



General Assembly

Sixty-fifth session

97th plenary meeting

Tuesday, 14 June 2011, 10 a.m.

New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Deiss (Switzerland)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 115 (continued)

Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

Specific meeting focused on development

The President (*spoke in French*): The General Assembly will resume its consideration of agenda item 115, entitled “Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit”, in order to hold, in accordance with Assembly resolution 60/265 of 30 June 2006, a specific meeting focused on development, including an assessment of progress over the previous year. Resolution 60/265 reaffirms that development is a central goal in itself and that sustainable development, in its economic, social and environmental aspects, constitutes a key element of the overarching framework of United Nations activities.

To start the day and welcome participants to this dialogue on development, I shall now make a few introductory remarks.

First, I am pleased to see participants meeting in the Hall. I would particularly like to thank those who made a long trip to join us. I am confident that we will have an excellent dialogue. We have with us high-calibre panellists, who will share their viewpoints and experiences. I would like to thank them very much for having accepted my invitation.

This sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly is taking place to a large extent under the banner of economic development and the fight against poverty,

with a number of important meetings on the agenda. The session opened in September 2010 with the High-level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). On that occasion, the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2), heads of State and Government assessed the progress made in implementing the Goals, highlighting best practices and lessons learned. On that occasion as well — and in my view, this is essential — the international community reiterated its commitment to achieving the MDGs by 2015 and to redoubling their efforts to do so.

The September meeting, in assessing what had been accomplished thus far five years from the deadline for implementation of the Goals, was fully in line with resolution 60/265, which gives us the mandate to hold, each year, our dialogue on development.

The momentum on the part of the international community at the conclusion of the September meeting has been reconfirmed and strengthened over the past few months. A number of very positive developments to implement the MDGs internationally must be emphasized.

First of all, the Global Strategy for Women’s and Children’s Health has progressed quite a bit. This initiative has considerably increased partner mobilization in this area, particularly with regard to financial resources. It has shown what can be achieved when all stakeholders join forces to achieve the same goal.

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Then, at the beginning of May, the international community agreed on a new Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020, the Istanbul Programme of Action. I think it is important to emphasize that the Programme of Action already takes us, for this group of countries, beyond 2015, which is the deadline for the MDGs. That is the first time, to my knowledge, that a programme has been drawn up to cover the period to 2020. The Programme of Action emphasizes the development of productive capacities in the least developed countries so as to accelerate poverty reduction and the achievement of all the Millennium Development Goals and ensure sustainable growth in such countries. The end goal is to transform the economies and societies of these countries so that the category of the so-called least developed countries will one day no longer exist.

Finally, the agreement reached on Friday, 10 June, at the end of the High-level Meeting on HIV/AIDS is another major outcome. The international community made a collective commitment to intensify its efforts in combating AIDS. Ambitious targets to stop the epidemic and to ensure universal access to treatment and care were adopted. Partners made a commitment to implement a holistic approach for justice and social inclusion in which the fight against AIDS is fully integrated into development programmes.

The international community's renewed commitment to development is quite encouraging, but we must not lose sight of the fact that in many countries and in a number of sectors the Millennium Development Goals are in danger of not being achieved. I need no more than note that far too often hunger still prevails and that millions of children still die of preventable diseases for lack of medication and care.

That reality brings us face to face with a fundamental challenge: to translate our commitments into actions and those actions into results. By making a tangible difference on the ground in the lives of the poorest people, we will demonstrate that the United Nations is a reliable, trustworthy and responsible partner. It is vital that we continually improve the effectiveness of our actions, especially through improved follow-up in implementing our commitments on the ground. We must also strive to increase accountability.

Our plenary meeting today is divided into a formal section and an informal section. The first informal round table will deal with "Implementation of the Millennium Development Goals and accountability: women's and children's health as an engine for progress". It will give us an opportunity to better understand advances made in the Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health and to learn from it. I encourage members to ask questions of our panellists and to share comments with them on the Global Strategy — including the Commission on Information and Accountability for Women's and Children's Health — in a constructive and interactive way.

This afternoon, the second round table will be an opportunity to consider, with the help of our panellists, how to advance the United Nations development agenda after 2015 in a way that is inclusive and appropriate for all stakeholders. On one point we must be unequivocal, namely, that our necessary discussion of the period after 2015 must in no way become a pretext for flagging in our efforts to do what we have promised or for reducing the resources allocated at the national level to achieve the MDGs by 2015. We must not forget that even if in 2015 we have achieved our Goals, we will have reduced poverty only by half. We cannot stop there. We must seek the total eradication of poverty. We must not be afraid to aim high. That is the agenda I propose for today's discussions, without compromising the Goals we have already set for 2015.

Then, after the second round table, a second formal meeting will be held so that delegations that so desire may make formal statements.

I am delighted at the active commitment in evidence here today. I encourage all members to share their observations and comments in an interactive way.

I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Asha-Rose Migiro, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations.

The Deputy Secretary-General: It is a pleasure to join the General Assembly for this discussion.

The United Nations agenda is becoming more crowded every day. We are responding to conflicts, disasters and other emergencies. But we cannot relent in our campaign to reach the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). We see many examples of real progress around the world that testify to the soundness of the

approach embodied in the MDGs, namely, putting people first.

Last month in Istanbul, the Conference on the Least Developed Countries reaffirmed the commitment to helping the more than 800 million people living in the world's poorest countries to build capacity and resilience. The least developed countries with genuine opportunities for businesses and investors are poised to be the next wave of development achievement. Just last week here in New York, at the High-level Meeting on AIDS, we at the United Nations agreed to intensify our efforts to realize our vision of zero new HIV infections, zero discrimination and zero AIDS-related deaths. With global solidarity, we can end this epidemic once and for all.

These recent developments are just part of the global mobilization behind the MDGs that has brought us a long way since they were first articulated, more than a decade ago. We can go a similarly long way in the four precious years that remain until 2015. But we have to do even more than we have done already. Food prices are high and volatile. Unemployment is destroying family incomes. Millions of children are not in school. Tens of thousands of children are lost to preventable diseases each day and hundreds of thousands of women still die in pregnancy and childbirth each year.

The impacts of climate change are ever more apparent, and we are still moving too slowly in making the much-needed transition to a low-carbon, clean-energy path of development. Moreover, the global economic crisis has also ushered in an era of fiscal austerity. Still, we must protect our development gains. We must never forget that investments in development pay huge dividends.

In such a climate, we need to scale up those interventions that have the best chance to generate progress across the MDGs. We must look for multiplier effects wherever we can, and none is more dramatic, none is more proven, than investments in the health of women and children. Healthy women deliver healthy children who can attend school and become part of a healthy workforce. A healthy workforce is a productive workforce, able to do its rightful part in building cohesive, prosperous societies.

We can take heart from gains on the health MDGs. Last year, countries and a broad range of partners pledged more than \$40 billion for the Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health. The Strategy is essentially about taking what we know works for women and children and bringing those efforts to scale. It is providing an energized platform to support national processes by reaching out to new constituencies and bringing in new influential actors. It is putting a special focus on information — on solid statistics encompassing births, deaths, causes of death and much else. Information is a critical component for analysis and policymaking across the MDGs, yet we have not invested enough in it. The Strategy seeks to do better.

Another of the Strategy's main features is a new and heightened focus on accountability. We have a framework that will tell us where the money is coming from, where it is going and how effectively it is being spent. This ability to track resources and results is critical for ensuring that all partners deliver on their commitments, and that we are achieving tangible progress in reaching our goals.

The agreed deadline of 2015 is fast approaching. We do not have a moment to lose. We need to make greater strides towards balanced and sustainable development. We also need to intensify our talks on what lies beyond 2015. Even a decade ago, we knew that achieving the MDGs would, in a sense, be only half the job. We knew that there would still be a vast backlog of deprivation. The time has come to look at those numbers, at those people and at all of the women, men and children who will be barely touched by what we do by 2015, and who will therefore need our attention come 2016 and beyond.

I look forward to members' continued contributions in meeting this shared test of our common humanity. Please accept my best wishes for a productive dialogue.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the Deputy Secretary-General for her statement.

The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 115.

The meeting rose at 10.20 a.m.