



## **Giant Petition Reaches UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon Pledges Full Civil Society Participation at MDG Summit**

**THE UNITED NATIONS, 23 JUNE 2010** -- Civil society activists and anti-poverty campaigners representing more than 120 organisations from across the globe personally delivered a letter today containing recommendations for a breakthrough plan to end poverty and inequality to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

The open letter to the UN Secretary General – shaped and signed by civil society organisations, including GCAP, the Feminist Task Force, CIVICUS, End Water Poverty and the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) -- contains nine key recommendations, including calls for greater accountability, measures to increase gender equality and reduce social exclusion and the provision of quality affordable public services.

“NGOs stand next to government and without civil society support we cannot address issues such as fighting poverty, empowering women and generating resources,” UN Secretary General Bank Ki-moon told a five-member civil society delegation. “You all come from different countries but are united with the United Nations.”

“It's a major breakthrough for our campaign,” says Lysa John, Campaign Director for the world's largest anti-poverty network, the Global Call to Action Against Poverty (GCAP). “The voices of global activists from across the world have been heard. But we will not stop until UN member states put our proposals into action and we achieve a genuine breakthrough plan to end poverty and inequality and achieve the promise of the Millennium Development Goals. We will carry this campaign into the halls of power of every UN member state.”

World leaders will gather at the United Nations in September at a meeting that is expected to produce additional pledges to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. In preparation for this gathering, the UN Secretary General has produced a report called “Keeping the Promise” which provides a 10-year review of the MDGs and recommendations for action. Governments are currently negotiating the contents of an action plan that will be approved at the September MDG Summit. The World We Want Open Letter contains specific proposals for this UN plan.

“Organisations often add their signatures to a petition without any real hope that people in power will actually read it,” says Jeffrey Huffines of CIVICUS. “Today, the UN Secretary-General not only read our proposal, he welcomed the input of civil society.”

“When we started the World We Want campaign six months ago in a small meeting room in Johannesburg, we didn't know where the journey would take us,” adds Huffines. “Since then, passionate campaigners and civil society networks from across the globe have collaborated to produce concise recommendations for how the UN can achieve the MDGs.”

Leaders from 189 countries signed The Millennium Declaration in 2000, setting out eight clear cut time-bound commitments to end poverty. While some progress and significant achievements have been made, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are not on track to be achieved by the 2015 deadline, due in part to the feminisation of poverty, the ever more apparent affects of climate change and the global financial and food crises.

“In 2009 alone, an estimated 90 million people – mostly women and girls - were pushed into poverty. The UN needs to create indicators for each MDG to measure how women and the socially excluded are faring, with an eye to ensuring that these groups are not left behind” says Rosa Lizarde of GCAP's Feminist Task Force. “Gender and social exclusion must be at the heart of the MDG review process if we are to end poverty and inequality.”

Secretary General Ban Ki-moon noted that civil society plays a crucial role in correcting injustice and eradicating poverty.

“Gender inequality is a moral, political and social injustice and we must work together to correct it,” says Ban Ki-moon, responding to the issues raised by the civil society delegation. “In the new Joint Action Plan on the MDGs that I have recently announced, I am calling for a greater investment of \$15 billion until 2011 and \$45 billion until 2015 to address the goals related to maternal and child mortality.”

“We look forward to seeing G20 countries commit more funds to achieve the MDG,” adds Lizarde. We need a holistic approach, one in which sexual and reproductive health and rights are taken into account. Social inclusion, gender equality and the empowerment of women must be a component of every Millennium Development Goal.

“We're extremely excited to have an audience with the Secretary-General,” says John. “But we now need the Secretary General's help to implement innovative funding measures, like the proposed financial transactions tax, that will mobilise resources to mitigate the effects of climate change and fund projects linked to the MDG. World leaders must show the vision that they demonstrated in 2000, when the Millennium Development Agreement was first adopted, so that we can achieve The World We Want in 2015.”

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## Photos and Links to the Open Letter to the UNSG:

Read the Open Letter (English, French, Spanish): [http://www.un-ngls.org/spip.php?page=amdmg10&id\\_article=2445](http://www.un-ngls.org/spip.php?page=amdmg10&id_article=2445)

Summary in Arabic: [www.whiteband.org](http://www.whiteband.org)

Photos: [www.flickr.com/photos/whiteband/sets/72157624216386855](http://www.flickr.com/photos/whiteband/sets/72157624216386855)

*Note: Feature story writers may be interested in writing about the path that the letter has taken, from its conception at a meeting in Johannesburg six months ago, to a rally outside the UN, a failed attempt to take it into the General Assembly, a meeting with the UN ambassadors guiding the MDG Review Process and finally into the hands of the Secretary General himself.*

**About GCAP:** The Global Call to Action against Poverty (GCAP) is a civil society alliance that challenges the structures and institutions that perpetuate poverty. With campaigns in some 130 countries, GCAP calls for action from world leaders to meet their promises to end poverty and inequality. For more information, visit [www.whiteband.org](http://www.whiteband.org)