



International  
Labour  
Office  
Geneva

Make poverty history!

Trade Union manual on the  
Millennium  
Development  
Goals

ACTRAV  
Bureau  
for Workers'  
Activities



***Make poverty history!***

Trade Union manual on the  
**Millennium Development Goals**

Copyright © International Labour Organization 2012

First published 2012

Publications of the International Labour Office enjoy copyright under Protocol 2 of the Universal Copyright Convention. Nevertheless, short excerpts from them may be reproduced without authorization, on condition that the source is indicated. For rights of reproduction or translation, application should be made to ILO Publications (Rights and Permissions), International Labour Office, CH-1211 Geneva 22, Switzerland, or by email: [pubdroit@ilo.org](mailto:pubdroit@ilo.org). The International Labour Office welcomes such applications.

Libraries, institutions and other users registered with reproduction rights organizations may make copies in accordance with the licences issued to them for this purpose. Visit [www.ifro.org](http://www.ifro.org) to find the reproduction rights organization in your country.

---

Make poverty history!  
Trade Union manual on the Millennium Development Goals

*ILO Cataloguing in Publication Data*

---

The designations employed in ILO publications, which are in conformity with United Nations practice, and the presentation of material therein do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the International Labour Office concerning the legal status of any country, area or territory or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers.

The responsibility for opinions expressed in signed articles, studies and other contributions rests solely with their authors, and publication does not constitute an endorsement by the International Labour Office of the opinions expressed in them.

Reference to names of firms and commercial products and processes does not imply their endorsement by the International Labour Office, and any failure to mention a particular firm, commercial product or process is not a sign of disapproval.

ILO publications can be obtained through major booksellers or ILO local offices in many countries, or direct from ILO Publications, International Labour Office, CH-1211 Geneva 22, Switzerland. Catalogues or lists of new publications are available free of charge from the above address, or by email: [pubvente@ilo.org](mailto:pubvente@ilo.org)

Visit our website: [www.ilo.org/publns](http://www.ilo.org/publns)

Printed in Italy by International Training Centre of the ILO, Turin

# Table of Contents

Preface .....	1
Foreword .....	2
What are the Millennium Development Goals? .....	3
Goals and Targets from the Millennium Declaration .....	5
Goal 1:	
Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger .....	7
Goal 2:	
Achieve Universal Primary Education .....	13
Goal 3:	
Promote gender equality and empower women .....	19
Goal 4:	
Reduce Child Mortality .....	23
Goal 5:	
Improve Maternal Health .....	27
Goal 6:	
Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other diseases .....	30
Goal 7:	
Ensure Environmental Sustainability .....	36
Goal 8:	
A Global Partnership for Development .....	41
Millennium Development Goal	
Concluding issues - 2015 and beyond .....	45
Concluding remarks .....	45



# Preface

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have been the main development framework for the international community since the year 2000. These goals have provided a framework for focused intergovernmental action to fight extreme poverty.

An evaluation of the progress being made to meet these goals shows that, while a number of targets will be met by 2015, progress is uneven and several countries are lagging far behind the targets set. This situation risks being further undermined by the current economic and social crisis which has dealt a heavy blow to the MDGs. The crisis has not only led to increased levels of unemployment and poverty, but has shifted the focus of many governments from inclusive growth, to the politics of austerity.

Hence, with only a few more years left to reach the target date, ACTRAV is publishing this manual to assist trade unions intensify their efforts and campaigns to ensure that all countries meet the MDGs. Furthermore, with debates already taking place on the next global development framework, this manual provides useful information to assist unions engage in the policy debates on the next global development compact.

Through their day to day activities, trade unions are engaging in the fight against poverty. Whether it is through negotiating minimum wages, defending workers' rights, campaigning for decent work or organising the working poor, trade unions are contributing to the attainment of all the MDGs. These actions need to be reinforced in order to encourage governments to put in place the right national policies that will accelerate progress towards the MDGs.

However, national level action is not enough. Coordinated international action is needed to tackle the scourge of extreme poverty. As the ILO constitution reminds us, "*Poverty anywhere constitutes a danger to prosperity everywhere*". This calls among other things, for continued commitment of the international community to support employment-intensive and inclusive national policies.

Our appreciation goes to Claude Akpokavie who compiled this manual and to Amrita Sietaram, Lene Olsen, Raphael Crowe and Gemma Adaba who provided useful comments on the publication.

**Dan Cunliffe**

*Director*

ILO Bureau for Workers' Activities

# Foreword

The fight against poverty is a central concern of trade unions. Since their inception, trade unions have fought pauperisation largely through the defence and promotion of workers' rights – particularly the right to organise. The Millennium Development Goals offer an opportunity to trade unions to continue this tradition by contributing to the global effort to make poverty history.

This manual provides trade union leaders, trainers and activists with a general overview of progress being made in countries to achieve each of the Millennium Development Goals. It presents a number of policy positions of trade unions in relation to each of the Goals. The manual also shows that trade unions are working to achieve each goal through their daily trade union actions, through specific projects they are undertaking and through their engagement with governments, employers and international organisations on socio-economic policies. The manual ends with a discussion of issues that trade unions could consider in their participation in debates on the future international development compact after 2015. Even though this manual is mainly for trade unionists, it also provides the general public with information about trade union positions on the MDGs and what they are doing to ensure that the different Goals are met.

The ILO's Declaration of Philadelphia states that the war against want has to be carried out with unrelenting vigour within each nation and through concerted international action in which trade unions and employers' organisations join governments in democratic discussion to promote the common good. Through their engagement in social dialogue processes worldwide, trade unions are playing their role in the war against want. It is our hope that this manual will be a useful tool to assist trade unions in this effort.

**Claude Kwaku Akpokavie**  
*Senior Adviser*  
ILO Bureau for Workers' Activities



# What are the Millennium Development Goals?

In September 2000, Heads of State and Government meeting at the United Nations General Assembly, adopted the United Nations Millennium Declaration. In this Declaration they committed themselves to a partnership. This included a set of values and principles; a commitment to peace, security and disarmament; a reaffirmation of their support to protecting the environment and the safeguard of human rights, democracy and good governance; and above all, a commitment to development and poverty eradication.

Within the framework of the partnership for Development and poverty eradication, world leaders resolved to make the right to development a reality for all. They also committed themselves to a set of Goals to be met by the year 2015. This set of goals, known as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), consisted of the following:

- **Goal 1:** Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger
- **Goal 2:** Achieve Universal Primary Education
- **Goal 3:** Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women
- **Goal 4:** Reduce Child Mortality
- **Goal 5:** Improve Maternal Health
- **Goal 6:** Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other Diseases
- **Goal 7:** Ensure Environmental Sustainability
- **Goal 8:** Develop a Global Partnership for Development

Since 2000, these goals have become a blueprint for development institutions and a framework for development policy making. In order to give effect to these MDGs, each Goal has a set of well defined targets and each of these targets is accompanied by a set of indicators.

World leaders reconvened at the United Nations in 2005, and again in 2010, to take stock of progress made in achieving the MDGs. The 2010 Summit further charted a path for accelerated action in order to ensure that the MDGs are met by 2015. Trade unions had deplored the absence of commitments to employment goals in the initial set of MDGs agreed in 2000. They were active in both Summits, advocating for the introduction, and then strengthening, of references to decent work in the Outcome Documents of the Summits. As a result of the efforts of trade unions and others, the 2005 Summit adopted, in paragraph 47 of its Outcome Document, a statement on Employment in which Member States made the following commitment:

*" We strongly support fair globalization and resolve to make the goals of full and productive employment and decent work for all, including for women and young people, a central objective of our relevant national and international policies as well as our national development strategies, including poverty reduction strategies, as part of our efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. These measures should also encompass the elimination of the worst forms of child labour, as defined in International Labour Organization Convention No. 182, and forced labour. We also resolve to ensure full respect for the fundamental principles and rights at work".<sup>1</sup>*

As a follow up to this commitment, a new target on employment and decent work was incorporated into MDG1 on poverty eradication (Target 1B). The ILO subsequently worked on the incorporation of indicators to measure progress in meeting this target.<sup>2</sup>

As a result of intense advocacy, the 2010 Summit Outcome Document contains more detailed references to the centrality of job-intensive growth and decent work for poverty eradication. For the first time, it encourages Member States to adopt a social protection floor as an important means of achieving and consolidating development gains.<sup>3</sup>

This Trade Union manual on the Millennium Development Goals contains a review of the state of progress made in attaining the Goals<sup>4</sup> as well as trade union concerns and actions for each goal. It concludes with a critique of the current development framework and a discussion on the possible shape of the global development agenda after the target date of 2015.

<sup>1</sup> United Nations, 2005 World Summit Outcome Document adopted by the General Assembly - A/60/L.1, 15 September, 2005.

<sup>2</sup> ILO, Guide to the New Millennium Development Goals Indicators, including the full set of Decent Work Indicators - International Labour Office, Geneva, June 2009

<sup>3</sup> United Nations, Follow-up to the Outcome of the Millennium Summit – *Keeping the Promise: united to achieve the Millennium Development Goals* - adopted by the General Assembly - A/65/L.1, 17 September, 2010.

<sup>4</sup> For more information on the MDGs and progress being made, consult the following websites:  
ILO/ACTRAV: [http://www.ilo.org/actrav/what/events/lang—en/docName—WCMS\\_111309/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/actrav/what/events/lang—en/docName—WCMS_111309/index.htm);  
ILO: <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/pardev/relations/multilateral/millennium.htm>;  
United Nations: <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals>

# Goals and Targets from the Millennium Declaration

## GOAL 1 ERADICATE EXTREME POVERTY AND HUNGER

- TARGET 1.A Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than \$1.25 a day
- TARGET 1.B Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people
- TARGET 1.C Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger

## GOAL 2 ACHIEVE UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION

- TARGET 2.A Ensure that by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling

## GOAL 3 PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER WOMEN

- TARGET 3.A Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and at all levels of education no later than 2015

## GOAL 4 REDUCE CHILD MORTALITY

- TARGET 4.A Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate

## GOAL 5 IMPROVE MATERNAL HEALTH

- TARGET 5.A Reduce by three-quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio
- TARGET 5.B Achieve by 2015 universal access to reproductive health

## GOAL 6 COMBAT HIV/AIDS, MALARIA, AND OTHER DISEASES

- TARGET 6.A Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS
- TARGET 6.B Achieve by 2010 universal access to treatment for HIV/AIDS for all those who need it

TARGET 6.C Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases

## GOAL 7 ENSURE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

TARGET 7.A Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programs and reverse the loss of environmental resources

TARGET 7.B Reduce biodiversity loss, achieving by 2010 a significant reduction in the rate of loss

TARGET 7.C Halve by 2015 the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation

TARGET 7.D Have achieved a significant improvement by 2020 in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers

## GOAL 8 DEVELOP A GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR DEVELOPMENT

TARGET 8.A Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system (including a commitment to good governance, development, and poverty reduction, nationally and internationally)

TARGET 8.B Address the special needs of the least-developed countries (including tariff - and quota-free access for exports of the least-developed countries; enhanced debt relief for heavily indebted poor countries and cancellation of official bilateral debt; and more generous official development assistance for countries committed to reducing poverty)

TARGET 8.C Address the special needs of landlocked countries and small island developing states (through the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and the outcome of the 22nd special session of the General Assembly)

TARGET 8.D Deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries through national and international measures to make debt sustainable in the long term

TARGET 8.E In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable, essential drugs in developing countries

TARGET 8.F In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications

# Goal 1:

## Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger

**Target 1A: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than \$1 a day.**

- Indicator 1.1: Proportion of population below \$1 (PPP) per day
- Indicator 1.2: Poverty gap ratio
- Indicator 1.3: Share of poorest quintile in national consumption

**Target 1B: Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people.**

- Indicator 1.4: Growth rate of GDP per person employed
- Indicator 1.5: Employment-to-population ratio
- Indicator 1.6: Proportion of employed people living below \$1 (PPP) per day
- Indicator 1.7: Proportion of own-account and contributing family workers in total employment

**Target 1C: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.**

- Indicator 1.8: Prevalence of underweight children under-five years of age
- Indicator 1.9: Proportion of population below minimum level of dietary energy consumption

### State of Progress<sup>5</sup>:

At the beginning of this century, poverty reduction became a central preoccupation of the international community. The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund initiated Poverty Reduction Strategies as the means for concessional lending to low income countries in 1999. The Millennium Summit in 2000 also made the eradication of extreme poverty a central pillar of the Millennium Declaration. This focus on poverty reduction was prompted by the realization that past policies such as Structural Adjustment Programmes, had largely failed to eradicate global poverty.

<sup>5</sup> Information on the State of Progress in this manual is drawn largely from a review of the following sources: United Nations, The Millennium Development Goals Report 2010, United Nations, New York, 2010; United Nations, The Millennium Development Goals Report, United Nations, New York, 2011; World Bank, Improving the Odds of Achieving the MDGs, Global Monitoring Report 2011, Washington DC, 2011; UNDP, Thematic Paper on MDG1, Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, UNDP Task Force on the MDGs, 2010; FAO and the Eight Millennium Development Goals (<http://www.fao.org/mdg/en/>); UNESCO, Reaching the marginalized, EFA Global Monitoring Report, 2010, Oxford University Press, 2010



**Target 1A - Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than \$1 a day.**

Between 1990 and 2005, the share of the population in developing countries living on less than US\$1.25<sup>6</sup> a day fell by 445 million - from 1.8 billion in 1990 to 1.4 billion in 2005. Eastern Asia registered the most dramatic decline in the proportion of people living on less than \$1.25 a day, moving from 60% to 16% in the same period. In 2005 the average income of people living below the US\$1.25 poverty line was US\$0.88.

Before the onset of the global crisis, the poor in developing countries were being hit hard by a food crisis and an energy crisis. The global financial crisis of 2007 exacerbated this situation and led to an economic and social crisis of global proportions. The global crisis slowed down progress in meeting the poverty reduction targets of MDG1. According to the World Bank's estimates, in 2009 an additional 50 million people were expected to fall into extreme poverty as a direct result of the crisis. The most affected regions are sub-Saharan Africa, Eastern and South-Eastern Asia.

Despite this situation, the world is still on track to reduce by half the number of people living in extreme poverty. The number of people in developing countries living on less than US\$1.25 a day is projected to fall to below 900 million by 2015 - compared with 1.4 billion in 2005 and 1.8 billion in 1990. Much of this progress registered since 1990 is due to rapid economic growth in China and India. The poverty rate in China is expected to fall under 5% by 2015. Poverty rates in India are projected to fall from 51% in 1990 to about 22% in 2015. In China and India combined, a total of 455 million people were lifted out of extreme poverty between 1990 and 2005. An additional 320 million people are projected to move out of extreme poverty by 2015. Projections for sub-Saharan Africa also point to a decline in the extreme poverty rate to below 36% by 2015.

However, progress to meet this target is uneven across regions and countries. Based on current projections, by 2015, some 900 million people will still be living in extreme poverty worldwide. 47 countries representing 55% of developing countries are on track to

<sup>6</sup> When the MDGs were launched in 2000, the international poverty line used to measure extreme poverty was \$1 a day. However, following improvement in internationally comparable price data by the World Bank, the international poverty line was changed to \$1.25 a day in 2008.

meet this target. 21 countries or 25% of developing countries are close to being on track. However, 17 countries representing 20% of developing countries are far from meeting this target.

Among the low-income countries, the following countries have either achieved the target or are on track to halve the number of people in extreme poverty. These are Cambodia, Central African Republic, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya and Mauritania. However, gains in poverty reduction may well be tenuous for countries such as Ethiopia and Kenya if they continue to be affected by unfavourable climactic conditions such as drought, with attendant severe food shortages and famine.

### **Target 1B - Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people.**

The global crisis has led to a deterioration of labour markets worldwide, and increased unemployment. In 2009, the crisis pushed an additional 34 million people into unemployment bringing the jobless figures worldwide to 212 million. In addition to this, millions of workers were plunged into different forms of precarious employment relationships. Young people were particularly affected by the crisis. Today, youth unemployment hovers just below 80 million, at two to three times the adult rate. Young people have entered the labour market when conditions are adverse and so they face the frustration of fruitless job searches in a depressed labour market that is failing to offer jobs. The situation is all the more acute for the millions of young people in sub-Saharan Africa and South-east Asia that have not succeeded in acquiring the needed literacy and skills that would enhance their chances in the labour market.

As the ranks of the unemployed increased, one witnessed an increase in *vulnerable work*.<sup>7</sup> In developing countries in particular, the informal economy accounts for between 35 and 90 percent of total employment. According to ILO estimates, the number of people engaged in vulnerable work increased by 110 million in 2009. The global vulnerable employment rate in 2009 is estimated at between 49% and 53% which amounts to 1.5 to 1.6 billion people in vulnerable work. This represents a serious challenge for the achievement of the MDGs since vulnerable work is characterized by great precarity as regards levels and security of income, conditions of work, and social protection. People who are engaged in vulnerable employment, a large majority of whom are women, do not enjoy the rights and benefits of decent employment.

Equally serious has been the impact of the crisis on the *working poor*.<sup>8</sup> These workers are often on tenuous or short-term contracts, devoid of statutory rights, and so experience high levels of job and income insecurity. A growing trend in the current political economy is the increasing precarity of work arrangements and erosion of rights thus leading to an increasing pauperisation of all categories of workers.

Since the crisis, the numbers of the working poor have increased after several years of steady decline. Regions most affected by the increase in the numbers of the working poor were sub-Saharan Africa, Southern Asia, South-Eastern Asia and Oceania. In 2008, 633 million workers and their families were living on less than US\$1.25 a day. According to the ILO, one in five workers and their families worldwide were living in extreme poverty (or on

<sup>7</sup> Vulnerable employment is defined as the sum of contributing family workers and own-account workers in total employment. By definition, contributing family workers and own-account workers are less likely to have formal work arrangements, which allows the usage of the indicator on vulnerable employment to confirm or refute claims of an increasing informalization of labour markets.

<sup>8</sup> The «working poor» are defined as those who are employed but live in households where individual members subsist on less than US\$1.25 a day.



less than \$1.25 per person per day) in 2009. This estimate is 1.6% points higher than the projected pre-crisis estimate. This amounts to 40 million more working poor as a result of the crisis.

### **Target 1C - Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.**

Since 1990, developing countries have made some progress towards halving the proportion of people who suffer from hunger. The share of the undernourished population fell from 20% (1990-92) to 16% (2005-07). However, despite reductions in poverty, the proportion of people going hungry has stalled at 16%. This raises doubts whether several regions of the developing world will meet the hunger target. FAO estimates put the number of undernourished people at 817 million for the period 1990-1992, and at 837 million for the period 2005-2007.

As a result of increasing unemployment, falling incomes and a hike in food prices, resulting from the 2008 food crisis and the financial crisis, hunger increased dramatically in 2009. The FAO estimates that the number of undernourished people in the world was about 915 million in 2008 and 1.02 billion in 2009. This represents an increase by 105 million of the number of undernourished people between 2008 and 2009. Progress to end hunger in most regions was compromised. For instance, the Asia/Pacific region was home to over half of the world's population and nearly two-thirds of the world's hungry people.

Despite this deteriorating situation, 25 countries (45% of developing countries) are on target to reach the goal of halving hunger by 2015. 18 other countries (33% of developing countries) are close to being on target, and 12 countries (22% of developing countries) are far behind the target.

However, major challenges remain. Given the key role that women play in the food chain as producers, sellers and providers for their families, women are acutely affected by food crises. As small-scale food producers they are unlikely to benefit from price hikes in the export market, while severe food shortages affect their income, their capacity to purchase imported food items and their care-giving role within their families. Also of particular concern is the high prevalence of underweight children under-five years of age in many developing countries. Furthermore, children in rural areas are nearly twice as likely to be underweight as those in urban areas. Across the developing world, children from the poorest households are twice as likely to be underweight as children from the richest households.

The commodity price speculations causing volatile hikes in food prices on international markets should be curtailed by appropriate regulation in order to provide a stable, predictable environment for food security. This will also ensure affordable access to essential staple foods by all. Similarly, it is important to address climate change and environmental degradation, since they also affect food production. Unless this wide range of policy issues are tackled, food insecurity and even famine in some regions will wipe out the gains achieved in other MDGs. These are all issues that need to be addressed by national governments with the support of the international community.

### **Trade Unions and MDG1<sup>9</sup>:**

The fight against poverty was a key reason for the creation of trade unions. Today, as in the past, trade unions are joining forces with like-minded organisations to fight for social

<sup>9</sup> For details on the ITUC positions on all the MDGs, consult: ITUC, Decisions, 2nd ITUC World Congress, Vancouver, 21-25 June, 2010 ([http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/CONGRESS\\_Decisions\\_EN.pdf](http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/CONGRESS_Decisions_EN.pdf)).



justice and the protection of the poor and hungry in society.<sup>10</sup> The mixed results of progress being made towards the attainment of the MDGs have been a key concern for unions. Rising levels of unemployment and inequality are seen as consequences of the current development model that is failing to create decent work for all. Against this background, unions have called for, among other things:

- A change in the prevailing macroeconomic policies being promoted by the International Financial Institutions. These policies are leading to growth patterns that are neither inclusive nor employment intensive and that result in people remaining trapped in poverty;
- The reform of the international financial system which has created the biggest economic and social crisis since the 1930s. This reform should make the banks and the financial markets work for the real economy instead of narrowly focused rent-seeking and short-term accumulation. This is an approach that has only served to endanger progress towards poverty reduction;
- A coherent policy approach that emphasises job creation, income-led growth as well as growth with redistribution, to deal with the high human cost of the current crisis;
- Industrialised countries to honour the commitment they made to allocate 0.7% of Gross National Income to Overseas Development Assistance. Furthermore, additional finance for development must be provided through new forms of international taxation such as an international financial transactions tax.

Trade unions exist to defend and promote the rights of workers, and to fight for social justice for all. The fight to eradicate poverty is therefore central to their mandate. So whether it is through trade union struggles for living wages for the working poor, or through the struggle for universal social protection systems, or the demand for the respect of workers' rights, or the fight for more and better jobs, unions are contributing directly and indirectly to poverty reduction. One of the most powerful trade union strategies to reduce poverty has been to ensure that the poor fully enjoy their right to freely form and join organisations of their own choosing. Through organising, poor individual workers gain collective strength. This allows them to defend and promote their interests and well-being at the work place and in local communities.<sup>11</sup> Below are a number of examples of how trade unions are organising poor vulnerable workers in different regions.<sup>12</sup>

The *SYNDICOOP project covering Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda* strengthened the capacity of trade unions and cooperatives to work together to organize workers in the informal economy and improve their working conditions. Freedom of association and collective bargaining are founding pillars of this shared approach. The experience is proving that trade unions and cooperatives have much to offer each other and are natural partners to provide the services and support needed by workers in informal and unprotected situations. It has shown tremendous potential for informal economy workers

<sup>10</sup> Other useful links: End Poverty 2015 Millennium Campaign ([www.endpoverty2015.org](http://www.endpoverty2015.org)); The Global Call to Action Against Poverty (<http://www.whiteband.org>)

<sup>11</sup> For information on how trade unions can defend migrant workers' rights, consult: Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV), In search of Decent Work - Migrant workers' rights: A manual for trade unionists, International Labour Office, Geneva, 2008: ([http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/—ed\\_dialogue/—actrav/documents/publication/wcms\\_115035.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/—ed_dialogue/—actrav/documents/publication/wcms_115035.pdf))

<sup>12</sup> Consult the ACTRAV website for more examples of what trade unions are doing to fight poverty: [http://www.ilo.org/actrav/what/events/lang—en/docName—WCMS\\_111309/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/actrav/what/events/lang—en/docName—WCMS_111309/index.htm)  
Conclusions of the International Workers' Symposium on "The Role of Trade Unions in the Global Economy and the Fight against Poverty"  
Background paper: The role of trade unions in the global economy and the fight against poverty

to organize and advance their interests. Participating unions and cooperative organizations are also benefiting from this strategic alliance as reflected in strengthened structures and enhanced services for existing members. Their collaboration is also laying the foundation for joint contributions to important national social dialogue processes.

The Street Vendors Trade Union of **Argentina** (*Sindicato de Vendedores Ambulantes de la República Argentina*) SIVARA, organises some 17,000 street vendors in Argentina. Created in 1973, this trade union has defended the rights of self-employed street vendors as well as workers in employment relationships that are not formally recognised. With about a third of the membership composed of women workers, SIVARA has managed to gain recognition for these workers and hence improved their negotiating capacity with public authorities.

In **India** rural women workers have been trained as extension workers. They have successfully worked with trade unions to organise rural workers into trade unions and establish a range of income generating self-help initiatives. Under this project, more than 80,000 rural workers have been organized and are participating in the running of democratic and representative trade unions. Furthermore, through this increased collective strength, the rural workers now have much greater income security. The significance of this collective voice is enormous. Women who have never previously had the possibility to enter into social dialogue have been empowered to successfully negotiate with a range of counterparts including local authorities and private landowners. The rural workers concerned have increased their incomes and negotiated a higher minimum wage from the landowners. Market traders have also secured better conditions including toilets, washing facilities and street lighting in the market areas.

### Some relevant international instruments:

- Declaration concerning the aims and purposes of the International Labour Organisation (Declaration of Philadelphia): *“freedom of expression and of association are essential to sustained progress; poverty anywhere constitutes a danger to prosperity everywhere; the war against want requires to be carried on with unrelenting vigour within each nation, and by continuous and concerted international effort in which the representatives of workers and employers, enjoying equal status with those of governments, join with them in free discussion and democratic decision with a view to the promotion of the common welfare”*
- Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (N° 87)
- Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (N° 98)
- Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (N° 122)
- Social Policy (Basic Aims and Standards) Convention, 1962 (N°117)
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948

### Did you know that...

- in 2009 about 1.02 billion people were estimated to be chronically deprived of adequate food?

## Goal 2:

### Achieve Universal Primary Education

**Target 2a: Ensure that all boys and girls complete a full course of primary schooling**

- Indicator 2.1 Net enrolment ratio in primary education
- Indicator 2.2 Proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reach last grade of primary
- Indicator 2.3 Literacy rate of 15-24 year-olds, women and men

#### State of Progress:

Important strides have been made in enrolment in primary education. However, the pace of progress in meeting this goal is insufficient to ensure that by 2015, all girls and boys complete a full course of primary education. Enrolment in developing countries has reached 89%. Even though Sub-Saharan Africa is the region with the lowest enrolment levels, it still increased enrolment from 58% (1998/1999) to 76% (2008/2009). The



© ILO/Crozet

highest enrolment levels for 2008/2009 are recorded for East Asia (96%), and Latin America and the Caribbean (95%), while North Africa made steady progress in increasing its enrolment level by 8 percentage points, from 86% in 1998/1999 to 94% in 2008/2009. South Asia has also seen steady progress, with its enrolment level increasing by 12 percentage points, from 79% in 1998/1999 to 91% in 2008/2009.

Major advances have been made even in the poorest countries. For instance, the abolition of primary school fees in Burundi has resulted in a threefold increase in primary school education since 1999. Tanzania doubled its enrolment rate during the same period. Guatemala, Nicaragua and Zambia also reached the 90% threshold in enrolment. Significantly also, the gender gap among out-of-school children has decreased from 57% to 53%. The total number of children who are out of school decreased from 106 million in 1999 to 69 million in 2008. The vast majority of these children are to be found in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. With 31 million children, Sub-Saharan Africa has almost half of all out of school children. Asia on the other hand, has more than a quarter, with 18 million out of school children. But there are remaining challenges, namely, ensuring that enrolled children do complete the full course of primary education. Currently, only 87% of children in developing countries actually complete their primary education.

Low income status and societal conflicts are pre-disposing factors for lower school enrolment levels. 42% of out of school children live in low-income developing countries affected by conflict. This represents 28 million children. These figures also have implications for the incidence of child labour. The ILO estimates that 215 million children aged between 5-17 years are in child labour. The Asian-Pacific region alone accounts for 113.6 million child labourers, while Sub-Saharan Africa has 65.1 million child labourers. However, the region with the highest incidence of child labour is sub-Saharan Africa, with 25% of its children engaged in child labour.

The most important obstacle to education is poverty. This is compounded by discrimination. Data from 42 countries show that rural children are twice as likely to be out of school than children living in urban areas. This rural-urban gap is slightly wider for girls than boys. Girls from the poorest 20% of households have the least chance of getting an education. Generally, girls suffer discrimination in access to education. Of the 72 million primary school age children out of school, 44 million are girls. Similarly, disability often leads to marginalisation from education. Even in countries that are close to the goal of universal primary education like Bulgaria and Romania, children with disabilities represent the majority of those excluded.

The 2010 EFA Global Monitoring Report points to significant evidence of persistent and serious challenges related to teachers which need to be tackled if MDG2 is to be reached. These challenges include, a major shortage of teachers, high pupil/teacher ratios with great national disparities between rural and urban areas, high student and teacher attrition rates, and low teacher salaries. A daunting challenge is that of the present teacher gap. According to the latest forecasts, as many as 10.3 million new primary school teachers need to be recruited between 2007 and 2015 in order to achieve the Education for All (EFA)<sup>13</sup> goal of universal primary education by 2015. This requires politically courageous national and international action based on sustainability and quality instead of short term measures that sacrifice quality for quantity.

<sup>13</sup> The World Education Forum (26-28 April 2000, Dakar) adopted the Dakar Framework for Action, Education for All: Meeting our Collective Commitments. The Goals broadly parallel those of MDG2. Development actors, policy practitioners and educators in this sector typically construct policy frameworks integrating the two sets of goals.

## Trade Unions and MDG2<sup>14</sup>

All trade unions continue to be strongly committed to the achievement of MDG2. Issues of deep concern to unions in the realisation of this goal include the following:

- Education is both a fundamental human right and a public good. Governments therefore have a dual responsibility: to guarantee and promote this right, and at the same time, to ensure it is publicly funded and regulated;
- Progress made towards the achievement of MDG2 and the Dakar Goals for Education for All, is being jeopardised and undermined by the effects of the global economic crisis. This is being exacerbated by current austerity measures which will further derail international commitments to end child labour and guarantee education for all;
- Public authorities must provide a legal framework for education based on the principles of fairness, equity and quality
- Every citizen worldwide has the right to quality education
- Quality education requires quality teaching and hence the importance of ensuring that teacher training is of high quality, that teachers' status is commensurate with their professional responsibilities, and that their conditions of service are comparable to other groups with similar qualifications
- Governments should accelerate progress towards meeting MDG2 through the provision of free, compulsory, quality education for all boys and girls. This requires public action to ensure quality education from early childhood through to higher education and life-long learning
- International solidarity is needed to support this effort, and donors must keep their promises made to fund MDG2.

In the light of these challenges, trade unions have developed different programmes in support of this goal. For instance, Education International (EI), has initiated the EFAIDS Programme with the twin goals of achieving Education for All and limiting the impact of HIV and AIDS on the education sector. This programme is currently implemented in coordination with over 80 EI member organisations in almost 50 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean on the basis of five working areas: Research, Policy development, Advocacy, Publicity and Training.

The rationale for adopting a joint approach to the issues of EFA and HIV/AIDS is related to the interconnectedness of the two issues. By achieving Education for All, children will be better equipped with the skills and knowledge necessary to protect themselves from HIV infections. Similarly, teachers who are supported to live healthily are better placed to contribute to providing quality education. Achieving universal education helps stem the tide of HIV infections. At the same time, promoting education on HIV prevention and support for people living with HIV, will strengthen the education sector, thus ensuring quality education.

### Education and child labour - Trade union actions against child labour:

One of the indications that MDG2 is not being adequately met is the persistence of child labour. Whereas poverty is the key driver leading to child labour, the lack of education for boys and girls is another significant and related factor that explains the existence of child

<sup>14</sup> For further information, consult the Resolutions of the 6th World Congress of Education International: ([http://www.ei-ie.org/en/websections/content\\_detail/5741](http://www.ei-ie.org/en/websections/content_detail/5741))



labour. The ILO estimates that there are 215 million child labourers worldwide. Of this figure, 115 million are engaged in hazardous child labour. The lack of really free, compulsory and quality education is an important contributing factor perpetuating this problem.

Trade unions contribute to MDG2 by fighting against child labour. They do this through policy work, advocacy and targeted project interventions. Trade union contributions to address child labour are highlighted in a 2007 survey undertaken by the ILO Bureau for Workers' Activities on "*Trade unions and Child labour*", involving 40 trade union confederations in all regions. This study revealed that almost all the 40 unions surveyed had an official policy on child labour. All the unions also had a department or a person in charge of child labour. The table below illustrates the types of activities undertaken by these unions.



© ILO/Crozet

## Trade Union action against child labour

Fields action	Activities
<b>Advocacy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sensitising parents to send their children to school</li> <li>• Organising Media campaigns on ILO conventions</li> <li>• Raising awareness on child labour and its consequences</li> <li>• Organising special events in communities and schools to prevent child labour</li> </ul>
<b>Policy work</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocating for child rights</li> <li>• Campaigning for the ratification and implementation of relevant ILO conventions</li> <li>• Monitoring the enforcement of the application of the conventions</li> <li>• Advocating for free, compulsory, quality education for all</li> <li>• Campaign for the extension of social protection to all</li> <li>• Lobbying government for policies that create more and better jobs</li> <li>• Advocating for living wages for workers</li> <li>• Participating in the formulation of a national plan of action and monitoring its implementation</li> </ul>
<b>Targeted Actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Denunciation of employers that are employing children</li> <li>• Withdrawing working children from dangerous working places</li> <li>• Counselling</li> <li>• Rehabilitation of former child labourers into school or vocational training</li> <li>• Improving adult conditions of work</li> <li>• Organising workers in the informal economy</li> </ul>
<b>Institution building</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reinforcing trade union capacities on child labour</li> <li>• Formulation of trade union positions on child labour</li> <li>• Creation of a Trade Union Observatory on child labour</li> <li>• Creation of a Rehabilitation centre</li> </ul>

Trade union action in the area of child labour also had a sectoral focus. Industrial unions from Benin, Kenya, Nepal, Senegal, Romania, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe focused their work in the Agricultural and Tourism sectors. Unions in Togo, Zambia, Nepal, Albania, Zimbabwe and South Africa were engaged in the Educational sector. Unions in Nepal undertook actions in the Wood and Construction sector. Trade unions in Benin, Burkina Faso, Costa Rica and Tanzania were engaged in fighting child labour in Mining. Workers' organisations in Benin and Senegal were involved in eliminating child labour in the Transport sector. Other unions in Burkina Faso and Tanzania were engaged in the campaign to eradicate Domestic child labour.

### Some relevant international instruments:

- ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers, 1966
- ILO Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (N° 138)
- ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (N° 182)
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989
- ILO Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (N° 169)
- ILO Human Resources Development Recommendation, 2004 (N° 195)

### Did you know that...

- over 80% of the estimated 72 million children of primary school age not attending school live in rural areas
- an estimated 774 million adults – two-thirds of whom are women – lack basic literacy skills and the majority of them are rural



## Goal 3:

### Promote gender equality and empower women

**Target 3a: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, and at all levels by 2015**

- Indicator 3.1 Ratios of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education
- Indicator 3.2 Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector
- Indicator 3.3 Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament

#### State of Progress:

In the area of *gender parity* in educational attainment, there is steady progress being made to achieve the targets set. In 2008 there were 96 girls for every 100 boys enrolled in primary school and 95 girls for every 100 boys enrolled in secondary education. In 1999 the ratios were 91:100 and 88:100 respectively, for the two levels of education.

Despite this progress, gender parity in primary and secondary education is still out of reach – particularly in some regions. For primary education, Oceania, sub-Saharan Africa and Western Asia are the regions lagging behind. In secondary education, the gender gap is more pronounced in sub-Saharan Africa, West Asia and South Asia. On the other hand, in Latin America and the Caribbean, East Asia and South-East Asia, more girls have been enrolled in secondary education than boys. In tertiary education, greater efforts are needed in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia where boys heavily outnumber girls by 67 and 76 girls per 100 boys respectively.

Poverty is a major obstacle to education especially among girls. Poor families tend to favour the education of boys. If there is a need for someone to stay at home to do household or farm chores, it is the girl who is often taken out of school. So girls from poor families of primary school age are three times more likely to be out of school as those from richer households. The gender gap is also wider for girls from rural areas.

Another area of gender disparity relates to fields of study. Women tend to be overrepresented in the humanities and social sciences, and underrepresented in science and technology. Measures need to be put in place to redress this imbalance.

Overall, regarding progress in the area of gender parity in primary education, it is estimated that 89 countries or 70% of developing countries are on target. A further 25 countries or 20% of developing countries are close to meeting the target. However, 13 countries or 10% of developing countries are far behind the target.



In the area of progress on gender parity in Secondary education, 82 countries (68% of developing countries) are on target whereas 23 countries (19% of developing countries) are close to the target. 15 countries (13% of developing countries) are far behind the target.

Low income countries that have either achieved or are on track to achieve gender parity in both primary and secondary education include Bangladesh, the Gambia, Kyrgyzstan, Malawi, Mauritania, Myanmar, Nepal and Rwanda.

In **paid employment**, men registered a higher share compared to women, in all developing countries. Nevertheless, the share of women in paid employment has been slowly increasing to reach 41% in 2008. However, gender disparity in favour of men's paid employment is still high in some regions. In South Asia, North Africa and West Asia, only 20% of those employed outside of agriculture are women. In sub-Saharan Africa, only one in three paid jobs outside agriculture is occupied by a woman.

In general, women engaged in paid employment outside agriculture tend to be paid less than men for work of equal value. According to a 2009 ILO Report, "*In most countries, women's wages for work of equal value represent on average between 70 and 90 per cent of men's, but it is not uncommon to find much wider differences.*"<sup>15</sup> Two ITUC studies in 2009 and 2010 also point to the same trends in pay inequity.<sup>16</sup>

In rural areas, women are mostly engaged in vulnerable work or subsistence agriculture. They combine farming with a range of care-giving and household tasks, much of which goes unremunerated. In general, women spend many more hours in unpaid work than men. This is an aspect of structured gender discrimination in the world of work which needs to

<sup>15</sup> ILO: *Gender equality at the heart of decent work*, Report VI, International Labour Conference, 98th Session, Geneva, 2009, para. 294.

<sup>16</sup> ITUC: *Gender in (equality) in the labour market: An overview of global trends and developments* (Brussels, Mar. 2009); ITUC: *Decisions for work: An examination of the factors influencing women's decisions for work* (Brussels, 2010), pp. 21, 31.

be redressed. In many countries women have no land inheritance rights which militate against their engaging in viable income-generating activities as own-account farmers.

At the level of the number of seats held by women in national parliaments, the numbers of women continue to increase timidly. In 2010, this reached a paltry 19% even though it represented a 67% increase since 1995.

### Trade Unions and MDG3:

Gender equality in the work place, in trade unions and in society at large, is a key trade union priority. Even as women participate increasingly in the paid workforce, they are nonetheless disproportionately represented in precarious, low-skilled, low-paid jobs as compared to men, and very often discriminated against. Trade unions have raised a number of issues and highlighted policies that should be implemented in order to achieve MDG3. These include the following:

- Action must be taken to address the situation in which the increase of women in precarious work has left many of them in low paid jobs, with little or no protection from exploitation, and lacking social security and pension entitlements;
- The current economic and social crises should not be used as an excuse to create even greater gender inequalities or undermine the acquired rights of women;
- Affirmative action measures and rigorous monitoring procedures remain an effective means to achieve gender equality;
- Specific attention must be paid to young women workers, particularly those in precarious working situations like workers in Export processing zones, domestic workers, migrants and rural workers;
- Non-discriminatory policies for quality education, vocational training, skills development and life-long learning need to be enhanced in order to ensure equal treatment and opportunity for girls and women;
- Public authorities and employers must work to provide the needed facilities and infrastructure to support workers with family responsibilities, and to promote the equal sharing of family responsibilities between women and men;
- Governments must ratify and implement all relevant international instruments related to gender equality, particularly Convention 100 on Equal Remuneration and Convention 111 on Discrimination.

### Decent work and decent lives for women workers:

To give effect to its commitment to gender equality, trade unions worldwide have embarked on a host of initiatives. These range from empowering women to participate effectively in decision-making organs within trade unions, to ensuring the involvement of women in social dialogue institutions, to educating women workers on their rights, to strengthening efforts to eradicate barriers to women's participation in society. One of the main recent campaigns launched by the International Trade Union Confederation has been the *Decisions for Life Campaign*. This campaign supports young women individually and collectively; aims to achieve better working conditions for young women; and seeks to increase the number of young women as trade union members and leaders. Issues addressed in this campaign include empowering women workers to make well-informed

decisions about their lives in areas such as career-family balance, how to access secure jobs, ensuring decent earnings and social benefits, understanding equal opportunities at work, and improving their leadership and negotiation skills. The campaign focuses on young women workers in eight large occupational groups in the service sector. To reach these women, the project is deploying a triple approach combining grassroots trade union campaigns at national level, media web technologies and research activities. The project is currently implemented in 14 countries.

### Trade unions for pay equity

For many years trade unions have been struggling to achieve pay equity at the workplace. This concept recognises that there are gender-based differences in workers' pay and conditions. The work carried out by most women is often less well paid than men's. This concept goes beyond the principle of "equal pay for equal work" which is largely accepted by the legislation in most countries. It seeks to eliminate sex-based stereotypes and introduce the notion of "equal pay for work of equal value". Gender neutral job evaluations should be carried out to ensure equity. When different jobs require the same level of training, skills, responsibility and efforts, they should receive the same wage and conditions of work. Jobs do not have to be similar to be considered of equal value.

### Some relevant international policy and normative instruments:

- Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (n° 100)
- Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (N° 111)
- Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (N° 156)
- Part-Time Work Convention, 1994 (N° 175)
- Home Work Convention, 1996 (N° 177)
- Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (N° 183)
- Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (N° 189)
- The Beijing Platform for Action
- UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women

### Did you know that...

- in most countries, women's wages for work of equal value represent on average between 70 and 90 per cent of men's?

# Goal 4:

## Reduce Child Mortality

**Target 4a: Reduce by two thirds the mortality rate among children under five**

- Indicator 4.1 Under-five mortality rate
- Indicator 4.2 Infant mortality rate
- Indicator 4.3 Proportion of 1 year-old children immunised against measles

### State of Progress:

Considerable progress has been made in reducing child mortality rates. Since 1990, mortality rates for children in developing countries have fallen by a third - from 89 deaths per 1000 live births in 1990, to 60 in 2009. Despite population growth, the absolute numbers of under-five deaths worldwide also declined from 12.4 million in 1990 to 8.1 million in 2009. So child deaths are falling - including in some of the world's poorest



countries. However, this fall is not quick enough to reach the MDG4a target and many countries still have unacceptably high levels of child mortality. This is illustrated in sub-Saharan Africa where under-five mortality has declined by 28% between 1990 and 2009 and yet, this rate of improvement is insufficient to meet the target. Regions that are on track to meet and surpass the target have recorded upwards of 50% declines in under five mortality rates between 1990 and 2009. For example, Northern Africa and Eastern Asia recorded declines in under five mortality rates of 68% and 58% respectively for the period.

43% of all deaths in children under the age of five are caused by 4 diseases, namely, pneumonia, diarrhoea, malaria and AIDS. Most of these children could have been saved by the provision of low-cost preventative measures and treatment. Routine immunization against measles continues to rise. In 2000 immunization coverage reached 70% of the developing world and rose to 81% by 2008. This average however masks significant disparities, with lower coverage for children from poor households, those from rural areas or with parents with lower levels of education. With the exception of countries in South Asia, disparities between girls and boys are however not significant.

Overall, 36 countries (26% of developing countries) are on track to meet the goal of reducing child mortality. 52 other countries (37% of developing countries) are close to being on target. However, 53 countries (38% of developing countries) are far behind the target. 5 low-income countries, namely, Bangladesh, Eritrea, Laos, Madagascar and Nepal, are on track to meet the goal.

### **Trade Unions, MDG4 and the other Health-related MDGs:**

The MDGs directly related to health care namely, MDG4 (reduce child mortality), MDG5 (improve maternal health) and MDG6 (combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other diseases), all share a number of crucial challenges. Trade unions take the view that these MDGs cannot be achieved within a narrow framework. What is needed is a comprehensive policy at national level that includes, adequate social protection, effective safety and health at work, and decent work for health workers. This will provide the enabling environment for healthy workers and their families, thereby achieving maternal and child health, and a sustainable reversal of the spread of HIV/AIDS.

The following are key considerations for the construction of such a policy framework:

- Trade unions have continually called for the universal access to adequate social protection. Social protection is not only a basic human right, it is also a public good;
- Given the erosion of the protection granted to workers and a rise in precarious and vulnerable employment, governments should ensure that these workers are not excluded from contributory social protection schemes on the basis of their employment status, and that they also have equivalent entitlements to other workers;
- Public authorities have the primary responsibility to ensure that the right to adequate social protection is enjoyed by all citizens;
- Benefits should be non-discriminatory, adequate, and secure while ensuring the financial sustainability of social protection schemes;
- To ensure fair and effective systems of social protection, trade unions and employers' organisations should be involved, with government, in the design and management of such schemes, on an equal basis;





© ILO/Crozet

- Current inadequacies in the coverage of social protection worldwide undermine the drive towards meeting all the MDGs, particularly the health related goals. For this reason, trade unions support the ILO campaign for the extension of social protection to all, starting from a social protection floor in all countries. Such a social protection floor is not only affordable, it is also a means of raising the incomes of the poorest. Therefore it acts as a tool for poverty reduction while protecting the health of the poor.

Trade union work in the field of ***Safety and Health at Work*** is another crucial area in terms of meeting the MDGs.<sup>17</sup> According to the ILO, every year there are some 270 million accidents at work and 160 million cases of ill health due to work. Trade union work to ensure that

<sup>17</sup> Consult. World Day for Safety and Health at Work (<http://www.ilo.org/safework/events/safeday/lang—en/index.htm>); International Workers' Memorial Day (<http://www.hazards.org/wmd/>)

workplace practices protect the health of all workers is therefore crucial. So also is their on-going campaign to prevent workers' death, injury and illness from the effects of psycho-social hazards, hazardous chemicals or dangerous substances such as asbestos.

Yet another area of trade union work to ensure safety and health at the workplace is to promote the inclusion of occupational health and safety clauses in **Collective Bargaining Agreements**. Other areas of trade union action to secure the safety and health of workers are through **risk assessment** at the workplace and the use of **joint employer-worker committees on occupational safety and health**. These measures need to be complemented by governmental action to ensure an effective labour inspection system in order to ensure full respect of occupational health and safety provisions. Finally, trade unions continue to call on governments to ratify all the relevant ILO conventions in the area of health and safety, particularly ILO Convention No. 187 concerning the Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health as well as Convention No. 81 on Labour Inspection.

Dealing with the health related MDGs also demands the defence and promotion of good working conditions and terms of service of **Health Sector workers**. Trade union work in organising and defending nurses is therefore an important contribution to meeting the health-related MDGs.

However, in order to **accelerate progress to meet MDG4**, a number of other issues need to be addressed.<sup>18</sup> These include the ratification and implementation of ILO Convention 183 on Maternity Protection. To achieve this, the ITUC has an on-going global campaign on maternity protection. Among the important challenges unions have to deal with is the inclusion of clauses on maternity protection into national legislation and collective bargaining agreements. These measures need to be supported by a host of other policies like the introduction of measures to enable working women to breastfeed at work; ensuring that women's jobs are secure throughout maternity; and ensuring that workers with family responsibilities are adequately catered for.

#### Some relevant international instruments:

- Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (N° 155)
- Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (N° 183)
- Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (N°156)
- Nursing Personnel Convention, 1977 (N° 149)
- Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (N° 102)
- Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (N° 81)

#### *Did you know that...*

- a child born in a developing country is over 13 times more likely to die within the first five years of life than a child born in an industrialised country

<sup>18</sup> For more information, consult United Nations Children's Fund, Facts for Life, New York, 2010: (<http://www.factsforlifeglobal.org/resources/factsforlife-en-full.pdf>)



# Goal 5:

## Improve Maternal Health

### **Target 5a: Reduce by three quarters the maternal mortality ratio**

- Indicator 5.1 Maternal mortality ratio
- Indicator 5.2 Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel

### **Target 5b: Achieve, by 2015, universal access to reproductive health**

- Indicator 5.3 Contraceptive prevalence rate
- Indicator 5.4 Adolescent birth rate
- Indicator 5.5 Antenatal care coverage (at least one visit and at least four visits)
- Indicator 5.6 Unmet need for family planning

### **State of Progress:**

Progress is being made in attaining MDG5. However, the rate of reduction of maternal mortality is well short of the 5.5% annual decline needed to meet the MDG5 targets. The proportion of women in developing countries that received skilled assistance during delivery rose from 53% in 1990 to 63% in 2008. Furthermore, the rural-urban gap in skilled care has narrowed. Nonetheless, of all the regions, South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa are particularly risky in terms of maternal deaths due to pregnancy and child birth.

Progress is also being made in the provision of antenatal care to pregnant women. However, inequality in care in favour of the wealthy and urban dwellers is striking. Only one in three rural women in developing countries receives the recommended four visits from a trained health practitioner during pregnancy. Less than half of all pregnant women in developing countries receive the recommended four visits.

Progress has stalled in reducing the number of teenage pregnancies with poverty and illiteracy cited as contributing factors in perpetuating adolescent birth rates. During the 1990s the use of contraceptives increased among women in almost all regions. However, there has been a marked slowdown from 2000 and disparities are evident in contraceptive use between the regions. As can be expected, the use of contraception is lowest among the poorest women and those with no education.

Overall, 30 countries (24% of developing countries) are on target to reach the goal of improved maternal health. 46 other countries (37% of developing countries) are close to being on target. However, as many as 48 countries (39% of developing countries) are lagging far behind the MDG5 targets.



© ILO/Crozet

### Trade Unions and MDG5:

The comments made above on the health-related MDGs are also pertinent for MDG 5. A comprehensive policy that includes adequate social protection, effective safety and health at work and decent work for health workers are all necessary to meet the health-related MDGs. In addition to these points, specific action must be paid to the issue of maternity protection. Trade unions are advocating for an adequate health infrastructure that caters to women's maternal health needs and therefore supporting the vital role they play in societal reproduction.

It is important to recall that discrimination on the grounds of maternity is one of the most common forms of gender discrimination. A large proportion of women workers around the world are still subjected to unequal treatment in employment owing to their reproductive function. This form of discrimination ranges from pregnancy tests at recruitment to firing of women workers because they are pregnant. Maternity protection in the world of work is therefore central to achieving MDG5.

Despite the fact that many countries have legislation providing for paid maternity leave, and many others provide health benefits and employment protection, the gap between law and practice is often huge. Furthermore, women in atypical forms of employment like the informal economy, agriculture, home work, domestic work or part-time work are very often excluded from this protection. Trade unions are therefore campaigning for<sup>19</sup>:

- Strong standards on maternity protection for all women workers based on the provisions of ILO Convention 183 on Maternity Protection. Coverage of this legislative framework must include working women in atypical forms of employment;
- The inclusion of maternity protection in collective bargaining agreements;

<sup>19</sup> For more information, consult the ITUC Campaign on maternity protection: (<http://www.ituc-csi.org/ituc-leaflet-on-maternity.html>); (<http://www.ituc-csi.org/ituc-statement-on-maternity.html>)

- Governments to ratify and implement ILO convention 183 on Maternity Protection and educate society to recognise that the right and social function of maternity must both be recognised and firmly defended by all.

#### Some relevant international instruments:

- Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (N° 183)
- Nursing Personnel Convention, 1977 (N° 149)
- Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (N° 155)
- Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (N° 102)
- Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (N° 81)

#### Did you know that...

- Every year nearly 530,000 women die as a result of complications from pregnancy and childbirth. 99% of these deaths take place in developing countries
- Haemorrhage and hypertension account for half of all maternal mortality in developing countries. The vast majority of the causes of maternal mortality are avoidable.

## Goal 6:

### Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other diseases

#### Target 6a: Halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS

- Indicator 6.1 HIV prevalence among population aged 15-24 years
- Indicator 6.2 Condom use at last high-risk sex
- Indicator 6.3 Proportion of population aged 15-24 years with comprehensive correct knowledge of HIV/AIDS
- Indicator 6.4 Ratio of school attendance of orphans to school attendance of non-orphans aged 10-14 years

#### Target 6b: Achieve, by 2010, universal access to treatment for HIV/AIDS for all those who need it

- Indicator 6.5 Proportion of population with advanced HIV infection with access to antiretroviral drugs

#### Target 6c: Halt and begin to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases

- Indicator 6.6 Incidence and death rates associated with malaria
- Indicator 6.7 Proportion of children under 5 sleeping under insecticide-treated bednets
- Indicator 6.8 Proportion of children under 5 with fever who are treated with appropriate anti-malarial drugs
- Indicator 6.9 Incidence, prevalence and death rates associated with tuberculosis
- Indicator 6.10 Proportion of tuberculosis cases detected and cured under directly observed treatment short course

#### State of Progress<sup>20</sup>:

The spread of HIV appears to have stabilized in most regions even though prevalence continues to rise in East Europe and Central Asia. Globally the spread of HIV peaked in 1996 with 3.5 million newly-infected people. By 2009 the number of newly infected

<sup>20</sup> Other useful links: Malaria: Global Action Plan ([www.rollbackmalaria.org](http://www.rollbackmalaria.org)); The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (<http://www.theglobalfund.org/en/>); UNAIDS (<http://www.unaids.org/en/resources/policies/>); ILO/AIDS (<http://www.ilo.org/aids/lang-en/index.htm>); World AIDS Campaign (<http://www.worldaidscampaign.org/en/Constituencies/Labour/Labour-Advocacy-Toolkit>)



© ILO/Crozet

people dropped to an estimated 2.6 million. Sub-Saharan Africa alone accounted for 69% of all new infections in 2009. An estimated 33.3 million people were living with HIV in 2009. Of these, 22.6 million lived in sub-Saharan Africa. The proportion of women living with HIV has remained stable at 50% globally, although women are more affected in sub-Saharan Africa (59% of all people living with HIV) and the Caribbean (53%).

Though some progress has been made, knowledge among young people (aged 15-24) on how to protect themselves is still unacceptably low in most regions. In 2008, young people accounted for 40% of new HIV infections among adults worldwide.

Disparities also play a role in determining progress in achieving MDG6a and 6b targets. In sub-Saharan Africa, knowledge of HIV increases with wealth and among those living in urban areas. There are also disparities in condom use by men and women as well as among those from the richest and poorest households. In developing countries, on average less than 50% of young men and less than a third of young women used condoms during their last high-risk sexual activity. In sub-Saharan Africa, men aged 15 to 24 are far more likely to use condoms than women of the same age. For both sexes, condom use increases dramatically with wealth and among urban dwellers.

In 2008, 17.5 million children were estimated to have lost one or both parents to AIDS. 14.1 million of these children lived in sub-Saharan Africa. These children suffer from discrimination and stigma and may be denied basic services such as education and even the opportunity to play.

In the area of achieving **universal access to treatment**, one notes that the rate of HIV infections continues to outstrip the expansion of treatment. For every two people who start treatment each year, five people are newly infected with HIV. For instance, more than 90% of the 2.1 million children living with HIV were infected either in the womb, around the time of birth or through breastfeeding.

However, more people than ever are also living with HIV. This is largely due to greater access to antiretroviral treatment which has helped reduce AIDS related deaths. Nearly half of all people (47%) eligible for antiretroviral treatment are now receiving much needed treatment. Some 6.6 million people, of an estimated 14.2 million people eligible in low-and middle-income countries, were receiving treatment at the end of 2010. In 2010, 48% of pregnant women living with HIV received effective regimens to prevent new HIV infections among children. There is therefore the urgent need to intensify prevention and provide universal access to treatment.

Regarding *the incidence of malaria and other major diseases*, one notes that half of the world's population is at risk of malaria. An estimated 243 million cases led to nearly 863,000 deaths in 2008. Of these, 89% occurred in Africa. So malaria control is central to achieving MDG6 and the other MDGs. On the positive side, one observes an expansion in the use of insecticide-treated bed nets across regions. However, poverty continues to limit the use of these nets. Hence children from poor households and those living in rural areas are less likely to receive treatment for malaria.

Slow progress is being made in the reduction of the incidence of *tuberculosis*. After peaking in 2004 at 143 cases per 100,000 people, the incidence of tuberculosis reduced to 139 cases per 100,000 persons in 2008. Tuberculosis prevalence is falling in all regions with the exception of CIS countries in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. However, tuberculosis remains the second leading killer after HIV.

### Trade Unions and MDG6:

The comments made above on the health-related MDGs also apply to MDG6. The need for a comprehensive policy that includes adequate social protection, effective safety and health at work and decent work for health workers, are all necessary to meet the health-related MDG6. One area of intense trade union action in relation to MDG6 has been work to deal with the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

Apart from the heavy toll on the lives of individuals, the global HIV epidemic reduces the supply of labour and undermines the rights and livelihoods of millions of working men and women, and those who depend on them. The loss of skills and experience in the workforce reduces productivity and diminishes the capacity of national economies to deliver goods and services on a sustainable basis. The world of work therefore offers a valuable entry point to reach women and men workers in the setting where they spend much of their lives - the workplace. The development and implementation of workplace policies and programmes on HIV and AIDS, facilitate access to prevention, treatment, care and support services for workers and their families, thereby also reaching out to the larger community.

Trade unions have therefore underlined the importance of stressing the crucial role of the workplace in both prevention and treatment. Also of deep concern to unions has been the fact that HIV has served to reinforce other sources of disadvantage, inequality and discrimination in society. Unions have also emphasized that the fight against HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other diseases should not become yet another victim of the current economic crisis. Trade unions have therefore called, among other things, for:

- firm action to protect those infected with HIV/AIDS from all forms of discrimination;
- the respect of privacy and confidentiality in HIV/AIDS programmes and measures to ensure that workplace surveillance of HIV/AIDS does not compromise workers' personal data, privacy and confidentiality rights;



- national and workplace HIV/AIDS programmes to be designed and implemented in consultation with workers and their representatives;
- continued public awareness programmes to reduce all high risk behaviour;
- all governments to keep their promises to deliver resources to meet MDG6;
- the establishment of effective and universally accessible public systems of health care in all countries, recognizing that equitable and universal access to health care, and in particular medicines for HIV, is a human right.

### Trade union action:

In order to pursue these objectives and to meet MDG6, trade unions are engaged in different actions ranging from awareness-raising to fighting the stigma associated with HIV/AIDS. Trade unions achievements include the following:

- In many countries, shop stewards have been trained as trainers and peer educators on HIV/AIDS. Workers and their families have been mobilized to access VCT (voluntary counselling and testing) and give care and support to those infected;
- Workplace policies, including policies incorporating HIV and AIDS in Collective Bargaining Agreements have been developed at the national level;
- Annual campaigns during the World Social Forum, World Day for Safety and Health at Work (28 April), Labour Day(1May), and during World AIDS Day (1 December) permitted workers to lobby employers and governments for access to treatment and helped to mobilize workers to access VCT;
- HIV and AIDS bipartite committees have been formed at many workplaces;
- Many workers are now involved in care of people living with HIV/AIDS either through workplace programmes or home based care;
- Unions have worked to increase access to Anti-Retroviral Therapy (ART) and VCT in many countries.

Below are a few country case studies of trade union actions to meet MDG6<sup>21</sup>.

### UGANDA

The Amalgamated Transport and General Workers' Union and ITF affiliates from Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya and Tanzania are supporting two projects for long-distance drivers along the northern corridor. These have established resource centres at border crossings and "knowledge rooms" along the corridor. Drivers are offered HIV testing and treatment for STIs, malaria and tuberculosis; those who are HIV-positive receive treatment for opportunistic infections and anti-retroviral therapy. The centres also provide "edutainment", where drivers and members of the local community can use the internet, play pool watch films and listen to speakers on HIV/AIDS.

<sup>21</sup> Agenda. Challenging HIV/AIDS in Transport, The International Transport Workers' Federation, Issue 5.2011, pp.11-12. For more case studies and best practices, consult: UNAIDS, Global reach: how Trade Unions are responding to AIDS - case studies of union action, Best Practice Collection, Geneva, 2006



## GUYANA

The Clerical and Commercial Workers' Union conducted a survey of ten companies to establish the extent of risk-taking behaviour, attitudes towards HIV co-workers, and the existence of HIV/AIDS workplace policies. In partnership with employers they promote voluntary counselling and testing (VCT), and on World AIDS Day and Labour Day they run talks about HIV and sex, emphasising the issue of stigma and discrimination. They have built a network of peer educators, supported by training, follow-up and refresher courses, as well as an online link between the educators supported by training, follow-up and refresher courses, as well as an online link between the educators and the training team.

## INDIA

The All India Railwaymen's Federation (AIRF) and the National Federation of Indian Railwaymen have come together to develop a joint programme on HIV/AIDS. Activities have included holding rallies, exhibitions, street plays and cultural shows. On International Women's Day the AIRF organises a public information campaign on HIV/AIDS, with sporting events at or near railway stations. They place particular emphasis on voluntary testing for HIV and other STIs. One AIRF affiliate organised a motorcycle campaign which saw 25 activities riding 1500km and stopping at every railway station, village and town on the way to spread HIV/AIDS information and reduce stigma.

## ARGENTINA

The Centro de Jefes y Oficiales Maquinistas Navales jointly runs seminars at the Muniz Hospital on HIV/AIDS. Health workers based at the hospital are setting up education sessions tailored to the needs of seafarers. Another collaboration with the Nautical National School means HIV/AIDS will be included in its curriculum, ensuring seafarers have a basic understanding of the subject and are able to work as peer educators onboard.



ship. The union has also produced three documentaries on health risks and HIV/AIDS for transport workers that are circulated to members and available on the union website:

## UKRAINE

The Trade Union of Railway Workers and Transport Constructors of Ukraine in partnership with the non-governmental organisation Labour, Health and Social Initiatives, has developed a project aimed at young workers. It focuses on three cities in Ukraine's most industrialised region which has a high HIV and TB incidence. Working with its youth council, the union conducts special prevention training for those who work with the public, such as conductors and locomotive drivers. This is Ukraine's first combined HIV/AIDS and T workplace prevention programme, so manuals, guidelines and best practice publications are being developed that can be used by other trade unions. There has also been an intensive public information campaign, with posters on trains and at stations and the distribution to railway passengers of one million leaflets on HIV/AIDS and TB.

### Some relevant international instruments:

- ILO Code of Practice and the World of Work, 2001
- Recommendation concerning HIV and AIDS and the World of Work, 2010 (N° 200)
- Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (N° 111)
- Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 (MLC 2006)
- Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (N° 183)
- Nursing Personnel Convention, 1977 (N° 149)
- Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (N° 155)
- Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (N° 102)
- Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (N° 81)
- Termination of Employment Convention, 1982 (N° 158)
- Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (disabled persons) Convention, 1983 (N° 159)
- Occupational Health Services Convention 1985 (N° 161)

### *Did you know that...*

- every 30 seconds a child dies from malaria.
- every day, nearly 7,500 people are infected with HIV and some 5,500 die from AIDS-related causes.

# Goal 7:

## Ensure Environmental Sustainability

**Target 7a: Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes; reverse loss of environmental resources**

**Target 7b: Reduce biodiversity loss, achieving, by 2010, a significant reduction in the rate of loss**

**Target 7a and 7b Indicators:**

- Indicator 7.1 Proportion of land area covered by forest
- 7.2 CO2 emissions, total, per capita and per \$1 GDP (PPP)
- 7.3 Consumption of ozone-depleting substances
- 7.4 Proportion of fish stocks within safe biological limits
- 7.5 Proportion of total water resources used
- 7.6 Proportion of terrestrial and marine areas protected
- 7.7 Proportion of species threatened with extinction

**Target 7c: Reduce by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation**

- Indicator 7.8 Proportion of population using an improved drinking water source
- Indicator 7.9 Proportion of population using an improved sanitation facility

**Target 7d: Achieve significant improvement in lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers, by 2020**

- 7.10 Proportion of urban population living in slums

### State of Progress:

There has undoubtedly been progress in country awareness in the area of the integration of the principles of sustainable development into national policies. This has been translated into some modest gains. For instance, the rate of deforestation shows signs of decreasing even though deforestation remains alarmingly high. Over the last decade, some 13 million hectares of forest worldwide were converted to other uses or lost through natural disasters each year. This compares to the figure of 11 million hectares per year in the 1990s. Despite increased country awareness of the problem, decisive action is yet to follow. In 2007, global emissions of carbon dioxide rose again, reaching 30 billion tons. This represents an increase of 35% above the 1990 level. Per capita emissions in developed



countries were about 12 metric tons of carbon dioxide per person per year in 2007. The average level of emissions in developing countries stood at 3 metric tons per person. The figure for sub-Saharan Africa in the same period was 0.9 metric tons.

The world has missed the 2010 target for biodiversity conservation. Despite some successes, the loss of biodiversity continues. Nearly 17,000 species of plants and animals are known to be threatened with extinction. Key habitats for threatened species are not being adequately protected. This is resulting in a growing number of species facing extinction. Even if overexploitation of global fisheries has stabilised, important challenges remain. If current trends are not reversed, the loss of species will continue with dramatic shifts in the world's ecosystem.

On current trends, the world will meet and even exceed the MDG drinking water target. However, even if the water related target is met, several challenges remain. More than one in ten people may still be without access in 2015. Pollution remains a huge problem and water quality poses major challenges. Rural areas in all developing regions are also at a disadvantage. In the area of sanitation, however, half the population of developing regions are without sanitation. At the current rate of progress, the world will miss the target of halving the proportion of people without access to basic sanitation. In 2008, an estimated 2.6 billion people worldwide, lacked access to an improved sanitation facility. Finally, improvement of slums is failing to keep pace with the rising numbers of the urban poor.

### Trade Unions and MDG7:

For trade unions, the multiple crises that the world is facing – energy, food, jobs, financial, climate – have a common origin in a socially unjust, an environmentally unsustainable and an economically inefficient model of development. The current development model of unregulated capitalism is ecologically destructive and unsustainable. Trade unions therefore call for a new model of development that is sustainable through a just transition in which social progress, environmental protection and economic needs are met. Trade

unions recognise the enormous potential for the creation of green decent jobs through a process of just transition that provides new green job opportunities, greening existing ones, anticipating potential losses of economic activity in certain sectors, and protecting the most vulnerable. Trade unions have therefore called on governments to, among other things:

- Sign up to a fair binding international climate change agreement and a just transition policy framework aiming at reducing greenhouse gases and dependency on fossil fuels while improving people's livelihoods;
- Comply with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and to contribute fully to the fight against climate change through significant reductions in their greenhouse gas emissions;
- Ensure that the US\$ 85 billion per year of public funding from 2003 to 2017 that the UN considers as necessary for adequate adaptation by developing countries be made available;
- Create a Financial Transactions Tax to fight speculation in the financial markets and raise the resources needed to fight poverty and promote sustainable development. This will also resources to finance mitigation and adaptation strategies to address climate change;
- Meet a global target of at least 50% increase in green and decent jobs by 2015, starting with the base year of 2015;
- Commit to implement the Universal Social Protection Floor initiative by 2020;
- Acknowledgement of the role social dialogue and collective bargaining can play in sustainable development.

### Unions for sustainable development:

To meet MDG7, trade unions are engaging in debates around different issues of sustainable development - the creation of green jobs and ensuring that they are decent, climate change challenges, poverty, resource depletion, pollution, waste management, and so on. Unions are also engaging in different actions in favour of sustainable development<sup>22</sup>. These range from awareness raising, training, policy development, lobbying governments on sustainable development issues at national level and at international forums, and creating local and international networks.

Following the *Trade Union Assembly on Labour and the Environment* in 2006 the international trade union movement launched the "*Green Jobs Initiative*" together with the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the International Organization of Employers (IOE). The trade union movement is also involved in the "*Green Economy Initiative*" initiated by UNEP. All this stems from the firm belief that workers can play a fundamental role in efforts to build a sustainable world. Many trade unions are looking at the wider links between the workplace, environmental protection and sustainable economic and social development. Unions bring to this issue much relevant experience of negotiation with governments and employers at all levels, as well as knowledge of human rights, social and economic policy development, gender and equality related issues, occupational health and safety, and so on.

<sup>22</sup> For more information, consult the ACTRAV website on Environment and Climate Change: ([http://www.ilo.org/actrav/areas/lang=en/WCMS\\_DOC\\_ATR\\_ARE\\_ENV\\_EN/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/actrav/areas/lang=en/WCMS_DOC_ATR_ARE_ENV_EN/index.htm)) and the website of the International Labour Foundation for Sustainable Development – SustainLabour (<http://www.sustainlabour.org>)

As a result of this, new practices are underway and are being contributed by workers of all generations and at all levels. For example trade unions are:

- bargaining collectively on issues related to environmental issues and including environmental clauses into existing bargaining agreements;
- establishing trade union representatives on the environment to promote environmentally sustainable initiatives and practices at the workplace as well as the national and international levels.

At workplace level, this has led to concrete actions such as:

- obtaining certification of recycling in workplaces;
- reducing paper use;
- car sharing policies and habits;
- training green committees to propose new ways of operating to employees and employers;
- adopting green policies and changing wasteful practices.

At local and regional levels, unions have introduced joint buying practices in conjunction with other organisations and organised training and capacity building activities for their members. Below are country examples of what unions are doing to achieve MDG7.

### **SOUTH AFRICA<sup>23</sup>:**

In November 2011 the social partners and government of **South Africa** signed a Green Economy Accord at parliament in Cape Town, which commits signatories to a partnership to build and grow the green economy. The Accord, one of the most comprehensive social partnerships on the green economy anywhere in the world, came about through discussions conducted under the New Growth Path. It was signed by representatives of business organisations, trade unions, community organisations and a number of Cabinet members. All three labour federations with a joint membership of more than two million workers (Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu), Federation of Unions of South Africa (Fedusa) and National Council of Trade Unions (Nactu) were represented. The Accord is part of an ambitious plan to shift the economy to a lower carbon-intensity whilst increasing jobs and industrial development and it contains commitments in twelve areas, ranging from installation of solar water heating systems, to increased investment in green industrial activities and the promotion of green skills at technical level. The Accord contains commitments by each party, as well as a monitoring and evaluation mechanism to ensure that the goals of the Accord are met.

### **SPAIN<sup>24</sup>:**

In order to meet the challenge posed by the climate change issue, social dialogue roundtables were initiated in Spain. The social dialogue roundtables were established to fulfil and guarantee the compatibility of the objective of emissions reductions with those of social cohesion and economic development. A general roundtable and seven sectoral roundtables - one for each of the intensive sectors of emissions which should reduce its

<sup>23</sup> All Africa.com (<http://allafrica.com/stories/201111170922.html>)

<sup>24</sup> ILO, The impact of climate change on employment: management of transitions through social dialogue Case study of Social Dialogue Roundtables on the effects of compliance with the Kyoto Protocol on competitiveness, employment and social cohesion in Spain, ILO, Geneva, 2010

emissions according to the current European guidelines - were set up as a space for participation in which the government, workers' and employers' organisations could analyse the potential social and economic consequences deriving from the implementation of measures to comply with the Kyoto Protocol, concentrating in particular on its impact on competitiveness, employment and social cohesion. Another roundtable was added one year later, in 2007, for the diffuse emissions sector; while not included in the objectives of Kyoto, this sector is responsible for a growing percentage of emissions. Participants to the roundtables have found this approach to be an extremely useful instrument for exchanging information, sharing concerns and requests, and tracking the evolution of each of the sectors. In addition to its contribution to building knowledge and mutual trust among the parties, they also constitute an element of motivation in the fight against climate change for some of them, particularly for the trade union organisations.

### Some relevant international instruments:

- Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (N° 155)
- Prevention of major industrial Accidents Convention, 1993 (N° 174)
- Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (C187)
- Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (N° 169)
- Labour Clauses (Public Contracts) Convention, 1949 (No. 94)
- Merchant Shipping (Minimum Standards) (N° 147) Convention No. 147 ILO (1976)
- Maritime labour Convention (2006)
- All other relevant ILO instruments covering health and safety in various sectors including mining and agriculture, as well as standards covering hazards such as benzene, air pollution, noise and vibration and asbestos
- International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers, 1978

### Did you know that...

- an estimated 250 million people already have been affected by desertification and nearly one billion more are at risk 330 million people, more than the whole population of the USA, are increasingly displaced by exposure to flooding in coastal areas, flood plains of rivers and small island States



# Goal 8:

## A Global Partnership for Development

**Target 8a: Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system**

- Includes a commitment to good governance, development and poverty reduction; both nationally and internationally

**Target 8b: Address the special needs of the least developed countries**

- Includes tariff and quota free access for the least developed countries' exports; enhanced programme of debt relief for heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC) and cancellation of official bilateral debt; and more generous ODA for countries committed to poverty reduction

**Target 8c: Address the special needs of landlocked developing countries and small island developing States through the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and the outcome of the twenty-second special session of the General Assembly**

**Target 8d: Deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries through national and international measures in order to make debt sustainable in the long term.**

Indicators for Targets 8a, 8b, 8c and 8d:

- *Some of the indicators listed below are monitored separately for the least developed countries (LDCs), Africa, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States.*

**Official development assistance (ODA)**

- Indicator 8.1 Net ODA, total and to the least developed countries, as percentage of OECD/DAC donors; gross national income
- Indicator 8.2 Proportion of total bilateral, sector-allocable ODA of OECD/DAC donors to basic social services (basic education, primary health care, nutrition, safe water and sanitation)
- Indicator 8.3 Proportion of bilateral official development assistance of OECD/DAC donors that is untied
- Indicator 8.4 ODA received in landlocked developing countries as a proportion of their gross national income
- Indicator 8.5 ODA received in small island developing States as a proportion of their gross national incomes



### Market access

- Indicator 8.6 Proportion of total developed country imports (by value and excluding arms) from developing countries and least developed countries, admitted free of duty
- Indicator 8.7 Average tariffs imposed by developed countries on agricultural products and textiles and clothing from developing countries
- Indicator 8.8 Agricultural support estimate for OECD countries as a percentage of their gross domestic product
- Indicator 8.9 Proportion of ODA provided to help build trade capacity

### Debt sustainability

- Indicator 8.10 Total number of countries that have reached their HIPC decision points and number that have reached their HIPC completion points (cumulative)
- Indicator 8.11 Debt relief committed under HIPC and MDRI Initiatives
- Indicator 8.12 Debt service as a percentage of exports of goods and services

### **Target 8e: In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries**

- Indicator 8.13 Proportion of population with access to affordable essential drugs on a sustainable basis

### **Target 8f: In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications**

- Indicator 8.14 Telephone lines per 100 population
- Indicator 8.15 Cellular subscribers per 100 population
- Indicator 8.16 Internet users per 100 population

### State of Progress:

Donors at the Group of Eight most industrialised nations (G-8) at the 2005 Gleneagles summit as well as states gathered at the 2005 UN World Summit, committed themselves to increasing their aid to the developing world. For instance, commitments made at Gleneagles combined with those of other donors meant that official development assistance (ODA) to Africa would double by 2010.

However real disbursements have not matched the commitments. In 2010, net aid disbursements was \$128.7 billion which amounts to 0.32% of the combined national incomes of developed countries. The shortfall in aid commitments hit Africa hardest. ODA to Africa rose by only 3% in real terms. It is estimated that Africa will receive only US\$11 billion of the US\$25 billion envisaged at Gleneagles.

The UN target for aid is 0.7% of gross national income for donor countries. Only 5 countries, namely Denmark, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden have reached or exceeded this target. However, as the economic crisis continues, there are real fears that the future outlook of ODA will become uncertain. A recent OECD survey indicates that most donors plan to increase aid over the coming 3 years but at a sharply reduced pace. Aid grew by 8% a year over the last 3 years. However the pace of aid between 2011 and 2013 is expected to grow only by 2% a year. Aid to Africa is expected to



rise by just 1% a year in real terms, compared to the average of 13% over the past 3 years. All this runs the risk of compromising the attainment of the MDGs as governments are tempted to use the current crisis as an excuse to reduce ODA.

### Trade Unions and MDG8:

Trade unions support MDG8 as a key motor for achieving all the other goals. It is meant to provide a mechanism for bringing donor and partner countries together to ensure coherent policy frameworks for development. Trade unions have asserted that MDG8 should be promoted as an accountability mechanism where trade unions and other stakeholders could engage governments in dialogue with the aim of keeping them accountable to commitments made in both donor and recipient countries.

Unions have however underlined the need for ODA to promote a new development model because the current model of development has failed to deliver sustainable, inclusive growth and social progress. Trade unions have therefore called for a development paradigm that is focused on decent work, income distribution, investment in people and sustainability. This means an end to the trend towards the privatisation of public services which has led to millions being deprived of their fundamental human rights. Universal access to quality public services contributes to poverty reduction and the MDGs. Similarly, this calls for a just trading system which promotes development in poor countries and respect for fundamental workers' rights worldwide. To meet MDG8, trade unions have therefore called on governments to:

- Honour the UN commitment to allocate 0.7% of Gross National Income to overseas development assistance;
- Keep the promises made to the developing world in terms of debt relief and development aid;

- Mobilize resources for development through progressive taxation regimes, robust systems of tax collection, addressing capital flight, transfer pricing (in Multinational Corporations), tax evasion and tax havens;
- Raise additional sources of international finance through modalities such as an international financial transactions tax;
- Promote policy coherence within the international system of agencies as well as between bilateral donors and governments in order promote social progress and meet the MDGs;
- Work for the reform of the international financial and economic system to make it focus on equity, job-rich growth and sustainable development.

In their own efforts aimed at achieving the MDGs, trade unions have created their own solidarity network<sup>25</sup> to provide support to unions in developing countries in their efforts to defend and promote workers' rights, and to fight for social justice in their respective countries.

#### Some relevant international instruments:

- ILO Declaration concerning the aims and purposes of the International Labour Organisation (Declaration of Philadelphia), 1944
- ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, 1998
- ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalisation, 2008
- ILO Global Jobs Pact, 2009

<sup>25</sup> ITUC Solidarity Fund (<http://www.ituc-csi.org/solidarity-fund.html>)

# Millennium Development Goals

## Concluding issues - 2015 and beyond

The approach of the 2015 target date for achieving the Millennium Development Goals has led on the one hand, to a critical evaluation of the MDG approach, and on the other hand, to a debate on the future development agenda for the world after 2015.

The MDG framework has been criticised for the modest nature of its goals and targets, set against the enormous scale of needs in the world. Targets are framed in terms of only halving the number of those in extreme poverty or the hungry. So even if the MDG1 targets are achieved, this will still leave almost 900 million people living on less than \$1.25 per day. This is clearly unacceptable, and impels the international community to engage in a serious dialogue on an effective development compact and framework beyond the MDGs and 2015.

Other critics point to difficulties in the monetary measure of poverty which glosses over critical issues such as the multidimensionality of poverty, access to social services and equity. The changing measure of the global poverty line is also questioned as it has evolved from US\$ 1 a day to US\$1.08 a day, to US\$1.25 a day. Some others point to methodological issues in these measurements which underestimate the extent of poverty. Discrepancies in the measure of poverty as against hunger estimates, have also been flagged as an area of concern in some circles. So the MDGs have been criticised in several circles as inadequate to the challenge of poverty eradication and human development.

However, the MDGs have at the same time been widely acknowledged as a formidable instrument of policy coherence in the international development community. The goals have led to a certain degree of policy alignment between international agencies of the United Nations and the International Financial Institutions. It has also promoted policy alignment between the bilateral donor community and recipient governments. Furthermore, it has led to a wide civil society mobilisation in support of the goals, even if many trade unions and civil society organisations would have wanted a more ambitious development agenda.

One of the positive results of the MDGs has been the *"return of the poor"* and of development policy to the international agenda. The period between 1980 and 2000 was dominated by the policies of the *"Washington consensus"* with the market being seen as the main actor of development. This led to market fundamentalism, the withdrawal of the state and a focus on trade liberalisation. The shift to the MDGs has however led to a return of poverty to the international agenda and thereby reinstated the need for development policy as against structural adjustment policies.

These debates will no doubt continue as the 2015 target date approaches. However, with less than 5 years to go, the debate on the future of the MDGs has already opened. Clearly,

given the uneven progress in meeting the goals, the priority is to accelerate the progress that countries are making. However, as the 2015 target date approaches, trade unions will be called upon to participate in various forums to determine the future international development agenda. Whether the present MDG targets are simply kept after 2015, or whether additional targets are added to the current MDG targets, or even a brand new framework is developed after 2015, unions must be ready to engage in the debate to define the future global compact on development. Below are a number of issues trade unions could consider in such debates on the future development agenda:

### **Equity matters in poverty reduction:**

Inequality has to be addressed in a new development paradigm. Inequality in states and between nations has increased everywhere. Productivity growth has far outstripped wage growth. This declining wage share has been one of the root causes of the current global crisis and is an obstacle to a speedy recovery as it has stifled aggregate demand in economies. The fact that the fruits of globalisation are unequally shared and that development outcomes are grossly unequal, point to a major fault-line in global development. Furthermore, as fairer societies tend to grow faster and better, equity matters in poverty reduction. Unequal development patterns are slowing down efforts at poverty eradication. Equity indicators therefore need to be a key part of any new development architecture.

### **Decent employment is a key route to poverty reduction:**

Decent Employment also needs to be addressed in a significant manner in the future. When the MDGs were initially adopted, employment concerns hardly figured in the targets and indicators. This reflects a view of employment as being only a spin-off of economic growth and not as something which should be central to economic policy and growth. This was later rectified by the addition of Target 1B to MDG1. The centrality of employment to any new development compact is very important. Decent employment is a source of social insertion, gives a sense of dignity, provides income security, ensures protection from vulnerabilities, and secures the protection of rights. An explicit reference to the goal of full, productive and freely chosen employment must therefore be an integral part of any future development agenda.

### **The Quality of economic growth matters:**

The search for high levels of sustained economic growth has dominated much of development thinking over the years. However, little attention has been paid to the issue of the quality of economic growth which is what makes growth able to deliver positive social outcomes. It is widely established that economic growth is a necessary but insufficient precondition for poverty reduction. However, it is the quality of the growth that determines its social outcomes. In this regard, issues related to the pattern of growth such as its employment intensity and its inclusiveness are crucial. The growth, employment and poverty reduction nexus has been widely established. Therefore, the more the pattern of growth is employment intensive and inclusive, the more it is able to reduce poverty. Such issues need to be considered in a new development agenda.

### **Human Rights and Workers' Rights:**

One of the major issues the current MDG process has raised has been the lack of explicit references to human rights. Even though the different goals are underpinned by human rights instruments, an explicit reference to a package of rights needs to be considered in a

future development compact. Naturally, such a package should include the fundamental rights at work, namely, ILO Conventions 87 and 98 on freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining; ILO Conventions 29 and 105 on the elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labour; ILO conventions 138 and 182 on the effective abolition of child labour; and ILO Conventions 100 and 111 on the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation. The universal ratification and implementation of these instruments must be an explicit aim of any new development compact.

### **Towards a Universal Social Protection floor:**

Social protection is both a fundamental human right and a public good. And yet, more than 75% of the world's population does not enjoy effective social protection. Four out of five persons in the working-age population have no access to adequate social protection. It is widely known that social protection not only serves as a shock absorber in times of crisis, it is a key element of stimulating aggregate demand and is therefore good for poverty reduction. Furthermore, it is a useful mechanism to ensure that countries grow with equity and climate of social cohesion and solidarity. That is why the inclusion of universal access to social protection is important in any new development framework. In this regard, the setting up of a social protection floor in all countries, that increases both horizontally and vertically across all economic sectors over time, is paramount. Current ILO work indicates that even for the poorest countries, a universal social protection floor is affordable and could therefore be a minimum requirement in any new development compact.

### **Quality public services for all:**

One of the limitations in the progress being made in the fight against extreme poverty in some countries is that it is not leading to an increasing access to public services. In fact, as a result of the current economic crisis, the trend is rather towards making cuts in public sector spending and therefore, access to quality public services is actually deteriorating. And yet, quality public services that are accessible to all are essential, not only to ensure a high quality of life for citizens but also to create more equal and prosperous societies.

### **Global governance and policy coherence:**

The recent international financial crisis has pointed to the need for major structural reforms in global governance, particularly in the international financial system. The crisis has had a dramatic negative impact on poverty levels. Yet, those who are paying a heavy price for the economic downturn, bear no responsibility for creating the crisis. Furthermore, despite greater attention paid to poverty outcomes in the work of the international financial institutions, their policies continue to be criticised. For instance, the macroeconomic policies they champion continue to have inflation targeting, market fundamentalism and fiscal discipline at their core – sidelining other important issues such as employment creation or poverty reduction. Against this background, it would be useful to also have specific targets and performance benchmarks addressed to international institutions in a new development compact. These could include targets aimed at the reform of the international financial system, targets related to the structure and functioning of the international financial institutions to make them more accountable and democratic, as well as reforms to promote policy coherence among intergovernmental agencies, in particular around the normative framework of ILO and UN instruments on human and workers' rights.



## Concluding remarks:

The mandate of the global trade union movement underscores the need to transform social, economic and political structures that stand as obstacles to the attainment of a world free from poverty. The mission of unions is to promote social justice, democracy, equality and sustainable human development. This effort requires coordinated international action as well as day to day national action. Through all these efforts, men and women trade unionists are contributing to the attainment of the millennium development goals.





