



Realising the MDGs

A communications campaign to mobilise action at the ten-year mark

March 2010



“In the decade since the Millennium Development Goals were first agreed, we have learned a great deal about what works, and where we need to focus our efforts. Evidence shows that the Goals can be achieved, even in the poorest countries, when good policies and projects are backed by adequate resources. We can and must do more, especially given the growing impact of climate change, increasing global hunger, and continuing fallout from the economic and financial crisis.

My message is simple: The MDGs are too big to fail. We are ready to act, ready to deliver, and ready to make 2010 a year of results for people.”

Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary-General
21 December 2009

Realising the MDGs

Supporting efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is a key priority for the United Nations Association of the UK (UNA-UK).

Adopted by world leaders in 2000, the MDGs are eight time-bound objectives aimed at reducing poverty and inequality, and addressing a host of other social ills, by the target date of 2015. We are now at the two-thirds mark of this schedule – just five years remain for the international community to achieve the Goals.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon recently noted that the MDGs “can be achieved, even in the poorest countries, when good policies and projects are backed by adequate resources”. But many challenges remain, not least the continuing fallout from the financial and food crises. Declaring 2010 to be the ‘year of development’, Mr Ban has called on governments to redouble their efforts and has scheduled a high-level meeting on the MDGs for September this year.

A communications campaign to mobilise action at the ten-year mark

In 2009, UNA-UK decided to ramp up its work on the MDGs by initiating a communications campaign to mark the ten-year anniversary of the Goals. The aims of the campaign were to:

- raise awareness of the Goals and their decade milestone;
- stimulate thought and debate on helping the international community to honour its pledge to the world’s poorest; and
- mobilise targeted international action to address areas where progress has so far fallen short.

This year-long initiative was multi-faceted, reflecting UNA-UK’s communications ethos which combines targeting key decision-makers and opinion-formers with support for grassroots campaigning. It included the production of teaching materials on the MDGs, the holding of conferences and the use of our website and new media to expand the reach of our work to developing countries, in particular our sister UN associations around the world. The campaign will culminate on 12 June 2010 at UNA-UK’s inaugural ‘UN Forum’, a large-scale national event to mobilise civil society in support of the UN’s work in development, human rights, and peace and security.

More about New World

New World is one of our primary advocacy and outreach tools. It is distributed to an international audience comprising UNA-UK members; developing-country NGOs including UN associations in nearly 100 countries; international media and academic contacts; UK parliamentarians; diplomatic missions in London and New York; and key individuals in all main UN bodies.

New World is UNA-UK's flagship magazine. It is published three times a year, in print and online, and has a global reach of 10,000 individuals and organisations. New World synthesises information from across the UN system, serving as a one-stop shop for policy-makers and campaigners interested in the UN and its work. Ban Ki-moon, Helen Clark, Kofi Annan and Sir John Holmes are some of our contributors, along with other senior UN staff – past and present, and leading voices on international issues from around the world.

More about UNA-UK

UNA-UK is the UK's leading source of independent analysis on the United Nations and a UK-wide grassroots movement. We are committed to a strong, credible and effective UN – an organisation equipped to tackle the raft of issues facing the world today, such as climate change and HIV/AIDS, which no country can address alone. Through public information and education tools, we seek to demonstrate why the UN matters to people everywhere. We believe that a strong UN is in the UK's national interest and work with government to advocate support for the UN. Our campaigns, resources and events help our local, student and young professional members to champion peace, development and human rights.

www.una.org.uk

Raising awareness of MDG progress and pitfalls



New World Winter 2009 featured a list of ten MDG successes and challenges, intended to give a snapshot of progress to date for use by policy-makers, journalists and campaigners in need of quick statistics and soundbites.

“Despite the economic downturn current projections suggest that overall poverty rates in the developing world will continue to fall in 2009... [but] an estimated 55 million to 90 million more people will be living in extreme poverty”

Ten, Winter 2009, p.28



We also sought to highlight particular areas of concern, such as MDG 5 on maternal mortality towards which the least progress has been made, and violence against women.

“Women in some rich countries have a 1 in 8,700 chance of dying in childbirth; in some poor countries giving birth will kill on average 1 in 10 women...this is not just a health or humanitarian problem – it is a human rights issue”

Former UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Health, Paul Hunt, Dispatches, Spring 2009, p.6

“Violence against women does serious damage beyond the victim, hurting families, societies, draining public resources and shrinking economic output”

Briefing, Spring 2009, p.14



And we put the spotlight on vulnerable groups, such as older people. In an op ed called 'Older people have rights too', Richard Blewitt, the CEO of HelpAge International, argued that the marginalisation of older people has a profound effect on the MDGs.

“Until information is collected on how older people are being affected by HIV, the UN’s target of universal access to prevention, treatment, care and support will not be met”.

Dispatches, Spring 2009, p.7



The links between peace, development and human rights can often be overlooked. We used New World to highlight some of the impediments to achieving the MDGs – such as the arms trade and corruption, which are not always factored into development strategies.

“Corruption damages economies by distorting competition, can lead to a collapse in governance and diverts resources from those most in need. According to leading anti-corruption NGO Transparency International, 25% of African states’ GDP is lost to corruption each year”

In focus, Spring 2010, p.10

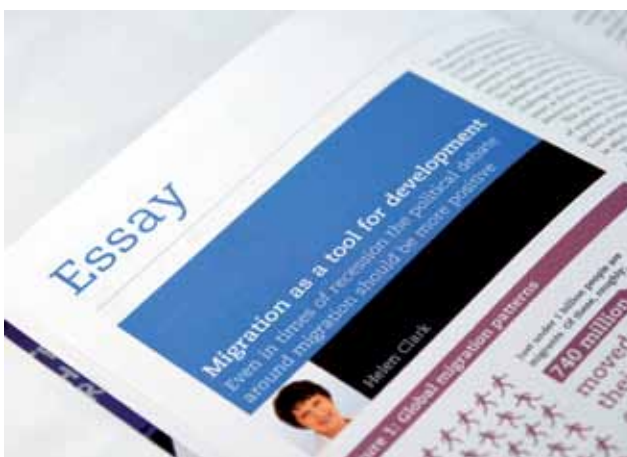
Providing expert analysis and recommendations



UN staff, policy-makers and academics contributed MDG policy prescriptions to *New World*. In the Spring 2009 issue, international development expert Alex Evans considered the impacts of the global financial downturn on the poor and what needs to be done to counteract these effects:

“The UN Millennium Campaign estimates that aid flows will fall by \$4.5 billion in 2009 as a result of the credit crunch; UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has called for a \$1 trillion ‘bail-out’ to help developing countries cope... policy-makers must move towards a more integrated approach to managing global risks”

Essay, Spring 2009, p.13



This issue of *New World* also profiled the UN Food & Agriculture Organization, including recommendations on achieving MDG 1 made by FAO head Jacques Diouf following a parliamentary meeting organised by UNA-UK. (Profile, Spring 2009, p.18-19)

One year later, Helen Clark – UN Development Programme Administrator – made the case that migration is an important tool for achieving the MDGs:

“Migrants often experience significant gains in terms of health, wealth and education... the families that remain at home experience improvements in their income and in the quality of the education and healthcare”

Essay, Spring 2010, p.16



British parliamentarians from across the political spectrum have used New World to make an impact. In the Spring 2010 issue, the recently launched cross-party group Trade Out of Poverty made the case for how the UK can lead by example to help achieve MDG 8:

“Rich countries must open their markets unconditionally to the poorest countries”

Opinion, Spring 2010, p.8



We also considered whether the existing development architecture and international institutions are fit for purpose. In the Winter 2009 issue, Professor Ngaire Woods and Devi Sridhar, members of the UNAIDS Leadership Transition Working Group, asked whether we need a UN agency for HIV/AIDS (Opinion, Winter 2009, p.7).

And the UN's efforts to combat climate change are addressed in both the Winter 2009 (Op ed by Yvo de Boer, head of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, Opinion, Winter 2009, p.8) and Spring 2010 issues (Briefing on the Copenhagen conference, Spring 2010, p.12).

“The magnitude of developing country action will largely depend on effective delivery of finance and clean technology through international cooperative action. There must be clarity on how significant financial resources will be generated to help developing countries both limit the growth of their emissions and adapt to the impact of climate change”

Yvo de Boer, Opinion, Winter 2009, p.8

Equipping our networks – from global to local

Throughout our MDG communications campaign, we suggested ways in which New World readers could help the international effort.

Our regular 'Do Something' feature – action points that individuals and groups can take in support of UN goals – included campaigns to 'seal the deal' on climate change at Copenhagen (Do Something, Winter 2009, p.24) and to fight violence against women (Do Something, Spring 2009, p.16).

We showcased the World Food Day partnership between our student group at the London School of Economics and the World Food Programme in the Spring 2010 issue of New World, and urged our other groups across the country to join our food security campaign:

“Rushing in between classes, scrambling for change to buy a bacon sandwich or impatiently queuing for pizza on a Friday night...It's easy to take food for granted and forget that millions of people around the world don't know where their next meal will come from”

Isabella Hayward, London School of Economics UN Society, Spring 2010, p.39



We featured the collaboration between our local branch in Cornwall and the UN Association in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). The branch has raised funds to re-roof a school in Mboko, a village in the war-ravaged DRC, and equip the village with a reliable water source. A letter exchange between children in both countries was also established. (Membership at work, Spring 2009, p.27)

Business and social entrepreneurship are vital to the MDGs, in particular, MDG 8 on 'a global partnership for development'. In the Spring 2009 issue, we interviewed one of our young professional members: the manager of award-winning fair trade project 'Gambia is Good'. The project links an international charity with a private horticultural company to provide the missing link between small-scale rural farmers and the high-value tourist market. (Young Professionals Network, Spring 2009, p.33).

And in the Spring 2010 issue, we highlighted the work of our young professionals with the UK Network of the UN Global Compact, as well as a new business-UN portal that matches the needs of specific UN agencies and projects (anything from funding to logistical support and technical advice) to private-sector firms and consultancies. (UNA-UK Young Professionals Network, Spring 2010, p.41)

“For me, social entrepreneurship is about using markets to unleash the energy, efficiency and innovation of the private sector to solve the world’s most pressing social and environmental problems. Two obvious examples are Grameen Bank’s pioneering work in microfinance and Vodafone’s innovative use of SMS technology in Kenya”

Andrew, Hunt, UNA-UK Young Professionals Network, Spring 2009, p.33

