

TUNZA answers YOUR QUESTIONS

Q: Clearly defined gender roles are often part of the traditions of different nations. Is Goal 3 proposing to impose a Western model of gender relations worldwide?

FATEMA KADERBHAY, MAURITIUS

A: Gender equality and empowering women is not a Western, or a Southern, concept but a fundamental human rights entitlement that applies in every country in the world. Women have extensive knowledge and experience in working towards healthy and peaceful environments, and gender equality is a precondition to getting communities onto a path of sustainable growth.

Q: The MDG campaign seems mainly aimed at governments rather than individuals. How can a young person possibly have an impact on problems of this scope?

GABY MAVILA, PERU

A: The campaign works with a wide variety of constituencies from local authorities to parliamentarians to the media to youth groups. We need everybody to add his or her voice to the fight against deprivation and to make poverty history. We are close to 6.3 billion voices and if we join together and have ONE VOICE, the world will definitely listen and act.

THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Q: I've read that many regions of the world, sub-Saharan Africa in particular, are currently not on track to meeting any of the eight goals. What progress, if any, can we expect to achieve globally by 2015? JULIEN MIKALEFF, FRANCE

A: The picture is very mixed, with countries ranging from doing well to lagging behind in providing healthier and more secure lives for their poorest citizens. Some progress has been made in parts of Eastern and Southeastern Asia, but many regions are not on track and in some countries the quality of life for poor people is getting worse. If we continue at today's pace, sub-Saharan Africa won't achieve the goal of halving the percentage of people living in extreme poverty for many decades to come.

Q: The benefits of a global partnership for the MDGs are obvious for poorer countries. But what is in it for wealthier countries that have no need to achieve the goals for themselves?

RAIMUND BLASER, AUSTRIA

A: The global partnership refers to the developed world's pledge to come through on Goal 8. Poor countries are primarily responsible for achieving the first seven goals covering poverty, hunger, education, health, the environment and women's rights. But they cannot succeed unless rich countries fulfil their promises on Goal 8. The goals are a global agreement between rich and poor countries, each having their own role to play to make the world a better place for everyone.

Q: How much would it cost to achieve the MDGs worldwide? Globally, do we have this capacity? SUSHMA PAI, INDIA

A: We have the capacity! We live in a time of unprecedented global prosperity and knowledge. But we need to build a global consensus to take action. About \$900 billion was spent on arms by governments in 2003 alone – but just \$70 billion per year in additional aid is needed to achieve the MDGs by 2015 and meet the basic needs of the poorest of the poor.

Q: Why does environmental sustainability merit a goal of its own? How (if at all) does it tie in with the rest of the MDGs?

CHRISTOPHER HOLTON, UK

A: All the goals are linked. Goal 7 focuses on our relationship with the natural environment – and there is a strong link between poverty and the environment. Poor people are usually the most severely affected when air and water are polluted, forests are cut down, or the amount of fish in the oceans is reduced. The achievement of Goals 1-6 depends on Goal 7 – on whether we use the earth's resources in ways that are sustainable over a long period of time. For example, increasing access to clean water (Goal 7) would reduce the number of children who die from waterborne diseases each year (Goals 4 and 6), which would also make it possible for more girls to go to school (Goals 2 and 3), which in turn would improve maternal health (Goal 5).



Do you have questions on environment and development issues that you would like the experts at UNEP to answer?

Please send them to cpinfo@unep.org, and we will try to answer them in future issues.