

PRESS RELEASE
Report of the MDG Gap Task Force

UN report: Significant progress in debt relief for poorest countries but trade and aid still major barriers to achieving anti-poverty goals

Improved access to medicine and technology, but more needs to be done

UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK, 4 September – As world leaders prepare to review gains in global development in New York later this month, a new UN report finds significant progress in providing debt relief to the world's poorest countries, but not in fulfilling trade and development aid commitments. Donors will need to increase their development assistance by \$18 billion a year between now and 2010 if they are to meet their previously agreed pledges.

The report, *Global Access to Medicines and Technology*, was prepared by the MDG Gap Task Force, created by UN Secretary-General BAN Ki-moon to track international commitments on aid, trade and debt, and to follow progress on access to essential medicines and technology.

"The year 2008 should mark a turning point in progress towards the Millennium Development Goals," said Secretary-General BAN Ki-moon. "This report is a wake-up call. It provides a valuable snapshot of where the global community is on track in fulfilling its commitments, and where we need to strengthen our efforts for the second half of the MDG timetable. This document will be an invaluable tool when world leaders gather for a high-level event in New York on 25 September to identify urgent ways to take action on the Goals."

Aid and trade—critical gaps in international follow-through

Though donor countries have stepped up official development assistance (ODA) since 2000, aid flows have actually declined in recent years – by 4.7 per cent in 2006 and a further 8.4 per cent in 2007. At the 2005 Group of Eight Summit in Gleneagles, donor countries promised to increase the total flow of ODA by \$50 billion per year by 2010, but delivery is already falling short. Increasing existing flows by \$18 billion per year between 2008 and 2010 would meet the agreed target and bring total aid to an estimated share of 0.35 per cent of gross national income of the OECD countries – still only halfway to the United Nations target of 0.7 per cent.

The breakdown of the Doha development round of trade negotiations in July was a major setback for developing countries seeking to benefit from expanding global trade opportunities in order to reduce poverty. The Doha round was launched in 2001 with the broad purpose of fulfilling the Millennium Declaration objective of establishing an "open, equitable, rule-based, predictable and non-discriminatory multilateral trading and financial system."

According to the report, only 79 per cent of exports from least developed countries are given duty-free access to the markets of developed countries, well short of the target set in 2005 of 97 per cent. Agricultural subsidies were another major Doha stumbling block: there has only been a mild reduction of tariffs on agriculture exports, while agricultural subsidies in OECD countries remain high - \$363 billion in 2006, almost four times the level of ODA that year.

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