



## OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

### Information Note for Special Procedures Mandate Holders on the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) Review Summit (New York, 20-22 September 2010)

#### I. Background on the MDGs and human rights

In September 2000, world leaders adopted the Millennium Declaration making wide-ranging commitments to tackle issues concerning peace and security, development, human rights and the environment. Alongside development goals, commitments were also made to promote democracy and respect for all human rights. This included the right to development and relevant economic, social and cultural rights with a particular focus on the rights of minorities, women and migrants and access to information. The 2005 World Summit Outcome also contained unprecedented commitments from member States to mainstream human rights in their national policies.

The MDGs have become central to the formulation of national development agendas and in mobilizing international cooperation efforts. However, ten years after the Millennium Declaration, global and national MDG progress reports provide clear evidence of uneven implementation among different regions and countries, with growing disparities and reversal of gains due to the multiple effects of food, oil and financial crises. While many countries are still on course to reach some of the Goals by 2015, numbers of others are far off track. Even in countries scoring major successes, large disparities still persist, with millions of people left behind.

The General Assembly will be reviewing the progress on the MDGs at a High-level Plenary Meeting (hereinafter MDG Summit) from 20 to 22 September 2010 at the UN headquarters in New York. In accordance with its [resolution 64/184](#), the MDG Summit will focus on accelerating progress towards the achievement of the MDGs by reviewing successes, best practices and lessons learned, obstacles and gaps, challenges and opportunities, leading to concrete strategies for action.

The Secretary-General's report "[Keeping the Promise](#)": A forward-looking review to promote an agreed action agenda to achieve the MDGs by 2015' was launched on 16 March 2010. The report strongly reiterated the inter-dependence and inter-relatedness among human rights, development and peace and security, as well as the importance of adhering to the fundamental norms and values of the Millennium Declaration, including human rights, gender equality and democratic governance if countries are to accelerate progress towards the MDGs.

OHCHR is advocating for integrating a human rights approach when implementing the MDGs. This is reflected in various resources, including in OHCHR annual reports, the 2008 publication "[Claiming the MDGs](#)" and the 2010 publication 'Human Rights and MDGs in practice'.

#### II. OHCHR contributions to the process

OHCHR is contributing to *the process leading to the MDG Summit and the Summit's outcome*, by, inter alia: (a) emphasizing the value of integrating human rights in global development policies

and in national MDG-based development strategies; (b) facilitating and supporting the contributions of the United Nations (UN) human rights mechanism, including the special procedures; (c) mainstreaming human rights in the UN system's contributions; and (d) creating advocacy and public awareness, including through the High Commissioner. Some of the key messages are:

1. Development and human rights are mutually reinforcing. Both pursue objectives of universal human well-being and dignity.
2. States that place human rights at the centre of their national MDG strategies stand a better chance of keeping the promise of reaching the Goals by 2015.
3. Human rights principles of equality and non-discrimination ensure that the poorest and most marginalized are not left behind.
4. Active participation by the people ensures that they are empowered participants throughout the process of achieving the MDGs.
5. The principle of accountability stimulates more commitment and transparency in national and international efforts to achieving the MDGs by clarifying the duties and responsibilities of States and non-state actors.

### **III. Strategic interventions by special procedures**

Special procedures have an important role to play in the MDG process. Much of their work focuses on issues covered by the MDGs, and some mandates have been explicitly mandated by the Council to make recommendations on strategies to achieve the MDGs relevant to their mandates. The reports of a number of special procedures to the General Assembly will focus on MDG targets of direct relevance to their thematic mandates, for example the report of the Independent Expert on water and sanitation will focus on MDG 7: Access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation, and the report of the Independent Expert on extreme poverty will focus on MDGs and social protection.

Special procedures mandate holders may also wish to consider:

- **Continuing to focus on the MDGs in their work monitoring the implementation of the MDGs and Summit Outcome towards 2015;**
- **Addressing MDG-related issues during their participation at the next sessions of the Human Rights Council and General Assembly;**
- **Issuing (a) joint press statement(s) addressing the linkage among human rights and the MDGs and urging participants of the MDG Summit to consider this linkage and explicitly reaffirm it at the Summit;**
- **Producing op-eds during June/July on the linkage among human rights and MDGs (OHCHR's Communications Section can assist in placing those op-eds; a collection of op-eds or web features will be posted on the OHCHR website. Mandate holders may wish to produce joint op-eds or web features.**

- **Providing OHCHR with good stories from the field where addressing human rights issues played an instrumental role in achieving a MDG;**
- **Calling upon stakeholders supporting their mandate, including relevant UN agencies, funds and programmes, to integrate a human rights perspective in their contributions to the Summit, as well as in their efforts to shape its outcome document;**
- **Participating in relevant events organized in connection with the Summit.**