

Millennium Development Goals, UN Summit, September 20th – 22nd 2010

The sustainable and equitable management of natural resources is central to the fight against poverty and inequalities

From September 20th - 22nd 2010, the United Nations will evaluate the progress towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Although they were presented as very ambitious, these eight development goals nonetheless reveal the gaps and weaknesses in their targets and indicators. With only five years remaining in which to attain the expected outcomes, the outlook is beyond mitigated. While there are several encouraging signs of development in certain regions of Asia and Latin America, Africa is not faring much better than ten years ago. As for Sub-Saharan Africa, the living conditions of populations have been consistently declining.

In this year, 2010, there is a high risk that States are attributing the delays in achieving the MDGs to the consequences of the financial crisis, without any deeper analysis. However, while the multiplication of crises (financial, economic, social, food and climate) does have a direct impact on the achievement of the MDGs, this is no accident: the causes of these crises are the same as those causing the delays in the achievement of the MDGs. These causes have a name: the desire for superprofits and the unsustainable management of resources. **The crises are therefore not simply hiccups; they are indicators of the international community's failure to implement the conditions of human development *sine qua non*.**

The overexploitation of resources poses serious threats to the planet. Our capitalist development model generates environmental consequences (climate changes, pollution, erosion of biodiversity etc.) that deepen social and environmental inequalities. The 2007-2008 UNDP report is very clear in this respect: global warming and climate changes are destroying the development efforts of many Southern countries. **It is therefore vain to hope to attain the MDGs without an ambitious regulation of the climate, without stronger initiatives to preserve biodiversity or more sustainable management of natural resources.**

The Millennium Declaration repeatedly affirms the two principles of equality and shared responsibility, stating that these must lead to "creating an environment - both on a national and a global scale - that is favourable to development and to the eradication of poverty". It is in terms of social and environmental justice that the use of natural resources must be perceived, so that it may benefit the development of all. **A sustainable and equitable management of resources must be performed in the interest of populations, in accordance with the sovereign right of the States and peoples to utilise their riches and natural resources.** This also requires a more just repartition of the wealth gained from the exploitation of natural resources. In order to do this, **a binding regulation for**

multinationals and the involvement of local populations are indispensable factors. However, the mounting tension surrounding the availability of resources has involved the establishment of policies of secured access to these resources by the economic powers, in order to ensure the perpetuation of their development model based on the overconsumption of natural resources. This secured access policy is also carried out at the expense of democratic practice in terms of the management of these resources, which are often privatised and exported, and from which the local populations obtain no benefits whatsoever. On the contrary, they often suffer the worst consequences in terms of conflict, pollution, diseases etc. We must become aware that our economic model - based on the overexploitation of resources - is leading us to a dead end. Then we can redefine modes of production and consumption that are ecologically sustainable and socially just.

Thus, **the partners of the network "One Planet Only", for the sustainable management of natural resources, wish to remind the signatory States to the Millennium Declaration to:**

1. Take sustainable natural resource management into consideration in a cross-sectorial manner with respect to each of the Millennium Development Goals

The achievement of the eight MDGs requires a more sustainable management of natural resources (water, air, land, forests, mining resources, fish resources and biodiversity). Fighting against hunger and extreme poverty means providing dietary sovereignty for billions of people who directly depend on small-scale, familial agriculture, on the quality of the soil, forests or fish resources for their day-to-day survival. Fighting against infant mortality, diseases and ensuring maternal health above all means allowing the poorest populations access to the minimum conditions of hygiene and health, particularly access to drinking water and cleansing infrastructure¹.

Allowing access to resources and providing a more equitable management of resources - particularly land and water - means promoting the living conditions of billions of people, allowing everyone to receive an education, encouraging women's autonomy, promoting public health and so on.

Sustainable natural resource management is thus an essential factor in attaining the MDGs.

2. Establishing a global partnership for development (MDG 8) which would be based on a more sustainable model of natural resource management

The global partnership for development must include a better repartition of the wealth gained from the exploitation of natural resources that is at the core of the commercial and financial system, in accordance with ethical, environmental and equitable principles for the repartition of wealth. European and international policies must comply with the recognition of the principle of State sovereignty over their natural resources (resolution 1803 (XVII) of the Security Council)².

In particular, in order to respond to the needs of the least advanced countries and the small island states which are the first to feel the effects of climate change, the global partnership for development must include the establishment of an ambitious, equitable and restrictive international agreement for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and the financing of the adaptation of the most vulnerable countries (this financing must be provided by means other than that of the promised 0.7% of GDP).

¹ Access to water and hygiene is central to many issues: food, health, education, emancipation of girls and women, food safety and sovereignty, economic activities, peace and territorial security. Despite the promises, even today, 1.1 billion human beings remain deprived of drinking water and 2.5 billion are without cleansing infrastructure.

² <http://www2.ohchr.org/french/law/ressource.htm>

The global partnership for development must also include ambitious decisions concerning the preservation of biodiversity. On the eve of the conference scheduled for October 2010 in Nagoya (Japan) and of the creation of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem services (IPBES), our decision-makers must invest so that the open, regulated, predictable and non-discriminatory multilateral commercial and financial system that has been established respects the principles of preservation of biodiversity.

Finally, the global partnership for development must implement a strategy allowing the consumption of natural resources to be measured and reduced in the rich countries. This will ensure that the Southern countries may access these resources in an equitable manner and with a view to their sustainability.

3. Do everything in our power to achieve the four targets of MDG 7 concerning environmental preservation

Whether it be the preservation of forestry zones, the ozone layer, fresh water resources and drinking water supplies, soil quality or biological diversity, the United Nations and its various programs (UNEP, UNDP, UN Water etc.) have instruments at their disposal, namely the framework conventions on climate change, biodiversity, sea rights, etc. These must contribute to establishing the necessary and adequate conditions for the preservation of all environmental resources and for the improvement of living conditions, both in rural regions and in the cities and their suburbs. It is also the United Nations' duty to develop new instruments for ensuring that there is more transparency and sustainability in the management of resources: (1) to set up a legally restrictive principle of responsibility and international regulation of private sector actors; and (2) to encourage the participation of citizens in all of the decisions, in order to allow them to defend their social and environmental interests.



The **One Planet Only** network was created by several organisations in Europe and southern countries in order to raise citizens' awareness and call on decision-makers regarding the issues of sustainable natural resource management for the development of all. It is run by the *Centre de recherche et d'information pour le développement* (CRID, France).

Une seule planète // CRID

14 passage Dubail - 75010 Paris

(33) 1 44 72 89 66

Email : contact@uneseuleplanete.org

www.oneplanetonly.org

