetary assistance

Information and communications technologies (ICT) are one of the central pillars to development and play vital role in the MDGs (in particular, MDG 8, subsection F). However, access to ICT should never be considered separately from other MDGs given that development of this sphere depends on such factors as infrastructure, education, in turn, contributing to the attainment of these MDGs.

Evidence shows that in the last decade or so, improvement in the ICT sector can be effective when used towards realizing the MDGs. For example, by the end of 2009 more than 30 per cent of the population of sub-Saharan Africa had access to mobile phones (UNDP, 2011). More than 2 billion people have access to the Internet, and broadband services, by the end of 2010 (UN, 2011).

However, it should be noted that ICT is unevenly distributed worldwide with the highest usage rates being in developed regions (72 per cent by the end of 2010 - UN, 2011) and lowest usage in regions such as in sub-Saharan Africa, Southern Asia, Oceania (21 per cent by the end of 2010, UN, 2011a). MDG 8, subsection F, is expected to be met by 2015 only in five of nine key regions (UN, 2011a).

It is essential that internet access and speed are significantly increased in the least developed regions of the world if they are to play a competitive role in global trade. For this, technology transfer from developed countries is essential. We suggest that focus should be placed in the cooperation of developing regions with multinational corporations, which mainly originate from developed countries, in order to allow effective exchange of expertise in the sphere of ICT.

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[86] United Nations Millennium Development Goals

This working group therefore proposes that cooperation be strengthened between governments, the private sector and leaders of the world telecommunication markets in particular, in order to increase accessibility of such technologies. The UN and related organizations could serve as liaison bodies in this matter. There should also be greater promotion of technological literacy by introducing and/or enhancing existing curricula in schools. Finally, the establishment of an international educational programme under supervision of the UN and/or International Telecommunications Union (ITU) which will allow students from developing countries to obtain ICT related degrees in top universities specialising in the field.

4.4 The need to eliminate harmful policies

Brain drain is particularly hampering developing countries in achieving health-related MDGs. Without a sufficient number of health workers, developing countries are unlikely to be able to reduce child mortality, improve maternal health, and combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases. Faced with high returns in developed countries, many of the countries have been experiencing shortage of much needed professionals. For instance, half of Ghanaian nurses have migrated to Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States in the past ten years.[87]

While developing countries might benefit from the high returns through remittances, money does not compensate or replace the role of health workers. The problem is two-fold. Developing countries lack proper governance and resources to maintain the educated professionals at home. It is therefore recommended by this working group that developed countries invest more resources to meet national demand for health workers and reduce dependence on foreign aid and pay more attention to capacity-building when providing aid packages to developing countries so that development will be sustainable. Furthermore developing countries should be allowed to introduce higher tariffs in order to cover the cost of keeping staff and maintaining medical facilities and other much needed services. Finally, countries should facilitate knowledge exchange and transfer so that the quality of health services will improve in developing countries and continue to do so beyond 2015.

4.5 The road ahead

The road ahead will likely be more difficult than the one already travelled. To meet the MDGs by 2015, historic leaps in human development will be required. It is also necessary to call on the private sector in developed and developing countries alike to leverage its financial resources, technology, expertise, networks, and global reach in partnership with governments to help deliver basic services, generate employment, and foster innovation in areas covered by the MDGs.

States should lead by example. As new global development issues arise, it is possible to set goals for all. Developed states must challenge themselves through setting their own goals. Development should be relative and progressive. Developed states still have plenty of room for improvement and setting separate, as well as all encompassing, goals past 2015 will provide unilateralism and balance in global development.

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[87] Bulletin of the World Health Organisation (February 2005), http://www.who.int/bulletin/volumes/83/2/news.pdf, p.85. Accessed on 19.07.11.

V. REGIONAL TRADE AND AGREEMENTS (RTAs)

Since 1990, the number of RTAs has increased by a factor of eight, reaching 489 in May 2011. Currently, nearly every country belongs to at least one RTA. According to a recent World Bank report, the average number of RTAs a single country belongs to is six. For industrialised countries, the equivalent figure is 13 (WTO, 2011). This pattern of RTAs, where developed countries participate in bilateral preferential trade agreements with several developing countries has been described by many commentators as a "hub and spoke" trade arrangement.

As a result of this arrangement, developed country access to developing country markets has been accentuated. However, although developing country access to some developed country markets has also been increased, the range of goods and services they are trading with developed countries remains limited (IMF, 2010). The growth in trade and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) that RTAs have promoted has often not been accompanied by a growth in developing country capacity for innovation and original equipment manufacturing. These two factors are essential for the diversification of their economies, the creation of skilled employment and the fostering of domestic industries that contribute significantly towards value addition across the global production chain.

In the context of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), for example, Mexico developed an extensive *maquiladora* industry that focused upon the assembly of parts from United States and Canadian suppliers for export to the United States and Canada. As a result, the creation of skilled employment has been limited, as has the country's contribution to value addition. Indeed, Mexico has experienced the slowest rate of GDP growth out of the three countries since the start of NAFTA. Overall, spill over of technology, managerial expertise and other forms of knowledge essential for value addition have been limited, primarily as a result of the inadequate enforcement of Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs), which discourages developed country firms from sharing intellectual property and a lack of a highly skilled labour force and infrastructure to adequately implement new technologies or management techniques.

Negotiating the terms of trade agreements

Therefore, it is the opinion of this group that if Free Trade Arrangements (FTAs) are to be conducive to the long term development of countries involved in bilateral or multilateral trade arrangements, there must be bilateral and multilateral collaboration to ensure compatibility in IPR law across all countries involved in the trade agreement, cooperation in the adequate enforcement of IPRs, partnerships between higher education institutions within the countries involved to facilitate the transfer of knowledge and an improvement in developing country firms' absorptive capacity. This way the presence of developed country firms is more likely to yield technological spillovers and induce the creation of skilled employment.

In participating in bilateral preferential trade agreements with so many different developed countries, many developing countries must also contend with a complex myriad of trade conditions and regulations that they often lack resources to administer and subsequently ensure they can obtain the most favourable terms of trade for their development. Supranational organizations such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Trade Organization (WTO) should assist developing countries

in devising integrated foreign trade arrangements, satisfying the nexus of conditionality each bilateral preferential trade agreement entails.

These organizations should also support developing countries in bargaining for better terms of trade from advanced and emerging market economies, particularly in textiles and agriculture. It is especially in these sectors that developing countries still have to pay extortionate tariffs, which hinders their states' capacity to fund social welfare programs, improvements in infrastructure, education and health, as well as policies to strengthen their manufacturing and services base.

Improvements to the terms of trade developing countries face should be accompanied by an increase in developmental aid from developed countries. Only five countries (Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Luxembourg and Netherlands) have fulfilled their promise of donating 0.7 per cent or more of their GDP to developing countries. This would facilitate the development of infrastructure and the capacity of developing country states to finance and promote improvements to their manufacturing and services bases.

Anti-dumping legislation should also accompany any reform to the terms of trade, as this would prevent developing countries from being flooded with cheap, subsidized developed country goods. Finally, it is essential to ensure that rural areas are also integrated within regional trade agreements. For this, effective linkages programs and infrastructural improvements are essential.

South-South regional trade agreements

The global competitiveness of developing country industries can also be promoted through South-South regional trade agreements. Countries from a specific region of the world could for example, each specialize in the production of particular components of high value added modules or systems, that can be traded with the rest of the world. For this to work, the presence of regional governance institutions that have the capacity to coordinate a single, non-conflicting set of policies that can be implemented across all member countries is essential. These organizations must be representative of the interests of every member country involved and any policies that are implemented must be the result of consensus amongst member nations.

It is also important that these supranational institutions represent the interests of not only governments, but also Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), higher education institutions and key industry groups. Promoting political harmony between countries involved is also essential. Political disputes between the governments of Colombia and Venezuela, for example, led to the free trade agreement that had been in place between the two countries being annulled and to trade between the two being blocked temporarily, with adverse consequences for both countries' industries.

Targets and sets of policies must be subject to frequent evaluation to ensure they are adhered to throughout the region and that they can adapt to varying patterns of demand and external economic shocks. This framework is still some way from being achieved in much of Africa, Latin America and South East Asia, where there are still a myriad of overlapping RTAs, which often outline conflicting sets of policies. These policies have not succeeded in consolidating the interests of all member countries involved. The consolidation of these into a smaller number of RTAs with clearly defined objectives that account for the interests of all member countries is essential.

Fiscal stability and collaboration

Another key barrier to the effective operation of RTAs has been the lack of monetary and fiscal stability and collaboration between member states in ensuring so. Greater collaboration between member states and financial institutions in sustaining stable exchange rates and reducing disparities in inflation and interest rates is of paramount importance. This would encourage member countries to maximise trade between each other. With assistance from the IMF, member countries should also be able to support one another when one suffers from an economic crisis, providing it with financial assistance to prevent the collapse of their economies and sustain regional stability and competitiveness.

The additional conditions we believe need to be met for regional integration to work are that economic integration must be accompanied by the free movement of individuals between member countries, such that demands for labour in specific industries and sectors can be promptly responded to. There must also be protection of IPRs to ensure firms and individuals are incentivised to share information and collective improvements in infrastructure to facilitate trade.

VI. ADDRESSING DEBT REDUCTION ISSUES BEYOND 2015

6.1 New challenges ahead

LDCs have generally grown faster than other developing countries, while their debt burden has increased significantly. Indeed FDI has increased, but most of it was concentrated on six oil producing countries. Exports have increased as well, but the results from trade liberalization suggest that imports have risen faster than exports.

Alongside this poverty rates still remain high, as almost 50 per cent of the population live on less than 1$ a day. And although ODA from developed countries has risen as well, a large number of donors still have not met the target of 0.20 per cent of their respective GDPs. Results in infrastructure and communication are improving slowly, although access to new technology is more than essential. Improvements are also needed in education. Concerning the population, high growth rates and low average life expectancy dominate. Many improvements in the health sector are required, since the majority of the population lives under poor housing and hygiene conditions.[88]

Therefore a New International Development Architecture (NIDA) is of exceptional importance so that LDCs follow new development paths. Consequently, financial aid provided to LDCs should have a twofold function, playing a humanitarian as well as a developmental role. Moreover, the trade associated with LDCs should adopt a more preferential character. Simultaneously, diversification of these economies will help to avoid Dutch disease effects, while access to technology and innovation should account for economic progress and development. Finally, technical and financial assistance for climate change adaptation and mitigation, as well as deepening of regional integration through RTAs are supposed to stimulate detachment from underdevelopment.[89]

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[88] http://www.un.org/ohrlld, The Facts About Least Developed Countries.
[89] UNCTAD, Towards a New International Development Architecture for LDCs, p.30-39.

As a result, globalization should pave a way which avoids old mistakes being repeated and reflects particular characteristics in order to avoid creating more poverty and instability, enabling LDCs to graduate from this group.[90]

6.2 A global partnership for development

Building a global partnership for development (MDG 8) requires a medium to long-term commitment from both LDCs and wealthy nations. For this reason, there is a pressing need to start dealing comprehensively with both domestic and external debts of Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPCs). Debt issues can severely impact a country's economy and because high levels of external debt can be a major impediment to economic development[91] in many LDCs, external debt management (DeM) must be seen as a critical challenge to the global fight against poverty.

While no consensus has been reached among rich nations and International Economic Institutions (IEIs) on the definition of debt sustainability, all should recognise the critical role that must be played by LDCs in their own economic socioeconomic development. In other words, it is our belief that development policies at large, and DeM in particular, must support these countries through a grown-up partnership free of paternalism and unilaterally imposed conditionality.

The external debt burdens of many LDCs share a commonality: macroeconomic problems and the quality of governance and institutions both require sound public debt management as well as sound macroeconomic policy. Because public debt problems generate risks to the financial stability of a country, both these elements are essential to foster market confidence[92].

First, inappropriate macroeconomic policies need to be replaced by better poverty-oriented development strategies. Indeed, we believe in debt sustainability mechanisms that promote human development. As supporters of this approach we advocate a variety of policy prescriptions, reflecting the needs of the populations at stake. Moreover, as underlined by the World Bank and the IMF, DeM capacities should be strengthened and HIPCs should adopt prudent policies on public sector borrowing[93].

Second, corruption has come to be recognized as a major challenge for lots of developing countries[94]. Instead of eulogising the concerned governments on the need to reduce corruption, macroeconomic policies should i) highlight the fact that corruption has two interdependent sides: supply and demand; ii) focus on tax policy as way to fight corruption, bribery and fraud.

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[90] J. Stiglitz, Globalisation and its discontents, p.247-252.

[91] BAUMOL, W., BLINDER, A., Macroeconomics: Principles and Policy, Eleventh Edition, South-Western Cengage Learning, Mason, OH, 2009, p. 308.

[92] SHIRAI, Sayuri (2005), "External Debt Management. Classification of External Debt Crisis and Indicators," Presentation to the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, http://www.unescap.org/pdd/Debt/docs/nationalwshop/SriLanka/shirai_1.ppt

[93] World Bank (2010), "Crisis preparedness and debt management in low income countries: strengthening institutions and policy frameworks," Policy Research Working Paper no. WPS5372, http://econ.worldbank.org/external/default/main?pagePK=64165259&piPK=64165421&theSitePK=469372&menuPK=64216926&entityID=000158349_20100721133631

[94] STIGLITZ, Joseph E., "Development-Oriented Tax Policy," in Taxation in Developing Countries: Six Case Studies and Policy Implications, Roger Gordon, eds., Columbia University Press, July 2010, p. 11.

Finally, the external debt burden discourages both domestic and direct foreign investments[95] and is crushing HIPCs. Long promoted development policies have not delivered the benefits that they promised. The post-2015 period must be marked by the recognition of the need for a renewed international development infrastructure that redefines external debt sustainability at a level of debt that allows a country (or LDC) to achieve both economic and social development.

6.3 Responsibility of developed countries in debt relief of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs)

As we continue to approach 2015, the fact remains that the overwhelming debt of several LDCs is a determining delaying factor in the achievement of the MDGs. While it is true that improved state governance in LDCs is key for a better distribution of resources, developed countries need to work with LDCs to ensure that not all money is allocated to debt alleviation. Doing so would further increase the number of those suffering from poverty.

We must recognize and congratulate developed Member States of the United Nations for, as of July 2011, having increased net aid disbursements of 0.32 per cent of developed countries' combined national income. However, we must also reproach that, as shown in the Millennium Development Goals Report 2011, out of US$130 billion G8 projected aid for LDCs for 2010, there was still a shortfall of US$19 billion. This has a direct negative consequence in the capacity of the latter to reduce their debt, hence the difficulty to achieve the respective MDGs.

If we are to better address this issue beyond 2015, developed countries must commit even more seriously to the aid they promise, to the extent of their possibilities. Complete debt cancellation may be undesirable, given the fact that countries may find it difficult to borrow again, or at least at interest rates that do not compromise their long term development. It is hoped that by addressing the other goals, developing countries' ability to pay back their debts and borrow at low interests rates will be increased.

6.4 A better role for Bretton Wood's institutions

Unbearable debts have progressively been recognized as an indenture on the capability of poor countries to develop sustainably and to diminish poverty. In response, just over two years ago, the IMF and the World Bank introduced new strategies in order to reduce poverty in the third-world countries through the HIPCs.

The HIPC initiative was designed through an aggregate of substantial debt relief and vital policy reform, to help poor countries reduce their external debt to sustainable levels. So it will allow them to focus on long-term poverty reduction and economic growth. However, some argue that the loan policies of IMF and World Bank are the causes of increasing poverty in Africa and reducing the chance of achieving the MDGs by 2015.[96]

Their policies in Africa have been heavily criticized in recent years because most of the time, they result in poverty. Also, the IMF and the World Bank's policies are quite different from how they were initially intended. The IMF in particular was initially

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[95] Gibson, C., Andersson, K., Ostrom, E., Shivakumar, S., The Samaritan's Dilemma : The Political Economy of Development Aid, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2005, p. 116.
[96] http://www.ipc-undp.org/pub/IPCPolicyResearchBrief003.pdf Privatising Basic Utilities in. Sub-Saharan Africa: The MDG Impacts

founded to promote steady economic growth and full employment by
offering unconditional loans to economies in crisis, and to establish mechanisms to
stabilize exchange rates and facilitate currency exchange.

Moreover, the lack of international investment and poor governance on the ground has
led some African countries in making very little progress towards the MDG targets. For
that reason these countries are still dependent on funding from the IMF.[97]

6.5 Debt relief through multilateral development diplomacy

Multilateral Development Diplomacy (MDD) between LDCs can increase investment
and development opportunities, the export of goods and services, and create effective
integration into the multilateral trading system. This would allow LDCs to benefit from
liberalized trade and increased market access. To achieve this, the initiative is aimed at
assisting LDCs in overcoming their supply-side constraints, building their economic
infrastructure and increasing their competitiveness[99].By using the initiative LDCs can
build a network which will provide substantive and technical services in debt
management and sustainability to reduce their debt from international institutions.

Indeed, an MDD initiative between LDCs can be a very good instrument for trade,
investment and development. At the same time MDD must encourage technological
transfer between regional LDCs in bilateral and multilateral ways. However, if the
market is bigger then it is better to have regional market cooperation and RTAs between
LDCs. Additionally Preference Trade Agreements (PTA) between LDCs, with advice
and help from the IMF and World Bank are important as they can be the building blocks
of trade and can reduce debt in participating countries.

Numerous stakeholders have a place in diplomacy. At the national level, the media,
political or economic groups and entities, organisations and lobbies working for a single
or complex goal will try to inform and form public opinion and vie to be heard and
influence events. At the multilateral level, the majority of stakeholders are groups of
national stakeholders, yet multinational enterprises, global media concerns, and private
agencies entrusted with specific tasks by the international community also play a role.

Some stakeholders have a recognised status as NGOs; others act in a legal void. All are
intent on ensuring that their concerns are taken into consideration in diplomatic
interaction, bilateral as well as multilateral. If they are frustrated in this, they may resort
to various kinds of non-diplomatic action, including non-violent and violent pressure[100].
All stakeholders should be brought closer and have the same direction in terms of
economic growth and social development.

The collaboration of NGOs and other stakeholders can prove to be powerful and
influential, especially when a collective opinion is held. Because of the success of this

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[97] http://www.globalissues.org/article/35/foreign-aid-development-assistance
[99] Aid for Trade- Background note on the Third Global Review Geneva, 18-19 July 2011
http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/devel_e/a4t_e/global_review11_e.htm
[100] Kappeler D. and Dumitriu P. - New Developments in Multilateral Diplomacy
http://campus.diplomacy.edu/lms/ClassNav.asp?IDclass=233

new approach, the whole subject of multistakeholder diplomacy is now receiving greater attention[101].

Multi-track diplomacy (MtD) uses practices that support the traditional negotiation process and some of its actors. It takes place outside the usual diplomatic fora and may include both diplomats acting in unofficial capacities and non-diplomats such as specialists in various fields and representatives of private sector enterprises. They may meet privately in fora set up for that purpose or under the auspices of scientific or academic institutions[102].

MDD must promote development policies, regional trade and investment cooperation to deliver the growth in LDCs and reduce the external debt sustainably beyond 2015. Every country must consider all aspects discussed above, as only in this way they will have a sustainable growth that will lead to progress in economic and social development.

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[102] Ibid.

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PART III: ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Report of the Working Group on Environmental Issues

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CFL	**Compact Fluorescent Limp**
CHP	**Combined heat and energy plants**
CO2	**Carbon Dioxide**
Etc.	**Etcetera**
For ex.	**For example**
IEA	**International Energy Agency**
ISO	**International Organization for Standardization**
MSW	**Municipal Solid Waste**
MDG(s)	**Millennium Development Goal(s)**
N.B.	**Nota Bene**
NGO	**Non Governmental Organization**
PV	**Photovoltaic**
UN	**United Nations**
UNEP	**United Nations Environment Program**
UK	**United Kingdom**
WHO	**World Health Organization**
WTO	**Word Trade Organization**
WWF	**World Wildlife Fund**

I. INTRODUCTION

There are many things that do not make sense. Did you for example know that one ton of mobile phones contain 30 to 50 times more gold than one ton of African gold ores?[103] Or that the richest 20 percentile of the world's population – about 1.4 billion people – consume over 80 per cent of global output, or 60 times more than the poorest 20 percentile?[104]

We cannot longer ignore the unsustainable way we live. Given the fact that we are already over-using Earth's capacities, it is evident that consumption patterns need to change. In fact, if everyone lived the lifestyle of the average American we would need five planets.[105] The most obvious risk is the eventual overshoot and collapse of humankind due to lack of resources.

First of all, our life is directly dependant on a healthy environment. Especially the poor among us are most directly exposed to environmental changes. Second of all, concern for the environment is often considered to be a luxury confined to the rich. With a fast-growing population and limited natural resources, our conflict-ridden world inhabits millions of people dying out of poverty.[106] In order to develop higher standards of living, it is evident that our perceptions of leading a "wealthy" life need to change. In this paper we will argue that an important step is to start sensing our impact on Earth, and become aware of how important nature is in our daily lives.

The idea of systematically reducing global poverty has been circulating in the international community ever since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was signed. The 20th century has marked some significant attempts to achieve this.[107] However, human development goes hand in hand with environmental protection, and one cannot be achieved without the other.

Here, the Earth Summit at Rio in 1992 contributed significantly to increasing public awareness concerning the intimate link between the environment and poverty, as well as the challenges we all face because of our fast degrading environment.[108] The Rio Declaration proves that there is now an international consensus that real changes cannot be achieved by governments alone without the participation of citizens. We have an important role to play in our future, and as we will see; our rights are real.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are the most recent set of concrete goals to reduce poverty. This set of eight interlinked goals, divided into more substantial targets which are to be achieved by 2015, illustrate the emergence of a global consciousness in which people all over the world are seen as living in a single

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[103] Von Weizsäcker 2011 – Lecture held at the Oslo Sustainability Summit 2011. http://www.sum.uio.no/oss/videos/
[104] Munasinghe 2011: http://www.mohanmunasinghe.com/pdf/Island-MCG-1Feb20112.pdf
[105] Footprint network 2011, Online: http://www.footprintnetwork.org/en/index.php/GFN/page/basics_introduction/ Retrieved 19.07.2011.
[106] Approximately 25'000 people die every die of hunger, or hunger related causes. See Hunger and World Poverty Resources: United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), Oxfam, UNICEF at www.poverty.com.
[107] Hulme, David, "The Making of the Millennium Development: Human Development Meets Results-based Management In an Imperfect World" (December 5, 2007), Brooks World Poverty Institute Working Paper, No.16
[108] Ibid.

social space and the nature of their well-being is compared.[109] In the spirit of the Rio Summit, MDG 7 aims specifically to ensure environmental sustainability.[110] It is a given fact that our habitat is rapidly deteriorating, and it is commonly acknowledged that none of the other MDGs can be achieved and sustained without equally ensuring environmental sustainability.

The solution is simple. We have unlimited opportunities to promote and protect our environment. Engaging in the current global environmental movement, we can tap into a world of knowledge concerning the human impact and the use of new technologies, and eventually reshape the way in which we interact with our environment. The first part of our report will therefore focus on the interaction between human development and the environment. It is fundamental to keep on questioning this interaction.

The challenge, both now and after 2015, is to manage development in a manner which puts less strain on the environment. The second part of this paper will address the topic from three angles, namely business and tourism, engineers and architects. We are not only citizens with democratic rights; we are consumers, tourists and perhaps one day business men. By renting or buying a house, we are actively involved in important urban planning and architectural issues. By using energy to support our life-style, our activities touch upon the relationship between engineering and the environment.... and the list goes on.

Hopefully, the following report will provide a source of inspiration for all of us to start sensing the nature in and of our actions.

II. PART I

2.1 Understanding the link between environment and development

Humans depend on nature, which provides us with many different services called ecosystem services. These services are the products of complex relationships between various components of biodiversity (such as genes, species and ecosystems). The benefits we get from nature come in many forms, from the provision of food, water and clean air to the joy of watching a wild animal. They are the foundations of our daily lives and underpin our well-being.[111]

Yet, we often do not grasp the link between environment and human well-being and consider the need to protect the natural environment as incompatible or even opposed to our development objectives. Therefore, we are currently neither giving nature its right value, nor understanding the trade-offs we make when we allow unbridled economic gain without taking environmental concerns into account. Due to our current lifestyle, species go extinct more than a thousand times faster than the natural

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[109] Charles Gore, UNCTAD, quoted in « The MDGs post 2015 » by Ellen Lammers, 2009, available at http://www.thebrokeronline.eu/en/Magazine/articles/The-MDGs-post-2015#f4 (consulted on 16.07.2011)

[110] Notably through integrating principles of sustainable development into country policies and programs, reversing loss of environmental resources, reducing biodiversity loss, reducing by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation and significantly improving the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers.

[111] Sukhdev, P., 2008. The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity – an interim report. [Online] Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/economics/pdf/teeb_report.pdf [Consulted 21 July 2011]

rates. Recent international studies have shown that 60 per cent of the world's ecosystem services are degraded to the point where they may no longer be able to provide us with their benefits.[112]

The current overexploitation of nature is problematic in two ways. First in that it can create serious impacts on human life, such as the emergence of new diseases, sudden changes in water quality or the collapse of important food sources such as fisheries. In many parts of the world, rising ocean temperatures induced by anthropic climate change have caused the large-scale death of coral reefs, indirectly reducing the fish stocks of the region and threatening the livelihoods of many fishermen.

Second, the burden created by the degradation of our global environment is heavier on the world's poorest and most vulnerable populations who depend on ecosystem services for their survival. With very few alternative income sources, their livelihood is based on hunting, fishing and small-scale agriculture which all depend on the natural environment.[113]

Environmental sustainability affects us all and as such presents a huge challenge that humanity has to face in the upcoming years. Understanding the link between the way we act and the environmental degradation we face every day is very important. As to us, we truly believe that well-aware people will act as great managers of their environment and the goods and services it delivers them.

2.2 Environment and poverty

Poverty and the environment are inextricably linked. Environmentally unsustainable resource use is a threat to economic development as it reduces the social and economic benefits generated. Investing in sound and equitable environmental management makes good economic sense and is essential to fight poverty because people in developing countries depend directly on natural resources (e.g. fisheries, pastures, forests) to earn their livelihoods and are more vulnerable to environmental hazards.

In Cambodia fuel wood, fishing and other resources provided by mangroves contributed 20 to 58 per cent of household incomes, with heavier reliance amongst poorer households. Studies show that nearly 1.1 billion people worldwide depend on forests for their livelihoods.[114] Environmental assets make up a far larger share of national wealth in developing countries than in high-income countries. A World Bank study estimates that environmental wealth accounts for 26 percent of the total wealth of low-income countries, versus 13 percent of wealth in middle-income countries and only 2 per cent of wealth in OECD countries.[115]

Investing in environmental management can generate large benefits for the poor and for enhancing overall growth in developing economies. In South Africa, traditional

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[112] World Resources Institute, 2005. Ecosystems and human Well-being: Biodiversity synthesis, World Resources Institute. [Online] Available at: Ecosystems and human Well-being: Biodiversity synthesis [Consulted 21 July 2011]

[113] UNEP – United Nations Environment Programme, 2007. Global Environment Outlook 4: environment for development. Stevenage UK: Earthprint Limited

[114] UN Millennium Project, 2005. Investing in Development: A Practical Plan to Achieve the Millenium Development Goals – Overview, London: Earthscan

[115] Hamilton, K (ed), Ruta, G., Markandya, S., Pedroso, P., Silva, 2005. Where is the Wealth of Nations? Measuring Capital for the 21st Century. Washington DC: World Bank Publications

medicine is the preferred primary health care choice for about 70 per cent of people, and every year 28 million South Africans use about 19 500 tons of medicinal plant material.[116] Protecting and restoring natural ecosystems will provide economic, recreational and life-sustaining benefits to the millions of people who depend on its future health.

Most developing countries have abundant renewable energy resources such as sun, wind and Earth's heat (it is estimated that developing countries have more than half of global renewable power capacity). By focusing on these renewable energy sources these countries would not only reduce their dependence on expensive foreign fuel imports, they also wouldn't be as exposed to volatile prices on the oil market and at the same time protect the environment. Refugees in Nepal and communities in Madagascar are using parabolic solar cookers as an alternative of cooking and storing electricity.

Of course, increased investment in environmental management alone is not enough. To be effective, investment must be accompanied by the empowerment of communities, local governments and the private sector to lead local development efforts.

2.3 Environment and health

The biophysical and ecological systems of the natural environment are fundamental to human health. Increasingly, human activities are disturbing both the structure and functions of ecosystems and altering native biodiversity.

These disturbances have consequences for human infectious diseases. And the resulting health risks will particularly affect vulnerable and poorly resourced populations. Therefore one cannot separate environmental considerations from health considerations: it is estimated that 24 per cent of current diseases in the world can be attributed to environmental degradation and in the case of diseases suffered by children less than five years old, an unhealthy environment is considered a major risk factor.[117] Environment and health considerations include the direct pathological effects of chemicals, radiation and some biological agents, and the effects (often indirect) on health and well-being of the physical, psychological, social and aesthetics, which includes housing, urban development, land use and transport.[118]

In recent decades, the pressure posed by humankind on the environment has become increasingly strong. If accompanied by an improvement in the material situation of part of the population, this pressure has led to an increasing environmental degradation that has affected human health. Urban pollution, for example, greatly increases the prevalence of respiratory and cardiovascular disease. The severity of environmental threats to health is made evident in the progression of diseases of rich countries: cancer and respiratory and cardiovascular diseases are rising sharply.[119] In

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[116] MACASKILL, C, 2011., The National Agricultural Directory 2011, Pretoria: Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of the Republic of South Africa.

[117] WHO – World Health Organization, 2002. Healthy Environment for Children - Initiating an Alliance for Action. Geneva: World Health Organization

[118] WHO – World Health Organization, 1990. Environment and Health - The European Charter and Commentary. Copenhagen: World Health Organization.

[119] Hevrier, M.P., 2007. « L'environnement et la santé humaine. Garantir la santé et le bien-être des êtres vivants, humains et non humains, qui occupent un territoire commun », in Gagnon, C. (ed.) & Arth, E. 2008, Guide québécois pour des agendas 21 locaux : application territoriales de

addition, changes in habitat, such as the clearing of forests to establish villages, can bring together people with forest organisms, increasing the risk for infectious diseases. For another example the encroachment of humans on tropical forests, for example, can increase exposure to Aedes mosquitoes and the transmission of yellow fever.[120]

Reducing health problems cannot be done if we continue to degrade our environment. Therefore, prevention of health problems through better behaviour towards the environment, rather than just treating diseases and conditions once born, is an urgent solution because not only the quality of human life is at stake, but also the ecological chain in its entirety.[121]

2.4 Environment and nutrition

In order to lead a normal healthy life, a human being needs, on average, about 2 000 to 2 200 calories per day.[122] The world's agricultural production would normally feed all people of the Earth; and in fact each one of them could even enjoy a total of 2 700 calories per day, which is higher than the required amount.

However, more than 1 billion individuals suffer today from hunger across the world. 900 000 persons do not have access to regular water supply. 5 000 children die per day because of diarrhoea caused by dirty water. Global demand for food is estimated to double by 2050.[123]

With the climate changing and the environment being deformed, the impact on nutrition and water is alarming, especially for developing countries where the people depend directly on nature to satisfy their hunger and thirst. In addition, agriculture is being affected by the pesticides and chemicals discarded in a hazardous way, poisoning the plants, their food, as well as the underground water supplies.

Pollution resulting from industrialization also affects water, fisheries (carrying an important amount of toxicity) but most importantly, pollution is a key to climate change, which tempers with the seasons and paves the way to desertification. Other factors to contend with include forests rapidly disappearing and thereby threatening the biodiversity that resides in every tree and helps pollinate seeds, hence catalyzing food production.

Today, we run in a vicious circle, with everything being interlinked and relatively affected. But the clock is ticking and tomorrow belongs to the young generation. Today, we start working for a better future where no human being would suffer from hunger or thirst. By protecting the environment, we will feed a child, a family, a country, a continent, and then the whole world. By letting things go in a natural way,

développement durable viable. [Online] Available at : http://www.a211.qc.ca/9583_fr.html [Consulted 21 July 2011]

[120] Chivian, E., 2002. Biodiversity: Its Importance to Human Health - Interim Executive Summary. Harvard: Center for Health and the Global Environment

[121] WHO – World Health Organization, 2005. Millenium Ecosystem Assessment – Ecosystem and Human Well-Being, Health Synthesis, Washington: World Resource Institute

[122] FAO - Food and Agriculture Organization, 2002., Diet, Nutrition and the Prevention of Chronic Diseases, Geneva: World Health Organization.

[123] WHO - World Health Organization, 2009. Diarrhoeal disease - fact sheet N°330, [online], Available at <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs330/en/index.html>, [Accessed on 21 July 2011]

we would be saving an African one-year-old or an Asian old woman and thereby giving them hope.

But how do we do that? It's where we work, what we do, how we behave towards nature and the environment. It's how protective we are of the forests, the ecosystems, and everything that is living. Our behaviour could save a person. It starts today.

2.5   Environment and gender

Although at first glance the relationship between humans and their environment seems to be gender-blind, upon closer examination, one realizes that this relationship is not neutral. Indeed, the often dissimilar roles occupied by men and women in our societies means that they will be differently impacted by environmental changes. These various roles (e.g. in a community, in a family) means that they have different power and priorities over natural resources and that they will not interact with the environment in the same manner[124].

In all societies, both men and women are agents of environmental change. However, their contributions do not always receive equal recognition. In most developing countries for example, women are responsible for water and waste management but due to their restricted access to political positions, the waste management systems are often designed by men – who do not necessarily take into account the knowledge, the views and the needs of the women[125]. Knowing the extent of interactions between women and their environment, ignoring their opinion not only means an increased vulnerability on the side of women when an environmental disaster happens, but also the loss of many chances to better manage our natural resources.

If environmental degradation has severe consequences for all human beings, it often affects very severely the most vulnerable people (namely women and children, who constitute a large proportion of the world's poor). Poor village women for example, are increasingly affected by environmental degradation which increases the distance they have to walk every day in search of fuel, fodder or water[126].

However, women are not mere victims of environmental degradation. They can play a key role in natural resources management[127]. In countries where they have a central role in food production, educating women to various types of agricultural practice can, for example, contribute significantly to mitigation and adaptation to climate change. Reaching out to both women and men, recognizing their different roles and promoting equal opportunities not only reduce women vulnerability to environmental changes, but it also can help us to improve the resilience of our societies.

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[124] OESC - Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2002. Liens entre pauvreté, environnement et égalité homme-femme, Paris: OESC.
[125] Ibidem.
[126] UNEP – United Nations Environment Programme, 2007. Global Environment Outlook 4: environment for development, Stevenage: Earthprint limited.
[127] OSCE – Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, 2009. Gender and Environment - A guide to the integration of gender aspects in the OSCE's environmental projects, Vienna: OSCE's Office of the Secretary General.

PART II

3.1 Changing consumption and production patterns to meet MDG 7

Individually and together, as politicians, businesses, shoppers, tourists, we can all work to achieve the ambitions of MDG 7, namely ensuring environmental sustainability. If we all begin to make some small changes in our lives, then we can together help to protect the environment today and into the future.

3.1.1 States

Since the consequences of climate change or other environmental degradation problems do not recognize states' boundaries[128], it should not take us long to realize the absolute urgency of international cooperation[129]. Indeed, there was a failure in reaching agreement in the Copenhagen Summit in 2009[130], however all people and especially we, the youth, took it under serious consideration and even went out on demonstrations supported by wide media coverage. [131]. So what would young people do in order to change our generation's mindset if they were governors for a day? First, a change of mindset would obviously imply some alterations to a country's educational policy, ideally, but not necessarily on a curriculum basis and still on a much broader lifelong learning approach[132].

On the other hand, some lessons learnt by previous generations suggest to governments that people respond to incentives[133]. Translated into specific policies, there should be certain legislative regulations in favour of environmentally and human friendly economic and business activities[134]. Legislatively, following the example of Greece, we may include our right to a healthy environment within our country's constitution[135]. Fiscally, perhaps follow Australia's example by taxing CO_2 emissions in order to discourage polluting businesses and raise money for investment in innovative, environmentally efficient infrastructure?[136]

But even if there is a strong will to change would it be fair for developing states? Ecology in practice is frankly an expensive habit with current technology, but there are already many success stories which show encouraging signs. Were you aware of the

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[128] Samiotis, G., D., Tsaltas, g., i., 1990. International Environmental Protection, Volume I, International Policy and Environmental Law. Athens: Papazisis Publications.
[129] Guardian, 2009 [online] available at:
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2009/dec/18/copenhagen-deal> [accessed 16/07/2011]
[130] Dailymotion, 2010. [online] available at: http://www.dailymotion.com/video/xbt6qf_aycc-a-message-to-world-leaders-fro_news [accessed 16/07/2011]
[131] UNESCO, 2007. The UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD – 2005 – 2014), The First Two Years, Report available at:
http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0015/001540/154093e.pdf [accessed 16/07/2011]
[132] Easterly, W., 2001. The Elusive Quest for Growth: Economists' Adventures and Misadventures in the Tropics. USA: The MIT Press.
[133] Bithas, K., 2003. The Economics of the Environmental Protection. Athens: Publications Typothito – Gutenberg.
Constitution of the Hellenic Republic, 1975/86/2001/2008. Article 24.
[134] Reuters, 2011. [online] available at: <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/07/11/us-australia-carbon-idUSTRE7690C520110711> [accessed 16/07/2011]
[135] UNEP, 2010. Green Economy Developing Countries Success Stories. Report available at:
<http://www.unep.org/pdf/GreenEconomy_SuccessStories.pdf> [accessed 16/07/2011]
[136] Sustainable Business Performance. 2010. [online] available
at: <http://www.sustainbusper.com/plastic-bag-levy-ireland> [accessed 16/07/2011]

fact that the Republic of Ireland introduced a 15 cents per bag tax on plastic shopping bags in 2004 leading to a more than 90 per cent reduction in the use of plastic bags in the country and raising millions of Euros in revenues? Well, now we are all aware of all of it. So, what are we going to do about it?

3.1.2   Businesses and producers

Think about this: One plastic bag can cause a world of damage. Its disposal normally means the bag would eventually end up floating around in the oceans where they starve, choke, strangle and kill fish, coral and other aquatic animals, especially turtles who mistake them for food. They take months to hundreds of years to breakdown and as they decompose, toxic bits seep into soil, rivers, lakes and oceans. The United States Environmental Protection Agency in 2001 claimed that between 500 billion and a trillion plastic bags are consumed worldwide each year. So if one plastic bag can do so much damage, what about the billions consumed each year?

What about paper bags? Are they better? The paper bags businesses package purchases in are known as "kraft paper." The toxic chemicals in the process used to manufacture kraft paper contribute to air and water pollution, and acid rain. In addition, it takes almost four times as much energy, and twenty times as much fresh water to produce a paper bag than it does to produce a plastic bag. What's more, paper bags are made from trees, so there is an impact on our forests[137]. Around 13 million hectares of forest were converted to other uses or lost through natural causes each year in the last decade.[138]

The type of packaging of products is also a factor to be considered. Agricultural emissions of methane and nitrous oxide, collectively accounting for over 90 per cent of agricultural green house gases, grew by 17 per cent between 1990 and 2005 and are estimated to rise by 35 to 60 per cent by 2030. Industrial agriculture uses more fertilizers and pesticides than it did 40 years ago[139].In manufacturing, the use of conventional technology and processes also contributes to environmental degradation. Manufacturing industries and construction accounted for 20 per cent of global CO_2 emissions in 2008.[140]

What can businesses and industries do?

Advocate recycling to customers. Using paper or plastic bags over twenty times reduces consumption by twenty more bags which translates to less trees being cut down, less pollutants in the air, more energy and less of our marine life dying. Banning plastic bags is also an option, and according to www.natural-environment.com banning plastic bags in the UK, would be the equivalent of taking 18,000 cars off the roads each year. How materials are sourced should be considered, and a move towards the manufacture, promotion and selling of products that have been made under environmentally sustainable conditions considered, for example,

[137] Ball, Jeffery. Paper or Plastic? A New Look at the Bag Scourge. Wall Street Journal. June 2009.
[138] Roach, John (for National Geographic News). Are Plastic Grocery Bags Sacking the Environment? National Geographic News. September 2003.
[139] Global Forest Resources Assessment 2010. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations. Rome, 2010
UNCTAD Policy Briefs. Agriculture at the crossroads: Guaranteeing Food Security in a changing global climate. No 18, December 2010.
[140] International Energy Agency (IEA). CO2 Emissions from fuel combustion Highlights. 2010 Edition. OECD/IEA 2010.

houses built with wood from environmentally sustainable forests, or biodegradable product packaging.

Investments in the generation and use of sustainable production systems and green technology are also important and allow products to be manufactured in environmentally friendly ways, offering the potential to reduce CO2 emissions. Organisations and policies which encourage environmentally sustainable activities and projects could also be promoted and the forestation and promotion of natural expansion of forests protects biodiversity, absorbs carbon, and provides a wide range of economic and social benefits to local communities.

3.1.3   Consumers

The choices of consumers are essential if we are to achieve a green economy. Consumers are one of the main actors of the economy in that they are the main market driver. In this sense the customer is in fact the one who dictates demand for a specific good or service. Hence, customers can strongly influence what goods are produced, and a customer can discipline companies with a responsible buying policy. Therefore, when shopping customers should be encouraged to watch out for the responsible utilization of resources, the respect of employees' rights, respect for the environment and all its actors and a strong reduction of carbon footprint and waste.

Customers' leverage on demand increases consistently according to the rate of differentiation, and the higher differentiation, the higher consumer leverage. Values and customers' awareness of environmental issues are consistent components, which strongly influence the purchase process. Customers with an awareness of environmental issues would be generally more willing to buy a product created through green processes rather than other harmful environmental processes. In order to have customer confidence, certifications of good production practices are often provided. Therefore certification can be requested by customers in order to buy a green product rather than another. Such behaviours would increase demand and stimulate supply of green goods rather than others.

Certifications are generally issued by institutions such as the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), and their logo can be found on products accepted into the scheme. Certifications are aimed to confirm certain a characteristic of a certain product or services and include Fair-trade, Rainforest Alliance, Soil Association, Forestry Stewardship Council. These certifications can cover different qualities of a specific output and differs depending on a specific critical issue that is more crucial for a specific product. Certification might deal with material used, rather than labour force, or any process used to create the product.

Tourists

Being a tourist, visiting other people and places, is a great way to get to learn about our planet, and all the diversity of cultures and environments that live on it. Tourism is one of the world's largest industries and a source of vital revenue for developing countries, rural areas, and vulnerable persons[141]. Meanwhile, tourism promotes global natural

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[141] Tao, T. and Wall, G. (2009) Tourism as a sustainable livelihood strategy. Tourism Management 30: 90.

awareness[142], which contributes to the development of conservation areas worldwide.[143]This leads to the revaluing of species such as whales as they become more economically viable alive for tourist pleasure than killed as a commodity[144] and the preservation of endangered species such as mountain gorillas[145].

Tourism and nature go hand in hand. Around one third of all tourism is directly nature based; activities such as hiking, bird watching[146], whilst all tourists demand an attractive and authentic surrounding environment[147]. Where the environment is damaged or destroyed, people will less want to visit. Economic opportunities are lost as well as natural diversity.

Therefore, it is important to follow a few ideas on how to be a good tourist, and for hoteliers, how to operate a low environmental impact business for example, holidaying at home is cheaper, greener, and supports the local economy. You do not even have to leave the house just like French philosopher Bourdieu who took holidays in his bedroom, taking time to appreciate his belongings[148].We also encourage you to visit Wikipedia before a vacation and spend a few minutes learning about your destination, such as a few language phrases. This will help you to know what to expect, appreciate more experiences when you are there, and understand local traditions. Tourists often upset local people by not respecting their culture. For instance, in Malta, visitors walk into private houses during mealtimes to take photos of local families eating, and islanders complain of living in a human zoo149

Other steps you can take include offsetting your carbon. If you can, choose shorter journeys, or travel by boat or train rather than airplane. If you do fly, consider paying a little extra to offset the carbon produced. You can do this when you book with recommended schemes, or perhaps just give direct to an environmental charity you like. We also suggest going off the beaten track and staying in small, locally owned accommodation, eating at backstreet restaurants and visiting unusual attractions, which helps to put more money in the pocket of local people, not just large companies150. You are also more likely to experience authentic local culture, and discover things most visitors never enjoy.

For those in the hotel industry, basic housekeeping measures can reduce costs in electricity and gas. Simple measures, such as replacing 60 watts light bulbs for their equivalent nine watt fluorescent lamps, putting lights on timers and lagging pipes, can considerably reduce the hotel's expense. There is also value in encouraging deals with local suppliers as by favouring local production the hotel can reduce its carbon

[142] Dieke, P. U. C. (2003) Tourism in Africa's economic development: policy implications. Management decision 41(3), 287.

[143] Eagles, P. (2002) Trends in park tourism: Economics, finance and management. Journal of sustainable tourism 10(2): 132-153.

[144] IFAW (2001) Whale watching 2001: Worldwide tourism, numbers, expenditures, and expanding socioeconomic benefits. Report available at: http://www.ifaw.org/Publications/Program_Publications/Whales/asset_upload_file881_13430.pdf accessed on 16/06/2011

[145] Smith, D. (2010) New hope for mountain gorillas in the Congo. The Guardian 08/03/2010.

[146] Fennell, D. (2008) Ecotourism (3rd edition). London: Routledge.

[147] Sedmak, G. and Mihalic, T. (2008) Authenticity in mature seaside resorts. Annals of tourism research 35(4): 1007-1031.

[148] Swartz, D. (1997) Culture and Power, the Sociology of Pierre Bourdieu. University of Chicago Press.

[149] Smith, M. K. (2003) Issues in cultural tourism studies. London: Routledge.

[150] McKercher, B. And du Cros, H. (2002) Cultural tourism. New York, London: THHP.

footprint, reduce the amount of garbage from packaging and improve local business and economy.

Owners should also consider smart infrastructure investments for future gain, if hotels need to renew their installations then why not use the needed investment in a way to ensure future economy or improve efficiency? These investments could vary from replacing an old gas boiler for a new, more efficient one, to replacing toilets for ones with water-saving devices and swapping shower heads for water displacement ones. Other ideas include improving reuse in guest bathrooms. Instead of thousands of small plastic bottles, the use of hair and skin dispensers still offer guests shampoo and soap at the push of a button, while saving money and reducing garbage production.

Finally we suggest the management of hazardous materials. Hotels use a series of materials that are hazardous and must be stored and disposed of correctly. Hotels should look closely at which materials are really necessary for its day-to-day operation and select less hazardous alternatives. A simple example is to use water based permanent markers instead of ink permanent markers, as ink markers contain toxic chemicals like toluene.

3.2   The urban environment

In the coming years more than half of the globe's population will be living in urban environments: cities, metropolitan regions and city agglomerations[151]. This ever increasing trend is putting more and more accent on urban environment as one of the key factors for solving environmental issues.

Cities can be defined in many different ways. In the light of environmental issues, we outline characteristics of urban environment as dense concentrations of people, activities, and interactions, environments where specialized services are provided, such as schools, hospitals and theatres. Life styles, consumption patterns, mobility and transport options are rooted in the different urban settings, and therefore make them an answer to global environmental crisis. Today cities all around the globe are experiencing an explosive growth while rural communities are shrinking or disappearing. In turn rural settlements have always been inseparable with urban environments, producing the food cities consume. Consumption habits of city dwellers shape the rural environment, and therefore put all the attention back onto the urban setup.

Cities have been expanding in various ways and rhythms since the earliest civilisations. Let's start with a simple question, asking ourselves how far the city could expand? The bigger the city is, the more we need to travel. The more we need to travel, the more energy we spend. If two neighbouring cities expand without restrictions, they will inevitably merge at some point, eating most of the natural environment in-between. In this case, the reduced natural environment near the city means reduced land for food cultivation, and less space for recreation. Less recreation means lower levels of health, social cohesion, restricted economic options from tourism, while no food produced in the proximity means transporting it from distant sources, hence, higher energy consumption.

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[151] Hall, Peter, The Polycentric Metropolis. Learning from Mega-City Regions in Europe (2006), Earthscan Institute, London UK, p.3-19.

These simplified deductions illustrate the burning issues and challenges of today's cities: densification, containment, city limits and urban rural relation. The aforementioned issues are all interdependent and try to work against the negative consequences mentioned earlier on. Denser cities, for example, mean that less transport and energy are needed. A better contained city means more agricultural land for food production can surround it, delivering the basic dietary products for the lowest environmental costs. Developing urban-rural relationships means to create a base for new market mechanisms. Cities should be better aware of their food needs, communicating these to the nearby countryside in order for efficient delivery and avoiding the unnecessary transportation of goods.

In developed countries limits are being established and the accent is now on the protection and improvement of urban-rural relations. On the other hand, developing countries in general are characterized by having much faster and less controlled urban growth where all these issues are more severe and harder to control. Booming cities do not know borders or limits, while fringe zones are by default occupied by its poorest populations[152]. These unregulated fringe zones are the nesting places of most informal settlements, and the most vulnerable areas regarding aspects such as water supply, health access and risk of natural disasters.

Even if less evident, basic causality could be established between the social structure of the city and environmental impact. When city facilities and inhabitants are polarized in the city, transportation distances increase. Higher concentrations of the rich or the poor, means also higher concentration of services and facilities in the rich residential areas[153]. For the person coming from poorer segregated zones, to reach the service or facility needed, such as a hospital, it takes more time. In cities of North America in comparison to the cities of Europe where city social mix is more diverse, such access differences are marked[154]. This can also be the case for job opportunities and remoteness of the workplace. In cases of higher mix of social groups, mutual relationships could be established, meaning that work could be found close to home. Decreases in journey times mean lower carbon footprints.

3.2.1 Infrastructure in the urban environment

Infrastructure can be seen as the veins of a complex body, the city. Therefore, infrastructure is vital for the survival of the city, since it carries all the main supplies that it needs for being operational every day. The infrastructure of a city is composed primarily of its roads, railways, cycle trails and walking paths (transport infrastructure); and its internal networks that supply electricity, water and drainages (communal infrastructure). The environmental impact is higher when we build more roads than necessary, each time we use motorized vehicles instead of green

[152] United Nations Human Settlements Program (UN-HABITAT) (2008), State of the World's Cities 2008/2009. Harmonious Cities.Part2.5 Slum Cities. p 106-122, available at:
http://www.unhabitat.org/pmss/listItemDetails.aspx?publicationID=2562 (last consulted 20.07.2011)
[153] United Nations Human Settlements Program (UN-HABITAT), 2008, State of the World's Cities 2008/2009. Harmonious Cities.
Part2. p. 50-106, available at:
http://www.unhabitat.org/pmss/listItemDetails.aspx?publicationID=2562 (last consulted 20.07.2011).
[154] United Nations Environment Program (2011), Green Economy . Cities - Investing in energy and resource efficiency, Part 3. The case for Greening the Cities, available at:
http://www.unep.org/greeneconomy/Portals/88/documents/ger/GER_12_Cities.pdf (last consulted 20.07.2011)

vehicles[155] and each time we spend more electricity than is necessary; generating higher levels of CO_2 emissions and energy consumption.

A green city infrastructure

A green city infrastructure needs sufficient resources as well as good management of the road system, the transport system and electricity supply. There must also be green urban infrastructure and urban greenery and cities should be planned with efficient road connections that avoid building more roads than necessary; and including more public green areas. There should also be green transportation which reduces daily vehicle trips, increases the use of bikes and encourages investment in tram systems, electricity road based transport, more efficient fuels and vehicles, using public transport, and shifting from motorized transport to rail and water transport156.

There are also green technological solutions for saving electricity to be considered. These include renewable micro-generation, district heating, and combined heat and energy plants (CHP), biomass systems, hydroelectric facilities, and solar power;157. Another example would be implementing sensors for public lighting. More environmentally efficient urban design and planning that allows for shorter distances of roads and includes greener transportation and electricity saving solutions will contribute to clean "the poisoned veins of our city". Nevertheless, green vehicles and green technological solutions for saving electricity (and affordable for all) are still in development.

It is up to us, the youth generation, to think of new green solutions to collaborate with more environmentally-friendly ways of transport to help cleaning the veins of the cities of the world. In this way, economic and social development will flow better and faster, poverty will be reduced, people will be healthier; and environments will be safe.

3.2.2 Buildings in the urban environment

Buildings are the main constituent elements of urban environment, and since they contain most of the human time, they also generate environmental impact. Here we would like to underline some less obvious aspects, such as linkages between building and biodiversity. A first level of observation is that the more buildings cover the Earth's surface, the more biodiversity is affected or destroyed. A second level of observation is the building itself. We are used to regard plants and flowers trough aesthetic lenses, but as a matter of fact, it constitutes a crucial micro environment for various species of insects and birds, which should be considered when designing the building.

Buildings hardware

First of all, decisions regarding roofs, walls, and landscape are playing a role. Buildings generate an impact in the environment they are inserted into, and in the biodiversity there was before the building existed. As mentioned before, roofs and

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[155] Green vehicle: A vehicle that does not generates or generates less CO2 emissions
[156] UNEP, 2011, Towards a Green Economy: Pathways to Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication, www.unep.org/greeneconomy pg.
[157] See Chapter 3 on Renewable Energies

walls can be designed in a way in which they can house this biodiversity[158]. Moreover, by implementing this kind of design, an opportunity for people to feel the nature is provided. It is also important to consider keeping the existing natural conditions and integrate them to the project. This includes alive and even dead trees[159].

Second, materials chosen for the buildings construction, their source, assembly and disposal influence. The source of the material is important; the farther the shipping distance, the more CO_2 in transportation is produced. The thermal characteristics of the material contribute to the efficiency of the building and reduce energy consumption. The way in which some materials are produced generates higher energy consumption and higher pollution level than others. One solution can be to use the materials from recycled waste[160], or learn from the traditional way of the construction and use of local material, which has been already used in the place.

Buildings software

Resources needed to sustain buildings when in use (energy, water, etc) are also important. One solution can be to invest the money planned for heating systems and air conditioning into improving the quality of insulation of the walls, letting you keep expenses lower and increasing the efficiency of the building[161]. For example, builders could include in the design of a building water systems for recycling used water and rain, and owners could close the windows when using the air-conditioner or heating systems.

Reusing the old

A final effect is caused by the destruction of existing buildings instead of renovation. Destroying an old structure instead of recycling it generates higher quantities of waste and higher rates of consumption when building a new one.[162] In conclusion, the urban environment chapter does not only address MDG7 but also MDG1 and MDG2. Addressing MDG 1, rural-urban relationships, mixed cities, city sprawl management and an efficient infrastructure design mainly contribute to reducing carbon footprint levels, but also generate economic and social benefits.

Addressing MDG 2, architectural designs that include biodiversity, insulation, environmental-friendly materials and recycling building are learning-messages for architects; while using green transportation and green electricity technologies, are simple actions that address the global community; towards a greener minded society that understands the environmental behaviour of the city they live in and that understand that green city planning can also contribute to reducing poverty.

3.3   The energy challenge

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[158] O'Brien, M, "Biodiversity: the new challenge for architecture", NBS (National Building Specification),available from: www.thenbs.com

[159] Edwards, B., "A short history of sustainable development", NBS, (National Building Specification),available from: www.thenbs.com

[160] UNEP, 2011, Towards a Green Economy: Pathways to Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication, www.unep.org/greeneconomy pg. 352

[161] Ibid.

[162] see "Energy for Building − Improving Energy Efficiency in Construction and in the Production of Building Materials in Developing Countries", www.unhabitat.org, Nairobi, 1991, pg. 49

3.3.1 Climate change and energy

What would happen if we run out of oil? We would have to deal with it, of course. Nowadays we talk a lot about energy resources, such as oil and natural gas reservoirs, CO_2 emissions and so on. Optimists, such as the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), propose that by the year 2050, we can have a world run entirely on renewable energy.[163] Others, with perhaps a more realistic view, say that for the next 100 years fossil fuel will be the most important energy resource.

Figure 6. World net electricity generation by fuel
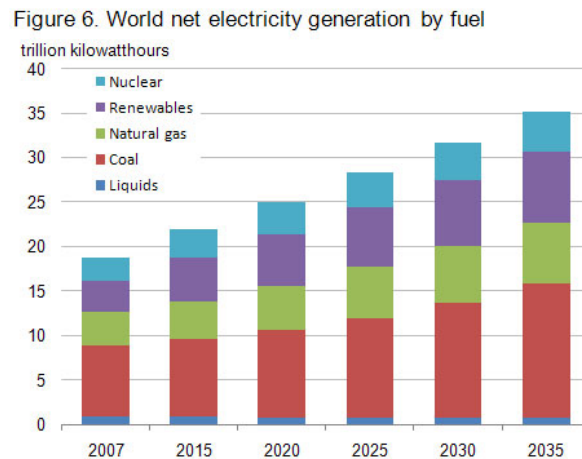
As this graph from the International Energy Agency (IEA) shows, electricity demand will only increase in the near future, mainly because of emerging economies energy needs, and population growth in the world. The projections also show that the amount of renewable energy also will increase in absolute measures, and the hope is that this proportion only will continue to grow.

The reason that energy use and production receives a lot of attention is the amount of waste and CO_2 emission it creates. This has severe repercussions for Earth, for example when it comes to climate change. It is now commonly acknowledged that human actions on Earth are responsible for an amount of the global warming that we observe and project. This is mainly measured by the effects that emission of greenhouse gases, such as CO_2, have on the warming of Earth from solar radiation. All forms of fossil fuels that human beings use, be it petrol for our car, gas for warming, or oil in plastic bags, emit CO_2 – which then again increases the greenhouse warming effect on Earth.

As we will see in the following, there is reason to be optimistic about our energy usage if we can use more renewable sources. Also, many countries have now realised that renewable energy is the only sustainable future solution.

3.3.2 Solar energy as a renewable resource

The Earth receives an incredible supply of solar energy. The sun is a fusion reactor that has been burning over four billion years. It provides enough energy in one minute

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[163] WWF (2011), "The Energy Report", Online, http://wwf.panda.org/what_we_do/footprint/climate_carbon_energy/energy_solutions/renewable_energy/sustainable_energy_report/ (Accessed 20.07.2011).

to supply the world's energy needs for one year. In one day, it provides more energy than our current population would consume in 27 years.

Solar energy doesn't cost anything and it is inexhaustible, although using it as an energy resource is relatively new idea. If we consider that the first practical solar cells were available for market less than 40 years ago, we have come a long way. Now they are available in market as specific and unique power systems for individual buildings there is no longer excuse not to consider solar power for our houses.

Today we use solar power in two forms, thermal and photovoltaic. The first, thermal, concentrates sunlight, and converts it into heat in order to warm buildings, heat water, generate electricity, dry crops or destroy dangerous waste. The second form of solar power (photovoltaic) produces electricity directly without moving parts. Today's photovoltaic system is composed of cells made of silicon, the second most abundant element in the earth's crust.

At present, photovoltaic (PV) provides only around 0.1 per cent of total global electricity generation and the costs of producing electricity from PV are still relatively high for most applications. However, recent dramatic cost reductions and effective supporting policies have led to rapid expansion in capacity. PV could provide as much as 5 per cent of global electricity consumption in 2030, rising to 11 per cent in 2050[164].

There are several advantages of photovoltaic solar power that make it one of the most promising renewable energy resources in the world. It is non-polluting, has no moving parts that could break down, requires little maintenance and no supervision, and has a lifetime of 20 to 30 years with low running costs. It is especially unique because no large-scale installation is required. Remote areas can easily produce their own supply of electricity by constructing as small or as large of a system as needed. Solar power generators are simply distributed to homes, schools, or businesses, where their assembly requires no extra development or land area and their function is safe and quiet. As communities grow, more solar energy capacity can be added.

Today solar energy is mostly sought in developing countries, the fastest growing segment of the photovoltaic market; as solar heating units are being built and installed on rooftops of homes in developing countries like India and Egypt by local entrepreneurs. There are only two primary problems regarding using solar power: the amount of sunlight and the cost of equipment. The amount of sunlight a location receives varies greatly depending on the geographical location, the time of the year and the day. The south-western United States is one of the world's best areas for sunlight. Globally, other areas receiving very high solar intensities include developing nations in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

But a person living in Siberia would not benefit much from this clean and safe energy. Even though solar energy technologies have made magnificent improvements and cost reduction, they are still more expensive than traditional energy resources for those countries. However solar equipment will eventually pay for itself in two to five years, depending on how much sun a particular location receives. Then the user will have a virtually free energy source until the end of the equipment's working life. Future improvements are expected to decrease the payback time to one to three years.

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[164] International Energy Agency (IEA) 2010," Transforming Global Markets for Clean Energy Products", Online, http://www.iea.org/papers/2010/global_market_transformation.pdf

3.3.3   Wind energy, another solution

Wind energy has been exploited as an energy source since the Egyptians in 5000 BC when they dug canals, and used sails to haul food and stone from inland sources to the River Nile, not unlike our interstate highway system[165].Wind energy was also notably used to sail the exploration vessels in the age of Columbus.

Wind energy sources such as the Horizontal Windmill were first built to turn grindstones to convert wheat to flour before it was modified to pump out the water for humans and animals. In the same way modern Vertical Wind Turbines (Vertical Axes) were designed to adapt to various wind directions and speeds[166].

A wind turbine does not work for wind speed below a minimum value and the turbine shuts down for wind speeds above a certain value to avoid overstressing the blades and tower. The turbine's output is characterized by a Cubic growth with wind speed up to a certain speed, as shown in the figure below.
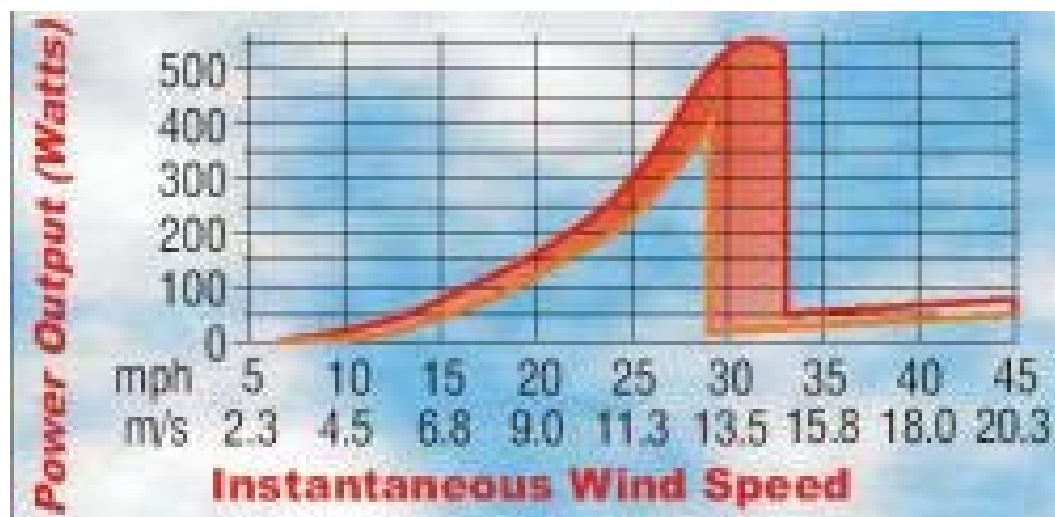
Wind energy currently supplies around 2 per cent of global electricity demand, with that capacity more than doubling in the last four years. At the current growth rates wind will meet a quarter of the world's electricity needs by 2050 and the price of this new technology is getting cheaper as an increase in investment makes it more efficient.

Challenges: environment and noise

One of the problems is that wind turbines kill migratory birds (though they are actually the lowest cause of bird deaths), but decision makers could avoid building wind farms on bird migratory routes, and use radars to stop turbines when birds are passing through wind farms. Regarding the blades swishing noise, the wind farms could be built in isolated, open and non-urbanized areas, thereby tackling the physical obstacles to running at full speed and allowing us capacity for more electricity generation. One other problem is common amongst almost all the renewable energies:

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[165] Columbia university presentation.
[166] Columbia university presentation, and American Wind Energy Association, Online, http://www.awea.org/ (Accessed 19.07.2011).

the storage of electricity generated, since it is not always used in the same moment as it is produced.[167]

3.3.4 Biomass

Biomass is renewable energy from biological material and waste, which is often called municipal solid waste (MSW). It is renewable because we can always grow more crops, and waste will always exist.[168] In general we can say that burning biomass fuels and fossil fuels both yield carbon dioxide, but burning fossil fuels converts stable carbon, sequestered millions of years ago, into atmospheric carbon dioxide. Burning biomass fuels releases back to the atmosphere contemporary carbon recently taken up by the growing plant. The main point is that biomass should be produced in a sustainable manner, which means that land from which biomass is harvested for fuel must be replanted.[169]

MSW[170] or "garbage" is another one type of biomass that contains materials like paper, tyres, food scraps, containers and packaging, leaves, plastics and other waste products. It refers basically to common household waste and excludes industrial and construction by-products. Today, garbage can be burnt in special waste-to-energy plants and its heat energy can be used to heat buildings or to generate electricity.

What forms of energy can biomass be converted to? [171]

Ethanol is an alternative source of energy which is used in cars in mixture with gasoline. Such a combination of 85 per cent ethanol and 15 per cent of gasoline is called E85. Peugeot has invested in the creation of new cars with a BioFlex capable engine, which runs on E85. Nowadays these cars can be found in France, Netherlands and Sweden.

Another possibility is biodiesel, a clean burning renewable fuel made from a mix of natural sources (agricultural oils or animal fats). Biodiesel is one of the alternative fuels which in the future have the biggest potential to replace petroleum. Biodiesel can be used as a pure fuel at a 100 per cent concentration (B100) or blended with petroleum in any percentage, with the most common blend being B20 (20 per cent of biodiesel and 80 per cent of petroleum diesel). A good example of the biodiesel car is the Loremo, which will be available on the market in 2011 and can go one hundred fifty miles on a gallon of biodiesel.

Another option again is biogas, a renewable energy obtained from organic waste by implementing special bacteria which splits wet organic matter (dung, sewage or food waste). Biogas can be used as a fuel for cooking, lighting or generating electricity and is already used in millions of households in China and India, The interesting fact here is that our own food waste could this way replace between 25 and 50 per cent of cooking fuel.

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[167] WWF (2011), "The Energy Report", Online, http://wwf.panda.org/what_we_do/footprint/climate_carbon_energy/energy_solutions/renewable_energy/sustainable_energy_report/ (Accessed 18.07.2011).

[168] Biomass.net (2011), "Biomass: an important source of renewable energy", Online, http://www.biomass.net (Accessed 20.07.2011)

[169] The Ashden Awards (2011), Online: http://www.ashdenawards.org (Accessed 21.07.2011)

[170] Center for Sustainable Systems, University of Michigan (2010), "Municipal Solid Waste Factsheet." Online, http://css.snre.umich.edu/css_doc/CSS04-15.pdf (Accessed 18.07.2011).

[171] Wheeler, R.and Bugbee, B. (No Year) "Biomass Production", Online http://www.dsls.usra.edu/meetings/bio2001/pdf/BIOMAScomplete.pdf (Accessed 21.07.2011).

In the future biomass can become one of the main sources of the alternative energies which will replace fossil fuel. However, although biomass is considered to be an eco-friendly source of energy the environment can only benefit if it is used in a sustainable manner, if land from which biomass is harvested for fuel is replanted and if municipal soil waste is treated only in waste-to-energy plants. Only by applying these special conditions can biomass development be beneficial for both the environment and future generations.

3.3.5 How to use energy efficiently

All over the world, we waste energy in many ways. This has been going on from the very beginning of industrialised energy generation, for example inefficient steam engines, but it still happens today in our home, for example by using inefficient household equipment. If we could reduce our energy demand, by very simply revising the way we use energy, we would reduce greenhouse gases emissions too. By reading the outline below about the waste of energy in buildings, you can be a part of this aim.

The walls and windows of buildings are poor at retaining heat, so this is the first place to start if we want to save energy. Window coverings not only cost you a lot, but they also waste energy. That's because in the winter, around 40 per cent of the heat that escapes a home flows through the windows.[172] During the summer, heat from the sun's rays coming through the windows can make it harder to keep a home cool. You can prevent that loss – and save on energy bills – by installing custom-made window treatments, especially on the south and west sides of your home. Some examples are; honeycomb shades, shutters, mini-blinds, woven wood, solar screening, vertical and horizontal blinds, draperies and curtains. These products insulate your home year round, and provide you with the opportunity to control light and temperature throughout the day. Another effective option is window film, which radiates heat back into your home in the winter and blocks solar heat from entering the home in summer.

Small leaks add up to big waste, and you can reduce those leaks by upgrading the insulation in your walls. Fixing poor insulation and reducing drafts and other air leaks in attics, crawl spaces, and recessed light fixtures can save you up to 20 per cent on your heating and cooling bills. That can amount to several hundred dollars. Not only can wallpaper also help you plug leaks, it can enhance the appeal of your interiors and the value of your home. And strategically-placed bookcases can also help you prevent drafts, leaks – and high energy costs.

Another important way of energy wasting is lights that are not right. The incandescent bulbs that many area residents continue to use are a waste of energy and money. A much better bet are CFL (Compact Florescent Limp) bulbs, which use 75 per cent less energy to operate than the incandescent versions. Making the switch is critical, considering that lighting is responsible for about 11 per cent of a home's energy bill. Most home owners are familiar with motion sensors for their exterior lighting, but what about motion sensors in garages and laundry rooms. More and more commercial

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[172] Energy Efficiency of Hunter Douglas Window Coverings (2011), Online, http://www.blindalley.com/portfolios/hunterdouglas/energyefficiency.html (Accessed 21.07.2011)

spaces are using this chic energy saver; why not find more applications in our own homes. It's cool and will help you save even more.[173]

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[173] Dobbs, D. (2011) "10 Ways To Beat The Heat" Online, http://www.greenandsave.com/green_news/green-lifestyle/10-ways-beat-heat-8145 (Accessed 21.07.2011)

IV.   CONCLUSION

It is now clear that it is up to us – the younger generation – to start changing the way we think. As the first part of this paper showed, our lives are intimately intertwined with the environment. In the second part we have touched upon practical issues which concern our daily routines. We have seen that the power we have as consumers, as well as (future) business men, or as tourists, should not be underestimated as avenues to change practices which are harmful to the environment. Our choice with regard to energy resources, which have a direct impact on climate change, should equally reflect this awareness. We can exercise this, for example, through actively linking our urban environment to nature, by choosing better insulated accommodation, by thinking about infrastructure planning and cherishing green spaces in and outside our buildings. Biodiversity and a city life can, in fact, go hand in hand.

Being a steward of the environment also implies the responsibility to exercise our knowledge. The aforementioned Rio Summit and declaration highlight the global change of mindset with regard to decision making in the field of environmental issues. Building on the Stockholm declaration of 1972, the Rio declaration highlights that "(humans) are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature".[174] More substantially, it emphasises the importance of our right to participate in environmental decision-making, our right to information and our right to justice if these principles are violated.

Rio Declaration Principle 10:
Environmental issues are best handled with participation of all concerned citizens, at the relevant level. At the national level, each individual shall have appropriate access to information concerning the environment that is held by public authorities, including information on hazardous materials and activities in their communities, and the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes. States shall facilitate and encourage public awareness and participation by making information widely available. Effective access to judicial and administrative proceedings, including redress and remedy, shall be provided.

The Rio Declaration has had an important follow up, embodying the three types of rights highlighted above in the detailed Aarhus Convention.[175] Kofi Annan, former Secretary-General of the UN, has called the Aarhus Convention "the most ambitious venture in the area of environmental democracy so far undertaken under the auspices of the United Nations". The Aarhus Convention currently has 44 parties[176], and will be actively promoted at the next Rio+20 Summit, to be held in 2012, 20 years after the first Summit.[177] It is at this important global event that the future of our Earth will be discussed.

The outcome of Rio+20 will inevitably tie in with the future development of our current MDGs, which come to expire in 2015. It is therefore of utmost importance for all of civil society, especially young people, to have an input in the discussions. Through the vast network of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), as well as youth congresses and conferences, our voice can be heard. One issue which has been a main obstacle to achieving the current MDGs and which therefore needs reflecting upon is, for example, financing. Can we think outside the box to find the money needed, and will we finance rescuing our Earth?

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[174] Principle 1 of the Declaration
[175] UNECE Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters, adopted on 25th June 1998 and entered into force in 2001.
[176] For a list of Parties, see for example www.participate.org
[177] See "Rio plus Aarhus - 20 years on: bearing fruit and looking forward", Chisinau Declaration, adopted 1 July 2011, available at: http://www.unece.org/env/pp/mop4.htm (last consulted 16.07.2011)

The 18 of July 2011 was Nelson Mandela International Day[178], a day which seeks to inspire individuals to take action to help change the world for the better. In fact, this is completely in line with our main message in this paper. Mandela, being an honest steward of his people and planet, showed that one individual can contribute to revolutionary change. The kind of movement that Mandela inspired is what we think is necessary to give our Earth the attention she needs, so that our future well-being is secured. This report has provided some solutions, some small steps that we can take, for this process to start.

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[178] For further information, see http://www.mandeladay.com/

V.   BIBLIOGRAPHY

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VI.   WORKING GROUP PARTICIPANTS

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49th GRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMME (GSP)

Geneva, 4 – 22 July 2011

"The United Nations working towards the

Millennium Development Goals:

successes and challenges"

Venue: *Palais des Nations*

All Plenary Meetings: *Room VII, Building A, third floor*

Working Groups: Room XV, Building A, second floor
                                     Environmental issues
                                     Moderator:
                                     Mr. Wondwosen Asnake, Programme Officer, Major Groups and Stakeholder Partnerships, and Harmful and Hazardous Waste (HSHW) Sub-Programme Regional Coordinator, Regional Office for Europe United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

                                     Room VII, Building A, third floor
                                     Economic and Social Development
                                     Moderator:
                                     Mr. Shigehisa Kasahara, Economic Affairs Officer, Office of the Secretary-General, UNCTAD

                                     Room IV, Building A, third floor
                                     Human Rights
                                     Moderator:
                                     Mr. Thomas Pollan, Human Rights Officer, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)

Monday, 4 July - Room VII

10:00 a.m.   **Opening ceremony**
Ms. Corinne Momal-Vanian, Director, United Nations
Information Service (UNIS), Geneva

Information about the Graduate Study Programme
Ms. Alessandra Vellucci, Chief, Press and External Relations
Section, UNIS Geneva

2:15 p.m.   **Guided Tour of the Palais des Nations**
Visitors' Service

3:45 p.m.   **Visit to the UN Library and League of Nations Museum**
Ms. Sylvie Jacque, Chief, Users Services Section

5:30 p.m.   **Cocktail**
Bar 13-15, Palais des Nations

Tuesday, 5 July - Room VII

9:30 a.m.   **Introduction to moderators and set-up of working groups:**

1. Environmental issues

2. Economic and Social Development

3. Human Rights

11:30 a.m.   **Photo opportunity**

2:00 p.m.   *International Organization on Migration (IOM)*
Mr. Jean-Philippe Chauzy, Spokesperson, IOM

4:00 p.m.   **World Health Organization (WHO)**
Ms. Elena Villalobos, Technical Officer, Evidence and Policy
on Emerging EH Issues

Wednesday, 6 July - Room VII

9:30 a.m.   **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)**
Ms. Sylvie Motard, Senior Programme Officer

11:00 a.m.   **Office of the High-Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)**
Mr. Vladlen Stefanov, Chief, National Institutions and
Regional Mechanisms Section, Field Operations and Technical
Cooperation Division

2:00 p.m.   **Working groups** (see cover page for Room number)
Press room 1 for the working group on human rights

Thursday, 7 July - Room VII

9.30 a.m.   **Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)**
                 Ms. Elisabeth Byrs, Spokesperson, OCHA

11:00 a.m.   **United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)**
                 Ms. Anne Wittenberg, External Relations Officer,

1:00 p.m.   **Youth event at ECOSOC**

3:00 p.m.   **Working groups** (see cover page for Room number)

Friday, 8 July - Room VII

9:30 a.m.   **Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)**
                 Mr. Ricardo Espinosa, Chief, NGO Liaison Office,
                 Office of the Director-General, UNOG

11:00 a.m.   **International Association of Soldiers for Peace**
                 Mr. Laurent Attar-Bayrou, President, IASP

2:00 p.m.   **Working groups** (see cover page for Room number)

4:00 p.m.   **Joint Working group session to discuss the report**

Monday, 11 July - Room VII

9.30 a.m.   **World Health Organization (WHO)**
                 Mr. Peter Mertens, Coordinator, United Nations Reform

11:00 a.m.   **Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)**
                 Ms. Viviane Brunne, Executive Officer
                 Office of the Director, Partnerships Department

12:30 a.m.   Exhibition on tribes in transition, new building

2:00 p.m.   **Working groups** (see cover page for Room number)

Tuesday, 12 July - Room VII

9.30 a.m.   **Visit to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)**

2:00 p.m.   **Working groups** (see cover page for Room number)

Wednesday, 13 July - Room VII

9.30 a.m.   **United Nations Correspondents Association (ACANU)**
                 Ms. Catherine Fiankan
                 Mr. Daniel Pruzin

11.00 a.m.   **International Labour Organization (ILO)**
                 Ms. Chandra Garber, Communications & Marketing Officer,
                 Better Work Programme

2:00 p.m.   **Working groups** (see cover page for Room number)

Thursday, 14 July - Room VII

9.30 a.m.:   **United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
                   (UNCTAD)**
                           Mr. Sudip Ranjan Basu, Economist, Division on Trade in
                           Goods and Services, and Commodities, Trade Analysis Branch

11.00 a.m.   **United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)**
                           Mr. Mario Apostolov, Regional Adviser, Trade Division

2:30 p.m.   **Visit to the Graduate Institute of International Development
                   Studies**

Friday, 15 July - Room VII

9:30 a.m.   **World Trade Organization (WTO)**
                           Mr. Hans-Peter Werner, Counsellor Development Division

11:00 a.m.   **World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)**
                           Ms. Cathy Jewell, Senior Information Officer,

2:00 p.m.   **Working groups** (see cover page for Room number)

4:15 p.m.   **Audio-conference with New-York on the UN Academic Impact
                   Initiative**

Monday, 18 July - Room VII

10:00 a.m.   **UN Peacekeeping operations**
                           Ms. Charlotte Warakaulle, Senior Political Advisor,
                           Office of the Director-General, UNOG

11:00 a.m.   **United Nations Inter-Agency Secretariat of the International
                   Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR)**
                           Ms. Aurelia Blin, Partnerships and Networks Officer

2:00 p.m.   **Working groups** (see cover page for Room number)

5:00 p.m.   **Visit to the University of Geneva**

Tuesday, 19 July - Room VII

9:30 a.m.   **International Labour Organization (ILO)**
                           Ms. Maria Arteta, Coordinator, CEB tool-kit for
                           Maintstreaming Decent Work, Policy Integration Department

11:00 a.m.   **Médecins sans Frontières (MSF)**
                           Mr. Emmanuel Tronc, Policy and Advocacy Coordinator,
                           Medical emergencies responses and challenges

2:00 p.m.   **Working groups** (see cover page for Room number)

Wednesday, 20 July - Room VII

9:00 a.m.   **University for Peace (UPEACE)**
                      Dr. Amr Abdallah, Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs

Working lunch
(Mandela's Day)

2:00 p.m.   **Working groups** (see cover page for Room number)

5:00 p.m.   **Visit of the Chancellerie of Geneva (AV)**

Thursday, 21 July - Room VII

9.30 a.m.   **Human Resources Management Service (HRMS)**
                      Ms. Claudia Purpura, Human Resources Officer
                      United Nations Office in Geneva (UNOG)

11:00 a.m.   **Plenary**
                      ▪ Discussion of Working Groups' proposals
                      ▪ Adoption of the final report
                      ▪ Debate co-ordinated by Moderators of Working Groups

2:00 p.m.   **Ad hoc drafting group to edit final report**

Friday, 22 July – Room VII

9:30 a.m.   **Closing ceremony**
                      Mr. Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, Director-General, United
                      Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG)

                 Presentation and adoption of the final report
                      Ms. Corinne Momal-Vanian, Director, UNIS Geneva

                      Ms. Alessandra Vellucci, Chief, Press and External Relations
                      Section, UNIS Geneva

*   ***   *

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