



WORLDCONNECTORS THE ROUND TABLE FOR PEOPLE AND THE PLANET

Quick Scan

Worldconnectors thematic background document

The Millennium Development Goals and Dutch Policy Coherence for Development

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1. Introduction

This quick scan aims to give an overview of recent developments, debates, key players and crucial moments related to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Dutch policy coherence for development. The aim of the report is to provide strategic input for the policy framework of the NCDO (the National Commission on Sustainable Development) and the new Round Table of the Worldconnectors.

The first chapter deals with the policy field of the MDGs, the genesis of the Goals and some of the latest developments. Chapter two provides an outline of the main debates regarding the MDGs. The third chapter focuses on Dutch actors: government, political parties, civil society and business. Chapter four is a list of important players in the field of the MDGs and policy coherence for development. This chapter ends with a list of relevant documents and reports (all available on the internet). Annex I contains a list of relevant events for the period 2007 to 2010.

1.1 The genesis of the Millennium Development Goals

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)¹ began as a review of development policy by the Development Co-operation Directorate of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD-DAC) in the mid-1990s. After being called 'the Seven Pledges', they evolved into the International Development Goals in 2000. In September 2000, the member states of the United Nations unanimously adopted the Millennium Declaration. Following consultations among international agencies, including the World Bank, the IMF, the OECD, and the specialised agencies of the United Nations, the General Assembly recognised the Millennium Development Goals as part of the road map for implementing the Millennium Declaration.

¹ The Goals, Targets and Indicators are listed at:

<http://www.oecd.org/topic/0,2686,en_2649_34585_1_1_1_1_37413,00.html>

Before 1989, development cooperation was not really about poverty reduction. For the most part, aid was given as a geo-political tool, to keep southern regimes from shifting their allegiance towards the socialist camp and vice versa. Only after the fall of the Berlin Wall, was a consensus arrived at that poverty reduction should be the main goal of development cooperation. In the nineties, a number of UN conferences were organised to discuss the position of the global environment, women, human rights, habitat etc.²

The Millennium Development Goals gather key development commitments from these UN World Conferences and prioritise these 'agendas', which have to be reached by 2015.

A plan for the achievement of the MDGs was set up, including a global campaign.

The Goals aim to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; achieve universal primary education; promote gender equality and empower women; reduce child mortality; improve maternal health; combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; ensure environmental sustainability; and develop a global partnership for development.

The Goals are designed as a set of measurable benchmarks for assessing progress at the national level. They are viewed by their advocates as a means of holding political leaders accountable, of encouraging democratic debate and creating capable states who are able to deliver the goals and political reforms and participatory processes.

In consultation with the UN, the World Bank, the IMF and OECD, 48 indicators were identified to monitor progress. The UN-secretariat has initiated a 'millennium indicator database'³ to compile the information gathered by different organisations. This information constitutes the basis of the yearly reports by the Secretary-General on the progress of the MDGs on a global scale.

It is often stated that the first 7 MDGs are aimed at developing countries, and the last, Goal 8, is aimed at donor countries. Goal 8 is designed to ensure that developed countries provide resources that will enable developing countries to participate effectively in the global economy. Others stress that all goals are of interest to all countries. Take, for example, goal 7 on sustainable development, which includes the adoption of national strategies for sustainable development in all countries.

1.2 2005 New York Summit

In September 2005, world leaders came together at a summit in New York to review the progress made since the Millennium Declaration in 2000.⁴

There has been some disappointment with the results of the summit, especially on the part of NGO representatives. In the knowledge that, most of the goals will not be met, given the current efforts, world leaders did not reach an agreement on additional aid, on intensifying efforts regarding debt cancellation, nor was an agreement reached on a more just world trade system.

On the positive side, others stressed that the summit had strengthened the commitment of the United States towards the MDGs, and that sexual rights were more firmly established in the MDGs.

The next date to be "commemorated" regarding the MDGs is 07-07-07; the halfway mark towards 2015. This will be an occasion for activities of civil society organisations. The UN will not seize upon 07-07-07 to organise special events.

² - Henny Helmich provides an overview of the historical background of the MDGs. Henny Helmich, 'Wereldleiders voor de Millenniumdoelen', in: *NCDO Jaarboek 2004-2005*, Hansje Galesloot (red), NCDO 2005.

- Information about the background of the MDGs can be found on the Paris21-website:

<http://www.paris21.org/betterworld/home.htm>

- The DAC-report 'Shaping the 21st Century: the Contribution of Development Cooperation' outlines the challenges and opportunities that form the background of the Seven Pledges,

<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/23/35/2508761.pdf>

³ <<http://www.millenniumindicators.un.org/>>.

⁴ Progress reports on the MDGs can be found at: <<http://www.millenniumindicators.un.org/>>.

Next 'big' international summit dealing with the MDGs will be the follow-up of the March 2002 Financing for Development Summit in Monterrey. This conference will be held in Doha (Qatar) in the second half of 2008.

1.3 Description of the field

In one way or the other, most development organisations in the world are actively working towards the effectuation of one or more of the MDGs. Besides, most countries (both donor countries and recipients of aid) evaluate the progress they are making in attaining the MDG targets.

Even the organisations that are critical about the development paradigms that underlie the MDGs, do work within the MDG-campaign, promote the Goals or assess their development efforts according to the guidelines of the MDGs.

The worldwide organisational infrastructure of the MDGs, therefore, is huge and it is impossible to describe it entirely. To illustrate the vastness of the field: the internet query 'Millennium Development Goals' results in no fewer than 1,200,000 hits of the search engine Google.

1.4 MDG infrastructure

The UN Development Group (UNDG) is instructed to help ensure that the MDGs remain the focal point of development efforts. The UN set up a four-prong strategy:

1. Practical assistance in support of country priorities: The UN is helping to integrate the MDGs into all aspects of its work at the country level, in response to the priorities identified by each country.⁵
2. Monitoring: UN agencies are monitoring the progress of developing countries in regard to each one of the goals. Organisations such as OECD-DAC, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, are also – together with governments, the private sector and civil society - working to support MDG reports. Donor countries have promised to report regularly on their progress in attaining the MDGs. UN Country Teams have been helping countries prepare national reports that measure progress in the field of the MDGs. The emphasis is on national ownership as well as accurate benchmarking of progress, so wherever possible this is examined in close collaboration with the government as well as civil society groups. So far, national MDG reports had been published in over 140 countries⁶; in the best cases they have led to improved policy analysis, a sharper focus on priorities, clearer target setting and ultimately to improved national economic and social policies.
3. Research: the UN Millennium Project⁷ is set up to generate new research and ideas by mobilising networks of scholars from developing and developed countries. Professor Jeffrey Sachs heads the Millennium Project. In 2005, the Millennium Project issued reports on all the MDGs. On 1 January 2007, the Millennium Project's work was incorporated into the Bureau for Development Policy under the leadership of the United Nations Development Programme. The MDG Support group was formed⁸, which works at the regional, national and global level to support the preparation and implementation of MDG-based national development strategies.
4. Advocacy: The UN system and its international and civil society partners have spearheaded a series of awareness-raising Millennium Campaigns within countries, based on national strategies and needs. This UN Millennium Campaign⁹ has been operational since 2002 and is headed by (the former Minister of International Cooperation in the Netherlands), Eveline Herfkens.

⁵ UN Country Teams coordinate this work. A list of all Country Teams:
<<http://unctlists.undp.org/index.cfm>>

⁶ The national MDG reports are published on the UNDP website:
http://www.undp.org/mdg/tracking_countryreports2.shtml.

⁷ <<http://unmillenniumproject.org>>

⁸ <http://www.undp.org/poverty/mdgsupport.htm>

⁹ <<http://millenniumcampaign.org>>

The World Bank and IMF are involved in the formulation of policies and the implementation of the MDG-framework. The implementation is carried out in close cooperation with local governments and other actors. OECD/DAC is the body where donors exchange views on technical aspects of the implementation of the MDGs.

2. Major discussions concerning the MDGs

Both the strength and the weakness of the MDGs is that they are, in essence, hardly ideological. This lack of ideology enables people from different backgrounds to embrace the Goals, but it also obscures the fundamental differences of opinion between people on their solutions for poverty and underdevelopment.

A quick glance at the MDG-monitoring process reveals that at the current pace most of the MDGs will not be met by the year 2015. Progress has been slower than foreseen and, more importantly, much of this progress has by-passed the people and countries that are most in need. In fact, a common critique is that the overarching goal of halving poverty will only be reached thanks to the rapid economic developments in countries like India and China. Sub-Saharan Africa will need unprecedented, unrealistic growth rates to halve poverty by 2015. At the current pace, according to some researchers, Africa will only halve poverty by 2048. Nevertheless, the MDGs have led to an international revival of attention for the problems of underdevelopment and global poverty. Especially during the period before the G8 summit in Edinburgh and the September 2005 UN-Summit in New York, the world witnessed an unusual dedication of states to reduce poverty. While the leaders of the most powerful nations in the world reaffirmed their earlier commitments at the G8 summit in Germany in 2007, at the same time it also became clear that the promises made in Edinburgh were not (yet) delivered upon. The international fight against poverty and the efforts to hold world leaders to their promises are personified by the presence of international idols such as Bono, Bob Geldof and Angelina Jolie. In the Netherlands celebrities have also spoken out in favour of the MDGs: Victoria Koblenko, Sylvana Simons, Tanja Jess, Jan Douwe Kroeske, Wendy van Dijk, Chantal Janzen, Nelly Cooman, Esther Vergeer and Bløf. The MDGs are also being adopted by companies, schools, local governments, hospitals etc as an easy and non-controversial way to engage themselves in the fight against poverty and underdevelopment.

CHALLENGE

In the Netherlands, several celebrities have spoken on the MDGs and participated in activities organised by civil society organisations. However, it is clear that a 'Dutch Bono' has not yet emerged. None of the Dutch celebrities has really stood up and initiated a movement. In a sense, Dutch celebrities acted as followers, not leaders. They react when asked to participate, but they don't initiate. This leaves us with the issue of moral leadership. Maybe Dutch celebrities feel that involving themselves with development cooperation entails the risk of being criticised about the (lack of) performance of development organisations.

2.1 Why set targets?

The history of development cooperation has seen a lot of targets, goals and promises. These targets and goals are rarely met, nor are the promises kept. A good example is the international commitment of rich countries to spend 0,7% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on development cooperation. Worldwide, only four countries ever have fulfilled that 'solemn' promise.

So, why set targets if they will not be met anyway?

Jan Vandemoortele (former chief economist of the UNDP) stresses that targets do play an important role. In a September 2005 paper Vandemoortele writes: "Global targets do make a difference, mostly by mobilising actors and advocates at all levels – global and local alike."¹⁰

¹⁰ Do global targets matter? By Jan Vandemoortele. Download at:
<http://www.environmenttimes.net/article.cfm?pageID=219>

Target setting is much debated in the development discussion in the Netherlands. Many experts feel that clear targets have been lacking in development cooperation, making it difficult to assess the results of Dutch development efforts.

Measurability of development activities is one of the key subjects of recent Dutch discussions on development. In recent years many organisations have changed their way of operating in order to better monitor the effect of their efforts, integrating clear benchmarks in their work and using Logical Framework Approaches.

Setting quantifiable targets is also a matter of accountability towards the public. The OEDC-DAC-report 'Shaping the 21st Century' states that: "We also recognise that those responsible for public money are accountable for its effective use. We have a duty to state clearly the results we expect and how we think they can be achieved."¹¹

2.2 The downside of target setting

In their May/September 2004 'Working Paper'¹² the Centre for Global Development, presents some arguments concerning the possible downside of international target setting for development such as the MDGs. Goals, the Centre argues, lead to "unreasonable expectations about what is likely to be achieved within a short time period", and therefore will lead to "unreasonable expectations about the role of aid in the development process". Failing to reach the MDGs does not necessarily mean that the governments have not pursued wise policies or are not making any progress on development. Nevertheless, they risk being "delegitimised by the label of 'failure' in 2015", according to the Centre. "Another potential downside is the possibility for adding to donor fatigue and distracting recipient countries from much-needed domestic reforms. If donors do provide additional tens of billions of dollars in aid per year sometime in the next few years, and if subsequently many of the goals are still not met, this will provide ammunition to interest groups in rich countries seeking to give up on development assistance."

CHALLENGE:

Neither over-optimism about achievement of MDGs, nor pessimism about the possibility of achieving them is very helpful. As it is clear that most of the MDGs will not be reached by 2015, the development community must develop an action plan for the period towards 2015 and beyond, for the fear exists that the optimism (embodied by someone like Jeffrey Sachs and, in the Netherlands, Hans Eenhoorn) that has fuelled current levels of expectations and enthusiasm, will have a serious backlash in the next five to ten years. It is important that pessimism about development does not lead to diminished efforts, or to 'blaming the victims'. What is the perspective of the fight against poverty and underdevelopment after 2015?

CHALLENGE:

The MDGs have a number of natural 'windows of opportunity', such as 07-07-07 and 2010 and, of course, 2015. There are also big international summits about related subjects (e.g. Financing for Development), which provide an opportunity for public action regarding the MDGs. The challenge is to keep the MDGs alive in between these official moments, and to choose our own 'momentum' in celebrating the MDGs. How do we make sure that the MDGs don't get lost in paperwork like other international promises do? How do we avoid the risk of failing to meet the MDGs and subsequently succumbing to cynicism?

¹¹ Shaping the 21st Century: the Contribution of Development Cooperation'
<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/23/35/2508761.pdf>

¹² 'The Trouble with the MDGs: Confronting Expectations of Aid and Development Success' by Michael A. Clemens, Charles J. Kenny and Todd J. Moss
(<http://www.cgdev.org/content/publications/detail/2749>)

2.3 Can development really be quantified?

The main objection to the technocratic approach of the MDGs is that it could easily lead to a simplification of the tasks at hand. A technocratic, quantified approach to poverty disregards the fact that development is rather the result of tough political processes than of technological solutions. The Dutch ex-premier and Earth Charter Commissioner Ruud Lubbers expressed this critique in a 2005 interview with the Dutch daily 'de Volkskrant': "The weakness in the set-up of the Millennium Goals is that they are purely quantitative. Figures can be no more than the necessary back up of beautiful words. But figures lack the rock bottom of ethics: the idea that every man and every woman counts, and that nature counts. What it's all about is how to find the way back from exploitation to respect. Nowadays development cooperation is still treated too much like a jukebox: you throw in some coins and sooner or later something will come out."

Jan Vandemoortele, former economist of the United Nations Development Programme, objects to this kind of arguing. In the SID 'Development'¹³ journal Vandemoortele states that the measurability of the MDGs offers an excellent modus for monitoring and control. Moreover, Vandemoortele argues, the MDGs should be seen as a pragmatic answer to 'qualitative' documents such as the 'Millennium Declaration'. The MDGs do not come in the place of political negotiations; they are an addition.

Moreover, it must be noted that only recently has a more quantitative approach become possible. Only since the late nineties have multilateral institutions like the OECD, the IMF, the World Bank and the UN decided to coordinate their statistical work and instruments, thereby allowing for consensus on starting points and results.

CHALLENGE:

The MDGs contributed to a new enthusiasm regarding development cooperation. Many citizens deployed activities during one of the White Band Days, if only just by wearing a white band. The challenge is to maintain this favourable attitude, and, if possible, deepen this rather shallow enthusiasm into real commitment based on a broader analysis of the problems concerning the division of wealth and poverty.

2.4 Investing in Development

One of the most notable promoters of the MDGs is the American economist Jeffrey Sachs. Besides being Professor of Economics at Columbia University, Sachs is the executive director of the UN Millennium Project. In January 2005, the end report of the UN Millennium Project was published: 'Investing in Development: A Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals'¹⁴.

'Investing in Development' is the result of the work of hundreds of scientists and development experts under the guidance of Sachs, and it arrives at ten concrete recommendations to make the MDGs feasible. The report also outlines a number of 'quick wins': situations in which concrete action in certain key areas can result in substantial contributions to poverty alleviation. For example: providing mosquito nets is a simple but very effective way to fight malaria.

To concretise his plan of action, Sachs has initiated the 'Millennium Villages'. A number of villages in ten African countries are selected as pioneer models for development that can be replicated by other villages in the future. Once these communities get on the bottom rung of the development ladder they can propel themselves onto a path of self-sustaining economic growth. The Millennium Villages initiative is carried out by the non-governmental organisation Millennium Promise¹⁵. Through the involvement in 78 villages across 10 countries in sub-Saharan Africa, the Millennium Promise takes a comprehensive approach to addressing extreme poverty. By combining the best scientific and local knowledge,

¹³ Development, 2005, 48 <<http://www.sidint.org/development>>

¹⁴ This report, and the reports of the ten Task Forces established by Sachs can be found at: <<http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/reports/reports2.htm>>

¹⁵ www.millenniumpromise.org

Millennium Villages address all the major problems simultaneously – hunger, disease, inadequate education, lack of safe drinking water, and absence of essential infrastructure – to assist communities on their way to self-sustainable development. The Millennium Promise is endorsed by international celebrities such as Angelina Jolie and former US-president Jimmy Carter.

The Millennium Village initiative has also met with criticism. There is doubt if the example of the villages can ever be extended to the national or even regional level. The successes of the villages are mainly due to the personal commitment of Sachs himself, who gained the support of local authorities, cabinet ministers and presidents alike. Without the special attention the villages receive, they would be no more than just another development initiative, critics fear.

The Dutch government did not react overly enthusiastically to the ‘Investing in Development’ report.¹⁶ According to former minister for Development Cooperation, van Ardenne, Sachs differentiates between winners and losers when implementing the MDGs. “The Netherlands does not favour the idea of selecting well-performing countries as suggested by the UN Millennium Project.” According to Van Ardenne, the report should suggest solutions for less well-performing countries to reach the Millennium Goals. In addition, the Dutch minister thinks that Sachs does not focus enough on the importance of involving the private sector. According to the Netherlands, the private sector is crucial in reaching the Goals. Finally, the Dutch government feels that the report does not focus sufficiently on the importance of policy coherence for development.

2.5 Sachs vs. Easterly

One of Sachs’s central propositions concerns the ‘poverty trap’: poor countries (and also households) are lacking the resources to develop their natural resources and to develop potential in a profitable manner. For their short-term survival they can do nothing but exhaust their natural resources, and by doing so, they destroy their long-term development possibilities. Sachs calls this vicious circle the ‘poverty trap’. According to Sachs, development cooperation can play an important role in breaking through this impasse. Initial, carefully targeted, funding (by foreign aid or investment) is all that is needed to break the deadlock and to enable them to make use of their natural resources in a sustainable manner.

Other economists question the ‘Poverty Trap Theory’ of Sachs, and doubt that aid in combination with investments can ensure a ‘Big Leap Forward’.

In his article ‘Reliving the ‘50s (August 2005): the Big Push, Poverty Traps, and Takeoffs in Economic Development’¹⁷ New York University (NYU) professor William Easterly contends that the data do not support Sachs’s view that ‘poverty traps’ or their subsequent ‘take offs’ are widespread among low-income countries. He argues that the divergence in growth trajectories tends to be associated with the existence of democratic institutions and economic freedom, rather than with differences in initial income. Easterly concludes that more rapid economic growth and poverty reduction will require changes from the bottom up rather than a ‘big push’ from development planners at the top: “The end of poverty will come as a result of home-grown political and economic reforms (which are already happening in many poor countries), not through outside aid. The biggest hope for the world’s poor nations is not Bono, it is the citizens of poor nations themselves.”

In his 2006 book ‘The White Man’s Burden’¹⁸ Easterly expounds on his ideas, arguing that Sachs’ model is top down and follows examples that have never worked in the past. Easterly

¹⁶ http://www.minbuza.nl/default.asp?CMS_ITEM=3DBFDABB0D5C4F70B517B501E0967C78X3X52036X64>

¹⁷ Working Paper number 65, the Centre for Global Development, <http://www.cgdev.org/content/publications/detail/3486/>

¹⁸ Easterly, William. *The White Man’s Burden - Why the West’s Efforts to Aid the Rest have done so much Ill and so little Good*. Penguin Press. 2006

contrasts Sachs' top-down 'planners' mentality with a bottom-up 'searchers' mentality. Big plans don't work in the fight against poverty, Easterly argues, what we need to tap into are the skills, talents, ambitions and quest for self-improvement of the poor themselves. The only way we can help the poor, says Easterly, is by allowing them to solve their own problems based on their own skills and knowledge.

Hans Eenhoorn, former senior vice-president of Unilever and member of the UN-taskforce on hunger, regrets the fierce controversy between Sachs and Easterly. In his 2007 inaugural speech at the Wageningen University, Eenhoorn said: "It is very unsettling to note that two world-class economists, with great personal experience in the developing world, have such conflicting views. Sachs is right that Africa – or certain regions of it – is caught in an economic and socio-political 'poverty trap'. But Easterly is right when he states that you cannot get out of such a situation (he even denies the existence of a 'poverty trap') only through a big external push – an argument that Sachs refutes. In all probability, two things will have to happen simultaneously."¹⁹

CHALLENGE

In a way it is a pity that there has not been a public debate about development among Dutch economists. Economic scientists keep differences in opinions about development cooperation largely restricted to the academic arena. They leave the public debate to politicians, public opinion leaders and representatives of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs). Even 'polemic' economists, such as Sweder van Wijnbergen, have not entered the debate on development. The active participation of economic scientists in the public debate could enliven the debate, open discussions to more fundamental issues, and ensure that the discussions would not be limited to short-term political issues.

2.6 The Social Watch development paradigm

Just before the 2005 UN-summit, the non-governmental organisation Social Watch published its yearly Social Watch Report, 'Unkept Promises. What the numbers say about poverty and gender'²⁰. In this report, Social Watch advocates a different development paradigm. Social Watch opposes the one-dollar-a-day poverty criterion used by the MDGs. According to Social Watch the essence of poverty is unequal distribution of income, wealth and access to services. These inequalities are the result of deep-seated and persistent imbalances in the current workings of the global economy. Thus, "an adequate response to poverty will only be found in comprehensive and redistributive initiatives, which address all aspects of inequality (...)"

2.7 Poverty reduction or development?

The essence of the critique of many non-governmental organisations and some critical development experts is that the MDGs reduce the concept of 'development' to 'poverty reduction', thereby denying all political implications of the term²¹. In other words: the MDGs are not about creating a more equitable world, but they are about making poor countries cope with the existing one.

More than poverty itself, the large differences in wealth are the problem, say critical NGOs. Kevin Watkins, economist at the United Nations Development Programme, supports this analysis: "One of the problems of the MDGs is that governments are encouraged to report on average performances and not on how the bottom part of society is doing. That would result in a whole different picture."

The World Bank emphasised poverty reduction rather than development. In the vision of the World Bank (and the IMF) poverty arises as a result of a poorly functioning market and limited access to that market. As a result, poverty reduction coincides with the neo-liberal agenda of free world trade and globalisation processes taking their course.

¹⁹ Eenhoorn, Hans. *Food security and Entrepreneurship*. Wageningen University, 2007.

²⁰ <http://www.socialwatch.org/en/informeImpreso/informe2005_adv.htm>

²¹ E.g. Kumi Naidoo in an interview in the magazine 'Vice Versa' 2006 – 1.

The 'old' solutions for the poverty problem (e.g. aid, social security, minimum wages and a regulated labour market) have, in this view, turned into part of the problem: they disturb the operation of the free market, and consequently destroy the dynamics of the market players and, eventually this leads to poverty.

2.8 MDGs are less far-reaching

The MDGs have given the debate concerning development a new turn: old goals have been reformulated, old controversies seem to be forgotten. The MDGs gave the debate a new élan. However, on the other hand, according to some, the MDGs have disturbed long-term, complicated debates. The MDGs are considered a denial of the political obstacles to development. The MDG-process considers development as a technological rather than a political challenge. As a result, it is feared that the debates about development (for example concerning the impact of globalisation) will lose their political edge.

The MDGs are less far-reaching, and distract attention from the agreements reached during several UN-summits in the 'nineties. The Netherlands is one of the countries that insist that the action plans of these UN-summits (e.g. Cairo, Beijing, Copenhagen, and Johannesburg) remain intact and valid. Without the execution of these agreements the MDGs cannot be obtained, states the Netherlands government.

Especially in the South, the MDGs are often considered a donor hype; the new 'toy' of northern development experts. Local organisations complain that donors too often change their focus of attention, thus hampering long-term planning. Development can only be achieved by long-term engagements and endurance, argue people in the field.

They fear that projects that do not immediately address the MDGs, run the risk of becoming under-funded, and that new projects do not stand a chance of receiving funds. In particular, lobbying efforts, emancipatory processes and projects to 'empower' people do not fit well into the MDG-development process.

2.9 Capacity for Aid Absorption

The most notable target of MDG-8 is the appeal to increase development budgets to 0.7 percent of the Gross National Product (GNP). However, many development experts, consider extra money more a problem than part of the solution. For example, UNDP's Kevin Watkins says: "More money for development cooperation (...) will ensure enormous spending problems. The capacity of development countries to present good plans should increase likewise, and that is something you don't read about in the MDGs."²²

The Dutch Government also thinks that the lack of institutional capacity of receiving countries is an important barrier to reaching the MDGs.²³ Capacity development will be seen as a development goal as such over the next couple of years in Dutch policy.

CHALLENGE:

Capacity development and institutional development are important instruments for augmenting the capacity for aid absorption. There is serious concern that both instruments are under pressure because they do not contribute directly to reaching the MDGs. Another threat to the continued existence of these instruments arises through the fact that development organisations increasingly value public support for their work. Capacity development and institutional development are not 'sexy', and do not fit into a PR-approach. There is a need for 'pimping' capacity development and institutional development.

2.10 Growth or aid?

Does aid lead to economic growth? There is an ongoing debate between development economists who believe that governmental policies are the major determinant of economic growth performance, and those who believe that structural factors such as geography, history, and climatic conditions play the dominant role.

In their paper 'The Trouble with the MDGs'²⁴ (May/September 2004), development experts

²² Quoted in Vice Versa 2005 – 6.

²³ *The Challenge of Capacity Development*, DAC Network on Good Governance, February 2006.

Clemens, Kenny & Moss write: "There is further caution required regarding the link between increased donor assistance and higher economic growth. This assumption underlies all of the costing studies that use the 'financing gap' model for estimating how much aid will be needed to reach certain growth targets. These estimates start from a measurement of poverty-income elasticity and current growth rates, which suggests a 'growth gap' – the rate at which the economy must grow to see the desired reduction in the poverty headcount – or in the case of reaching the poverty MDG, to halve the poverty ratio by 2015."

2.11 And what about the PRSPs?

It is clear that the MDGs are at the core of current development efforts. That leaves the question about the relationship between 'old' development infrastructure (such as the Comprehensive Development Frameworks and the Poverty Reduction Strategy Plans, PRSPs) and the 'new' MDGs.

How do the MDGs fit into PRSPs that countries have set up? For example: what is to be done if the priorities that countries identify based on the PRSP-process do not match any of the MDG-goals, targets or indicators?

Behind this dilemma lies the old controversy between the world's two biggest multilateral development organisations: the World Bank (PRSPs) and the UNDP (MDGs).

Many consider the PRSPs a continuation of the controversial Structural Adaptation Programmes (SAPs) of the eighties and nineties, according to which the World Bank and the IMF imposed neo-liberal free market policies on poor countries (this was coined the 'Washington Consensus'; a specific set of ten economic policy prescriptions that were considered to constitute a "standard" reform package promoted for crisis-racked countries by Washington-based institutions such as the IMF, World Bank and US Treasury Department, source: wikipedia). Although the PRSP process gives room for participation of, for example, the civil society, the PRSPs are still part of the conditionality that characterises the Bretton Woods-approach.

The Netherlands promotes the linking of the two instruments and thinks that the MDG-process should be leading. The Secretary-General of the UN is also concerned about the current double strategy.

2.12 Are the MDGs complete?

The MDGs are an expression of a broad, comprehensive concept of poverty: poverty is more than lack of income. That does not mean that the eight MDGs include all priorities. From the beginning, organisations, pressure groups and countries have tried to add new goals, targets or indicators to the MDGs.

Apart from an extra 'target' concerning sexual and reproductive rights (to be added to goal 5), the relevant UN-organisations so far have been able to block *add ons* to the MDGs.

Pressure to add important topics (like 'human rights', 'security', 'private sector development', climate change, and 'energy', just to name a few) to the list of MDGs will probably not be effectuated.

Many of the critics of the MDGs just focus on the eight Development Goals, and (conveniently?) forget about the targets and indicators behind the MDGs. When the targets and indicators are taken into account, the MDGs are far more comprehensive than they appear at first glance. In a way the targets and indicators are the very heart of the MDGs. Without progress in the indicators, the eight goals cannot be reached.

2.13 Decent Work

The most serious lobby for an extra goal to be added to the MDGs comes from labour organisations. According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) the MDGs will not be reached unless a comprehensive employment policy is adopted. The ILO thinks that

²⁴ 'The Trouble with the MDGs' : Confronting Expectations of Aid and Development Success', by Michael A. Clemens, Charles J. Kenny and Todd J. Moss
(<http://www.cgdev.org/content/publications/detail/2749>)

achieving the MDGs could be hard in the absence of policies ensuring full employment. ILO and different labour organisations (such as the FNV in the Netherlands) have been lobbying to add 'decent work' as an extra, ninth MDG.

CHALLENGE:

How to make the connection between employment for developing countries and the existing fear in western countries of losing jobs to developing countries? The concept of 'decent work' can perhaps help to overcome the existing fear of international outsourcing and off-shoring. This can also be linked to migration issues.

2.14 Coherence

Concerning development policies, we speak of 'incoherence' if efforts in the field of development cooperation are (partly) undone by policies in other sectors. Inconsistencies between trade and development and agriculture and development are the most commonly used examples. The OECD defines policy coherence for development in the following way: 'Policy Coherence for Development means working to ensure that the objectives and results of a government's development policies are not undermined by other policies of that same government which impact on developing countries, and that these other policies support development objectives where feasible.'²⁵

Policies that lack coherence and undermine development efforts are easily found. The total volume of aid from rich countries is dwarfed by protectionist trade-distorting agricultural subsidies, e.g. from the EU. Support for private sector development and diversification is undermined by systematic tariff escalation that discourages developing countries from processing products and adding value. Rich countries allow – and even finance – their fishing industries to invade poor countries' fishing grounds, over-exploiting these resources, and undermining the fisheries development projects that the same countries have paid for with aid.

Policy coherence for development is one of the aims of Dutch government policies. The Dutch government is legally obliged to take account of the objectives of development cooperation in the policies that it implements, which are likely to affect developing countries. A special Policy Coherence Unit at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is in charge of identifying coherency problems, formulating new policy regarding coherence, and assessing the progress in policy coherence for development.

In 2001, the OECD-DAC commended the Netherlands for its long-standing active engagement on issues of policy coherence for development. Furthermore, the Centre for Global Development has listed the Netherlands at the top of its 'Commitment to Development Index' (CDI), which measures the coherence of development policies of 21 of the richest nations.²⁶ Nevertheless, the Dutch NGO Evert Vermeer Foundation cites many cases of incoherent Dutch policy measures²⁷.

The European Union is also bound to policy coherence for development. Art. 178 of the Treaty establishing the European Community states: "The EU shall take account of the objectives (of its development policy) in the policies that it implements which are likely to affect developing countries." Concurrently, the EU is accused of gross violations of this article. In particular, the European Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) leads to huge incoherencies.

To further enhance EU policy coherence in the specific context of supporting the MDGs, the European Commission will compile a mid-term EU Policy Coherence for Development Report, between now and the next international MDG Review, in which progress on the coherence commitments will be reviewed.

CHALLENGE

To a large extent, the debate about Policy Coherence for Development is restricted to

²⁵ <<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/0/31/31659769.pdf>>

²⁶ <http://www.cgdev.org/section/initiatives/_active/cdi>

²⁷ <<http://www.coherentie.nl/>>

development experts. The dialogue between experts on trade and development is largely incomprehensible for non-experts. Representatives of NGOs have adopted the jargon and technical terms used by officials in national governments and multilateral organisations. The challenge is to make these discussions and difficult policy choices comprehensible for 'ordinary people'. Only if the public is informed about the tough choices that Policy Coherence for Development really imply, can we expect public support for these choices.

CHALLENGE

Which changes are needed in the Dutch government and in the responsibilities of cabinet ministers to ensure Policy Coherence for Development? Is a special minister for Development Cooperation the best way to ensure that development issues will be high on the agenda in the council of ministers? Or should every minister have a responsibility regarding development cooperation? Or maybe Dutch foreign policy should be more integrated, e.g. by creating a 'Super Minister for International Relations'. Such a super minister would be responsible for international trade, migration issues, agriculture, foreign affairs, development aid and defence.

3.0 Dutch actors regarding the MDGs

3.1 The Dutch government

In the last couple of years, Dutch development goals have been aligned with the MDGs. Moreover, the MDGs contributed to discussions on the concrete results of development initiatives. In 2005, the Dutch minister of development cooperation reported to the Parliament on the results of development efforts for the first time²⁸. In May 2007, a new report on the results of development cooperation efforts was published.²⁹

In May 2004 the Dutch government published a progress report on the Dutch efforts. It was remarkable that this report was not only issued by the Ministry of Development Cooperation, but co-signed by the Dutch Prime Minister, making it a government wide effort. The next progress report was published in September 2006³⁰. However, this does not mean that the Dutch Government plans to issue a progress report every two years. The third report is not expected before 2010, according to a source at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. What is new in the 2006 progress report is that it includes MDG-8 contributions of Dutch civil society, trade unions, academic circles and the Dutch private sector.

The MDGs are a leading principle for the new Dutch Minister of Development Cooperation, Bert Koenders (PvdA, Labour Party) as well.. During the first 100 days of the new cabinet, during the beginning of 2007, minister Koenders consulted many stakeholders in Dutch society on their ideas and recommendations concerning the MDGs. Some of the ideas that were generated during these consultations are: contribution to the construction of a system of health insurance in developing countries, focussing on the development of the financial sector in developing countries and support for the construction of a global sustainable ecological network.

According to the June 2007 policy programme³¹ the cabinet will concentrate on:

- Developing the knowledge about and support for the MDGs in the Netherlands;
- A novel approach based on the integration of new ideas;
- Improved cooperation between relevant stakeholders;
- More attention for groups and areas that lag behind;
- A holistic approach as the MDGs are strongly interconnected;
- Changing and fortifying underlying systems in order to reach the MDGs.

²⁸ Resultaten in Ontwikkeling; Rapportage 2004
<http://www.minbuza.nl/default.asp?CMS_ITEM=92EDE6584FCF4CC8ADC8E6343AF73056X3X48236X94>

²⁹ Download at: <http://www.minbuza.nl/nl/ontwikkelingssamenwerking/resultaten>

³⁰ Download at: http://www.minbuza.nl/nl/themas,armoedebestrijding/millennium-ontwikkelingsdoelen/millennium_ontwikkelingsdoel_8.html

³¹ Download at: <http://www.regering.nl/regeringsbeleid/balkenende4/beleidsprogramma/index.jsp>

To mark the halfway point on the road towards 2015, the Dutch government initiated the so called 'Schokland Agreement'. On 30 June 2007 Dutch individuals, companies, organisations, celebrities etc. signed this agreement, on the former Dutch polder island of Schokland, a Unesco World Heritage Site, to renew their commitment to reach the Millennium Goals³². The Dutch government closely collaborates with the NCDO and the Dutch MDG-campaign 'Een'³³ within this initiative.

CHALLENGE:

The Netherlands emphasises the untying of aid. Since February 2005, the ORET-programme (*Programma Ontwikkelingsrelevante Exporttransacties*; a subsidy for developing countries to buy Dutch goods or services) has been untied for the least developed countries. With the untying of aid, however, possibilities for the Dutch public to identify themselves with development initiatives are diminished. Aid that is given in the form of goods or services binds the donor and the receiver. Untied aid is maybe cheaper and more effective, but it is less personal.

3.2 Dutch political parties

The MDGs as such are not an issue in Dutch politics. All parties accept the MDGs as important targets and so the MDGs are hardly controversial. Furthermore, because the MDGs are specific concerning goals and targets, but not on how to reach the targets, they pose no risk of becoming controversial or a subject of fierce debates.

The neo-liberal *Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie* (VVD) is in principle critical about development cooperation. This party thinks that the MDGs should focus more on the development of the private sector in developing countries. Bilateral development cooperation should be limited to helping poor countries with 'good governance' by strengthening private enterprises. The VVD supports the MDGs, but they view them as a last chance for development cooperation to help developing countries to 'stand on their own feet.' After 2015, development aid should be abolished (with the exception of emergency aid and cooperation with the private sector), according to the VVD. To give the MDGs a chance, the VVD supports the G-8 call to rich countries to spend 0.5 percent of their GDP on development cooperation. In fact, the VVD thinks that the levels of development aid should be raised immediately for the MDGs to be reached.

For the *Dutch Labour Party* (Partij van de Arbeid, PvdA) the MDGs are not in the centre of their attention. The PvdA accepts the MDGs as concrete goals, but criticises the lack of commitment by other rich countries. The MDGs are used as an opportunity for discussions on international trade and other issues regarding policy coherence for development. A 2006 report on new ways for development cooperation by the PvdA Koenders Commission (named after the then Labour MP and current Minister of Development Cooperation, Bert Koenders) hardly mentions the MDGs at all.³⁴

A 2006 report on Foreign Policy written by the *Christian Democrats* (Christen Democratisch Appèl, CDA) is fairly brief about the MDGs. The CDA emphasises the value of the MDGs as "a step towards a common, internationally shared vision on poverty reduction."³⁵ But also the CDA does not consider the MDGs to be a 'hot' political item. In the 12 recommendations the CDA-report makes, the MDGs are not mentioned once.

3.3 Civil society perspectives

Although civil society organisations in most countries are critical about the development paradigm that underlies the MDGs, they do participate in the worldwide campaign around the MDGs. Rather than oppose the campaign, they use the dynamics that surround the

³² See: <http://www.hetakkoordvanschokland.nl/>

³³ See: <http://www.een.nl/>

³⁴ <<http://www.evertvermeer.nl/renderer.do/menuId/237910/clearState/true/sf/237910/returnPage/237910/itemId/77739/realItemId/77739/pageId/237965/instanceId/238051/>

³⁵ <http://www.cda.nl/domains/cda/content/downloads/internationaal/internationale_samenwerking.pdf>

MDGs, and point at the MDGs to put pressure on governments to keep their promises. By organising actions, concerts and demonstrations (for example the White Band Days) in the wake of the G8-Summit in Edinburgh and the UN-summit in New York, the CSOs created a publicity hype around the MDGs.

Dutch NGOs have also embraced the MDGs. Most organisations that finance or execute projects in developing countries calculate in their annual report how much they have contributed to the Millennium Goals. There is no organisation that fails to mention the MDGs.

Dutch NGOs have followed the Global Call for Action Against Poverty. Dutch 'White band Days' were organised by the *Nederland Platform Millenniumdoelen* (Dutch MDG Platform), in which more than 45 Dutch development organisations cooperate. The White Band Days were commemorated by schools, local governments, companies, churches, libraries etc. In 2006 the Dutch MDG Platform started the 'Een-campagne'³⁶, to gather public support for the MDGs. The first focus of attention was 07-07-07, the halfway point on the road to 2015. On 1 July 2007 the online campaign started, and in August a media campaign started (will be launched) for the 2007 highlight: on 17 October, World Poverty Day, the Een-campagne will try to rally as much public support as possible for the MDGs.

The Een campaign is part of GCAP, the global campaign behind 'Live 8' and 'ONE', initiatives that were headed by celebrities as Bono and Bob Geldof. Een is financed by the Dutch development organisations Novib, ICCO, Cordaid and Hivos. It works in close co-operation with the NCDO.

The activities of the Dutch MDG-platform have raised public awareness of the MDGs. A survey by the organisation NCDO shows that in 2005, 50 percent of the Dutch public knew of the MDGs, in 2003 this was only 10 percent³⁷.

The NCDO also played a role in raising public support for the MDGs. When it published the 2003-2006 NCDO policy document³⁸, the NCDO was one of the first Dutch NGOs to fully embrace the MDGs. In order to broaden public support for development cooperation, the NCDO, in the period 2003-2006, financed many MDG-activities, initiated by Dutch NGOs and grassroots organisations. The NCDO set up the internet site www.millenniumdoelen.nl/ to inform the Dutch public about the importance of the MDGs.

For the first time, in 2006 Dutch NGOs contributed to the Dutch MDG-8 progress report. It is clear that most organisations feel uncomfortable in this close cooperation with the government. The MDG-process emphasises the importance of a common effort to tackle poverty, where governments, civil society, and the private sector join hands and coordinate their efforts based on the common analysis of global problems and challenges. Such a close cooperation denies the 'natural' position CSOs have as opposition forces and as a countervailing power. Especially donor organisations with partners in the South feel a need to distance themselves from western government policies.

Another notable recent innovation is the initiative of 'social transfers' to facilitate the poor's access to health facilities and education. Dfid developed this idea³⁹, and it focuses mainly on child benefits ('kinderbijslag') and benefits for elderly people ('AOW'), to strengthen the demand-side, the access to health and education services by the extreme poor. In the Netherlands this idea is promoted mainly by the organisations STOP AIDS NOW and Unicef. In June 2007 these organisations presented the 'Manifesto for Social Protection of vulnerable children in Africa' to Dutch minister Koenders, who apparently is very interested in this concept as a method to help reaching the MDGs.

³⁶ See: <http://www.een.nl/>

³⁷ An abstract of this research project can be found at: <http://www.ncdo.nl/index.php?page=19&PHPSESSID=f97dac722d7eac0ae5d62d9ca2d850db>

³⁸ Wereldburgerschap voor de Millenniumdoelen - NCDO Beleidskader 2003-2006. NCDO, Amsterdam 2003.

³⁹ See: <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/social-transfers.pdf>

Noteworthy is also the Ghana-Netherlands School feeding Programme⁴⁰, a unique public private partnership, with partners both in Ghana and the Netherlands, to reduce hunger with children in Ghana. This 'holistic' initiative combines the efforts of many stakeholders to fight hunger and at the same time enhances local food production, stimulates basic education, empowers women, reduces child mortality and combats diseases.

Actors in the international NGO-community have pointed to the challenges in the international fiscal practice. National taxes are an extremely important factor to finance development. The capacity to generate taxes for developing countries is essential to finance its public sector and to alleviate donor dependency. Tax evasion and incapacity of national governments to levy taxes are an important barrier to development. The Tax Justice Network published a briefing paper in March 2005 called; *The Price of Offshore*,⁴¹ which estimated that the amount of funds held by individuals in offshore tax havens, is about 11.5 trillion US dollars. The negative effect on the worldwide tax revenue as a result of these offshore assets is estimated at 255 billion dollars, every year. This amount would royally fill the financing gap to achieve the United Nations' Millennium Development Goal of halving world poverty by 2015. One of the international tax havens is the Netherlands, where thousands of companies have chosen residency, through mail box companies managed by trust companies, just to profit from the possibilities the Dutch government offers to pay less taxes. The Dutch organisation Somo published the Tax Briefing Paper in January 2007; ⁴² on the size and implications of the Dutch Tax Haven practices.

CHALLENGE

What should be the level of cooperation between Dutch CSOs and the government? An integrated approach to development would imply close cooperation between the two sectors, or at least a high level of coordination between the efforts in both sectors. In practice, however, CSOs feel a need for distance between themselves and the Department of International Cooperation. Most CSOs like to place themselves to the left of the department. The Dutch political tradition dictates that the government minimises (political) control over civil society, even if CSOs receive government (co)-funding. Lately this tradition has been under pressure. The current minister of development cooperation emphasises the importance of coordinated efforts and seeks more partnerships. The challenge is how CSOs can maintain their independence and play the role of countervailing power in spite of being dependent on government funding.

3.4 The profit sector

More than ever before, Dutch companies are involved in development cooperation. Many Dutch companies are active in the field of development aid⁴³. This engagement varies from partnerships between Dutch companies and UN-organisations (e.g. TNT and the UN World Food Programme) to companies supporting a school in a developing country. Global Compact is an important partnership to engage the international business community in the MDGs. In 1999, the former UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, challenged business leaders to join this initiative, that would bring companies together with UN agencies, labour and civil society to support universal environmental and social principles. Today thousands of companies have engaged themselves in the Global Compact to promote responsible entrepreneurship and contribute to development and the fight against poverty, hunger and diseases.

Some fifty regional or national Chapters have been founded since 2001, but not yet in the Netherlands. In April 2006, the CEOs of TNT, Shell, Unilever and ABN AMRO announced

⁴⁰ More information at: <http://www.sign-schoolfeeding.org/>

⁴¹ More information and download at: http://www.taxjustice.net/cms/front_content.php?idcat=2

⁴² More information and download at: <http://www.somo.nl/>

⁴³ A (non-exhaustive) list of Dutch companies active in charity (not only development cooperation) can be found at <<http://www.managementscope.nl/>>

they would initiate the funding of a Dutch Chapter. Some time later KLM-Air France joined in. But the initiative still has to materialise. The position of the remaining twelve Dutch companies who are members of the Global Compact is still unclear. According to the Dutch employers organisation VNO-NCW, companies are unsure if the construction of a new forum is really helpful and the relevant tasks are already being carried out by organisations like CSR Netherlands or the Dutch business network Society and Company.

There are of course a number of reasons why the profit sector would want to be involved in the MDGs. A World Bank report in 2005 ⁴⁴ sums up a number of incentives for businesses to become involved in the MDGs: to open up new, vast markets; improved governance increases opportunities for investments; a healthy workforce means a more reliable workforce; clients increasingly want to buy from companies that care about development issues; companies that engage in Corporate and Social Responsibility (CSR) often take the lead in regulatory and financial reform.

Most companies have some impact on development and can make a contribution in the following spheres of influence: their core business activities – in the workplace, the marketplace and in the supply chain; their social investment and philanthropy activities; and their engagement in public policy dialogue and advocacy activities.

Many companies channel their charity through foundations, e.g. Shell Foundation, Alfred Heineken Foundation, Nutricia Research Foundation, ABN Amro Foundation, Elsevier Foundation, Unilever Foundation for Education and development.

The UNDP Commission on Private Sector Development has launched local branches⁴⁵ in over twenty countries in the South to promote and facilitate a national policy dialogue on the role of the indigenous private sector in development. They are also designed to catalyze active private sector involvement and to create partnerships in order to further build on the opportunities offered by 'bottom-of-pyramid' markets.

The World Economic Forum (WEF) has also initiated actions to contribute to reaching the MDGs. The WEF's report *Harnessing Private Sector Capabilities to Meet Public Needs: The Potential of Partnerships to Advance Progress on Hunger, Malaria and Basic Education*⁴⁶ shows that there is significant potential for the private sector to help meet the Millennium Development Goals on hunger, malaria and basic education. It identifies priority actions for companies to take and presents over 45 examples of ongoing corporate efforts on these three issues.

One of the initiatives of the WEF is the Business Alliance Against Chronic Hunger (BAACH)⁴⁷. BAACH was formed in 2006 by a group of CEOs and public leaders who outlined an action plan for business to help reduce hunger. Through BAACH, businesses leverage their expertise and capabilities to improve value chains – from production, processing and packaging to retailing and marketing – to increase food supplies, nutrition and incomes in hungry regions. The Dutch companies Unilever and TNT are active in BAACH.

For most companies charity is business; the Economist calls it 'Philanthro capitalism'. The American Centre for Effective Philanthropy even publishes lists of the most effective 'good causes'. However, philanthropy has become an obsolete phrase. In the marketing strategies of many companies, the term currently in use is: 'Cause Related Marketing'.

CHALLENGE

How to use the principle of Cause Related Marketing without 'selling out' to (multinational) corporations?

⁴⁴ Business Action for the MDGs: Private Sector Involvement as a Vital Factor in Achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Available on: <<http://www.businessandmdgs.net/>>

⁴⁵ See the UNDP report *Unleashing Entrepreneurship*: <http://www.undp.org/cpsd/report/index.html>

⁴⁶ Download at: <http://www.weforum.org/en/initiatives/index.htm>

⁴⁷ More information at: <http://www.weforum.org/en/initiatives/hunger/index.htm>. Here also the report *Potential of Partnerships to Advance Progress on Hunger* can be downloaded.

CHALLENGE

It is relatively easy to get companies to support a school in a developing country or an AIDS-project in Southern Africa, but how do you sell less 'sexy' initiatives, such as institutional development or support for local governments in developing countries?

CHALLENGE

Business tycoons such as Bill Gates, George Soros and Warren Buffet use their talents (and money) for development cooperation. We are waiting for the Dutch Bill Gates. Peter Bakker (TNT) is too busy running his own company and Hans Eenhoorn (former senior vice - president of Unilever) is not well known enough. Which Dutch (former) CEO is dedicated to development cooperation? Engaging in these activities would be a nice way to counterbalance the excessive rise in CEO-remuneration in the Netherlands in recent years.

The Dutch academic community

Dutch expertise in field development cooperation is quite considerable. A large number of scientists and research departments focus on MDG-related themes: agriculture, infrastructure, development economics, education, medicine, gender studies etc.

In its 2005 Policy Brief⁴⁸ the Development Policy Review Network (DPRN)⁴⁹ warns that the academic development community "is fragmented and the impact of its considerable efforts is less than it should be. A concerted effort is required to enhance the situation. Academic involvement and contributions to the MDG-debate in the Netherlands have been limited and should henceforth be improved considerably."

It is noted that the decision of former minister of development cooperation, Herfkens, to increase the deployment of local capacities in the implementation of technical assistance has had a negative effect on the Dutch research capacities regarding development. The DPRN Policy Brief states: "The objective to stimulate research communities in developing countries resulted in a weakened Dutch network and a diminished Dutch prominence in the international arena.". It concludes: "The Netherlands have failed to maintain the status of what it used to be, a "gidsland" (a country 'guiding development innovations')."

DPRN recommends to:

- efficiently structure the availability and flow of information on development-relevant research funded by the Netherlands;
- provide annual data on available Dutch expertise of MDG-relevant knowledge;
- establish a web platform to provide research outputs, publications, policy briefs, as well as new research proposals.

CHALLENGE:

One of the contradictions that should be overcome is that untied aid implies that recipients of aid can decide for themselves where they acquire knowledge and research capacity. This could easily contradict the Dutch scientific research community's interests to deploy and enhance its development cooperation capacities. In general there is a contradiction between the ideal of untying aid and maintaining support for development cooperation in donor countries.

⁴⁸ DPRN Thematic Meeting 2005 report on MDGs, Policy Brief: 'Millennium Development Goals as a Challenge for the Dutch Knowledge Community'

<http://www.dprn.nl/>

⁴⁹ The Development Policy Review Network (DPRN) is a network of development experts and policymakers in the Netherlands and Belgium who aim to reduce the gap between science, policy and development practice.

<http://www.dprn.nl/>

4 The most important players regarding the MDGs

Intergovernmental

- **MDG-support**, established in 2006, is designed to quickly mobilize technical support from across UNDP and the UN System to help developing country governments achieve the MDGs. MDG-support is the successor of the UN Millennium project (<http://unmillenniumproject.org>)

Website: <http://www.undp.org/poverty/mdgsupport.htm>

- United Nations Millennium Campaign

Website: <http://millenniumcampaign.org>

- Financing for Development Office

Website www.un.org/esa/ffd/

- UNICEF

Website: www.unicef.org

On MDGs: http://www.unicef.org/mdg/28184_28230.htm

http://www.unicef.org/statistics/index_24304.html

<http://www.unicef.org/mdg/poverty.html>

- FAO

Website: www.fao.org

About MDGs: http://www.fao.org/es/ess/mdg_kit/default.asp

- UNESCO

Website: www.unesco.org

On Education for all: <http://www.unesco.org/education/efa/>

- UNAIDS

Website: www.unaids.org

On MDGs <http://www.unaids.org/en/Goals/MilDevGoals/default.asp>

- World Bank

Website: www.worldbank.org

Compare and track progress on MDGs:

<http://ddp-ext.worldbank.org/ext/GMIS/gdmis.do?siteId=2&menuId=LNAV01HOME3>

- IMF

Website: www.imf.org

On MDGs: <http://www.imf.org/external/np/exr/facts/mdg.htm>

- Paris21

Website <http://www.paris21.org/>

On MDGs: <http://www.paris21.org/betterworld/home.htm>

- EU

Website: www.europe.eu

On MDGs: <http://www.europe-cares.org/>

- OECD
Website: www.oecd.org
On MDGs:
http://www.oecd.org/departement/0,2688,en_2649_34585_1_1_1_1_1,00.html

International Non Governmental Organisations

- Millennium Villages
Website: <http://www.earthinstitute.columbia.edu/mvp>
- Millennium Promise
Website: <http://www.millenniumpromise.org>
- Global Action Against Poverty (GCAP)
Website: www.whiteband.org
List of members: http://www.whiteband.org/Lib/about/about_sup/en
- Alliance2015
Website: www.alliance2015.org
List of members: http://www.alliance2015.org/news/members_contact
- European Development Cooperation 2010
Website: www.edc2010.net
On MDGs: http://www.edc2010.net/detail_page.phtml?page=section7
- Civicus
Website: www.civicus.org
On MDGs: <http://www.civicus.org/new/default.asp>
- Development Gateway
Website: www.developmentgateway.org
On MDGs: <http://www.developmentgateway.org/mdg/>
- Social Watch
Website www.socialwatch.org
- ActionAid International
Website: www.actionaid.org
- DATA (Bono's organisation on development related issues)
Website <http://www.data.org/>
- Eldis
Website: www.eldis.org
On MDGs: <http://www.eldis.org/aid/mdgs.htm>
- Make Poverty history
List of members: <http://www.makepovertyhistory.org/whoweare/members-a.shtml>
- Centre for Global Development
Website: www.cgdev.org

International Business

- Business and MDGs
Website: <http://www.businessandmdgs.net/>

- UN Global Compact
Website: <http://www.unglobalcompact.org/>
Business Associations:
http://www.unglobalcompact.org/ParticipantsAndStakeholders/business_associations.html

National (the Netherlands)

Governmental

- Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken
(Ministry of Foreign Affairs)
Website: www.minbuza.nl
MDG-dossier: <http://www.minbuza.nl/nl/themas,armoedebestrijding/millennium-ontwikkelingsdoelen>

Non Governmental Organisations

- Een Campagne – Nederlands Platform Millenniumdoelen
(Dutch Platform MDGs)
Website: www.een.nl
List of members: http://www.een.nl/npm_leden.html
- Development Policy Review Network
Website: www.dprn.nl
Inventory of expertise on MDGs:
<http://dprn.fss.uu.nl/MDG%20dprn%20inventory%20of%20expertise%20lv.pdf>
- Netherlands Development Assistance Research Council (RAWOO)
Website: www.rawoo.nl
Special page on the MDGs:
<http://www.rawoo.nl/main-4b9.html>

Business

- Dutch Global Compact. No site yet

Papers & reports on the MDGs

International

- Final paper on the UN Millennium Project: Investing in Development: A Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals
<http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/documents/MainReportComplete-lowres.pdf>
Task Force Reports: <http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/reports/reports2.htm>
- Handbook UN Millennium Project: Preparing National Strategies to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals: A Handbook (2005)
http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/documents/handbook111605_with_cover.pdf
- MDG Country Reports on the UNDP website:
http://www.undp.org/mdg/tracking_countryreports2.shtml

- Paper of the UN Committee for Development Policy: An African Perspective of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs): From Scepticism to Leadership and Hope (2005)
<http://www.un.org/esa/policy/devplan/cdpmdgafrica05.pdf>
- World Bank
Getting Serious About Meeting the Millennium Development Goals: A Comprehensive Development Framework Progress Report (2003)
<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/CDFINTRANET/Resources/MDGReport.pdf>
Are We Really Reducing Poverty?
[http://lnweb18.worldbank.org/eap/eap.nsf/Attachments/poverty+reduce+2/\\$File/are+we+really+reducing.pdf](http://lnweb18.worldbank.org/eap/eap.nsf/Attachments/poverty+reduce+2/$File/are+we+really+reducing.pdf)
- Paper 175 delegates: Together for Equality, Renewing the Call: the Beirut Platform from the Global Call to Action against Poverty
http://www.civicus.org/new/media/gcap_beirut_platform_eng.pdf
- International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)
Discussion paper: Achieving the Millennium Development Goals: Rural Investment and Enabling Policy www.ifad.org/events/gc/28/panel/e.pdf
- Paper GCAP: Delivering and exceeding the MDGS, Why and How Countries Can Take Action at the UN Summit, Oxfam International
www.oxfam.org/en/files/GCAP_MDGs_report_050901.pdf
- Paper 175 delegates: Together for Equality, Renewing the Call: the Beirut Platform from the Global Call to Action against Poverty
http://www.civicus.org/new/media/gcap_beirut_platform_eng.pdf
- Report Alliance 2015: 2015 Watch, The Millennium Development Goals, a Comparative Performance of Six EU Member States and the EC Aid Programme
http://www.alliance2015.org/news/cooperations_activities/2015_watch
- Report of the Department of Social Affairs, African Union Commission: Review of Progress Towards the Millennium Development Goals in Africa (2005)
http://www.sarpn.org.za/documents/d0001576/P1934-AU_MDGs-Report_May2005.pdf
- Report of the UN Economic Commission for Africa: The Millennium Development Goals in Africa: Progress and Challenges (2005)
http://www.uneca.org/mdgs/MDGs_in_Africa.pdf
- NCDO
Measuring the Contribution of Civil Society and the Private Sector to Achieving the Millennium Development Goals
<http://www.ncdo.nl/index.php?page=170>
The Road to the UN Millennium Development Goals – Some Insights into the International Debate
<http://www.ncdo.nl/index.php?page=173>
- Paper of Global Compact: UN Global Compact Conference: The Business Contribution to the Millennium Development Goals Recommendations from Conference Participants to Governments (2005)
http://www.unglobalcompact.org/docs/issues_doc/7.3/7.3.1/mdg_paris.pdf

- Report of the UNDP and the International Business Leaders Forum: Business and the Millennium Development Goals, a Framework for Action (2003)
http://www.undp.org/business/docs/mdg_business.pdf
- Social Watch
The Use of International Financial Markets to Fulfil the MDGs: Part of the Problem or Possible Solution? (2005):
<http://www.socialwatch.org/en/informesTematicos/91.html>
Indicators of Social Watch: Miles Away from the Millennium Goals (2005):
http://www.socialwatch.org/en/avancesyRetrosos/pdfs/SW-2005-Colcha-eng_1.pdf
Social Watch Report 2005, Roars and Whispers:
<http://www.socialwatch.org/en/informeImpreso/informe2005.htm>
A list of themes with reports on measuring progress:
<http://www.socialwatch.org/en/avancesyRetrosos/index.htm>
- UNCDF Guide: Microfinance and the Millennium Development Goals. A Reader's Guide to the Millennium Project Reports and other UN documents (2005)
http://www.yearofmicrocredit.org/docs/mdgdoc_MN.pdf
- The DATA Report 2006
<http://www.thedatareport.org/>
- Several papers on the MDGs can be found at the site of the centre for Global Development
<http://www.cgdev.org/>
- Several papers on the participation of business in the MDGs can be found on the World Bank site:
<http://www.businessandmdgs.net/>
- A practical guide on how businesses can contribute to the MDGs can be found at the UNDP site:
www.undp.org/partners/business/mdg_business.pdf

Europe

- European Union
EU progress regarding the MDGs 2000-2004:
http://ec.europa.eu/comm/development/body/publications/descript/pub7_24_en.cfm
EU information packages regarding the MDGs:
http://ec.europa.eu/comm/development/body/communications/communications_en.htm
EU Report: EU Contribution to the Review of the MDGs at the UN 2005 High Level Event, EU Report on Millennium Development Goals 2000 – 2004
http://ec.europa.eu/comm/development/body/communications/docs/eu_mdg_report.pdf#zoom=125
EU Paper: The EU Contribution towards the Millennium Development Goals
<http://europa.eu/scadplus/leg/en/lvb/r12533.htm>

National

- MVO Nederland:
Internationaal Duurzaam Ondernemen
(International Sustainable Business)

<http://www.internationaalduurzaamondernemen.nl/upload/attachments/1117443084.pdf>

- DPRN:
Policy Brief: Millennium Development Goals as a Challenge for the Dutch Knowledge Community
<http://dprn.fss.uu.nl/Report%20%20Policy%20brief.pdf>

5. The most important players regarding Policy Coherence for Development

International

- Centre for Global Development
Website: <http://www.cgdev.org/>
Commitment to Development Index' (CDI)
http://www.cgdev.org/section/initiatives/_active/cdi
- The World Trade Organisation
Website: <http://www.wto.org/>
On Policy Coherence for Development
http://www.wto.org/english/res_e/reser_e/world_trade_report_e.htm
- OECD
Website: www.oecd.org
On Policy Coherence for Development:
www.oecd.org/departement/0,2688,en_2649_18532957_1_1_1_1_1,00.html

Europe

- Evert Vermeer Foundation (EVS)
European site on Policy Coherence for Development: www.eucoherence.org/

Netherlands

Dutch Government Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Development Cooperation
Website: <http://www.minbuza.nl/>
On Policy Coherence for Development:
<http://www.minbuza.nl/nl/themas,armoedebestrijding/coherent-beleid>

- Evert Vermeer Foundation (EVS)
Website: <http://www.evertvermeerstichting.nl/>
On Policy Coherence for Development: <http://www.coherentie.nl/>

Papers & reports on Policy Coherence for development

- www.europaindewereld.nl/ cites a great number of documents about policy coherence.

For example the document 'Policy Coherence for Development: Accelerating Progress Towards Attaining the Millennium Development Goals'.

http://www.europaindewereld.nl/list_url.phtml?&username=guest@euforic.org&password=9999&groups=EUNGO&text03=;109;&groups=

- Eldis

Engendering policy coherence for development: gender issues for the global policy agenda in the year 2005

<http://www.eldis.org/static/DOC18352.htm>

- OECD:

Institutional approaches to policy coherence for development:

OECD Policy workshop, May

<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/43/35/31659358.pdf>

- Commission for Africa

The Commission for Africa and Policy Coherence for Development: First do no harm.

[http://www.parliament.the-stationery-](http://www.parliament.the-stationery-office.co.uk/pa/cm200405/cmselect/cmintdev/123/123.pdf)

[office.co.uk/pa/cm200405/cmselect/cmintdev/123/123.pdf](http://www.parliament.the-stationery-office.co.uk/pa/cm200405/cmselect/cmintdev/123/123.pdf)

- Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Enhancing Policy Coherence for Development in the EU;

From Concept and Legal Obligation to Concrete Results on the Ground

http://www.minbuza.nl/default.asp?CMS_ITEM=8358D122B08940619B0590282FFC8C9CX3X63142X53

‘Beleidscoherentie Ontwikkelingssamenwerking – Landbouw’ (‘Policy Coherence

Development Cooperation – Agriculture’) (December 2002)

http://www.minbuza.nl/default.asp?CMS_ITEM=AE62799E1E924544A9DEFF2A57A4E04AX3X61045X23

Progress report on Dutch Policy Coherence for Development:

http://www.minbuza.nl/default.asp?CMS_ITEM=EE1B22CF2DFE4C7493DB88EA8824B7C6X3X58652X34

ANNEX I

Events (2007 – 2010)

2007

debt networks identified 2007 as a focal year

07-07-07 is the half way point to the MDGs

South Africa to chair the G20

EU new chair of Kimberly Process - the international initiative to eliminate the trade in conflict diamonds

European Year of Equal Opportunities for All

Date	Events	Location	Details
1/01/07	German Presidency of the EU		
14-1/16-1-07	The 8th Annual Global Development Conference	Beijing, China	European Development Cooperation
14-01/16-01-07	Shaping a New Global Reality: The Rise of Asia and its Implications		
20-01/25-01-07	WSF	Nairobi, Kenya	
7/02/07	G77 41st meeting	Rome, Italy	
8/03/07	International Women's day (UNESCO)		http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=19031&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html
7/04/07	World Health Day		http://www.un.org/Depts/dhl/health/
13/05/07	Walk the World Event, UN WFP		http://www.fighthunger.org/
15-05/18-05-07	World Forum on Early Care and Education	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	http://www.worldforumfoundation.org/wf/wf2007/purpose.php
08-06/10-06-07	G8 Summit	Heiligendamm, Germany	
09-07-2007	G8 demonstration	Rostock, Germany	
June	Review of Monterrey+5		www.monterreyforum2007.org
1/07/07	Portuguese Presidency of the EU		
06-06/10-06-07	Protestant Church Congress	Cologne, Germany	
8/06/07	White Band Day		
16/06/07	Day of the African Child		
07/07/07	HIV/AIDS Conference	New York, USA	
07-07-07	Halfway point on the road to 2015		
11-07/14-07-07	European conference on African Studies: African Alternatives: Initiative and Creativity Beyond Current constraints		European Development Cooperation
11-07/14-07-07	AEGIS European Conference		European Development

	on African Studies		Cooperation
October	Presidential Elections in Brazil	Brazil	
September/October	Annual meeting World Bank and IMF		http://www.imf.org/external/am/2005/about.htm
16-10-2007	World Food day		FAO http://www.fao.org/wfd/2005/index.asp?lang=en
the week of 16-10-07	Wereldvoedseldag (World Food Day)	The Netherlands	Fairfood www.wereldvoedseldag.nl
17-10-07	World Poverty Day	International	Highlight of Dutch Een-Campaign: www.een.nl
09-11/15-11-07	World Energy Congress	Rome, Italy	http://www.rome2007.it/home/home.asp
	Women's World Cup	China	
	French Presidential Elections	France	
	Commonwealth Summit	Uganda	
	APEC summit	Australia	
	First US Social Forum	Atlanta, US	
	Bicentury Abolition of Slavery		http://www.antislavery.org/archive/press/pressrelease2005bicentenary.htm
	WSF Kenya	Nairobi, Kenya	
	ILO Conference on Employment and Social Protection		
	Review of Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing		
	US Farm Bill expires		
	EFA (Education for All) week		

2008

International Year of Planet Earth Proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly

International Year of the potato Proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly

Date	Events	Location	Details
8/01/08	Slovenian Presidency of the EU		
8/03/08	International Women's day (UNESCO)		http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=19031&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html
7/04/08	World Health day		http://www.un.org/Depts/dhl/health/
8/07/08	French Presidency of the EU		
Second half of 2008	Financing for Development	Doha (Qatar)	
03.08.-08.08.2006	XVII International AIDS Conference (AIDS 2008)	Mexico City, Mexico	
October 2008	32nd World Congress on Urban Development		
16-10-2008	World Food Day		FAO http://www.fao.org/wfd/2005/index.asp?lang=en

the week of 16-10-08	Wereldvoedseldag (World Food Day)	The Netherlands	Fairfood www.wereldvoedseldag.nl
	Third High Level Forum on Aid Harmonisation & Effectiveness	Accra, Ghana	
	World urban Forum	China	related events: http://www.wuf3-fum3.ca/en/around_wuf3_side_events.shtml
	US Presidential elections	USA	
	Duty and quota free market access for the Least Developed Countries starting in 2008		
	G8 summit	Japan	
	World Business Awards, in support of the Millennium Development Goals		organised by UNDP, IBLF, ICC http://www.iccwbo.org/wba/id4031/index.html
	8th ASEM Finance Ministers' meeting	Korea	
September/October	Annual meeting World Bank and IMF		http://www.imf.org/external/am/2005/about.htm
	EFA (Education for All) week		

2009

Date	Events	Location	Details
8/01/09	Czech Presidency of the EU		
8/03/09	International Women's day (UNESCO)		http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=19031&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html
7/04/09	World Health day		http://www.un.org/Depts/dhl/health/
9/07/09	Swedish Presidency of the EU		
September/October	Annual meeting World Bank and IMF		http://www.imf.org/external/am/2005/about.htm
16-10-2009	World Food day		FAO http://www.fao.org/wfd/2005/index.asp?lang=en
the week of 16-10-09	Wereldvoedseldag (World Food Day)	the Netherlands	Fairfood www.wereldvoedseldag.nl
	President Bush leaves office		
	Second Asia-Africa Summit		
	Fifth World Water Forum		
	54th UK General elections		
	National Elections in South Africa		
	EFA (Education for All) week		

2010

Date	Events	Location	Details
10/01/10	Spanish Presidency of the EU		
8/03/10	International Women's day		http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php

	(UNESCO)		hp-URL_ID=19031&URL_DO=DO_TO PIC&URL_SECTION=201.html
7/04/10	World Health day		http://www.un.org/Depts/dhl/health/
10/07/10	Belgian Presidency of the EU		
September/October	Annual meeting Worldbank and IMF		http://www.imf.org/external/am/2005/about.htm
16-10-2010	World Food day		FAO http://www.fao.org/wfd/2005/index.asp?lang=en
	World Cup Soccer	South Africa	
	G8 agreed to double aid to Africa by 2010		
	All members of the EU 15. 0.56% by 2010 and 0.7% by 2015 of GDP as ODA		
	US promised to ban landmines by 2010		
	Universal access to treatment by 2010		
	2010 target of halving child poverty ("eradicating" child poverty in 2020)		
	EU Helsinki Headline Goal 2010		
	US Senate election		
	End of Decade to Roll Back Malaria in Developing Countries		
	End of Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World		
	End of Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism		
	World Business Awards, in support of the Millennium Development Goals		Organised by UNDP, IBLF, ICC http://www.iccwbo.org/wba/id4031/index.html
	50 year Anniversary of DAC		
	Brussels Programme of Action for the decade 2001-2010		
	EFA (Education for All) week		
	World Urban Forum		

International Decades proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly

2005-2014 - Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People

2005-2014 - International Decade for Action "Water for Life"

2005-2014 - United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development

2003-2012 - United Nations Literacy Decade

2001- 2010 - International Decade for a Culture of Peace and non-violence for the Children of

the World

2001-2010 - Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism

2001-2010 - Decade to Roll Back Malaria in Developing Countries, Particularly in Africa

1997- 2006 - First United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty