



Delivering and exceeding the MDGs

Why and how countries can take action at the UN Summit

A historic opportunity in 2005

At the UN World Summit in New York on 14-16 September, Heads of State will gather to review the progress made towards the commitments in the United Nations Millennium Declaration. This Declaration covers issues of international peace and security and development, including the internationally agreed development goals (MDGs) and the global partnership required for their achievement.

The world's largest anti-poverty campaign – the Global Call for Action against Poverty (GCAP) – is calling on leaders to make firm commitments at the UN on poverty, peace and security and human rights. GCAP is an alliance of millions of people and organisations united in the belief that 2005 offers an unprecedented opportunity for change. United by the symbol of the white band, we span every culture across the world.

The path to failure: broken promises, missed opportunities

Five years after the Millennium Development Goals were agreed we are already in serious danger of failing to achieve even them, despite the fact that they set the most minimalist of targets.

- If we continue as we are it will take many countries 100 years, not ten, to achieve the goals.
- In 2005 the world will miss the first agreed MDG target of achieving equal numbers of girls as boys in primary school: this target has been missed in over 70 countries.
- Average life expectancy in Africa is 46 years and falling and the number of people living in extreme poverty has increased by more than 140 million in the last twenty years¹.
- A mother dies every minute as a result of problems in pregnancy and childbirth, and the MDG of reducing maternal mortality by three-quarters by 2015 will, on current trends, not be met.
- On current trends and including the commitments made at the G8 in Gleneagles, the G8 countries will only be giving 0.36% of GNI and not until 2010
- To reach 0.7% of GNI in 2010, donors must increase their aid not by the \$48 billion agreed in Gleneagles, but by \$170 billion.
- The world spends \$400bn per year on advertising
- G8 countries between them spent over \$600bn on defence in 2004
- US cotton subsidies to just 25,000 farmers are three times more than the entire US aid budget for Africa

We have the solutions, all we need is the political will

Whilst the problems are grave, there are a number of changes that if implemented could substantially cut the rate of people suffering from poverty

- If rich countries delivered on the commitment they made 35 years ago to allocate 0.7% of their Gross National Income (GNI) to aid the MDGs could be met
- To reach the MDGs by 2015, over 60 countries need their debts cancelled, many more than the 18 who had them cancelled at the G8 summit
- We need a world trading system that does not force poor countries to open their economies and give up their right to determine their own trade policies.
- Developed countries must abolish the \$1 billion dollars per day paid in subsidies to big agribusiness which make it difficult for poor countries to benefit from trade
- Developing countries should commit to spending 20% of public budgets on quality social services such as health, education and clean water
- Developing countries must put in place effective anti-corruption mechanisms and guarantee their citizens civil and political rights

¹ UN Statistics Division, Dept of Economic and Social Affairs, <http://www.un.org/esa/>

Poverty threatens everyone's security

In the twenty-first century, the price of not investing in sustainable development for poor communities will be felt not only in developing countries, but across the world. The existence of extreme poverty heightens the likelihood of conflict and unrest across the globe. The risk of civil war is much higher in low-income countries. New threats to peace and security of rich nations arise from poverty and inequality. Criminal and terrorist networks are more likely to operate where state institutions are weak. And the actions of rich nations do not go un-noted by the rest of the world, which perceives that rich powers intervene militarily when their own security is threatened, but rarely invest in long-term development in accordance with their obligations to ensure the security of rights for all.

It is crucial therefore that countries do more to protect the security of *all* citizens, while making the long-term investments that are necessary to address human rights violations and the poverty that fuels insecurity.

At minimum the summit must result in:

1. Clear steps towards not only meeting, but exceeding, the Millennium Development Goals;
2. A commitment towards the shared responsibility to protect all citizens and
3. A clear acknowledgement of the equality of human rights for all.

The Millennium Development Goals are eight goals agreed by over 190 governments in 2000 to help eradicate poverty through action by developed and developing countries. They focus on eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, achieving universal primary education, promoting gender equality, reducing child mortality, improving maternal health, combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other preventable diseases, ensuring environmental sustainability and developing a global partnership for development.

What needs to be done to reach and exceed the MDGs?

Written into the MDGs themselves is a commitment in goal 8 to make sure that the poorest countries will have the finance needed to achieve them. Reports released this year, of the UN Millennium Project and the Commission for Africa, have stressed that without immediate and sustained investment by the rich countries poverty will continue to claim millions of lives and the MDGs will not be met. While small steps were taken at the G8 on increasing aid and providing some debt cancellation for some countries, they fell far short of what is needed to stem the tide of death, hunger and disease. Larger steps are needed at the UN Summit.

Of course tackling global poverty requires more than money. Poor countries' prospects are also undermined by unfair trade rules and by violent conflicts. Poor country governments must also fulfil their own commitments to fight poverty, primarily through committing to allocate more of their money to basic services like health and education and by ensuring greater transparency and accountability in their spending. Yet without the additional financing, even those poor countries with the best policies will remain unable to take advantage of global trade opportunities or protect their citizens' basic rights to life, good health and education. So, financing is vital.

More and Better Aid - everyone must give 0.7%

Leaders of all rich countries must agree to reach 0.7% of their national income in aid immediately and ensure that this aid reaches the poorest people in the poorest countries. They promised to give this amount in 1970, and 35 years later this promise remains broken. Whilst the G8 committed to increase levels of aid, the quality, quantity and crucially the speed of its delivery falls far short of what is desperately needed.

Rich countries spend shamefully little on aid, giving half as much as a proportion of incomes as they did in the 1960s. The MDGs could be met if rich countries delivered on the commitment they made 35 years ago, to allocate 0.7% of their Gross National Income (GNI) to aid. But on current trends and

including the commitments made at the G8 in Gleneagles, the G8 countries will only be giving 0.36% of GNI and not until 2010. Other countries not in the G8 must also reach the 0.7% target. A comparison of the aid levels of all these countries is below.

Rich countries could afford to spend much more.

Alleviating poverty is simply a matter of priorities

- The G8 countries between them spend 600 billion US dollars annually on defence²
- For the price of just one cruise missile, 100 schools could be built in Africa³
- Japan's aid budget is currently one-fifth of its spending on agricultural subsidies⁴
- Current US spending on aid to Sub-Saharan Africa is half of what the US spends on bottled water (estimated 2004 US bottled water sales: \$8bn⁵)
- Germany's current spending on aid per person per week is equivalent to the price of a McDonalds cheeseburger⁶
- One billion US dollars is enough to lift 30 million people out of absolute poverty⁷
- Five billion US dollars would pay for the education of the 100 million children currently out of school⁸

How much more aid is needed

In Gleneagles in July, the G8 leaders increased aid to developing countries by \$48bn a year by 2010, compared to 2004 levels of \$56.6. This will have added an extra \$16bn to the global aid budget by 2010 above and beyond current trends.

However, the increases will still come too late and fall far short of what the UN estimates is needed. The UN is very clear on what is needed to meet the MDGs: an immediate substantial boost in aid followed by a further steady increase to 0.46% of Gross National Income (GNI) by 2010 and 0.7% of GNI by 2015⁹. In US dollars this means an immediate boost of \$70bn more aid in 2006 than 2004 levels rising to \$90bn more by 2010.

Even if reached, the MDGs will only halve poverty. The Global Call for Action against Poverty is demanding that rich countries go further and give 0.7% of their national income as ODA by 2010 at the latest. The G8 countries' proposed increase of \$48bn by 2010 will only equate to an average of 0.36% of their national income by 2010. To reach 0.7% of GNI in 2010 donors should increase their aid not by \$48 billion but by \$170 billion. In contrast, military spending by rich countries was over \$600bn in 2004.

HEALTH:

Taking health as an example, the World Health Organisation (WHO) says that a minimum of \$30-40 per person is needed annually to finance a minimum health package, but many poor countries invest far less, on average \$10 per person, and in some countries, as little as \$2 per capita¹⁰. Achieving the health MDGs will be impossible without a much bigger increase in investment and commitment from developing and donor countries.

EDUCATION:

In the case of education, while aid to basic education in low income countries increased to \$1.7bn in 2003, this still represents only one-fifth of what is needed. For less than \$5.5bn more per year, free,

² <http://www.armscontrolcenter.org/archives/001221.php>, http://borgenproject.org/Global_Issues.html

³ Calculations by GCE – see school report

⁴ Japan's aid spending in 2004 was US\$ 8.9bn; its annual spend on agricultural subsidies is US\$ 44 bn

⁵ Mintel, Dec 2004

⁶ German aid spending per person per day is £0.99; McDonalds cheeseburger

⁷ Working on \$20 billion figure to half the number of people living in extreme poverty taken from WB Global Monitoring Report. Number of people living below dollar a day is 1.2 billion.

⁸ \$1bn is enough to put 20 million children in school. Paying the Price, Oxfam 2005

⁹ Based on projections of the Millennium Project contained in 'Investing in Development: a practical plan to achieve the Millennium Development Goals', January 2005. Figures have been adjusted to constant 2004 US dollars to allow comparison.

¹⁰ Building Stronger Health Systems Key to Reaching Health Millennium Development Goals, World Health Organisation, 22 August 2005

quality education could be provided for every child¹¹. The G8 commitments are nowhere near big enough to meet this need.

Aid Levels¹² - How much do the G8 give? How much should they give?

	UK	France	Italy	Japan	US	Canada	Germany	Across all G8 ¹³ countries
<i>Do they have a target for 0.7?</i>	0.7% by 2013	0.7% by 2012	0.7% by 2015	No Target	No Target	No Target for 0.7% (but have target of 0.33% by 2010)	0.7% by 2015, but only if supported by new financing mechanisms	
<i>What new commitments at the G8 meeting in July 2005</i>	Reconfirmed commitment made in July 2004 to reach 0.7% by 2013	Reconfirmed commitment made in 2002 to reach 0.7% by 2012, and announced that 0.5% will be reached by 2007	Reconfirmed commitment to the May 2005 European target of 0.51% by 2010 and 0.7% by 2015	Announced ODA will increase by \$10bn over next 5 years, reversing a 5-year decline. Also announced re-allocation of ODA to health initiatives in Africa	Reconfirmed HIV/AIDS initiative and Millennium Challenge Account. Announced new malaria initiative. New resources total approx. \$600 million per year	Reconfirmed commitment made in 2002 to double its aid by 2010 from 2001 levels, meaning Canadian aid will reach 0.33% by 2010	Reconfirmed commitment to the May 2005 European target of 0.51% by 2010 and 0.7% by 2015, but only if supported by new financing mechanisms such as plane ticket tax	
<i>Amount currently spent on Aid as % of GNI</i>	0.36	0.42	0.15	0.19	0.16	0.26	0.25	0.24 (average)
<i>Amount spent on Aid in 2004, US\$bn¹⁴</i>	7.8	8.5	2.5	8.9	18.9	2.5	7.5	56.6 (total)
<i>Amount per citizen per year (US\$)</i>	131	137	43	69	65	79	91	88 (average)
<i>Amount per citizen per week (US\$)</i>	2.5	2.6	0.83	1.3	1.2	1.5	1.8	1.7 (average)
<i>Cost of getting to 0.7% now (US\$ billion)</i>	7.3	5.7	9.2	24.5	63.3	4.3	11.4	125.7 (total)
<i>Amount spent on defence (US\$bn)¹⁵</i>	49	40	17.5	45.1	420	10	29.7	611.3

¹¹ Missing the Mark, Global Campaign for Education. April 2005. Drawing on data from UNESCO's Education for All Global Monitoring Report.

¹² All the aid level statistics are taken from the OECD DAC official figures for 2004.

¹³ Although G8 is used throughout instead of G7, Russia does not give foreign aid, so the countries covered are Canada, US, UK, France, Germany, Italy and Japan.

¹⁴ OECD DAC

¹⁵ <http://www.armscontrolcenter.org/archives/001221.php>, http://borgenproject.org/Global_Issues.html

Aid levels for some non-G8 countries (for information on all countries see link below)¹⁶

Country	Australia	Denmark	Greece	Ireland	New Zealand	Norway	Portugal	Sweden
<i>Aid spending as a % of GNI (2003 figures)</i>	0.25	0.84	0.21	0.39	0.23	0.92	0.22	0.79

Aid works but must come without strings attached

Where good quality aid is delivered in a timely and well-focused way it can make an enormous difference. Aid has a key role to play in wiping out killer diseases - \$100million was used to eradicate smallpox in 1980. Aid has also been used in countries emerging from war, such as Mozambique, to get them back on their feet; and in Ethiopia, aid has paid for roads which have made a dramatic difference to communities, speeding up journeys to clinics and markets.

At the same time, increased aid budgets must go hand-in-hand with improvements to the way aid is delivered. Too often aid is used as a political tool, is tied to an obligation to buy goods and services from the donor country, or comes with harmful economic policy conditions attached. Leaders must commit to untying aid and to ending the economic policy conditions too often attached to aid.

Full Debt Cancellation

Leaders at the UN summit must endorse the need to go further on debt cancellation, agreeing to cancel the debts of all countries that need it to be able to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. They must also ensure that debt relief is not tied to harmful World Bank and IMF conditions.

Alongside increased levels of ODA, developing countries need to have unfair debts cancelled. At current levels, poor countries pay over \$100 million to the rich world in debt repayments every day¹⁷. Last year Zambia's debt payments to the IMF alone were more than its entire education budget – despite 40% of women being unable to read or write¹⁸. In Gleneagles the G8 leaders endorsed the debt cancellation deal agreed by their finance ministers in June 2005 which cancelled 100 per cent of the debts owed to some poor countries by the World Bank, the IMF, and the African Development Bank. The step will benefit 18 countries immediately, and could benefit as many as 38 countries in coming years.

The G8 deal is only the beginning

However, we have much further to go. Many countries – such as Sri Lanka, Kenya and Vietnam - have been left out of the deal and the relief remains subject to harmful World Bank and IMF conditions. Research shows that over 60 countries will need 100 per cent of their multilateral debts cancelled if they are to reach the MDGs by 2015, at an annual cost of \$10bn. In contrast the deal agreed by the G8 in July 2005 covers 18 countries initially at a cost of \$1.5bn to rich countries each year.

It is crucial to ensure that every country that needs this cancellation receives it as soon as possible. This means both widening the list of eligible countries, and abolishing the harmful conditions that eligible countries have to comply with to benefit from debt cancellation.

¹⁶ For further information on all countries' aid levels see: www.socialwatch.org/en/informeImpreso/pdfs/oda2005_eng.pdf

¹⁷ Global Development Finance, 2004

¹⁸ From Oxfam and UNICEF

Trade Justice

Leaders at the UN summit must commit to trade justice. In particular they must agree to stop pushing poor countries to open their economies and guarantee their right to determine their own trade policies.

Today, developing countries represent only 31 per cent of world trade, despite the fact that more than 80 per cent of the world's population lives in the developing world. This picture is even bleaker if one looks closely at the data on agriculture: developing countries capture only a third of world agricultural trade and within this Africa accounts for only 4 per cent. An improvement in such statistics could make a huge difference to poverty reduction, on the poorest continent and elsewhere. But currently, unfair trade rules and the practices of rich countries' severely undermine that potential.

Developing countries are badly hit by the billion dollars a day paid in subsidies to farmers in rich countries. The United States spends \$3.5 billion a year subsidizing its 25,000 cotton farmers, the vast majority big agribusinesses. The cheap cotton the United States dumps on world markets has contributed to world prices falling by half since the mid 1990s, which has caused massive hardship among the 10 million cotton farmers living in West Africa and elsewhere. US cotton subsidies are three times more than the entire US aid budget for Africa.

At the same time, rich countries, through the World Trade Organisation, the World Bank and the IMF, and a raft of bilateral and regional free trade agreements, are pushing open poor countries' economies, undermining the food security and the livelihoods of their citizens. This must stop.

The G8 failed to move forwards on creating a more just world trade system, and in some cases even moved back on existing commitments. Whilst G8 leaders professed their commitment to a pro-development trading system, their trade negotiators in Geneva were blocking progress in talks that could have achieved just that. A serious commitment to trade justice at the UN is needed as part of any serious commitment to achieving the MDGs.

Actions from Southern Governments

Meeting the MDGs is everyone's responsibility

Developing country governments should demonstrate their commitment to poverty reduction by meeting the UN recommendation to spend 20 per cent of public budgets on basic social services and transparently directing it to poor people. They should also end the imposition of user fees for basic health and education services. Though many governments have a long way to go, there are also big success stories. Kenya, for example, introduced free primary education in 2003, and since then education spending has reached up to 40% of the government budget. And in Tanzania aid and debt relief money enabled the government to scrap fees for primary education in 2002, giving almost two million children the chance to learn to read and write.

Crucially, developing country governments must also address the corruption that almost always hits the poorest hardest; they must institutionalize parliamentary and civil-society participation in the making and implementation of pro-poor policies; and they must guarantee civil and political rights to free and fair elections, freedom of expression, and the rule of law.

While there is clearly a long way to go in many countries, there has been substantial progress in the performance and accountability of many poor-country governments. Democracy is taking root in sub-Saharan Africa, for instance, with elections held in 44 out of 50 countries in the past decade, while independent TV and radio stations are being established across the continent.

Regarding corruption, national coalitions across the south are increasingly exposing petty corruption and holding their governments to account to ensure that money goes to where it is needed most. For example, in Malawi, civil society groups tour the country's schools making sure textbooks paid for by foreign aid actually arrive. In Uganda, an anti-corruption network named and shamed a corrupt official who had pocketed £15,000 earmarked for a road upgrade. He was arrested and forced to hand back the money. These are just two examples of how African citizens are taking action against corruption within the continent.

Corruption is not an excuse for inaction

GCAP believes that problems with corruption must not be used as an excuse for rich countries not to deliver on the necessary financing that is crucial for achieving the MDGs. Aid is a weapon through which corruption can be fought by building governments' capacity to monitor the spending of aid money and ensuring that civil servants are paid a salary which they can survive on. Moreover, corruption itself is in part a consequence of poverty. "Petty" corruption is more likely to take place when civil servants are paid very low wages – a fact that has been acknowledged by both the World Bank and IMF. In such circumstances, simply withholding aid is ineffective, and can be counter-productive.

What Happens if World Leaders Fail to Act?

More unnecessary deaths, more extreme poverty...

Currently, there are 50,000 unnecessary deaths every day, caused by poverty. The majority of these are women and children. If the G8 Gleneagles commitments are delivered, by 2010 this will have fallen to 37,000 unnecessary deaths per day. This is not good enough. Much bolder steps need to be taken.

Worsening health crisis

Millions will continue to die from avoidable causes

If the required aid and debt cancellation is not forthcoming, many of the poorest countries will remain unable to buy badly needed medicines, to build up health facilities, and to train and pay medical staff. Data presented in a recently released World Health Organisation (WHO) report¹⁹ indicates that if trends established in the 1990s continue, the majority of developing countries will not achieve the health MDGs. This will have severe knock on effects on the other goals. Currently the situation is not looking good. None of the poorest regions are on track to meet the child mortality target. The goal of reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS and reversing the incidence of malaria and other communicable diseases remains a huge challenge in sub-Saharan Africa.

Annual avoidable deaths in developing countries include: almost 11 million children under five, more than half-a-million women in pregnancy and childbirth and approximately one million people from malaria. The HIV/AIDS pandemic takes three million lives each year.

In Africa alone one in six children dies before reaching their fifth birthday. Many could be saved by low cost treatments such as oral re-hydration salts, malaria nets and vitamins.

Continuing exclusion from education

Despite bold rhetoric, numbers of children out of school are rising

In 2000 the world's governments committed themselves at the World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal, to provide free primary education for every child in the world by 2015. In 2001 the Education for All Fast Track Initiative (FTI) was established with G8 and EU backing to provide the resources needed to fulfil this promise.

But despite the bold rhetoric about Education for All, the international community is not coming up with the money needed for removing school fees, building schools and training teachers.

For example, Yemen would like to build more schools in rural areas and expand a programme of stipends that has proven very successful in attracting poor girls to school. However - despite receiving Fast Track Initiative endorsement - it is still short of some \$96 million per year to go ahead

¹⁹ Building Stronger Health Systems Key to Reaching Health Millennium Development Goals, World Health Organisation, 22 August 2005

with its plans. Mauritania has a spectacular track record on increasing girls' school enrolment and yet needs almost twice as much aid as it is currently getting to implement the education plans that FTI donors have approved. In Zambia teachers are dying of AIDS more quickly than they can be trained. Across Africa the numbers of children out of school are rising – 40 million children are not getting the most basic education - more than one third of all children - and more than half of them are girls²⁰.

Despite longstanding commitments to increase education spending to 6% of GDP, countries in Africa and South and West Asia countries still devote an average of less than 3.5% of GDP to spending on all levels of education.ⁱ But, even if all developing countries substantially increased their own education investments, they would still need additional support from rich countries in order to achieve the MDGs. Yet donor countries give only a fifth of the aid that would be needed to achieve universal primary education by 2015²¹.

In Gleneagles, the G8 communiqué reiterated the aim that every FTI- elected country should have the 'resources necessary to implement their sustainable education strategies'. No new financial commitments were made however, despite the G8 Africa Personal Representatives' report admitting a shortfall of \$6bn annually for primary education alone. There was no mention of the sole MDG target for 2005 — to get equal numbers of boys as girls into school. This target has been missed in over 70 countries²².

Poverty will continue to have a female face

Women's rights and poverty eradication are inseparable goals. Both are issues of rights and justice, not charity. No matter what the indicator of poverty, women systematically bear the greater burden. Throughout the world, women have less to eat than boys and men, are the first to be denied the chance to go to school, are the ones at highest risk from HIV/AIDs, and work longer hours for less. They have less control over their lives, and are the first to suffer from insecurity and violence.

The problem of exclusion from education is particularly serious for girls. Sixty million girls are denied education. Every year of schooling lost represents a 10 to 20 per cent reduction in girls' future incomes. Countries could raise per capita economic growth by about 0.3% percentage points per year – or 3 percentage points in the next decade - if they simply attained parity in girls' and boys' enrolments.ⁱⁱ Failure to educate girls and women perpetuates needless hunger. Gains in women's education contributed most to reducing malnutrition between 1970-1995, playing a more important role than increased food availability²³. It costs as little as US\$100 per year to provide this critical asset, and in the 21st century there can be no excuse for 60 million girls to be denied it.

At current rates of progress, it will take more than 100 years before all girls in Africa go to primary school, and hundreds more before they get a chance at secondary education. Over the next decade, unless world leaders take action now, unacceptably slow progress on girls' education will account for over 10 million unnecessary child and maternal deaths, will cost poor countries as much as 3% points in lost economic growth, and lead to at least 3.5 million avoidable cases of HIV/AIDS. Without a dramatic increase, 40% of countries will still not attain gender equality in enrolments even by 2015.²⁴ Some 86 countries are not on track to achieve universal primary education by 2015.²⁵

²⁰ Missing the Mark: A School Report on rich countries' contribution to Universal Primary Education by 2005; and Girls Can't Wait. Both by Global Campaign for Education 2005.

²¹ *ibid*

²² Gleneagles: what really happened at the G8 summit?, Oxfam International, July 2005

²³ L. Smith & L. Haddad, 'Explaining Child Malnutrition in Developing Countries.' International Food Policy Research Institute Research Report No. 111 (Washington DC: International Food Policy Research Institute)

²⁴ UNESCO, EFA Global Monitoring Report 2003/4 (Paris: UNESCO, 2004)

²⁵ B. Bruns et al, A Chance for Every Child: Achieving Universal Primary Education by 2005 (London: GCE, 2003)

Peace and human security

Poverty fuels global insecurity

In addition to action on MDGs, the UN Summit must take real steps to deal with the global insecurity that is fuelled by poverty – and, in turn, undermines development.

GCAP believes that the collective security of the world depends entirely on achieving social justice and larger freedom for all; freedom from fear and want, and security of the environment, lives and livelihoods of all. The global trend towards militarization and the uncontrolled trade in arms promotes insecurity and undermines freedom for the world's poorest. GCAP calls on governments to commit to stop the unilateral use of force, and to disarm and regulate the arms trade. It upholds the role of the United Nations as a legitimate and representative institution for global governance. It calls on all governments to accept their shared responsibility to protect civilians from genocide and crimes against humanity, and, when necessary, take action through the United Nations to protect them.

From Rwanda to Darfur, UN member states have again and again failed to mobilise in a timely fashion the political will and financial resources necessary to protect civilians in times of extraordinary humanitarian crisis. If the mantra of 'never again' is to have any meaning at all, the UN must make a firm commitment to the protection of civilians. Commitment to a shared responsibility to protect all citizens can and must be agreed upon at this UN World Summit.

Conclusion

The world's largest anti-poverty campaign is asking our leaders to take concrete steps at the United Nations to end poverty once and for all. Ending global poverty is not a distant dream but a practical, achievable objective and a moral imperative. The commitments that must be made at the United Nations affect humans; for a billion women and men, boys and girls they are the dividing line between dignity and indignity, life and death.

Civil society has a crucial role in holding their governments to account on their promises; and to ensuring that they make meaningful commitments to act on behalf of their citizens. This is why national coalitions across every continent - united under the Global Call for Action against Poverty - will continue to watch our governments to ensure that they take meaningful action at the UN.

The small gains that were made at the G8 Summit in Gleneagles were in large part due to the millions of campaigners across the world that mobilized on the first White Band Day on 2 July. On 10 September, the spotlight will be on world leaders as they prepare to leave for the UN World Summit in New York. People across the world will unite in the second GCAP White Band Day mobilisation to demand that world leaders WAKE UP to Poverty.