

## STATEMENT

### Secretary-General's Remarks to ECOSOC High-Level Segment and Global Launch of the 2015 MDG Report

**Oslo, Norway, 6 July 2015**

Your Excellency Ms. Erna Solberg, Prime Minister of Norway, Your Excellency Mr. Paul Kagame, President of Rwanda, Your Excellency, Ambassador Sam Kutesa, President of the General Assembly, Mr. Jan Eliasson, Deputy Secretary-General, Honourable Ministers, Excellencies, Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to join you via video conference for this important session of ECOSOC in this crucial year for the United Nations.

I am here in Oslo with two strong supporters of the Millennium Development Goals – Prime Minister Erna Solberg and President Paul Kagame. I know you in New York are also surrounded by leaders who have played a valuable role in the historic campaign to bring the MDGs to life over the past decade and a half.

I thank the President of the Economic and Social Council, Ambassador Martin Sajdik, for his leadership during this period in which we will take major decisions about our shared future and I thank you Ambassador Oh Joon for chairing this important session in his absence.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The year 2015 is a landmark for humanity. The deadline for the MDGs is upon us, and a new universal development agenda for the next 15 years will be adopted by world leaders in September.

Today, I have the pleasure to launch the final assessment of progress since the establishment of the MDGs, outlined in the United Nations Millennium Development Goals Report 2015.

The report confirms that the global efforts to achieve the Goals have saved millions of lives and improved conditions for millions more around the world.

The MDGs helped to lift more than one billion people out of extreme poverty and make major inroads against hunger.

They have enabled more than 2.6 billion people to gain access to an improved drinking water source -- and more girls to attend school than ever before.

The reductions in child and maternal mortality, and the progress in combatting HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, are among the most significant advances in human well-being in all of human history.

Antiretroviral therapy reached 13.6 million people in 2014, an immense increase from just 0.8 million in 2003.

More than 6.2 million malaria deaths have been averted since 2000, primarily of children under five years of age in sub-Saharan Africa.

Tuberculosis prevention, diagnosis and treatment interventions saved an estimated 37 million lives between 2000 and 2013.

The developing regions as a whole have achieved the target to eliminate gender disparity in primary, secondary and tertiary education. Women have gained ground in parliamentary representation and, over the past 20 years, the average proportion of women in parliament nearly doubled.

These successes should be celebrated throughout our global community.

At the same time, we are keenly aware of where we have come up short.

Progress has not reached everyone. Too many people have been left behind, particularly the poorest and those disadvantaged because of their sex, age, disability, ethnicity or geographic location. Too many women and children continue to die during pregnancy or from childbirth-related complications. And too many people lack adequate sanitation facilities, especially in rural areas.

Moreover, other dangers have intensified. Conflicts have forced almost 60 million people to abandon their homes—the highest level of displacement since the end of the Second World War, with staggering consequences for human development. Climate change has become an existential peril, environmental degradation is undermining development gains – and both are affecting poor people the most.

These gaps are where our efforts now need to turn.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The lessons from the MDGs can be our springboard for future progress.

Our successes prove that global action works. Setting goals works – both as a guide and as a benchmark for greater accountability.

We have gained a greater appreciation for governance and institutions. We have seen the fundamental importance of national ownership.

And we have come to appreciate the immense value of partnerships. Here at the United Nations, we have demonstrated that bringing together key actors -- Governments, civil society, the private sector and academia – can significantly accelerate action, as has happened with the Every Woman Every Child initiative and other platforms involving energy, education and food security.

The MDGs worked at all levels -- global, national and local, rallying not just diplomats and technocrats in conference buildings but communities gathering in village squares.

The MDGs measured what mattered to people.

As we look ahead, we must do more to reach those who are most vulnerable, are not counted and have not shared the improvements of the past 15 years.

We cannot allow hard-won and fragile gains to be diminished or reversed.

We must work together to finish the job started with the MDGs, and build on their successes and momentum.

As we reflect on the MDGs and set our sights on the next fifteen years, I am confident that we can deliver on our shared responsibility to end poverty, leave no one behind and create a world of dignity for all.

Thank you.