



## Why 2010 is a crucial year for the world

*“The Millennium Declaration represents the most important collective promise ever made to the world’s most vulnerable people. This promise is not based on pity or charity, but on solidarity, justice and the recognition that we are increasingly dependent on one another for our shared prosperity and security.”*

Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary General, March 2010

**Ten years ago, in September 2000, world leaders met at the United Nations to sign the Millennium Declaration.**

This historical and inspirational declaration was, in fact, a global deal by which rich and poor governments of the world agreed to unite in an unprecedented common effort to eliminate the scourge of poverty and hunger, work towards achieving gender equality, fight environmental degradation, and reverse the advancement of HIV/AIDS, while improving access to education, health care and clean water, all by 2015.

To translate these wide-ranging commitments into concrete targets and measurable results, the [eight Millennium Development Goals \(MDGs\)](#) were brought together as a common framework for action and shared vision on development, representing a global partnership based on the collective responsibility of all countries.

**The Millennium Development Goals provided the first ‘recipe’ to fight global poverty that was shared among all UN member states.**

At the dawn of the new century, this unprecedented political consensus on what should be done and by whom, provided us all with a sense of purpose and renewed optimism: ‘We were the first generation that could put an end to poverty, and we refused to miss the opportunity!’

**The world was on track to achieve at least the first MDG of halving the number of extreme poor; and was coming close in several others. Now, that hard fought progress is at risk.**

Ten years after the Millennium Declaration was signed, the economic crisis, which originated within the world's major financial centres, has spread throughout the global economy. Developing countries, which are least responsible for the crisis, are bearing the brunt of its impact, and severe social, political, and economic dislocation and a rise in social conflict and distress are only emphasised by natural disasters such as the recent earthquake that brought Haiti and its people to their knees.

**With just five years left to 2015, we cannot afford to undo progress made towards achieving the MDGs.**

As time is running out, we need to redouble our efforts, take stock at what has been achieved, renew our joint commitment, and ensure world leaders keep their promises, and accelerate progress towards the MDGs.

**This year poses an unprecedented opportunity to rally and revitalise efforts. We know that “business as usual” will not get us to the Goals by 2015; this year we all have to assess our contributions that can help make the MDGs a reality.**

From 20-22 September 2010, Heads of State will meet again at the United Nations headquarters to review the successes, to learn from the failures, and to discuss the launch of detailed plans on how to ensure the attainment of the MDGs by 2015.

This Summit will be a defining opportunity to galvanise new political commitment, spur the collective action and efforts needed to meet the MDGs by the 2015.

**The MDGs *can* be achieved. But we need to act *now*.**

Many countries have achieved major successes in combating extreme hunger and poverty. Since the Millennium Summit in 2000, poor countries have invested in the policies and mechanisms that are required, and rich countries have increased the amounts of money they are making available for overseas aid.

But as recent reports from the [United Nations](#) and the [European Union](#) show, the world needs to boost progress towards the Millennium Development Goals. In its recent submission, [Dóchas has outlined what action is needed now](#) to ensure we achieve the Goal of ending extreme poverty.

**Ireland's overseas aid programme has been shown to be an extremely effective contribution to the global efforts to end poverty.**

In the words of Minister of State Peter Power ([click here](#) to read his recent speech on the MDGs):

*“The MDGs are at the heart of Ireland's development cooperation programme. We focus on Least Developed Countries, in particular in sub-Saharan Africa. We have taken a leadership role on the global hunger crisis. We focus clearly on the social sectors – health, education, HIV and AIDS. Our commitment is to the poorest and to addressing the structural causes of poverty and vulnerability. These are not just words – any analysis of where Irish Aid funding goes, and how we work, bears this out...”*

*“...In my view the Irish people can be proud of what our aid programme has achieved these past few years. We have invested over €4 billion of public funding in development cooperation since the Millennium Summit in 2000”.*

**As part of the Millennium Goal agreement, Ireland has promised to make resources available for poor countries' development strategies.**

In September, Ireland will have to inform the members of the United Nations about our contributions to the MDGs.

Dóchas believes that it is vital that Ireland, in its own right but also as a member of the European Union, adopts an ambitious position ahead of the High Level Meeting. Such an action plan would need to include monitoring mechanisms on countries' contributions to the MDGs, and clear interim targets for all commitments.

**NOTES**

1. The UN report, “Keeping the promise: Forward-looking review to promote an agreed action agenda to achieve the MDGs by 2015”, is available at: [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/64/665](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/64/665)
2. In September 2000, world leaders agreed a set of goals for the international community, to bring about a world in which sustaining development and eliminating poverty would have the highest priority. These goals were based on agreements and resolutions of world conferences organised by the United Nations in the 1990s. The goals are commonly accepted as a framework for measuring "development" progress, and are called the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs): see <http://www.dochas.ie/pages/resources/default.aspx?id=34>
3. As part of its contribution to the achievement of the MDGs, Ireland promised to increase its overseas aid budget, so that we would reach the UN target of spending 0.7% of national income on Official Development Assistance. The date for the achievement of this target has shifted twice: In 2000, then Taoiseach Bertie Ahern set a date of 2007, which was later revised to 2012. In December 2009, the Government announced the date would be moved to “2015 at the latest”, but to date, the Government has not published a time-table or strategy for the achievement of this latest target date.