

Conclusion

2005 AND BEYOND

The Millennium Declaration raised expectations for a new century. The Millennium Development Goals added deadlines, indicators, and a roadmap.

There is clear evidence of some success toward achieving the goals. More attention than ever before is now focused on human development. More people are talking, more governments are talking, and there are more opportunities for advocacy and leverage on key issues, in many places even if, not in all places.

However, there are some very real threats to our common objectives. We have outlined them in this report. Not least is the threat to the capacity and even the future of the United Nations itself.

After the September 2005 leaders' summit, there is the danger that follow-through will lag or fail. What will happen to development assistance in 2006? To debt cancellation? To global levies for global benefit? To democratization of international institutions? Will 2005 lead to stronger mechanisms for accountability, policy change, and resource distribution that will take us to the Millennium Development Goals and a good deal further?

Much depends on the success of civil society advocacy and organizing in 2005. Much depends on what continues in 2006 and beyond.

AN OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN

A number of non-government development coalitions and organizations are using 2005 to evaluate not only promise-keeping, but also how promises are kept, including best cases and inadequacies. In the process, they are advancing common understanding of what can make aid effective, how to improve quality, and how to get at the root causes of poverty, disease, and environmental ruin.

Will they be able to sustain the effort? Will those with political and institutional power take these evaluations on board? Will policy change and operational change happen?

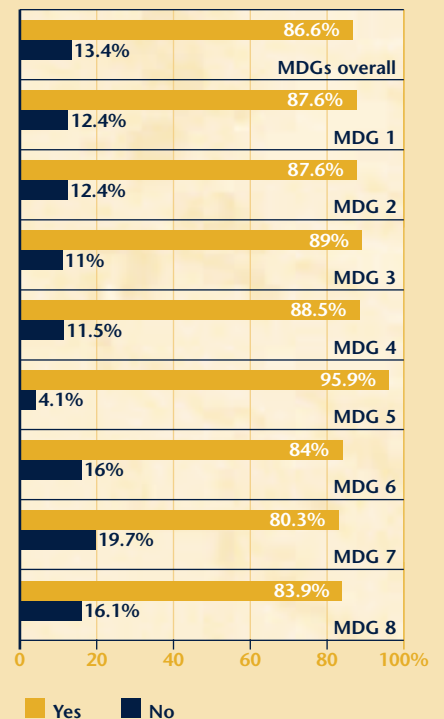
AN OPPORTUNITY TO PRIORITIZE AND TO COALESCE

As we review the submissions to our survey and the evidence in NGO studies, there emerges an identifiable series of common concerns and priorities and an understanding of the interconnected elements of causality and of change.

There is a political opportunity when a few civil society spokespeople represent the broader global community at UN roundtables and hearings. They can use this opportunity to bring as many groups and people as possible into reflecting on and shaping priorities and the message. This happened in Monterrey, Johannesburg, and at other UN conferences. It should happen again.

The desire to organize a worldwide campaign against poverty has led dozens of diverse networks and groups to focus on three broad themes — aid, debt, and trade. They agree to share the “space” or flexibility to ally their own specific organizational priorities and approaches to this broad three-pronged theme for a year.

Do you think change in policy or resources contributing to the achievement of the MDGs is achievable in your country and/or other countries?



Many groups are developing their own priorities to present to governments. *We the Peoples* is one of several efforts to draw together priorities. The opportunities to join hands among networks during 2005 exist. Will they be used?

AN OPPORTUNITY TO ORGANIZE

A number of key networks — like Social Watch in social development and WEDO in gender, environment, and development — have an established record in evaluating government and institutional policy. Activities in 2005 should bring them allies and assist them in strengthening their networks in order to continue and reinforce their effectiveness. Some networks, like those in human rights have an even longer pedigree. Global alliances with more specialized focus in such areas as health, AIDS, child labour, habitat, and education have emerged and could, potentially, significantly strengthen civil society's power to hold authorities accountable. Together with older organizations like WFUNA and World Federalists, a growing number of organizations are concerned with global governance and democratization.

But 2005 may not see the sort of significant shift in power and democratization that many desire. The occasions to strengthen coalitions for change for the longer run are there, whether in follow-up events to the World Social Forum, in forums around the UN processes, in coalition-building for White Band Days, or national campaign events.

TAKING ON THE FUTURE

For four years *We the Peoples* has mapped and marked civil society engagement with the Millennium Declaration. *We the Peoples 2005* signals the necessity of finding new ways forward.

This is a crucial year, but we don't believe the leaders' summit is the end of the story. At a minimum, the summit must agree to dates for further multi-stakeholder evaluation of progress, and opportunities for course correction.

We sincerely hope that 2005 will be used to learn, to coalesce around priorities, and to organize more effectively for the long run, and for the next five years.

We the Peoples intends to assist in evaluating this important year, and in contributing to setting directions for 2006, 2010, and far beyond. We are profoundly grateful to all who have helped us with our 2005 survey and report. We continue to look forward to working even more effectively with you and many others for the common futures we all desire.