

Chairman Russ Carnahan  
Subcommittee on International Organizations, Human Rights and Oversight

Opening Statement

Achieving the United Nations Millennium Development Goals:  
Progress through Partnerships

July 27, 2010

Ten years have passed since 192 nations and multilateral organizations set eight international development targets, which became known as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), representing a collective international effort toward improving the lives of those living in developing countries. The goals include: the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger; achievement of universal primary education; promotion of gender equality and empowerment women; reduction of child mortality; improvement of maternal health; halting and reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; environmental sustainability; and creation of a global partnership for development.

At last year's UN General Assembly, President Obama stated, "We will support the Millennium Development Goals, and approach next year's summit with a global plan to make them a reality." It is in the interest of the United States to stick to this commitment. We must use this strategy to take a leadership role at the United Nations High-Level Review of the Millennium Development Goals, which takes place on September 20-22 in New York City. I look forward to receiving the Administration's MDG Strategy in the coming days.

As we recover from an economic recession, it is important to keep in mind that the Millennium Development Goals are not only a moral commitment, but are also vital to our security and economic prosperity. Fighting poverty, hunger, lack of access to education and healthcare helps reduce unrest and extremism, which can contribute to hatred and violence. The MDGs also help to leverage U.S. aid, bringing in contribution from other countries, the private sector and civil society. Collectively, our investment helps to reduce extreme poverty and build a growing middle class abroad, which will ultimately buy U.S. products. Achieving the MDGs helps the world's most needy, but it's also good for America's producers and consumers.

Since 2000, the global community moved steadily toward achievement of many of these goals. In developing regions, net enrolment in primary education increased by 5 percent between 2000 and 2007. Globally, the new HIV infection rate decreased from an estimated peak of 3.5 million in 1996 to 2.7 million in 2008. And, as we heard last month at this subcommittee's hearing on "Women as Agents of Change," women's share of national parliamentary seats has increased from 6% to 19% in the last 10 years.

Unfortunately, progress has stagnated in other areas. The mortality rate for children under 5 is still well under the target of a 2/3 reduction, and we have seen an increase in poverty rates over the last year. Finally, as we heard last week at our hearing on the Administration's "Feed the

Future" Initiative, the number of hungry people increased from 842 million in the early nineties to over 1 billion people in 2009.

In order to address these critical challenges, we must adhere to a strategy that is cost-effective, invests wisely in the developing world, and works with our National Security Strategy. The U.S. government has played, and will continue to play, a vital role in this effort. However, we need to ensure that we do so in a collaborative manner that leverages all available resources.

The private sector is in the unique position to contribute their expertise, resources, and innovative techniques toward this global effort. Targeted private-public intervention programs have already proven successful. For example, the incidence of polio has plummeted by more than 99 percent since 1988, when Rotary International partnered with the WHO, the CDC and UNICEF to launch the Global Polio Eradication Initiative. Another project, Millennium Villages, supports social and business development services for more than 400,000 people in rural communities across 10 countries in Africa. Finally, there are many microfinance programs that serve as examples of successful public-private initiatives which have helped to reduce poverty and empower women.

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses today about lessons learned from their public-private partnerships, and what initiatives can be scaled up to meet the Millennium Development Goals.

I will now recognize our Ranking Member, Representative Rohrabacher, for his opening statement.