

17th Sept. 2010

Press Release on MDGs

Centre for Poverty Reduction & Social Policy Development (CPRSPD), Planning Commission, Government of Pakistan has launched the Pakistan Millennium Development Goals Report (PMDGR) 2010 on 17th of September, 2010.

Pakistan along with other world leaders adopted the Millennium Declaration in the year 2000, and pledged to “*spare no efforts to free our fellow men, women and children from the abject and dehumanizing conditions of extreme poverty*”. With only five years remaining efforts for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) becomes increasingly important. The UN MDG summit, also known as high level plenary meeting of the General Assembly, later this month is focusing to agree on an agenda to spur collective action for attaining Millennium Development Goals over the next five years (by 2015).

The Pakistan Millennium Development Goals Report 2010 part of the MDG monitoring and evaluation process is the fourth report in the series, produced by the Planning Commission, Government of Pakistan. The report provides a keen analysis of present status and challenges towards achieving the MDGs.

The report covers the period since 2006 in which numerous and far reaching developments have taken place, which have transformed the social, political, and economic landscape of Pakistan, all having an impact on the outcomes, achievements and targets of Pakistan’s Millennium Development Goals. For instance, security issues have been of concern for last many years but since 2007-08, they have been highly aggravated affecting the physical, social and human capital outcomes, undermining the development efforts. The economy has suffered losses in foreign domestic investment and exports due to the spill-over effects of global economic recession; followed by the financial crisis in the developed countries while the global commodity price shock had already contributed to the miseries of the poor. Moreover, the devastating floods of August – September 2010 have affected more than 20 million people, ravaged different rural and urban areas destroying infrastructure and agricultural heart lands of the country. This has adversely impacted the overall economy and the achievement of many of the MDG targets will remain an ambitious objective.

Dr. Nadeem ul Haque, Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission was the chief guest of the launching ceremony of the PMDGs Report 2010. Mr. Ahmad Owais Pirzada, Additional Secretary, Planning Commission also the National Project Director, CPRSPD welcomed the participants.

In his key note address, Mr. Ashraf M. Hayat, Secretary, Planning and Development Division, told the participants that this report has significant importance as it is the only monitoring tool for measuring Pakistan's performance in achieving MDGs. While only five years remain towards the attainment of these goals by 2015, the UN Summit is very timely to reassess the World's commitment with respect to MDGs. In spite of all the challenges and unfavourable circumstances faced by Pakistan, the Government of Pakistan is resolved to fulfil its commitment of achieving MDGs. A number of initiatives have been taken towards this end, with the most significant being the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) and allied social safety net programs.

Mr. Ashraf Hayat also emphasized that the developed world should fulfil its role by: allowing free access to their markets; transfer of new technologies; and by providing favourable terms of trade. He also invited the international community to come forward and play their part in development of flood affected areas. Although half-a-decade may sound too short a period towards achieving the MDGs, however, with strong commitment and persistent efforts by the Government of Pakistan and its development partners, the MDG targets may remain achievable.

The Resident Coordinator, United Nations, Pakistan Mr. Onder Yucer and Country Director, UNDP, Pakistan, Mr. Toshihiro Tanaka also addressed the participants. Mr. Ashraf Hayat, Secretary, Planning Commission presented a copy of the PMDGR 2010 to the Chief Guest, Dr. Nadeem ul Haque.

Dr. Nadeem ul Haque in his address told the participants that slow economic growth, severe energy crisis, socio-political problems, security issues, war on terror, recent floods and subsequent displacement of millions have definitely put enormous pressure on the economy. It is a great challenge to tackle these issues, which will be having far reaching adverse impact on the country not only in terms of achievement of the MDG goals and targets, but also in achieving sustained economic growth over the next few years.

He also said that the Government of Pakistan is putting all its efforts to cope with above mentioned challenges and aims at increasing the economic growth rate. To this end, Planning Commission is already working on devising a Growth Strategy, which aims at making Pakistan competitive in global markets. With regards to improving the livelihood of poor and marginalized segments of the society, the Government of Pakistan has taken several measures, among which reaching consensus of National Finance Commission Award and introduction of social safety nets especially through Benazir Income Support Program are the most significant.

He acknowledged that the international development partners and civil society organizations have joined hands with the Government in this regard. He also said that the developing world is lapsing on its commitment towards achieving the Eight Goal: Developing a global partnership for development. The rich countries' trade policies are impeding Pakistan's exports. They can help to provide much needed quota free and duty free access to exporters from developing countries like Pakistan as recommended in the Eighth Goal. He further added that we can only tackle the current challenges by joint efforts and hope that the development partners will support Pakistan's stance on the final goal.

A detailed presentation on the status of MDGs targets was presented by Ms Aisha Maqsood Ahmed, Gender Specialist, CPRSPD. It is evident from the statistics presented in the report that Pakistan has adopted 16 national targets 37 indicators against the 08 MDGs, keeping in view the priorities and data availability. Pakistan is ahead in 06 indicators; on track in two; slow in 04; lags behind in 20 indicators and is off track only in one indicator.

The ceremony ended by the closing remarks and letter of thanks by the Chief Economist, Planning Commission of the Planning and Development Division. He stressed that that growth is a necessary condition, though not sufficient, for alleviating poverty. He added that, the UN MDG Summit will hopefully achieve its objective of agreeing on a new action agenda to achieve the MDGs by 2015. He also hoped that the world leaders gathering at the summit will commit to make use of their country's trade preferences in a manner that will help Pakistan to receive a much needed boost towards growth as well as realizing MDGs.