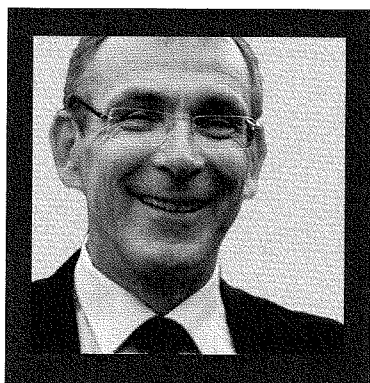


Andris Piebalgs

Working in partnership for success



The MDGs have changed the face of global development. They have given us clear targets, focused our efforts and highlighted the responsibilities of both donor countries and the developing world. They have led the EU to double the amount of aid that it grants since the MDGs were launched, and we remain absolutely committed to their achievement. This is why European leaders recently reaffirmed their pledge to commit 0.7 percent of GNI to development aid by 2015, notwithstanding the present economic difficulties.

The EU is very proud of the fact that it is the world's largest donor, providing more than 60 percent of global aid. It is equally committed to making sure that this aid is well used, that it results in real change, real benefit to the citizens of the developing world, and that EU taxpayers get value for money. This is not just about charity and moral obligation, although these are important reasons to maintain and increase our development efforts; in addition we all know that the root causes of instability, terrorism and economic migration are the poverty of chance in the world's poorest countries.

At the end of the day the MDGs therefore give voice to a very simple truth that has to be at the heart of our development efforts – that the wealthy have a responsibility to help the world's poorest to equip themselves with the basic tools so that they can lift themselves onto the development ladder. As we have seen time and time again, if people have effective education and healthcare,

sustainable energy and infrastructure, security, governance and the possibility to trade fairly, they can pull themselves out of poverty.

As MDG 8 makes so clear, central to all the MDGs is the creation of a “global partnership for development”. Donors need to work together effectively among themselves and equally they must do so with their partners in the developing world. Just as importantly, it is first and foremost up to the governments of developing countries to create the conditions necessary to turn aid into results for their citizens. Aid alone will never be a panacea for the developing world, but, used widely and in partnership, it can help as a catalyst to enable the developing world to grow. What MDG 8 reminds us is that, at the heart of each and every development effort, there is the principle of partnership.

Indeed, the MDGs will be reached only if we all work in cooperation, shared ownership, and a sense of joint responsibility. Several important aspects of international cooperation remain to be further improved to make sure that all aid results in a high impact on the ground, proving the conditions for the creation of chance. This includes focusing aid where it can create leverage, whether in health, education, governance or infrastructure. It also includes using aid as a springboard to increase, one step at a time, the raising of domestic resources, as well as more innovative financing for development, further debt relief, and the use of aid as a catalyst for the more rapid and innovative development of the private sector in developing countries, for ex-



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ample through the support of public-private partnerships.

So, if MDG 8 is indeed about partnership, it means that we all have responsibilities. The EU embraces its commitments, as a duty and as an opportunity. We are also, however, committed to assisting our partners to meet their commitment to continually improve governance, in terms of the creation of conditions where growth can flourish, covering issues as broad as the fight against corruption, tax avoidance, access for all to basic services, democracy and the respect of human rights. Without such commitment from our partners, aid will never have the impact on the ground that we are all seeking.

Over the last months, at EU level, we have been actively working on these issues. Take domestic resources: we are committed to provide stronger support to developing countries for setting up sound and transparent fiscal systems and fighting tax evasion. On trade, we have already met our 2010 objective of €2bn annual spending in “aid for trade” to help the integration of developing countries into the world economy. To

improve aid efficiency, the creation of the EU’s External Action Service must, and will, contribute to the better coordination of the national and EU programming of aid and avoid duplication. These are only examples of a new impetus of the EU to make sure that its aid produces results, which, again, can only be done in partnership.

A perfect example of the opportunities for partnership can be seen in the energy sector, where the EU will continue to focus. Many of the world’s poorest citizens have no reliable source of electricity, without which many of the MDGs cannot be reached. At the same time, the EU’s commitment to providing climate change funding to developing countries gives an additional source to face this challenge. Furthermore, if the developing world grows over the next decades on the basis of increased fossil fuels, we will be contributing to solving one problem, poverty, at the cost of another, climate change, that in itself threatens to undo all the progress made in the developing world. The challenge of climate change can never be a reason to limit efforts to bring people out of poverty, but tackled in partnership, there is no reason why it should. If we work together, much of the world can skip a technological generation, moving directly to reliable, indigenous and sustainable energy, and at the same time create an engine for growth in these countries. But again, this will only happen if we succeed in creating a partnership for change.

MDG 8 is, therefore, one of the most important Goals. At its heart it recognises that aid alone will not solve the problems of the world’s poorest citizens. Unless the world unites to make sure that all play their full role, both rich and poor, and both provide the aid we promise and use it wisely, whilst we might meet some statistical targets, we will have lost the opportunity to use the MDGs to make a real, lasting change; to give the ordinary citizens in the developing world the real chance to develop, and to claim their time in the sun.

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