

## Europe key policy messaging HLE on the MDGs September 25th 2008.

The High Level Event on the MDGs taking place in New York on September 25<sup>th</sup> 2008 provides an opportunity to assess the delivery of European leaders of the promises made on Goal 8.

### **Demands at the Regional European Level:**

#### **On Aid Quantity:**

Despite the commitments made in May 2005 by the European Union– the EU 15 – to deliver 0, 51% by 2010; 0.7% by 2015 and to establish intermediate national targets, some of the EU 15 countries are not on track in the delivery of these commitments. Moreover, in light of the current food, fuel and financial crisis and of national budgetary constraints—all challenging factors that could potentially further undermine those commitments—at the HLE on the MDGs, the EU countries must reconfirm their 0,7% commitments and to put in place adequate mechanisms to ensure timely implementation.

#### **On Aid Quality**

More aid alone will not eradicate poverty, nor achieve the Millennium Development Goals. The improvement of aid is a crucial priority. Yet donors are behind schedule in the implementation of the Paris Declaration, as the 2006 OECD/DAC Survey shows. The Third High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness that took place recently in Accra on September 2-4, renewed the commitments from donors and recipients around the basic principles of Ownership, Alignment, Harmonization and Coordination. The challenge remains implementation and political will. At the HLE on the MDGs, European donors must renew their commitments to the MDGs with an explicit focus on the aid Effectiveness Agenda and ensure that the three pre-conditions for Aid Effectiveness—Predictability, Accountability and Cost-effectiveness will become central in their aid systems.

#### **On Debt**

In recent years, there have been several initiatives for the cancellation of both bilateral and multilateral debt. While debt relief is an important source for MDG-related policies and programmes at the national level in developing countries, it is important that at the HLE on the MDGs EU members pledge to ensure that debt relief – as it counts in the official definition of aid – reaches the poorest countries.

#### **On Trade**

At the HLE on the MDGs European countries should set a new tone after the failure of the trade negotiations. The EU and the US have the largest shares of world trade, and thus they should shoulder the responsibility of delivering on Goals 8. EU countries should confirm their commitments to eliminate agricultural export subsidies and the capping of domestic subsidies on products of importance to developing countries – even if these were in the end not “agreed” last summer– as there was no final deal. Furthermore leaders at the HLE could really commit to provide genuine market access to Least Development Countries (LDCs) which is a promise made unilaterally at earlier UN Summits repeatedly. Commitments as mentioned above would go along way to put trade-working-for-development back on track.

## **Demands at the national level**

### **ITALY**

UNMC in Italy involved 16 key actors among Italian CSOs, citizen's movements and trade unions (Acli, ActionAid, Amref, Arci, Associazione ONG italiane, Caritas Italia, CGIL, CINI, CISL, Ufficio Campagne Oxfam e Ucodep, Save the Children Italia, Tavola della Pace, Terre des hommes Italia, Volontari nel mondo Focsiv, Unicef, WWF Italia) and on Sept. 17, delivered to the HLE Italian delegation a co branded policy paper.

The policy paper reaffirms quantity and quality of aid as Italian policy priorities in the process to reach MDGs by 2015. The paper includes detailed recommendations asking our Government to:

- Increase the quantity of aid in the next budget law (Sept/Oct. 2008), thus reversing both Government's current draft budget law and the Decree Law no. 112 drastically decreasing ODA and making impossible for Italy to reach the goals of 51% ODA in 2010 (e.g., the Decree Law no. 112 approved on August 5th introduce a 3-year cut of 170 million euro annual for 2009-2011)
- Improve Italian aid effectiveness creating an "Italian Plan for a better aid". Key priorities for the plan are:
- Increase the percentage of program aid reducing donor-driven projects financing and supporting the implementation of countries development strategies
- Stop "tying aid practice"
- Coordinate analysis and missions
- Make ODA allocation more transparent, particularly to CSOs players
- Increase incentives for donor staff to encourage the Paris Declaration implementation
- Increase multi-year aid predictability

The policy paper will be handed-over to the Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs Minister, Mr Enzo Scotti, in representation of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Franco Frattini, and one of the two official delegates for the Italian Parliament, Mr Alessandro Maran. The policy paper was also sent to all Parliamentarians of the Foreign Affairs, Economics and Environmental Committees and to key Italian MOFA and MOE representatives.

### **SPAIN**

The UNMC in Spain worked on a pre-event for the September 25<sup>th</sup> High Level Event with civil society groups to deliver their policy demands to the Spanish Secretary of State for Development Cooperation. Ms. Soraya Rodriguez. The Spanish Alliance's policy demands are:

On Financing for development

- More and better Official Development Assistance (ODA) to reach 0.7% GNP observing the principles of the Paris Declaration on aid effectiveness, strengthening the geographical orientation towards the Least Developed Countries, allocating 20% of total ODA to basic social services and untying aid.

- Include additional sources such as global taxes (Tobin Tax rate) and application of new and special tax on extraordinary profits made by companies and financial institutions.
- To fight tax heaven, that causes severe declines in tax revenue from all countries, but especially the South.

#### On Debt

- To cancel 100% of bilateral debt to the least developed countries (LDCs), urging a similar position by our government in the international financial institutions to cancel the multilateral debt of these countries.
- Adopting effective mechanisms to identify and hold accountable those on illegitimate debts, as well as the return of the ecological debt contracted by transnational corporations or by industrialized countries.
- To promote debt swap for MDG

#### On Trade

- Change the rules of international trade (WTO agreements, free trade, economic partnership agreements, etc..) currently favour the interests of rich countries and prevent small farmers and the governments of poor countries to decide how fighting poverty, protecting the environment and ensure the Right to Food. Also, eliminate all kinds of subsidies that harm the livelihood of local communities.
- To protect public services, excluding the framework of negotiations of the GATS and the Services Directive in the EU internal market, ensuring the rights of access to potable water, education, health care and essential medicines.

#### On Decent Work

- To ensure the existence and creation of decent jobs and rights, as an effective mechanism to combat inequalities, eradicating poverty and promoting equality between women and men.

The Spanish office is also planning an event on September 26 to launch an advertisement campaign on the importance of achieving the MDGs and to promote the Spanish Alliance's day of mobilization on October the 17<sup>th</sup>.

## **GERMANY**

The UNMC in Germany supported the German Coalition of Development NGOs (VENRO) in planning and implementing an event on September 18 to hand out Germany's CSOs policy demands and Shadow Report to German Minister of Economic Cooperation and Development, Mrs. Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul. The main policy asks contained in the Germany Shadow Report are:

#### On Financing for Development:

- Germany does only devote 0,37% of its GNI for ODA. German civil society demands a substantial increase in the ODA figures to comply with international commitments and to combat poverty effectively.

#### On Debt:

- Germany complies with the commitments concerning the multilateral initiative of debt cancellation. But a sustainable solution of the debt crisis requires Germany's dedication to international negotiations to solve the debt issues for the poorest countries globally.

#### On Trade:

- The EU must cut the subsidies on agriculture with no conditionality attached to this measure.

#### Hunger:

- Strong financial support for rural development is necessary to solve the food crisis in a sustainable way. This must be a focus of the German development aid –especially in the Sub-Saharan Africa.

#### Education:

- Only 1% of the total figure of German ODA is spent in basic education although it is well known to be the central precondition to fight poverty. The German Government must increase this percentage.

#### Gender equality:

- Although the German development aid considers gender equality as a cross-sectional element it does not show enough commitment through programmes of direct support and empowerment of women and girls.

#### Mortality of women and children:

- There are alarmingly few advances concerning the mortality of women and children. Germany must urgently encourage the construction of health infrastructure and work towards ensuring universal access to reproductive health.

#### AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria:

- Germany must avoid patents rights impede the access to vital drugs in poor countries. The political pressure on countries which export generics must stop.

#### Climate change:

- CO<sub>2</sub>-emissions must be cut through energy efficiency and the use of renewable energies. The industrial countries are obliged to financially support the poor countries during the adaptation to climate change. Germany must pay its fair contribution to the UN Climate Fund.

The UNMC in Germany is also hosting a Parliamentary event on the evening of September 25th together with VENRO to inform members of the Parliament on MDG related policy demands.