

Statement by the Commonwealth Secretary-General

Rt Hon Don McKinnon

on the occasion of the

**High Level Plenary Meeting of the
United Nations General Assembly**

as we have together sought to question and answer why we have not done better in achieving those eight Millennium Development Goals.

Our limited success in achieving the MDGs after five years should, above all, shock into action those of us here who can do more. Those with the means must be more committed and more generous to those in the statistical spotlight.

This year, G8 countries have pledged increased aid and also debt cancellation for low income countries. I applaud those initiatives. That is the sort of concrete action required. It was of a level of ambition and scale that needs to be repeated again and again until the MDGs are securely and sustainably achieved. And when I say the MDGs, I mean the Goals themselves and not just the targets. We need, for example, to go beyond the target of halving income poverty and reach the Goal – that is, the total eradication of extreme poverty and hunger. The test on those pledges, as always, is ‘delivery, delivery, delivery’, and to ensure that the funds made available are spent with wisdom, responsibility, accountability, and effectiveness.

In the Commonwealth, 11 of our 53 members have recorded significant progress on the MDGs already, but 31 have made slow progress, and some are actually going backwards. The Commonwealth will have to redouble its efforts to achieve the MDGs and we will do so.

We will help to build or rebuild those democratic institutions which we know go hand-in-hand with stable and prosperous societies. We will continue to champion the principles and values our membersh

Mr President,

This year marks 60 years of the United Nations. This institution embodies mankind's collective will to live and progress together, in a collaborative way, in a community of nations. Multilateralism is the only way in which common problems can be resolved in a substantive way and the future secured for all. Global challenges require global responses.

My colleague, Secretary-General Kofi Annan, has placed before governments a wide-ranging series of proposals to move forward the UN as an institution, and the priority global issues with which it deals. I welcome especially the proposed strengthening of the UN's work in peace-building, human rights, anti-terrorism, and the special attention to development and democracy. The UN has been and will remain a vital partner for the Commonwealth in furthering our objectives in democratisation, peace, human rights and development.

Development can no longer be thought of simply in terms of GDP. Development is about possibilities first and production se