

12th July 2010, New York - UN Headquarters in New York held the *Informal Interactive Hearings of the General Assembly with NGO, Civil Society organisations and the Private sector* from 14th to 25th June. The purpose of the hearings was to provide input for the preparatory process of the MDG + 10 Summit to take place on 20-22 September in New York.

At the hearings, high-profile international experts discussed a number of issues among which equal and inclusive partnerships, accountability in the fight against poverty, sustaining development and withstanding crises, drafting and implementing new policies aimed at delivering on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and finding balance between local actions, national strategies and global structures.

Participants underlined the significance of the MDGs as a useful mobilisation tool and unifying force in development. Many speakers reaffirmed the message of the Secretary-General that the MDGs rest upon the Millennium Declaration and are an expression of basic human rights.

It was argued at the meeting that if MDGs are to be beneficial for developing countries and their most vulnerable citizens, values such as non-discrimination, equality, equity, participation and accountability must come to the foreground. In particular, more attention needs to be directed towards realising gender equality since without actively involving women the 2015 goals are likely to be missed.

Attendants were reminded of some good practices that should be followed. Brazil with its *Fome Zero* (Zero Hunger) programme helped reduce child malnutrition by 73%, India with the *National Rural Employment Guarantee* (NREG) scheme that helped reach some 40 million households living below the poverty line and Malawi with agricultural subsidies to small farmers that significantly boosted productivity were cited as examples worth replicating. These types of examples reinforced the view that the MDGs are achievable as long as there is political will as it is ultimately the governments that are vested with resources and have their citizens' mandate to carry out necessary changes. The MDG + 10 Summit will provide an opportunity to further discuss the role of States in achieving the MDGs.

The MDG+10 Summit is a High-level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals whose primary objective is to accelerate progress towards achieving the eight MDGs by 2015. The Summit is expected to comprehensively review the achievements, best practices and lessons learned as well as the obstacles, gaps and challenges remaining and opportunities that lead to concrete strategies for action.