Steps towards Sustainable Development

The Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations

A Statement of the Advisory Commission on Sustainable Development of the Evangelical Church in Germany to the Special Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations in September 2005
CONTENTS

Preface 4

1 Preliminary notes on the reason for this paper 7

2 The Millennium Development Goals and progress with their implementation 9

3 The financial and trade policy required of industrialised countries 11
   3.1 Increasing the budgetary appropriations for development cooperation 11
   3.2 New financial instruments 12
   3.3 Debt relief 13
   3.4 Trade policy 13

4 Key social policy issues of millennium policy 15
   4.1 Reducing poverty, promoting education, overcoming discrimination 15
   4.2 Promoting health 16
   4.3 Protecting life support systems 17

5 Millennium policy and UN reform 20

Members of the Advisory Commission on Sustainable Development 21
Preface

At the turn of the century, the General Assembly of the United Nations (UN) adopted a Millennium Declaration. It contains Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which are, in essence, about tackling situations of extreme poverty. Around 150 countries have signed up to them, including Germany and the other big donors of official development assistance. The MDGs define clear objectives for the reduction of poverty, hunger, major diseases, illiteracy, the consumption of environmental resources and gender discrimination. They entail specific obligations and responsibilities for industrialised and developing countries. Deadlines were set – most of the goals are to be implemented by the year 2015. Moreover, the Millennium Declaration contains a basic global political consensus on the line to follow to achieve sustainable development. The aim is to enable all human beings to enjoy decent living conditions, without humiliation and misery, now and in future.

Through the work of Bread for the World (Brot für die Welt) and the Church Development Services (EED) Protestant churches have a long tradition of development cooperation, focusing on the needs of the most disadvantaged with the motto “justice for the poor”. In the ecumenical dialogue on justice, peace and integrity of creation, the "preferential option for the poor" has become the keynote of social action. This is also expressed in the joint Catholic-Protestant statement on the economic and social situation in Germany: “All social, political and economic action should be gauged by the extent to which it concerns, benefits and empowers the poor.”

In its ecumenical and international cooperation the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) does not confine itself to promoting aid projects. It takes an active part in the fundamental discussion about the process of globalisation, seeking to make a contribution to the responsible shaping of this process. In ecumenical dialogue and cooperation, the churches in Germany also speak out on questions and problems concerning economic globalisation. Here they listen to the voices of the churches in the developing world, which is experiencing the darker side of globalisation. They take part in the discussion which has been especially initiated by the World Council of Churches (WCC), the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) and the Lutheran World Federation (LWF). Hopefully this will be deepened and explored in more detail at the WCC Assembly in Porto Alegre, Brazil, at the beginning of 2006. The call for justice worldwide to be the measure of the globalisation process should not go unheard.

1 A Statement of the Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany and the German Bishops’ Conference on the Economic and Social Situation in Germany, 1997, para. 107 (http://www.ekd.de/english/2403_social.html).
Therefore, the Protestant churches in Germany are grateful to the UN General Assembly for its Millennium Declaration and the goals it contains. The declaration represents an important step by the international community towards a common responsibility for shaping globalisation. But does present progress suggest that the proclaimed goals will really be reached? Haven’t there been enough fine speeches, with very little action to follow? What further efforts are necessary in order to transform the voluntary commitments of the states into binding policies? The United Nations has reported on progress to date. North and South are called upon to draw their own conclusions. They intend to do this at the coming UN Special Session of the General Assembly in September 2005. The increasing criticism of globalisation, mainly voiced by the economically disadvantaged countries, is another reason why the commitments must be put into practice without delay. Churches in these countries consider the worsening of living conditions to be a consequence of globalisation. They cannot see any future for the poor regions of the world given the prevailing forms of political and economic activity. Therefore the international community has the urgent task of developing realistic prospects for improving living conditions in the southern hemisphere. A consistent implementation of the MDGs would be plausible proof that the international community is willing and able to shape globalisation in a spirit of social and ecological responsibility.

In the light of the upcoming UN General Assembly, the Council of the Evangelical Church of Germany (EKD) endorses the role of policy-makers in preparing the ground for practical steps to implement the MDGs. In this spirit, we urge those with political responsibility in Germany to keep the promises made in the framework of the Millennium Declaration. Further, we consider it essential that new initiatives be taken to guarantee the funding of the programmes needed to achieve the MDGs. We ask the member churches of the EKD not to slacken in their commitment to their church development services and to continue to work towards these goals.

The EKD is willing to cooperate with all those endeavouring to implement the Millennium Development Goals. With this statement, the EKD Council seeks to strengthen public interest in the decisions of the international community - in churches and beyond.
The EKD Council thanks the Advisory Commission on Sustainable Development for drawing up this statement. I hope it meets with a broad and strong response.

Hanover, June 7th, 2005

Bishop Wolfgang Huber
Chairman of the Council
of the Evangelical Church in Germany
1 Preliminary notes on the reason for this paper

With the Millennium Declaration on development and poverty reduction, the international community took a step forward. The heads of state and government who gathered in the year 2000 committed themselves to goals entailing verifiable implementation. This opportunity has to be seized. 2005 could turn out to be a particularly significant year in this context. The Tsunami-disaster at the turn of the year 2004/2005 dramatically revealed the vulnerability of human society but also the comparable potential for humanitarian aid and support. It expressed an awareness of worldwide responsibility which can strengthen all of those involved in the global fight against poverty. The reduction of poverty is closely connected to empowering the United Nations to act. The upcoming UN General Assembly in September 2005 is to take decisions on both these matters. This will be done on the basis of a comprehensive report compiled by the secretary general using the Sachs Report and the High-level Panel Report, two studies which deal with the implementation of the Millennium Goals and the present threats to the world’s society. There will be a number of conferences by governments and non-governmental organisations before the General Assembly, which will be preceded by a special session (world summit).

Much is at stake. Governments and societies are challenged to agree on the nature and prospects of a free and just world order founded on human dignity and solidarity.

This present statement is designed to heighten public interest in the upcoming decisions. It raises concrete demands for policy-makers, which are also important for the churches. Facing tight budgets, the churches too have to set priorities and therefore to deal with conflicting goals. They are challenged just as much as the governments to critically consider their own actions in the light of the Millennium Goals.

Where injustice rules, everybody loses in the end. Locked gates and watchmen, which many of the better-off in many nations of the earth install to protect themselves and their property, may provide security but they also mark the loss of freedom and mutuality without which no society can exist in peace. Guided and encouraged by the Christian understanding of what it is to be human, by the biblical

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2 In Larger Freedom – Toward Development, Security And Human Right For All; (http://www.un.org/largerfreedom/, 21.3.05)
3 Investing in Development, A Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals, January 2005; (http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/reports/index.htm)
message and Christian social ethics, the churches want to make their contributions to the necessary reorientation of the international community, as outlined in the Millennium Declaration. This will be difficult but necessary for the sake of the poor, peace and the dignity of all people.

Our world is torn apart between wealth and poverty. Global economic activities which are not focused on solidarity and justice widen this divide. Therefore, for the Protestant churches in Germany, "the scandal of global economic injustice is the central challenge to the shaping of global development" (Declaration of the 6th session of the 9th EKD Synod, Amberg 2001). Winners and losers can be found in all countries, both rich and poor. A balance of the various interests does not materialise on its own because the stronger have better competitive positions and the weaker fewer opportunities. All the more important is the construction of a common political will, based on a consensus of values. Solidarity and justice do not enjoy undisputed esteem nowadays but are often subordinated to competition and striving for profit. Selfishness at the individual level corresponds at the world level to the tendency of the economically and politically powerful countries to place their own interests above the promotion of the common good and the protection of the most vulnerable. With regard to economic globalisation, a new political framework is urgently required for international business activities.

Conflicts of interests and values characterise the discussion about the ways of achieving a "more peaceful, prosperous and just world", described in the Millennium Declaration as the primary goal of common international action. If churches themselves get involved as partners in dialogue, they do so in order to offer support in decision-making drawn from Christian faith. The church proclaims belief in God, who is the creator and sustainer of the world; human beings, made in God's own image, are to cultivate and preserve the earth. From a Christian point of view, future peace and security at the global level hinges on justice within the present generation, justice between the generations, and on the action in solidarity that follows from that. Without justice and solidarity there can be no sustainable development, and without sustainable development there can be no shared future for all. Solidarity and justice are at the heart of every biblical and therefore every Christian ethic.

The present paper is committed to the fundamental option for those who are vulnerable and disadvantaged. In the biblical testimony God time and again takes the part of the lowest of the low and tells God's people to share their bread with the hungry, to bring the homeless poor into their own house and to cover the naked (Isaiah 58:7). The option for the most vulnerable highlights the unity of loving God and our neighbour. It requires us to adopt the position of those who live in the sha-
dow of prosperity and are unable to attract much attention to themselves as a population group or to form a lobby in order to represent their interests.

2 The Millennium Development Goals and progress with their implementation

The Millennium Declaration, which the heads of state and government adopted at the UN General Assembly in 2000, provides the opportunity to measure the political action of the international community and that of groups in society: benchmarks are the reduction of poverty, the promotion of peace and the protection of the environmental resources on which life depends. The Millennium Declaration commits the states to achieve eight MDGs by 2015. These goals are to effectively reduce poverty and to provide a basis for sustainable and equitable economic development. They are:

1. To halve the proportion of the world’s people who suffer from extreme poverty and hunger,
2. To achieve universal primary education,
3. To promote gender equality and empower women, especially in education,
4. To reduce child mortality,
5. To improve maternal health,
6. To combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other contagious diseases,
7. To ensure environmental sustainability and to halve the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water,
8. To develop a global partnership for development.

The Declaration is addressed to all states. It commits them and their citizens to do their share in reaching the Millennium Goals.

This commitment to poverty reduction is based on the understanding that peace, freedom and democracy in the world can only be achieved, or safeguarded, if the living conditions of the people living in poverty are decisively improved. The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 in New York and Washington and of March 11, 2004 in Madrid, as well as the still unforeseeable consequences of the military interventions in Kosovo (1999) and Afghanistan (2001) and the war against Iraq (2003), are also extreme expressions of social tensions and therefore emphasise the
urgency of this mission. Nevertheless, poverty reduction is primarily a matter of justice, not just a security requirement.

If the United Nations succeeds in showing that the international community takes effective action against poverty, hunger and diseases and can for this purposes become more operational, its legitimacy will also grow in other areas of policy. The studies on the implementation of the MDGs (Sachs Report) and on the reform of the United Nations (High-level Panel Report), and the report of the Secretary General ("In Larger Freedom") are important contributions to emphasising and expanding the objective of comprehensive international cooperation and the peaceful handling of conflicts. They run contrary to the tendencies of unilateralism and military violence.

The Special Session of the UN General Assembly, meeting in September 2005, will take stock of what has been achieved regarding the MDGs. This will show what still has to be done. Previous analyses indicate that the international community is "not on track", as Jeffrey Sachs put it. He evaluated the previous achievements regarding MDG implementation on behalf of the secretary general of the United Nations. So far any reduction of the number of poor people compared with 1990 has only been achieved in China. That makes the global statistics look better because more than a seventh of the world's population live in China, but little has changed in most other countries. In many countries and regions the problems are even increasing. In virtually all countries, including China, differences in income are growing within society. In many countries more and more people are slipping into poverty. The middle class, in whom great hopes have been placed, is under pressure, even in western industrialised countries.
3 The financial and trade policy required of industrialised countries

3.1 Increasing budgetary appropriations for development cooperation

Despite the currently insufficient implementation of the MDGs, the Sachs Report arrives at the conclusion that they could still be achievable with appropriate efforts by all countries. But, it says, the developed countries already have to more than double their present financial contributions to development cooperation in 2006 and to more than triple them by 2015 (an increase from 65 to 195 billion US dollars). This would result in contributions corresponding to half a per cent of the gross national product (GNP) of the donor countries. However, the Sachs Report recommends that Germany and Japan, in particular, show firm commitment to the 0.7 per cent goal, in order to give credibility to their desire to participate in the shaping of world politics (by a permanent seat in the Security Council). The Commission of the European Union (EU) on the other hand recommends that all old EU members work towards attaining the 0.7 percent goal by 2015 (new member countries should aim for 0.33 percent). A share of 0.51 per cent of GNP should be achieved in 2010.

- The German government backs the MDGs without any restrictions. It ought therefore to outline precisely how it intends to manage its contribution. The implementation of relevant voluntary commitments should still be monitored by independent institutions. The dimension of the contributions which would correspond to 0.7 per cent of GNP is still a little less than the subsidies currently granted by the German government to German industry.

- The churches, too, are called upon to contribute to achieving the MDGs. Therefore the Protestant churches in Germany should not slacken in their dedication to development cooperation, despite all financial difficulties. We recall the recommendation of the EKD Synod in 1968 on the occasion of the founding of the Churches' Development Service (KED). It called on EKD member churches to allocate "gradually rising funds from 2 to 5 per cent of church tax revenue" for the common task of "overcoming poverty, hunger and misery in the world, along with their root causes."
3.2 New financial instruments

Even with intensified efforts to increase the budgetary appropriations of donor countries, it remains questionable whether they will suffice to finance the MDGs. For this purpose alone – not to mention further development efforts – new financial instruments are becoming increasingly important. Here industrialised and developing countries are agreed. But it is still not clear how additional finance can be raised. Three proposals have been made by various groups of states.

First, the United Kingdom and France pushed for the establishment of an International Finance Facility (IFF) which is to generate additional funds by issuing government bonds on the international financial markets. The second proposal seeks to assign special drawing rights (an extension of the credit line for the financing of development programmes by the International Monetary Fund (IMF)), as well as to sell the IMF’s gold reserves. Third, a group of states, with the participation of Germany and headed by Brazil, has proposed the establishment of innovative funding instruments, for example through the raising of international taxes on aviation fuel. There has even been renewed talk of taxing international, non-investment-related financial transactions (similar to the idea of the Tobin tax).

Despite caution regarding the details of these proposals, the Advisory Commission on Sustainable Development regards the mobilisation of additional funds as necessary. Possible measures include taxing international business activities. Yet implementing the MDGs still primarily involves activities that are the responsibility of nation states. Most developing countries will need external financial support to meet their responsibilities in the context of the MDGs. Multinational corporations also have to make a contribution. Disappointingly few multinational corporations have so far subscribed to the UN Secretary General’s Global Compact, an appeal to corporate citizenship and responsibility for the public good.

These proposals are hotly debated internationally (e.g. in the EU and in the G 8) with no compromise in sight.

- Proposals for new financial instruments fail again and again due to regulatory policy objections. This especially applies to the levying of international taxes. We ask the German government to take initiatives for the establishment of new financial instruments and to press for this at the European level. As a major economic power, the EU bears a special responsibility in this area.
3.3 Debt relief

The way debt relief has been practised by the creditor countries so far has proven insufficient. It is not happening fast enough and has not been shown to contribute much to a full-scale settlement of the debt problem. Many more countries are affected by the international debt crisis than has been acknowledged by the World Bank and IMF up to now. The extended initiative for the debt relief of the heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC), which was pressed for by the German government at the economic summit in Cologne in 1999, has not been implemented as planned due to insufficient resources. From the list of 38 countries, only 14 have attained the completion point at which debt relief can be initiated, since 1999. An additional 13 are still at a decision point, while the remaining 11 will not be considered under the current criteria. Moreover, world economic crises, armed conflicts and natural disasters are threatening to wipe out the modest successes of the debt relief initiative.

- We urge the German government to lobby for the debts of all 38 HIPC's to be cancelled. Furthermore, to prevent them running into debt again, the grant component should be raised in bilateral development cooperation. The MDGs should also be included more in the present criteria for sustainability analyses. In view of funding requirements for MDGs, consideration should also be given to reducing the debt of middle-income countries. New decisions have to be made on what should still be regarded as the maximum limit of sustainable debt and to what extent the conditions the IMF links to the granting of loans are consistent with the goals of poverty reduction. We urge the churches and the church institutions which have campaigned for debt relief since the Cologne economic summit to call for more action to reduce debt.

3.4 Trade policy

Worldwide development partnership includes establishing an open, regulated and non-discriminatory trade system. The industrialised countries call upon developing countries to liberalise their foreign trade while again and again undermining their own agreed liberalisation measures. Not only are critical economic sectors protected against competition from the South - exports to the South, particularly in the agricultural sector, are still so heavily subsidised that local production in the developing countries is losing its sales opportunities. The latest example is the export of highly subsidised poultry pieces from Europe to West Africa, which means that the local small farmers are often no longer able to even cover their costs on the market. So the subsidies of farm products in industrialised countries deepen the poverty in the southern countries. The problem has been known for a long time. Indeed, concessions have been made to the developing countries in countless negotiations.
But - the bigger the concessions, the bigger the temptation to undermine them through hidden protectionism (subsidies). Since the Pearson Report of 1968 the motto "aid through trade" has taken hold. However, the vast majority of developing countries need aid to trade. The Sachs Report even proposes the establishment of a fund for that purpose.

- At the Doha world trade conference in December 2001 (still reeling under the impact of the September 11 terror attacks), the industrialised countries agreed to reduce trade-distorting subsidies and to further facilitate access to their markets for the developing countries. These promises have yet to be fulfilled. Restructuring farm subsidies in the EU’s Common Agricultural Policy is one way of dealing with conflicts of interests in the industrialised countries. As liberalisation is taken further (especially in the services sector), the legitimate protection interests of the developing countries have to be taken into account. Moreover, multilateralism in world trade policy has to be retained and strengthened vis-à-vis the temptations of bilateralism. The group of 20 (industrialised and developing countries) that the German government helped to bring into being in 1999, was a first step towards strengthening multilateralism, which must be followed by further steps (e.g. by an involvement of the UN’s Economic and Social Council and by the representation of poorer developing countries in this group).
4 Key social policy issues of millennium policy

4.1 Reducing poverty, promoting education, overcoming discrimination

Poverty is not only characterised by lack of income. Poverty also means having few, if any, chances of participating in social, political and cultural life, being excluded and not accepted. Women are doubly affected by this. They are particularly exposed to poverty and also suffer discrimination. In many countries, the chances of escaping this through better education are slight. Girls suffer particularly from deficiencies in primary education. The Sachs Report made detailed proposals on how to remedy this, listing the capital expenditures that are most efficient and effective for the purpose. The model for these proposals is a development-driven state which plans and directs economic and social investments. A dynamic of economic growth can thus develop, which will reduce poverty. Many developing countries lack the necessary preconditions for such growth. This is much bemoaned in development policy circles, and rightly so. Therefore, reducing poverty, promoting education and overcoming discrimination have to be accompanied by an extension of the state’s organisational competence in social and economic matters. Today, this competence is questioned in the industrialised countries themselves. Increasingly, public-private partnerships are sought, in order to accomplish the public tasks that over-extend the organisational competence of the state under current circumstances. To function, public-private partnerships need a strong civil society, which is precisely absent in the neediest developing countries.

Justice issues are largely sidelined in efforts to cope with the poverty issue. For the World Bank, the development of "human capital" is the priority. The development agencies of the industrialised countries currently like to feature development policy as security policy. Indeed, policy for the poor is also about protection from violence. This applies primarily to the protection of the poor, not to our own protection, and especially to women. But reducing development problems to security problems would be fatal.

➢ The German government has done pioneering conceptual work with its Action Programme 2015 for poverty reduction. It is urged to fully use the potential of this action programme and to incorporate the concept of gender mainstreaming, i.e. to consider the different life circumstances and interests of men and women as a central element in all decision-making processes. Moreover, this is also about the concept of the state underlying development policy. In many developing countries, government authority is often regarded not so much as an instrument for shaping a community as a source for personal enrichment. Development cooperation, committed to the
MDGs, has to strengthen democracy, transparency, good governance and the responsibility of the state for the common good. The industrialised countries have to allow questions about the extent to which they actually counteract these goals with their demands for liberalisation and deregulation.

4.2 Promoting health

Three of the eight MDGs refer directly to improvements in health care (numbers 4, 5 and 6), while 1 to 3 indirectly benefit from an improved health of the population. Conversely, the goals of improved education and access to safe water contribute greatly to better health in the respective population. That is why the Sachs Report deals at length with the causes of diseases and underdevelopment, making detailed proposals on how to reduce maternal and infant mortality and contain the spreading of the main infectious diseases, HIV/AIDS and malaria.

Particular focus is on reducing infant mortality, which is considered a particularly sensitive indicator of the quality of public health care in poorer countries. Malaria is still the most numerous cause of death for children under five. The prevention and treatment of malaria are easy and effective using impregnated mosquito nets and new drugs based on Chinese medical plants.

In many countries, combating HIV/AIDS is also of extraordinary importance for the realisation of other MDGs, due to the extraordinarily high mortality rate. This necessitates a wide range of interventions in the area of prevention, and effective treatment with antiretroviral drugs.

Besides combating the main infectious diseases, access to vaccines is an especially important issue. In this area, important progress has been achieved by the establishment of the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI). To fund GAVI, a pilot project of the International Finance Facility was to be decided before the G 8 summit in July 2005 (see point 3).

- The German government is urged to take part in the pilot project of the International Finance Facility for the funding of immunisation (IFFIm). This is mandatory for the realisation of the MGDs in the health sector.
4.3 Protecting life support systems

Poverty is in many locations accompanied by an excessive consumption of natural resources – mostly interacting with large-scale industrial exploitation of the environment (mining, over-grazing, cash crops – also for the production of "green energy"). The poor feel impelled to use their remaining resources ever more intensively. Due to the consequences (soil erosion, deforestation), their livelihoods are restricted even further. Therefore, one challenge for poverty reduction – of inestimable importance – is the protection of natural resources. This has also consequences for the industrialised countries. In conflicts of interests between environmental protection and economic interests, they tend to prioritise the latter. Powerful special interests play an important role here, as in the conflict about genetically modified organisms (GMOs). The consequences of the general and worldwide depletion of resources are already emerging: air pollution, climate change, desertification, a worldwide shortage of fresh water. These are all problems to which the population in poor countries is exposed, virtually unprotected.

In this situation, it is time for a renewed debate about alternative ways of using resources, lifestyles and consumer patterns, and the regional differentiation of the global economy through strengthening local and regional economic cycles. In this context, poverty reduction is also about balancing public and private interests anew under the conditions of globalisation.

A central factor for achieving the MDGs is food security. Experts agree that the problems involved in feeding all people worldwide are not due to shortages in food production. The greatest risks to sufficient food supplies are due to economic, social and political factors. So local agricultural production needs to be supported and protected. Smallholder farming has to be maintained and strengthened in order to guarantee that the population is supplied with locally produced food on a lasting basis, and to counter migration into the cities. The cultivation of traditional plant varieties, adapted to the respective climate and soil, also contributes to food security in the face of increasingly extreme weather conditions (drought, flooding). Whether the spreading of genetically modified plants offers an alternative is a highly controversial matter. The production of transgenic plants is geared towards the requirements of a heavily export-oriented agriculture. This may well promote the elimination of smallholders in favour of the industrial agriculture. The health risks involved with GM plants have not been sufficiently researched to date. Probably the secondary effects are more serious, like the accumulation of pesticides in the food, desertification, further loss of biodiversity or an increasing concentration of world agriculture.
We appeal to the German government to consistently promote small-scale farmers, environmentally aware production, and local and regional suppliers and markets. The protection of markets has to be accomplished in cooperation with the local smallholders. The uncontrolled spreading of transgenic plants has to be counteracted through international agreements and monitoring to highlight the consequences for nature and the food chain. This is the only chance the consumer has to influence market development.\(^5\)

The current controversy about water offers a striking illustration of the fact that poverty reduction extending people’s participation in community welfare is not a matter of social engineering. Without sufficient access to clean water, no human development is possible. Therefore, the international community paid particular attention to this topic in the Millennium Declaration, and also at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002. The nations resolved to provide access to clean drinking water and sewerage facilities to at least half of the people currently excluded by 2015.

In the German development policy, "access to safe drinking water" was a high priority before the Millennium Declaration. Bilaterally, Germany allocates the second highest sum to projects in this area after Japan. It focuses on developing public institutions and the political conditions necessary for supplying drinking water, and then on installing the water supply and sewerage facilities. But it is highly questionable whether those poor groups who are in most urgent need of improved access to clean water can be reached by these means.

One measure intended to contribute to improving the necessary political environment is currently the privatisation of the public water supply. There are justified doubts about whether private operators do in fact improve the supply situation in poor countries, regions or population groups. This form of poverty reduction has led to fierce conflicts in some countries. The sociopolitical explosiveness of this kind of utilisation strategy is clear, in which efficiency, individual economic interests and regulatory policy preferences (takeover of public responsibilities by private corporations) combine in a non-transparent way. Privatisation may bring about improved efficiency in the use of water. However, it is a matter of dispute whether the participation of the private sector in the water supply is conducive to reaching the poorest people in the slums and rural areas and to protect the water resources on a long-term basis.

The German government bears a high degree of responsibility in the discussion about water supply. This responsibility has to reflect the insight that the provision of water under socially acceptable conditions has to take priority over the regulatory policy goal of solving difficulties in supply primarily through privatisation strategies: Participatory approaches to the use of water should be supported in the interest of empowering the disadvantaged groups. This is one practical way of implementing the MDGs.
5 Millennium policy and UN reform

The millennium policy is closely related to the reform of the United Nations. The strengthening of multilateral cooperation and the operational capacity of the United Nations provide an opportunity to promote the millennium policy of the states and to safeguard it, e.g. by the establishment of a special institution for conflict management. Without UN reform, millennium policy could slip back into mere rhetoric. The German government is pressing for a reform of the United Nations. Given its increased responsibility in the international context, it combines this commitment with the effort to obtain a permanent seat in the UN Security Council. However, a strengthening of multilateralism to the benefit of the MGDs and the operational capacity of the United Nations will not depend upon whether Germany, Japan and certain other countries obtain a permanent seat in the UN Security Council. German policy will gain credibility to the extent to which its commitment to millennium policy and UN reform is pursued independently of its efforts to obtain a permanent seat in the Security Council.

This likewise applies to development policy. Again and again the attempt has been made to increase its general political significance in industrialised countries by interpreting it as a far-sighted policy representing the interests of the donor countries. But the focal point of development policy is the pursuit of justice. Combating poverty is first and foremost a policy in the interest of poor people. Only if it really benefits them can it also prove to be a far-sighted policy of national interest. Fighting hunger is a question of justice. Although development policy will also serve our own security in the long run, it must not be primarily practised as security policy. Development policy will lose its justification if it is harnessed to other causes.
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