



Summary of the Recommendations

At the mid-point in the global effort to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015, progress in many African countries is not on track. The continent's pace on each Goal is lagging, despite encouraging increases in economic growth and strengthened policies. Nevertheless, a number of recent successes — including the expansion of HIV/AIDS treatment, increases in agricultural productivity, a dramatic rise in school enrolment and improved access to water supply — demonstrate that rapid progress is possible across Africa when sound national programmes are matched with adequate development assistance and full support from the international system.

Existing international commitments — if fully implemented — can expand these success stories and are sufficient to achieve the MDGs. The aim of the MDG Africa Steering Group recommendations is therefore to translate existing commitments into tangible progress in every African country. They represent a landmark understanding among the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank Group, the European Commission, the International Monetary Fund, the Islamic Development Bank Group, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, and the World Bank Group on the practical steps, strategies and programmes needed to achieve the MDGs in Africa. The Steering Group calls for the following key actions by sector:

- **Agriculture and food security.** Africa is the only region in the world where per capita food production has fallen in the last 30 years. Therefore, the Steering Group calls for support to African Governments to launch a Green Revolution to double crop yields, with a focus on providing smallholder farmers with temporary subsidies for fertilizer and better seeds. Malawi's agricultural support programme provides an impressive example of the rapid gains that can be made with improved inputs. Development assistance for African agriculture must rise from the current US\$1–2 billion provided annually to some US\$8 billion by 2010. In parallel, assistance for feeding and nutrition programmes should be raised by an additional US\$4 billion by 2010.
- **Education.** The education sector has seen some of the most remarkable progress towards the MDGs, yet many countries remain off-track. The Steering Group calls on development partners to finance national education strategies endorsed by the Education for All Fast-Track Initiative. No African child should be denied access to primary education because of a lack of financial support. Beyond universal primary education, the recommendations also focus on the need to increase expenditure on early-childhood, secondary, tertiary and vocational education, as well as adult literacy programmes.
- **Health.** The Steering Group underscores the critical importance of financing national health systems to improve the quality of life of Africa's people. International support should help phase out user fees for primary health care to ensure that the poor can access health services. Investments in healthcare providers, including through community health workers, will also need to be stepped up. The Steering Group is particularly concerned by the slow progress on the MDG aimed at reducing the high rate of maternal deaths in pregnancy and childbirth. The Steering Group therefore calls on governments to increase investments in emergency obstetrical care.
- **Infrastructure and trade facilitation.** The Steering Group asks development partners to at least double infrastructure financing to some US\$23.7 billion annually by 2010, in order to close growth-inhibiting gaps in transport, power generation and transmission, communication, water and sanitation services. The large number of small and landlocked countries in Africa creates the need for substantially increased investments in regional transport, communication and power networks to support development through growth and trade.
- **National statistical systems, census, civil registration.** Progress towards the MDGs can only be measured and accelerated if we have better data. The Steering Group calls for concerted action to support a full census across



Africa, better statistical systems, and more comprehensive civil registration. Improved systems of civil registration are critical in protecting the rights of women and children.

- **Climate proofing.** The Steering Group recommendations include an explicit and comprehensive call to ‘climate proof’ efforts to achieve the MDGs so that countries can guard themselves against increasing temperatures, rising sea levels, and changing weather patterns. Recommended measures included better seed varieties and irrigation, improved malaria control, and renewed investments in clean power generation and transportation.

Financing and aid predictability

- **The Steering Group has issued the most comprehensive assessment of the external financing needed to reach the MDGs in Africa.** Existing EU and G8 commitments, combined with present aid flows from other sources, are sufficient to finance the estimated US\$72 billion a year in external money required to implement the Steering Group’s recommendations. This figure is in line with pledges made in 2005 at the EU and Gleneagles G8 Summits to more than double official development assistance (ODA) to Africa to about US\$54 billion a year by 2010. Measured in current US dollars, this commitment is equivalent to about US\$62 billion annually. Combined with existing support from donor countries outside of the OECD, private foundations and public-private partnerships, the Steering Group’s recommendations would be fully financed.
- **Aid predictability.** Most African countries do not know how much aid they will receive in coming years and therefore they cannot expand key public services with needed personnel and infrastructure, both of which require confirmed multi-year financing. Therefore, the Steering Group

calls on donors to issue country-by-country schedules for how their aid will be increased to meet the commitments made in 2005. This change in the way aid is provided would have a dramatic effect on African countries’ ability to pursue the long-term strategies needed to achieve the MDGs.

- **Scaling up aid.** Experience shows that even large increases in ODA can be absorbed in the presence of sound policies. The Steering Group is supporting a first set of ten countries in preparing scenarios for how existing ODA commitments can be implemented on the ground through new and expanded projects and programmes. The Steering Group will help mobilize the resources needed to implement these country-owned plans.
- **Follow-through on financing needed.** Many African countries have upheld their side of the Monterrey Consensus by implementing economic and political reforms and by focusing budgets on MDG-related social expenditures. But the increase in ODA promised to Africa by the G8 at Gleneagles, which amounted to an additional US\$25 billion (in 2004 dollars) per year by 2010, has not yet materialized, nor come close. As of 2007, OECD/DAC data show that annual net ODA to Africa, including one-off debt relief, emergency assistance and scholarships, is estimated to have increased by only US\$7 billion since 2004. The Steering Group urgently calls on donors to accelerate ODA flows to Africa in line with existing commitments.

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