

- Deadly floods and the aftermath: A special report from Pakistan
- Interview with a Sri Lankan human rights activist
- Male circumcision and HIV in Africa



Millennium  
Development Goals  
(MDGs)

# End Poverty

# 2015

## Where are we now?



# GLOBAL SOUTH

*Development Magazine*

**Global South Development Magazine** is a quarterly magazine published by Silver Lining Creation Finland. The magazine covers a wide range of developmental issues primarily of the developing world and is an initiative of freelance writers and development activists from different parts of the world.

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**Craving for knowledge**

Two boys in a flood affected area of Pakistan read their textbooks using a tiny space available to them. Deadly floods in Pakistan affected more than 20 million people this year.

Photo: Khalid Hussain/World Vision

## Vietnam meets hunger MDG ahead of 2015

BANGKOK, 14 September 2010 - A new Oxfam report highlights Vietnam's performance in meeting the UN Millennium Development Goal of halving hunger and reducing poverty five years ahead of the 2015 target.



**"Vietnam has cut hunger and reduced poverty from about 58 percent of the population in 1993 to just 18 percent today."**



**"This means that since 1993 roughly 6,000 people per day have been pulled out of hunger poverty."**

poverty from about 58 percent of the population in 1993 to just 18 percent today. "To put this in perspective, this means that since 1993 roughly 6,000 people per day have been pulled out of hunger poverty," Price-Thomas said.

By focusing on agricultural land reform, Vietnam has made land distribution more equitable, invested heavily in irrigation and agricultural technology and maintained restrictions on rice exports until 2001, nurturing the domestic industry.

The UN Food and Agriculture Organization is set to announce on 14 September that the number of hungry people worldwide has dropped, for the first time in 15 years, from 1.23 billion in 2009 to 925 million. (IRIN)

## BANGLADESH: Decades-old water dispute could destroy nation's agriculture

DHAKA, 20 September 2010 - Ongoing wrangling over vital waterways that pass through China and India – the two most populous countries in the world – could lead to agricultural devastation further downstream in Bangladesh, experts warn.

The Ganges, Brahmaputra and Meghna rivers - together one of the largest freshwater flows in the world - pass through Bangladesh on their way to the ocean, but the rivers' catchments are outside the country, leaving the impoverished nation to rely on neighbours to allow water through.

"Vietnam's track record is one of the best in the world. They are absolutely a role model within East Asia and more broadly in the world," Steve Price-Thomas, Oxfam's Vietnam country director told on 14 September from Hanoi. According to Halving world Hunger: Still Possible, Vietnam has cut hunger and reduced

However, with neighbours under pressure from population and economic growth looking to their own water and hydro-energy needs, Bangladesh is suffering.

As climate change increases Himalayan glacier melt and swells rivers below, China and India are likely to move forward with more dam projects, said Steve Luby of the International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh.

"The loss of the Himalayan ice pack means China and India are going ahead with plans to dam, and decrease water supply to Bangladesh," Luby said. "That puts a country that is already vulnerable in a worse position. In Bangladesh, more than 80 percent of the water used is used in agriculture."

Bangladesh first felt the impact of disrupted flow from the Ganges in 1975 when India built the Farakka barrage, which led to an almost 50 percent drop in dry season flow.



Now India, with a population of 1.1 billion that is expected to swell to more than 1.5 billion in the next four decades, plans to construct another large dam that will block a significant portion of downstream flow from the Meghna.

On top of that, China with plans to divert water for its own use from the Brahmaputra, which accounts for 71 percent of the water in the Ganges delta, said Ahsan Uddin Ahmed, of the Ministry of Water Resources.

"If somebody diverts the main flow and takes the water away, then a major ecological catastrophe will take place in this delta," said Ahmed, who is executive director of the centre for global change in



**"The loss of the Himalayan ice pack means China and India are going ahead with plans to dam, and decrease water supply to Bangladesh."**

**"Bangladesh already faces water shortages because of severe drought in the north."**





the ministry's Water Resources Planning Organization (WARPO). "It'll have a tremendous adverse implication on Bangladesh."

According to World Bank and UN estimates, China's population of more than 1.3 billion is expected to grow by about 70 million by 2050. While its projected population growth rate is lower than India's, its GDP has skyrocketed at 10 percent or more annually over much of the past two decades.

## Downstream dilemmas

Many of Bangladesh's aquifers have become contaminated with arsenic, making them dangerous for human consumption. Surface water is also heavily contaminated, while the recharge rate on deep, underground aquifers is too slow for them to be a viable alternative.

Ahmed said that with too little water, agricultural production drops, causing a rise in local food prices and seriously impacting a country where the UN estimates 50 percent of the population live on less than a US\$1 a day and 46 percent of children are malnourished.

"When rice prices rise, people eat less," he said. "Less water means less grain means less food for people who are already malnourished."

Bangladesh already faces water shortages because of severe drought in the north.

With two-thirds of the country's population working in the agriculture sector, communities are hard hit, said Syeda Rizwana Hasan, chief executive of the Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association.

"Part of the northern region is facing desertification. There is a huge shortage of irrigation facilities," she said. "Because of the unilateral withdrawal of water by India, major rivers have silted up. These rivers have died. Salinity is spreading because there is no water coming from upstream to push the seawater back."

Increased salinity has caused groundwater problems and led to a drop in agricultural production in the southern coastal regions, where farmers once relied on the Ganges during the dry season for their water-dependent rice crops.

"When the water became saline and there wasn't enough water coming from upstream, people had to forfeit the most important crop and gradually they picked up less economically important crops, so their whole livelihoods changed," said Ahmed from WARPO.

Ahmed warns that it will probably become ecologically impossible for people to live or maintain livelihoods in the southwest of Bangladesh.

## Old friends, old problems

With these ongoing water disputes, Bangladesh is having a hard time pushing back against India - its powerful neighbour that helped Bangladesh become independent in 1971.

"It's a difficult situation because India is a large country," said Adilur Khan, secretary of human rights NGO Odhikar. "At the official level, India is a big brother that puts pressure on its small neighbours."

A Joint River Commission established by the two countries in 1972, and the 1996 water-sharing treaty between the two countries, have done little to resolve the problem.

The sharing of the Ganges' waters remains a long-standing diplomatic issue between India and Bangladesh over appropriate allocation and development needs.

With no end in sight to the dispute, experts agree that it will be essential to hold multilateral talks between India, Bangladesh, China, Bhutan, Nepal - the five neighbouring countries that contain the Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna basin. (IRIN Sept 2010)

## Silcreation to launch a development TV channel!

HELSINKI, 26 Sept, Silver Lining Creation Finland is going to launch an online development TV channel in the near future. The channel will be named as Global South Development TV (GSDTV) and will freely available to everyone. The channel will be formally inaugurated on the 15th of October 2010.



Silcreation has been actively working on the development of user led social media initiatives since its establishment, and this move can be taken as a significant step towards contributing to the two top priorities of Silcreation- promotion of citizen journalism and active citizenship through activating user participation and modern means of mass communication.

More importantly, the channel has been expected to be a powerful means of sharing knowledge and disseminating developmental experiences within and outside the developing world. The development TV channel will feature development initiatives, documentaries, social films and programs based on other social environmental and developmental issues in general. (Silcreation.org)

## New report reveals the worst place in the world to be a school child



Somalia and Haiti have topped a list of the world's worst places to be a school child as a new report from the Global Campaign for Education, backed by organizations including Education International, Oxfam, Plan, Save the Children and VSO warned that poor countries are teetering on the brink of an education crisis with the growth in access to education now stalling.

The agencies, which are part of the Global Campaign for Education who authored the report shows how, despite promises from leaders across the world, chronic underinvestment in education means that 69 million children are still out of school. The key findings of the report titled "Back to School?" include:

- **Economic Impact leading to cuts in education provision:** Millions of children are becoming the victims of the financial crisis with poor countries' education budgets being cut by \$4.6 billion a year. In the last twelve months Kenya had to delay the provision for free education to 9.7 million children due to budgetary constraints.
- **Unequal provision of education:** In Nigeria, the sixth biggest oil producer in the world, a lack of political will is a major factor in the country having the highest number of children out of school in the world. Gross inequality in the provision of education has led to 8.2 million children out of primary school with many more dropping out within the first year. Over half of these children are in the north of the country, with girls suffering the most with many receiving just 6 months of education in their lives.
- **Secondary and tertiary education:** While there has been progress in primary provision of education, only one country in Africa has more than 50% of its children in secondary school.

Gordon Brown, former Prime Minister of Great Britain and recently appointed to the High Level Panel for the Global Campaign for Education said: "We find ourselves at an historic crossroads for global education. The momentum of the last ten years could still be harnessed to make education for all a reality within five years, an achievement that would surely rate among mankind's greatest. But, if education budgets are not protected from the ravages of the financial crisis all that progress could be jeopardized and generations will be condemned to poverty. For years the international community has acknowledged the fundamental role education plays in development. Today it must back these words with renewed action."

The report shows that education investment should form a significant part of the international community's global recovery package which will be discussed at the G20 in Korea in November. The dividend that education provides to people is clear as adults that complete an education earn 50% more than those that don't. New research from UNESCO estimates that 171 million people could be lifted out of poverty if they left school just with basic reading skills.

**In many countries, progress is being made** as in Tanzania three million extra children are now able to go to and Mozambique has halved the number of children out of school. A number of countries in Africa, such as Rwanda have made strong efforts to ensure that there are enough professionally trained teachers, although others have resorted to hiring contract and unqualified teachers. The report shows that delivering education for all is highly achievable and brings other poverty dividends such as reducing HIV deaths by seven million and doubling child survival by 50% if mothers are educated.

**Sadly some rich countries don't direct their aid budgets** at the poorest countries or where inequalities are most extreme, but use their aid budgets to underwrite their University systems. Germany spends 50% of its aid to education on subsidizing its Universities allocating \$927 million to its University system. France is guilty of the same practices and further misuses its aid budget to underwrite former colonies, with the island of Mayotte receiving \$67 million of France's education budget - the equivalent to \$1099 per child - while other children in Africa receive 50 cents.

GCE is calling on leaders meeting at the United Nations in New York this week to **make funding for education a priority in order to meet the target of universal access to basic schooling by 2015**. It argues that poor countries should spend 20% of their national budget on education, abolishing school fees and be

supported to hire an additional 1.9 million teachers so that every child can have access to education.

In addition, rich countries must agree a 'step up plan' to reach the \$16 billion per year needed to achieve Education For All with an immediate doubling of aid to basic education to \$8 billion in 2011. They also should end the practice of reporting university costs and assistance to overseas territories as aid, agree a financial transaction tax which would contribute to the provision of education and ensure the World Bank and IMF pursue policies that promote investment in quality public education.

Kailash Satyarthi, President of the Global Campaign for Education said: "Girls are the real victims of the world's failure to invest in education with millions unable to enter school. The argument for prioritizing education is clear. If scientists can genetically modify food and NASA can send missions to Mars, politicians must be able to find the resources to get millions of children into school and change the prospects of a generation of children." (Oxfam)

## Silcreation raises funds for flood victims in Pakistan

1 Sept 2010(FINLAND)

As part of its humanitarian assistance programme, Silcreation organized a fundraising event to raise money for flood victims in Pakistan. The one day event was held at the premises of Diaconia University of Applied Sciences, Järvenpää-Finland, on 1 September 2010.

Dozens of students, teachers and other professionals donated money throughout the day for the humanitarian cause. As the event was organized in association with the Finnish Red Cross, all donation boxes were handed over to local Red Cross officials afterwards. Finnish Red Cross along with other aid agencies has already been operating one of the most active and effective relief campaigns in flood affected Pakistani hinterlands.



Earlier in mid August, Silcreation executive board had decided to respond to the natural disaster in Pakistan by taking fundraising initiatives and raising awareness through the use of modern means of mass communication and social networking sites. Silcreation's coordinator for Humanitarian Assistance and Human Rights Promotion Saila Ohranen was given the responsibility of humanitarian assistance initiatives. Silcreation's Executive Director Manoj Bhusal and Coordinator Sudip Joshi also participated the fundraising event.

Pakistan has been grappling with the worst natural disaster in its history. The deadly floods have claimed more than two thousand lives damaging almost a million homes. More than 20 million people have been directly affected by the floods. The United Nations has requested \$460 million for emergency relief – in other words, money to provide the most basic necessities in the short term like food, temporary shelter, clean water and health care. Several aid agencies have responded to the disaster by launching emergency relief campaigns, but reports say the effort has been scanty given the colossal damage caused by the disaster. (Silcreation.org)



# Male circumcision- an answer to HIV prevention for Africa?

Jasen Mphepo  
Zimbabwe

A few years back the then President South Africa president Thabo Mbeki commented that the key driver to the spread of HIV was poverty. This statement had negative responses from key stakeholders at regional level as well as in Africa as a statement that had misleading connotations. His deputy then, the current President of the Republic of South Africa after having had an extra marital sexual relation with his employee made another renegade statement that HIV could be prevented by taking a shower soon after having unprotected sex. The HIV body in that country went on the streets to campaign for the retraction of such utterances but it fell on deaf ears.

HIV has been known to be amongst Africans especially during the late 1980's. This disease was known mostly as a white man's disease and mostly found amongst gays. The disease slowly evolved to be amongst the heterosexuals and a widespread campaign to sensitize the communities was launched. The campaigns which primarily showcased the dangers of HIV as a killer with most campaign materials having the death sign of a skeleton behind an X, passed on messages of a menace amongst us.



With more and more discoveries of how the disease could be detected in the human, how one could survive with the disease and the introduction of antiretroviral drugs, it became a 'normal' disease as some people could hide their status through taking care of themselves. Slowly almost each household began to experience the disease and slowly people began to stigmatize the disease.

Most African governments have put in place country level strategies with regards preventive mechanisms in view of the spread of HIV and Zimbabwe is no exception. Most nongovernmental organizations working in Zimbabwe have developed strategies that target different communities; different target groups e.g. the youth, women and man. A lot of strides have been made in trying to tackle HIV but still incidences of HIV remain high. Currently about 13% of the population of about 12 million people is living with HIV by far one of the highest number of people living with HIV per country.

A campaign by the government and other players in the development world on male circumcision has taken center stage in developing a mechanism to support the already existing strategies such as promoting condom use, promoting voluntary counseling and testing, abstinence and being faithful to one faithful partner.

Male circumcision, as known in the country, is the surgical removal of the male foreskin exposing the male organ thereby allowing the head to keratinize and become hard in turn creating some form of protection to the male during sex or when exposed to sexual fluids of a person living with HIV. This method though still involves the



“A campaign by the government and other players in the development world on male circumcision has taken center stage in developing a mechanism to support the already existing strategies such as promoting condom use, promoting voluntary counseling and testing, abstinence and being faithful to one faithful partner.”

use of condoms during sexual intercourse with a person whom you do not know their HIV status as well as coupled with reducing the number of sexual partners.

A number of debates have been tabled over this issues, some debating on whether this will not encourage males to be more sexually active hence drawing back the gains that have been achieved over the past decades? Why get circumcised if you still have to wear condoms, rather stick to condoms? What do women think about this issue? Will women not be put at more risk?

An interview with the facilitator from an organisation called PSI - Zimbabwe one of the leading agencies in the male

circumcision campaign in Zimbabwe, at a workshop this journalist attended on male circumcision and concurrent partnerships, revealed that male circumcision was one of the best ways in line with providing measures to reduce the chances of men at least by sixty percent from getting infected.

“Circumcision is also not just done for the purposes of HIV prevention but also as a way of being hygienic, as well a man who has been circumcised will reduce the chances of his wife being infected by the bacterium found under men's foreskins which may cause cervical cancer; man will also have the benefit of satisfying their female counterparts better as there is no premature ejaculation” said Aunty Patience

(Jasen Mphepo is Global South Development Magazine's country correspondent from Zimbabwe and can be at [jasen@patsime.org.zw](mailto:jasen@patsime.org.zw))



## People's tribunal on climate change to punish climate 'sinners'!

Sandeep Srivastava

INDIA

Sept 2010

While the final outcome of international negotiation (*Cop 15*) on climate change is still being debated, impacts have started affecting millions of people in developing, least developing and extremely vulnerable countries. It is felt that there is dearth of legal entitlements even in national and domestic legal frameworks of countries. Some people argue that there is a need of taking legal action against the climatic sinners making them own impacts of



climate change. With Effort of Oxfam India, a planning meeting for National People's tribunal on climate crisis was organised in New Delhi on 9 September 2010.

The purpose of the tribunal was to explore state responsibility and accountability for violation of range of rights of people. Victims of climate change, civil society, experts, scientists, the media, people from judiciary and lawyers and government officials as duty bearers were part of the tribunal providing written, verbal and audio-visual evidences before it. There was a jury which comprises

responsibility and accountability for violation of range of rights of people. Victims of climate change, civil society, experts, scientists, the media, people from judiciary and lawyers and government officials as duty bearers were part of the tribunal providing written, verbal and audio-visual evidences before it. There was a jury which comprises

“the shift in land use- from agriculture to industrial or infrastructural development has caused an irreversible damage to agriculture.”

people having vast experience in the field of climate change science, law on environment and climate change, agriculture, food security, gender, social work, government, policy makers & people's representatives.

The tribunal was akin to moot court and heard and recorded evidences on impacts of climate change in order to ascertain the state responsibility and responsibility of developed countries to redress climate change impact in the developing world.

Various eminent personalities were part of this meeting and expressed their views in favour of humanity & nature. Representation was also seen from rain fed, flood plains and drought affected Himalayan regions from the States of Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Haryana, Uttarakhand, Uttar

Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh along with key stakeholders from Delhi.

Reflections, experiences from NGO representatives were also shared from various states. For instance it was mentioned that there has been a big shift in the cropping patterns due to the uncertainty of rains and the depleting water resources. Apart from paucity of sustainable ways of farming, the migration and shift seen, of the labour from agriculture to industries and cities has become both a cause and effect of agriculture becoming a less viable option of livelihood. Furthermore, the shift in land use- from agriculture to industrial or infrastructural development has caused an irreversible damage to agriculture.

## Seminar on development and democracy



HELSINKI, 15 September 2010

The link between democracy and development is often contested, though; there have been a number of attempts to incorporate freedom and democracy as essential components of development. Some suggest that a country's development status should not be measured merely on the basis of income and infrastructure, but also on choices and the extent of freedom available to its citizens.

So how human rights and development are important for development? The Finnish NGO Foundation for Human Rights (KIOS) and Political Parties of Finland for Democracy (DEMO Finland) organized a two day seminar (14-15 Sept) in Helsinki and attempted to fathom the already eulogized link between development and democracy.

The seminar was participated by a number democracy and development enthusiasts, professionals, human rights activists, journalists and students. Representatives from Nepal, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Ethiopia and Rwanda shared their experiences of working as human rights defenders and NGO activists.

The seminar started with welcoming remarks of KIOS Chairperson Anne Romar and continued for two days with stimulating discussions and development debate.

Key speakers of the programme included Mr. Paavo Väyrynen, Minister for Foreign Trade and Development, Finland; Dr. Richard Youngs, Director General, FRIDE; Mr. Kris Berwouts, Director, European network for Central Africa and Ms Anjana Shakya, Chairperson, Himalayan Monitors for Human Rights (HimRights) Nepal.

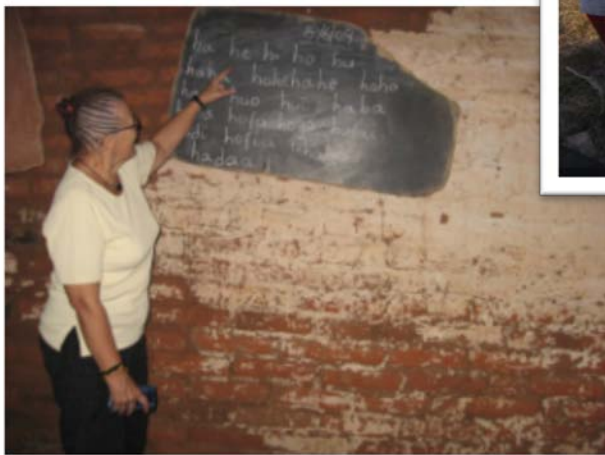
## Thoughts and Experiences on Voluntary Work in Africa

numerous times there. Their attitude towards life can be an example for us all.

**“Media gives us rather one-sided image of Africa; wars, famine and poverty”**



**Volunteer work in Tanzania**



Media gives us rather one-sided image of Africa; wars, famine and poverty. All of that is true but surely there is much more to it. That is something I have discovered during my several trips on the continent.

Through our western eyes we often notice poverty first and our eyes as though stop there which leads us to closing them from everything else around. But what is poverty?

To me, poverty has many faces. Local people are materially living meager life than us in West. However, internally they are much richer. They set humanity above material. They spend a leisurely and strongly communal life. My sister is your sister and what is mine, is yours as well. I have lived to witness such mindset

We can help with lack of material but rather teach how to fish instead of giving one. That kind of support brings them long lasting comfort. Machining is somewhat a keyword here.

Among people, many are still completely uneducated and many have received very poor education. Education opens entirely new possibilities when people learn to acknowledge their strengths and rights.

We westerners can be for help by creating an opportunity for schooling and by bringing in craftsmanship from different industries.

My interest towards Africa raised its head already during my teenage years through nature studies, which expanded to correspondence; and through safari traveling into private godchild projects in Kenya; and then further into voluntary work in Tanzania.

I have visited the continent already eleven times since the year 2002. My early retirement has granted me the chance to stay in the destination for longer periods. At the moment I have altogether four one-month



workcamps behind in Tanzania's Morogoro Region in the Uluguru Mountains.

These camps are development cooperation projects financed by Finnish Foreign Ministry and led by Setlementtinuorten liitto ry. I found out about work camps through Vesaiset Organization where I am working at local level.

What are these work camps then all about? We voluntary Finns work together with local craftsmen in order to renovate elementary school buildings. The school buildings are badly damaged, partially even in the edge of collapsing, and our mission is to deconstruct the old and rebuild the new for lasting and safe seat learning for school children of the mountain villages.

During the work camp we sleep in tents and live primitively depending on carried water for instance. Our tools consist of hammers, saws, paintbrushes, hoes and shovels. We also have an opportunity to give lessons in school. As a former kindergarten teacher, giving lessons and playing games with children in my free time is what I enjoy perhaps most.

I returned recently from a workcamp where I was working as the leader. The job description differed from my former.

Purchasing materials, planning and making arrangements with both workcamp members and representatives of local

partnership organization were emphasized in my role. I was also responsible for management of financing. I had whole new challenges in front of me.

My Swahili skills are elementary based only on phrases and vocabulary. English language skills of mountain people are limited. Attendance of an interpreter who was able to speak Swahili, some English and also Finnish was of great help while communicating with locals. Yet surprises always arise when people from two different cultures meet. Nevertheless, anything we could not overcome has not occurred.

I enjoy work camps enormously because modest living conditions suit me. I can even say returning back to West makes me somewhat discontent. But surely it feels good to come home to close ones and I can affect my choices here too.

I believe my African friends have opened my eyes and heart and I am very grateful for that. I also thank my



Pupils participating during school-day

family for encouraging me in my projects.

During this year I have also participated in FELM's (Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission) expedition in Senegal. I am one of the Tasaus Ambassadors and my mission is raising awareness both personally and through media about Tasaus projects; about the achievements we have reached through Tasaus

fundraising; and also informing about our future plans. This year donations are invested in building wells and developing cultivation in Senegal and Mauritania.

African continent has partially stolen my heart. When I will be finished with my informing mission this fall, I will go

on a trip – a true holiday trip – and the destination is where else but towards my beloved continent: Africa. My wish is to see chimpanzees and gorillas in Uganda.

My message to You: Go for aid work. Help is needed in the world and I can tell you, by giving you get.

**“My message to You:  
Go for aid work. Help is  
needed in the world  
and I can tell you, by  
giving you get”**

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**Seija Saarikoski-Silvola**

Masku 12.9.2010

Story and pictures by Seija Saarikoski-Silvola  
Translation by Seri Pitkänen



# End poverty 2015

## Where are we now?

Global South Development Magazine

“We will spare no effort to free our fellow men, women and children from the abject and dehumanizing conditions of extreme poverty, to which more than a billion of them are currently subjected. We are committed to making the right to development a reality for everyone and to freeing the entire human race from want.”

This was the ‘historic’ commitment made by 189 member states of the United Nations at the September 2000 UN Millennium Summit where the Millennium Declaration was adopted unanimously. The declaration was taken as a “statement of values, principles and objectives for the international agenda for the twenty-first century”.

Ten years passed and world leaders, once again, gathered last month in New York to review the progress made in achieving the MDGs.

The UN report published in June 2010 had already told the story that the progress has been made, but it’s highly uneven, scattered and excludes the poorest of the poor. The review summit, like any other global summits, was expected to make some important announcements, which didn’t happen in reality. However, some significant ideas were put forward

“Some African countries like Ethiopia and Ghana also made remarkable progress. In Ethiopia the proportion of people living on less than \$1.25 a day fell from 61% to 29% in 18 years and primary enrolment increased from 22% to 72% in 16 years.”



and global commitment to fighting poverty, hunger, disease and illiteracy was renewed.

### What has happened after 2000?

Some countries were able to achieve significant feats during this period. For instance, Vietnam made a remarkable progress in improving the lives of the poor. Recent statistics show that Vietnam reduced the proportion of people living on less than \$1 a day from nearly two-thirds to one-fifth in just 14 years. Moreover, the country also halved the proportion of



underweight and malnourished children. Similarly, China has demonstrated significant progress as its poverty population has decreased from 452 million to 278 million.

Reports from Brazil are also encouraging. Infant mortality in Brazil has declined from around 50 per 1,000 live births in 1990 to 33 per 1,000 live births in 2003 (that's 34%). The country is faring well in combating poverty which is deeply based on race, gender and disability.

Some African countries like Ethiopia and Ghana also made remarkable progress. In Ethiopia the proportion of people living on less than \$1.25 a day fell from 61% to 29% in 18 years and primary school enrolment in Ethiopia has increased by more than 500 percent since 1994. Whereas, Ghana is set to become the first country in Africa to halve poverty and hunger before 2015. Undoubtedly, backed by international support, these successes emanate from these countries' sheer determination and genuine political commitment to fight poverty and hunger amidst all odds.



**“A UN study of 30 countries found that just 11 of the 30 countries are on track to meet MDG1 (Halving poverty and hunger).”**

**“Though progress has been made, it is uneven. And without a major push forward, many of the MDG targets are likely to be missed in most regions.”**

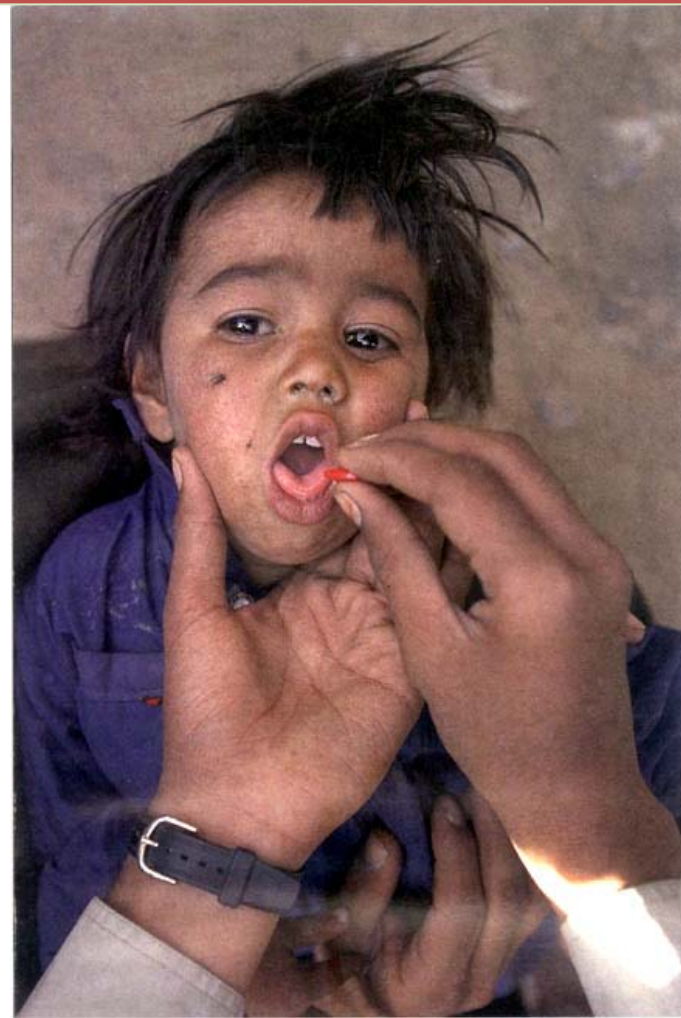


### Who is lagging behind?

No country in sub-Saharan Africa is on course to achieve all the MDGs by 2015. South Asian countries, too, will have to adopt tough measures in order to achieve the MDGs by 2015. Countries grappling with ongoing conflict and wars have performed badly.

A UN study of 30 countries found that just 11 of the 30 countries are on track to meet MDG1 (Halving poverty and hunger). In 2007 there were 923 million undernourished people in the world, an increase of 80 million people since 1990/92; 20 of those 30 countries are either off track or require additional, strengthened or corrective action to achieve MDG2 (education) despite an increase in enrolment in primary education from 83 per cent in 2000 to 88 per cent in 2007; and,

Only 7 of the 30 countries are on track to meet MDG 5 (maternal health). This is the goal that the UN recognises has seen the least progress.



In an overview in the "Millennium Development Goals Report 2010", the UN says that many countries, including some of the poorest, are moving forward, demonstrating that setting bold, collective goals in the fight against poverty yields results. For every life that has benefitted from the establishment of a quantitative, time-bound framework of accountability, the MDGs have made a real difference.

But unmet commitments, inadequate resources, lack of focus and accountability, and insufficient dedication to sustainable development have created shortfalls in many areas. Some of these shortfalls were aggravated by the global food and economic and financial crises. Nevertheless, the data and analysis on the following pages provide clear evidence that targeted interventions, sustained by adequate funding and political commitment, have resulted in rapid progress in some areas. In others, the poorest groups, those without education or living in more remote areas, have been neglected and not provided the conditions to improve their lives.

Though progress has been made, it is uneven. And without a major push forward, many of the MDG targets are likely to be missed in most regions.

### Progress on the MDG1 target: "Halving global poverty"

The MDGs comprise eight specific themes, but the MDG1 has been on the forefront as it aims at reducing the proportion of people in extreme poverty by half between 1990 and 2015.

The June 2010 UN MDG report said that progress on this target was "still being made, despite significant setbacks due to the 2008-2009 economic downturn, and food and energy crises." It further mentioned that, taken as a whole, the developing world "remains on track to achieve the poverty reduction target by 2015.

The World Bank's *Global Monitoring Report 2010* reports that number of people living below the international poverty line (of \$1.25 a day) had fallen from 1.8 billion in 1990 to 1.4 billion in 2005 (a 22% reduction). The report's projections to 2015, below, are for numbers in poverty to fall to 920 million by 2015, around half 1990's 1.8 billion (about 49%)

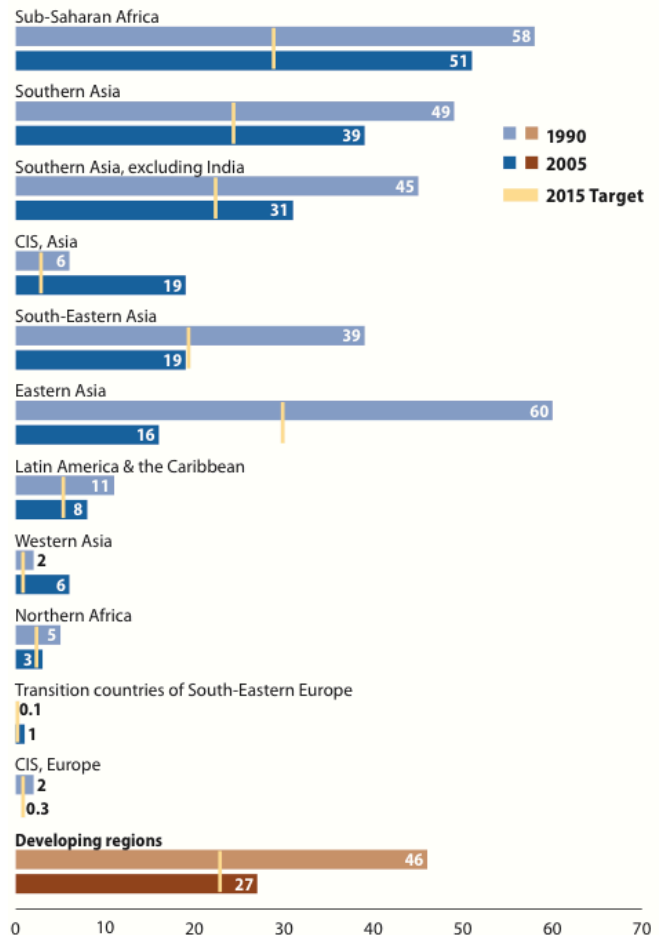
However, these figures of progress are highly uneven. Much of the global progress in poverty reduction comes from East Asia where poverty incidence was reduced from 55% (1990) to 17% (2005). China dramatically reduced from 60% to 16%, whereas, India's figure stands somewhere around 42% compared to 51% in 1990. However, in India, the number poor actually rose because of population growth. In many countries proportion of poor people might have decreased at the same time giving rise to the number of poor.

Sub-Saharan Africa is another dismal picture in terms of progress towards achieving the MDGs. In the sub-Saharan region proportion of people in poverty fell from 57.6% in 1990 to 50.9% in 2005, however, the number of people in poverty increased from 296 million in 1990 to 387 million in 2005.

### What will happen after 2015?

The progress so far clearly indicates that only a few countries will make significant progress in achieving the MDGs, however, many countries will still strive even after 2015.

### Proportion of people living on less than \$1.25 a day, 1990 and 2005 (Percentage)



“The progress so far clearly indicates that only a few countries will make significant progress in achieving the MDGs, however, many countries will still strive even after 2015.”

There isn't a single and definite reason to point at for the uneven and slow progress toward achieving the MDGs, but global economic crisis and global energy crisis have greatly hampered the pace of progress in the developing world. On the other hand, lack of strong political will both in the developed and the developing world miserably impeded the MDG progress.

What will happen after 2015? This question has already surfaced in the development arena. Will there be another improved and more binding version of the MDGs? The review summit did not focus on the post 2015 scenario yet, but it is essential and likely that there will be another series of development goals with special emphasis on environmental protection and climate change issues. Given the fact that the MDGs won't be achieved by many nations by 2015, having another target year with some similar goals will not surprise the world.



## Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

		Targets (for 2015 )
1	Eradicate <b>extreme poverty and hunger</b>	Halve the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day and those who suffer from hunger. <i>Full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people</i>
2	Achieve <b>universal primary education</b>	Ensure that all boys and girls complete primary school.
3	Promote <b>gender equality and empower women</b>	Eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, and at all levels by 2015.
4	Reduce <b>child mortality</b>	Reduce by two thirds the mortality rate among children under five
5	Improve <b>maternal health</b>	Reduce by three-quarters the ratio of women dying in childbirth. <i>Universal access to reproductive health.</i>
6	Combat <b>HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases</b>	Target for 2015: Halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS and the incidence of malaria and other major diseases. <i>Universal access to HIV/AIDS treatment for all who need it by 2010.</i>
7	Ensure <b>environmental sustainability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources.</li> <li>• By 2015, reduce by half the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water.</li> <li>• By 2020 achieve significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers.</li> </ul> <i>Significantly reducing the rate of biodiversity loss, by 2010.</i>
8	Develop a <b>global partnership for development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop further an open trading and financial system that includes a commitment to good governance, development and poverty reduction – nationally and internationally</li> <li>• Address the least developed countries' special needs, and the special needs of landlocked and small island developing States</li> <li>• Deal comprehensively with developing countries' debt problems</li> <li>• Develop decent and productive work for youth</li> <li>• In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies – especially information and communications technologies.</li> </ul>

## Millennium Development Goals



# 2015

## Yet another Millennium Development Goal - Gross National Happiness (GNH)!

**Jigme Yoser Thinley**

“Ten years ago, we committed ourselves to the pursuit of the eight MDGs to raise human conditions beyond basic survival. We pledged to galvanize a partnership of rich and poor countries to eradicate poverty, hunger and disease. These goals have become a critical and coherent force to establish the minimum social, economic and ecological preconditions for the promotion of human wellbeing. To these, my delegation would humbly like to propose the inclusion of a ninth goal.

I am happy to report that my country is well on its way to fulfill the MDGs with most goals being achieved before the deadline of 2015. There are many other countries that will find similar or greater success having reoriented their policies and resources to achieve these ends. I take this opportunity to express our deep appreciation and gratitude to our development partners without whose generous assistance, such progress would not have been possible. I would also like to pay tribute to the UN and the other multilateral development agencies. The World Bank and ADB are to be thanked for their current lending focus on the achievement of MDGs to the middle and low-

“My delegation would like to propose to this highest forum in the world that we include happiness as the ninth MDG.”

income countries at preferential rates through such windows as the World Bank’s International Development Association (IDA).

This summit, I am confident, will generate the will and the means to ensure that those governments which are in danger of failing their people will continue to receive the necessary technical and financial resources from the international community.

As all our people rise above the threats of basic survival, what will our collective endeavour be as a progressive society? Must we continue to believe that human life is to be spent in labouring for higher income so as to be able to consume more at the cost of relationships, peace and ecological stability? Are the causes of depression, suicide, community disintegration, and rising crime to be accepted as inevitable? Having dreamed the impossible and achieved the unthinkable, has human civilization not reached the time and moment, to aspire for a higher goal as individuals, families, communities, nations and as a society? And, is it unreasonable to assume that we can consensually chart a common course to tread with collective endeavour sharing trust and cooperation for mutual gain and to live in accord with nature? Could we not find a way to steer ourselves from the self-consuming fire of greed that is fuelled by the media and paid for by industry and commerce which thrive on reckless consumerism? And should we not hope that the



pursuit of such a state of being will be more of the kind that refines the mind, disciplines the body and conserves the life-supporting environment?

Enough thoughts and knowledge have been generated in recent years by those who care to convince us that humanity needs to get off the perilous path on which the wrongful use of GDP has set it since its inception in the 1930s. It does not demand much imagination and intelligence, indeed, to understand that endless pursuit of material growth in a world with limited natural resources within a delicately balanced ecology is just not sustainable - that it is dangerous and stupid. One just cannot imagine, even as China and India aspire to compete in consumption with the USA, what would become of earth if every global citizen acquired the same voracious capacity. The evidence of the limited ability of nature to tolerate abuse is there for us to suffer in the rising frequency and fury of the multiple calamities. I refer not only to natural and manmade disasters such as the one from which millions of innocent Pakistani victims are trying to recover and the one that has destroyed the ecosystem and much of a way of life in the Gulf of Mexico. I remind you also of the socio economic calamities such as the current economic recession whose bottom we may not have, as yet, seen. The latter is particularly instructive in the way it reminded us that much of



the so called wealth we have created are in fact, illusory and that being unreal, they disappear often, without a trace, like the jobs, homes, savings, investments and more that were lost. The only things real are the psychological, emotional and environmental costs. More, we can be certain, will strike to persuade us of the need to change our way of life.

The good thing is there is a burgeoning class of people out there - academics, writers and journalists; economists and policy makers; corporate leaders and ordinary folk and indeed, teachers and youth - who are concerned, responsible and increasingly daring. They have the redeeming courage to be different - to acknowledge the futility of our way of life and to be 'sacrilegious' in pleading for an alternative way to live a good and decent life. Relegating the purpose of GDP to its intended role of simply measuring the sum of goods and services transacted in the market at a given period of time, they recommend a variety of indicators and analytical frames to undertake and measure genuine societal progress. The MDGs comprise one such contribution and I commend the Secretary-General and his Special Advisor, Dr. Jeffery Sachs, for their vision and devotion.

It was some four decades ago that Bhutan, on its part, chose not to be led astray by conventional development practices. Having pondered the meaning and purpose of development and being dissatisfied with the aimlessness of prevailing models, our king's understanding of the innermost yearning of his people inspired him into conceiving the development philosophy of Gross National Happiness. It is based on the belief that since happiness is the ultimate desire of every citizen, it must be the purpose of development to create the enabling conditions for happiness. His understanding of

happiness is a state of being that is realised through a judicious equilibrium between gains in material comfort and growth of the mind and spirit in a just and sustainable environment. It is not about asceticism and denial. Consequently, our small success in balancing the needs of the body with those of the mind, with visible ecological benefits, have raised a level of interest in GNH as a holistic development paradigm.

The pursuit of happiness in Bhutan has been, at the broadest level, a concomitant effort to achieve four goals. These are equitable and sustainable socioeconomic development, conservation of our environment, promotion of culture and good governance. All our achievements including, the peaceful emergence of Bhutan as the youngest democracy has been the result of pursuing happiness. I wish to add also that the MDGs are completely in harmony with our program to create the enabling conditions for happiness.

With these in mind and as it is likely that the relevance of the 8 MDGs will remain beyond 2015, my delegation would like to propose to this highest forum in the world that we include happiness as the ninth MDG. It is a goal that stands as a separate value while representing as well, the sum total outcome of the other eight. Its relevance goes beyond the poor and developing member states to bind all of humanity, rich and poor, to a timeless common vision. It will be in the conscious pursuit of happiness that the very best in the nature of the human race will flourish. Through the pursuit of such a goal, we will find the reason and genius to moderate and harmonize our otherwise, largely material wants with the other equally important human needs and nature's limitations. It

is what will make life on earth sustainable. And the way in which a nation pursues this goal will be a measure of its devotion to the promotion of its people's true well being. We must not lose time and opportunity to work in concert at all levels of society for the collective pursuit of this ultimate value through public policy, plans and programmes.

The inclusion of happiness as the ninth goal will confirm we are concerned with the quality of life, of adding meaning and value to life. Its inclusion will be a broader set of outcome indicators. Above all, it will enhance the feasibility of moving towards a more responsible human endeavour that bears the promise of meaningful pursuit, fulfilment and happiness. Based on the set of elaborate and precise metrics developed by Bhutan and others, we could leave the task of adopting or developing indicators for uniform application to the experts.

Let us get off the beaten path to blaze a new trail to gain new knowledge, wiser ways of doing things and fulfilling ways to spend our transient life. Let us agree to leave a legacy of ideas and a way of life that will be worth living with a greater certainty for the long-term survival of humanity.

Hope has prevailed against cynicism to bring us to the United Nations today. Let us go forth from this summit not only rededicated to the eight goals to banish hunger, disease, and extreme poverty, but also to the new ninth voluntary goal, to build a world that can sustain happiness for all its people, today and for generations yet to come.  
*(Speech delivered by the Bhutanese prime minister at the MDG review summit)*

# Weighing up the MDGs

**Jennifer Harrison**

The official aim of the MDG (Millennium Development Goals) summit, held at the UN in New York City last month, was to take stock of and accelerate the progress towards achieving these goals which address issues including hunger, education and HIV/AIDS by the target date of 2015.

Many had already pegged the UN summit as a talking shop where nothing would be achieved but was billed by NGOs and other advocates of the poor

as a critical moment to hold governments accountable for their commitments on the MDGs.

An MDG assessment report released by the UN in June, indicated that the world has slashed the percentage of people living in extreme poverty – classed as earning less than \$1.25 a day – in the past two decades.

However, it also noted that hunger and malnutrition are on the rise in some regions, and stubborn gaps persist between rich and poor and between urban and rural communities.

Girls also lack the same opportunities as boys, especially in education – the report found that a girl in one of the poorest households is four times more likely than an equivalent boy to not be attending school.

It also added that although Latin America and the Caribbean have made important progress on child health and gender equality, fewer than half of women in some African regions receive care from skilled health workers when giving birth.

To highlight lack of progress in these areas, events were held across New York City in order to capture the interest of the public and media and to communicate their messages around their chosen MDG.

The anti-poverty NGO ActionAid held a stunt on the eve of the summit at the Lincoln Centre, where a giant cow, chicken and goat gathered to draw attention to the plight of local farmers and their role in the first Millennium Development Goal – halving world hunger by 2015.

By the time the summit kicked off on Monday, security in the streets surrounding the United Nations was tight – blacked out limos and secret service men with aviator sunglasses were a common feature.

Such activity gave the impression that critical and substantial announcements and decisions were being made inside the United Nations itself but only a handful of leaders were prepared to to commit themselves to further funding and initiatives.



On the first day of the summit, Nicholas Sarkozy's announcement that he would champion a Financial Transaction Tax as Chair of the G20 from 2011 pleased many, who commended the championing of a system can raise money to tackle poverty, even in tough economic times.

On the second day, Hillary Clinton announced a

“1,000 Days: Change a Life, Change the Future” initiative, which will help combat child under nutrition, proving once more that the USA is continuing to lead the world in the fight against hunger.

The UK's deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg announced an increase in UK funds for malaria from £150m a year to £500m by 2014 in his closing speech to world leaders on the final day of the summit – he also pledged to halve deaths from the disease in 10 African countries.

Australia's Foreign Minister Kevin Rudd also pledged \$5 billion to education aid efforts over the next 5 years and crucially - 70% of that aid would be directed at basic primary education.

There was a significant amount of positive opinion forming around the idea of innovative financing and financial transaction tax but a long way from political consensus - Greece and France have said they are in favour, but the UK has avoided the issue and Italy and Australia are not favourable.

“In reality, the end result was that no fully funded plans of action for tackling poverty were announced – a drive launched on the final day of the summit to save the lives of 16 million women and children was met by scepticism by many, as the US\$40 billion cost of the plan had not yet been matched in donor commitments.”

“A lack of political will is restraining a set of modest goals, which are unlikely to be met by the 2015 deadline, which will further impact the lives of people living in the poorest countries in the world and increase the economic cost, to both the rich world and developing country governments.”





*Farmyard animals and ActionAid activists protest in New York on the eve on the UN summit, calling for investment in local farms in poor countries to fight hunger. ActionAid says that more than 1 million children could die of hunger by 2015 and half of Africa will not have enough food in the next 10 years if governments do not act now. Photo: Charles Eckert/ActionAid*

The outcome document was considered to be adequate in terms of the language and commitments by various delegations, who were pleased by the political commitment lined up behind Ban Ki Moon's initiative around maternal and child health, which was launched in prolific press conference with speakers including Hilary Clinton, Melinda Gates and several African presidents.

However, aside from these very welcome sporadic announcements, the general consensus from those participating in the summit at various levels, was that very little was moving forward – this was characterised by journalists in the press centre who amused themselves by drinking coffee and fiddling with their Blackberries, anxious for something to report.



**“It can only be hoped that these governments will wake up to the realisation that time is running out for the world's poor and commit real funds and resources in the fight to achieve these goals to change lives for the better.”**

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“World military spending has now risen to over \$1.2 trillion. This incredible sum represents 2.5 per cent of GDP(global gross domestic product). Even if 1 per cent of it were redirected towards development, the world would be much closer to achieving the Millennium Development Goals.”

- UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

“The MDGs remain feasible with adequate commitment, resources, policies and effort. A human rights approach to MDG-based strategies has an important added value as it calls for more integral strategies in addressing both immediate and structural problems, putting the rights of people at the centre, and raising the level of accountability of States both at national and international levels.”

-Navanethem Pillay, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

“We must recognize the need for inclusive economic growth ... sustained growth that creates jobs especially for youth and that help the poor and in sectors that help women.”

- Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, President, Liberia

“Despite their good intentions, their perspective is often predicated on paternalism not on partnership, on charity not on self-reliance, and on promises unfulfilled rather than real change on the ground ... We in the developing world also could do more. We have to reflect deeply on how we have driven this agenda so far and why we are lagging behind on these targets. ... We must assume effective leadership.”

- Paul Kagame, President, Rwanda

“While we strive to achieve reasonable standards in living, we must not forget the need to avoid treading heavily on the natural environment. The current spate of natural disasters around the world and frequent flood situations in countries are a stark reminder of the effects of environment degradation.”

-- Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa

“By tackling poverty comprehensively, using two types of instrument, in the same way as the two blades of a pair of scissors cut through paper: instruments to attack its causes and instruments to mitigate its consequences.”

-- Chilean President Sebastian Pinera

# The Sri Lankan saga of unrequited justice and freedom

When it comes to socio-economic development, Sri

Lanka is taken as a remarkable example in south Asia. That development, however, is not equitable and neglects the Tamil minorities, says the Sri Lankan human rights activist, **K.M. Rukshan Fernando**.

Mr Fernando, head of Human Rights in Conflict programme- Law and Society Trust, Sri Lanka, has been working in the field of human rights, peace and reconciliation in Sri Lanka for more than 13 years.

Global South Development Magazine's Editor-in-Chief **Manoj Kr. Bhusal** recently met and interviewed him in Helsinki where he was invited as a guest speaker to a seminar on human rights, development and democracy. Some excerpts from the interview:

## Could you tell us a bit about yourself and the work you do in Sri Lanka?

My name is Ruki. I have been working in the field of human rights, peace and reconciliation for about 13 years, primarily in Sri Lanka, but I have done some work at regional level in Asia. And the organization I work with now is Law and Society Trust. It's a human rights organization based in Colombo, but we do a lot of work on advocacy, research, documentation, training and also protection.

## How is the current situation of human rights in Sri Lanka?

In compare to the war period, cases of human rights violations have decreased in number certainly, but still numerous cases of human rights violations can be witnessed in Sri Lanka every day. Attacks are targeted at people who are intolerant, dissent and critic of the ruling regime. You can see many political parties, politicians, human rights activists, journalists, lawyers, religious leaders, or even doctors who are critical of the current ruling regime and voice dissenting opinions being penalized, some have been killed, abducted, threatened, assaulted and we don't see anything being done about these attacks. It's quite clear that the government is behind some of these attacks although the government denies it. And even if the government isn't responsible directly, the government hasn't been able to stop it and it has not been able to identify, prosecute and convict those who are responsible for



Photo: Janica Anderzén

abuses of people who have dissenting views against the government.



“What we would like to see more is countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America supporting people's struggle for justice and peace in Sri Lanka.”

“I think an essential feature of democracy is tolerance and appreciation of dissenting views and opinions and also how you treat your minority communities not only the majority.”



But it is important to know the war itself was about three decades, thirty years, but the ethnic conflict is more than fifty years old. The grievances of the Tamil people who are minority in Sri Lanka are yet to be addressed. And sixteen months after the war, there are no signs that the grievance of the Tamil community is going to be addressed. There is no political solution in terms of restructuring of the state so that Tamils can share power. There is no signs that crucial issues of the Tamil community will be addressed, thousands of people who have been detained without any charges, some for more than ten years and also people who have gone missing for over number of years, particularly in the last four years since 2006, or even acknowledgement of the people who have been killed, death certificate issues, compensation for those killed and so on.

## Does it mean that incidents of human rights violations are increasing rather than decreasing?

I think it's difficult to say whether increasing or decreasing. There are times suddenly you think everything is okay, human rights violations have gone down; but suddenly they rise up again. For example in the last few weeks we have seen a lot of human rights violations in terms of particularly people who are forced at the tents of the government to seek more control of its power through amendment of the constitution. So people who printed a poster are detained right now. You thought that the violations are going down in terms of numbers, but suddenly you have a surge of new repressive measures. So it's very difficult to say.

## So can we still call Sri Lanka a democratic state?

Officially Sri Lanka is a democratic country and the constitution says the same. But I think an essential feature of democracy is tolerance and appreciation of dissenting views and opinions and also how you treat your minority communities not only the



majority. I think on these accounts Sri Lanka cannot qualify as a democracy.

### How do non-state agencies and the media respond to these situations?

Well the media has undergone a lot of threats and repressive measures. Many journalists have been killed; some have been abducted, threatened and assaulted. Media institutions have been burnt down and many very prominent, independent minded journalists have fled the country in fear. Because of these, there is a kind of self-censorship and the media by and large does not want to write critical things of the regime. So we cannot expect anything much from the media at the moment. Civil society organizations, including local and international groups, face a lot of restrictions. For example we can't get permission to go into a lot of areas that the government says liberated already. So it's a mystery! Why people have been allowed to settle in these areas? Why independent media, independent organizations are not allowed to go? It's very difficult to access these people. And also the government is trying to bring a lot of laws to restrain NGOs. The Ministry of Defence is trying to register and regulate the NGOs particularly in the northern east.

Some foreign nationals have been very helpful in terms of humanitarian and human rights protection work and in last two months three of them have been deported though they had valid visas and permits. So it's difficult for civil society organizations and media to operate right now in Sri Lanka.

### Sri Lanka is taken quite as an example in south Asia in terms of development parameters. What do you think about that?

It is difficult to have any form of sustainable and genuine development if you don't have basic freedom to express yourself, freedom of assembly and freedom of association. In absence of these freedoms, what you have is a development imposed by the central government with its power. It's not a form of a participatory development and it will not respond to the needs of the people, when the people who are expected to be the beneficiaries of



“It is difficult to have any form of sustainable and genuine development if you don't have basic freedom to express yourself, to freedom of assembly and freedom of association.”

“Development without freedom is a farce.”



development and their own representatives are not able to participate in defining what kind of development is going to happen. Development without freedom is a farce.

**Do you see any better future for Sri Lanka in the days to come or it's just bleak?**

I think in the short term it's very bleak and depressing. We might be stuck with this kind of a situation for some time. But I think there has to be collective outrage of ordinary citizens in Sri Lanka. It might come at a particular moment when citizens will say *this is enough, we don't tolerate more than this*. And I think for that there is always a need of kind of support and backing from the international community. When I say international community, particularly, I am referring to people to people initiatives and also particular governments which are principled on human rights and international law. They should support the people of Sri Lanka in

their search for more freedom and genuine participatory development.

### As far as I know there has been some international engagement in Sri Lanka in the past, for example Norway was negotiating peace talks, what do you think about that? Has international engagement proved to be helpful?

The international community has tried to help to some extent, but what we have been very disappointed is particularly countries in Asia, countries in Africa and Latin America have been very reluctant to stand by the people of Sri Lanka in the hour of need. We found that it's only a few Western countries that voice their concerns at the massive amount of human rights violations that is happening. Countries in Asia, including countries that have overcome dictatorship like the Philippines, Indonesia, Nepal, Thailand, these are all countries that have seen people's movements overthrowing dictatorship. They are very silent or they even support the Sri Lankan's repressive measures. It's the same in Latin America. Countries like Argentina, Chile, El Salvador which have come through dictatorships and very difficult times, which have seen a lot of enforced disappearance happening, kept very quiet. It's rather unfortunate and disappointing that these countries are not spoken out.

What we would like to see more is countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America supporting people's struggle for justice and peace in Sri Lanka.

### When we think of conflicts in south Asia, in many countries, it is deeply rooted in rampant poverty or poor socio-economic conditions. But in Sri Lanka it's quite different, isn't it?



Yes, conflict in Sri Lanka originated clearly on the basis of ethnicity. The Tamil community in Sri Lanka which is a minority in relation to the Sinhalese. It's predominantly a sense of domination based on ethnicity and religiosity that has brought about this conflict in Sri Lanka.

### Finally do you have any message to the international community who want to see a better Sri Lanka?

Of course the main struggle has to be raised by Sri Lankan people, but I think international support is also very crucial. When you say international community, it's very broad and vague. It could mean foreign governments, it could mean Western countries, Asian countries, African countries and it could also mean people to people solidarity initiatives. I think all these are important. People to people solidarity from countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America is very important. Support of multilateral and international organizations and the UN which have experience in human rights protection and working towards genuine protection of minorities is very crucial. We hope that the UN agencies can play a more proactive and principled role, as well as foreign governments, civil society, people's groups and people's solidarity initiatives can offer more principled and more proactive support to Sri Lankan people.

# The Casino of Life: The odds of reducing inequality in a country like Bolivia

Ioulia Fenton

As a visitor to La Paz in Bolivia I have been staying in a friendly hostel downtown. One week I happened to stumble onto a Casino night organised by the owners. It was all for fun and no real money was exchanged. Everyone received 250 fake bolivianos (fbs) worth of chips. If you managed to do well and double your pot to 500 fbs then you could exchange them for a free drink.



I happened to be having dinner with some other travellers I had just met on a table which was destined for Black Jack. Now this was not like a real casino which to me can seem rather boring and

somewhat lonely as players silently make bets and collect their winnings or losses. Instead the 10 players around our table had really gotten into the spirit of things and supported each other cheering and laughing through the whole game. Even the dealer was on our side. The positive atmosphere led to a bit of a winning streak for all of us. For a series of hands the dealer was beat. What was noticeable to me, however, was that those players who by the beginning of the winning streak had amassed more chips kept betting close to the maximum allowed of 50 fbs, while those with smaller pots would bet closer to the minimum of 5 fbs (with some exceptions).

As we progressed through the winning streak, everyone's individual pot grew. *Proportionally* to our own pot sizes we were all probably making roughly the same bets, lets say 5% of the total pot (and therefore drawing similar

proportions of winnings back), yet the absolute difference between pot sizes of the relatively chip rich and the relatively chip poor kept growing. The pot size of those making small bets did not change much, while the lucky ones with larger bets and pot sizes steamed ahead. Even when the relatively chip poor increased their bets and thus winnings on a hand, this made little difference to the overall gap despite them increasing their pot by a larger proportion than the richer players.

This got me thinking about the aim of many aid agencies and governments to reduce inequality and poverty through pro-poor growth in developing

countries like Bolivia<sup>1</sup>. What would this really mean and is it achievable? Or should we be focusing on different aims? Let me demonstrate what I mean with a simple thought experiment. Let's use the most ambitious scenario: To be pro-poor, growth needs to disproportionately benefit the poorest segments of the population and reduce absolute poverty<sup>2</sup>. Let's assume a poor person earns around \$600 (US) per year (or just above the national poverty line in Bolivia of \$1.6 per day) and an average person earns around \$5,000 per year (just above the Bolivian \$4,454.99 national per capita GDP adjusted for PPP)<sup>3</sup>. The income gap is \$4,400 per annum. Let's assume that we have growth of overall 5%, but that it is pro-poor in that the poorest wages are increasing at 6% while the wages of the average person at 4%. After the first year it will look as follows:

Year	Poor income	Middle Income	Gap
0	\$ 600	\$ 5,000	\$ 4,400
1	600*1.06 = \$ 636	5000*1.04 = \$ 5,200	\$ 4,564 (+ 164)

So the absolute income gap has increased by \$164 per annum. What if the next year new and highly successful

“Although attention has been paid to non-income dimensions of poverty, they have not yet been universally incorporated into growth and inequality measures.”

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 “A person's income is not purely monetary or wage driven. Nor can inequality be easily measured purely from income statistics.”  
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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Klasen S., Grosse M., Thiele R., Lay J., Spatz J. & Wiebelt M. (2004) “Operationalising Pro- Poor Growth: A Country Case Study on Bolivia”.

<sup>2</sup> This is something that is recommended in a recent paper by Negre M. (2010) “Concepts and Operationalization of Pro-Poor Growth”, UNU-WIDER Working Paper No. 2010/47.

<sup>3</sup> For the year 2009 – source <http://www.economywatch.com/economic-statistics/country/Bolivia/>.



pro-poor policies were implemented and the poorest's wages grew at 12% and the better-off only 3%:

Year	Poor income	Middle Income	Gap
1	\$ 636	\$ 5,200	\$ 4,564
2	636 * 1.12 = \$ 712	5,200* 1.03 = \$ 5,356	\$ 4,644 (+80)

So even in a really optimistic (and perhaps somewhat unrealistic) scenario, the income gap increased by \$80 per annum, thus actually making the growth *anti*-poor.

Imagine the figures if you compare the absolutely richest



“This article is not an attempt to say that lowering absolute income inequality is not an admirable goal. However, there needs to be recognition that it may be difficult to achieve it in societies with relatively high levels of income inequality to begin with”



with the absolutely poorest. This begs the question whether pro-poor growth and income inequality reduction are compatible and complementary goals. Of course with both these case scenarios

the standard of living of the poorest would have improved (assuming zero inflation), thus having a poverty reducing effect, while inequality has increased.

Income inequality is thus clearly not telling the whole story. In fact, consumption inequality for Bolivia is much lower than income inequality (Gini 0.44 and 0.60 respectively) due to the fact that consumption in developing countries is less reliant on a formal wage than that in developed countries<sup>4</sup>. A Gini of 0.44 is closer to the income inequality recorded for USA and thus paints a very different picture when being compared to Bolivia. This large difference in the Gini coefficient has been caused by simply changing the measure from income to consumption.

This brings me back to my casino night experience.

Towards the end of our Black Jack game roughly half of us had more than doubled our initial pot, thus qualifying for a free drink. We had exchanged the required 500 fbs and we

used the rest to help get drinks for those who did not quite have enough. We then divided the left over chips equally between all of us and played out the rest of the game.

The point here being that virtually everyone's pot did grow (income), but it did not determine who was able to get a free drink (consumption). In addition, having fun with the people around us and making new friends (our social capital) and sharing our wealth (collectively deciding to tax the rich to provide the same opportunities for the poorer in our group) in the end were the things that made up the whole experience. A person's income is not purely monetary or wage driven. Nor can inequality be easily measured purely from income statistics. Progressive taxation, non-cash government transfers (benefits), access to public services, opportunities in life (for a decent job, education, health services and so on), and human and social capital all play their part.

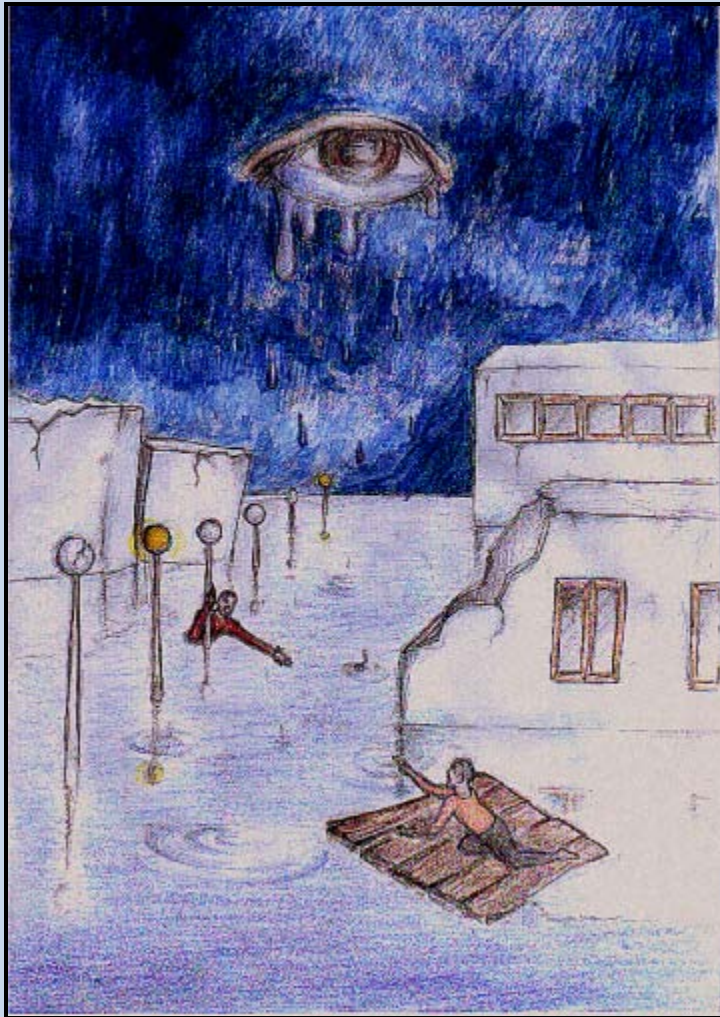
In fact, depending on the country, even the total monetary income someone receives can include a large number of sources. For example wages, remittances and family support, government welfare payments, interest earnings on savings and investments and so on, all of which are rarely captured in wage and income statistics. Inequality and poverty depend on all these factors and are very relative.

Lowering inequality through pro-poor growth has particularly been a focus of aid agencies in Bolivia. This article is not an attempt to say that lowering absolute income inequality is not an admirable goal. However, there needs to be a recognition that it may be difficult to achieve it in societies with relatively high levels of income inequality to begin with (as was demonstrated in the rather simplistic and stylised mathematical example above). Although attention has been paid to non-income dimensions of poverty, they have not yet been universally incorporated into growth and inequality measures. Where attempts have been made, Bolivia's progress looks much more positive<sup>5</sup>. In the Casino of life, many other factors determine how equal a society is and increasing opportunities for all is perhaps a more important aim that needs to be recognised in statistics. (*Ioulia Fenton is Global South Development Magazine's regional editor for Latin America and can be reached at 275971@soas.ac.uk*)

<sup>4</sup> Andersen L. E. (2008) "How Unequal is Bolivia really?", INESAD Monday Morning Development Newsletter, Available online at [http://www.inesad.edu.bo/mmblog/mm\\_20080211.htm](http://www.inesad.edu.bo/mmblog/mm_20080211.htm)

<sup>5</sup> For details of a study for Bolivia see Grosse M., Harttgen K. & Klasen S. (2006) "Measuring Pro-Poor Progress towards the Non-Income Millennium Development Goals", UNU-WIDER Research Paper No. 2006/38.

# Floods in Pakistan



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## Khalid Hussain

There is a joke that many say aptly describes Pakistan for her development and humanitarian donor nations, institutions and individuals. It goes:

One day an Angel brings the news of a frightening super cyclone in California to God. God sends the angel away saying, “The Americans know what to do. They will do it.”

Another group tells of an industrial chemical leak in Germany. God is not interested saying, “The Germans will work it out”.

There is also news of a devastating earthquake in Japan. God pays no attention saying, “They Japanese will innovate and continue.”

Then comes a junior angel carrying news of floods in Pakistan. God jumps up and orders all to follow him in aiding the disaster hit nation. The angels ask God what was so special about Pakistan that He was rushing to their aid!

“I have to. They will do nothing themselves for they have left everything at God’s will!”

And God is what most people had with them when the worst floods in history struck with a vengeance and lingered on for over two months with a cruel persistence!

The floods in Pakistan are far from over despite it being over two months since the disaster started with abnormal monsoon cloud bursts in Kashmir, Ladakh, north-western Pakistan and Afghanistan. Sadly, it is actually worsening for the most vulnerable among the 20 million people affected.

More than 10.5 million people are on the move on roads looking for refuge and shelter. A very small fraction of this population has so far found shelter in government facilities or temporary camps set-up by NGOs and international relief agencies. A majority of this displaced population has lived in open fields and without proper shelter, food, medicines or protection.

According to Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani, the inundations affected 20 million people, killing more than 1,800 and damaging 1.9 million homes. The losses helped push rice in Chicago to the highest level since May and boosted cotton to the most expensive in 15 years in New York.

“Losses to rice, cotton and sugar crops come to US\$3.27 billion,” calculates Federal Agriculture Minister Nazar Muhammad Gondal. Wheat and rice are the two staples for Pakistan’s people, and the government and international relief agencies have found it hard to provide food for affected areas. The United Nations said damage to infrastructure may hurt farmers for years.





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Most of the make-shift camps are without essential services and poorly managed. Government schools are used to camp displaced population and most of these buildings are already in dilapidated conditions and cannot house victims for a long time. The government and humanitarian agencies have not been able to set-up tent facilities, thus increasing risks of shocks and vulnerabilities.

The food, medicines, water, non-food items and temporary shelters provided by government, NGOs, philanthropists and international groups are far less than the demand. It is predicted that the trauma is still not over as more monsoon is predicted and will add more volume of water in the river system.

Proving the local saying *hardship seldom comes alone*, the disaster of floods in Pakistan is not the only calamity that ails both state and society here. Floods are obviously the biggest natural disaster ever to hit this country. But for the people it comes to join another three disasters they have been trying to survive: Security, Governance and Environment.

All three have a direct bearing and impact on the disaster brought by the biggest floods this country has ever seen. The size and scope of the floods disaster is so large that it affects everything in its wake. But as for the suffering of the flood-affected people of Pakistan, the three are inexorably intertwined and create the reality in which the weaker suffer more from floods with little hope of help but from God All Mighty!

*For the people it comes to join another three disasters they have been trying to survive: Security, Governance and Environment.*

Security is a big and continuous disaster in Pakistan. The ongoing war against Taliban and Al-Qaida in Pakistan added to the miseries of flood affected people as the state remained challenged and unavailable to help its citizens.

Monsoon floods started in Baluchistan on July 22 this year. Extreme Floods hit Kashmir, Skardu, Gilgit-Baltistan and Dir, Swat, Charsada, Nowshera and Peshawar in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) province, formerly known as the NWFP, on July 29. Ethnic violence erupted in Karachi on August 02 with 32 killed in a single day. The Commandant of the paramilitary Frontier Constabulary (FC) was killed along with his two gunmen and a civilian in a suicide attack close to his office on August 04 in his Peshawar office as 19 more were killed in Karachi.

Media coverage is one yard stick to measure how much resource security occupied versus rescue and relief for the disaster stricken poor people of the country. As floods ravaged the Kyber-Pakhtunkhwa and south Punjab, President Asif Ali Zardari was on his Euro tour. More than floods, it was the war against terror that kept him occupied in Europe. He told the French newspaper Le Monde that coalition forces were “losing the war against the Taliban” in

Afghanistan. “The international community, to which Pakistan belongs to, is losing the war against the Taliban. This is above all because we have lost the battle to win hearts and minds,” he said, in published comments.

*The greater tragedy had a human hand!*

When Ambassador Richard Holbrooke, US Special Representative for Pakistan and Afghanistan, said on September 17 in Islamabad that the Government in Pakistan was not drowning in the floods though it was facing “unbelievably difficult circumstances,” he was showing the linkages between the first two and the third disaster blamed on human induced environmental changes.

And so did the United States President Barack Obama when he sent his condolences to the families of the victims of the devastating floods in Pakistan pledging support in Pakistan’s challenging relief and rescue effort. “Our relationship with Pakistan goes far beyond our shared commitment to fight extremists.



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“The United States government stands ready to continue to assist Pakistani authorities address the difficult challenges posed by this natural disaster,” Michael Hammer, the spokesman for the National Security Council, said.

Little wonder, therefore, that United Kingdom, Germany, Saudi Arabia and America were the first rich nations to commit themselves to large flood donations within days of the disaster's strike. The United States has donated the most, at least \$70 million, and has sent military helicopters to rescue stranded people and drop of food and water. Washington hopes the assistance will help improve its image in the country — however marginally — as it seeks its support in the battle against the Taliban in neighboring Afghanistan.



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Britain, Pakistan's former colonial ruler, was the second largest donor, pledging over \$32 million. Other major donations included \$13 million from Germany, \$10 million from Australia, \$5 million from Kuwait, \$3.5 million from Japan and \$3.3 million from Norway.

Pakistan's worst floods in recorded history spread throughout the country affecting 20 million people and

62,000 square miles (160,000 square kilometers) of land or one-fifth of the country. The flooding also devastated parts of northwest Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province, which has seen some of the fiercest fighting in Pakistan's war against Taliban insurgents. People in the Swat Valley - who had been trying to rebuild their lives following a massive military operation against the Taliban last year - have been particularly badly affected.

Once the floods recede, billions more dollars will be needed for reconstruction and getting people back to work in the already-poor nation of 170 million people. The International Monetary Fund has warned the floods could dent economic growth and fuel inflation. The scale of the disaster raises global concerns for the country pivotal to defeating al-Qaida and the Taliban.

The floods are already destabilizing Pakistan's weak civilian government. Political chaos, affecting more than just Pakistan, is also likely to follow.

Governance compounded the natural disaster paralyzing institutions and systems. The disaster response not only manifested Pakistan's administrative adequacy but also showed all that no system can function without organizational discipline and accountability.

There were two waves of floods in Pakistan. One was caused by extreme weather disturbances that brought the sudden flood calamity in NWFP. The worse was, however, the lingering mismanagement to save the crumbling infrastructure for water resources management on the Indus River. The greater tragedy had a human hand!

In the North-West, a massive cascade of waters, triggered by heavy monsoon rains starting on July 28, swept through the region, washing away homes, roads, bridges, crops and livestock. Yet the floods persist after two months despite the fact that the monsoon season in Pakistan has been over since the first week of September!

The Flood debacle in Sindh has unmasked the fragility of governance structure where individuals dominated the rules of business. An initial relief breach in Tori bund wreaked havoc in the province. Millions of people living in the upper half of Sindh from Kashmore to Dadu/Jamshoro had to pay the price through their misery.

There are 1600 miles (nearly 2400 km) of embankments (or levees or dykes), mostly made of earth or a mix of stones and earth, along the rivers in Punjab alone. They have been built to save cities and human settlements from the overflowing rivers. In Sindh, from Guddu barrage near the border of the Punjab up to Kotri, there is a wall of embankments along the Indus. But due to silt depositions and wear and tear of the levees, this protective wall has weakened. Massive corruption in the provincial irrigation departments and the pilferage of money is another cause why dykes breach when floods come.

As water rises in rivers, the embankment near the Kot Addu was breached by authorities to save the Taunsa Barrage because water level was rising above 1.1 million cusecs and the entire canal system from the Taunsa Barrage was at risk. The breach in the left marginal embankment created a parallel channel for the swollen Indus River. The resulting flood devastated dozens of towns like Dera Din Pannah, Kot Addu, Sinawan, Mehmood Kot, Gurmani, Qasba Gujrat, Qasba Ghazi Ghat and Khar Gharbi. An estimated 300,000 people were forced to flee for their lives as flood water waves as high as 14 feet ravaged through their homes, villages and towns. The saddest thing about this was that people could have been told to leave but the flood warning system failed abjectly.

With a breach in the Kandhkot-Toori embankment near Hamid Malik village near Sukkur, floodwaters speedily ravaged Karampur, Ghauspur and other parts of the district, in addition to around 300 villages with a population of 300,000 people. A breach was created in Tori *Bandh* (dyke) near Jacobabad in the west towards Balochistan to save Jacobabad where the Americans run a rented Airforce base situated in Sindh for their war against terror. In district Jaffarabad, a surge in the floodwater level in Dera Allahyar, Usta Muhammad, Suhbatpur, Rojhan Jamali, Gandakha, Kot Magsi of district Jhal Magsi and some parts of district Nasirabad was observed thanks to this breach. Floodwaters level in Balochistan districts would not descend until the gap in Toori embankment was plugged, officials said.

The Balochistan government issued strong press statements protesting over the diversion of floodwater from Sindh. President Zardari and his ruling party in Sindh were accused of creating a 'man-made disaster' for the Baloch people. Chief Secretary Balochistan said if the water was allowed to pass through its natural channel; the evacuation

*Officials only came to hand out food when media were present.*



*Wealthy landowners diverted water into unprotected villages during the floods to save their own crops.*

from such large area could have been avoided. Deputy Chairman Senate Jan Jamali demanded from the Chief Justice of Pakistan to take *suo moto* action on criminal diversion of floodwater towards Balochistan. Former prime minister Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali also protested loudly as his hometown in Baluchistan was also flooded.

"We are seeing the equivalent of a new disaster every few days in Pakistan", said Valerie Amos, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator. "Yesterday, new breaches of the embankments of Manchhar Lake in Sindh flooded more villages. Millions of people have lost everything. Our task is to give people the help they need", she added.

Hundreds of victims blocked a major highway with stones and garbage near the hard-hit Sukkur area, complaining they were being treated like animals. Protester Kalu Mangiani said government officials only came to hand out food when media were present.

Pakistan's UN Ambassador Abdullah Hussain Haroon has called for an inquiry into allegations that wealthy landowners diverted water into unprotected villages during the floods to save their own crops. There was evidence that landowners had allowed embankments to burst and to lead waters flowing away from their land, he said on BBC's "Hard Talk" programme telecast on Thursday. "Over the years, one has seen with the lack of floods, those areas normally set aside for floods have come under irrigation of the powerful and rich," Ambassador Haroon said.



Popular disaffection with the state has been a theme well-played by the media circus of Pakistan. Iniquitous land relations in Sindh and other rural areas, heavily hit by the floods will become a major source of public disenchantment with the state agencies. This is what prompted President Asif Ali Zardari on September 08 to declare reports on the alleged breaching of embankments were merely a fiction and only political actors were talking about the breaking of dykes.

The federal cabinet that met earlier in Islamabad failed even to get the finance minister despite an articulated need for allocation of funds in view of the unprecedented calamity. Accepting their lack of credibility on August 12, Prime Minister Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani and leading opposition party leader from Punjab Mian Nawaz Sharif declared joint hands to establish a disaster management body to raise funds and to oversee relief and rehabilitation of the flood-affected people in a transparent manner. "A commission or board would be set up, which would open its own account for receipt of donations and contributions, oversee damage need assessment survey and ensure judicious distribution of assistance among the affected people," said Gilani totally oblivious to the fact that he was telling his own government was not credible for donors.

The fight over handling the flood relief goods got complex as Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani's four-member Flood Relief Assessment Committee for the Punjab was stopped from functioning. If this was not enough, media revealed that Army stopped the special committee notified by the Prime Minister and has impounded all their stores from Multan, Gilani's home town. On September 06, Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani conceded in the Council of Common Interests meeting in Islamabad that aid was not coming to his government. This confirmed a fact that was already well known.

*"This is a global disaster, a global challenge. It is one of the greatest tests of global solidarity in our times."*

~ UN chief Ban Ki-moon



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The UN agencies had already stepped up calls for donors to deliver on their pledges for Pakistan to prevent what UN chief Ban Ki-moon called on August 20 a "slow-motion tsunami" from wreaking further catastrophe. What the U.N. secretary-general Ban Ki-moon called a "slow-motion tsunami" is expected to leave a big scar on the national psyche, society, economy and geography. "The U.N. chief, who traveled to Pakistan to visit sites devastated by the disaster, said almost 20 million people need shelter, food and emergency care." That is more than the entire population hit by the Indian Ocean tsunami, the Kashmir earthquake, Cyclone Nargis, and the earthquake in Haiti -- combined," he said. Make no mistake," he said. "This is a global disaster, a global challenge. It is one of the greatest tests of global solidarity in our times."

When Hyderabad city was inundated on August 21, the world had to do something to get aid to the people without involving the viciously fighting politicians and breathing on the necks Army. This is why the United Nations got to

issue a second appeal to fund their Flood relief operations in Pakistan.

Just under two months since the onset of flooding, the United Nations and its partners have launched a revised Pakistan Floods Emergency Response Plan, which now appeals for US\$2,006,525,183 to provide aid for up to 14 million people over a 12-month period. The appeal has 483 projects to be carried out by 15 United Nations bodies, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and 156 national and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The appeal includes the earlier amount of \$459.7 million, requested on 11 August. The initial appeal of \$459 million is now 80% funded, making the unmet requirements for this emergency \$1.6 billion.

Environmental issues come to fore when we appreciate the fact that the total volume of water in the Indus river water system was not exceptionally high at 1.1 million cusecs at its maximum. The river system could easily absorb this volume of water. Yet, the number of people suffering from the massive floods in Pakistan could exceed the combined total in three recent mega-disasters - the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, the 2005 Kashmir earthquake and the 2010 Haiti earthquake - the United Nations says.

Triggered by monsoon rains, the floods have torn through the country from its mountainous northwest, destroying hundreds of thousands of homes and an estimated 1.7 million acres (nearly 700,000 hectares) of farmland. In southern Pakistan, the River Indus is now more than 15 miles (25 kilometers) wide at some points — 25 times wider than during normal monsoon seasons.

The disaster happened because of a freak weather phenomenon resulting in unprecedented monsoon cloud bursts, massive deforestation in the catchment areas, unplanned settlements blocking rain torrents in the mountains and destruction of the riverine ecology. Mated to a weak water protection infrastructure, it was the underlying environmental causes that wreaked the flood havoc across the country.

Rivers are drains of water from the body geography. Being one of the largest rivers of the world, the Indus should have been able to carry out excess water into the Arabian Sea. Why the river could not carry excess water is where human intervention – in terms of water resource planning and

infrastructure development – played a villainous role for the people of Pakistan.

*“Why the river could not carry excess water is where human intervention – in terms of water resource planning and infrastructure development – played a villainous role for the people of Pakistan.”*

Since the Green Revolution and after the Indus Waters Treaty with India in 1960, more and more waters of the Indus River have been diverted in for irrigated agriculture. Many farmowners are resourceful enough to secure state support for building built levees or embankments on the river protecting their farms from flood waters. Not only in Pakistan, but indeed across South Asia, the local councils and the water resource planning authorities have supported such ‘straight-jacketing’ of rivers.

Pakistan’s disaster response system was found helpless in the face of floods. “The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and its provincial and district extensions were sent into a tailspin by the disaster being totally ineffective,” noted Naseer Memon, Chief Executive of a major NGO Strengthening Participatory Organization (SPO). A resourceless Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) in Sindh could do nothing to help the province manage the biggest flood disaster ever to hit the lower Indus region. Punjab did not have any PDMA till recent days while those established in the other two provinces were found to be totally resource less. Memon calls them ‘Dead as Dodo’.

Lack of appropriate early warning system had been a major cause of otherwise preventable localized disasters. Timely warning is linchpin of any disaster response mechanism as it can assuage the impact to a considerable degree. Little wonder our shoddy disaster management machinery was soon on its knees as the disaster continued to meander through patchwork of dykes on both sides of mighty Indus.



Bereft of a flood management plan, confounded Punjab and Sindh governments had to follow the whim of meandering waters resulting in clumsy decision making. Thus, one can safely say that the floods were partly 'anthropogenic' in that they were caused by careless planning of water resources. It is the water infrastructure on the Indus River and its tributaries that is to blame for the scale of human impact of the floods in Pakistan.

Although in numbers of dead the disaster that has hit the nation is smaller than the Asian Tsunami, the scale of human suffering, particularly during the post-flood times, and the magnitude of the nearly impossible task of rebuilding innumerable livelihoods is far greater than the Tsunami.

No one could possibly predict and prevent the floods. It was by all measures an unusual natural event exacerbated by human folly in terms of Security, Governance and Environmental management.

Given the political imperative to "do something," the conventional wisdom has been to pour money on the problem. For over a decade, Pakistan has had almost bottomless credit from the World Bank and other donors to cure its poor record of economic development. Sadly, the country has little to show for it. And it appears now that the Bank is once again prepared to pull out its checkbook-in spite of the fact that a recent report (large file size) conducted by the Bank's own independent evaluation unit

admits in painstaking detail the many failures of the Bank's massive investments in Pakistan during the 1990s.

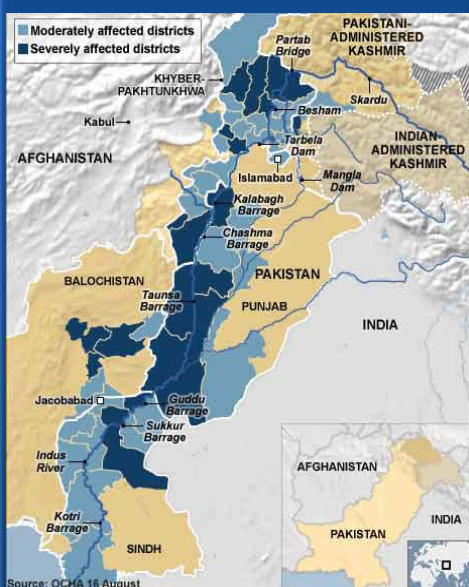
The World Bank has also seen it fit to link a US\$6 billion package with improved governance. The WB cited Corruption, limited oversight and weak accountability as major challenges and sought improvements in economic governance, human development, infrastructure and security. Pakistan's governance challenges are critical to mitigation of damages from the epic disaster. Else the overall social, natural and economic environment will also change. Limited oversight and weak accountability of public institutions are at the basis of a chaos calling itself a government. Pakistan's development objectives depend on improved governance of the public sector.

However, dramatically ramping up assistance to Pakistan has little chance of working. Pakistan has received large packages of loans including the last one in 2006 for as much as US\$6.5 billion. Will the money make a difference? Only if Pakistan's leadership puts their house in order.

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## Flood Damages in Figures



- 20 million persons affected - of which over 75 percent are in Sindh and Punjab Millions in need of urgent humanitarian aid
- At least 10 million people currently without shelter
- Over 2 million hectares of crops lost
- Cotton, Rice and Sugar Cane crops lost US\$3.27 billion to the economy
- Almost 1.9 million homes destroyed or damaged
- An area of at least 160,000 km<sup>2</sup> ravaged by floods
- Once the floods have gone, there will be an economic catastrophe in which millions of ordinary people lack the resources to feed their own families.



# Sorrows of Salt makers in India



**Dr.P.V.Ravichandiran**  
**India**

*(Text and photo)*

After China and the USA, with an average annual production of about 18 million tonnes, India is the third largest salt producing country in the world. Of the total salt production of 260 million tonnes in the world, China accounts for 60 million tonnes and the US for 46 million tonnes. About 60 per cent of the global salt output is consumed by chemical industry, while 20 per cent goes for edible purposes and melting ice.

Salt is one of the essential items of human consumption. Current annual requirement of salt in India is estimated to be 6 million tonnes for

edible use (including requirement of cattle) and 7 million tonnes for industrial use. Caustic soda, soda ash, chlorine, etc., are the major salt-based industries. Besides, about 1.5 million tonnes of salt is exported every year. The industry significantly earns foreign exchange to India. Private sector plays a dominant role contributing over 97% of the salt production, while the public sector contributes the rest. Co-operative sector contributes about 7% whereas the small-scale

sector (less than 10 acres) accounts for nearly 30% of the total salt production in the country. Salt is Produced mainly in 6 states namely Gujarat, Rasasthan, Tamilnadu, Andrapradesh, Orissa and Karnataga.

Gujarat is the largest salt producing state in the country. Tamilnadu is the third largest salt producing state (till previous year Tamilnadu was the second largest). Tamilnadu contributes 30-35% of India's



**“Salt is a very profitable and growing industry. However, the laborers making out this possible are not accounted for any sort of benefits”**





edible and industrial salt requirement, producing about 2.1 million tonnes. Tuticorin, Vedaraniyam and Marakkanam are three important salt producing clusters in the state. (Kelampakkam, Thiruporur, Adirampattinam, Ramanadapuram, Vayaloor and Kanyakumary are few other pockets where salt production is going on in smaller level)

The salt laborers are hard working, but still suffer in bad working and living conditions. In most cases, their basic identity of being a salt worker itself is denied. The primary stakeholder, the state, does not have a conscious approach to the suffering inflicted upon the salt workers. An assessment made by the Indian government's Salt Commission on the livelihood conditions of Saltpan workers throughout the country states, "the salt workers are the poorest of the poor in the country". In spite of all these findings, no specific step has been taken on their behalf so far. However, laborers employed by the private sector, public Sector, cooperatives are comparatively in a better position.

Due to various reasons, unfortunately, the condition of salt workers is still dismal in the country. Because of an intensive civil society intervention, on the direction of the High Court, Gujarat Government had formed a high-level empowerment committee for salt workers and had undertaken various meaningful efforts to improve the status of salt workers in Gujarat. Whereas, in other states, nothing has been significantly initiated.

#### Underlying Issues of small-scale salt workers in India

- Poor and fluctuating household income due to seasonality and calamities.
- Inadequate skills, inadequate access to state resources (including access to credit), no representation in decision making groups, Voiceless and somehow bonded working nature.
- Very poor working condition (no proper drinking water, no toilet facility, no shed for rest, no lights, no proper road, no first aid or health care facility, health hazards due to excessive heat in saltpan and no livelihood risk coverage)
- Poor living condition (living mostly in thatched shelters, poor sanitation, no proper drinking water, poor transport access, electricity etc.)
- Poor literacy level (Girl child school drop outs at 5<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> standard is very high among salt worker children. Because the women salt laborers, as they go to saltpans in very early (2-3am), the elder girl child is taking care of younger children, cooking and doing household works.
- Lack of awareness of their rights and inability to access government's social safety net programs coupled with lack of appropriate forum and bargaining power.
- No proper information about salt laborers in the state, no priority to the salt workers in the policies and programs and etc.

#### Possible causes:

1. No collective strength or bargaining power
2. No or less skill
3. No or less proper state control on the industry
4. Discrimination on the basis of caste / gender, systematic hiding and denial of rights

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## EAST AFRICA: Community radio reaches refugees with HIV messages



NGARA, 1 October 2010 (PlusNews) - An FM radio station broadcasting from the western Tanzanian town of Ngara is bringing vital HIV prevention information to thousands of Burundian and Rwandan refugees living in the region.

A weekly 30-minute HIV-focused programme entitled, You and Me, Together We Can, is broadcast on Radio Kwizera to an estimated 90,000 refugees living in camps in northwestern Tanzania. Its coverage goes beyond the camps, reaching more than six million people in Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda and Tanzania.

"During our health broadcasts, there is real interaction with the people," said Father Damas Missanga, head of Radio Kwizera, which was founded in 1995 by the NGO Jesuit Refugee Service. "They call us and send SMS questions; we answer them on air."

"Girls call in to tell us what is happening [such as] men who do not want to wear condoms," said Jean-Paul Basabose, the show's host.

According to the station's editor-in-chief, Emmanuel Buhohela, the programme covers a raft of HIV prevention issues, reflecting the "social realities" of the refugee communities.

"We talk a lot about sex with [underage] girls," he said. "We tell pregnant women to go to a hospital to give birth because it is still very much the mentality that it must be done at home."

The UN Refugee Agency has reported incidents of sexual exploitation of children in Tanzanian refugee camps.



# Let's talk about the MDGs

After the Copenhagen climate summit in 2009, the world was mesmerized again for a couple of days during the MDG review summit this year.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are simply admired by many as they are quite straightforward, modest, practically measurable and, in presence of firm political commitment and global solidarity, quite easily achievable too!

The MDGs have been at the centre of development objectives in the developing world since they were framed in the year 2000 at the UN Millennium Summit. Almost all developing nations take into account of the MDGs when they are framing their domestic development policies. It is very likely that the pattern will continue for many more years.

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On the other hand, the MDGs have served as the crux of cooperation that binds the developed and the developing world. In many instances, the MDGs have been used as bargaining tools in negotiations between the two worlds.

Interestingly, the MDGs are not aimed at the developing world only. The goal 8 requires the developed world to fulfill its promise of development assistance. So the MDGs are the tests both rich and the poor world will have to pass. So the victory over the MDGs will be equally shared by both developing and the developed world.

Rich countries have renewed their soft commitment to increase support in the developing world, but given the pervasive financial crisis at home, they will have to think of and find alternative sources for helping the poor. In absence of that, all the promises will go in vain again. In that sense, however, the review summit can be taken as a success as it gave space to alternative viewpoints of financing development in the developing world.

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