



Doc. 13368

16 December 2013

Stepping up action against global inequalities: Europe's contribution to the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) process

Report¹

Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development

Rapporteur: Sir Alan MEALE, United Kingdom, Socialist Group

Summary

Less than two years before reaching the target date for the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), it is clear that some goals are out of reach. Much more remains to be done all over the world to save the lives of young children and their mothers, to stop violence against women and children, to guarantee access to health care and to decent work, and to protect the environment.

Europe is part of the problem as well as part of the solution: if Europe lives up to its responsibilities, it can make a major impact on people's lives not just in Europe, but all over the world.

The Parliamentary Assembly should thus call upon member States to step up their efforts under the current MDG framework. Europe needs to foster democratic governance and institutions and to address the key obstacles to a more balanced global development by guaranteeing equal opportunities, protection and rights to women and girls in particular and the young more generally. Europe should take a strong stand and ensure that its voice be heard in global development processes, including in the design of the next set of global objectives beyond 2015.

1. Reference to committee: [Doc. 13049](#), Reference 3922 of 25 January 2013.



Contents	Page
A. Draft resolution	3
B. Explanatory memorandum by Sir Alan Meale, rapporteur	5
1. Introduction	5
2. The Millennium Development Goals: what lessons can we draw?	6
2.1. Achievements and remaining challenges in a changing global context	6
2.2. Mobilising resources, policies and actors	10
3. European parliamentary lead for better governance in development	11
3.1. The scandal of poverty and hunger	11
3.2. Equal access to health care and decent work for all is not luxury	12
3.3. Burning the candle at both ends – new approaches to global economies	14
4. Conclusions and recommendations for European action	16

A. Draft resolution²

1. In 2015, the target date for the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), agreed upon by the United Nations at their summit in September 2000, will be reached. Since 2000, major progress has been made in eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, increasing sustainable access to drinking water, reversing mortality rates from diseases such as malaria and tuberculosis and improving the living conditions of over 200 million slum dwellers.
2. Nevertheless, many issues still remain to be resolved, such as: high levels of mortality rates amongst young children and maternal mortality in the poorest regions; the insufficient proportion of children having access to primary education; the great number of people not having secured access to basic health-care services, let alone to vaccination programmes or to specific treatment for serious diseases such as HIV/AIDS. Integrated strategies are therefore required in many areas to keep the ever-growing global population – an expected 9 billion by 2050 – fit to learn, work and enjoy life.
3. The Parliamentary Assembly is concerned about the persistently high levels of global inequalities and the remaining barriers to a more balanced human development, which are also affecting Europe's own destiny. The Assembly considers that Europe should strive to increase its action and impact in order to better live up to its responsibilities while taking into account global interdependencies.
4. Europe's strength and added value in this respect lies in particular in its experience and lead taken concerning some of the key issues that have not yet been addressed effectively by the international community, in particular persistent gender inequality, a high rate of violence against women and children, the lack of decent work conditions in many regions of the world and the continuous degradation of our natural environment.
5. Moreover, European experience in the field of good governance could stimulate the effectiveness of global development processes: democratic structures and procedures should therefore be promoted beyond Europe's boundaries and the most urgent issues, such as widespread corruption, should be addressed both within Europe and in developing countries, also to increase the efficiency of the Official Development Aid (ODA).
6. However, Europe not only has access to some of the solutions to major challenges of the 21st century, but is also contributing to some of the current global inequalities through its production and consumption patterns.
7. Europe's contribution should consist first in stepping up efforts to reduce global and regional inequalities under the current MDG framework; setting good examples as regards good governance and the committed fight against corruption, whilst promoting such measures in and beyond Europe and explicitly addressing some of the key factors hindering developments in developing and emerging countries and globally promoting the political willingness for doing so as well as organising awareness-raising campaigns for the general public on global interdependencies; and contributing to the international negotiation process by asking that the development framework beyond 2015 be completed by new goals.
8. The Assembly thus calls on member States to:
 - 8.1. as regards support provided to various countries under the current MDG framework:
 - 8.1.1. provide assistance to countries in need, including capacity-building programmes aimed at helping countries to stimulate sustainable economic development;
 - 8.1.2. develop targeted programmes and integrated strategies for poverty reduction, for building comprehensive health services accessible to all, for promoting decent work and for creating decent employment;
 - 8.1.3. respond, in the meantime, to the commitments taken within the international aid mechanisms and provide a level of 0.7% of gross domestic product (GDP) as Official Development Assistance;
 - 8.2. as regards action to be taken in the field of good governance:
 - 8.2.1. take legislative measures to fight corruption, tax fraud and tax evasion, both in Europe and beyond, to ensure that a maximum level of public resources is used according to set targets;

2. Draft resolution adopted unanimously by the committee on 12 November 2013.

- 8.2.2. strengthen support to democratic institutions such as parliaments to allow them to exercise effective oversight of anti-corruption measures as well as of general development and assistance programmes;
 - 8.2.3. promote media freedom and freedom of expression in order to encourage the media and civil society to expose any cases of corruption;
 - 8.3. as regards addressing key factors hindering development:
 - 8.3.1. empower women and girls in all spheres of society, including the family, the educational sector, the labour market and political decision-making processes, thus allowing them to access resources and opportunities and a fair share of power;
 - 8.3.2. promote the guarantee of sexual and reproductive health and rights for women and girls, in particular with a view to avoiding unwanted pregnancies and further reducing maternal mortality;
 - 8.3.3. step up the fight against violence towards women and girls in the most committed manner through prevention programmes and campaigns, including measures to protect victims;
 - 8.3.4. create equal opportunities for women and young people to access quality education and decent jobs;
 - 8.4. as regards Europe's contribution to the international negotiation process revising the MDGs for the post-2015 period:
 - 8.4.1. ensure that development assistance becomes once again a priority on political agendas in Europe, and that innovative approaches are sought to support third countries;
 - 8.4.2. integrate current MDGs into a new set of global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);
 - 8.4.3. base this new framework on a transversal understanding of sustainable development addressing global interdependences in a straightforward and innovative manner;
 - 8.4.4. promote the idea that a next set of goals should explicitly include measures fostering good democratic governance and the fight against corruption, not least by defining these as preconditions for obtaining international support;
 - 8.4.5. ensure that the challenges identified as key factors for a more balanced global development, such as sustainability and decent work, be given a more prominent place in the upcoming development framework;
 - 8.4.6. continue promoting the principles of the European Landscape Convention (ETS No. 176).
9. The Assembly also invites member States to ensure that the Council of Europe is officially represented at upcoming events and world summits related to this global process, until 2015 and beyond, in order to ensure that the pan-European voice expressed in the present resolution is heard worldwide.

B. Explanatory memorandum by Sir Alan Meale, rapporteur

1. Introduction

“The MDGs have proven that focused global development objectives can make a profound difference. Success in the next 1 000 days will not only improve the lives of millions, it will add momentum as we plan for beyond 2015 and the challenges of sustainable development.”

Ban Ki-Moon, United Nations Secretary-General (June 2013)

“The difference between what we do and what we are capable of doing would suffice to solve most of the world’s problems.”

Mahatma Gandhi

1. When the 189 nations of the world forming the United Nations endorsed the Millennium Declaration at their Summit in September 2000 and pledged to uphold “the principles of human dignity, equality and equity”,³ it was thought we could beat abject poverty and hunger in just fifteen years, eradicate the worst diseases, and in particular reduce the mortality of children and mothers so that the most vulnerable could simply live their lives. There was a confidence that empowering women, building global partnerships and better protecting our environment would lay the foundations of a more peaceful, prosperous and just society. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have stood as a lighthouse on our journey towards such a bright future.

2. Have we succeeded? Have the lives of the neediest improved? If we put these questions, in 2013, to the people who can now drink clean water every day or afford enough daily bread, the answer will probably be “yes”. But what if we talk to the one billion starving men, women and children? Our solidarity has not reached them yet and they cannot help themselves enough on their own. The world has never been as rich as it is now, but the gap between the poorest and the richest has never been as wide. The present economic crisis has swept through the world, leaving millions homeless, jobless, sick, hungry and angry, including in Europe. The international efforts deployed towards achieving the MDG must therefore not slow down, but be pursued with the same verve beyond 2015.

3. Europe, as one of the wealthiest regions of the world, must be one of the main stakeholders and drivers in this process, not least because extreme poverty can be observed encroaching back into Europe. Our continent and its different players, including governments, private corporations and citizens, are part of the current production and consumption patterns resulting in an unequal distribution of wealth across the world. Finally, we must not forget that Europe has the technological, methodological and systemic knowledge to solve many of the problems encountered by different countries in the world. However, political willingness will inevitably determine to what extent these challenges can be addressed.

4. A particular concern for Europe also stems from the increasing migration flows into it from poorer regions of the world, which are an expression of the multiple interdependencies between world regions. The continuous arrival of migrants arriving on southern European shores, including recently on the Italian island of Lampedusa, when many lost their lives when their boat sank, is just one sad example. It further illustrates the huge gap in living conditions on different continents, which makes many hope for a better future in Europe to the point of undertaking such extremely perilous journeys.

5. The international community will have to agree on a global vision for the post-2015 development framework before the final summit in 2015. We, the parliamentarians of Greater Europe, have to contribute our proposals early on towards shaping a truly inclusive development road map for the future. In exploring Europe’s contribution to the fulfilment of MDGs until 2015 and beyond, I believe that we should give priority to Europe’s comparative strengths. We should also distinguish between the final results expected, the institutions and processes allowing us to reach them and some of the key elements in these processes.

6. Against this understanding of the type of action required, my report will check some of the progress achieved in implementing the MDGs so far and will highlight opportunities and priorities for action under a new development framework. It will put forward proposals for action from a European and parliamentary perspective, underlining in particular which structural improvements will be required for the achievement of current goals as well as how the MDG framework should be completed or reoriented beyond this first timeline.

3. See the Millennium Declaration at www.un.org/millennium/declaration/ares552e.htm.

2. The Millennium Development Goals: what lessons can we draw?

7. Less than two years separate us from the 2015 target date, date by which we estimated that the MDGs would be fully accomplished. During this long path of almost 14 years, the Declaration of the Millennium has been the backbone of our efforts to combat extreme poverty and foster development around the world. The reality, however, is that despite huge advancements being made, which we welcome and applaud, there are still pending issues in our planned road map. The moment has come to undertake an intermediate evaluation of our efforts and identify potential leverage points to be activated after 2015.

2.1. Achievements and remaining challenges in a changing global context

8. The Millennium Declaration was approved in 2000, during a period marked by a strong optimistic momentum fuelled by the globalisation process and strong international trade growth rates. This context created the illusion of a future of never-ending wealth creation and the moral obligation of rich countries to aid people living in the so-called “third world countries”, affected by labour exploitation, unfair trade conditions and depletion of natural resources. However, many targets have so far not been met and certain key issues not yet sufficiently addressed.

2.1.1. State of play: achievements and remaining challenges

9. The combined commitment of the international community, including national governments, private corporations and civil society organisations has proven crucial in the successful attainment of several important MDGs. Amongst the targets already reached, we can cite: 1) the halving of the proportion of people living in extreme poverty (defined as living on less than \$1.25 a day); 2) the halving of the proportion of people without sustainable access to clean drinking water (with the proportion of the global population having access reaching 89% in 2010, up from 76% in 1990); 3) the halt and reversion of mortality rates from malaria (which have fallen by 25%), and tuberculosis (almost halved); 4) the improvement of the living conditions of over 200 million slum dwellers.⁴

10. Nonetheless, progress in other MDGs is lagging behind and is not expected to be achieved by 2015. A number of issues will require further action in the future, such as:

- the mortality rate under the age of five dropped by 41%, thus remaining far from its two-thirds target, and is clustered in the poorest regions;
- maternal mortality has been halved, but remains far from the three quarters target, even though human society has the means to avoid most of these fatalities;
- universal access to treatment for HIV/AIDS has not yet been granted to all those in need, even though the spread of the illness has been reduced and in some cases halted;
- the proportion of children without access to primary education has been virtually halved, but 57 million children still separate us from the target of achieving universal primary education;
- the global emission of CO₂ is rising, deforestation spreading, desertification continuing, marine fish stocks shrinking and biodiversity continues to be lost.

11. Whilst health care has made tremendous progress worldwide, too many people do not yet have full access to even basic health care services, including in developed countries. Integrated health strategies will therefore be paramount to keep the booming global population – 9 billion by 2050 – fit to learn, work and enjoy life.

12. In our ambition to offer decent lives to all humans, we cannot turn a blind eye to the continuous degradation of our living environment. Our planet is tired and sick because of man-made disasters such as climate change, environmental degradation and pollution, water shortage and an onslaught on biodiversity. Ensuring environmental sustainability – an explicit goal for development since 2000 – requires a much more coherent global approach and calls for a stronger political commitment. For this reason, the issue of climate change as one of the major challenges is currently covered by a specific report soon to be debated by the Parliamentary Assembly, which forms its contribution to the Conferences of Parties (COP)⁵ process.⁶

4. United Nations: The Millennium Development Goals Report 2013, New York, June 2013, www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/report-2013/mdg-report-2013-english.pdf.

5. COP held under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

6. Doc. 13362, report on “Climate change: a framework for a global agreement in 2015” (Rapporteur: Lord John Prescott, SOC).

13. When looking at some of the measurable results of global development processes, we should not forget the fact that some of the MDGs have been unevenly achieved, for example within regions or between genders: rural-urban gaps can be observed in access to drinking water, enrolment rates in school is three times lower in the poorest households, and the gap between genders remains clearly visible in access to education. It becomes clear that some of the central key factors determining a balanced development of society have so far been neglected.

2.1.2. Key factors: preconditions for a balanced global development

14. On the road to substantial and measurable targets, there is a need to regularly question the approaches followed, including institutions and processes leading developments on the one hand and key factors contributing to the success of a global development process on the other. The following issues are such key factors in my view and not fully addressing them creates obstacles on the path to a balanced and sustainable development fully respecting human rights.

2.1.2.1. Gender equality

15. Gender equality and the empowerment of women, reflected by MDG 3 with one single target ("Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015") shamefully has not yet been sufficiently addressed by the international community and within individual countries. It must also be said that linking this issue to the educational sector is certainly a good starting point, but largely insufficient to cover all risks and obstacles that women and girls are still facing in our modern society.

16. The levels of poverty and of preventable illnesses and deaths amongst girls and women, gender discrimination, gender-based violence, maternal deaths, and the lack of decent work opportunities for women remain unacceptably high. Women and young people are the two largest groups in the world facing inequalities, with limited opportunities, restricted choices and freedoms. Without developing this aspect further in the present text, it goes without saying that efforts to achieve equity must also include the protection of other vulnerable groups, such as people with disabilities and the elderly.

17. The current situation of women and girls in many countries has detrimental consequences for addressing global population and sustainable development challenges, thus impacting on the development of whole countries. Studies have estimated that if women's employment rates were raised to the same level as men's, the gross domestic product (GDP) of industrialised countries would rise by 9% in the United States, 13% in the eurozone and 16% in Japan.⁷ Women who have control over household resources invest considerably more of their income in their children's health, nutrition and education than men, thereby strengthening the prospects of their children breaking out of poverty. Therefore, persistent gender discrimination undermines countries' abilities to unleash their full economic and productive potential.

18. Gender-based inequality is also reflected in the national parliaments that we belong to: the number of seats held by women in national parliaments on 1 July 2013 (both houses combined where this applies) corresponded to 21.3% in Sub-Saharan Africa, 18.8% in Asia, 22.7% in Europe (OSCE member States, excluding Nordic countries) and 24.4% in the Americas; with a better performance to be observed in Northern European countries only (42% (one house only)).⁸ Figures for Europe are confirmed by Council of Europe data: based on IPU figures, the average proportion of women in national parliaments was noted to be at 23% in 2012 (with highest scores to be observed in Andorra, Finland, Netherlands and Sweden).⁹ Ensuring that women can equally participate in the decision-making processes is an important milestone towards more gender equality in other areas of society, such as education or the labour market.

2.1.2.2. Lack of opportunities for young women in particular

19. Youth unemployment is high in most countries with young women in particular facing gender-related barriers. Young people are all too often working in low-opportunity activities: 73 million young people are unemployed, an increase of 3.5 million since 2007.¹⁰ In low- and middle-income countries, where 90% of the

7. United Nations (2012), Resilient People, Resilient Planet, A Future Worth Choosing, the Report of the United Nations Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Global Sustainability.

8. Interparliamentary Union (IPU): Women in National Parliaments data (situation as at 1 July 2013), www.ipu.org/wmn-e/world.htm.

9. Resolution 1898 (2012) on political parties and women's political representation (and Doc. 13022); IPU, Women in national parliaments, World classification, situation as at 30 June 2012.

10. International Labour Organization (ILO) (2013), Global Employment Trends for Youth: a Generation at Risk.

world's young people live, roughly two thirds of them are not working or studying, are engaged in irregular employment or in the informal sector. Additional barriers to decent work opportunities are faced by the 120 million young people and 497 million women who are illiterate, usually poor women and adolescent girls from rural areas.¹¹

2.1.2.3. Persistent levels of maternal mortality

20. The fulfilment of sexual and reproductive health and rights is a major determinant of educational attainment by women and girls and of their ability to secure decent work opportunities. Yet achieving MDG 5 has been the one most off-track: the maternal mortality rate has fallen by 47% over the past two decades, however it is still far from the target of 75%. Every day, 800 women and adolescent girls die from preventable complications of pregnancy and childbirth (representing an annual total of 287 000 deaths).¹²

21. Every year, 16 million adolescent girls (15-19 year-olds) and an additional 2 million under 15 years of age give birth. Meanwhile, maternal mortality is the leading cause of death for adolescent girls in many countries.¹³ Only 55% of pregnant women in developing countries receive the recommended minimum of four antenatal care visits, and in some regions, such as Sub-Saharan Africa, fewer than 50% of women have skilled attendance during childbirth.¹⁴ 222 million women would like to prevent pregnancy but are not using an effective method of contraception. This contributes to 80 million unintended pregnancies, 30 million unplanned births and 20 million unsafe abortions every year.¹⁵

2.1.2.4. Persistently high levels of violence against women and girls

22. Violence against women and girls is one of the most widespread human rights violations in the world that seriously impairs their health and their social, economic and political participation. The devastating consequences include severe trauma and death as well as serious health problems. Violence hampers survivors' productivity, as well as the educational and personal development of the children who witness or experience domestic violence and sexual abuse. It costs billions of dollars annually to public budgets, in addition to the income and productivity losses suffered by the women and employers affected.¹⁶ In particular sexual violence also makes women more vulnerable to HIV and other sexually transmitted infections.

23. Violence against women was also classified as a barrier to reaching many of the MDGs at a recent ministerial meeting co-organised by UN Women. According to the first systematic study of global data on violence against women presented by WHO in June 2013, no part of the world is free from gender-based violence, and one in three women will experience physical and/or sexual violence at some point in her life, most commonly at the hands of an intimate partner. For the post-2015 agenda, UN Women have proposed a stand-alone goal that would build on MDG 3 by addressing three target areas: 1) freedom from violence against women and girls; 2) gender equality in terms of sexual and reproductive health and rights and access to resources and opportunities; and 3) gender equality in terms of decision-making power in public and private institutions.¹⁷ These are very clear objectives that, in my view, the Parliamentary Assembly should strongly support.

2.1.2.5. The situation in Europe

24. Only in July 2013 did the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), UNFPA and the Swiss Government organise a Regional Conference for Europe to review the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development in the UNECE Region¹⁸ (adopted in 1994). Evidence presented at this event has shown that Europe is not exempt from the above-mentioned global challenges and that further legislative and political action in favour of women needs

11. UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2012), Adult and Youth Literacy Fact Sheet.

12. The World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the World Bank (2012), Trends in maternal mortality: 1990 to 2010.

13. WHO (2012), Fact Sheet No. 364: Adolescent Pregnancy.

14. United Nations (2012), Millennium Development Goals Report 2012.

15. Guttmacher Institute and UNFPA (2012), Fact Sheet: Costs and Benefits of Investing in Contraceptive Services in the Developing World.

16. United Nations Secretary-General (2013), Report of the Secretary General to the 56th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women on the Prevention of Violence Against Women and Girls, E/CN.6/2013/4.

17. Anderson, Violence against women – the missing millennium development goal, Thomson Reuters Foundation, 26 September 2013, www.trust.org.

18. The UNECE region encompasses 56 countries in Europe and Central Asia as well as Canada, the United States and Israel.

to be stimulated urgently. Although much progress has been made on well-being, health and education, it was noted that the region still faced many barriers and challenges, such as an incomplete agenda for gender equality and women's economic empowerment, political leadership and participation in decision-making, large inequalities in access to sexual and reproductive health information and services, as well as discrimination of migrants, minorities and other disadvantaged groups.¹⁹

25. Despite women's high level of education, severe problems were found to remain regarding their labour market participation, especially in some eastern and south-eastern European countries. The majority of women still occupy lower-paid and unstable jobs at the lower end of the career ladder and face enormous wage differences (ranging from an average of 20% in the European Union to between 40% and 50% in the Caucasus and Central Asia).

26. The target of reducing child mortality in Europe seems to be within reach, even in Europe's emerging economies. However, further progress is needed to achieve target 5A to reduce maternal mortality. Continuously low prevalence rates of modern contraceptives and the unmet need for family planning are important indicators for monitoring further progress: a considerable share of maternal deaths could be prevented if women who wanted contraception could have access to it.

2.1.3. Background: a changing context in international commerce and development aid requiring continuous commitment from Europe

27. The current international context contributes to radical changes in the backbone of the Millennium Project as defined in the MDG 8: "Develop a global partnership for development". It is marked by a weak compliance of the developed countries with the traditional funding mechanisms on the one hand, and by an unequal global redistribution of wealth-creation, materialised in extraordinary growth in emerging economies and severe slowdown in developed countries, on the other. One of the results is that the so-called BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) have outperformed the rich countries, including Europe, in terms of assistance for development and they plan to create their own institutions to face western economic supremacy.²⁰

28. On the side of the donors, progress on the MDGs has been threatened by the harsh financial and economic crisis that has undermined our economies since the 2008 collapse and led to high unemployment rates and increased poverty also in European countries. In this unexpected context, many governments have been more concerned about their own macroeconomic situation, for which they are directly accountable, than about granting part of their resources to foreign populations. National governments across the world, including in Europe, have repeatedly evoked the financial crisis to justify their failure to provide the 0.7% of GDP as Official Development Assistance (ODA).

29. Most recently, the European Union called on its member States to honour their commitments as their contributions to the poorest countries of the planet had fallen by €2.3 billion in 2012, according to a report by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). At the beginning of 2013, only Denmark, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Sweden had met the 0.7% GDP target.²¹ Globally, ODA from developed countries amounted to \$125.6 billion in 2012, which represented merely 0.29% of their combined GDP and a drop of 4% in real terms since 2011, the latter already being 2% below 2010 levels. This is the first time that ODA has shrunk in two consecutive years.²²

30. On the side of the aided countries, extraordinary growth rates propelling emerging economies, such as China, have marked a turning point in the lives of millions formerly aided through ODA. In some of these countries, the situation has evolved from mainstream poverty to extraordinary economic boom, which has provided citizens with new opportunities and raised overall living standards. The euphoria generated by this evolution initially resulted in governments being more committed to preserving the dynamics of growth, rather than in devoting part of their extraordinary GDP growth to the ODA or sharing the knowledge stemming from their success with countries lagging behind.

19. Chair Notes of the UNECE Regional Conference, Enabling Choices: Population Priorities for the 21st century, 1-2 July 2013.

20. Radhika Desai, The Brics are building a challenge to western economic supremacy, *The Guardian*, 2 April 2013, www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/apr/02/brics-challenge-western-supremacy.

21. EU falters with UN targets as development aid drops 4.3%, www.euractiv.com, 8 April 2013.

22. United Nations, The Millennium Development Goals Report 2013, op. cit.

31. Nonetheless, this situation has radically changed over the last decade. Certain countries, such as the BRICS countries, have emerged as leaders in development co-operation, with increased financial aid, technical assistance as well as through south-south co-operation with low-income countries (LIC).²³ Today, the BRICS-LICs relations go beyond strict financial assistance, with more intense commercial and regional interaction.²⁴ This can on the one hand be perceived as something positive, since it reinforces ODA contributions. On the other hand, this aid is often granted through bilateral mechanisms focused on the regional integration of neighbouring countries; it therefore entails a shift in geo-economic relations in which certain developing countries are overlooked. Europe should therefore maintain and revitalise its commitment to development aid, and orient its own programmes accordingly.

2.2. Mobilising resources, policies and actors

32. The likelihood of accomplishing the MDGs would be higher if all stakeholders assumed their respective roles in the United Nations Millennium Project with full commitment: Governments both in developing and developed countries must undertake political reforms aimed at increasing the effectiveness of financial aid and implementing sound macroeconomic policies. In addition to mobilising reserves within the ODA mechanism, new formulas should be outlined with the aim of improving the financing architecture.

33. In this respect, core issues affecting the primary source of funds should be addressed to ensure the continuous flow of aid and its efficient expenditure:²⁵

- Donor countries should consistently contribute to the ODA, ensuring 0.7% of GDP and applying financial plans for its predictability on an annual basis. Financial aid should be structured in order to ensure its allocation to coherent development policies and programmes. Private charities contribute through their know-how to channel aid more effectively and monitoring of expenditure should be applied wherever appropriate;
- Governments in developing countries should improve transparency and fight corruption, implement targeted policies, support the creation of sound institutions for development, and improve their statistical services, thus enabling accurate control of the expenditure;
- Fair public and corporate governance combined with transparent transfer prices would increase the bargaining power that producers from countries rich in natural resources exert in negotiations with international industries. This would ultimately result in fairer revenues and allow for the dedication of resources towards education, health and poverty eradication;
- Lastly, ensuring access to financial services in developing countries would help some 400 million micro, small and medium-sized enterprises in developing countries to obtain the liquidity required for investment in productive capacity and to generate sustainable income through their businesses.

34. At its 5th Assembly held in Kyiv, Ukraine, in April 2008, the World Movement for Democracy discussed, *inter alia*, what democracies could do to reduce poverty and inequality.²⁶ On that occasion, researchers showed, for example, that the higher levels of inequality in Latin America were not a result of the market but rather due to the weakness of the State in this region, including public redistributive programmes and taxation systems. They accordingly issued the following recommendations that should be fully supported:

- reduce levels of corruption to ensure that the State's resources may be used for basic infrastructure and social programmes;
- introduce educational programmes informing citizens of their rights and training them for work thus allowing them not to rely on the State;
- strengthen institutions such as parliaments so they can exercise their oversight roles more effectively;

23. European Parliament, Directorate-General for external policies of the Union, Policy Department: The Role of BRICS in the Developing World, www.ecologic.eu/files/attachments/Publications/2012/knoblach_12_lot5_24_brics.pdf.

24. Mlachila/Takebe, FDI from BRICs to LICs: Emerging Growth Driver? International Monetary Fund (IMF) Working Paper 11/178, Washington DC, 2011, from the website of the Eldis programme, co-ordinated by the Institute of Development Studies (IDS), Brighton/United Kingdom, www.iadb.org/intal/intalcdi/PE/2011/08803.pdf.

25. Mahmoud Mohieldin (World Bank President's Special Envoy), Financing the Next Development Agenda, Project Syndicate, 10 June 2013, www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/activating-new-sources-of-development-finance-by-mahmoud-mohieldin.

26. World Movement for Democracy, What Can Democracies Do to Reduce Poverty and Inequality, April 2008: www.wmd.org/assemblies/fifth-assembly/reports/democracy-research-and-education-workshops/what-can-democracies-do#sthash.37lprZoa.dpuf.

- strengthen the rule of law to increase accountability and reduce corruption;
- encourage the media and civil society to expose corruption;
- strengthen labour unions to ensure worker rights and fair wages;
- develop targeted poverty reduction programmes, including conditional cash-transfer programmes to low-income families;
- improve taxation policies to redistribute wealth more effectively and to generate revenue for social policy programmes;
- enforce rules that reward businesses that follow fair employment practices.

35. Amongst the initiatives promoted by international organisations, the World Bank Group's International Development Association (IDA) deserves to be highlighted.²⁷ Since 1960, the "World Bank's Fund for the Poorest" has been one of the main sources of development finance, providing support for health, education, infrastructure, agriculture and economic and institutional development in the world's poorest countries. The programme's main advantage is that the cross-sectorial knowledge and resources of the World Bank are combined and directed towards the solution of complex challenges. Concretely, this has allowed IDA to immunise nearly half a billion children, provide better access to water for 123 million others and help 65 million receive health services. In the future, such development programmes should increasingly include principles of good governance and accountability when it comes to deciding how funds are distributed to recipient countries.

36. Mention must also be made of a large number of private funds, amongst which the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation is one of the better known and most committed to the UN Millennium Development Programme in terms of grants allocation. Through its Global Development Programme and Global Health Programmes applied to developing countries, this foundation focuses on improving people's health and providing them with opportunities to lift themselves out of hunger and extreme poverty. The granted amounts the foundation allocated globally for the financial years 2011 and 2012 (also including a specific equal opportunities programme for the United States) reached \$3.4 billion.²⁸ Governments across the world, including in Europe, must not spare any effort to stimulate similar efforts of other private corporations in favour of international development

3. European parliamentary lead for better governance in development

37. As shown, democratic structures and good governance are also key determinants on the way to a more equal distribution of resources and wealth. However, a society where basic needs such as access to food, housing and health care are not guaranteed will hardly succeed in projecting democratic values and respect for human rights; fundamental human rights, democracy and the rule of law are closely interlinked with balanced development processes. Parliaments as essential democratic bodies directly elected by the people are central players in making progress towards better governance in development, both through legislative and political action.

3.1. The scandal of poverty and hunger

38. Amongst the most remarkable triumphs of the United Nations Millennium Project to date are perhaps having halved the proportion of people living in extreme poverty (\$1.25 a day) and being close to halving the proportion of people suffering from hunger, an objective which seems to be within our grasp before 2015.²⁹ However, even halved, the proportion of people living on less than \$1.25 a day was estimated at 22% in 2010, meaning that 1.2 billion people are still living in destitution, and current improvements are unevenly distributed. The Millennium Development Goals Report 2013 estimates that about 870 million people, namely one in eight people, remained undernourished over the period 2010 to 2012, once again unevenly distributed around the globe.

27. World Bank Group/International Development Association (IDA), The World Bank's Fund for the Poorest, Washington DC, June 2013, www.worldbank.org/ida/what-is-ida/fund-for-the-poorest.pdf.

28. Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Foundation Fact Sheet, www.gatesfoundation.org/Who-We-Are/General-Information/Foundation-Factsheet.

29. United Nations, The Millennium Development Goals Report 2013, op. cit.

39. According to the report “Global Food Losses and Food Waste”, published by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in 2011, about one third of the global food production for human consumption, namely approximately 1.3 billion tonnes, is lost during production and commercial distribution or wasted by consumers annually. Every year, consumers in developed countries waste around 222 million tonnes of perfectly edible food, while the net annual production of Sub-Saharan Africa is 230 million tonnes.³⁰ Once again these figures illustrate that production and consumption models of the western world need to be strongly questioned.

40. However, we should not forget those living in wealthy and developed nations, but who are nevertheless reduced to poverty. High unemployment rates, increased taxation, overwhelming financial debts and cuts in social services are plunging many people into poverty in European societies, while governments opt for further dismantling social services through austerity programmes. In some European countries, such as Greece,³¹ Portugal or Spain,³² public educational institutions have recently reported cases of “food insecurity”. Household poverty is known to be the most significant factor keeping children out of school, followed by gender and place of residence.³³ The importance of these issues regarding Europe has led the Parliamentary Assembly to explore them in depth in a specific report on “Ending child poverty in Europe”, currently under preparation in the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development.

3.2. Equal access to health care and decent work for all is not luxury

41. Equal access to health care and decent work may be highlighted here as two examples of thematic areas where Europe could make an impact on upcoming developments through targeted programmes.

3.2.1. Equal access to health care

42. The advancements we have achieved in reducing child mortality, improving maternal health and combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases are undeniable. However, today, in many poor and peripheral rural areas, even basic health-care services are far from being accessible to all, even though the right to health is enshrined in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, which states that “Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including ... healthcare and necessary social services”;³⁴ this set of rights has been reiterated by the World Health Organization (WHO) on numerous occasions since then.³⁵

43. Unfortunately, economic growth does not automatically ensure universal access to basic health care. Governments of developed countries, in their efforts to recover financial stability, have recently targeted rising health costs and opted for budgetary restrictions affecting the general level of health services rendered. In many countries, for example, the capacity of hospitals has been limited and the demand for private health services has increased, which has further contributed to inequalities in the health field.

44. These dynamics have most recently been explored by the Parliamentary Assembly in a report on “Equal access to health care” resulting in [Resolution 1946 \(2013\)](#). In the context of the United Nations, it is also confirmed that universal access to basic health care is crucial and must be ensured globally. At the national level, optimal allocation of resources and monitoring of expenditure are fundamental for the efficiency of basic health-care services, and developed countries should provide technical assistance in this field wherever required. Preventive health care, for example through education or vaccination, are effective additional measures when it comes to protecting the most vulnerable.³⁶

30. FAO, Global Food Losses and Food Waste – Extent, Causes and Prevention, Study conducted for the International Congress SAVE FOOD! at Interpack2011 (Düsseldorf, Germany), Rome 2011, www.fao.org/docrep/014/mb060e/mb060e00.pdf.

31. Liz Alderman, Hunger presses in on Greece, *The International Herald Tribune*, 18 April 2013.

32. Nils Muižnieks, Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, “Spain: human rights need special protection in times of economic crisis and austerity budgets”, <http://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=2072787>.

33. United Nations, The Millennium Development Goals Report 2013, op. cit.

34. United Nation, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 25, www.ohchr.org/EN/UDHR/Documents/UDHR_Translations/eng.pdf.

35. Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights/World Health Organization, The Right to Health, Fact Sheet No. 31, Geneva 2008, www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/Factsheet31.pdf.

36. United Nations, A New Global Partnership: Eradicate Poverty and Transform Economies Through Sustainable Development, The Report of the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, New York, 2013 (page 38), www.post2015hlp.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/UN-Report.pdf.

45. Further calls for the “Access to Health as a Basic Right” have recently been issued by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). In its Resolution adopted at its 126th Assembly, the IPU in particular expresses its concern about the non-achievement of some of the MDGs such as MDGs 4 and 5 (maternal and child mortality) and develops a whole set of recommendations aimed at reinforcing universal access to health care and in particular securing the health of women and children.³⁷

3.2.2. Decent work

46. The issue of decent work has been largely absent from the global debate so far, although it is an essential precondition for achieving some of the other goals and an integral part of the MDGs (target 1B under the goal “eradicate extreme poverty and hunger”). Benefits from our planet’s riches tend to bypass the needs of those who are low on the economic ladder. Core labour standards, some agreed nearly a century ago, are part of our civilisation’s heritage and modern understanding of social justice. But in the world of reckless finance and international commerce, in which European corporations are important players as well, respect for work and human capital is too often relegated to the sidelines of globalisation.

47. Especially in developing countries, the lack of reliable and consistent data restricts the assessment of unemployment and hinders effective measures against it. We know, nevertheless, that the number of workers living on less than \$1.25 per day, classified as the “working poor”, has declined by 294 million since the beginning of this century, even though some 384 million still live under this threshold. According to ILO’s classification, 60.9% of the employed population in developing countries remained at least “nearly poor”, living on less than \$4 per day.³⁸ “Highly vulnerable employment”, including unpaid family workers and self-employed workers, show high rates in Latin America and the Caribbean (31%), Middle East and North Africa (36%) and South Asia (79%), in contrast to OECD member States (15%) and the eurozone (12%).³⁹

48. Full and productive employment and decent work for all, including for women and young people, is judged as the most effective route out of poverty by the ILO, leading to its Decent Work Agenda calling for worldwide action in this field.⁴⁰ ILO and the European Union are currently co-operating on a project on “Monitoring and Assessing Progress on decent work” (MAP) (2009-2013), with a view to strengthening the capacity of developing and transition countries to self-monitor and self-assess progress towards decent work.⁴¹

49. Access to a profession and a fair remuneration provide individuals and families with the financial means to satisfy basic needs and to accumulate savings that enable investments in personal and productive assets. Governments across the world must undertake socio-economic transformations aimed at reaching more inclusive growth and definitively banning child labour and forced labour. However, sustainable economic development in developing countries is more likely to be achieved with governments and the private sector allowing the poorest to participate as partners in the growth of international trade in fair and more equitable conditions, such as those ensured by “fair trade” programmes aimed at creating investment opportunities on endogenous productive capacity.

50. Recent examples have shown that inequalities in industrial and commercial sectors can sometimes find violent expression involving many victims: on 24 April 2013, a whole factory building collapsed in Dhaka, Bangladesh, killing over 1 000 textile workers. However, months after the incident, caused by unsafe conditions of the workplace, most companies involved are still refusing to pay compensation to the victims, denying – as is often the case in such situations – that they have ever had direct commercial relations with the factory.⁴²

51. In this area in particular, international interdependencies become very visible. Populations in the developing world are often forced to accept employment that is far from western standards to ensure their own subsistence whilst responding to the massive demand of western consumers for goods at reasonable

37. IPU, Access to health as a basic right: The role of parliaments in addressing key challenges to securing the health of women and children, Resolution adopted unanimously by the 126th IPU Assembly, Kampala, 5 April 2012, www.ipu.org.

38. United Nations, The Millennium Development Goals Report 2013, op. cit.

39. World Bank Group, official data: <http://data.worldbank.org>.

40. ILO, The Millenium Declaration, the MDGs and ILO’s Decent Work Agenda (overview), www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---exrel/documents/publication/wcms_201786.pdf.

41. All information available on the ILO website: www.ilo.org.

42. Deutsche Welle (DW): South Asia – Bangladesh textile workers await compensation, news item published on 28 August 2013, www.dw.de/bangladesh-textile-workers-await-compensation/a-17046711.

prices. New minimum standards need to be introduced in a sensitive and globally co-ordinated manner in order to avoid problems linked to the exploitation of the poor workforce being simply shifted to other countries.⁴³

52. Any debate on a new vision for our development agenda offers a chance to give decent work a more important place in our priorities for the future. To this end, the Parliamentary Assembly is also dedicating a specific report to this issue, which is currently being prepared by the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development.⁴⁴

53. Developing countries need financial assistance and knowledge for undertaking investments in infrastructures, job creation, skills and innovation, and which potentially raise workers' productivity. Accordingly, the ILO has formulated the two following proposals for the post-2015 development agenda: to upgrade the objective of full and productive employment and decent work as a central goal and not merely as a target to tackle extreme poverty and hunger, and to implement social protection floors for poverty reduction and resilience.⁴⁵ It is a strategy which we support.

54. However, the issue of ensuring decent work for all increasingly threatens job markets in developed countries, where the financial and the economic crisis has boosted unemployment rates, with a 1.7% drop in the employment-to-population ratio.⁴⁶ For Europe in particular, we can quote the case of Greece and Spain, respectively marked by unemployment rates of 26.9% and 26.8% in 2013.⁴⁷ More alarming results are shown amongst the population aged 15-24 years, with rates of 55.3% of youth unemployment for Greece and 53.2% for Spain in 2012.⁴⁸ This situation delays the access to job markets for a great share of this age group, and enterprises thus lose the potential of highly educated candidates who progressively lose their competitiveness and continue to depend on parental resources for their subsistence, often for many years.

3.3. Burning the candle at both ends – new approaches to global economies

55. The progress of humanity seems to be inexorably propelled by the collection, use, trade and consumption of natural resources. Yet this model for growth is flawed in the long run, perhaps with the cost of petroleum as the most evident dilemma of our irrational addiction to resources consumption. Developed countries, which traditionally have been responsible for the most prominent portion of resources depletion and greenhouse gas emissions, are now joined by emerging economies experiencing vigorous economic advancements, whilst at the same time accounting for the largest increases in population.

56. In the face of a world population of 9 billion by 2050, the current stock of natural resources will be put under great strain if current consumption levels are maintained or even further increased. In parallel, the continuous use of fossil fuels, widespread consumerism and the irresponsible disposal of waste continue to poison our environment. It is therefore crucial that both "old" and "new" consumers are made fully aware of the devastating consequences if we persist in a direction that is meant to lead to "progress" and "development" around the globe but in effect will finally undermine our efforts through the destruction of our natural resources and environment.

3.3.1. Need for a more comprehensive understanding of sustainable development

57. Amongst the most visible consequences of progress, CO₂ emissions globally increased by over 46% between 1990 and 2010, nearly one third of marine fish stocks were depleted, deforestation and desertification keep spreading and many species are at risk of extinction, to quote a few examples.⁴⁹ With a rise of merely 0.8°C over preindustrial levels, highly vulnerable regions in Africa, Asia and the Pacific are already suffering severe environmental impacts on ecosystems, forest areas and water supplies. If our attempts to revert this tendency remain unsuccessful in the next decades, we will reach the threshold marked by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change with a temperature rise close to 2°C, causing widespread food shortages, extreme weather, including persistent heat waves and draughts.⁵⁰

43. Kanth Devarakonda, Ravi, New Labour Norms Could Hurt Bangladesh, Interpress Agency News Service, 13 July 2013, www.ipsnews.net/2013/07/new-labour-norms-could-hurt-bangladesh/.

44. Report on "Decent work for all".

45. ILO, Jobs and Livelihoods at the heart of the post-2015 Development Agenda, ILO Concept Note on the post-2015 development agenda, www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/statement/wcms_205641.pdf.

46. United Nations, The Millennium Development Goals Report 2013, op. cit.

47. Eurostat, statistics database: <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/eurostat/home/>.

48. Eurostat News Release 107/2013, The measurement of youth unemployment – an overview of the key concepts, 12 July 2012, http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_PUBLIC/3-12072013-BP/EN/3-12072013-BP-EN.PDF.

49. United Nations (UN): The Millennium Development Goals Report 2013, op. cit.

58. The World Bank's report "Turn Down the Heat" revealed in 2012 that the greenhouse effect will eventually provoke a temperature increase of 4°C over preindustrial levels by the end of this century unless we undertake adequate and co-ordinated action. Sub-Saharan Africa will be one of the most affected regions in the world, where poverty and hunger are expected to further spread with little room for resilience. The World Bank's recent commitment to end extreme poverty by 2030 is perhaps within our reach, but climate change and its consequences threaten its success.

59. So far, we have failed in our attempt to revert the tendency of growing CO₂ emissions and the destruction of natural resources. If we aspire to halt the course of this direction, we must take effective steps including the development of environment-friendly technologies for transportation, industrial production, household emissions and energy generation, the promotion of responsible consumption and production, the support of scientific research and development and negotiation of integrated action with strong political determination and clear international co-operation.

60. It should be recalled that the true added value of the concept of sustainable development lies in its transversality aimed at co-ordinating economic, environmental and social matters in a manner that ensures the well-being of present and future generations.⁵¹ From the launch of the Rio process in 1992 onwards, nations of the world have made it very clear that integrating economic, social and environmental aspects was the main aim. This was confirmed at the Rio+20 conference, also held in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) from 20 to 22 June 2012.

61. In its final declaration, the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development recognised that poverty eradication, changing unsustainable and promoting sustainable patterns of consumption/production and protecting and managing the natural resource base of economic and social development are the overarching objectives. They also acknowledged that democracy, good governance and the rule of law are essential for sustainable development and confirm that, in reaching out to the fulfilment of the Millennium Development Goals, the interdependence of different countries and areas of development must be taken into account.⁵²

3.3.2. Recognising global interdependencies and the real costs of environmental destruction

62. The following are two examples illustrating how the economic, social and environmental dimensions of human development are interconnected and to what extent new cross-cutting perceptions are needed: On the one hand, we are looking at an increasing group of "environmental refugees", including those who migrate because environmental degradation has undermined their livelihood or poses unacceptable risks for their health.⁵³ On the other hand, we are witnessing high levels of global consumption of resources where many can access services having a huge environmental impact without necessarily contributing to the real costs of their behaviour. In 2012, the United States' Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) released an annual forecast projecting that airline passenger travel will nearly double in the next 20 years.⁵⁴ At the same time, environmental studies show that just one return flight from London to New York produces a greater carbon footprint⁵⁵ than a whole year's personal allowance needed to keep the climate safe.⁵⁶ One of the challenges of sustainable development will be to overcome such incoherences and address the enormous environmental impact of the individual consumer's behaviour, not least by strengthening the "polluter pays principle".

50. World Bank, Turn Down the Heat: Climate Extremes, Regional Impacts, and the Case for Resilience, A Report by the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research and Climate Analytics, Washington DC, November 2012.

51. "Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It contains within it two key concepts: the concept of needs, in particular the essential needs of the world's poor, to which overriding priority should be given; and the idea of limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organisation on the environment's ability to meet present and future needs." – Definition provided by the Brundtland report in 1987, laying the foundations for today's concept of sustainable development.

52. United Nations, Report of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 20-22 June 2012, New York, 2012.

53. Renaud, Bogardi, Dun, Warner, Environmental Degradation and Migration, in: Online Handbook Demography of the Berlin-Institut für Bevölkerung und Entwicklung (Berlin Institute für Population and Development), September 2008, www.berlin-institut.org/online-handbookdemography/environmental-migration.html.

54. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Press Release – Airline Passenger Travel to Nearly Double in Two Decades, www.faa.gov/news/press_releases/news_story.cfm?newsId=13394.

55. Our carbon footprint is the estimated amount of carbon dioxide (CO₂) given out as we travel, buy food, heat our homes and enjoy our usual lifestyles, definition proposed by the Environmental Transport Association (ETA), see following footnote.

56. Environmental Transport Association (ETA): Air Travel's Impact on Climate Change, <https://www.eta.co.uk/environmental-info/air-travels-impact-on-climate-change/>.

63. In China for example, it was recently estimated that the cost of environmental degradation amounted to \$230 billion in 2010, or 3.5% of their nation's GDP. China is therefore paying a high price for its rapid industrialisation or, as one economic expert puts it: "Digging a hole and filling it back in again gives you GDP growth. It doesn't give you economic value. A lot of the activity in China and elsewhere over the last few years has been digging holes to fill them back in again – anything from bailing out failing solar companies to ignoring the 'externalities' of economic growth."⁵⁷

4. Conclusions and recommendations for European action

64. The advancements achieved through the first MDG Framework are unquestionable. We have proved to ourselves that effective measures can be taken to tackle poverty and hunger. Yet having fulfilled some of the most paramount goals of the MDG Framework five years ahead of the 2015 deadline does not entitle us to relax our efforts and forget the millions of individuals still suffering from poverty.

65. The extent to which MDGs will be achieved by 2015 and beyond will depend on various determinants, including the political will and level of agreement between nations, coherence and effectiveness of the post-2015 MDG framework, compliance with ODA, education, transparency and effectiveness in aid expenditure, the capacity of generating endogenous wealth, as well as creating visible results in laying the foundations for a truly sustainable development.

66. Revised lines of action must be defined and put into practice from the year 2015 onwards, as some of the MDGs have evidently not been accomplished and new targets need to be added. In this process, several elements should be taken into consideration, such as the interdependence of different MDGs, the need to set more ambitious targets or to adapt the current funding architecture.

67. Further determinants that will have an influence on the successful achievement of MDGs will be the capacity of promoting good governance in the most committed manner possible, including fighting corruption and the waste of resources, both in the developed and the developing world. Without ensuring transparency and the rule of law, any resources generated and distributed through international assistance programmes will remain ineffective in the long run.

68. A number of key factors have been identified in the present report which still represent enormous obstacles on the path to a more balanced and sustainable global development and should be given priority in the two remaining years of the current MDG process and beyond 2015. Amongst these are ensuring gender equality, providing equal opportunities to women and young people, fighting violence against women and girls and fully guaranteeing sexual and reproductive health and rights to women and girls. Whilst addressing these challenges is extremely urgent in developing countries, Europe is not exempt from the need to commit to them.

69. Against this background, Europe's contribution should in particular consist in:

- stepping up efforts to reduce global and regional inequalities under the current MDG framework;
- setting a good example as regards good governance, based on democratic structures and processes, and the committed fight against corruption, and continuing to promote such values and measures in and beyond Europe;
- addressing the above-mentioned key factors hindering development and promoting the political willingness for doing so;
- contributing to the international negotiation process by asking that the development framework beyond 2015 be accordingly completed by a set of new goals.

70. Europe is one of the main stakeholders when it comes to making progress in human development and further advancing in the achievements of MDG goals by 2015 and beyond, both in terms of sharing knowledge, such as on sustainable development, good governance, and of questioning our own economic needs and practices which are having dramatic social and environmental consequences. In upcoming negotiation processes taking place within the international community, the Council of Europe should ensure that Greater Europe speaks with one voice and that this European message is heard.

57. *New York Times*, Cost of Environmental Damage in China Growing Rapidly Amid Industrialization, 30 March 2013, www.nytimes.com/2013/03/30/world/asia/cost-of-environmental-degradation-in-china-is-growing.html?_r=0.

71. The Parliamentary Assembly, in particular, should also join forces with other parliamentary bodies such as the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the Parliament of the Americas, the European Parliament, the Commonwealth Foundation, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean, the African Nations Group and others who are strongly involved in the post-2015 MDG process. The IPU in particular is amongst those calling for a replacement of the current MDG framework by a new set of global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs),⁵⁸ including both global goals for the eradication of poverty and for fostering sustainable development – once again, a proposal that I would also strongly recommend, be supported by the Parliamentary Assembly in the light of the above data.

72. The Council of Europe in general and the Parliamentary Assembly, as one of its two organs, already take concrete action contributing to progress under some of the key factors of balanced development as identified by this report. Alongside its reporting activities, currently including different texts on climate change, decent work and child poverty, the Parliamentary Assembly has been leading various promotional campaigns to combat violence against women and girls (see chapter 2.1 above) in recent years. It promotes the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (CETS No. 210) through its “Parliamentary Network Women Free from Violence”. The fight against sexual violence against children (both girls and boys) and, in this respect, the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (CETS No. 201) are promoted through the parliamentary dimension of the ONE in FIVE campaign (2010-2014).

73. Council of Europe intergovernmental activities in this field include various activities on gender equality and in particular the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2012-2015) in which “Eliminating all forms of violence against children” is one of the strategic objectives. Amongst all these activities aiming at the implementation of European standards, in particular the child’s rights’ programme is due to be updated in 2014 and pursued after 2015; it therefore remains one of the tools through which Europe could make a substantial contribution to global development processes.

58. See Advance Notice for the 2013 Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations (New York, 14-15 November 2013).