



**JOINT LETTER SIGNED BY**

**Mr. Shengman Zhang, Managing Director of the World Bank, and  
Mr. Mark Malloch Brown, Chair of the United Nations Development Group.**

Washington - New York

May 5, 2003

To: United Nations Resident Co-ordinators  
World Bank Country Directors

cc: Carol Bellamy, Executive Director UNICEF  
Thoraya Obaid, Executive Director UNFPA  
James Morris, Executive Director WFP  
UN Country Team Members  
World Bank Regional Vice Presidents

*Subject: Relationship between MDGs and PRSP*

Dear Colleagues,

We have prepared the attached note on the relationship between the MDGs and the PRSP, in response to requests for clarification. A Poverty Reduction Strategy is being planned, prepared or reviewed in more than 70 of the world's poorest countries. These focused strategies provide a key opportunity to mobilise national actors to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

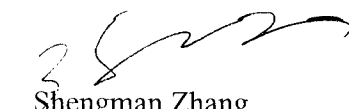
We are very pleased to see that the working partnership between the UN Resident Co-ordinators (along with the other members of the UNCT), and the World Bank Country Directors and/or Resident Representatives, has improved significantly in recent years. It is obvious that the impact of the World Bank and the UN Agencies in support of poverty reduction is maximised when their efforts complement each other.


However, we still find instances of inadequate consultation and collaboration. We believe that frank and regular consultation on your plans, programmes and projects will lead to more effective support from both organisations. Indeed, we are seeing very positive results when the World Bank and UN Agencies work closely together in jointly supporting the PRSP process and building national capacity to monitor MDG progress.

We look forward to hear of more such examples. If you are experiencing any problems with this relationship, which cannot be addressed locally, or you require any further clarification, please do let us know, as we place very high priority on getting this relationship right.

We encourage you to share the one-pager with relevant colleagues and partners to help reduce the degree of misunderstanding on the relationship between the PRSP and the MDGs.

Yours,

  
Shengman Zhang  
Managing Director  
World Bank

  
Mark Malloch Brown  
Chair of the UN Development Group  
United Nations

## HOW DO THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS RELATE TO THE POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY PAPER?

The Millennium Development Goals, derived from the World Summits and conferences of the 1990s, were adopted by 189 nations in the Millennium Declaration in September 2000 and strongly reaffirmed by all United Nations member states in the Monterrey Consensus and in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation in 2002. Global targets were set to help mobilise political commitment and to provide benchmarks for measuring progress in promoting human development and poverty reduction. The MDGs represent an unprecedented commitment by the member states of the UN and the UN system and the World Bank.

Translating the global MDG targets into action requires an operational framework at the national level. This framework should set out a country-owned cross-cutting agenda aimed at sustained, shared growth and public action directed towards achieving the MDGs. For over 70 of the poorest countries, the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) will constitute the primary strategic and implementation vehicle to reach the MDGs. Because national ownership is key, countries will need to set their own numerical and time-bound targets directed at meeting the Goals and articulate the policies and programmes to attain these.

Under the leadership of the government, the World Bank, the IMF and other donors, including the UN System, provide coordinated support to the PRSP process. In this context, the UN System promotes civil society participation and provides advice to the government on the development of national capacity for poverty monitoring and analysis, and pro-poor policy reforms and service delivery. The entire UN Country Team, working with other development partners, can facilitate the expression of the MDGs in national goals included in the PRSP, based on its strong country presence and its multi-sectoral coverage. The business plans of various development partners (CAS, UNDAF, bilateral plans) can then focus on how specific agencies can best support the implementation of the PRSP, and help the country attain the MDGs.

The UN Country Team jointly provides support for the regular MDG country reporting that assesses progress towards the goals. The MDG country reports will be a key instrument to inform public debate for setting national targets, helping to enable all parties to hold each other accountable for the achievement of objectives as set out in the PRSP. The MDG country reports and the annual PRSP progress reports will inform the wider public and policy-makers of progress towards poverty reduction. It is essential that these reports do not generate parallel processes. Efforts to produce both should support good statistics and strengthen national capacities for poverty monitoring and analysis.