



Millennium Development Goals Are Our Responsibility Too

- Comments to the UN Secretary General's Report to the
UN Millennium +5 Summit in September 2005

This paper is supported by 28 organisations:

ANCOP Foundation Denmark, BirdLife Denmark, CARE Denmark, Caritas Denmark, Danish Association for International Co-operation, Danish Indian Childrencare, Danish International Human Settlement Service, Danish Mission Council Development Department, Danish Organisation for Renewable Energy, Danish Red Cross Youth, Danish Society for Nature Conservation, Danish United Nations Association, Greenpeace Denmark, Happiness Foundation, IBIS, K.U.L.U. - Women and Development, Nature and Youth, Nepenthes, Network for Ecological Education and Practice/Eco-net, Save the Children Denmark, Southern Africa Contact, The Danish Association for Sustainable Communities, The Danish Family Planning Association, The Ecological Council, The Ghana Friendship Groups in Denmark, The Swallows in Denmark - Association for International Social Development, The Women's Council in Denmark, WWF Denmark.

Introduction

The challenge is great when the world's heads of state and government leaders will meet at the UN Millennium +5 Summit in September: They must take status and take on new, joint initiatives in order to secure the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, which the global society broadly supported at the UN General Assembly's Millennium Summit in 2000. Considerable progress has been made towards some of the goals in South- and East Asia, while especially African countries have made little or no progress towards achieving the goals.

But there *is still* a whole 10 years until 2015. It *is* possible for all countries to make considerable progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). However, this requires the international society to take *action now*. The need for aid, better terms of trade, and other initiatives that support the poor countries' own efforts is huge.

The ambition must be that the summit in September results in a number of joint decisions and other initiatives that genuinely change the ways of the world. The rich countries *must* redeem their promises to help the poor so the MDGs can be achieved in most countries.

The UN's Secretary General has with the report "In Larger Freedom: Towards Development, Security and Human Rights for All"¹ laid a good foundation that could enable the summit to reach historical decisions. Many of the Secretary General's proposals are good; but there is a need for clearer and more ambitious goals in various areas, and the report fails to provide proposals that deal with a number of problems.

The organizations listed below, which cooperate in and work with the Danish 92-Group/Forum for Sustainable Development, urge *Denmark* to work for strengthening the proposals in the Secretary General's report in the run-up to the September Summit. In the following pages we have described how the report's proposals which are most relevant to achieving the MDGs should be more concisely defined and further developed.

The purpose of our proposals is among others to:

1. Ensure that the world society makes an extra effort to assist Africa
2. Ensure that development towards achieving the MDGs is also sustainable
3. Support international initiatives which contribute in simple ways to the speedy attainment of the MDGs
4. Advance the reduction of development countries' debt
5. Support women's rights and empowerment
6. Prevent conflicts
7. Ensure the private sector's active cooperation in attaining the MDGs

¹ The Report which was released 21 March 2005 can be downloaded from www.un.org/lagerfreedom/

1. Main goals

In the UN Secretary General's report, the introduction to the proposal of concrete decisions to be taken contains the following considerations:

1. "The Summit will be a unique opportunity for the world's leaders to consider a broad range of issues and make decisions that will improve the lives of people around the world significantly. It is a major undertaking that is worthy of the world's leaders collectively assembled.
2. In the 21. century all States and their collective institutions must advance the cause of larger freedom – by ensuring freedom from want, freedom from fear, and freedom to live in dignity. In a world that is increasingly interconnected, progress in development, security and human rights must go hand in hand. There will be no development without security and no security without development. And both development and security also depend on the respect of human rights and the rule of law.
3. No state can stand wholly alone in today's world. We all share responsibility for each other's development and security. Collective strategies, collective institutions, and collective action are indispensable.
4. Heads of State and Governments must therefore agree on the nature of the threats and opportunities before us and take decisive action."

Comments:

The Secretary General is completely correct when he states: "There will be no development without security and no security without development". But development must also be sustainable.

Poverty in itself doesn't cause war or terrorism, but it increases the risk of instability and violence. War and conflict is not the only reason that countries must struggle with wide-spread poverty; but without peace, development is unlikely.

Therefore it is also crucial that the UN summit focuses on development and poverty alleviation and doesn't give unbalanced priority to security issues.

It is necessary that a gender- and women's-equality dimension is explicitly integrated as a cross-cutting factor into all policy areas from development to security instead of being marginalized merely as a special effort in a single area. Securing women's rights and possibilities to participate in society and development is decisive for future development and security.

It must be emphasized that the goal must be to create *sustainable* development. The global society has a collective responsibility to protect the environment, and over-utilization of nature and the natural resource base is a substantial barrier to achieving the MDGs. The struggle against poverty will be in vain, if the present course of over-utilization of natural resources and man-made climate change continues. This realization should be reflected in the conclusions approved at the Summit.

2. Freedom from want

a. Quality of aid

The Secretary General continues:

“5. To reduce poverty and promote global welfare for all, I urge Heads of State and Government to:

- (a) Reaffirm, and commit themselves to implementing, the development consensus based on mutual responsibility and accountability agreed in 2002 at the International Conference on Financing for Development held in Monterrey, Mexico, and at the World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg, South Africa. Consistent with that historic compact, centered on the Millennium Development Goals:
 - (i) Developing countries should recommit themselves to taking primary responsibility for their own development by strengthening good governance, combating corruption, and putting in place the policies and investments to drive private-sector-lead growth and maximize domestic resources to fund national development strategies;
 - (ii) Developed countries should undertake to support these efforts through increased development assistance, a more development-oriented trade system and wider and deeper debt relief.”

Comments:

The Secretary General's proposal is too noncommittal. Member States and governments, as well as international organizations, must comply with earlier promises from international conferences on good governance and quality of aid. The Summit should adopt precise time frames for this implementation.

Good governance is fundamental to creating development. The Summit should commit Member States to make plans of action with time frames and deadlines for how and when they will effectuate the important principles of good governance.

The Summit should support new initiatives that seek to counteract corruption in developing countries rich in raw materials. This applies, for example, to the proposals from the British Government and NGO's to get oil companies and others to provide public information on what they pay for access to raw materials in developing countries. This type of information is vital for ensuring parliamentarians and civil society insight into public finances.

The Summit should also establish a deadline for reaching the current UN target of contributing 0,15 – 0,20 % of gross national product to aid to the Least Developed Countries. Today only 5 EU countries live up to this target.

The 20/20 principle of increased investment in social development, such as education and health, which stems from the World Summit on Social Development in Copenhagen, 1995, must be revitalized with clear time frames for implementation. Less than 10 per cent of global development assistance is allocated to social development.

The Summit should also be used to agree on a plan for untying development assistance. Today, about 1/3 of the aid from G7 countries is bound to the purchase of goods or services from donor countries.

It is also important to maintain that aid for peace and security, as well as efforts against migration and terror, must not be taken from funds for development in poor countries.

If international agreements on these matters cannot be reached at the Summit, then the EU should take initiatives in these areas together with like-minded countries.

b. Africa

Secretary General's proposals continue:

”(b) Recognize the special needs of Africa and reaffirm the solemn commitments made to address those needs on an urgent basis.”

Comments:

It isn't sufficient to acknowledge Africa's special needs and confirm earlier promises. The Summit should adopt more precise goals for actions to address the challenges that Africa is facing.

According to the World Bank, 314 million people in Sub-Saharan Africa exist on under 1\$ a day. That is 46.5 % of the area's population and 87 million more poor than in 1990. The World Bank expects another 50 million poor in this part of the world by 2015.

A number of proposals in the Secretary General's report will also have a positive effect on Africa. These proposals should however be supplemented with the following:

- That, as proposed by the British Africa Commission, at least 25 billion \$ extra in aid to Africa by 2010 and an additional 25 billion \$ by 2015 should be mobilized.
- That the predictability of aid be strengthened by making binding agreements to give budget support for 3 – 5 years without the possibility of withdrawing the pledges afterwards, such as the EU Commission also has proposed.
- That the international society obligates itself at the Summit to ensure coherence, so trade, agricultural, and fishery policies, etc., actively contribute to promoting sustainable development in Africa and not the opposite.

It also leaps to the eye that Danish aid to Africa in the year 2005 is still lower than it was in 2001 (215 million Danish crowns less) and that Danida's new Africa strategy still hasn't resulted in an increase.

It is important that the goal to increase Danish aid, both in actual numbers and in per cent, is carried out very soon. A precise promise in this matter should be given in connection with the UN Summit.

Another place in the report the UN's Secretary General suggests that a "green revolution" be executed in Africa. In that connection it is important to be aware that such a revolution should have another character than the green revolution which India carried out 30-40 years ago. The extensive overuse of freshwater resources and pervasive poverty in India show that that model had serious defects. Every attempt to eradicate poverty and create food security must have sustainable agriculture and fishing as the central point of departure; and it is critical that agricultural development in Africa takes the specific African conditions into consideration.

c. National strategies

The Secretary General's proposals continue:

(c) "Decide that each developing country with extreme poverty should by 2006 adopt and begin to implement a comprehensive national strategy bold enough to meet the MDG targets by 2015."

Comments:

The proposal is central and should be supported actively by the international society, including institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Furthermore, it is important to ensure that poor people, women as well as men and their organizations, are involved in formulating the strategies.

Development requires local ownership, and therefore these strategies are important. To ensure that the strategies actually become the framework for a sustainable development that is directed towards achieving the MDGs, it is certainly important that decisions from the UN Summit clearly support some of the ideas that the Secretary General has advanced in his report but has not included in the proposal for decision, including:

- That the national strategies should be integrated frameworks for public investment in 7 issue areas (gender equality and women's empowerment, environment, rural development, urban development, health, education, and research); and that they thereby become frameworks for sustainable development.
- That the national strategies should build on existing strategies, such as the World Bank initiated Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP). It is critical that, as suggested by the Secretary General, the PRSPs are adjusted so they lead to the fulfillment of the MDGs by 2015. Until now the PRSPs have not been sufficiently directed towards achieving the goals; their formulations have been too controlled by World Bank policies and practices; and civil society has most often not been sufficiently involved.

d. Development assistance

The Secretary General's proposals continue:

- (d) "Undertake to ensure that developed countries that have not already done so establish timetables to achieve the target of 0.7 % of gross national income for official development assistance by no later than 2015, starting with significant increases no later than 2006 and reaching at least 0.5 % by 2009."

Comments:

The Secretary General's proposal should be supported. At the same time EU countries and Denmark should actively demonstrate global leadership.

The EU Commission has recently suggested a new joint target for EU aid by 2010: a collective goal of 0.56 % of gross national income (GNI) to aid, as well as a goal of 0.51 % for each of the 15 old members, while each of the 10 new members should reach at least 0.17 % of GNI. The countries that today exceed these goals are expected to continue to do so.

The EU target is a step in the right direction but is not sufficient to reach the global target proposed by the Secretary General. There are no indications that the fact that the EU and its members collectively are the most important providers of development assistance will change any time soon. This means that it is mainly up to the EU to ensure the attainment of the global aid target. This can only happen by each of the 15 old EU members taking the commitment on themselves to at the least reach the target of 0.7 % of GNI in development assistance already by 2010.

It is not unrealistic. It is after all only a question of giving 30 Cents more in aid for every 100 Euro earned than is given today. Four EU countries already fulfil the 0.7 % target. An additional six countries have decided to reach the target over a number of years. Some of these need to be more rigorous in their efforts, and the last five countries need to get started.

Denmark must not promote the perception that aid is not affordable or needed. It is therefore crucial that aid is not reduced from the current level of GNI and that Denmark sets the target of once again granting 1 % GNI in aid as soon as possible, just as Norway and Sweden plan to do.

e. Debt

The Secretary General's proposals continue:

- (e) "Decide that debt sustainability should be redefined as the level of debt that allows a country to both achieve the Millennium Development Goals and reach 2015 without an increase in debt ratios; that, for most HIPC countries, exclusively grant-based finance and 100 % debt cancellation, while for many heavily indebted and non-HIPC and middle-income countries, it will require significantly more debt reduction than has yet been on offer; and that additional debt cancellation should be achieved without reducing the resources available to other development countries and without jeopardizing the long-term financial viability of international financial institutions."

Comments:

The Secretary General's proposal for a more substantial debt relief, including redefining the concept of what is a "sustainable" level of debt should be supported and operationalized.

The rich countries have given comprehensive promises of debt relief. However, far from all the funds that have been pledged for this purpose have materialized; and the debt relief initiatives that have been executed have turned out to be too limited to reduce the debt of the countries in question to a level which could prevent new debt from accumulating. In short it is clear that the HIPC initiative has delivered too little debt relief, too slowly, to too few countries.

A new debt relief initiative must define a "sustainable debt" that takes its point of departure in a country's development needs, i.e. that there is sufficient money to fulfill the population's basic rights to food, health, and education.

The poorest countries must be given 100 % additional debt relief for both bilateral and multilateral debt. The financing should come from among others sale of IMF gold reserves. In order to avoid further indebting poor countries, both bilateral and multilateral development assistance should in the future be given as grants – not as loans.

f. Trade

The Secretary General's proposals continue:

(f) "Complete the World Trade Organization Doha round of multilateral trade negotiations by no later than 2006, with full commitment to realizing its development focus, and as a first step provide immediate duty-free and quota-free market access for all exports from the least developed countries."

Comments:

The Secretary General's proposal should be supported; and this implies that the EU must declare its willingness to change its strategy in international trade negotiations in the WTO.

The EU has played a key role in WTO negotiations for almost 10 years, but unfortunately the union's contributions in a number of areas have not been especially constructive. The EU has in short pressed on to promote trade liberalization for products of interest for EU exporters without demonstrating much will to reduce its own tariff protection or agricultural subsidies.

The decision taken in Doha to place developing countries' "needs and interests at the heart" of the current round of negotiations, as well as to support sustainable development should be realized by:

- Ensuring that the negotiations give special priority to removing barriers to Africa's trade and to supporting agricultural development in Africa.
- Abolishing the rich countries' dumping of agricultural goods and giving developing countries better market access.

- Lessening the pressure on developing countries to liberalize and giving developing countries the possibility to implement strategies that aim at self-sufficiency in basic food products.
- Abolishing subsidies that contribute to the overexploitation of the world's fishing stock.
- Promoting the transfer of clean technology to developing countries and supporting their possibilities for ensuring that their products live up to health and sanitary regulations in rich countries.

The UN Summit should furthermore emphasize that the negotiations of the Doha development round may not be used to undermine environmental regulations, including the international environmental conventions and treaties.

g. Innovative financial sources

The Secretary General's proposals continue:

(g) "Decide to launch, in 2005, an International Financial Facility to support an immediate front-loading of official development assistance, underpinned by commitments to achieving the 0.7 % ODA target no later than 2015; and to consider other sources of innovative finance for development to supplement the Facility in the longer term."

Comments:

Additional and alternative funds for development are needed. Therefore the Summit should make concise decisions to continue to work on establishing supplemental financial sources. Proposals that simultaneously promote the environment or other global targets should be given priority.

The simplest and most important means of providing more funds for developing countries are by the rich countries living up to their commitments to provide 0.7 % of GNI in development assistance. In spite of this, it is appropriate to develop new and stable financial sources to support both the fight against poverty and for sustainable development, so the effort becomes less dependent on financial policies in individual countries.

All proposals for supplemental financial sources deserve consideration, but the Summit should be used to clarify which proposals should be worked on in the future. It is recommended to focus on the following proposals, which besides generating income also support sustainable development: tax on airplane fuel, tax on carbon content in fossil fuels as well as tax on the sale of weapons.

Before the Summit, the EU should agree to establish a tax on airplane fuel and use the proceeds for aid to Africa, as England and France have proposed.

h. Simple solutions

The Secretary General's proposals continue:

- (h) "Decide to launch a series of "quick win" initiatives so as to realize major immediate progress towards the MDGs through such measures as the free distribution of malaria bednets and effective anti-malaria medicines, the expansion of home-grown school meals programs using locally produced foods and the elimination of user fees for primary education and health services."

Comments:

The proposal to promote simple solutions should be supported, ensuring at the same time that efforts for immediate improvements for the poor take place within a strategic framework which ensures a continual follow-up.

Good development work must build bridges between the short- and long-term perspectives, so that immediate improvements support the long-term efforts.

The proposal stands and falls with the international society's willingness to give binding commitments to contribute the necessary resources. The EU Commission's proposal that donor countries should give binding commitments to finance budget support over a 3 – 5 year period is an important example of how this can take place in practice. Establishing new, supplemental financial sources in order to finance specific efforts could be another model.

It is recommended that "quick wins" in the first instance be focused on efforts that are related to securing free primary school for all because goal nr. 2 is the MDG that seems to attract the most progress and attention. Additional initiatives can be taken as financial sources are developed.

i. HIV/AIDS and other diseases

The Secretary General's proposals continue:

- (i) "Ensure that the international community urgently provides the resources needed for an expanded and comprehensive response to HIV/AIDS, as identified by UNAIDS and its partners, and full funding for the Global Fund to fight AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria."

Comments:

AIDS is one of the greatest threats to development and must therefore be given a special priority at the Summit. This means in particular to attain the target of providing 7-10 billion \$ a year in additional aid to fight HIV/AIDS, as the UN's Member States agreed to do at the Special Session of the UN's General Assembly on HIV/AIDS in 2001.

Part of these funds should as proposed by the UN's Secretary General be used to secure full financing of the Global Fund to fight AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria.

The Summit must also emphasize the need to procure life-prolonging treatment for 3 million people with HIV/AIDS by 2005, just as the Summit must once more emphasize that the WTO's patent rules give poor governments the right to promote public health and access to inexpensive medicine.

The Summit must furthermore emphasize the necessity of promoting women's rights and empowerment, including sexual and reproductive rights, in order to reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS.

j. Gender equality and women's rights

The Secretary General's proposals continue:

(j) "Reaffirm gender equality and the need to overcome the pervasive gender bias by increasing primary school completion and secondary school access for girls, ensuring secure tenure of property to women, ensuring access to reproductive health services, promoting equal access to labour markets, providing opportunity for greater representation in government decision-making bodies, and supporting direct interventions to protect women from violence."

Comments:

The Secretary General's proposal to strengthen women's rights and empowerment should be supported and operationalized. The gender dimension should be integrated in all of the MDGs.

Combating inequalities between men and women and ensuring women's full rights and equal participation comprise a crucial condition for attaining the Millennium Development Goals. In fact, all the MDGs contain a gender dimension; and therefore it is essential to integrate gender as a central factor in achieving them, including taking into consideration how strategies for obtaining the different goals impact women and men and the relation between genders.

It is therefore welcome that the Secretary General, in addition to access to education for women, also mentions central aspects such as ensuring access to reproductive health services, in that women's sexual and reproductive rights are critical to improving women's societal position. In addition to these points, the Summit should be used to advance:

- Investments in infrastructure that is aimed at reducing girls' and women's time use and work burden, for example in connection with gathering fuel and fetching water. It is critical to ensure the participation of women in the design and implementation of such infrastructure projects.
- Combining women's rights to property ownership of for example land with initiatives that ensure women's opportunities to realize these rights, including access to legal knowledge, legal counsel and aid.

- Acknowledging that equal access to the labor market also involves a showdown with the lower wages and poorer working conditions for women. Programs that require the public sector to take care of parts of the household/family care work (which otherwise tie women to the household), as well as policies that eliminate discriminating practices concerning employment, wages, social protection and access to credits and professional and vocational education are needed.
- Combining instruments, such as quotas and the reservation of seats for women in order to ensure increased political representation of women in political bodies at local and national levels, together with other initiatives that "empower" women.

It is also important to ensure equal representation of women at the international, global level.

k. Research

The Secretary General's proposals continue:

- (k) "Recognize the need for significantly increased support for scientific research and development to address the special needs of the poor in the areas of health, agriculture, natural resource and environmental management, energy and climate."

Comments:

The proposal should be supported.

I. Climate

The Secretary General's proposals continue:

- (I) "Ensure concerted global action to mitigate climate change, including through technological innovation, and therefore resolve to develop a more inclusive international framework for climate change beyond 2012, with a broader participation of all major emitters and both developing and developed countries, taking into account the principle of common but differentiated responsibility."

Comments:

The proposal for a broader framework for action concerning climate change beyond 2012 should be supported, but it is critical to clarify the basis for this work.

It is first of all important to set a target for international climate efforts. The best proposal so far is the EU's, which involves limiting the increase in the global average temperature to under 2 degrees in relation to the pre-industrial level. Not even this target will be able to ensure that climate changes will not cause incalculable and irreversible consequences. But to attain the target, it is necessary for the rich countries to reduce their emissions of greenhouse gases by at least 30 % by 2020 and 60-80 % by 2050 (in comparison to 1990 levels).

Secondly, it is important that the expansion of the circle of countries that participate in international climate efforts doesn't take place at the expense of the committed targets for reduction of the rich countries' emissions of greenhouse gases. An agreement concerning climate work in the period following 2012 should, in other words, be based on the basic principles from the Kyoto Protocol and not on a voluntary basis as proposed by the USA

m. Natural disasters

The Secretary General's proposals continue:

(m) "Resolve to establish a worldwide early warning system for all natural hazards, building on existing national and regional capacity."

Comments:

The proposal should be supported.

n. Prioritizing recipient countries for aid

The Secretary General's proposals continue:

(n) "Decide that, starting in 2005, developing countries that put forward sound, transparent and accountable national strategies and require increased development assistance should receive a sufficient increase in aid, of sufficient quality and arriving with sufficient speed to enable them to achieve the Millennium Development Goals."

Comments:

The proposal should be supported, but it should also be ensured that it does not result in unintended consequences.

The rich countries, which certainly include the EU, should, as mentioned in the commentary to 'item d' above, quickly increase their development aid, just as new, additional financial sources mentioned in 'item g' should be developed. It seems natural that new funds be channeled to countries that demonstrate a will and capacity to advance attainment of the MDGs.

It is however crucial that the populations in "failed states" aren't deserted. Human and economic costs multiply many times over, when a negative spiral with conflicts and corruption is allowed to develop. In countries where regimes will not or are not able to combat poverty, development assistance should to a greater degree be channeled outside "the system" via NGO's and others.

3. Freedom from fear

The Secretary General's report contains 12 proposals for how the Summit can contribute to promoting peace and security. The proposals involve among other things:

- *Ensure compliance to, as well as further development of, international disarmament and non-proliferation agreements;*
- *Define terrorism, promote ratification of international conventions against terrorism and develop a new comprehensive convention on terrorism;*
- *Develop a binding international agreement on trade in hand guns;*
- *Establish a reserve fund for financing UN peacekeeping missions;*
- *As well as establish a Peace Building Commission in the UN.*

Comments:

The proposal is in general sensible, but it should be ensured that the proposed Peace Building Commission in the UN not only deals with conflicts and reconstruction but also contributes to preventing conflicts.

The advantages of focusing on preventing instead of healing conflicts are numerous: for people, development and economically. Therefore it should be an important task of the Peace Building Commission to contribute to preventing conflicts.

In Africa many conflicts are also battles over natural resources, such as timber, oil and diamonds. Control over such resources can be the direct target for conflicts, while resources in other connections contribute to financing conflicts.

The Summit should establish a Peace Building Commission; but at the same time ensure that in connection with the Commission, a permanent expert panel or a similar capacity is established with the following functions:

- Examine the cause of conflicts, including the role that natural resources play;
- Monitor the implementation of UN adopted sanctions that are related to natural resources;
- Formulate a proposal to establish international certification systems for natural resources that contribute to conflicts that is similar to the certification system for diamonds;
- Assist in creating regional surveillance mechanisms with the purpose of avoiding illegal trade with natural resources;
- Assist States that are resolving their conflicts in establishing systems for handling income gained from the extraction of natural resources, so the gains benefit the whole society;
- Assist such States by ensuring openness regarding the use of resources and the income gained from them.

4. Freedom to live in dignity

The Secretary General's report contains 5 proposals for how the Summit can contribute to promoting democracy and human rights. The proposals involve:

- *Establishing that States and the international society have a responsibility to protect populations from genocide, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity;*
- *Encouraging countries to ratify and implement all treaties relating to the protections of civilians;*
- *Assisting countries in developing democracy, including via a Democracy Fund at the UN;*
- *Recognizing the important role that the International Court of Justice plays.*

Comments:

Among the proposals there is a considerable lacuna regarding the private sector's societal responsibility.

At the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002 there was support for taking international initiatives that promote the private sector's corporate social responsibility. However, no international process was defined for this purpose.

At the Summit in September a process should be established that can lead to the creation of binding global rules for enterprise and business contributions to observing human rights, labor rights, indigenous peoples' rights, protection of the environment, consumer protection, combating corruption, etc.

The current guidelines for multinational companies in OECD should comprise a point of departure for the work with such rules. Also the UN's Commission on Human Rights has developed a draft set of international norms which should be drawn on; and the Commission's special representative should be involved.

5. The imperative for collective action: strengthening the United Nations

The Secretary General's report contains 11 proposals for how the Summit can contribute to strengthening and reforming the UN. The proposals involve:

- *Expanding the UN's Security Council by giving more countries a permanent seat in the Council;*
- *Establishing mechanisms that promote the participation of civil society in the work of the UN's General Assembly;*
- *Reforming the UN's Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), by among other actions holding annual meetings on a ministerial level to assess progress in attaining the MDGs;*
- *Replacing the UN's Commission on Human Rights with a Human Rights Council which convenes regular meetings and is comprised of elected Member State representatives;*

- *Establishing a more integrated structure for environmental actions based on the UN's Environment Program (UNEP), etc.*
- *Strengthening cooperation among regional organizations, including developing a 10-year plan of capacity building for the African Union.*

Comments:

Several of these proposals are sensible. This is the case for the proposal to give the UN's Economic and Social Council the task to assess progress made towards the MDGs and the proposal to create a more integrated structure for environmental actions.

A continuous follow-up arrangement to monitor MDG progress is needed. Therefore it would be appropriate to convene annual ministerial level meetings in the ECOSOC with a primary focus on the MDGs.

The proposal for a more integrated and comprehensive structure for global environmental efforts is also welcome. A clearer division of labor between, on the one hand, global environmental institutions which focus on establishing the necessary knowledge base, establishing environmental standards, and monitoring the implementation of international environmental agreements and, on the other hand, the international development institutions which focus on operational activities and have the function of ensuring that environmental concerns are integrated in these is needed.

It is essential to ensure that the future global set-up for environmental matters will be strong and comprehensive enough to be a serious counterpart to the WTO in order to ensure that environmental impacts of future trade agreements will be dealt with and that importance is given to removing environmentally harmful subsidies within, for example, agriculture, fishing and energy.