

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

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G8: Time for bold actions, not just promises

Amnesty International welcomes the G8 Muskoka Accountability Report and the commitment of G8 countries to increase transparency and accountability in relation to their individual and collective efforts towards achieving development goals. We also welcome the contribution by G8 countries to supporting global efforts to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). However, as deadlines draw nearer, there is a very real danger that the MDG targets will not be met in several areas.

Amnesty International believes that human rights standards – and the duty of all governments to realise them – must be put at the heart of MDG efforts in order to fulfil the promises made in the Millennium Declaration. For those living in poverty international co-operation and assistance can play a crucial role in ensuring the realisation of at least the minimum levels of economic, social and cultural rights.

In a welcome move the Accountability Report provides an account of the G8's contribution to making progress on a number of key development issues, such as health, education and water and sanitation. Although a step in the right direction, accountability for development commitments must be grounded in a framework of human rights.

Amnesty International believes that accountability of all states in their efforts to realise development goals must include accountability for ensuring that all such efforts are consistent with human rights standards - including in relation to economic, social and cultural rights.

The G8 Muskoka Accountability Report emphasises that the purpose of aid is to foster sustainable growth and contribute to tangible improvements in the lives of the world's poorest people. The Report also acknowledges the need to improve aid effectiveness in line with commitments made in the Monterrey Consensus, the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action. G8 countries should also reaffirm the Accra Agenda of Action commitment that *“Developing countries and donors will ensure that their respective development policies and programmes are designed and implemented in ways consistent with their agreed international commitments on gender equality, human rights, disability and environmental sustainability.”*

The G8 must ensure that all their international co-operation and assistance is consistent with human rights standards and should include information on this issue in reports to international human rights bodies, including the Universal Periodic Review of the Human Rights Council.

Amnesty International acknowledges the role played by G8 in raising the profile of health within the broader global development agenda. G8 commitment to scale up efforts to address the gaps in the areas of maternal and child health care services is welcome. However, women and girls across the world continue to be subjected to gender discrimination and other human rights violations. They frequently experience multiple forms of discrimination, for example because of their race, caste, ethnicity, disability and marital status.

Failure to tackle gender discrimination, including gender-based violence, and to fully integrate the human rights of women and girls into all efforts to achieve the MDGs will undermine progress. In this regard we urge the G8 countries to call upon the UN Secretary-General and all

UN member states to ensure that the proposed *Joint Action Plan to Improve the Health of Women and Children* is underpinned by a human rights framework and is based on the respect for, and fulfilment of, sexual and reproductive rights.

Greater accountability for national and global efforts towards development goals also requires independent monitoring and evaluation of such efforts. National and international human rights accountability mechanisms could play an important role in efforts to achieve the MDGs. These mechanisms hold states to account for their human rights commitments, and give people living in poverty, and civil society acting on their behalf, greater opportunities to hold governments to account. They can also help ensure that development efforts are based on respect for, and promotion of, all human rights, including economic, social and cultural rights, for all.

In light of the upcoming High-level Plenary Meeting of the UN General Assembly on the MDGs we call upon G8 member countries to ensure their efforts to meet the MDGs support the realisation of human rights.

-ENDS-

Notes

This work is part of Amnesty International's Demand Dignity campaign which aims to end the human rights violations that drive and deepen global poverty. The campaign will mobilise people all over the world to demand that governments, corporations and others who have power listen to the voices of those living in poverty and recognise and protect their rights. For more information visit <http://www.amnesty.org/en/demand-dignity>

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