

*The KidsRights Millennium  
Development Goals Conference 2010*



an initiative of the  KidsRights foundation

## **THE KIDSRIGHTS MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS CONFERENCE**

**Johannesburg, The Emperors Palace, 9 July 2010**

### **THE JOHANNESBURG CALL TO ACTION FOR CHILDREN**

Many children throughout the world - and particularly the children of the world's poor - continue to live in dire and unacceptable conditions.

However, we, the participants in the KidsRights Millennium Development Goals Conference held in Johannesburg on July 9, 2010, are convinced that the world has sufficient resources, know-how, experience, solidarity and conscience to act; to act fast and to act effectively to improve the condition of the world's children by ensuring the full implementation of all the MDGs. If we all keep our promises and have the faith and the will to act in urgency and in solidarity, we will be able to achieve - and in some cases surpass - the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In any case, it is our belief that a world that claims to be civilised and compassionate, cannot stand idly while our children live and die in misery or fail to achieve their full potential.

We have today considered the progress that the world has made in achieving the MDGs for children in the areas of poverty, health and education. Arising from our deliberations we make the following solemn and urgent call to action to the international community, including inter alia UN agencies and civil society organisations including NGO's, and to all our national governments:

1. Re-dedicate yourselves without hesitation as leaders, to the Millennium Compact and to the commitments that you have made to achieve the MDGs, and in particular to the following goals that affect the well-being of our children:
  - no child should live in poverty;
  - no child shall go to bed hungry;
  - no child should be left out of school;
  - no child shall die needlessly;
  - no mother shall die bringing life.

Keep the promises that we all have made and keep them now!

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2. Develop child-friendly implementation plans and policies supported by adequate human and financial resources and ensure that they are utilised effectively and transparently. Ensure that your promises are reflected in your budgets, prioritising the rights of children and mothers in achieving the MDGs. Promote and support active involvement of civil society organisations, the media, Parliaments, local governments and communities in the achievement of the MDGs.
3. Use the existing tools, knowledge and capacity and improve and/or enhance them for the achievement of the MDGs. Develop and manifest strong and inspiring leadership and political will in this regard.
4. To ensure that all children are treated equally and to address effectively continuing inequalities and discrimination, make it a priority to pay special attention to the poorest and most marginalised children, to children with disabilities, to children in inaccessible areas and to the children of ethnic minorities.
5. Take the necessary measures to ensure that all your actions for the achievement of the MDGs are in full compliance with the human rights and fundamental freedoms that are recognised in international human rights treaties - particularly with the children's rights that are enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.
6. Finally, we call on the rich countries to fulfil their commitments to provide development assistance amounting to at least 0.7 per cent of GDP; to ensure fair and equitable international trade; and to maintain a just and stable international financial system. Rich countries must make up the aid shortfall to date of over 20 billion dollars and must continue to meet their aid commitments. We call on them to keep their promises for the sake of our children!

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With this call to action in mind:

- We will undertake all necessary measures to ensure that our political leaders, governments and civil society organisations are held accountable for the achievement of the MDGs - particularly insofar as they affect the well-being of our children. We accept our own responsibility to address the plight of all children who are in need of special attention and protection;
- We will not be satisfied with lip service, empty promises and excuses that there are other priorities;
- We will use every platform – including the UN MDG Summit 20 - 22 September 2010 in New York – to insist on effective action to achieve the MDGs – and especially those MDGs that most closely affect the future of our children.

Signatories:

- Archbishop Emeritus, Desmond Tutu, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate 1984
- Mr. F.W. de Klerk, former President of South Africa, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate 1993
- Ms. Graça Machel, Founder of the Foundation for Community Development, Mozambique
- Mr. Marc Dullaert, Founder and Chairman of KidsRights
- Mr. Kailash Satyarthi, Chair person of the Global March Against Child Labour and President Global Campaign for Education
- Ms. Ekaterina Zagladina, President of the Permanent Secretariat of the World Summit of Nobel Peace Laureates
- Mr. Jeffrey D. Sachs, Director of the Earth Institute at Columbia University and Special Advisor to UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon on the Millennium Development Goals
- Ms. Marta Santos Pais, Special Representative to the UN Secretary General on Violence Against Children
- Prof. Jaap E. Doek, Emeritus Professor of Family and Juvenile Law, former Chairman of the Committee on the Rights of the Child
- Ms. Eveline Herfkens, former Development Minister, the Netherlands, and Founder of the UN Millennium Campaign

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- Mr. Charles Abugre Akelyira, Africa Regional Director UN Millennium Campaign
- Hon. Samia Yaba Nkrumah, Member of Parliament, Accra, Ghana
- Ms. Dorothy Rozga, Deputy Director of UNICEF Eastern and Southern Africa
- Mr. John Samuel, 1Goal for Education Campaign, Expert Advisor
- Mr. Walter Veltroni, Italian Politician, former Mayor of Rome
- Mr. C.W. van Rooijen, Director of Institute for Housing and Urban Development Studies
- Dr. Nanko G. van Buuren, Executive Director of IBISS, The Brazilian Innovation Institute on Social Health
- Ms. Zandile Gcabashe, Strategic Partnership Coordinator of the AIDS Foundation of South Africa
- Thandiwe Chama, International Children's Peace Prize winner 2007
- Mayra Avellar Neves, International Children's Peace Prize winner 2008
- Baruani Eustache Ndume, International Children's Peace Prize 2009

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## ANNEX

*“We need to show the world that when we make a commitment, we keep it”,*  
Minister of Women, Children and Persons with disabilities, Republic of South Africa.

On the 9<sup>th</sup> of July 2010 over 200 representatives from public, private and civil society sectors came together in Johannesburg at the invitation of the KidsRights Foundation, with the support of Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu, the FW de Klerk Foundation, the 1Goal Campaign and the World Summit of Nobel Peace Laureates, to discuss the progress of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in relation to children worldwide.

Taking advantage of the special opportunities presented by the World Cup, and the presence of the global media, we focused our attention on the plight of children and on the steps that must be taken to ensure that they will benefit from the implementation of the MDGs. The MDGs, which must be achieved by 2015, are extremely relevant for the well-being of disadvantaged children everywhere. However, in a world dominated by so many other pressing issues, the problems that the world experiences in achieving the MDG targets affecting children, too often fade into the background. In view of the above:

1. We recognize that significant progress has been made worldwide towards achieving the MDGs. Through the concerted efforts of many, state and non-state actors alike, in individual countries and in international partnerships and solidarity, millions of people have been pulled out of poverty and millions of lives have been saved.
2. We are concerned about the millions of people remaining in poverty, mothers and children still dying in large numbers from preventable causes, millions of children remaining out of school and millions of children still suffering from hunger and malnutrition. We are saddened that at the current rate, many countries, especially in sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia, will not meet the MDG targets and if they do, the poorest people and the poorest children will not be reached. We are alarmed that in some goals, such as improving maternal health and reducing child mortality, progress has gone backwards.

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3. The situation has been worsened by the global financial and economic crises and climate change. It is estimated that the global recessions precipitated by the international financial meltdown may have pushed over 50 million people into poverty worldwide and may have contributed to over 200,000 additional child mortalities, as poor countries cut down on spending on social development and producers lost markets and income. The contraction in financial flows to poor countries and the decline in domestic resource mobilisation were exacerbated by the failure of rich countries to deliver their development assistance promises.
4. We would like to stress that the MDGs are not ambitious if we measure them against the wealth, knowledge and capabilities that the 20<sup>th</sup> Century brought to humanity. The MDG's income norm is 1.25 dollars a day. This is not a norm that any of us will like to live under. The MDGs are no more than the lowest common values of what it means to be human.
5. With five years to the 2015 target, we believe that the goals are achievable but to achieve them will take accelerated actions, more resources and more effective use of resources. It will also take partnerships within and between state and non-state actors (including the private sector) and more effective global partnerships than currently apply.
6. We recognize that the MDGs are linked together: achieving one goal affects the other and requires the other to be sustained. All the MDGs affect children's rights directly or indirectly and therefore to sustain children's rights it is necessary that all the goals be achieved;
7. We acknowledge that economic progress has lifted millions of people out of poverty in all parts of the world, including Africa. By extension, child poverty has been reduced around the world. However the impact of economic development has been uneven. The poorest regions and the poorest communities have been left behind. An estimated 25 per cent of the developing world's population still live in extreme poverty, with the proportion of the population living in poverty highest in Sub-Saharan Africa.

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8. Progress in reducing hunger and malnutrition has been slow. 127 Million children under five are underweight. In the whole world, almost one billion people live in slums with little access to sanitation and clean water. The food crisis preceding the global financial crisis may have pushed millions more children into hunger and increased malnutrition.
9. We note that education for both boys and girls is a critical tool in ending discrimination, eliminating child labour and breaking the cycle of poverty. We are saddened by the fact that in spite of commendable efforts to increase primary school enrolment, 72 million children are still out of school and millions more have access only to sub-standard education, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa. Attendance rates remain low, drop-out rates are high and trained teachers are insufficient. We emphasize that good quality education is equally important as enrolment.
10. We note that significant progress has been made in narrowing the gender gap in primary school enrolment across the world. However, fewer and fewer girls transition to higher levels of education. Moreover, with a few exceptions, representation of women in business and political decision-making remain extremely poor. Women in successful business and political decision-making would have both a direct and indirect positive impact on the lives of children.
11. In relation to child mortality, we acknowledge that globally there has been a decline in the under-five mortality rate by over 25 per cent in 2008 compared to 1990. However, progress is slow. The number of children dying from preventable causes remains unacceptably high at approximately 9 million annually. Alarming child mortality rates have increased, rather than decreased, in five countries in sub-Saharan Africa, including the relatively wealthy ones like South Africa and Kenya.
12. We note with concern that the situation is even more grim when it comes to reducing maternal deaths, as the developing world as a whole (India included) is not on track to meet this goal. In at least seven countries in Africa the maternal mortality rate has actually increased. To be able to reduce maternal mortality, the number of trained personnel to assist at delivery needs to increase dramatically among other measures, especially in sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia. We recognize that the number

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of women who have access to reproductive health care has increased from over 50 per cent to more than 60 per cent. However, the universal access is still far away.

13. In relation to HIV and Aids we observe with disquiet that the number of newly infected people with HIV and Aids remains too high, especially in Southern Africa. Gender inequality, among others, makes it impossible for women to gain control over their own sexuality, which negatively influences the HIV and Aids figures and as a consequence the number of orphans. We however recognise with delight that the coverage of antiretroviral treatment in poorer countries has increased significantly. Nevertheless, approximately two-third of people who need treatment do not have access to the required drugs and even when they do, their efficacy is hampered by factors such as hunger.
14. We also recognize that as a result of various global programmes, supported by public and private sectors alike, tuberculosis and malaria cases have declined. Nevertheless malaria continues to kill almost one million people annually worldwide, most of them children.

Taking the above into account we call on world leaders, meeting at the UN MDG Summit in September 2010, to invest in children and address their needs in fast and effective ways.