

3. Statement on Millennium Development Goals

Schokland Agreement for the second half of the MGDs (2007 - 2015)



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Including article by Ruud Lubbers and Herman Mulder:
'Red gletsjers en armen met één plan'

worldconnectors

In 2007 the Worldconnectors wrote four statements related to the themes Migration and Development, Global Human Security, Millennium Development Goals and Policy Coherence for Development. All four statements are prepared by Working Groups before presentation and discussion at the Round Table of Worldconnectors.

The statement on MDGs – discussed by all Worldconnectors at the Round Table on 6 July 2007 at the World Forum Convention Centre in The Hague – is an inspiration and starting point for further dialogue, public debate and media activities of the Worldconnectors.

The Working Group on MDGs consists of the following Worldconnectors: Henny Helmich, Willemijn Aerds, Sandra van Beest, Anna Chojnacka, Hans Eenhoorn, Teresa Fogelberg, Louise Groenman, Herman Mulder, Gabi Spitz, Erik Thijs Wedershoven and supporters: Dušica Vukolić and Alide Roerink (NCDO), Gordana Stanković (SID NI), Karen Witsenburg (DPRN), Roeland Muskens (Wereld in Woorden).

The following special guests at the Round Table in July have contributed to the statement as well: Jan Pronk (Institute of Social Studies and former Dutch Minister of Development Cooperation), Mirian Vilela (Earth Charter).

Reactions and comments on the statement can be shared on the website www.worldconnectors.nl and readers are invited to exchange inspiring examples and initiatives that illustrate and support Millennium Development Goals via email: roundtable@worldconnectors.nl.

Other statements:

1. Statement on Migration and Development
2. Statement on Global Human Security
4. Statement on Policy Coherence for Development: Aid, Trade, Investment and other issues

Colofon

February 2008

Annex to ‘Inspiring a Global Mindset – an overview of 2007’

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This statement is printed on FSC paper

Printed copies: 2000

I. REFLECTIONS

- 1 We as Worldconnectors² believe that the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are currently the most valuable shared programme in the global fight against poverty, hunger and diseases. Never before has the global community of governments agreed to formulate and act upon such specific promises to end extreme poverty. Never before have they accepted accountability vis-à-vis world public opinion. Never before have such promises been benchmarked by concrete, measurable, realistic, time-bound, and tough indicators. We see the MDGs as a part of the Millennium Declaration that encompasses a wider agenda of global human security, conflict prevention and peace building.
- 2 On the evening of the 6 July 2007, the world will be halfway the road to reaching the MDGs. We feel that this halfway point is an important occasion to evaluate the progress achieved so far, to reaffirm our commitment to the MDGs and to invite all our fellow world citizens to support the urgent work to realise these goals.
- 3 Our determination to reach the MDGs by 2015 is based on our commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the United Nations in 1948, and our firm belief in the principles and agenda of the Earth Charter, launched in June 2000. We are encouraged by the ‘Peoples Millennium Forum Declaration and Agenda for Action’, adopted by more than 1,000 NGOs in May 2000. We strongly feel that poverty, hunger and the deep divide between rich and poor on our planet, and in individual countries, constitutes an unacceptable violation of human rights.
- 4 We see that further important progress has been achieved since the MDGs were adopted in 2000. The MDGs have a remarkable capacity as a mobilising and organising vehicle for concrete action. Millions of people worldwide – individuals, companies, governmental institutions, non-governmental organisations – have become active in the fight against poverty, hunger and disease. The debate on development and the MDGs has been rich and will be continued for a long time. Nowadays, development is much more about poverty alleviation by coherence and global human security as an end in itself. Development efforts, by all actors, have become more accountable, not in the least to people in developing countries. But more progress is urgently needed, as at present about 1 billion people have to live off one dollar a day or less and as a consequence suffer from chronic hunger. In addition, climate change threatens to disproportionately affect poor people.
- 5 The MDGs are the welcome product of unique consensus among governments and heads of state. In the formulation process of the MDGs, civil society and the private sector played an important role. However, we feel that at the halfway mark to 2015, all actors of civil society and private business should be invited to become more fully engaged as stakeholders in the process to reach the MDGs. Otherwise, we fear that working towards the MDGs in the societies of the world may become less of a priority.
- 6 We, the Worldconnectors, realise that the MDGs are not perfect. Ending only half of extreme world poverty by 2015 can never be presented as overambitious. We know that development is too complex to be summarised by merely eight goals and 48 indicators. Ownership of the implementation of MDGs – in particular by women – will be crucial. We know that the poor will need our support in order to play their role in policy making.
- 7 Ending world poverty has everything to do with executing the right policies, with creating fair trade relations, with creating equal opportunities, with a fair distribution of income, with access to power, with creating a level playing field, with respect for sustainability. We believe that with the abundance of resources our world has to offer – nature, knowledge, technology and wealth – there is no excuse for failure to in eradicating all extreme poverty. It is however,

not only a matter of using resources and knowledge as best as we can, and improving collaboration while managing these, but it is also about making the right political choices and priorities. It means that we need to support poor men and women in their struggle to gain access to resources, education, health, services and – public – goods, and ultimately to their fair share of political power to influence fair policies. Development co-operation is all about building the capacity of poor people to take their fate into their own hands.

8 We are concerned that at the current pace and given the present politics, some of the MDGs may not be reached³. Other MDGs will only be reached through rapid developments in some regions of the world, while elsewhere, notably in Sub-Sahara Africa and the Arab region, countries are seriously lagging behind. We took notice of the fact that about one third of the world extreme poor live in conflict areas and states fragilised by conflict. This fact requires special attention when devising poverty reduction strategies. We also are worried that the MDGs that deal with the position of poor women and children in particular have seriously fallen into arrears. We note that even in countries where the MDGs are on track, the other half of the poor are not always included in progress. Poverty eradication has led to the inclusion of the middle income groups, yet has often left the poorest of the poor even further behind. We are acutely aware of the strong nexus between conflict, post-conflict regions, fragile states, and poverty. We fear that the growth of the world economy, with the use of present technology, will put too much pressure on biodiversity. We need to realize that we share this planet with countless other living species, with a value in their own right and on whose survival all other creatures including mankind ultimately also depend.

9 The Worldconnectors are concerned that dramatic changes on the global stage – particularly after ‘9/11’ – have diverted attention and resources away from the fight against poverty. Attention seems to be devoted to a renewed kind of Cold War, which has autistic effects on two camps and it has led to suspicion of moderate forces who continue to build connections between civilizations. Currently more resources are invested in the military ‘War on Terror’ than all efforts combined to fight poverty. We feel that the symptoms of insecurity are dealt with, but the causes are too often overlooked. Poverty eradication should be positioned central stage again.

10 We realise that, halfway the road to 2015, we are entering into increasingly difficult areas where chronic poverty is multifaceted and external circumstances of conflict, crime and a permanent culture of oppression of women, seclusion and non-recognition of women’s strengths, are more challenging. We will need to use our creativity, intellectual and financial resources to make real progress. Paradoxically, the urgency of this enterprise demands patience and perseverance. Success is never guaranteed. Quick fixes do not exist. The enterprise of development and empowerment needs risk-takers more than ever before.

II. RENEWAL

1 We, as Worldconnectors, we connect committed persons from the worlds of politics, of non-governmental organisations, of national and international governmental institutions, of knowledge and advisory centres, of the media, of the business community, of youth organisations, and of religious organisations. We pledge to renew our commitment to reach the MDGs and to be accountable to each other in our efforts.

2 We pledge to respect human dignity: that all human beings are born equal with the right to life and liberty and to be free from want, fear and insecurity. Nobody is born into this world as an illegal citizen. In particular, we pledge to fight for the human rights of women and children and to empower women and men to end violence. We will defend the free choice of lifestyle and worship.

3 We pledge to actively guard and defend existing bridges between civilizations, and to restore bridges where extremists on all sides are breaking them down. We condemn the mistreatment of migrants in our societies and we believe asylum should be provided for those who seek protection from persecution. We believe that well-regulated labour migration can be a powerful tool in the fight against poverty, and can indeed lead to benefits for countries of origin, countries of destination and for individual migrants (a triple win).

4 We pledge to assure that the institutions and enterprises we work for (governmental, non-governmental and private) function along the principles of (corporate) social responsibility and contribute to sustainable development. We will take into account the impact our activities, services, consumption patterns and production practices have on our fellow citizens, especially those in the poorest and most marginalised societies.

5 The Worldconnectors are convinced that for the next half of the MDG-timeframe, all actors must reinforce their intellectual, political and financial efforts to reach the MDGs. The Dutch Worldconnectors call upon their government

and their political leaders to be a good example: in resource allocation to MDGs, in policy coherence for development, in pushing for better policies within the European frameworks, in high quality development policies, in the support for good governance, democracy and the rule of law, and in creating a specific focus on the role of women in development and their position in society to reach in particular those MDG targets in relation to health and education that lag behind.

6 We call upon governments of the developed world to intensify their efforts to reach the targets of official development aid, and to strengthen their resolve to arrive at a more just and equal playing field for all participants: in trade, debt relief, and empowerment. We call upon the governments of the developing regions to uphold their part of the promises. The Millennium Development Project has brought together a wide network of experts to review approaches to reach the MDGs. We call upon governments to act according to their recommendations and to actively monitor results.

7 Coherence in agendas (of governments, business and civil society) of global poverty eradication is vital. We call upon governments to carefully review all existing and new policies with regard to their direct and indirect effect on the position of developing countries, on the poor in those countries, and on the fight against world poverty, hunger and diseases. Notably, we call upon the members of the European Union and the European Commission (EC) to implement the pledges of the ‘European Consensus’ (2005), as an agreement between the European Council, the European Parliament and the EC to make a difference in achieving the MDGs, especially in the vulnerable countries. We call upon all parliaments of EU-Member states to stimulate the European Commission to give the MDGs a more central stage⁴.

8 We pledge to invest in a global strengthening of networks in civil society (of researchers; activists; politicians; entrepreneurs) to build a truly global network of world connectors. We

will actively work within our institutions and organisations to prioritise attention and support for the MDGs.

9 We call upon all individuals, organisations, institutions and companies in our networks to support this pledge. As a global network we call for the establishment of MDG (budgeting and results) monitoring institutions and activities in all countries of the world, and we call for the support of citizens committees to facilitate and encourage information exchange about the MDGs and related national policies and practices. Monitoring is not just about collecting quantitative data. It is also about monitoring and observing processes in the fight against poverty, and about monitoring evolving public values and perspectives on human dignity. We

call on them to influence their own public opinion as well as the global public.

10 We invite all readers of this statement, each from his or her own position, to commit themselves to renewing their intention to reach the MDGs. We invite all readers to add to this statement their own personal pledge in the fight against poverty, and to be accountable about their pledge. We believe that everybody has a role to play in this effort. If you can write a letter, write that letter, if you can plant a tree, plant a tree, if you can sing, sing a song! Show that you care and inspire and connect to others by demonstrating your individual commitment. Write a blog or contribute to a website. Speak up, take action!

III. ACTION! MY PERSONAL STATEMENT

Example of a personal statement⁵ form which was used in 2007.

In support of the MDG statement of the Worldconnectors and in addition to the pledges made by the Worldconnectors, I, as a private person, in my society, in my networks of family, friends and colleagues, and in my professional capacity, pledge to take the following action, as my personal endeavour to reach the MDGs. Furthermore, I promise I may be held accountable for this promise⁵:

The Hague, 6 July 2007

Name:

Date:

Organisation/network/function/different, if appropriate:

E-mail:

Signature

Notes:

- Schokland was a densely populated island in the Zuiderzee: it is a symbol of the struggle against the sea and against deep poverty in the Netherlands. In 1859, the economic and ecological environment forced the last villagers to evacuate. Schokland became the first Dutch monument to be included in the Unesco World Heritage List. On 30 June 2007, the Government of the Netherlands invited all citizens and companies to support its renewal of efforts to reach the MDGs by committing to the 'Agreements of Schokland'. Governments cannot reach the MDGs on their own but need to work together with citizens and the private sector.
- Worldconnectors wish to re-connect Dutch society to the world. They are (opinion) leaders in the public, business, media, policy and/or political arena, and engage in cross-sector dialogue with each other, with the aim of connecting knowledge and views and advancing global thinking and to critically analyse current trends and ideas and propose alternative views and strategies. We wish 'to encourage the ambition and enhance the role of the Netherlands as a key player in the global community of nations and peoples, with the urgent aim of working towards a just, sustainable and peaceful world'. See: www.worldconnectors.nl
- The Millennium Development Goals Report 2007, 2 July 2007
- Cf: Report of the European Parliament on the MDGs the Midway Point (2007/2103 (INI)) by Glenys Kinnock, 11 June 2007
- Examples of possible contributions and endeavours:
 - Cities can become 'world connector cities' and twin with cities in developing countries.
 - Disadvantaged neighbourhoods in rich countries could link up with similar neighbourhoods in poorer countries: reciprocally important and practical lessons can be learnt in social and economic inclusion approaches.
 - Companies should instruct their foundations (charitable foundations linked to enterprises) to address the MDGs as their core business. On a national level they should create national corporate MDG foundations focused on private sector development in developing regions and investments in 'bottom of the pyramid' policies.

- Companies can direct part of their expertise and manpower to solving problems related to poverty, hunger and diseases
- Farmers can create and renew links with their colleagues in poorer regions of the world.
- Knowledge institutions could re-energise their links with institutions in poorer countries.
- All citizens, companies, organisations and institutions, can pledge to set aside, independent of the actions of their governments, at least 1% of their resources, time and investments to reach the MDGs. In those countries where their governments are not yet at this level they can lead by setting the example.
- The Ghana Netherlands 1-2-1 initiative could be copied in other sectors and by other countries to other countries (see www.sign.nl).
- Everyone can invest part of their intellectual resources, attention, analytical skills, prayers, creativity, writing and art creation, and their energy, in a global push to reach the MDGs.
- If you have experience in health insurance and social protection schemes, think about how you could apply these, with colleague organisations, in developing countries, creating social insurance from the bottom-up.
- Public awareness of the MDGs is crucial to engage and commit the general public. Learn about them and communicate. Write letters and articles. Show that you care, inspire others!
- Action! My Personal Statement: Example form of a personal statement. The Round Table resulted in personal statements by Worldconnectors and others.

Red gletsjers en armen met één plan

De aarde kan pas gereed worden als er tegelijk ook aandacht is voor haar armste bewoners, aldus **Ruud Lubbers** en **Herman Mulder**.

Vandaag zullen tientallen internationale topartiesten hun gezamenlijke sterrenstatus inzetten om alarm te slaan over de opwarming en klimaatverandering van onze planeet en zo mensen inspireren tot actie. De organisatoren van 'Live Earth' hopen twee miljard mensen te bereiken.

Maar klimaatverandering is slechts een van de noodsituaties waarmee de wereld kampt. Die lopen uiteen van massale armoede tot wijdverspreide gewelddadige conflicten en het verlies van biodiversiteit, en al deze problemen zijn met elkaar verbonden. Om het gevaar van willekeurig welke van deze noodsituaties te keren, moeten en kunnen ze op een meer integrale manier worden aangepakt. Dit is een moeilijker boodschap, maar de wereld moet de mogelijkheden aangrijpen om deze tijdens Live Earth over te brengen.

Klimaatverandering lijkt inderdaad het wereldprobleem zoals campagneleider Al Gore zegt dat het is. Het is duidelijk dat we als wereld moeten samenkomen om deze enorme uitdaging voor onze toekomst aan te gaan. Maar smeltende gletsjers, stijgende zeespiegels en veranderende regenpatronen moeten gezien worden als symptomen van een grotere en complexere aandoening. Andere symptomen zijn de toenemende armoede in sommige delen van de wereld, overconsumptie elders, ernstige overtredingen van vrede en mensenrechten, en de achteruitgang van natuurlijke systemen.

Al deze symptomen en vooral de opwarming van de aarde hangen samen met het gebruik en de verdeling van hulpbronnen in de wereld. We zijn met steeds meer mensen en we gebruiken meer energie, meer materialen, meer voedsel, met steeds krachtiger technologieën. Oppervlakkig gezien klinkt dit niet als een beschrijving van een aandoening; voor een heleboel mensen lijkt de toegenomen economische vooruitgang hun leven te verbeteren.

Toch, zoals de concerten van Live Earth en de vroegere Live Aid-concerten proberen te onderstrepen, vindt deze vooruitgang plaats op een wijze die vanuit menselijk perspectief onrechtvaardig en vanuit milieuperspectief gevaarlijk is. Profijt op het ene gebied wordt ingewisseld voor verlies op ander gebied. En op sommige plaatsen lijken mensenrechten in verval te raken. Wat is er verkeerd gegaan?

Een manier om te begrijpen wat er verkeerd gaat, is te kijken naar die plaatsen waar veel dingen goed gaan. Denk bijvoorbeeld aan

de positieve sociale veranderingen in Noord-Ierland en Zuid-Afrika. Denk ook aan de prestaties van recente Nobelprijswinnaars Wangari Maathai (oprichtster van de Greenbelt Movement in Kenia) en Mohamed Yunus (oprichter van de Grameen Bank in Bangladesh). Zulke voorbeelden bewijzen dat wat het syndroom ook is dat onze wereld aantast, er allerlei redenen zijn om aan te nemen dat het behandeld en uiteindelijk genezen kan worden.

Wat hebben de goede voorbeelden gemeen? In ieder geval is visie een deel van het antwoord. Verder staat het aanhangen van ethische waarden centraal in elke visie op progressieve sociale verandering. Waar ontwikkeling echt rechtvaardig en duurzaam is, vind je mensen die geïnspireerd worden door een aansprekende, inclusieve en integrale ethische visie en de wil om van die visie realiteit te maken. Zorgen voor mensen en zorgen voor de aarde worden niet als aparte uitdagingen gezien, maar als onderdelen van één grote taak.

Als Live Earth erin slaagt de aandacht van de wereld te richten op het probleem van opwarming van de aarde, moet het ook mogelijk zijn de aandacht te richten op een meer geïntegreerde aanpak van 's werelds aandoeningen. Een handvat om te helpen dit grotere geheel te zien, is het Handvest van de Aarde, een verklaring die is onderschreven als een oproep tot actie door duizenden organisaties, vele regeringen, instituten en vooraanstaande leiders. Een ander handvat wordt gevormd door de Millenniumdoelen van de Verenigde Naties, wier campagne om te voldoen aan de basale menselijke behoeften met bescherming van het milieu ook de datum 7-7-07 in de planning had om een wereldevenement te organiseren, lang voordat Live Earth bedacht werd.

Geleid door deze breed omarmde wereldvisies en waarden kunnen we vele initiatieven naar voren halen die streven naar vermindering van armoede en tegelijkertijd broeikasgassen verminderen, en zijn er klimaatbeschermingsprogramma's waarin ook schone energie geproduceerd wordt voor ontwikkelingslanden –terwijl deze ook resulteren in meer vrede en verbeterde mensenrechten in de wereld als een geheel.

We kunnen het ons niet meer veroorloven te kiezen voor of de gezondheid van de natuur of de welvaart van de mensheid. Inzien dat het Earth Charter en de Millenniumdoelen onderdeel zijn van de agenda van Live Earth kan helpen dat initiatief zijn ultieme doelstelling te laten bereiken: een gezonde planeet voor ons allemaal.

Ruud Lubbers is minister van Staat en voormalig Hoge Commissaris voor de Vluchtelingen voor de VN.

Herman Mulder is als adviseur verbonden aan het Earth Charter Initiatief. Beide auteurs maken deel uit van het worldconnectors-collectief. Zie ook www.worldconnectors.nl

In combination with every statement the Worldconnectors reach out for dialogue and debate with Dutch society by writing articles among others. For the theme Millennium Development Goals, Worldconnectors Ruud Lubbers and Herman Mulder wrote the following article. It was published in *de Volkskrant* on 7 July 2007.

