



# MEDIA RELEASE

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## Asian countries meet in Dhaka to reach global development goals

DHAKA: Senior representatives from eight Asian countries, leading UN officials, non-governmental organizations will meet in Bangladesh this week to consolidate plans aimed at helping Asian countries meet global development targets.

World leaders agreed to these global targets -- known as the Millennium Development Goals -- in September 2000 at the United Nations Millennium Summit. Leaders agreed to a set of time-bound and measurable goals and targets aimed at combating poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, environmental degradation and discrimination against women.

During the three-day workshop (23-25 February) in Dhaka, representatives from Bangladesh, DPR Korea, Iran, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Timor Leste, Cambodia and Vietnam are expected to prepare national strategies for meeting the Millennium Development Goals in their respective countries. They will also look at ways of reporting and monitoring progress towards achieving the goals.

"The very laudable objective of halving the number of people living under the yoke of poverty will never be achieved unless nations are committed to freeing the human race from hunger, want and inequity" says Hafiz Pasha, Director of the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific, United Nations Development Programme. "In the last ten years, although we have seen major improvements in some areas of development across the region, overall, there has been very little change for the poorest living in the Asia-Pacific region," he says.

More than 1.2 billion people are living on less than USD 1 per day, and many of these are living in Asia. In addition, progress towards meeting the goal of halving poverty has slowed in Asia since the targets were set. Providing universal primary education remains a challenge in the region, while the fight against HIV/AIDS has also lost ground. On the positive side, child mortality has reduced and school enrollment for girls has increased.

The Millennium Development Goals are technically feasible and financially affordable. Yet, the world is off-track to meeting them by 2015. The Goals are ambitious, but each and every target will be met by some countries, including a few low-income countries.

Working through the UN Development Group, UNDP is helping to integrate the Millennium Development Goals into all aspects of the UN system's work at the country level, in response to the priorities identified by each country.

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Word Count (approx): 370

NOTE to Editors:

All media are invited to the inaugural session, which will be attended by H.E. Mr. Moudud Ahmed, Minister of Law and Parliamentary Affairs; Mr. Hafiz Pasha, UN Assistant Secretary General and Director of the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific, UNDP and Jorgen Lissner UNDP Resident Representative UNDP.

The inaugural session will be held at the Brac Centre Inn on Sunday 23 February from 9:00 am to 11:00 am.

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