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Human Rights, and Oversight

Achieving the United Nations Millennium Development Goals: Progress through
Partnerships

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for calling today's hearing on the Millennium Development Goals and for inviting the United Nations Foundation to testify. Your leadership in support of American efforts to battle extreme poverty and illness in the developing world and to support the United Nations and UN programs is greatly appreciated.

President Obama has boldly pledged that the Millennium Development Goals are "America's goals," and two months from now, President Obama will appear before a gathering of world leaders at the United Nations to deliver his plan for the United States to help achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Mr. Chairman, the President's speech is a vitally important opportunity to signal to the world that our nation will continue to play a leadership role in battling global poverty – despite the very tough economic times here at home – and that the United States is fully committed to working with the UN, other donor countries, and the developing world itself to make sure that our aid becomes more effective and sustainable.

The MDGs are an internationally-recognized framework to allow bilateral and multilateral donors to work closely with the developing world to eradicate extreme poverty. By embracing the MDGs, the United States does not cede its sovereignty; rather, it signals our nation's shared commitment to the moral, economic, and strategic imperative of alleviating the worst suffering around the world. In particular, the goal of these types of programs was made clear by Defense Secretary Gates when he noted that, "In the campaign against terrorist networks and other extremists, we know that direct military force will continue to have a role...but over the long term, should be subordinate to measures to promote participation in government, economic programs to spur development, and efforts to address the grievances that often lie at the heart of insurgencies and among the discontented from which the terrorists recruit." This is manifestly what the Millennium Development Goals seek to achieve.

I would like to point out that there is a strong interest among American voters to work toward the achievement of the MDGs. In April, the UN Foundation and our sister organization, the Better World Campaign, conducted bipartisan polling that found that 87% of Americans support the elements encompassed in the Millennium Development Goals – and believe the U.S.

should help achieve them. We also found that a majority of Americans said they would have a more favorable opinion of major U.S. companies if they were providing financial or other support to programs that would help achieve the MDGs by 2015. This is good news as the private sector, together with foundations and other partners, already play a critically-important role in achieving the MDGs – and no one sector can achieve them alone. This is the subject of my testimony today.

Let me briefly discuss some of the public-private partnerships being implemented by the United Nations Foundation, not because they are the only examples, but because it is what we know how to do best. Our initiatives are designed to support the MDGs by ending easily-preventable malaria deaths, reducing child mortality through immunization, promoting opportunities for adolescent girls in the developing world, introducing modern information and communications technologies, rallying key partners in support of maternal health, and promoting access to clean energy.

I will start with our work in combating malaria through our Nothing But Nets campaign. As you know, malaria is preventable and treatable, yet every 30 seconds, a child in Africa dies from malaria infection, making it a leading killer of children on the continent, as well as the leading killer of refugees. As a result, the Millennium Development Goals specifically establish a target for ending malaria deaths, with the help of long-lasting, insecticide-treated bed nets. Mr. Chairman, I know that this Committee has played a very important role in strengthening U.S. programs to reduce the incidence of malaria in the developing world, and for that we thank you. To allow Americans to join the fight against malaria, the United Nations Foundation launched a grassroots campaign called *Nothing But Nets* to raise awareness and funding to combat malaria. Nothing But Nets has a simple message –Malaria Kills, Send a Net, Save a Life. A simple \$10 donation can protect a family in Africa from malaria. To date, hundreds of thousands of supporters have joined the campaign to raise funds and raise their voices to save lives. However, this campaign would not be possible without partners in the corporate and foundation world, including such diverse partners as the National Basketball Association, Major League Soccer, and the United Methodist Church. This pairing might not seem natural – but combined with an additional 14 partners who give *Nothing But Nets* the chance to raise awareness and funds from their fans and followers, from Bishops to basketball players, we have raised more than \$33 million to distribute more than 3 million nets in 15 countries across Africa– a significant contribution toward MDG 6 – to combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases.

Another good example of our partnerships support of the MDGs is our work in immunizing children against measles, another major killer in the world. *The Measles Initiative* is a partnership that takes the best skills of multiple organizations and combines them into a clear plan for global measles reduction. From 1990-2001, global measles deaths decreased *only* 3% each year. Since 2001, the UN Foundation has been leading the charge, along with the Red Cross, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, UNICEF, and the World Health Organization, in ending deaths from measles, and has also provided a platform for private corporations like

Vodafone and faith groups such as the LDS church to invest in this very important program. From 2001-2008, global measles deaths decreased 10% each year. One organization on its own could not have achieved a 90% reduction in measles deaths in Africa. So far, the reduction in the number of global measles deaths is the single greatest contribution to achieving MDG 4 by lowering the rate of childhood mortality by 23 percent.

In addition to our work on measles, the UN Foundation is also an active member of the *Global Polio Eradication Initiative*. Along with our partners at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, WHO and Rotary International, we have, in a single generation, successfully eliminated 99 percent of polio cases worldwide.

The UN Foundation is proud of the work that we and our partners do to further the lives of children in the developing world through immunization. Time and again, our partnerships have demonstrated that vaccines are the single most effective means to save and improve the lives of children. Vaccine interventions can prevent 8 million more deaths by 2020. We look forward to working in the near future with a broad coalition of partners on elevating the conversation on vaccines.

Another exciting example of a public-private partnership in support of the Millennium Development Goals is the recently-launched *Girl Up* Campaign. The Members of this Committee know all too well the plight facing many adolescent girls in the developing world. One in seven girls marries by age 15, seventy percent of out-of-school youths are girls, and few girls receive access to comprehensive health care. Adolescent girls 15-19 are twice as likely to die in child birth as women over twenty. Girls from 10-14 are 5 times as likely to die. Yet only half a cent of every development dollar – half a cent – goes to programs specifically designed to help adolescent girls. That is why the Millennium Development Goals call for gender equality, universal access to primary education, and improved maternal health.

By partnering and providing resources to the Girl Up campaign, we are helping to connect adolescent girls in the United States to girls in the developing world: Girl Up funds will support United Nations programs that provide comprehensive health care, life skills education to keep girls safe from violence, and funding to allow girls to enter and stay in school. Most importantly, this program gives American girls a chance to be part of a vitally-important mission – ensuring that girls in the developing world have the same opportunities that they are so fortunate to have.

With our Girl Up campaign, we seek diversity in our partnerships – we look for marketing partners, constituency building partners, funding partners, and programmatic partners. We have moved beyond the traditional “corporate partner” in order to understand what it is that corporation is providing. Our experience with partnership campaigns is that it is important to focus on the intended outcome versus the nature of the organization

Another innovative approach to partnerships is to create a coalition of partners with a common goal. According to the World Health Organization, smoke from traditional cookstoves causes 1.9 million deaths annually (mostly women and children), and millions more suffer from chronic lung diseases as a result of cooking over open fires on a daily basis. “Black carbon” emissions are also a major contributor to climate change, and women are often put at risk of violence in the search for wood and other fuels. Adoption and deployment of clean and efficient cooking stoves and fuels must be a major priority for the global community.

In response, the UN Foundation is actively working with the U.S. Department of State, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Shell Foundation, UN-Energy, the World Health Organization, the World Food Programme, and the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development to create a Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves to scale up the adoption of clean cookstoves in the developing world. By establishing standards for cleaner stoves, funding health and climate research, and spurring innovative financing mechanisms, the Alliance will seek to bring about a sustainable cookstove industry that can reach an additional 100 million households – roughly 20 percent of the affected population – with clean and efficient stoves and fuels by 2020. This is a rare and exciting opportunity to improve public health (addressing MDGs 4, 5, and 6) and mitigate climate change (MDG 7, ensuring environmental sustainability).

Finally, The UN Foundation has engaged in a successful five-year, 30-million-dollar partnership with the Vodafone Foundation to advance the work of the United Nations. This has become an effective model for how private sector experts and public charities can work together to save lives and help achieve the MDGs.

After identifying the opportunity to use the explosion of cell phones in developing countries to improve health systems, the partnership created programs with the World Health Organization in 22 African countries to use mobile phones to collect and share health information instead of the previous method of paper and pencil. mHealth can quickly track and contain disease outbreaks, support nation-wide child immunization campaigns, and identify stockouts of crucial medical supplies such anti-malarial drugs. Those experiments led the Vodafone Foundation and UN Foundation to join forces with the Rockefeller Foundation, the US Government’s PEPFAR program, and the global wireless industry trade association (GSMA) to launch the mHealth Alliance to move mobile health from experiments to full deployment.

The Secretary-General’s Joint Action Plan for achieving the MDGs calls for Innovation in service delivery. Scott Ratzen co-chairs the Innovation Working Group which is strongly supporting mHealth along with other innovations. Our Foundation leads the Advocacy Group for the Action Plan.

Last month the mHealth Alliance and a highly diverse group of public and private partners gathered in London to announce a major new initiative aimed squarely at lowering maternal mortality. This program is bringing together the experts in maternal and newborn

health, NGOs, governments, and the wireless industry. Mothers and babies should not be dying when the information to save them can be in the hands of a family member or midwife. We were delighted that both Co-Chairs of the Innovation Working Group were present to kick this off -- and are working so closely with us on this project. I have attached a summary of this exciting Maternal and Newborn mHealth Initiative to my testimony. In addition, we will be co-hosting a major mhealth Summit with NIH and the NIH Foundation this November.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I would like to add a few points about the challenges of making partnerships successful.

First, it is critical to bring all partners and recipients to the table from the start of any initiative. Co-creation is essential.

Second, partnerships succeed best when everyone has a clear role to play and can play from strengths and competencies—not just financial resources.

Third, partnerships work best when they take the time to create full business plans with clear goals and objectives. To be sustainable, these need to serve the different interests of the various partners.

Fourth, the UN, which traditionally had not been partner-friendly outside its normal member state environment, is becoming more adept and successful at partnerships and so is the U.S. government.

And fifth, Congress has an important opportunity to support public-private partnerships in support of the Millennium Development Goals. As this Committee considers legislation to re-write the Foreign Assistance Act, it is critically important that USAID and the State Department are directed to work closely with public-private partnerships, and to actively encourage these efforts. Given scarce public and private resources, it is imperative that money be well spent and effectively coordinated.

I am proud that the United Nations Foundation has had a history of successful partnerships; and looking forward, we will continue to work together with our partners to drive progress toward the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify, and I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.