

STAND BY YOUR COMMITMENTS

“DEINE STIMME GEGEN ARMUT” CAMPAIGN POSITION PAPER

DEINE STIMME GEGEN ARMUT



**MORE GERMAN ENGAGEMENT
FOR THE MILLENNIUM
DEVELOPMENT GOALS!**

VENRO is the Association of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) operating in the area of development. It comprises 116 German NGOs working as executing agencies of private or church development co-operation, emergency relief and educational, public relations and lobbying activities relating to development.

DEINE STIMME GEGEN ARMUT is a campaign run jointly by VENRO, artist Herbert Groenemeyer and friends who are specialists in the PR and media branch. They are calling on the German Government to become more involved in putting the Millennium Development Goals into practice. The campaign sees itself as part of the international campaign **“Global Call to Action against Poverty“** (GCAP). Everywhere and at any time, the **“White Band”** acts as a symbol of this world-wide campaign.

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SID – Society for International
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SODI – Solidaritätsdienst
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Demands and background information

In September 2000, 189 heads of governments and states signed the Millennium Declaration, from which the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) derive. Since then, the MDGs have become the point of reference for national and international development policy, with the German Government also bringing its development policy in line with them.

Former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan gave a precise description of the MDGs in September 2001 in his report ***Road map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration***. Alongside the eight main goals, 18 targets and 48 indicators on how to attain the MDGs by 2015 were defined. In the meantime, more than half the time has elapsed. The promised engagement at state level has, on the whole, not been forthcoming, the flow of earmarked funding insufficient. If this does not change in the future, many countries – especially in Sub Saharan Africa – will not even come close to improving their status quo.

Realising the MDGs on time is an essential step towards improving the living conditions of a considerable share of the world's population. However, according to non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the MDGs merely represent intermediate targets on the road towards the complete eradication of poverty. The MDGs concentrate predominantly on quantitative development goals and can therefore not be seen as an alternative to a comprehensive development approach as formulated in the concept of ecologically and socially balanced "sustainable development."

VENRO and the **DEINE STIMME GEGEN ARMUT** CAMPAIGN

Through its campaign »Deine Stimme gegen Armut«, the Association of German development non-governmental organisations (VENRO), together with the German artist Herbert Groenemeyer and friends from the PR and media industry, is calling for a timely realisation of the MDGs. "Deine Stimme gegen Armut" is Germany's contribution to the worldwide ***Global Call to Action against Poverty*** (GCAP) campaign. GCAP is a civil society movement active in more than 100 countries. The "White Band" has become the common symbol in the fight against poverty and is recognised worldwide.

VENRO's member organisations and the incorporated NGO federal state networks – around 2,000 organisations in total – have been engaged in the fight against poverty for many years. Together with their local partners in Africa, Asia and Latin America, these organisations support projects and programmes focusing on direct poverty reduction in the health, education, rural development and democratisation sectors.

In order to implement these interventions, VENRO member organisations provide around one billion Euro each year. Three-quarters of these funds are raised from private resources, such as donations, church taxes and foundation monies. At the same time, the exchange of information and common political advocacy work of the VENRO member organisations and their partners in the South play an increasingly important role. They co-operate to develop policy papers and introduce them into political dialogue, thereby facilitating the improvement of national and international framework conditions in favour of the poor.

Consequently VENRO and its member organisations do not demand anything that they themselves are not prepared to give: the raising of substantial funding, a clear orientation towards the fight against poverty and the creation of a favourable framework to further its political advocacy work.

THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS STAND BY YOUR COMMITMENTS

APPEAL

DEINE STIMME GEGEN ARMUT

Every three seconds, a child dies from the consequences of extreme poverty. These deaths must and can be avoided. Therefore, we appeal to all governments and parliaments of the industrialised and developing nations, and especially the German Government and the Bundestag: Stand by your commitments! Show that you have the political will to act quickly to achieve the MDGs on time. Keep your promises for more and better development co-operation, just world trade and debt relief for poor countries by taking concrete action. Improve health and education standards and support actively democratisation processes in developing countries. The corporate sector and other actors must play their part in the fight against worldwide poverty and injustice too.

WE DEMAND:

- 1** More and better aid!
- 2** More democracy and the eradication of corruption!
- 3** Support for rural development and the eradication of hunger!
- 4** Education for all!
- 5** Better health services and care and fight against diseases!
- 6** More justice in world trade!
- 7** Drop debts!
- 8** Empower women and ensure gender equality!
- 9** Stop climate change!
- 10** Ensure peace and security!

THE DEMANDS IN DETAIL

1

More and better aid!

Fighting poverty and realising human rights are the key aims of German development policy. However, in order to provide assistance to empower people to take charge of their own future, Germany's bilateral and multilateral development needs to be reformed. This means orienting it towards improved co-ordination, more effective use of the resources, instruments and organisations available, as well as more and intensive participation of people living in low and middle income countries.

- Development must aim to strengthen the South's **ownership** for its development. When negotiating with the governments of developing countries, the German Government should show leadership for the **strengthening of democratic structures**, democratic institutions (parliaments) and increased opportunities for civil society participation.
- The German Government's development co-operation must become more active, **efficient and effective**. To achieve this, co-operation with other bilateral and multilateral funders needs to be better co-ordinated, superfluous bureaucratic procedures dismantled and greater focus placed on the long-term funding of poverty-relevant sectors.
- In order to fight poverty effectively, development must adhere to and implement **development policy coherence**. This means that other policy fields, such as trade, agricultural and security policy, should not counteract development policy aims.
- Where applicable, the German Government should make target-oriented and intensified use of **budget support**. Providing financial support to the state budgets of poor countries represents an effective instrument for facilitating increased **ownership** for developing countries. Budget support can only have the desired, poverty-relevant effect, when democratic participation and transparent local structures can ensure that budget resources reach those who in greatest need. Above all, it is the **education and health sectors** in poor countries which need long-term financial planning security in order to implement reforms and establish an infrastructure.
- The practice of tying aid activities with commissions for companies from the relevant donor country (**tyed aid**) must be completely abolished. The primary benchmark for the allocation of resources for bilateral co-operation on the one hand and multilateral aid on the other has to be the **effective and transparent application** of these resources in line with poverty reduction and the other MDGs.
- The **World Bank** must orient its directives and its activities towards the financing and support of basic services in the education, health, water and infrastructure sectors, from which especially poor population groups will benefit. For this reason, it is imperative that the German Government, as one of World Bank's major shareholders, exerts its influence and presses for change. World Bank investments in the energy sector should support renewable energy sources as a matter of course.

In 2005, the eight most important industrialised countries (G8 countries) promised to top up their official development assistance (ODA) funds by 50 billion US dollars and double the assistance they provided to Africa by 2010. In line with the EU step-by-step plan passed in 2005, Germany has committed to achieving the following steps: 0.51 per cent of Gross National Income (GNI) by 2010 and 0.7

per cent by 2015. A commendable plan; it nevertheless remains unclear as to how it will be achieved. All development assistance increases to date are insufficient to reach these targets.

- The German Government must keep its promise and provide at least the resources necessary to fulfil the **EU step-by-step plan from May 2005** and reach the 0.7 per cent target. To achieve this, the German Government needs to produce a binding plan of action which details which steps should be reached in which year.
- The MDGs need to be achieved with **fresh money** and not by offsetting debt relief. ODA payments must reflect real financial transfer to developing countries. To achieve this, **ODA criteria** need to be reworked.
- The German Government must – alongside the German budget increase in resources for development co-operation – introduce **innovative instruments** to finance development as soon as possible, such as a kerosene tax and finance transaction taxation.
- To start with, the German Government should introduce a compulsory **tax on flight tickets**, levied in France and other countries since 2006.
- Resources gained from the auctioning of emission rights certificates should be used for development and climate purposes. These resources should be freed up in addition to the promised 0.7 per cent ODA funding and be used to aid developing countries in their efforts to adapt to the consequences of climate change.
- The German Government should campaign for the release of more funds for the fight against poverty through the revaluation or sale of the **International Monetary Fund's (IMF) gold reserves**.
- Developing countries should be supported in their efforts to mobilise funding sources for development, e. g. through the mobilisation of local resources by supporting the development of efficient and fair tax systems.
- A stop must be put to tax evasion and capital exodus. Each year, developing countries lose almost 500 billion US dollars through the transfer of funds to tax-free financial centres ("tax oases"). Concerted **action by the community of states to prevent tax evasion** is more urgent than ever before. In the long term, an international **UN tax organisation** as co-operation partner in tax issues should be established.
- The introduction of an international minimum tax on company profits should be striven for in order to counteract tax evasion amongst companies effectively.
- The implementation of the MDGs and global development efforts should be regularly, transparently and effectively monitored and evaluated. **All monitoring activities** should be guaranteed by an independent and democratically legitimated international body.
- The development strategies of **new and emerging donor countries**, such as China or India, should also focus on the fight against poverty and the implementation of the MDGs. At the same time, their policies should be subject to comprehensible criteria and be incorporated into a global monitoring system.

2

More democracy and the eradication of corruption!

Without good governance, the fight against corruption, and an effective taxation system, many development-related activities will come to nothing. The strengthening and support of developing countries' own efforts is therefore a common task for all stakeholders, both in the North and the South.

Efforts to combat poverty, injustice and exclusion must be seen as a human rights commitment of all states and governments. The political and civil, as well as **economic, social and cultural rights (ESC rights)** must be the benchmark for all efforts in the fight against poverty.

- Development co-operation must direct its attention towards the strengthening of **democratically legitimated institutions** (parliaments) at national and local level.
- The active integration of all civil society groups, especially the poor, women, children, young people, representatives of minorities, refugees or the sick, is key to the formulation, decision and implementation of poverty reduction strategies. It does however not replace the demand for the strengthening of democratically legitimated institutions.
- United against corruption: governments, parliaments, institutions and civil society groups must take **concerted action against corruption**, also in the private sector. Corresponding national plans of action need to be consistent with international anti-corruption conventions – such as the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC). Germany must also ratify these conventions without delay.
- **Transparency and accountability** are key to the responsible use of resources in the fight against poverty. To this end, international initiatives should support the repayment of embezzled public funds and hot money (such as the UN and **World Bank's Stolen Assets Recovery Initiative**).

3

Support for rural development and the eradication of hunger!

The basic human right to food cannot be guaranteed in many parts of the world. More than 850 million people face starvation or are malnourished, a trend which continues to increase. Measures promoting worldwide food security and the promotion of rural development are therefore extremely necessary.

- The German Government's development policy – in coherence with its trade and security policies, as well as other relevant political fields – must make an active contribution towards worldwide **food security**.
- On account of the increasing lack of food and spiralling food prices, rural development support must be given much **higher priority immediately**. German development co-operation expenditure in the agricultural sector must also be increased.
- **Smallholders** must receive special support by providing agricultural counselling, access to land, special credits and participation in political decisions. Depending on the region, women make up between 20 and 70 per cent of all agricultural output and should therefore receive special support. At the moment, women are at an extreme disadvantage as they have particularly poor access to all important resources.
- The governments of developing countries must invest intensively in the establishment of an **agricultural infrastructure**, water supply and marketing systems, as well as the education of smallholders.
- Developing countries must be granted the opportunity to have **protective mechanisms** against superior foreign competition. Subsidised agricultural products from industrialised countries displace local production and lead to the loss of workplaces. Especially smallholders must receive support – in line with the concept of empowering people to take charge of their own future – in order to promote the efficient production of local agricultural products.
- Rural development interventions must give priority to the preservation of biodiversity ahead of the scaling up of industrial agriculture. Sustainable food security means securing and supporting **local cultivation practices** and production methods. The use of patented, standardised and genetically modified seeds, as well as pesticides, leads to new forms of dependency and cannot be considered as a solution in the fight against hunger.
- An important element of food security is guaranteed access to, and the sufficient provision of, **drinking water and basic sanitary services** via toilets and waste water systems.

4

Education for all!

Education is a basic human right and key to reducing poverty. It contributes towards improving health, promotes peaceful living together and facilitates economic growth.

- The German Government must pay considerably more attention to the issue of primary education and thus orient its development policy to the goals of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development. In 2000, the World Education Forum in Dakar adopted the Plan of Action "**Education for All**"; the six goals contained in this Plan of Action, and the MDGs 2 and 3 which build on this, must be implemented systematically.
- German development policy must therefore make **supporting education** – and in particular primary education – one of its key issues. The number of partner countries with education as a key issue should be increased, with Sub Saharan Africa being of focal importance.
- The German Government must increase its engagement in the **financing of the World Bank's Fast Track Initiative (FTI)**: by 2010, it needs to have contributed at least 52 million Euro per year to the **FTI-Catalytic Fund**.
- The empowerment of girls and women with regard to vocational training and job entry opportunities must be scaled up and boosted, especially in the informal sector.

5

Better health services and care and fight against diseases!

In many countries, especially in Africa, pandemics such as HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis cause great human suffering and represent a serious barrier to development. Health systems in the world's poor countries are inadequate and chronically underfinanced. Development co-operation must radically increase its health-related activities, if it is to attain the MDGs by 2015.

- The German Government should support **the training of a sufficient number of health specialists and workers in developing countries** as well as an appropriate salary for them. In order to attain the health-related MDGs, special effort has to be made to develop hospitals and health centres in developing countries further. Loan conditions, such as those imposed by the World Bank and the IMF, must not restrict the development of the local health sector.
- Donor countries must purposefully **co-ordinate** the well over 100 existing global health initiatives in order to strengthen the health systems in partner countries and to increase planning security for the recipients.
- Germany must make a suitable contribution towards the provision of further resources for effective **HIV prevention programmes and humane care** of those living with the infection. Thanks to the considerable increase in Germany's contribution to the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM), the financing of sustainable programmes can be guaranteed.
- The German Government must actively implement the "Framework for the Protection, Care and Support of Orphans and Vulnerable Children Living in a World with HIV" and provide further resources for the **care of affected children**.
- Women are especially affected by HIV and AIDS. The German Government must therefore provide more resources with regard to the increasing **feminisation of HIV/AIDS**. Furthermore, it must increase its engagement in access to sexual and reproductive health services and supplies in particular for women.

- The **pharmaceutical industry** must sell medication for the treatment of HIV and multidrug-resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB) in poorer countries at cost price and should not hinder poorer countries issuing compulsory licences and receiving parallel imports. The pharmaceutical industry can contribute towards reducing prices by offering voluntary licences to generic companies or by **waiving drug patent rights**.
- Those living in high-risk areas must be granted access to effective **malaria** prevention and medical treatment services. To achieve this, the necessary financial resources must be provided.
- The number of **tuberculosis** cases has more than trebled since the mid-1990s. Access to prevention and treatment must be provided to all people living with the disease. The German Government must support programmes which work towards halting the spread of tuberculosis in poorer population strata.
- The **development of new medication and vaccines** is crucial in the fight against HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. The German Government must increase its engagement in the research and development of innovative health mechanisms.

6

More justice in world trade!

In their negotiations within the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the industrialised countries should refrain from exerting further liberalisation pressure. Instead, the development interests of the countries in the South should play a stronger role. If world trade is to become more just, then European trade and agricultural policy will need to change radically!

- As a first step towards fulfilling the MDGs, the EU should completely abolish its continued **agricultural subsidies** – worth billions of Euros – by 2009.
- The German Government must show commitment to fair rules in world trade at all levels. These rules need to support a poverty-oriented trade and economic policy in line with human rights and which respects international conventions on environmental protection. **Unfair practices of the industrialised states** vis-à-vis the poorer countries, such as export subsidies in the agricultural sector, tariff escalation, and strict patent guidelines for essential drugs, must be ended immediately.
- The German Government must show leadership **for the correction of the aggressive policy to open up the service markets** of newly emerging economies and developing countries. The German Government must campaign for increased flexibility in the TRIPS agreement, thus ensuring that patents and other rights to intellectual property do not become development barriers for countries in the South.
- The German Government should show leadership for the introduction of international trade rules which support the goals and rules of **multilateral environmental agreements**, instead of counteracting them. This is especially important for the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).
- Developing countries must be able to protect their markets from superior foreign competition. The German Government should recognise the right of developing countries to **regulate access to foreign investors**, so that development can be promoted and decent jobs can be created.
- Governments and the private economy should engage in the implementation of the **ILO's international Core Labour Standards** as well as socio-ecological standards worldwide. This includes for example fair salaries for employees, social security measures, no discrimination in the workplace and free unionisation.
- **Public assignments** can only be granted to companies if they and their sub-contractors can prove that they respect human rights as well and social and ecological norms. Furthermore, they must completely fulfil their reporting obligations.

- Should companies contravene these rules, **sanctions** should be imposed on them. International structures must be created so that cross-border control of companies can be implemented and sanctions enforced.
- The population of those countries, which rely almost entirely on the exporting of raw materials, must be able to profit from export income. To achieve this, the responsible governments must agree on binding regulations and implement them. The **Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative's (EITI)** voluntary agreements must be translated into internationally recognised binding agreements and systematically integrated into national law.
- **Trade policy decisions in Germany** must be shaped more democratically and transparently. An early and stronger participation of the German Parliament and civil society is indispensable. Instruments governing German foreign trade interventions must orient themselves towards social, ecological and human rights criteria.

7

Drop debts!

Creditors have granted the world's poorest countries, but also Iraq and Nigeria, partial debt cancellation. This is a significant success for the worldwide movement towards comprehensive debt relief. However, many developing countries still find it difficult to cope with debts from foreign countries. These countries have either not been incorporated into debt relief initiatives or have already paid off their debts but need to borrow money again on the capital markets. The only solution to counteract this situation is the far reaching reform of the international financing architecture.

- The debt servicing ability of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) must be **independently assessed**. The resources necessary to implement the MDGs must be separated off from the legitimate claims of their creditors (minimum subsistence level – MSL – for states).
- Heavily indebted countries must be granted **comprehensive debt relief**, if this facilitates achieving a sustainable accumulation of debts.
- **Illegitimate debts**, such as loans given for the purpose of warfare or to dictators should, as Norway has done, be cancelled without substitution. The German Government must actively participate in the discussion about the coherent definition of illegitimate debts.
- **Resources which are released as the result of debt relief must be used to reduce poverty**. Innovative forms of debt conversion, such as the **Debt2Health** initiative, should be scaled up.
- Debt relief proceedings must be removed from the responsibility of the World Bank and the IMF – who also act as creditors – and transferred to a neutral body. To ensure long-term prevention of debt accumulation, a **fair and transparent arbitration procedure** – International Insolvency Procedure – should be established for all heavily indebted countries.

8

Empower women and ensure gender equality!

Gender equality is of paramount importance in overcoming worldwide poverty. The third MDG is however far from being fulfilled. Throughout the world, women are most heavily affected by poverty. They carry the main responsibility for basic health services, the education of children and food security. As well as the economic disadvantages, one reason for the poverty of women is their lack of access to positions of power and decision-making. In order to overcome poverty, therefore measures need to be taken at social, cultural, economic and political levels.

- Development activities must increase the incorporation of gender equality aspects into their portfolios, which also link up to the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) as well as the Beijing Action Platform from 1995.
- In order to achieve gender equality, gender must be integrated as a **cross-cutting issue at all political levels**. Poverty amongst women can only be reduced if the effects of economic, financial and trade policies take their role into consideration. Furthermore, gender equality can only be achieved by specifically strengthening the position of women. **Gender mainstreaming** and the specific strengthening of women must therefore be perceived as complementary instruments; the funding of both areas must be equally secured.
- German development policy must strengthen **women's economic rights**. The German Government must strengthen the integration of the role of women in conflict and post-conflict situations as part of its peace and security policy and, in line with UN resolution 1325, strengthen the prevention of gender-specific violence and participation of women in peace-keeping activities.
- When reforming development co-operation, it is essential that especially women can **profit from an increased effectiveness** of development activities. The implementation of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness must therefore be accompanied by impact analysis mechanisms which allow the monitoring of progress made and challenges incurred on the way to gender equality.

9

Stop climate change!

Poor people living in developing countries are affected the most by the effects of climate change. Global warming has the most devastating impact on the provision of food and water. The German Government must therefore negotiate for a post-2012 Climate agreement, which is based on the following goals:

- The German Government show leadership in the international arena at all relevant levels for a climate policy which prevents **dangerous climate change**. In concrete terms, this means that global rise in temperature should not be more than 2°C. Furthermore, the emission of greenhouse gases in industrialised nations should be reduced by 30 per cent by 2020. Altogether, the reduction of greenhouse gases worldwide should decrease by 2050 by 80 per cent, compared with 1990 figures. Newly emerging economies, such as China and India, should receive support for their climate protection activities. Furthermore, the fight against the deforestation of tropical rainforests must be intensified.
- The main perpetrators of climate change are industrialised nations and as such should assume responsibility for this. Those states and population groups most at risk have the right to greater support in **financing the costs for adapting** to the consequences of climate change (estimated to be tens of billions of Euro). Innovative financing mechanisms can act as incentives to reduce emissions in industrialised countries, such as the sale of emission certificates. Serious incentives must be created to invest in carbon-free – or at the very least low carbon – fuels, but without having to resort to the dangerous pseudo-alternative of atomic power.
- According to the World Bank, the **scaling up of renewable energies** must, for example, receive more support and absolute priority ahead of climate-damaging energy sources. The EU's bio fuel strategy should not be purely import-based. At the moment, it is not possible for developing countries to put an ecologically and socially sustainable, export-oriented production into practice. The effects of such a policy would clearly place a heavy burden on local food security and smallholder agriculture. A comprehensive EU-wide strategy for a The EU's **bio fuel strategy** should not be purely import-based. At the moment, it is not possible for developing countries to put an ecologically and socially sustainable, export-oriented production into practice. The effects of such a policy would clearly place a heavy burden on local food security and smallholder agriculture. A comprehensive EU-wide

strategy for a climate and territory-oriented biomass production is necessary. This strategy must respect food rights, support smallholder agriculture, prevent the destruction of ecologically valuable and sensitive regions, such as rainforests, savannas and wetlands and lead to a significant improvement in the climate situation.

10

Ensure peace and security!

Human peace and security are essential prerequisites for development and poverty reduction. War and conflict always have a negative impact on development processes. However, if success in fighting hunger, poverty and exclusion in the world and making globalisation fairer can be achieved, everyone will be able to profit from a so-called *“Peace and Development Dividend.”* Supporting comprehensive *“human security”*, engaging in human development and strengthening human rights are all concepts which should complement each other. Compared with the Millennium Declaration, the MDGs do not sufficiently recognise the importance of the link between poverty reduction and crisis prevention: concrete goals are missing.

- Development co-operation and humanitarian aid should not be exploited *in “the wake of military interventions”* as a form of supporting, flanking or legitimising such conflicts.
- *The disproportion in the German budget* with regard to expenditure for military and civil purposes must be redistributed equally, e. g. in the case of Afghanistan. Significantly more funding must be provide for civilian infrastructure to reflect the withdrawal of the primacy of military powers.
- Military involvement in overcoming crises is no solution. In situations of serious conflict, *civil conflict management instruments* for foreign policy and development must be used carefully and timely.
- The German Government must increase its support of *prevention structures and mechanisms*, both at regional and national level. In international discussions, the German Government must contribute towards furthering the idea of *“responsibility to protect”* towards the concept of *“responsibility to prevent.”*
- The German Government show leadership for the inclusion of a binding criteria catalogue, recognised under international law, for a restrictive licensing code of practice in the transfer of arms as part of the international *Arms Trade Treaty (ATT)*, thereby counteracting violations of human rights and humanitarian international law.

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