

EVALUATION OF OUTCOMES OF THE SUMMIT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 20 to 22, 2010

The United Nations Summit on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) concluded on Wednesday 22 September, 2010, with the adoption of the Summit Outcome Document - [Keeping the Promise: United to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals](#).

Trade Union participation in the Summit

A trade union delegation led by ITUC General Secretary Sharan Burrow, participated actively in various events at the Summit, while some participants engaged in dialogue with their government representatives, to signal the keen interest of the trade union delegation in seeing real and accelerated progress aimed at achieving the MDGs by 2015, particularly with respect to poverty eradication through decent work and social protection.

This was also the key message communicated by Sharan Burrow to Round Table 4 of the Summit on 21 September, devoted to the theme: "Emerging Issues". (For Burrow's speech, as well as other presentations by representatives of Civil Society, go to: http://www.un-ngls.org/spip.php?page=amdq10&id_article=2998)

Burrow also spoke at a number of side events, namely, an ILO /Realizing Rights event on "*Accelerating Achievement of the MDGs through Decent Work*", an ITUC/SOLIDAR Event entitled "*Decent Work and the MDGs – Keeping the Promise*" and an ITUC/UBUNTU event entitled "*Innovative Financing for the MDGs: A Precondition for Success*". ...

Trade unions welcome decent work commitments

In reviewing the Outcome Document, trade unions have welcomed the sections devoted to MDG1 on poverty eradication, since employment, decent work and social protection are recognized as central to poverty eradication. Member states have, in effect, committed themselves to adopting coherent macroeconomic policies consistent with the pursuit of "job-intensive, sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth and sustainable development to promote full and productive employment and decent work for all, including for women, indigenous people, young people, people with disabilities and rural populations..." [para 70 (d)]. Of equal importance is their resolve to "promote the Global Jobs Pact as a general framework within which each country can formulate policy packages specific to its situation and national priorities in order to promote a job intensive recovery and sustainable development." [para 48], and their recognition of the importance of social protection and "universal access to social services" for the achievement of the MDGs [para 51]. In what is a first for a UN Summit Outcome Document, Member States recognize the need for involving employers and workers' representatives in [designing and implementing] initiatives on employment and decent work [para 70 (d)].

Conclusions – ITUC deplores the lack of firm measureable commitments in the Summit Outcome Document, but welcomes the progress on decent work, social protection and social dialogue

In general, it may be said that the Summit Outcome Document is comprehensive in the range of policy measures and strategies it outlines for achieving the MDGs by 2015. However, the language of the Document can be characterized as pious affirmations and promises; and it would be difficult to measure concrete progress, and to hold governments accountable to their commitments on this basis. Given the serious reversals in countries' capacities to achieve the MDGs with the onset of the crises, and the need for accelerated progress if they are to be achieved by 2015, what trade unions were hoping for was firm, measureable and monitorable commitments, including the decent work indicators. But the document does advance the labor agenda within development policy, and in particular advances decent work by having a good social protection component, as well as the recognition of workers' representatives in the process and the need for social dialogue. Compared to the 2005 Summit Outcome Document which had devoted one short paragraph to decent work, this represents considerable progress. The corresponding sections of the 2010 Summit Outcome Document provide leverage points which trade unions can use to advantage in trying to ensure that their governments remain committed to the MDGs, with a priority focus on the decent work/social protection dimensions of MDG1 on poverty eradication.