

## Foreword (of sorts)

### We want you to read the Report (its gripping stuff!) and send us your comments

The UN Millennium Campaign is a somewhat unique beast in the context of the UN and offers a great learning experience for those interested in poverty and the MDGs, citizen action for public accountability, and organizational innovation. This is not just another evaluation report, it's a must read. You can zoom in on the Executive Summary or the annex listing the bibliography or indeed any other part of the multiple documents; they are all equally pulsating. As you will find in the evaluation, this is relatively uncharted territory and we need you to read the documents and give us your ideas, advice and provocation.

Apart from the overall global evaluation report (with an Executive Summary), there are sub-reports for Africa (with brief case studies on Kenya and Nigeria), Asia (with brief case studies on India and Philippines), Europe (with a brief case study on Spain) and a desk study on the U.S.A. In addition, there is a separate report on Internal Fitness and 6 Annexes on the Campaign's history, the evaluation methodology, etc. We have also just received the summary (in English) of an independent evaluation of the German campaign which was commissioned by the German Government (BMZ) and carried out in the first half of 2009. The findings are extremely positive and are available upon request. So take your pick!

The Evaluation covers the period late 2002 (when the Campaign was set up) to mid-2009. A smaller-scale evaluation conducted in 2008 by an external consultant on behalf of DFID is also available. We are now at almost the mid-point of the overall life of the campaign which is mandated to last until 2015 and the main findings and recommendations will feed into our Strategy for 2010-15, which is being finalized in the next couple of months.

### We want to share our reflections on the Evaluation

We have a lot of very specific comments but I want to share some of the headlines with you. We welcome the critical review provided by the external evaluators. On first reading, some of the findings did make us defensive and others very surprised. For example, within the Campaign, we see the **Stand Up** for the MDGs initiative as a peak moment for what we do over our annual campaigning calendar. But the evaluators discovered that for many people, the Millennium Campaign was synonymous with **Stand Up**. On balance, most of the recommendations are very much in line with our own assessment of the areas that need improvement and we will be incorporating these into our forthcoming strategy for the next and final phase of the UN Millennium Campaign (2010-15).

As one would expect, the Evaluation faced many of the classic methodological challenges in any such exercise which is to be completed with limited time and resources. Establishing attribution and causality in the absence of statistically valid baselines or a rigorous with-without technique is the most obvious one. To add to the complexity, the Campaign has been explicitly focussed on supporting local and national partners, rather than doing things ourselves. To top it all, given our limited budget, we have not (by choice) invested much so far on documentation and monitoring, leaving the evaluators the additional task of reconstructing history.

In any case, it is simply not easy to make a global assessment of a campaign that is firmly focused on the national level. This challenge appears consistently through the report. We have our broad policy messages

and objectives at the global level, but each country provides the detail and granularity. How successful we have been is dependent on a range of factors including the larger political context, the strength of our partners, etc. We also felt that the evaluation relied excessively on a survey that was responded to by a very small proportion of our hundreds of partners across the world. And that some of the critiques in the case of the UN and some of our civil society partners were coming from very few respondents but this is presented in an unweighted manner.

Finally, the UN Millennium Campaign's design principles and strategies are rooted in the Millennium Declaration. We have gone for choices that are more difficult but, we believe, more sustainable. To give you some examples:

- We do not focus on individual MDGs, but on the MDGs as an integral part of the overall development agenda and the underlying factors that hinder MDG achievement. The MDGs are so minimalist and so inter-linked - we would not choose between them. It would be easier to pick more narrow policy objectives and look for "quick wins." The evaluation suggests we should focus on specific policies and MDGs;
- We strongly believe that the Campaign should be driven by broad-based citizen action, particularly focussed on women and excluded groups. It would be easier for us, as an UN-linked body, to either directly target decision-makers or work with capital-based "policy elites" to affect change. The evaluation recommends that we target more narrowly;
- We decided from the outset that most policies that affect MDG achievement are (rightly) made at the national and local level and that, given our limited resources, we should invest our efforts in a select number of countries. And that change should be brought about by citizens as voters demanding accountability. The evaluation recommends more work at the regional and global level.

### **We want to thank you**

On behalf of the UN Millennium Campaign, I would like to begin by thanking the Team Leader and each of the four individual consultants who carried out this external evaluation for completing what was inherently a very complex assignment with great patience, diligence and objectivity, resulting in a thoughtful and constructive product. We know that every member of the team had to put in much more time and effort than they had signed up to and we are grateful for that. I also want to thank the Evaluation Support Group made up of Demetra Arapakos from the UN Office of Internal Oversight Services, Masahiro Igarashi from the UNDP Evaluation Office and L. David Brown from the Hauser Center for Nonprofit Organizations at Harvard University who gave so generously of their time. To ensure independence, this group selected the lead consultant who in turn chose the individual consultants who carried out this external evaluation. Equally importantly, they provided very valuable feedback on the methodology and final draft of the report.

Special thanks to the over hundred people (partners and others) at the global, regional and national levels who so willingly agreed to give their honest feedback to the consultants and many more who responded to the surveys. In closing I want to thank the UN Millennium Campaign team, particularly Roshni Menon, Dalita Balassanian, Ehab Burawi, and Zeljka Strahinjc, without whose quiet support over the last six months, this would not have been possible.

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**October 30, 2009**