

MDG Conference 2003

Invitation to a Press Briefing:

Monday 17 November, 2.00pm, Town and Country Planning Association, 17 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1Y 5AS

Hitting the targets or missing the point?

Will the Millennium Development Goals break the vicious global cycle of protectionism, subsidies to rich-world farmers, declining aid and disempowerment?

The International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) in London is bringing together 100 leading activists and development professionals from more than 33 countries to the launch of a challenging new report.

'Hitting the Target' probes whether the global community's approach to reducing poverty through the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is likely to succeed and what needs to change to ensure it does.

The Millennium Development Goals have committed governments and international agencies, by 2015 to:

- Achieving universal primary education
- Reducing infant and child mortality by two-thirds and maternal mortality by three-quarters
- Halving the 2.5 billion people with unsafe drinking water and sanitation and the 1.5 billion with inadequate incomes and food intakes
- Significantly improving the lives of at least 100 million 'slum' dwellers (by 2020)
- Halting and beginning to reverse the spread of Aids, malaria and other major diseases

They also demand more gender equality and more work opportunities for youth. So governments and international agencies have set themselves up to be judged by whether they can ensure these very ambitious targets are met.

IIED's latest report seriously questions how can these goals be achieved when:

- Local processes needed to achieve this change remain largely unrecognised and large international agencies and governments are not structured in a way that can support them. Federations of some of the very poorest people, including pavement and slum dwellers, are using their own money to build basic infrastructure for their communities, including water supply, sanitation, housing, health-care and schooling.

- The trade policies of most high-income nations still marginalise many of the world's poorest nations – e.g. high-income nations subsidise their own farmers by US\$300 billion a year, 6 times more than they spend on development assistance. In the last five years 10 million African exporters have lost about \$200 million a year competing in a world cotton market where other countries subsidise their producers to the tune of US\$6 billion.
- The indicators for measuring success in meeting these goals are inaccurate or highly questionable. The poverty line – living on less than a \$1.00 a day -- is so broad it is potentially meaningless. A dollar a day in rural Uttar Pradesh would go much further than a dollar a day in downtown Jo'burg.

IIED cordially invites you to a press briefing with leading international activists and development professionals who have first-hand experience of progress based on local initiatives.

Contact Details:

For further information on the press briefing, interviewing any of the participants or to request hard copies of IIED's report please contact:

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