

The Task Ahead

To prepare for the leaders' summit in September, United Nations Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, commissioned two major studies: *A more secure world: our shared responsibility* – *The report of the UN's High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change* (<http://www.un.org/secureworld/>) and *Investing in Development: A Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals* (<http://www.unmillenniumproject.org>).

Both reports call for bold action by governments to enhance the role of the United Nations in providing collective security and to meet the development goals. The report of the Secretary-General for the summit reflects upon their recommendations. *In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all. Report of the Secretary-General*. 21 March, 2005 (<http://www.un.org>).

However, when the leaders meet in September they will represent a deeply divided world. Three large societies, North America, Europe, and Japan, are home to most of the world's wealth. They have a combined average gross domestic product (GDP) per capita of US\$26,000. They account for 15% of world population, 75% of world arms spending, and 95% of the world's assistance to developing countries. Three other societies, India, Indonesia, and Nigeria are home to a quarter of the world's population, 1.5 billion people with a combined average GDP per capita of US\$2,000. The annual wealth of 11 African countries is less than US\$1,000 per person per year.

The world is divided, too, on security issues and how best to respond to threats and conflict. Concepts like "Responsibility to Protect" challenge older ideas of state sovereignty and non-intervention (<http://www.iciss.ca/report-en.asp>). Millions have died in Cambodia, Rwanda, and Darfur while the world gropes for a new security consensus.

Many things have changed since the last time world leaders met in 2000. Among them, there is new urgency to HIV/AIDS, new attention to terrorism, and increased alarm about Weapons of Mass Destruction, including nuclear weapons.

With these divisions and changes evident to all, there will be one of three likely outcomes from the September leaders' summit.

Leaders will take action to improve the United Nations, strengthen cooperation for peace and security, and dramatically increase resources and efforts to achieve the development goals and Declaration objectives. Or they will agree to some minimal steps for the UN and on a few practical steps to enhance both collective security and the development goals. Or they will fail to agree to anything specific.

Recently, there have been some encouraging signs including the March 11, 2005 report of the UK-initiated Commission for Africa (<http://www.commissionforafrica.org>), nevertheless the G-7 Finance Ministers failed to agree on an adequate scale and scope of action at the February, 2005 meeting.

And the global civil society effort on behalf of the MDGs has not gone unnoticed. According to British Chancellor of the Exchequer Gordon Brown, “[We owe progress]. . .to the millions who have campaigned for justice, for the strength of their resolve, the vision of their leadership, their determination in pursuit of a great cause.”

Motivated citizens can help determine the agenda and the outcomes of the September leaders’ summit and beyond. Civil society groups and movements all over the world face a momentous opportunity. By acting now, we can propose priority issues, we can press for a stronger United Nations, and we can demand bold action and more accountability to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Declaration promises.

Some of this work is already underway. Much more can be done. We hope that this report provides assistance and inspiration in the task ahead.

Part II summarizes the 2005 survey results and reports on the status of each of the eight development goals. It describes the approaches to each goal, notes the type of activities groups undertake, draws attention to obstacles, and presents recommendations for change. Part II also includes other survey information about civil society organizations (CSOs), their interests, and activities.

Part III offers an overview of the limitations of the development goals and outlines six larger challenges that must be addressed in order to achieve the goals and meet other urgent needs.

Part IV draws attention to the seventh challenge, governing our global society.

Part V and the Conclusion offer information and a resource kit to help motivated citizens become involved, or more involved, in campaigns and other actions in support of the Millennium Development Goals, the Declaration, and government accountability. You can use this information to press governments, parliamentarians, leaders, and others to keep the promises made to the world in 2000 (cut poverty, educate children, empower women, improve health and the environment, build a real partnership for development). You can also use these resources to help promote peace, rights, democracy, fair trade, and the other objectives of the Millennium Declaration.