FAO & OTHER AGENCIES IDENTIFY TARGETS TO REPLACE MDGS

IN APRIL 2014, the three Rome-based agencies that deal with food, agriculture and rural development – the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), World Food Programme and the International Fund for Agricultural Development – met to discuss what should replace the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) after 2015; below is an excerpt from an FAO news story discussing the meeting:

Representatives from the three Rome-based agencies not only stressed the need to finish the job of the MDGs that expires in 2015, but also to broaden their scope to address deeper issues of universal relevance like malnutrition, sustainable and inclusive food systems, and their inter-linkages. The three agencies identified a list of five targets:

- Access to adequate food all year round for all people.
- End malnutrition in all its forms with special attention to stunting.
- Make all food production systems more productive, sustainable, resilient and efficient.
- Secure access for all small food producers, especially women, to adequate inputs, knowledge, productive resources and services.
- More efficient post-production food systems that reduce the global rate of food loss and waste by 50 percent.

The UN Rome-based agencies emphasised that progress in these areas would have to come through innovative partnerships among governments, with the private sector, with development institutions and with all members of society from producers to consumers. New governance mechanisms would also be needed to monitor impact, ensure accountability, and give different stakeholders a voice in decision-making. Attention was drawn to the important role in global food security of small-scale food producers, who needed to be at the centre of new investments and new partnerships for a hunger-free world.

ZERO HUNGER

New targets are in line with the UN Secretary-General’s Zero Hunger Challenge, which envisions a world where, within our lifetime, no one experiences chronic hunger or malnutrition. The work of the three Rome-based agencies has been consistently inspired by this shared vision. The agencies stressed that successes associated with the MDGs have been substantial in some areas, such as halving the number of people living in extreme poverty, dramatically increasing the number of people with access to safe drinking water, as well as boosting primary school enrolment. But the agencies emphasised that gains were by no means universal and much work still needed to be done, given that around 840 million people remain chronically hungry and that poverty continues to be pervasive in rural areas around the world.

The new development goals to be set by the UN General Assembly in 2015 should therefore be a catalyst towards the realisation of the right to adequate food, improved nutrition, gender equality, focus on smallholders and sustainable and resilient food systems.


UN COMMITTEE

GENEVA TO NEW YORK

SHARON HATTEN UN Chair wrote:

Recently I was able to travel to Geneva and New York after the London Board meetings. In Geneva, Joanna Koch, one of our UN Representatives in Geneva and I attended the Child Rights Connect (CRC) annual meeting. They had 80 members from all over the world. CRC (the NGO) works with the Committee on the Rights of the Child (UNCHG) to pursue the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. It was 30 years ago that 20 NGO's came together to influence the drafting of this document. Meg Berrux-Bryant was our ACWW representative on this NGO group at the time. The CRC continues to promote the third Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which is a fundamental step to ensuring that children have the right to justice. The CRC study children’s issues in thematic working groups, which include:

1. Children of incarcerated parents
2. Children without parental care
3. Children and violence
4. Mainstreaming child rights
5. Universal birth registration

Late in the afternoon, we met with Dr. Douglas William Betcher, the Director of the Department for Prevention of Non-communicable Diseases (NCDs) at World Health Organisation (WHO), Geneva, Switzerland. NCDs include cancer, cardiovascular disease, chronic respiratory diseases and diabetes and cause 60% of all deaths each year. NCDs represent the biggest threat to women's health worldwide, increasingly impacting women during their most productive years. Common risk factors that can be modified by the individual include diet, physical activity, tobacco use and alcohol use. The key barriers to treatment for girls and women with NCDs are entrenched poverty, gender inequality, family responsibilities and health care systems that are not female responsive. Ban Ki Moon described the NCD epidemic as a "public health emergency in slow motion". We also met with Dr. Veronica Magar who is the team leader for Gender, Equality and Human Rights at WHO. Her role is to ensure that all WHO staff work with these three core values in mind and that gender, equality and human rights are reflected in the way WHO works and what it delivers. Joanna and the Alliance for Health Promotion (NGO Committee at WHO) will continue to liaise with these representatives.

On Saturday Joanna and I took the train to Vers L'Eglise to visit Meg Berrux's daughter, Laura, and pay tribute to our long serving rep who recently died. ACWW had a wonderful advocate and UN Representative who lived high in the Alps in a grand old farm house. She frequently travelled 1-2 hours each way by train to work on behalf of ACWW in Geneva. We had a lovely fondue lunch and a lovely relaxing day. Onto New York City to introduce the World President, Ruth Shanks AM to the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). The secretariat building is once again open after five years of renovations and removal of asbestos. As the CSW has several thousand delegates each year, it was nice to have the new conference rooms and more space. This year the commission's theme was 'Challenges and Achievements in the Implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for Women and Girls'.

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WOMEN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Kock, Chair of the Communications and Marketing Committee, promoted the work and aims of the Committee in her address. She motivated members to take up individual membership and encouraged them to make use of every opportunity to promote ACWW's work in their various countries. This report would not be complete without mentioning the wonderful, particularly Norwegian experiences; the excursion we had to the home of Edvard Grieg for lunch and a tour of his house in its beautiful waterside setting with the young Norwegian dance group and musicians; the national dress of the Norwegian attendees and the drum and pipe band who escorted us as we went to the gala dinner.

The fundraising was amazing – over £1,000 raised and no-one will forget the delegates in their woollen hats – over 300 arrived for the competition, with the winning hat from Peru, submitted by a delegate from the Netherlands. How international can you get?

A full report is available online now at http://www.acww.org.uk/area_europe, together with the precise wording of the Resolutions, which will go forward to the next World Conference. So many people played a part in making Bergen a great Conference, some of whom have already received a mention either here, or in the Conference report. My special thanks must go to Liz Neale who worked hard throughout the Conference to make sure the report was full and accurate. Many thanks, Liz.