

# PARLIAMENTARY ENGAGEMENT WITH THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS



A Manual for Use in Parliaments | 2010

**ENDPOVERTY**  
**2015**  
millennium campaign



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# Foreword

In the largest ever gathering of world leaders in the history of humankind, 189 world leaders committed themselves, at the United Nations in September 2000, to fighting poverty, disease and illiteracy while protecting the environment. In making this commitment they set themselves specific time-bound targets to be achieved by 2015.

Looking back at the decade since the 8 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were agreed, it is heartening that they have become the unifying framework for the international development agenda both within the developing world and with their donor partners. In concrete terms, the world has seen unprecedented progress on the MDGs in the last decade with the poverty, education and water targets on track to being achieved. In fact, except on child and maternal mortality and perhaps sanitation, the other MDGs are on track to be met at the aggregate level. More importantly, there has been significant progress even in the poorest countries of the world on almost every MDG. There is enough empirical evidence to establish that virtually all the MDGs are achievable in most countries over the next five years.

But this requires serious acceleration toward the establishment and implementation of nationally relevant development plans and budgets that are MDG-compliant, with a strong emphasis on addressing not just poverty but also inequality. Plugging the growing accountability gap between governments and citizens, particularly in developing countries, could go a long way in improving MDG achievement.

Experience has shown that in countries as diverse as the Philippines and the United Kingdom, where parliaments have fully exercised their legislative and oversight role in relation to the MDGs on a cross-party basis, it has had a very positive effect on increasing accountability of government actions on the MDGs.

Building on existing examples of where parliaments have strengthened democratic governance for the MDGs, this Manual aims to support and encourage more active engagement of parliamentarians across the world in increasing public accountability for creating the policies and practises that are essential for achieving the MDGs.

As the race to the 2015 finish line begins and preparations commence for the UN MDG Summit in September 2010, where world leaders will be meeting to review progress on the MDGs and agree on a Breakthrough Action Plan for each country and at the global level, we hope that members of parliament, and those seeking to influence them, will find this action-oriented document of practical use.

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# Executive Summary

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) represent the agenda for reducing poverty agreed to by world governments in the year 2000. This manual for Parliamentarians and Parliamentary staff emphasises the national importance of effective Parliamentary engagement with the MDGs.

The manual **outlines mechanisms** that can be used in Parliaments to increase and improve engagement with the MDGs, **highlights examples** of best practice in the way that different Parliaments have made the MDGs a central part of their work and **provides practical advice** on how to effectively implement some legislative mechanisms to utilize the MDGs in Parliaments around the world.

In addition to outlining the general benefits of Parliamentary engagement with the MDGs, this handbook also outlines specific ways in which Parliaments can engage with the MDGs through four of the core functions of any Parliament:

- **Engaging with the MDGs when passing laws**
- **Engaging with the MDGs when scrutinising government activities**
- **Engaging with the MDGs through the budget approval process**
- **Engaging with the MDGs when reflecting and acknowledging the opinions and concerns of citizens.**

Parliaments and Parliamentarians have a clear and important role to play in ensuring that progress is made in achieving the MDG targets. Effective Parliamentary engagement can be a catalyst for accelerating progress towards the achievement of the MDGs and improving the lives of citizens in every country. It is the aim of this handbook to assist Parliaments in making the MDGs central to the work of the Parliament and in engaging effectively with the MDGs in all areas of Parliamentary work.

# Introduction

This manual is a guide for use in Parliaments and is intended to provide a set of practical tools for Parliamentary engagement with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). This manual provides examples of mechanisms which have been used in Parliaments around the world in order to ensure that achieving the principles outlined in the MDGs remain at the forefront of the Parliamentary agenda, and gives tips for Parliaments on how to implement the mechanisms described in this handbook.

The Millennium Development Goals are an agenda for reducing poverty and improving lives agreed to by world leaders at the Millennium Summit in September 2000. For each goal, there are also targets which should be reached in all countries by 2015. Whilst it was the participating governments which signed the Millennium Declaration on behalf of their respective countries and which ultimately have the responsibility to deliver the targets, Parliaments can also play an important role in orienting themselves toward these agreed upon development goals. The central role that Parliaments can play in reducing poverty in a country and attaining the MDGs has been further reinforced in international agreements such as the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness in 2005 and the Accra Agenda for Action in 2008.

The MDGs provide a unique reference point to allow Parliaments to analyse whether agreed upon development targets are being met and whether poverty is being reduced in their respective countries. Parliaments are in a position to raise issues or concerns with the government in order to adjust MDG-related

policies to make them more effective and to better address the needs of citizens. It should be the role of every Parliament to oversee and scrutinise whether the country is reaching these targets and the role of every Parliamentarian to raise issues of concern relating to the MDGs on behalf of their constituents.

This manual outlines possible mechanisms available to Parliaments to engage within the MDG framework, to play a central role in overseeing whether the targets are being met in their countries, and to facilitate an acceleration of progress toward these goals. This manual also suggests some practical advice and possible tools to use in implementing these mechanisms. However, this manual does not set out to recommend which policies should be adopted and implemented or which budget issues should be prioritised in order to achieve the targets set within the context of the MDGs, as this is

## **MILLENNIUM DECLARATION**

### *Paragraph III. 11*

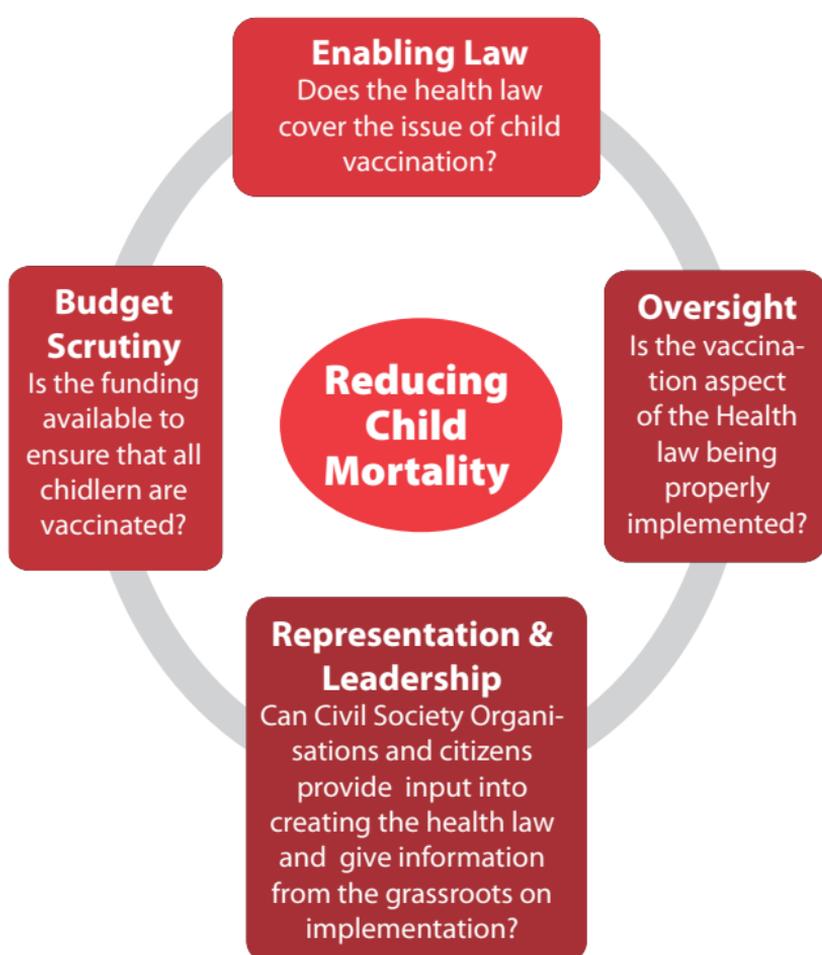
We will spare no effort to free our fellow men, women and children from the abject and dehumanizing conditions of extreme poverty, to which more than a billion of them are currently subjected. We are committed to making the right to development a reality for everyone and to freeing the entire human race from want.

the function of individual governments and parliaments.

Parliaments are key actors in most democracies and are in the unique position of being representative bodies usually inclusive of various geographical areas, different social or ethnic groups, and diverse political viewpoints and traditions. Ensuring that Parliaments engage according to the parameters of the MDGs not only increases a sense of national ownership but can also lead to improved progress on the road toward development according to the MDGs. Without fully engaging Parliaments in the MDG framework, it will be even more challenging for countries to reach the ambitious targets set in the MDGs by 2015.

Parliaments have many functions and responsibilities but the main functional areas within most Parliaments include legislation, oversight, budget scrutiny and representation. There is overlap and clear links can be identified among these four primary functions and the delivery of MDGs in any given country. The **legislative role** of a Parliament can ensure that the necessary enabling legislation to make progress towards the MDG targets is in place. An example of this complementarity is ensuring that a national health law addresses the issue of vaccinations. The **oversight role** of Parliaments allows the representative body to hold the government and other stakeholders accountable with regards to MDG related policy implementation. One example would be overseeing whether the government is effectively implementing a new law on vaccinations. **Scrutinising the national budget** is also the responsibility of many Parliaments which are in a position to assess whether resources are being prioritised in the

best way to make progress towards the MDGs. For example, ensuring that there is sufficient funding allocated and available to vaccinate all children. The **representation role** can take many forms in different Parliaments but will usually include ensuring that citizens, different stakeholders, and civil society groups have a voice at the national level and are therefore involved in national governance issues. This would include a voice in the identification, prioritizing, and goal-setting for MDGs within the context of a given national legislative agenda. Citizen feedback is a vital component of this process, and might, for example, include soliciting citizen or citizen group feedback on the issue of vaccination and the implementation of the national health law. The opinions expressed by civil society organizations would then be utilized in modifying the health law or altering the way in which the law is implemented,



including subsequent information sharing between the legislature and the people it is intended to represent.

Many countries have made significant progress toward achieving the Millennium Development Goals, and it is clear that members of Parliament (MPs) have an important role to play in catalyzing progress towards accomplishment of the MDGs. MPs are in national leadership positions and are therefore mandated to not only carry out their duties in Parliament but also to influence other decision makers and to proactively engage in local and national campaigns intended to accelerate progress toward achievement of the MDGs in a given country.

This manual provides examples of how Parliaments in different countries have engaged within the MDG framework by making some or all MDGs a core issue in various Parliaments around the world. However, whilst it is important to highlight these global examples, it is also recognised that different countries will have different approaches and that there is no standard policy in terms of improving the engagement of Parliaments within the Millennium Development Goal context. The advice and examples provided in this manual are general in nature, and should be applicable to most Parliaments within most governance structures globally.

In addition to highlighting examples of ways in which Parliaments have engaged with the MDGs and providing tips on how to implement these mechanisms, at the end of this guide there is a checklist of possible activities that Parliaments can undertake to increase and improve engagement with the MDGs. Not all of the issues raised and the mechanisms provided in the checklist will

be relevant to all Parliaments, but such a list will allow Parliaments to assess the different possible mechanisms available and implement mechanisms which are appropriate to their circumstances.

This manual is a short, concise and practical guide and is not intended as an in-depth review of the MDGs or the place of Parliaments within Governance structures. Further information on the MDGs and references to further research on the role of Parliaments and work undertaken in different Parliaments can be found in the appendix to this manual.

Finally, it should be noted that increasing Parliamentary engagement with the MDGs is a process and not an event. As 2015 approaches and pressure on signatory governments to deliver on the targets set in the MDGs increases, Parliaments need to assess on a regular basis whether the mechanisms they are using to engage the MDGs are effective, while continuously revising and amending their individual approaches in order to play a key role in assisting in delivering the agenda for change agreed in 2000.

### **ACCRA AGENDA FOR ACTION 2008**

*Paragraph 8*

#### **Country ownership is key.**

Developing country governments will take stronger leadership of their own development policies, and will engage with their **parliaments** and citizens in shaping those policies.

# What are the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)?

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are commitments made by world governments in the year 2000. The MDGs set a number of development goals and reform targets which aim to improve the human condition around the world. The MDGs provide an overall framework to which all countries are committed and the development of any given country can be tracked by assessing progress made towards achieving the MDGs. Therefore, the MDGs provide Parliaments with useful benchmarks to assess the development progress in their countries.

The MDGs are long-term and ambitious goals agreed to at a global level but it is the responsibility of each individual country to decide how best to achieve these development goals and targets.

Therefore, whilst countries have signed up to the MDGs as the long term aims with specific targets to be achieved by the year 2015, many countries have also developed Poverty Reduction Strategic Plans (PRSPs) which have outlined how governments intend to reduce poverty in a given country. PRSPs can cover a range of broader social and economic issues and the MDGs can be incorporated into the PRSPs.

In addition to committing to the global MDGs, some countries have decided to localise the MDGs. Localising MDGs can mean transforming the goals and targets into national strategies and targets according to a country's national development priorities, prioritising the MDGs or creating localised MDGs for specific regions or provinces in the country. For example, the Kingdom of Lesotho in southern Africa decided to adopt MDG 6 (reversing the spread of HIV / AIDS) to be the

## WHY ARE THE MDGS IMPORTANT?

The MDGs are the goals that all countries have agreed are international priorities.

Many of the issues and complaints made by citizens to MPs every day, such as **education, health, poverty or jobs** are all issues that are included in the MDGs.

Making progress towards achieving the MDGs means that the lives of the people will improve. Generally, governments and parliaments that improve people's lives are more popular with citizens.

number 1 MDG in the country in order to emphasise the negative impact that the HIV pandemic was having on development in the country. Other countries have localised the MDGs to create specific targets for the country as a whole or for regions or provinces within the country that are more realistic and applicable to the national or local situation. It is important that Parliaments and Parliamentarians are aware of both the global MDGs and the country-specific targets.

Therefore, with governments having agreed to long-term global goals and targets and in some countries having localised these targets in certain regions, Parliaments can play an oversight role in terms of regularly tracking progress and achievement against these localised and region-specific MDGs.

The UN has Country Offices in most countries around the world and many offices have their own information and country specific resources on the MDGs. To get more information on the MDGs, contact the office of your UN Resident Coordinator or go to [www.endpoverty2015.org](http://www.endpoverty2015.org) or [www.undp.org/mdg](http://www.undp.org/mdg)

# THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS: A SUMMARY

In total there are eight Millennium Development Goals, 21 targets and 60 indicators. This is a summary of the MDGs:

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger</b>      | <b>Target:</b> by 2015, to halve the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day and suffering from hunger |
| <b>Achieve universal primary education</b>       | <b>Target:</b> by 2015 to ensure all boys and girls complete primary school  |
| <b>Promote gender equality and empower women</b> | <b>Target:</b> eliminate gender disparity at all levels by 2015  |
| <b>Reduce child mortality</b>                    | <b>Target:</b> by 2015 to reduce by two thirds the mortality rate among children under five                            |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>Improve maternal health</b></p>                     | <p><b>Target:</b> to reduce by three quarters the ratio of women dying in childbirth by 2015</p>  |
| <p><b>Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases</b></p> | <p><b>Target:</b> by 2015, to halt and begin reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS and incidence of malaria and other major diseases</p>   |
| <p><b>Ensure environmental sustainability</b></p>         | <p><b>Target:</b> by 2015, reduce by half the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water</p>  |
| <p><b>Develop global partnerships for development</b></p> | <p><b>Target:</b> develop further open trading &amp; financial systems that include a commitment to good governance, development and poverty reduction, both nationally and internationally</p> |

For a full list of the MDG targets and indicators and for more information on the MDGs go to [www.endpoverty2015.org](http://www.endpoverty2015.org), or contact the office of the UN Resident Coordinator in your country.

## **E**nsuring Parliaments are Well Informed of the MDGs

In order for Parliaments and Parliamentarians to fully engage with the MDGs they must receive accurate and up to date information on the MDGs and progress being made towards achieving the MDGs in their country.

Ensuring that Parliamentarians understand the breadth and depth of such a wide range of policy issues as those incorporated in the MDGs is a challenge in all Parliaments. Parliamentarians are usually overburdened with daily legislative issues and representational responsibilities, and therefore ensuring that the MDGs remain at the forefront of their minds and at the top of the Parliamentary agenda can be difficult. There are many different formal and informal

### **INDUCTION PROGRAMME FOR THE PARLIAMENT OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS**

In 2009, in the Republic of the Marshall Islands in the Pacific, an induction programme for Parliamentarians was held. The Parliament worked with UNDP to arrange that a section of the induction programme concentrated on the MDGs with the Director of Economic Policy, Planning and Statistics updating Parliamentarians on progress made in achieving the MDGs in the country. As well as discussing the MDGs, the induction session also discussed ways in which the Parliament could engage more effectively with the MDGs. This example highlights the importance of including the MDGs in any induction programme for newly elected Parliaments.

mechanisms that Parliaments can use to ensure that Parliamentarians remain well informed on the MDGs.

One of the most important points for any Parliament is to ensure that they receive full information on the MDGs and the progress being made towards achieving the MDGs in their country. To ensure that Parliament can fully engage with the MDGs, it is crucial that the Parliament regularly and automatically receives government reports and other formal reports on the MDGs. These reports should contain a concise and compressed “executive summary” followed by more extensive supporting documentation so as to ensure that MPs and other decision-makers will read and at least briefly focus on country-specific progress on a regular basis. It is equally important for Parliament to be aware of which stakeholders are involved in implementing policies and projects which aim to make progress towards achieving the MDGs. In most countries national governments, local governments, non-government state agencies, international development partners and civil society organisations all contribute to the achievement of the MDGs. For a Parliament to fully engage with MDG related issues, it is important that information is shared and interaction occurs between the Parliament and all of the relevant stakeholders. This information and interaction can come in the form of formal documentation or in workshops or briefing sessions for Parliamentarians. In countries where the world-wide web is accessible and readily available, on-line information sharing through a country-specific MDG

## **THE NIGERIAN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY CREATES AN MDG RESOURCE CENTRE**

In 2009, the Nigerian National Assembly Committee on the Millennium Development Goals launched an MDG resource centre. The resource centre was commissioned by the Parliament Speaker and aims to ensure that the Parliament has the latest information on the MDGs available for use by Nigerian Legislators. The MDGs Resource Centre is supported by CSOs and is equipped with educational resources, MDGs advocacy materials and various MDGs reports.

web page, a tailored MDG blog, or an email list serve can all serve to ensure that progress is noted and shared as widely as is possible. Whilst receiving information from governments is crucial, these events can be more sustainable and successful if there is also CSO involvement and the opportunity for CSO representatives to engage in the process is established early on.

Although one-off events such as breakfast meetings and MDG workshops can be useful in themselves, incorporating these events into a continuous process of Parliamentary engagement through ensuring that such events become regular fixtures in the Parliamentary calendar is a more effective way for Parliaments to engage with the MDGs. For example, these one-off events can become more permanent by holding annual briefing sessions for Parliamentarians on the MDGs and the progress being made towards

achieving the MDGs either informally through workshops or formally through a Parliamentary debate.

One of the issues that many Parliaments must face is the high turnover of Parliamentarians after national elections. Whilst one-off events may have informed Parliamentarians of the MDGs, it is likely in most countries that at least some of these Parliamentarians will be replaced following national elections by new Parliamentarians whose knowledge of the MDGs may be limited. Therefore, in order for a new Parliament to be able to engage with the MDGs from the outset, policy briefings on the MDGs can be incorporated into any induction programme that a Parliament arranges for newly elected Parliamentarians.

Once Parliamentarians are well informed on the goals and obligations of the MDGs as

### **RECEIVING INFORMATION ON THE MDGS**

There are many different ways in which Parliamentarians can be informed on the MDGs. Some of these include:

- Parliamentary debates, questions and hearings
- Documents from the government
- Documents from International Partners and CSOs
- Workshops or briefing sessions with Government, International Partners and CSOs
- Committee Hearings
- Public Meetings
- Constituency meetings

established in a given country, they can play an effective role in all MDG related issues as there is clear overlap between the legislative, oversight, scrutiny, and representative functions of any parliamentary body.

Another important way in which Parliamentarians can become better aware of the MDGs and the role that Parliaments can play in achieving progress towards the MDGs is through participation in regional or international parliamentary networks. Events organised by international organisations such as the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) or the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) and regional networks such as the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) Parliamentary Forum or Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum can be useful forums for Parliamentarians to discuss the MDGs and share good practice about ways in which national Parliaments have effectively engaged with the MDGs.

# TOP TIP

## INFORMING PARLIAMENTS ON THE MDGS

Write an annual plan on how you will receive information on the MDGs. This plan will differ from Parliament to Parliament but in general should include a proposed date, who will receive the information and who will provide the information. In addition to a general plan for the Parliament as a whole, the MDG Committee or relevant Subject Committees can also develop their own annual plans which would include additional activities such as field visits or public meetings.

A very basic general plan for the Parliament as a whole may look like this:

- **January 2010** – Distribute copy of MDGs to all MPs (Parliament staff to arrange)
- **February 2010** - Induction programme (Government Ministries and UN agencies to give information on the MDGs for new MPs)
- **April 2010** – Briefing session for all MPs on the MDGs (Government and International Agencies to provide latest information)
- **September 2010** - Workshop for certain MDG related committees (Government and International Agencies to provide update on progress)
- **November 2010** – Parliamentary debate scheduled on the MDG progress report (Minister of Finance to open debate and respond)

# **W**hy and How can Parliaments Engage with the MDGs?

## **Why engage with the MDGs?**

In most countries, Parliaments are in a unique position in accordance with their representative and legislative mandate to gather diverse representatives from all geographic areas of the country. In any given country, the Parliament is usually the most representative body within the governance structure of the state. The MDGs are goals for the entire country and Parliaments have a responsibility to oversee policies and programmes that aim to make progress towards achieving the MDGs while helping to ensure that a country reaches the targets set. This means assessing the effectiveness of government policy, scrutinising national budgets and ensuring that enabling legislation is passed. In addition, Parliaments play an important representation role and provide an opportunity for elected citizen representatives to have input directly into the MDGs. It is for these reasons that Parliaments should increase and improve engagement with the MDGs.

## **What does 'engage' mean?**

Once Parliaments have received information and been informed on the MDGs, Parliaments are then in a position to fully engage with the MDGs. Parliamentary engagement with the MDGs can take many forms and will differ from Parliament to Parliament depending on the political and constitutional circumstance in each country. In general terms, engaging with the MDGs means Parliaments getting involved with the MDGs and MDG related issues.

## **THE BENEFITS OF PARLIAMENTARY ENGAGEMENT WITH THE MDGS**

- Increasing national ownership of the MDGs and a creating a higher profile for the MDGs in the country
- Allowing the government to explain on a national stage the policies it is pursuing to achieve the MDGs
- Allowing national discussions on the MDGs in a formal political setting
- Parliamentary engagement with the MDGs can lead to increased consensus on MDG related policy issues
- Allowing CSOs and non-majority groups to give their opinions on MDG related policies and progress made towards the targets
- Creating open and transparent mechanisms for countries to track progress towards achievement of the MDGs

Therefore, effective Parliamentary engagement with the MDGs means increasing Parliamentary involvement with the Millennium Development Goals, assessing whether a country is making progress towards achieving the MDGs and playing a role as a Parliament in accelerating progress towards achieving the MDGs. This involvement or engagement will revolve around some of the main functions of the Parliament; legislation, oversight, budget scrutiny and representation.

## General Parliamentary Engagement with the MDGs

The following sections of this guide will outline different mechanisms that can be used by Parliaments to engage with the MDGs within the various functional areas of a Parliament's work - legislation, oversight, budget scrutiny and representation. However, there are some cross-cutting areas of parliamentary responsibility involving all legislative functions and there are ways in which Parliaments can make the MDGs central to its work. In addition, it is also important that Parliaments not only engage with the MDGs, but that Parliaments are seen to be engaging with the MDGs in order to demonstrate the support of the Parliament for the MDGs to CSOs, in-country decision-makers, and the public at large.

General engagement with the MDGs is the first step in a longer process. Many Parliaments have started the process of engagement by holding one-off events. These one-off events, such as breakfast meetings or orientation workshops, usually have a number of aims including raising the profile of the MDGs in the Parliament and the country as a whole, increasing awareness levels of the MDGs amongst Parliamentarians, and building cross-party consensus on the importance of poverty reduction and the MDGs. Non-partisan media coverage and accurate internet-based information sharing may also serve to potentially raise awareness and acceptance of MDGs.

However, whilst these one-off events can be useful in their own right, they are far more effective if they develop into a

## **MAKING THE MDGS A CENTRAL ISSUE IN THE KENYAN PARLIAMENT**

In 2009 the Parliament of Kenya began a process of making the MDGs central to the work of the Parliament. Initially, one MP served as a focal point for MDG related activities. The Focal Point then created a Parliamentary caucus for Poverty and the MDGs. In May 2009 a breakfast meeting was arranged for Parliamentarians and was also attended by the National Coordinator of the Government MDG unit. This breakfast meeting created an environment which allowed Parliamentarians to raise MDG related issues and to discuss ways in which the Parliament could engage with the issues.

broader programme of Parliamentary engagement with the MDGs. One such way of ensuring continuity is the creation of an MDG Parliamentary caucus in the Parliament. A cross-party caucus or interest group in the Parliament can become a focal point for MDG related activities. Although the caucus may not have the same formal powers as a MDG Parliamentary committee, it can be a useful mechanism to bring MPs together to discuss MDG related issues. In addition, an MDG Parliamentary caucus can highlight the importance that MPs and the public attach to the MDGs; it can become a liaison point for government, nationwide decision makers, CSOs, and international donors on MDG issues and can ensure that MDGs remain on the Parliamentary and national agenda.

# TOP TIP

## ARRANGING YOUR FIRST MDG MEETING

Parliamentarians are busy with many competing interests. Therefore getting them to attend meetings can be challenging. Some issues to consider when arranging your first MDG meeting or briefing sessions include:

- Get Parliamentary leaders, such as the Speaker or Senior MPs, to endorse your event as this will make MPs more likely to attend.
- Choose a location which is easy for MPs to reach. A location near the Parliament is usually best as MPs may have to move on to other meetings.
- Choose a time which will maximise attendance. When Parliament is sitting, MPs will be in the Capital city but there may also be Parliamentary plenary or committee meetings scheduled. Breakfast meetings can be effective as other formal Parliamentary meetings are unlikely to be scheduled for this time whilst evening meetings may need to be postponed if Parliament plenary or committee sessions overrun.
- Be realistic in your aims for this meeting. In the first meeting, Speakers such as Government Ministers or International Agencies can give information on the MDGs but there is unlikely to be enough time for detailed debate.
- At this meeting, give MPs information on further events, e.g. a MDG caucus meeting or the next briefing session.
- Not all MPs will be able to stay for the whole meeting so give MPs written information to take with them.

## **E**ngaging the MDGs in the Legislative Process

One of the central functions of most Parliaments is the law making role. The constitutional powers of Parliaments relating to the legislative process differ from country to country. Some Parliaments have the constitutional power to directly initiate legislation whilst others only have the power to scrutinise government initiated legislation. However, it remains a fact that in most countries all draft laws must pass through the Parliament in order to become laws and therefore the Parliament is in an influential position to be able to engage with and influence MDG related laws.

Subscribing to the MDGs themselves and assessing progress toward achieving them may not necessarily need additional laws to be passed in order to create an enabling environment for progress towards implementing policies needed to achieve the

### **MDG RELATED LEGISLATION IN THE PHILIPPINES CONGRESS**

The Lower House of the Parliament in the Philippines created a Special Committee on the MDGs in order to ensure that MDGs remain centre stage in the Parliament. As well as holding an oversight function and budget allocation function, the Committee facilitates the passage of MDG related laws and assesses the effectiveness of MDG related laws already being implemented. In 2008, the Committee was dealing with 125 MDG related Bills and resolutions which were at various stages of discussion.

MDGs. However, in many cases, legislation may be needed.

The legislative process can be used by Parliaments to create a framework for monitoring progress toward achieving the MDGs by assessing whether the draft laws under discussion will impact positively on achieving the MDGs.

However, it should be noted that passing enabling legislation is only part of the solution towards achieving the MDGs. Monitoring and overseeing the implementation of legislation and policy is an equally important function of a Parliament.

For example, in order to achieve Millennium Development Goal Number 2 (Achieving Universal Primary Education), Parliaments may approve legislation aimed at making primary schooling compulsory. However, this in itself is not enough to achieve the MDG as there are then policy implementation issues, personnel and infrastructure needs (e.g. teachers and schools), and budget and financial issues which need to be addressed in order to reach the target set in the MDG. Legislation can create an enabling environment for achievement of the MDGs but it is not an end in itself.

Although the legislative process may differ from country to country, Parliaments can often engage with the MDGs through the entire legislative process in the Parliament. Engaging can mean discussing or debating the draft legislation or can mean proposing amendments to the draft legislation which Parliamentarians believe will speed up progress towards achieving the MDGs. There may be entry points for Parliaments to raise the MDGs when legislation or resolutions are proposed, when they are debated during the

different stages of the legislative process and before a law is finally passed.

The mechanisms available for Parliaments to engage with the MDGs during the legislative process will also differ according to the country. However, Parliaments in all parts of the world are increasingly moving towards using Parliamentary committees to scrutinise legislation in-depth and propose amendments before the final laws are passed by the Parliament as a whole. Therefore the work of Parliamentary committees can also provide a useful entry point for MDG engagement. Working through Parliamentary committees can be effective in terms of receiving input from groups outside of Parliament, for example by allowing and encouraging civil society organisations (CSOs) to provide information and evidence before parliamentary committees. It can be more effective than working through the extensive general parliamentary process to scrutinise the detail of draft laws in order to assess the potential impact of the draft law and to correct any inconsistencies. Also, asking CSOs, academics, subject experts (e.g. doctors when addressing health care and vaccinations), and citizens with a stake in the issue to talk to committees can lead to good ideas about possible new laws or amending current draft laws or laws.

In general, in using Parliamentary committees to engage with the MDGs both during the legislative process and to provide oversight, there are two options open to Parliaments. The first is that Parliaments can use existing committees which cover MDG related subject areas such as the Health Committee, the Education Committee, the Environment Committee, or others with relevant involvement in the MDG being

## **ENGAGING WITH THE MDGS THROUGH EXISTING SUBJECT COMMITTEES OR CREATING A NEW MDG COMMITTEE**

Engaging with the MDGs through Parliamentary Committees can often be the most effective way to ensure in-depth scrutiny of MDG related legislation, the budget and oversight of government policy. Whilst some Parliaments have engaged through existing subject committees others have created new MDG Committees.

### ***Engaging through Existing Subject Committees***

- Committees are usually well established
- Subject expertise built up within the Committee Membership
- No need to change the Rules of Procedure to create a new Committee
- Often more time to scrutinise legislation than MDG Committees that consider all MDG related laws

### ***Creating a new MDG Committee***

- Creates greater awareness of the MDGs amongst all Parliamentarians in the Parliament
- Makes a clear public statement of the importance that Parliament attaches to the MDGs
- Ensures that draft legislation is justified with an MDG focus and can make tracking MDG related legislation easier
- Creates a central MDG focal point within the Parliament as an Institution

addressed. The benefits of working through existing subject committees is that they are usually well established, they have established expertise in their specific fields, and they often have extant resources to facilitate the work of the committee. They are more likely to be able to scrutinise MDG related legislation in depth and may have a lighter legislative workload to perform this function compared to more general MDG Committees or Poverty Reduction Committees that are responsible for the whole spectrum of the MDGs. The second option is the creation of an MDG Committee within the Parliament which can scrutinise legislation related to the MDGs. A number of Parliaments have moved to create specific MDG Committees or Poverty Reduction Committees in order to increase Parliamentary engagement with the MDGs. Some of the benefits of creating a specific MDG Committee in the Parliament include creating greater awareness of the MDGs amongst both the Parliament and the government, ensuring that legislation is scrutinised according to its impact upon making progress towards the MDGs, and creating a central focal point on the MDG issue within the established Parliamentary structure.

Scrutinising MDG related legislation in subject committees or a purpose-specific MDG Committee often allows Parliaments the opportunity to gather the views of citizens and interest groups which may be directly affected by eventual implementation of the proposed law. The ability of Parliamentary committees to invite various stakeholders to appear before the committee will depend on the internal rules of procedure of the Parliament, but hearing from representatives of civil society and the citizens they represent increases the access of Parliamentarians to relevant and current information on important issues such as those inherent in the MDGs.

Although government ministers can outline government policy in different sectors, there is clear benefit for Parliamentarians in hearing directly the views and informed opinion of CSOs, civic groups, and relevant citizens regarding the reality on the ground in the country and within their constituencies. For example, if a law relating to HIV and AIDS is before Parliament, the Parliamentary Health Committee may want to hear directly the opinions of civil society organisations and citizens representing people living with HIV and AIDS, health professionals and other groups who may be directly affected by the proposed health legislation. Gathering the views of these stakeholders during the legislative drafting (or amendment) process will assist Parliaments in assessing the likely impact of the legislation and whether the proposed law will help to halt and reverse the spread of HIV and AIDS in the country and in accordance with Millennium Development Goal 6.

The full plenary session of Parliament also offers opportunities for Parliamentarians to engage with the MDGs through the legislative process. Questioning the government, or the sponsor of the legislation, on the purpose of the legislation and the likely impact of the draft legislation on progress towards attaining the MDGs focuses debate on the MDGs and ensures that an MDG focused justification of the legislation is given both to Parliament and the country as a whole.

An additional mechanism that Parliaments can use in order to engage with the MDGs during the legislative process, is to ensure that the explanatory notes which often accompany the text of the draft law include a section on the likely impact of the proposed legislation on attainment of the MDGs.

# TOP TIP

## ENGAGING WITH THE ANNUAL LEGISLATIVE PROGRAMME

In many countries, the government will outline a programme of laws that it intends to introduce to Parliament. This can be a key time for Parliaments to engage with the MDGs:

- Analyse the government's Legislative programme to see which proposed laws are related to the MDGs
- Analyse the Legislative Programme to see if it includes MDG related recommendations that Parliament or Parliamentary Committees have previously recommended in reports
- After the legislative programme is announced, the Parliament can then assess which draft law will be considered by which Committees and whether these Committees will need extra technical help when considering this draft law. For example, the Parliament's Health Committee may need a short-term expert to advise them when they consider a draft law on improving maternal mortality rates.

Creating a precedence that explanatory notes accompanying legislation contain a section on MDG impact will focus the minds of those in government on the MDGs, and also provide the Parliament (and interested civil society organizations) with a valuable tracking device to monitor MDG related legislation and progress toward MDGs in the country.

## **E**ngaging the MDGs in the Oversight Function

A key function of most Parliaments is the oversight function. The government is usually accountable to the Parliament and the Parliament is therefore in a position to oversee and monitor the work of the government and individual ministries. Parliaments can use their oversight responsibility to assess:

- (a) whether (and to what extent) progress is being made towards achieving the MDGs;
- (b) whether government policy is being effectively implemented;
- (c) what impact these policies are having on achieving the targets outlined in the MDGs.

Therefore, the oversight function of the Parliament can be a key for Parliaments to engage with the MDGs and make the MDGs central to their work.

There are many different mechanisms that a Parliament can use to oversee progress towards the MDGs both in full Parliamentary plenary sessions and in Parliamentary committees.

Full plenary debates on the MDGs can be the most high profile way for a Parliament to oversee progress made towards achieving the goals. A good entry point for oversight of the MDGs is for the Parliament to initiate a Parliamentary debate on MDG Reports. In many countries, governments can work with international development partners and domestic civil society groups to produce annual or biannual MDG reports or MDG progress reports that outline the impact that government policy is having on making progress towards the MDGs. Parliamentary

## **PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE FIELD VISITS IN NAMIBIA**

In 2008, the Namibian Parliamentary Standing Committee on Human Resources, Social and Community Development undertook field visits to the Erongo and Hardap regions which are characterised by widespread poverty linked to economic changes in the farming sector. The aims of the field visits were to monitor the effectiveness and implementation of government policies on poverty reduction, to receive direct input from the relevant agencies in the regions about the challenges and difficulties they face and to engage with NGOs working in the sector. Following the field visits, the Committee wrote a report and made a number of recommendations on MDG related issues.

debates on these reports can provide effective oversight and an opportunity for the Parliament to discuss the impact that government policy is having on achieving the MDGs. The overlap between the oversight and representation functions of Parliamentarians is clear when during these debates they raise concerns relating to MDG issues with the government on behalf of constituents or CSOs. It is good practice for MDG country reports to be debated in Parliament as this ensures that overarching debate covering all MDGs will be held in the Parliament.

Another mechanism that can be used in a full Parliamentary plenary session in many Parliaments is the use of oral and written questions. Questions on the MDGs as a whole can be asked of the minister responsible for

the MDGs (often the Minister of Finance or the Minister of Development or Economic Planning). An alternative mechanism Parliamentarians can utilise is to ask written or oral questions to specific ministers on MDGs which fall within their remit, for example a question to the Minister of Health on the effectiveness of programmes or projects in reducing the number of women dying in childbirth in accordance with MDG 5. In countries where on-line access is available and accessible, civic groups nationwide may also submit questions through a parliamentary web portal specific to the topic and Millennium Development Goal being addressed. The purpose of asking Parliamentary questions can be to obtain information, to raise awareness of the MDGs or to put pressure on the government to accelerate progress towards achieving the MDGs.

Effective oversight can also occur in Parliamentary committees. In many countries, using committees to oversee progress towards achievement of the MDGs can be more effective because committees can often work more flexibly than full sessions of the Parliament.

As outlined in the section on engaging during the legislative process, Parliamentarians benefit from hearing from groups and organisations from outside of Parliament. This is equally true when engaging with the MDGs when overseeing the implementation of laws or policies. For example, Parliamentary committees in many countries have the power to ask different stakeholders to give their views on whether progress is being made in achieving the MDGs or specific MDG related policy issues. In the case of MDG related issues, the list of possible stakeholders well-positioned to provide information to the committee on progress towards attaining the MDGs include

relevant government ministries, MDG commissions or MDG task forces, CSOs, labour unions, academics, and international organisations.

Parliamentary committees can undertake this oversight role by using numerous mechanisms available. They can, for example:

- (a) request that government ministries or MDG task force members provide the committee with regular briefings on progress being made towards achieving the MDGs;
- (b) undertake a Parliamentary investigation into the MDGs as a whole or selected MDGs which includes asking CSOs and other stakeholders to provide

### **MECHANISMS FOR ENGAGEMENT THROUGH THE OVERSIGHT FUNCTION**

- Annual Parliamentary Debate on MDG Reports
- Written and oral questions to Government Ministers on progress towards achieving the MDGs
- Parliamentary Committee Investigations into progress towards achieving individual MDG goals
- Briefings or testimony to Parliamentary Committees on the MDGs by Government Ministers, CSOs and other key stakeholders
- Field visits by Parliamentary Committees to see the impact of MDG policies and legislation on communities
- Public meetings by Parliamentarians to gather the views of the general public on the MDGs

information in writing, orally, or in electronic format to the committee during the investigation;

- (c) hold public consultations in order to gather views directly from citizens on the impact that policy is having on making progress towards the MDGs.

Although the way in which Parliaments hold public consultations varies, public meetings or hearings themselves are an effective way of gathering additional information directly from the general public which may raise different issues than those raised by government or civil society representatives.

In addition, depending on the internal rules of the Parliament, oversight through Parliamentary committees does not necessarily have to be physically based in the Parliament. Whilst asking CSOs and others to come before Parliamentary committees to give evidence can be the most cost and time effective method of gathering information, a very effective oversight mechanism for gathering information on progress towards achieving the MDGs is for Parliamentarians to undertake field visits to see for themselves the impact that projects or policies are having on making progress towards the MDGs. By visiting regions or communities that usually receive less attention than major cities, Parliamentarians can meet constituents, those directly affected by government policy and key service providers. Such field visits allow Parliamentarians to see firsthand the impact that projects and policies are having on communities and can bring to life the reality and importance of the MDGs. The information gathered during such field visits will benefit Parliamentarians with regard to their legislative, oversight and representation functions.

# TOP TIP

## PREPARING FOR A FIELD VISIT

Field Visits by Parliamentary Committees or delegations can be the most useful way for MPs to assess the real impact that MDG related policies are having on the people. However, in order to ensure that a field visit is effective it is important to prepare properly:

- Ensure that those going on field visits are representative as the findings of a cross-party delegation are likely to hold more weight than those of a delegation dominated by Parliamentarians from one political party.
- Ensure that the aim of the visit is clear and specific, e.g. “to assess progress made towards reversing the spread of HIV / AIDS” rather than a more general issue such as “assessing the general health situation in the region”.
- Prepare a list of key questions that you want answered during the field visit, e.g. How is the government policy being implemented? Is it effective? Are there enough resources to implement the law or policy? What further action is needed?
- Draw up a clear itinerary for the visit and be realistic as to how many citizens / CSOs can be consulted during the visit.
- As part of the field visit, consider holding a public meeting to explain the purpose of the visit and for citizens to be able to raise issues of concern directly with the Parliamentarians.
- Before the field visit it should be agreed by the Committee what they intend to do with the findings from the field visit, e.g.:
  - Will the report include recommendations for the government?
  - Will the field visit report be tabled for debate in a full Parliamentary plenary session?
  - Will the report be sent to the relevant Minister and who will be asked to come before the Committee to respond to the findings of the field visit report?

## **E**ngaging the MDGs through Budget Scrutiny

The annual budget of any country will outline the spending priorities of the government for the coming year. In any national budget, difficult political decisions need to be taken regarding which budget lines and programmes are prioritised within the budget. Although the budget process and the influence that Parliaments can have on the annual budget vary enormously depending on the country, most Parliaments are in a position to scrutinise the budget. Therefore budget scrutiny provides an important entry point for Parliaments to engage with the MDGs and assess whether the proposed budget before the Parliament is likely to achieve progress towards the MDGs.

If a country has produced an MDG progress report, this document may outline which areas of public spending will need to be prioritised in order to accelerate progress towards achieving the MDGs. In addition, some governments have produced MDG needs assessment reports which outline the resources needed to achieve the MDGs. In countries where these documents are in place, they could form a basis to scrutinise budgetary allocation to the MDGs. Even in countries where these documents do not exist, the planning and budget cycles are an opportunity for parliamentary deliberation on the government programme and therefore a vital opening for Parliament to engage with the MDGs.

Although the budget process followed in each Parliament will be different, some of the mechanisms that could be available to scrutinise the budget in an effective manner may include asking ministers to explain individual budget lines and the impact they will have on achieving the MDGs and

## **BUDGET SCRUTINY IN THE KENYAN PARLIAMENT**

In the Parliament of Kenya, initially a focal point was identified to lead and coordinate MDG related issues in the Parliament. This position of focal point developed into the creation of a poverty reduction and MDG Parliamentary Caucus. The Parliamentary Caucus allowed the issue of the MDGs and the engagement of the legislature with the MDGs to be raised within the Parliament. This Parliamentary Caucus has now developed into a formal Parliamentary Committee on MDG's and poverty reduction. Unlike the Caucus, the Committee is now recognised in Parliament and will scrutinise budgets to ensure resources are allocated as per the priorities of the MDG's and poverty reduction strategies of the government. This example highlights the benefits of having a specific MDG Committee that has the power to scrutinise MDG related budget expenditure.

asking how the budget addresses each of the individual MDGs. If the budget is being scrutinised by a Parliamentary committee, this committee may have the power to request that in addition to hearing from government ministers, it wishes to hear evidence from International development partners, civil society representatives, and other stakeholders on how their activities will support the priorities outlined in the budget and accelerate progress towards achieving the MDGs. Asking civil society organisations to give their opinions on the proposed budget and the likely impact that the budget will have on achieving the MDGs also adds an additional dimension to

Parliamentary budget scrutiny. Whilst not all Parliaments will be able to utilise all of these mechanisms in their budgetary processes, ensuring that the MDGs are raised in some shape or form during formulation, approval, and oversight of a given national budget will enhance the effectiveness of national budgets in terms of achieving the MDGs.

However, the scrutiny role of the Parliament does not stop following the approval of the national budget. In addition to assessing the impact of the spending priorities of the national budget, it is of equal importance for Parliament to scrutinise whether the expenditure in the previous year has been effective and has made an impact on making progress towards the MDGs. There is a clear role for Parliamentary Public Accounts Committees or their equivalents to scrutinise previous spending on MDG related programmes and assess whether these programmes have been effectively implemented and the resources well spent.

### **CSO ENGAGEMENT WITH THE BUDGETARY PROCESS IN THE GAMBIA**

In the Republic of the Gambia, a CSO, The Pro-Poor Advocacy Group (Pro-PAG,) has created strong links with the Parliament. Pro-PAG works with Parliamentarians to provide pro-poor analysis of policy and legislation. In December 2008, Pro-PAG held a one day briefing for Parliamentarians to provide a preliminary analysis of the budget by scrutinising it from a pro-poor perspective. In addition, Pro-PAG outlined its likely impact on the poor and vulnerable and the development challenges faced by the Gambia in its quest to achieve the MDGs.

# TOP TIP

## SCRUTINISING THE BUDGET

Effective budget analysis and scrutiny can be a highly technical and challenging task for any Parliament. However, there are a number of steps the Parliament can take to make MDG budget scrutiny more effective:

- Analyse the budget to see which budget lines are related to the MDGs.
- Ask the government to provide MDG related justifications for the budget as a whole and for specific budget lines.
- As well as asking the relevant Government Ministers to come before the Parliamentary Committee which is scrutinising the budget, consider asking International Partners and other stakeholders to come before the Committee to explain how their work complements the government budget and will help accelerate progress towards achieving the MDGs.
- If the budget is being scrutinised by the MDG Committee or another relevant Committee, consider requesting from the Parliament or International donors additional technical expertise to assist the Committee in their budget scrutiny work.

## **E**ngaging the MDGs in the Representative and Leadership Roles of Parliamentarians

In addition to their legislative, oversight and scrutiny functions, Parliaments and Parliamentarians hold important representative and leadership roles. In many Parliaments, Parliamentarians have been elected to the Parliament as representatives of geographical areas or social groups. Representing the views of their constituents in Parliaments and providing constituents with information on national and Parliamentary issues is a key role for Parliamentarians.

The leadership role of Parliamentarians and effective Parliamentary engagement with the MDGs can highlight that the goals and targets are not only government targets but are nationally owned. In addition to demonstrating that national commitment to the MDG's extends beyond the government itself, Parliaments have an important role to play in raising awareness of the goals and efforts to achieve them. This can be achieved through ensuring that Parliaments effectively engage with the MDGs through their leadership and representation roles.

Parliamentarians need to establish dialogue with voters by providing information to their constituents on the MDGs and receiving feedback from constituents on the effectiveness of government policies at a grassroots level. There are a number of mechanisms that can be used by Parliamentarians to establish this dialogue with voters. These mechanisms include holding MDG

## **CSOS IN NIGERIA WORK WITH PARLIAMENT TO STAND UP AGAINST POVERTY**

In 2009, the Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre in Nigeria worked with the Parliament and the Parliament's MDG Committee to join a campaign called "Stand Up" which aimed to make Parliamentarians show a commitment to achieving the MDGs by Standing Up for one minute in the Parliament. This one-off event highlighted the MDGs in the Parliament, created awareness amongst Parliamentarians of MDG issues and highlighted to the country the Parliament's commitment to achieving the MDGs.

related public outreach or 'town hall' style meetings, holding meetings with village chiefs or traditional leaders, undertaking field visits to places like schools, hospitals or businesses and holding constituency meetings or 'surgeries' in order to give citizens the opportunity to raise issues of concern. In addition, Parliamentarians can provide information to their voters on the MDGs and the progress being made towards achieving the MDGs through utilising new technology such as using interactive website or social networking sites, or through more traditional means such as speaking on radio

programmes. When creating a dialogue with voters, Parliamentarians will become increasingly aware that the day to day concerns of constituents, such as jobs, education and healthcare are all related to the MDGs and making progress towards achieving the MDGs will improve the lives of their constituents. It is important that Parliamentarians should not only listen to the concerns and grievances of constituents but also provide feedback to them when progress is made or to explain why there is no progress being made. It is also important for Parliamentarians to show voters that when they raise issues of concern with Parliamentarians, these concerns are acted upon in a timely manner, and

### **SERBIAN PARLIAMENTARY ENGAGEMENT WITH THE NATIONAL MDG WORKING GROUP**

In the Parliament of Serbia, a Poverty Reduction Standing Committee was established. The chair of this committee has now been included as a member of the working group formed by the government to support the analysis of the nationalised MDG's. This is an example of how a parliamentary committee can play a leadership role on behalf of the Parliament on MDG related issues.

where appropriate are addressed at a national level.

Parliamentarians who have been elected to office from party lists and have no specific geographical area to represent also have an important leadership role to play within their own political parties. Mechanisms available to Parliamentarians elected through party list systems include creating an MDG caucus within the political party in order to raise the profile of the MDGs within the party, and opening a dialogue with party members and supporters on the MDGs in order to build momentum towards achieving widespread consensus on how to achieve the MDGs. This includes demonstrating to the party faithful how the establishment and implementation of MDGs will help those nationwide both within and outside the party membership structure.

In addition to representing constituents, Parliamentarians are on occasion asked to represent the legislature in international MDG related conferences, in regional or international Parliamentary networks or on formal MDG related bodies. If the Parliament has an MDG committee, the chairperson of this committee is in a position of authority to represent the Parliament at national and international events. In some cases, where the Parliament has strongly engaged with the MDGs, the chairperson of the Parliamentary committee on the MDGs has sat on the National Millennium Development Goals Taskforce on behalf of the Parliament and is therefore in a position to show leadership on behalf of the legislature.

# TOP TIP

## OPENING A DIALOGUE ON THE MDGS WITH CITIZENS

Improving the leadership and representation role of Parliamentarians on the MDGs can take many forms. One of the most important leadership roles for Parliamentarians can be in opening a dialogue with constituents on the MDGs.

### What to discuss

- Give information to citizens on MDG related issue raised in Parliament;
- Outline progress made on the MDGs in general and within specific sectors;
- Outline how you as a Parliamentarian are raising MDG issues at a national level;
- Listen to citizens and CSOs so that you can receive information on MDG issues and policy implementation in your constituency;
- Request new information from citizens and CSO on issues that you can raise at a national level in Parliament

### How to open a dialogue

- Hold a public meeting in your constituency on the MDGs. This can be held in a public place such as a school, community centre or religious building. Consider what will be the best time and location for constituents;
- Hold a stakeholders meeting with CSOs and community groups that work in sectors covered by the MDGs;
- Have information on the MDGs available in your constituency or party office;
- Put information on the MDGs up in the window of your constituency office or on local notice boards;
- Put information on the MDGs on your website or raise MDG issues on social networking sites.

# **P**arliamentary **Engagement with the MDGs: A checklist for your Parliament**

Whilst the mechanisms used for effective Parliamentary engagement with the MDGs will differ from country to country, the following checklist summarises some of the key issues for effective Parliamentary engagement. The checklist will allow Parliaments to assess which methods they are currently using to engage with the MDGs and which mechanisms could be introduced in their Parliament.

UNDP works with Parliaments in many countries and has expertise to support parliamentary development both with regards to making the MDGs central to the work of the Parliament or more generally.

For more information contact your UNDP Country Office or go to [www.undp.org/governance/sl-parliaments.htm](http://www.undp.org/governance/sl-parliaments.htm)

| <b>GENERAL ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION</b>   |  |  |
|---|---|---|
| Has each Parliamentarian received a copy of the MDGs?   |   |   |
| If the MDGs have been localised in your country, has each Parliamentarian received a copy of the localised MDGs?                          |   |   |
| Are MPs aware of which government ministry is responsible for the MDGs and whether an MDG taskforce exists in your country?               |   |   |
| Does the Parliament regularly and automatically receive MDG related documents from the government and international development partners? |   |   |
| Have MDG briefings or workshops been held in your Parliament?   |   |   |
| Is there a programme in place for regular briefing sessions for Parliamentarians on MDG issues over the course of the Parliament?         |   |   |
| Are MDG policy briefings included in Induction programmes for Parliamentarians following national elections?                              |   |   |
| Has your Parliament held a one-off event such as a breakfast meeting or a MDG day to highlight its commitment to achieving the MDGs?      |   |   |

| PARLIAMENTARY STRUCTURES  | ✓ | ✗ |
|---|---|---|
| Does your Parliament have a nominated Parliamentarian as an MDG focal point?  |   |   |
| Is there a cross-party MDG or Poverty Reduction caucus operating in your Parliament?  |   |   |
| Is your Parliament represented on regional MDG Parliamentary forums or networks?  |   |   |
| Has the Parliament created a specific Committee for the MDGs within the Parliamentary structure?  |   |   |
| If there is no specific Parliamentary Committee on the MDGs, are the Subject Committees aware of which MDGs fall within their remit and is this reflected in their mandate? |   |   |

| <b>MECHANISMS FOR ENGAGEMENT</b>  |  |  |
|---|---|---|
| Is the MDG Report or MDG Progress Report produced by the Government and International Development Partners debated in the Parliament?                           |   |   |
| Does the government regularly and formally update Parliament through a statement or debate on progress towards the MDGs?  |   |   |
| Have Parliamentarians asked written or oral questions to the government on progress towards achieving the MDGs?   |   |   |
| Do Government Ministers or MDG Taskforce Members come before Parliamentary Committees to provide updates on progress towards the MDGs?                          |   |   |
| Has the MDG Committee or the Parliament Subject Committees initiated investigations into progress made in attaining one or more of the MDGs?                    |   |   |
| Do Parliamentary Committees invite International Development Partners and other key stakeholders to meetings to give evidence on their input into MDG projects? |   |   |

| <b>MECHANISMS FOR ENGAGEMENT</b>  |  |  |
|---|---|---|
| Has the MDG Committee or the Parliament Subject Committees asked CSOs to come to meetings to give their opinions on MDG related issues?                                 |   |   |
| Has your Parliament as an institution or have individual Parliamentarians held public meetings to discuss the MDGs with citizens?                                       |   |   |
| Has the MDG Committee or the Parliament Subject Committees been on field visits to see first hand the impact of MDG related policies on communities?                    |   |   |
| Is there a MDG justification for legislation included in the explanatory notes accompanying draft laws or given by Government Ministers during the legislative process? |   |   |
| Does Parliament track and monitor MDG related legislation and is there post-legislative scrutiny of the effectiveness of the legislation?                               |   |   |

# **M**ore Information and Useful Links

## **Organisations**

African Development Bank:

**<http://www.afdb.org>**

Asian Development Bank:

**<http://www.adb.org>**

International Monetary Fund:

**<http://www.imf.org>**

Inter-Parliamentary Union:

**<http://www.ipu.org>**

National Democratic Institute for  
International Affairs:

**<http://www.ndi.org>**

Parliamentary Centre:

**[http://www.parlcent.ca/povertyreduction/  
index.html](http://www.parlcent.ca/povertyreduction/index.html)**

World Bank Group:

**<http://www.worldbank.org>**

World Bank Group Millennium Development  
Goals:

**<http://www.developmentgoals.org>**

United Nations Development Programme:

**<http://www.undp.org/>**

United Nations Millennium Campaign:

**<http://www.endpoverty2015.org>**

## References and Additional Information

**Association of European Parliaments for Africa** – Safeguarding the Interests of the People: Parliaments and Aid Effectiveness (2009)

**Department for International Development and the London School of Economics** – Strengthening Legislative Financial Scrutiny in Developing Countries (2007)

**International Budget Partnership** – Open Budgets. Transform Lives. The Open Budget Survey 2008

**Morgan, Michael** – Building Political Governance Frameworks: Advancing the Millennium Development Goals in the Pacific Islands through Parliamentary Strengthening (2004)

**United Nations** – United Nations Millennium Declaration (2000)

**United Nations Development Programme** – Localizing the MDGs for Effective Integrated Local Development: An Overview of Practices and Lessons Learned (2007)

**United Nations Development Programme** – How to Guide to Localizing the MDGs. Bureau for Development Policy, Poverty Group (2006)

**United Nations Development Programme and the Office of the National Assembly of Vietnam** – Engaging Parliaments in the Millennium Development Goals: A Key Part of National MDG strategies (2006)

**United Nations Development Programme** – The Legislature and Constituency Relations (1999)

**United Nations Development Programme** – Strengthening Parliament Involvement in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Process and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

- Toolkit 1: Legislative-Executive Communication on Poverty Reduction Strategies(2004)
- Toolkit 2: Parliamentary-Civic Collaboration for Monitoring Poverty Reduction Initiatives (2004)
- Toolkit 3: Legislative Public Outreach on Poverty Issues (2004)

**United Nations Development Programme** – Reference note: UNDP e-discussion on Rethinking democratic governance and leadership for achieving the millennium development goals (2008)

**United Nations Millennium Campaign** – Campaigning for the MDGs: Making Votes and Voices Count in Elections: A Toolkit for Activists, Political Parties and Candidates (2009)

**United Nations Millennium Campaign, National Economic Development Authority and United Nations Resident Coordinators Office** – Creating a broad ownership of MDG issues: Success stories from the Philippines (2008)

**United Nations Statistics Division** – The Millennium Development Goals Report (2009)

**World Bank Institute** – Parliaments and the PRSP Process (2004)

**World Bank Institute and the Parliamentary Centre** – Handbook on Parliamentarians and Policies to Reduce Poverty (2002)

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## WWW.ENDPOVERTY2015.ORG

The UN Millennium Campaign was established by the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan in 2002. The Campaign supports citizens in their efforts to hold their governments to account for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The Millennium Development Goals were adopted by 189 world leaders from the north and south, as part of the Millennium Declaration which was signed in 2000. These leaders agreed to achieve the Goals by 2015. Our premise is simple, we are the first generation that can end poverty and we refuse to miss this opportunity.

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UNDP is the UN's global development network, an organization advocating for change and connecting countries to knowledge, experience and resources to help people build a better life. We are on the ground in 166 countries, working with them on their own solutions to global and national development challenges. In support of parliaments and parliamentarians, UNDP works directly with more than 60 national parliaments globally, supporting their efforts to pass quality legislation, scrutinize the work of the government and reflect the interests of the citizens.