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Editorial

What now for the Millenium +5 Summit ?

The G8 Summit in Scotland, though a small step forward, falls short of being 'historical.' Following the announcement of the cancellation of some debt for a few countries that were part of the HIPC initiative by the G7 Ministers of Finance on June 11, the Summit failed to go beyond agreeing on aid increases. Some countries like the United States, Canada and Japan even failed to come up with a timetable to reach the UN commitment of spending a minimum of 0.7% of Gross National Product on Official Development Assistance.

Many hopes had been pinned on this summit. People from all over the world wearing a simple white band were mobilised in symbolic support for the demands of the Global Call to Action against Poverty (GCAP). The key demands were that the G8 make ambitious decisions to increase aid while ensuring that it really reached the poor, to cancel all debts that prevented poor countries from investing in their own development and to change the rules of trade to make them actually benefit the poor.

With the 150 million people that it represents globally and through the campaigns and activities of all its members including development organisations, trade unions, faith groups, grassroots movements and women's groups across 72 countries, the GCAP now aims to raise public awareness and reach all citizens before the United Nations Millennium+5 Summit in New York in September. Like the 'White Band Day' on July 1, a call will be sent out on September 10 to highlight the expectations of millions of people that their heads of government demonstrate true leadership by making momentous decisions at the UN Summit to turn the tide on global poverty and to commit to stepping up efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

For its part, CIDSE supports and contributes to the actions of the GCAP. It has already started to actively lobby governments and will continue to influence the preparatory process and outcome of the Summit.



**Act now! Send a postcard
 urging world leaders to
 make poverty history**
www.cidse.org/action/

MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Southern Bishops and over 260'000 postcards to lobby world's leaders

At the end of May, five high-ranking church leaders from Africa, Asia and Latin America were invited by CIDSE to meeting the representatives from European G8 governments and the EU commission. Cardinals Rodriguez (Honduras) and Toppo (India) and the Archbishops Mazombwe (Zambia), Onaiyekan (Nigeria) and Souraphiel (Ethiopia) joined by fellow church leaders from the visited countries released a call addressed to the world's leaders demanding for trade justice, debt cancellation and more and better development aid (www.cidse.org/docs/200505301140053993.pdf).

In Berlin, Hans Eichel, German Finance Minister, said it would be very difficult to find the resources necessary to fund this almost tripling of development aid while opposition leader Angela Merkel underlined her support of raising Germany's ODA to 0.7% of GNI without giving a concrete timeframe for this. In London, the Cardinals and Bishops welcomed UK's initiative of putting development and Africa at the center of the G8 Summit in Gleneagles, Scotland. Nevertheless, the church leaders expressed to Gordon Brown (UK Chancellor of the Exchequer) their concern that the adoption of the International Finance Facility (IFF) may come at the expense of future aid spending. The Cardinals and Bishops met also François Loos, Minister for External Trade, Michel Camdessus, Advisor to President Chirac in Paris and José Manuel Barroso, President of the EU Commission, in Brussels.

The Cardinals and Bishops brought one batch of the postcards to Downing Street 10, in a demonstration of the support, by adding a specifically Catholic voice to those united in the Global Call to Action against Poverty (GCAP). At the eve of the G8 Summit, over 260'000 postcards from the joint CIDSE campaign on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were delivered to Tony Blair to urge the world's leaders to double aid and improve its quality, cancel debt that prevents the achievement of the MDGs, end dumping immediately and let developing countries protect their farmers. The postcards were collected through a mass

awareness and mobilisation campaign launched at the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre in January 2005 and that will end with a final count of postcards prior to the Millennium+5 Summit in September.

"Actions so far have failed to go far enough to signal willingness to put an end to the continuing crisis of poverty today." Act now! Send a e-card: www.cidse.org/action.

Civil Society involved in the preparation of the UN Millenium+5 Summit

On 3 June, Jean Ping, UN General Assembly President, released the first draft of the outcome document for the Millennium +5 Summit. After the progressive agenda set out in the Secretary General's report, 'In Larger Freedom,' this document comes as a disappointment. Responding to this letter, GCAP with the active contribution of CIDSE, points out that the Millennium Summit is a golden opportunity to make the rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights real for billions of women, children and men around the world. As part of the preparation of the Millennium+5 Summit, the General Assembly, for the first time in its history, invited global civil society to a dialogue. However at the Summit itself there is no broader civil society participation foreseen. Christiane Overkamp, Secretary General of CIDSE, addressed the cluster "strengthening the United Nations" (see statement available at www.cidse.org/docs/200506301259296465.pdf). CIDSE members will also be lobbying their own governments to encourage them to suggest more progressive language in the document for the Millennium+5 Summit. Official negotiations over the first draft began in June and the second draft of the document is expected by mid-July.



UN NGO/DPI Conference

The 58th Annual NGO/UN Department of Public Information (DPI) Conference 'Our Challenge: Voices for Peace, Partnership and Renewal' will be held this year on the eve of the Millennium +5 Summit, 7-9 September at the UN in New York. More than 2500 NGOs are expected to attend the

three-day conference, which will include dialogues with a variety of stakeholders including member states, as well as take part in midday workshops. CIDSE, with co-sponsor Eurodad is expecting to hold a multi-stakeholder dialogue on the imperative for greater coherence between the UN and the IMF in Low Income Countries' achievement of the MDGs. One of the main objectives of the dialogue will be to demonstrate how incoherence between Bretton Woods Institutions' (BWIs) policies and UN strategies currently undermines the MDGs in the national context and outline a new framework for authentic partnerships between governments, civil society, UN and BWIs in the development of national strategies to achieve the MDGs.

Important dates

- 13 July: Hearing in the European Parliament on MDGs and European Development Policy Statement, Brussels
- 7-9 September: UN DPI Conference, New York
- 14-16 September: UN Millennium +5 Summit, New York

EU DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Hearing in European Parliament on MDGs and EU Development Policy Statement

The European Parliament will hold a hearing on 13 July with two panels on the Millennium Development Goals and on the revision of the EU Development Policy Statement. CIDSE has been invited as a panel speaker to present the findings of its Shadow Report on EU progress towards MDG 8. In the second panel, the Commission will present its Communication on the revised Development Policy Statement, which will have two parts: the first laying out the shared objectives, principles and values of the entire Union's development policy; and the second giving orientations for Community aid managed by the European Commission. The CONCORD task force on the Development Policy Statement, of which CIDSE and Caritas Europa are part, will prepare a statement for the occasion, highlighting the need to deliver on the Statement's principles in the practice of aid, and the need to confirm the priority of participation of civil society in the definition and implementation of cooperation. Following the hearing, further analysis will be developed for use in lobbying EU Member States and the European Parliament. The revised Statement

should be jointly agreed by the Commission, Council and Parliament by the end of this year.

RESOURCES FOR DEVELOPMENT

Air-ticket tax to raise finance for development discussed at EU meetings

After years of lobbying and with the impetus provided by the initiative of the governments of Brazil, France, Chile, Spain and more recently Germany, innovative mechanisms to raise finance for development have been a key item on the political agenda. However, the current proposals on the table, especially to count the money raised through such an air-ticket tax as official development assistance and make it a voluntary tax whereby governments could choose to impose it and in some countries, passengers could agree to pay a surcharge on their tickets, have been criticized by many NGOs, including some members of CIDSE. A staff working paper of the European Commission has also pointed out that such an air-ticket tax would be more effective if instituted at the EU-level. Such an EU-wide tax would also "raise public awareness on development issues and ensure a more forceful message of European solidarity towards developing countries". The EU could then open the initiative to other willing partners at the Millennium+5 Summit.



Zambia MDG Costing

Following an initiative of CIDSE's English member organization CAFOD, a study on the costs of reaching the MDGs in Zambia was carried out. Findings were discussed at a meeting of partners and CIDSE member organizations in Zambia in May 2005 before a 'mini' Consultative group meeting of donors. Bilateral meetings were also arranged by CIDSE member organizations whose governments were donors to Zambia, parallel to lobby work being done by Zambian partners with the government of Zambia. This was a key advocacy opportunity not only to call for increasing aid for poverty reduction in

Zambia but also for opening of the discussion on national development to civil society, thereby ensuring that the government remains primarily accountable to Zambian citizens rather than to donors. A full consultative group meeting will take place in early 2006 at which donors will pledge the amount of finance they will commit to Zambia's national development plan on a multi-annual basis.

Important dates

- 26-27 September: IMF/WB Annual Meetings, Washington

TRADE AND FOOD SECURITY

First approximation on agriculture for Hong-Kong Ministerial

Most of the people in poverty rely on the small-scale agriculture economy. The WTO agricultural trade rules are thus the core priority of CIDSE's advocacy work on trade and food security. A joint CIDSE-Caritas Internationalis delegation held a series of lobby meetings with Ambassadors and Diplomatic Missions at the WTO in Geneva from 21 to 23 June in order to influence the negotiations just before the drafting of a first approximation of the potential conclusions on agriculture at the Hong-Kong WTO Ministerial. CIDSE will continue its lobbying actions in the context of the civil society mobilisation around the WTO General Council at the end of July. For further information on CIDSE's position and policy proposals on the WTO agricultural negotiations, see "Make a difference for poverty reduction" - www.cidse.org/docs/200507041413202219.pdf

Sugar: time for action at the European Parliament

The proposal presented by Marianne Fischer Boel, the EU Agriculture Commissioner, for the reform of the European sugar regime is shaped by the principle of a hefty and swift price reduction (39% to 42%) that will force the weakest producers to cease their activities. This will have devastating effects on developing countries where sugar provides livelihoods for many small-scale producers. CIDSE will now focus its lobbying action on the European

Parliament in partnership with other NGOs and also with the Least Developed Countries and the African, Caribbean and Pacific Countries. The Parliament will first discuss the Action Plan to finance compensatory and accompanying measures for developing countries up until 2006. It is necessary to ensure that a sufficient budget line is included in the 2006 budget and to monitor the action plan to make it benefit small-scale sugar producers. The Parliament will subsequently vote on the content of the sugar regime. CIDSE will continue to advocate for a more remunerative price and a regulation of production through quota management.

Important dates

- 13 July: Hearing on the reform of the EU common sugar market, European Parliament, Brussels
- 27-29 July: Civil society mobilisation around the WTO General Council, Geneva
- 29-30 September: CIDSE-CI Trade and Food Security Working Group meeting, Brussels

CIDSE NEWS

In brief

A warm welcome to Géraldine Thomas, who took over as Christiane Overkamp's assistant from the middle of May.

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