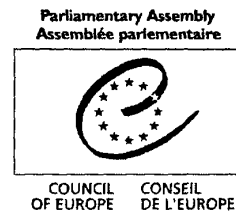


Parliamentary Assembly Assemblée parlementaire



Doc. 10566
2 June 2005

The environment and the Millennium Development Goals

Report

Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs

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Summary

The eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have been agreed by all United Nations member states to combat poverty, improve human health and education, environmental sustainability and gender equality by 2015. This report focuses on the environmental Goal (MDG 7) which is also of great importance for achieving many of the other goals. A United Nations "Millennium Review Summit" is scheduled to take place in New York on 14 to 16 September 2005 where Heads of State and Government will take stock and assess progress in achieving the MDGs and provide guidance for the future. Sustainable development is at the heart of the MDGs and this should be reflected at the UN meeting in September 2005 as the next 10 years will be critical for the development of the poorest regions in the world and the sustainability of life on our planet.

We are far from being on track on MDG 7 so more needs to be done to reach the targets of improving access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation, integrating sustainable development concerns into national policies, reversing the loss of environmental resources and improving the life of slum dwellers. Funding and financing are vital but the cost of inaction should also be weighted in.

Europe's national parliaments, as well as national, regional and local authorities, need to keep the momentum beyond the September Summit and fully engage in activities to achieve the MDGs so that Europe meets its share of global responsibility towards other countries and regions and to present and future generations. The Parliamentary Assembly stresses the importance of engaging at all levels to meet MDG 7 and the other Goals and urges national parliaments and European and global leaders to show their commitment by taking prompt action to ensure environmental sustainability in Europe and worldwide.

I. Draft resolution

1. In September 2000, the United Nations General Assembly countries unanimously adopted the Millennium Declaration. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are part of the road map to implement the Millennium Declaration in addressing the world's most important development challenges. A Millennium Review Summit will take place in September 2005 to assess progress and give directions to meet the MDGs. Sustainable development is at the heart of the MDGs and this should be reflected in the decisions to be taken at the UN meeting in September 2005.

2. The Parliamentary Assembly recalls its Resolution 1318 (2003) on globalisation and sustainable development, highlighting the links between globalisation, planet-wide risks and shared responsibilities that create a need for concerted action by the international community, as well as its Resolution 1319 (2003) on the follow-up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development: a common challenge, where the Assembly stressed the opportunities that parliamentary action can provide as a useful contribution to sustainable development at the global level.

3. The Assembly welcomes the commitment of the Heads of State and Government of member states of the Council of Europe to achieve the MDGs expressed in the Warsaw Summit Declaration and Action Plan of 17 May 2005 and in particular the reference to "everyone's entitlement to live in a balanced, healthy environment" (Action Plan, IV-3) and to "Promoting sustainable development" (Action Plan, II-7).

4. The environmental sustainability goal (MDG 7) includes specific targets to integrate sustainable development principles into country policies and programmes, reverse the loss of environmental resources, halve the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation (by 2015) and significantly improve the living conditions of at least 100 million slum dwellers (by 2020).

5. The targets included in MDG 7 are far from being met and more needs to be done to take environmental concerns into account. Besides the great importance of ensuring global sustainability, the environment is also crucial for achieving other Millennium Development Goals: A clean and safe environment is indeed a necessary condition to achieve the MDGs related to improving human health and eradicating poverty and hunger.

6. National sectoral policies, such as environment, agriculture, fisheries, energy and education, can have a major influence on aid and development policies of industrialised countries, and therefore have an impact on meeting the MDGs. A number of countries, including those of the European Union, are working on ways in which non-aid policies can assist to accelerate progress to meet the MDGs.

7. The UN Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, published in March 2005, has shown that 60 per cent of ecosystem elements supporting life on earth, such as fresh water, clean air or a relatively stable climate, are being degraded or used unsustainably. We can decrease the human pressure on the services that nature provides but this requires radical changes in the way nature is treated at every level of decision-making, as well as new ways of co-operation between government, business and civil society.

8. The MDGs are a very ambitious set of objectives but they can still be achieved by 2015 with intensive efforts by all parties to improve governance, actively engage civil society, mobilise domestic resources, substantially increase aid and make suitable policy reforms at the global level, such as in the field of trade.

9. The Assembly recognises the high impact that personal choices and decisions in Europe have in other parts of the world. It also recognises that it is a challenge for Europe to address the impact of its own production and consumption patterns on the global environment and stresses the need to de-couple economic growth from environmental degradation.

10. The Assembly affirms the importance of taking account of the cost of inaction and weigh it against increased future costs of action. The Assembly recalls its Recommendation 1653 (2004) on environmental accounting as a sustainable development tool, where it underlined that the adoption of such an accounting system at all levels of government would enable political decision makers to know the environmental outcomes of the policies implemented, as well as integrate the "environment" variable into decision-making processes, and therefore make the environmental effects of government policy more perceptible.

11. The Assembly fully supports EU plans to "do more" about achieving the MDGs by focusing on increasing official aid, speeding up reforms to improve the quality of aid, rethinking the way that the EU influences the conditions for development and ensuring that Africa is the main beneficiary of these new approaches, while seizing new opportunities for partnership between the two continents.

12. The Assembly considers unacceptable that 1.2 billion people in the world lack access to safe drinking water and 2.6 billion lack access to basic sanitation. It recognises that EU governments provide 1.4 billion euros annually to water and sanitation in developing countries, as well as the additional resources provided by civil society organisations.

13. It welcomes World Water Day on 22 March 2005, marking the start of the UN International Decade for Action on Water. It further welcomes the organisation of a European Solidarity Week on water issues on 17 to 21 October 2005, in Strasbourg, with the participation of the Council of Europe and the organisation of a joint colloquy by the Assembly and the Congress. This event will make a contribution to the 4th World Water Forum on "Local Actions for a Global Challenge" which will take place in Mexico in March 2006.

14. Council of Europe member countries have a good situation regarding access to improved water sources but the quality of drinking water often does not meet basic standards, constituting a major health risk. The level of access to basic sanitation in Europe is high but the maintenance of sewage systems is a problem in many countries. The target to integrate sustainable development principles into national policies and programmes is an area in need for improvement in all countries and Council of Europe member states need to intensify their efforts to make progress in "greening" their sectoral policies.

15. In the light of these elements, the Assembly recommends that member states:

- i. ensure access to water and sanitation for all which should be considered as a fundamental human right;
- ii. address the burden placed on local authorities regarding the provision of water and sanitation and the importance of improving local and regional capacity (technical, technological and financial) to achieve this goal;
- iii. improve water governance and facilitate decentralisation of decision making on water and sanitation matters;
- iv. develop integrated water resources management and water efficiency plans, including the establishment of legal and institutional frameworks;
- v. support and fully engage on the EU Water Initiative, designed to contribute to achieving global targets for drinking water and sanitation by mobilising a wide range of partners to increase co-ordination and co-operation on water issues at all levels, under the overarching policy framework of integrated water resources management based on a river basin approach;
- vi. step up efforts to curb unsustainable consumption and production patterns, through regulations, economic incentives, ecological tax reform, public information and education;
- vii. integrate environmental issues in the dialogue with partner countries and support them to meet their obligations under environmental agreements.

viii. incorporate the sustainable management of natural resources, including biodiversity, in development co-operation programmes;

ix. co-operate and work further to develop a global framework to address climate change post-2012 by promoting the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol, based on the common but differentiated responsibilities and capabilities of countries;

x. endeavour to achieve the objective to earmark 0.7% of their GDP for official development aid and, for those that have not already done so, adopt a timetable to meet this target, which was set in 1970 but has only been met by five member states so far: Denmark, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden. Six further member states (Belgium, France, Finland, Ireland, Spain and the United Kingdom) have adopted timetables to achieve this target before 2015;

xi. work with UN agencies to develop effective follow-up and monitoring systems to assess progress in meeting the MDGs and actions needed;

xii. join efforts with international donors to tackle the main challenges identified by member states, such as:

- a. strengthen institutions and law enforcement;
- b. develop adequate legal frameworks;
- c. develop sectoral strategies, particularly in water and air quality;
- d. increase financial resources ;
- e. improve public awareness and public participation;
- f. build capacity to collect and analyse data;
- g. develop local capacities ;
- h. integrate ecological and social priorities in the reforms that Central and Eastern European countries are currently undertaking;

xiii. establish multi-functional agricultural policies so as to preserve life's essential elements: water, air and soil;

xiv. set up international trade rules, in the context of the WTO Doha round, which take significant account of the non-economic impacts of agriculture on the environment with the aim of preserving water, air and soil.

16. The Assembly calls on national parliaments to contribute to keeping the political momentum on the MDGs beyond the UN Summit in September 2005. It further calls on national parliaments to lead the way in ensuring that the governments of member states take action to keep their commitments regarding the MDGs.

17. It recommends that national, regional and local authorities fully engage, within their area of jurisdiction and competence, in activities to meet the MDGs so that Europe meets its share of global responsibility towards other countries and regions, and to present and future generations.

18. The Assembly urges global leaders, and particularly the five member states of the Council of Europe that belong to the G-8, to show their commitment towards achieving the MDGs, including through urgent action against climate change, at the G-8 summit in Scotland on 6 to 8 July 2005.

II. Explanatory memorandum by Mr John Dupraz

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1. Introduction: Background and context of the Millennium Development Goals

1. At the United Nations Millennium Summit in September 2000, 189 countries adopted the UN Millennium Declaration¹, committing their nations to a global partnership to reduce poverty, improve health, and promote peace, human rights, gender equality, and environmental sustainability. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are part of the road map to implement the Millennium Declaration in addressing those important development challenges². Soon after, world leaders met again at the March 2002 International Conference on Financing for Development in Monterrey, Mexico, establishing a landmark framework for global development partnership in which developed and developing countries agreed to take joint actions for poverty reduction. Later in 2002, UN member states gathered at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa, where they reaffirmed the MDGs as the world's time-bound development targets. The MDGs have become an international standard to assess trends in development and human well-being.

2. The MDGs include eight Goals³ and 18 targets, covering poverty, health, environment, education, gender equality, trade and financial issues with specific targets and deadlines set, most of them by 2015. (see Appendix). This report focuses on the environmental MDG 7, which is also of great importance for achieving some of the other goals. While poverty reduction is the single major objective of development activities worldwide, with the Kyoto Protocol in force, climate change is becoming one of the main areas of bilateral development co-operation, demonstrating the close relationship between the impacts of climate change, natural disasters and poverty.

3. In 2002, UN Secretary-General Mr. Kofi Annan set up the UN Millennium Project as an independent advisory body to develop a global plan for achieving the MDGs by 2015. The Project is directed by Professor Jeffrey Sachs, of Columbia University, and based at the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) headquarters in New York. UNDP is in charge of overseeing the

¹ United Nations General Assembly Resolution 55/2, of 18 September 2000.

² 'Road map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration', Report of the Secretary-General, A/56/326, of 6 September 2001.

³ Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education; Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women; Goal 4: Reduce child mortality; Goal 5: Improve maternal health; Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability; and Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development.

monitoring and implementation of the MDGs in developing and transition economies. UNDP works to integrate the MDGs into countries' national development strategies and frameworks, as MDGs need to be tailored to national circumstances.

4. The core recommendation of the UN Millennium Project is that the Millennium Development Goals must be at the centre of national and international poverty reduction strategies. For this to happen, developing countries need to conduct "needs assessments" to identify where they stand on the MDGs and what interventions need to be in place to get on track for 2015.

5. Also, for the MDGs to be achieved, donor countries must also keep up their part of this global deal. MDG 8 contains a specific target for a "global development partnership" that details what is needed from the world's richest countries in order to finance the fight against poverty in the developing world. The World Bank has estimated that US\$40-\$70 billion of additional official development assistance (ODA) per year would be needed to achieve the MDGs, which represents double the official aid flows in 2000⁴. Meeting the MDGs will therefore require a marked increase in development assistance. The findings of the Millennium Project, published in January 2005, are more specific and claim that ODA for direct MDG support will need to rise to US\$73 billion in 2006 and US\$135 billion in 2015 for all countries to meet the MDGs⁵. Overall, the report of the Millennium Project argues that if national poverty reduction strategies, based on the MDGs, are matched with the 0.7 percent pledge made by developed countries, the Millennium Development Goals can be achieved by 2015 even in the poorest countries.

6. The Millennium Review Summit, scheduled to take place in New York on 14-16 September 2005, will be attended by Heads of State and Government who will take stock and assess progress in achieving the MDGs and finding common responses to the main development, security and human rights problems. This high level event will be held prior to the 60th session of the UN General Assembly, which will also address the reform of the United Nations, and where all member states of the Council of Europe will be represented, as UN members. It is therefore of great importance that the Assembly is discussing these matters to send a strong political message to the UN summit from the elected representatives of Europe's citizens.

2. Focus on the environment: Goal 7

7. Goal 7 (or MDG 7) focuses on the objective to "ensure environmental sustainability" and includes specific targets related to issues as diverse as the integration of sustainable development principles into country policies and programmes; the need to reverse the loss of environmental resources; improved access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation; and significantly improve the living conditions in slums worldwide. It is, however, interesting to note the different timeframes set for the three environmental targets included in the MDGs: target 9 ("integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes, and reverse the loss of environmental resources") represents an enormous challenge for industrialised and developing countries alike, does not have a specific deadline, while target 10 is to be achieved by 2015, and target 11 by 2020.

MDGs: Goal 7 – Ensure environmental sustainability

- Target 9: Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes, and reverse the loss of environmental resources.
- Target 10: Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation.
- Target 11: Have achieved, by 2020, a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers.

⁴ 'Goals for Development: History, Prospects and Costs', World Bank Working Paper, 2002.

⁵ 'Investing in Development: A Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals', Millennium Project, January 2005.

8. Besides the obvious importance of ensuring global sustainability, the environment is also crucial for other MDGs. A clean and safe environment is a necessary condition to achieve many of the other seven MDGs, particularly those related to improving human health and eradicating poverty and hunger. The close links between sanitation and safe drinking water with health threats such as malaria, and their impact on levels of child mortality are just two such examples. The environment is clearly one of the pillars on which many of the MDGs will stand or fall.

9. Environmental degradation, natural disasters and poverty very often prove to be connected. Parliamentary Assembly Resolution 1422 (2005) on Europe and the tsunami disaster stressed that the tsunami disaster is a tragic reminder that poor communities are uniquely vulnerable to natural disasters. The majority of the world's poor are Asians, in particular residents of impoverished coastal communities⁶. Environmental considerations are therefore critical to human health and prosperity and a key factor in ensuring sustainable development and poverty reduction.

10. The road map to implement the Millennium Declaration included a section on "protecting our common environment", which highlighted the devastating impact that climate change is having on the Earth and the need to reverse the growing environmental damage that global warming is creating, such as deforestation, the loss of biodiversity, soil erosion and desertification, reduction in water tables and the increase in natural disasters. This report identified the indicators to be used in order to measure progress towards meeting the three targets under MDG 7 (see box above), which cover forest, biodiversity, energy, carbon dioxide emissions, and proportion of population with access to water, sanitation and secure tenure. Some of these indicators may need to be disaggregated to take account of the different situation in urban and rural areas.

Indicators for MDG 7 – "Ensure environmental sustainability"

- Proportion of land area covered by forest
- Land area protected to maintain biological diversity
- Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per unit of energy used
- Carbon dioxide emissions (per capita)
- Proportion of population using solid fuels
- Proportion of population with sustainable access to an improved water source
- Proportion of people with access to improved sanitation
- Proportion of people with access to secure tenure

11. Indicators for MDG 7 are important not only as measures of environmental sustainability, but also as contributors to the health and poverty goals. These linkages are most clear for the water supply and sanitation indicators, but also for the carbon dioxide emissions, forestry and biodiversity indicators. The lack of improved water and basic sanitation is predominant among the poor, especially the rural poor, while improvements in water supply and sanitation are clearly linked to reductions in child mortality and diarrhoeal disease.

12. There are close linkages between natural resource use and the living standards of rural communities, although the causal relationships are complex. Poor rural communities often live in mountainous and forested areas, including those with high levels of biodiversity, and can be dependent on natural resources for their livelihoods. Both poor and non-poor contribute to resource degradation, but the poor have are less able to adapt to the impacts of environmental deterioration. Environmental policy affects global progress towards environmental sustainability and has consequences for other MDGs through close links between environment and poverty, health, natural resources access and management, and the role of women, among others.

⁶ Nearly half of the 6 billion people in the world are poor. The World Bank defines 'extreme poverty' as the situation of those who live on an income of less than US\$1 a day, and estimates that 1.1 billion people live in extreme poverty. The majority of them live in Asia, although Africa has the largest proportion of extreme poverty, with nearly half of its population under this category.

13. The need for policy coherence across different sectoral areas has been voiced by many, including the EU. Mr Louis Michel, European Commissioner for Aid and Development, has recently stressed the major influence that "non-aid policies" of industrialised countries will have on whether the MDGs will be attained: "The environmental policies of developed countries not only directly affect global progress towards ensuring environmental sustainability but have consequences for virtually all other MDGs"⁷.

14. In this sense, the European Commission has adopted a Communication on "Policy Coherence for Development – Accelerating progress towards attaining the Millennium Development Goals"⁸. The OECD defines "policy coherence" as "working to ensure that the objectives and results of governments' development policies are not undermined by other policies of that same government which impact on developing countries, and that these other policies support development objectives where feasible"⁹. The challenge of how non-aid policies can assist to achieve the MDGs has led the EU to define general orientations to accelerate progress towards meeting the MDGs through the contribution of sectoral EU policies, such as agriculture, fisheries, energy, migration, research, transport, etc., to international development objectives.

15. The Parliamentary Assembly dealt with these linkages in its Resolution 1318 (2003) on globalisation and sustainable development, which defined "sustainable human development" as the capacity of all communities, including the most deprived, to meet their fundamental needs for accommodation, drinking water, food, health and hygiene, participation in decision-making, social cohesion, cultural and spiritual expression, etc. This challenge entails the adaptation of technologies and lifestyles to the social, economic and environmental potential of each region, internalising costs and establishing systems that are compatible with the biosphere, which is again at stake to meet the MDGs.

16. In connection with this issue, the Parliamentary Assembly's assessment of the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development already indicated the difficulty of tackling global development in a sustainable way. In its Resolution 1319 (2003), the Assembly considered that "the action plan remains weak, and that disappointment remains considerable with regard to certain questions such as energy, biodiversity, regulation of world markets and the change in production and consumption patterns"¹⁰. The Assembly has highlighted the opportunities that parliamentary action can provide as a useful contribution to sustainable development at the global level, both through their legislative action and by means of the pressure that they can bring to bear on the governments as the elected representatives of civil society¹¹.

3. Assessing progress: Are we on the right track?

17. An initial and serious problem to assess progress towards meeting the Millennium Development Goals is the availability and reliability of information and official data to measure whether the situation is improving or not regarding the targets set for the MDGs. There are virtually no baseline information for the indicators for 1990, which is the base year against which the quantitative targets defined in the MDGs are set. The World Bank alerted of this situation, which means that progress has to be measured mostly in relation to 2000, the first year for which reasonably consistent data are available¹², with the related difficulties of extrapolating the situation from the new base year taking account of the 25 year timeframe set in the MDGs programme (from 1990 to 2015).

⁷ Statement by Commissioner Louis Michel at the Joint Ministerial Committee of Board of Governors of World Bank and IMF, on 17 April 2005.

⁸ COM (2005)134 final, of 12 April 2005

⁹ Id, at p.3.

¹⁰ Resolution 1319 (2003) 'Follow-up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development: A common challenge', para. 4.

¹¹ Id, at paragraph 9.

¹² For global and regional trends on MDGs, with data for years between 1990 and 2001-02, see: http://millenniumindicators.un.org/unsd/mi/mi_worldregn.asp

18. Although there has been significant progress in achieving many of the Goals between 1990 and 2002, progress is considered to have been far from uniform across the world and across the Goals, as well as existing big disparities across and within countries, where poverty is greatest for rural areas, although urban poverty is also extensive, growing, and underreported by traditional indicators. Assessing progress on MDG 7, and more specifically on meeting the target of improved access to safe drinking water, the UNDP¹³ reported that by 2002, 68 countries had achieved or were on track to meet this goal, while 25 countries "lagged far behind"; and 75 had no data to assess this objective.

19. To assess progress and provide timely information to contribute to the Millennium Review Summit in September 2005, the Millennium Project published its final report – "Investing in Development: A Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals"¹⁴ - which includes specific information and advice on each of the eight MDGs. Regarding the environmental issues covered by MDG 7, the report indicates that:

- The share of population with access to improved drinking water supply has increased substantially, with most regions now on track, except for Sub-Saharan Africa, Oceania, and rural areas in most regions.
- The world is not on track to meet the sanitation goal. Progress has been too slow in South Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, and much of the rest of Asia.
- About 900 million people are estimated to live in slum-like conditions, with inadequate housing and a lack of access to water or sanitation. The highest share of slum dwellers is in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, accounting for more than 70 percent of the urban population in many cities. In most other subregions, progress is either absent or lagging.

20. All developing regions have experienced substantial environmental degradation over the past decade, which could worsen as a result of long-term global climate change. Many countries are struggling because their natural resources, the forests, fisheries, soil, and water that survival and livelihoods depend on, are progressively being degraded and subject to rising levels of pollution.

21. Adhering to global goals improves accountability and makes progress easier to measure, but the lack of good data and indicators on the environment hides the extent to which most developing regions have suffered extensive environmental degradation over the past decade and are not on track to achieving environmental sustainability and related MDGs. A related development is the "Millennium Indicators Database"¹⁵, showing the latest available data regarding all MDGs¹⁶, although it will not be further modified from the end of April 2005 and until after the September Summit in order to ensure consistency between country data and regional figures presented in various MDG reports.

22. As the 2005 Millennium Project report indicates, there is no one-size-fits-all explanation for why the Goals are failing or succeeding in different parts of the world. Each region and each MDG require a careful analysis but four overarching reasons of why the Goals are not being achieved have been identified: poor governance (corruption, poor economic policy choices, and lack of respect for human rights); the poverty trap (local and national economies too poor to make the needed investments); progress in one part of the country but not in others (resulting in persisting pockets of poverty); and areas of specific policy neglect that have a great effect on citizens' well-being. Sometimes these factors occur simultaneously, which makes individual problems more challenging to resolve.

23. To address the lack of appropriate data on environmental issues, the UN Millennium Ecosystem Assessment - a four-year ecological survey compiled by 1,300 scientists in 95 countries to support work on the MDGs - was published in March 2005. Mr Kofi Annan celebrated this

¹³ 'Human Development Report', UNDP, 2002.

¹⁴ January 2005, see at <http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/reports/index.htm>

¹⁵ ST/ESA/STAT/MILLENNIUMINDICATORSDB/WWW (of 27 April 2005) - See at: http://millenniumindicators.un.org/unsd/mi/mi_goals.asp

¹⁶ See at: http://millenniumindicators.un.org/unsd/mi/mi_worldreg.asp

publication stressing that "only by understanding the environment and how it works, can we make the necessary decisions to protect it". He hailed the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment as "an unprecedented contribution to our global mission for development, sustainability and peace".

24. According to this study, some 60 per cent of ecosystem elements supporting life on Earth, such as fresh water, clean air or a relatively stable climate, are being degraded or used unsustainably and the situation could become significantly worse during the first half of this century. To continue with the link between environment, poverty and health, the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment shows that changes in ecosystems such as deforestation influence the abundance of human pathogens such as malaria and cholera, as well as the risk of emergence of new diseases. The four main findings of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment are:

- Humans have changed ecosystems more rapidly and extensively in the last 50 years than in any other period – with the result of substantial and largely irreversible loss in diversity of life on Earth (10-30 per cent of mammal, bird and amphibian species currently threatened with extinction).
- Ecosystem changes that have contributed substantial net gains in human well-being and economic development have been achieved at growing costs in the form of degradation of other services.
- The degradation of ecosystem services could grow substantially worse during the first half of this century and is a barrier to achieving the MDGs.
- The challenge of reversing the degradation of ecosystems while meeting increasing demands can be achieved but it involves significant policy and institutional changes.

25. The over-riding conclusion of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment is that it lies within the power of human societies to decrease the pressure we are putting on the services that nature provides, if only for the selfish argument that we need to continue to use them for our own survival. But this requires radical changes in the way nature is treated at every level of decision-making, as well as new ways of co-operation between government, business and civil society.

26. Perceptions, expectations and assumptions regarding the MDGs are very important, both in industrialised and developing countries, and will be instrumental in whether they are achieved or not. The MDGs are indeed a very ambitious set of objectives, but they are well proportioned in relation to the critical situation we face for the future of humankind and life in this planet, so bold and creative decisions are needed. The UN report "*Investing in Development*" boldly states that "in every country that wants to achieve the MDGs, the starting assumption should be that they are feasible unless technically proven otherwise".

27. "*Investing in Development*" further recognises that for many of the poorest countries the MDGs are very ambitious, but they can still be achieved by 2015 in most or even all countries "if there are intensive efforts by all parties to improve governance, actively engage and empower civil society, promote entrepreneurship and the private sector, mobilize domestic resources, substantially increase aid to countries that need it to support MDG-based priority investments, and make suitable policy reforms at the global level, such as those in trade". It is therefore crucial that "technical constraints" to meet the MDGs are not confused with "financial constraints", on the understanding that the political will manifested at the 2000 UN Millennium Summit, at the 2002 Monterrey Conference, and at the Johannesburg Summit continues to be strong.

MDG 7 in Europe

28. Some Council of Europe member countries in Central and Eastern Europe have already achieved certain MDG goals and targets (e.g. education, health care) but important challenges remain in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus, including water quality, sewage and waste treatment - with drinking water frequently not meeting basic biological and chemical standards.

29. This situation has been stressed by a World Bank report on the MDGs in Europe and Central Asia¹⁷, which states that although 91% of the population has access to improved water sources, the quality of drinking water frequently does not meet basic standards, constituting a major health risk. The water quality problem has been identified as most serious in countries such as Albania, Romania and Moldova.

30. Regarding other targets of MDG 7, the report argues that in this region the level of access to basic sanitation covers 93% of the population, and the target for 2015 is 95%, which represents a "modest challenge". However, the main problem is the state of disrepair of sewage systems. Access to sanitation is highlighted as problematic in Albania and Romania. Regarding energy use, the World Bank report strikingly states that the region of "Europe and Central Asia" remains the least energy-efficient in the world in GDP per unit of energy used.

31. The EU launched a Water Initiative at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) to contribute to the achievement of the MDG and WSSD targets for drinking water and sanitation, within the context of an integrated approach to water resources management. The Initiative covers four geographical regions, including Eastern Europe/Caucasus/Central Asia (EECCA). Key elements of the Water Initiative include the reinforcement of political commitment and profile of water and sanitation issues in the context of poverty reduction efforts; the promotion of better water governance, regional and sub-regional co-operation, and use of an integrated water resources management approach. As far as funding is concerned, €38m from the TACIS¹⁸ Regional Programmes were earmarked to support the development of the EECCA component of the EU Water Initiative¹⁹.

32. In 2004, a report by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)²⁰ assessed progress in meeting the MDGs in four Central European countries: the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia. Regarding MDG 7, the report stated that "in all four countries, major progress has been recorded since 1990". But there are areas where further progress is needed, as "some parts of the sewer systems are not yet connected to waste water treatment plants, and a significant number of households – particularly in Roma communities – live in dwellings that are not connected to public sewers systems". The regional themes for MDG 7 in Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States are safe drinking water, sewerage and waste systems; and the integration of sustainable development principles into national policies and programmes.

33. Many European countries, all members of the Council of Europe have submitted national reports to UNDP on their progress and challenges to meet the MDGs²¹. These country reports from CoE members identify a number of areas needing particular attention to achieve the environmental sustainability objective of MDG 7, such as:

- Strengthen institutions and law enforcement
- Develop adequate legal frameworks
- Develop sectoral strategies, particularly in water and air quality
- Increase financial resources
- Improve public awareness and public participation
- Build capacity to collect and analyse data
- Develop local capacities to deal with environmental issues
- Strengthen monitoring systems

¹⁷ 'Meeting the Environment Millennium Development Goal in Europe and Central Asia', The World Bank, May 2003.

¹⁸ Launched in 1991, the EU TACIS Programme provides financed technical assistance to 13 countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Mongolia, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan), and mainly aims at enhancing the transition process in these countries

¹⁹ European Commission report on 'Millennium Development Goals 2000-2004', p.27.

²⁰ 'Progress toward fulfilling the MDGs in Central Europe: Initial findings' - Millennium Development Goals Report – Sub-Regional Chapeau. See at http://mdgr.undp.sk/DOCUMENTS/MDG_Regions_2.pdf

²¹ Albania (2002); Armenia (2001); Bosnia and Herzegovina (2003); Bulgaria (2003); Croatia (2004); Czech Republic (2004); Hungary (2004); Lithuania (2002); Poland (2002); Slovakia (2004); Slovenia (2004); and Ukraine (2003). Available at <http://www.undp.org/mdg/countryreports.html>

- Integrate ecological and social priorities in the reforms that Central and Eastern European countries are currently undertaking

34. Interestingly, while these countries still need further action to meet MDG 7 and some of the other MDGs, the donor community increasingly sees them as "graduating" countries where bilateral activities have started to phase out. As a consequence of the relatively high Gross National Product (GNP) and growth rates of the Central European and Baltic States, Council of Europe members from Central and Eastern Europe and the Baltic States (including the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia) are becoming "emerging donors" in a global development context, especially in terms of "East-East co-operation". They are expected to contribute financially to meet internationally agreed development goals through development cooperation, among other tools, and even though the assistance they provide is at present relatively small by international standards, these countries are committed to becoming donor countries and have already taken institutional and political steps in this regard.

4. Europe's contribution to the Millennium Development Goals

35. Council of Europe member states are directly affected by the MDGs. They committed themselves at the UN Millennium Summit to achieve these objectives and consequently need to tailor the MDGs to their national circumstances, and build them into their national sustainable development strategies and policies. Even though all European countries committed to achieving the MDGs, they are undoubtedly at different levels of development, and have different status regarding the MDGs, as the richer countries within the EU are predominantly donor countries, and there are diverse levels of development among countries about to join the EU, the countries of the Balkans, and other countries in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus. This situation makes Europe a "special region" in terms of MDG monitoring, as it includes a wide variety of countries.

36. Regarding MDG 7 and related Goals, European countries need to place environmental sustainability at the heart of their development policies and programmes. They also need to give priority to achieving the goal of improving water quality in Europe and providing adequate access to clean drinking water and sanitation for all.

37. The UN Millennium Project has calculated that the MDGs can be achieved with an investment of approximately 0.5% of the economic output of the industrialised world. The current situation is that although richer nations have long committed themselves to provide 0.7% of their GNP for international development assistance, major donor countries are currently spending an average of only 0.25% of GNP²².

38. Europe has an important contribution to make to the global challenge of the MDGs. Even though the UN Millennium Project, and many developing countries, affirm that poverty reduction is the primary responsibility of developing countries themselves, it is certain that achieving the MDGs will require significant increases in official development assistance. The cost of supporting countries to meet the MDGs has been estimated to require donors to increase their ODA from 0.25% of GNP in 2003 to around 0.44% of GNP in 2006, and 0.54% by 2015.

39. Within the EU, the European Council meeting of December 2004 confirmed the EU's commitment to the MDGs and mandated the European Commission to present concrete proposals on new and adequate ODA targets taking into account the position of the new Member States. The European Commission had suggested two related targets to be reached by 2010: for the EU-15 (before the enlargement of May 2004) a target of 0.51 % ODA, and for the 10 new EU countries, a target of 0.17% ODA. These targets have been agreed by the EU Council of Ministers on 24 May 2005. The EU is already the largest aid donor, providing 55% of global ODA, but it nevertheless

²² However, five European countries already provide 0.7% or more of their income to aid and a further six have established plans and timetables to achieve the 0.7% target before 2015.

expects to make a substantial contribution at the high level UN meeting in September 2005 regarding the financing gap, the effective use of ODA, and the continuing unsustainable debt burden of many poor countries²³.

40. 23 out of the 30 member countries of the OECD are also members of the Council of Europe. These developed countries have reaffirmed their commitment to strengthen co-operation to address the environmental challenges that need to be met in order to implement the UN Millennium Declaration and related MDGs²⁴. In particular, the OECD Council stressed the need to address climate change, protect biodiversity and decouple environmental pressure from economic growth in key sectors such as transport, agriculture and energy. Strengthening the integration of environmental concerns into development co-operation programmes is another important priority for these countries.

41. A number of donor countries from Europe (Belgium, Denmark, Finland, The Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden, as well as the European Community) submitted their country reports to UNDP in 2004, outlining their contribution to the MDGs²⁵. Although these progress reports focus on MDG 8 ("developing a global partnership for development"), it is interesting to note that all of them include consideration of MDG 7 and related concerns, such as the recognition that sustainable development cannot be achieved in European countries without progress in developing countries. They also emphasise the interdependency between environmental sustainability at the global scale and development issues. In addition, Industrialised countries also have certain obligations in relation to MDG 7, in particular regarding the integration of the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes, as well as reversing the loss of environmental resources.

42. The European Parliament has adopted a resolution on the role of the EU in the achievement of the MDGs, where it states its belief that "it is an illusion to achieve the MDGs of halving poverty and hunger by 2015, providing free education for all and improving access to health care, while developing countries spend four times more on repaying debts than they spend on basic social services"²⁶. Regarding the water target included in MDG 7, the European Parliament affirmed that water "is a shared resource of mankind" and that access to water, "especially for the poorest communities of the South, assumes the proportions of a fundamental human right to be promoted and safeguarded"²⁷.

43. In 2004, the Parliamentary Assembly reiterated its commitment to the Rio and Johannesburg processes, welcoming the commitments to achieving Agenda 21, the MDGs, and the WSSD Plan of Implementation, particularly regarding the objective to significantly reduce the number of persons without access to safe drinking water or sanitation²⁸. Furthermore, the Assembly has recently looked into the environmental and financial aspects of the MDGs, through this report and a related one on "The Bretton Woods institutions and the realisation of the Millennium Development Goals", which support two resolutions from the Assembly on these issues.

5. The way forward

44. Sustainable development is at the heart of the MDGs and this should be reflected at the UN General Assembly High-level Plenary Meeting in September 2005. That meeting offers a tremendous opportunity to reassess the progress achieved and provide renewed impetus to the MDGs, focusing on the specific actions needed to meet the targets and goals that were agreed.

²³ Commission Communication 'Accelerating progress towards attaining the Millennium Development Goals – Financing for Development and Aid Effectiveness', COM(2005)133 final, of 12 April 2005.

²⁴ OCDE Statement to the Follow-up of the UN Millennium Declaration and Monterrey Consensus, C/MIN(2005)2, of 29 April 2005.

²⁵ See at: <http://www.undp.org/mdg/donorcountryreports.html>

²⁶ Document P6_TA-PROV(2005)0115, of 12 April 2005, at paragraph 34.

²⁷ *Id.*, at paragraph 64.

²⁸ Recommendation 1668 (2004), on 'Management of Water Resources in Europe', at paragraph 8.

45. On 21 March 2005, the UN Secretary-General presented his report *In larger freedom: Towards development, security and human rights for all*²⁹, a contribution to the preparations for the September United Nations summit. Mr Kofi Annan has stressed the need to revitalise consensus on key challenges and priorities and convert them into "collective action". He argues that security, development and human rights must be tackled together, as "otherwise none will succeed", but is confident that the MDGs can be met by 2015 "only if all involved break with business as usual and dramatically accelerate and scale up action now".

46. The report lists the priority areas for action in 2005 - a time of "historic opportunity" - including national development strategies, by 2006, which take into account seven broad clusters of policies: gender equality; the environment; rural development; urban development; health systems; education and science; and technology and innovation. Regarding environmental action, some proposals are:

- Mobilise technological innovation and scientific advances to develop tools to mitigate climate change.
- Develop a more inclusive international framework to stabilise greenhouse gas emissions beyond the expiry of the Kyoto Protocol in 2012.
- Action to combat desertification and protect biodiversity.
- National timetables to achieve the 0.7% target of gross national income for official development assistance no later than 2015.

47. The 13th session of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-13) took place in April 2005 and will submit its political decisions as a contribution to the High-level Plenary Meeting in New York on 14-16 September 2005. The Commission called on "governments, UN system, international financial institutions, and other international organisations, working in partnership with major groups and other stakeholders" to take specific actions regarding the goals and targets included in MDG 7. Some of the recommended actions on the three MDG 7 targets are:

- On access to basic services and integrated water management:
 - o Sustain and accelerate progress towards the water goal, supported by increased resources from all sources
 - o Develop and strengthen human and institutional capacities for effective water management and service delivery
 - o Develop and transfer low-cost technologies for safe water supply and treatment
 - o Enhance co-operation among riparian states
 - o Develop national monitoring systems on the quantity, quality and use of surface and groundwater resources at national and local levels
 - o Support more effective water demand and water resource management across all sectors, especially in the agricultural sector
- On sanitation:
 - o Sustain and accelerate progress towards the sanitation target, supported by increased resources from all sources
 - o Ensure effective capacity for building, operating and maintaining sanitation and sewage systems
 - o Ensure access to culturally appropriate, low-cost and environmentally sound sanitation technologies
 - o Support countries in promoting sanitation and hygiene education and awareness raising
 - o Expand and improve wastewater treatment and reuse
 - o Support regional and sub-regional arrangements to protect water resources from pollution, addressing the specific needs of arid, semi-arid and coastal countries

²⁹ See at: <http://www.un.org/largerfreedom>

- On human settlements:
 - o Support integrated planning and management of human settlements, giving due consideration to the needs of the urban poor, with a view to prevent slum formation
 - o Assist in providing access for the poor, in urban and rural areas, to decent and affordable housing and basic services

48. The Commission also recommended to tackle the interlinkages and cross-cutting issues among these objectives, and address water, sanitation and human settlements in an integrated manner, taking account of economic, social and environmental aspects and sectoral policies, as well as national, sub-regional and regional specificities, circumstances and legal frameworks. In this sense, the Commission also recommended to devise water, sanitation and human settlement policies and actions taking account of the need to address the impacts of rapid urbanisation, desertification, climate change and climate variability, and natural disasters. Adequate resources, from a variety of domestic and international funding sources and financing approaches, will be needed to implement all of these actions, goals and targets.

49. The UN Commission on Sustainable Development further decided to devote part of its review sessions in 2008 and 2012 to monitor and follow-up the implementation of its decisions on water and sanitation, and their inter-linkages.

6. Conclusions

50. Clearly there is no shortage of reports and proposals on the MDGs and how to move forward in the near future to make them a reality. The next 10 years will be critical for the development of the poorest regions in the world and the sustainability of life on our planet. As the final report of the UN Millennium Project boldly states: "We have the opportunity in the coming decade to cut world poverty by half". Practical solutions exist, the political framework is established and, for the first time, the cost is utterly affordable. "All that is needed is action".

51. We are far from being on track on MDG 7 and so more needs to be done to take environmental concerns into account if the MDGs are to be reached. Funding and financing are vital, but the cost of inaction on this issue should also be weighted and considered. Funding alone does not provide the solution either, and effective follow-up and monitoring systems will be needed to assess the state of progress and identify whether and when new or different actions are needed.

52. In the end, the future of global development is closely linked to personal choices and decisions each and every one of us take, especially in industrialised countries. We need to show the less rich regions and communities our strong personal commitment. We need to lead the way by taking responsible decisions to show that Europe is meeting its share of global responsibility towards other countries and regions in the planet, and to present and future generations.

Appendix 1 : Millennium Development Goals and targets
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Goal 1 Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

- Target 1: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than \$1 a day
- Target 2: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger

Goal 2 Achieve universal primary education

- Target 3: Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling

Goal 3 Promote gender equality and empower women

- Target 4: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005 and in all levels of education no later than 2015

Goal 4 Reduce child mortality

- Target 5: Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate

Goal 5 Improve maternal health

- Target 6: Reduce by three-quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio

Goal 6 Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases

- Target 7: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS
- Target 8: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases

Goal 7 Ensure environmental sustainability

- Target 9: Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and program and reverse the loss of environmental resources
- Target 10: Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation
- Target 11: Have achieved, by 2020, a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers

Goal 8 Develop a global partnership for development

- Target 12: Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system (includes a commitment to good governance, development, and poverty reduction—both nationally and internationally)
- Target 13: Address the special needs of the least developed countries (includes tariff-and quota-free access for exports enhanced program of debt relief for HIPC and cancellation of official bilateral debt, and more generous ODA for countries committed to poverty reduction)

- Target 14: Address the special needs of landlocked countries and small island developing states (through the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and 22nd General Assembly provisions)
- Target 15: Deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries through national and international measures in order to make debt sustainable in the long term
- Target 16: In co-operation with developing countries, develop and implement strategies for decent and productive work for youth
- Target 17: In co-operation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable, essential drugs in developing countries
- Target 18: In co-operation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications

Appendix 2: List of acronyms

CSD	Commission on Sustainable Development (United Nations)
EECCA	Eastern Europe/Caucasus/Central Asia
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNP	Gross National Product
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
ODA	Official Development Assistance
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WSSD	World Summit for Sustainable Development

Reporting committee: Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs

Reference to committee: Doc. 10525 and Reference No. 3079 of 29 April 2005

Draft resolution adopted by the Committee (in conformity with Rule 46.4 of the Rules of Procedure) on 26 May 2005.

Members of the Committee: Mr Walter **Schmied** (Chairman), Mr Alan **Meale** (1st Vice-Chairman), Mr Antonio Nazaré Pereira (2nd Vice-Chairman), Mr Renzo Gubert (3rd Vice-Chairman) (alternate: Mr Giovanni **Crema**), Mr Ruhi Açıkgöz, Mr Olav Akselsen, Mr Gerolf Annemans, Mrs Sirkka-Liisa Anttila, Mr Ivo Banac, Mr Jean-Marie Bockel, Mr Malcolm **Bruce**, Sir Sydney **Chapman**, Mrs Pikria Chikhradze, Mrs Grażyna Ciemniak, Mr Valeriu Cosarciuc, Mr Osman Coşkunoğlu, Mr Alain Cousin, Mr Miklós Csapody, Mr Taulant Dedja, Mr Hubert **Deittert**, Mr Adri Duivesteijn, Mr Mehdi Eker, Mr Bill **Etherington**, Mrs Catherine Fautrier, Mr Adolfo **Fernández Aguilar**, Mrs Siv Fridleifsdóttir, Mr György Frunda, Mr Fausto **Giovanelli**, Mrs Maja Gojković, Mr Peter Götz, Mr Vladimir Grachev (alternate: Mr Valeriy **Sudarenkov**), Mrs Gultakin Hajiyeva, Mr Mykhailo Hladiy, Mr Anders G. Högmark, Mr Jean Huss, Mr Ilie **Ilaşcu**, Mr Jaroslav Jaduš, Mrs Renate Jäger, Mr Gediminas **Jakavonis**, Mr Ivan Kalezić, Mrs Liana Kanelli, Mr Karen Karapetyan, Mr Orest Klympush, Mr Victor Kolesnikov, Mr Zoran Krstevski, Mr Miloš **Kužvart**, Mr Ewald Lindinger, Mr Jaroslav **Lobkowicz**, Mr François Loncle, Mr Theo Maissen (alternate: Mr John **Dupraz**), Mr Andrzej Mańka, Mr Tomasz Markowski, Mr Giovanni Mauro, Mrs Luísa Mesquita, Mr Gilbert Meyer (alternate: Mr Daniel **Goulet**), Mr Goran Milojević, Mr Vladimir Mokry, Mrs Carina Ohlsson, Mr Gerardo Oliverio, Mr Pieter Omtzigt, Mr Mart Opmann, Mrs Elsa Papadimitriou, Mr Cezar Florin **Preda**, Mr Jakob Presečnik, Mr Lluís Maria **de Puig**, Mr Jeffrey Pullicino Orlando, Mr Maurizio Rattini, Mr Marinos Sizopoulos, Mr Rainder Steenblock, Mrs Inger Støjberg, Mrs Maria **Stoyanova**, Mr Gábor **Szalay**, Mr Nikolay Tulaev (alternate: Mr Yuri **Kovalev**), Mr Iñaki **Txueka**, Mr Vagif Vakilov, Mr Borislav Velikov, Mr Geert Versnick, Mr Klaus Wittauer, Mr G.V. Wright, Mr Kostyantyn Zhevago

N.B. The names of those members present at the meeting are printed in **bold**.

Secretariat to the Committee: Mr Sixto, Mr Torcătoriu and Ms Lasén Díaz