

The role of the European Union in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals MDGs

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PURPOSE: to present a communication from the Commission on the EU's contribution to speed up progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

CONTENT: this communication takes stock of the EU's contribution to development and identifies the

measures that need to be taken to speed up achievement of the MDGs. The EU's consolidated report on the MDGs, which was drawn up by the Commission at the request of the Member States, shows that the input of the Community and its Member States to the international community's efforts is substantial. The EU must now do even more.

The report states that in the face of major development challenges, Europe, as a global player, has special responsibilities to shoulder and must fully take on its political role in order to increase the resources for development and the effectiveness of cooperation, and to give adequate support to sub-Saharan Africa, which is behind on progress to many goals.

The consolidated EU report on the MDGs and the report on the follow-up to the Barcelona commitments have highlighted the importance of the efforts made so far. This communication, together with the specific proposals on financing for development and policy coherence for development, sets out guidelines for future action.

Africa, too, can change. Africa has given proof of its willingness to assume responsibility for its political and socio-economic development. A number of countries have embarked on the transition to democracy, peace is returning in many parts of the continent, and economic growth is picking up. The emergence of the African Union and the NEPAD initiative has given birth to an ambitious institutional structure and a charter that places governance and freedom at the heart of development. This year, 2005, could be Africa's year. Europe must show that it is up to dealing with these developments and playing a leading role in supporting Africa; most importantly this includes giving Africa priority for financing, so helping to fulfil the commitments made by the G8 in 2002. Africa's road to sustainable development and achievement of the MDGs is a long and hard one. A new dynamic must now be set in motion, the EU and Africa can and must work together to make it happen.

This communication, together with the communications on financing and coherence and related reports, forms the framework of the EU's contribution to the UN High-Level Event in September this year on the subject of development and synergies with other policies. On this basis, the Commission asks the Council to finalise the EU's proposals and commitments with a view to speeding up progress to the Millennium Development Goals.

In addition to this, the process now under way should also pave the way for a new declaration on EU development policy designed to lay down a true European Development Strategy. At the Kananaskis Summit (2002) the G8 pledged to allocate at least 50% of additional ODA to Africa. If this pledge were made at EU level and if current trends continue (keeping of Barcelona commitments for 2006), this would mean an additional allocation of more than EUR 6.5 billion a year for Africa.