



Seattle Voter

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Local Contributions to Our Global Village

By Ellen Z. Berg, International Relations Committee

Do you make New Year's resolutions? Do you keep them? In 2000 the nations of the world made a remarkable set of resolutions to welcome the new century: the Millennium Development Goals. Like your resolutions and mine, they have the potential to transform lives – by ending poverty and hunger, by preventing and curing disease, by educating all children and empowering women, by sustaining the environment as agriculture and trade go from floundering to flourishing. In the report at the end of this *Voter*, we discuss all these resolutions, how they might be kept, and what progress has been made thus far.

All these resolutions depend on a final one: to form a partnership between developed and developing countries to carry through – to find the will and make the effort to keep all the other resolutions, which can improve the lives of billions. The speakers at our April 3 Forum each contribute to this partnership.

We will be hearing from individuals who live locally, and work globally. Each is a leader in one of our region's leading non-governmental, non-profit development organizations – so the evening will give us a chance to hear about local organizations as well as about significant work being done to further the Millennium Development Goals.

While the volume of government to government assistance is greater than that flowing from non-governmental organizations, these organizations often make tremendous contributions because they are able to be creative and nimble, focused and flexible. And they are staffed by exceptional people who bring to their jobs expertise, vision, caring – and the

stamina to travel (lots) to inconvenient places.

We have asked our speakers to tell us about their organizations, and the work they are doing which is relevant to the Millennium Development Goals. And we have asked them to respond where they can to these general questions about the development enterprise: Does 'development' mean that we in the developed countries are imposing our ways on cultures which don't want to be imposed upon? What is meant by sustainable development? Do you work differently in the least developed, poorest countries – and do you think the Millennium Development Goals can help them? And finally, are the goals really changing the lives of women and girls – and is this really changing societies?

After our recent record of presenting you with reports and forums first on torture then on nuclear terror, we on the International Relations Committee are delighted to be changing the tone this year. We found studying the Millennium Development Goals fascinating – and uplifting. Please join us on April 3 for a program which promises to be the same.

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Mission Statement

The League of Women Voters of Seattle, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

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President's Message

Tuesday morning I learned from National Public Radio that March 4 was the 75th anniversary of Franklin D. Roosevelt's inauguration, possibly the last meaningful day of the 2008 presidential primary season, and National Grammar Day. These are great events to spark a discussion of the League, noting how we influence important issues in government and the electoral processes, and how we insist that these government processes be clear and transparent.

It would be difficult to find a better example of government's ability to influence people's lives for the good than the Roosevelt New Deal programs, and in particular how through insuring oversight and accountability these programs evolved to address the great human needs of the Depression era. This month our League focused on encouraging government oversight by supporting—with some recommendations—the lobbyist registration ordinance before the Seattle City Council. We also joined the petition against the Mayor's sweeps of homeless camps, citing the current lack of available shelter beds and concern for the more than 2,600 homeless persons counted on the 2008 One Night Count.

Although the March 4 radio commentaries predicted that both parties were on the point of selecting their nominees, we were reminded the next day that the voters make their own decisions on these matters. It is indeed an exciting time for an organization that encourages voter education and active participation



Denise D. Smith

in government. We have had requests from college groups to conduct voter registration, invitations from high school civic classes to speak on voting and the Electoral College, calls from radio stations to explain the caucus and primary systems and an opportunity to participate in a media sponsored regional civic education project.

The interest in this election, particularly by younger voters, is very encouraging. We have distributed many copies of the League publication "How to Pick a Candidate" included in the February *Voter* and answered many questions on our Washington election process. We encourage you to share this with neighbors, friends and family. Extra copies of this brochure are available at the League office. We also have copies of our *2008 TRYs*; however, they are going quickly. To date we have distributed over 75,000 in response to requests from throughout the region.

This brings me to the final citation on NPR Tuesday morning: National Grammar Day. Although I hope this letter passes scrutiny from our many gifted grammarians, my point is that good grammar is a metaphor for clarity and openness. This past month, Washington State's confusing caucus and primary systems would get low marks for clarity and openness. I found myself cringing at news reports and official quotes saying "the primary vote does not count" or "it only counts for 49%." I think we do a disservice to the voters with our current state caucus/primary system. The League supported instituting the Washington presidential primary years ago, but an election that is ignored by the Democrats and only partially considered by the Republicans is not what we had in mind.

I encourage you to contact your political party and ask them to address this situation. It is an insult to the voters.

As you see we are very busy with a wide variety of League activities. We encourage you to learn more about activities that interest you and consider volunteering your time and talent.

Denise D Smith

Upgrade needed.

The Seattle League would like to upgrade our publishing software InDesign CS2 to the CS3 version. The price for a new version is \$699, a little steep for our budget. Can you help? Do you have access to Adobe discounts or know where we might find another copy? Please call Denise or Monya at 206-329-4848. Thanks.

April

April

Forum: Local Contributions to Our Global Village
 Thursday, April 3
 7:30 p.m.
 Seattle First Baptist Church

Board Meeting
 Saturday, April 5
 9:00 a.m.
 League office

Voter deadline
 Monday, April 7

International Relations Committee
 Monday, April 7
 12:45 – 2:45 p.m.
 League Office

Civics Education Committee
 Tuesday, April 8
 4:00 – 6:00 p.m.
 League Office

Social Justice Committee
 Tuesday, April 8
 6:00 – 7:30 p.m.
 League Office

Fund raising Committee
 Monday, April 14
 10:00 a.m.

Transportation Committee
 Tuesday, April 15
 10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
 Place: Skagit Station

Membership Strategic Planning Committee
 Tuesday, April 15
 5:30 p.m.
 League Office

Immigration Study Committee
 Wednesday, April 16
 9:00 – 11:00 a.m.
 League Office

Voter Registration Trainings
 Wednesday, April 16
 1:00 – 2:00 p.m. or
 5:30 – 6:30 p.m.
 League Office

Education Committee
 Monday, April 21
 12:00 noon. – 1:30 p.m.
 League Office

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3 Forum: Local Contributions to Global Village 7:30 pm	4	5 Board meeting 9:00 am
6	7 Seattle Voter deadline IR Committee 12:45 pm.	8 Civics Education Comm 4:pm Social Justice Comm 6:00 pm	9	10	11	12
13	14 Fund raising Comm 10:00 am	15 Transportation Committee 10:30 am Mbrshp Strategic Planning 5:30 pm	16 Immigration Committee 9:00 am Voter Reg Trng 1:00 or 5:30 pm	17	18	19
20	21 Education Committee 12:00 noon	22 Earth Day	23	24 Land Use Committee 12:30 pm	25	26 Economics & Taxation Comm 9:00 am Universal Health Care Forum 1:30 pm
27	28	29	30	May 1 Forum 7:30 pm	May 2	May 3 Board Meeting 9:00 am
May 4 Spring Fling	May 5	May 6	May 7	May 8	May 9	May 10

May

Forum: Voting Issues
 Thursday, May 1
 7:30 p.m.
 Seattle First Baptist Church

Board Meeting
 Saturday, May 3
 9:00 a.m.

Spring Fling
 Sunday, May 4

Annual Meeting
 Thursday, May 22
 7:30 p.m.
 Seattle First Baptist Church

Land Use Committee
 Thursday, April 24
 12:30 – 2:30 p.m.
 Park Shore Building

Economics and Taxation Committee
 Saturday, April 26
 9:00 a.m.
 909 E. Newton # D9

Universal Health Care Forum
 Saturday, April 26
 1:30 – 4:30 p.m.
 New Everett Theatre
 Everett, WA

Calculate your Carbon Footprint

By Denise D. Smith

April 22, known internationally as Earth Day, is the day we celebrate the Earth's environment. The roots of this celebration have a connection with Seattle. It was at a conference in Seattle, Washington in September 1969 that Senator Gaylord Nelson announced his plan to hold a nationwide grassroots demonstration on the environment. The first Earth Day, April 22, 1970, was the culmination of Senator Nelson's long campaign to focus national attention on the environment and is regarded by most as the beginning of the modern environmental movement. We encourage you to participate in local Earth Day celebrations, and to look at what you personally can do to help the environment. There are many resources for information on limiting your impact. You can take an online survey to calculate your carbon footprint, the measure of impact on the environment made popular in the Al Gore movie,

An Inconvenient Truth. Some interesting surveys are:

Earth Lab <http://www.earthlab.com/signupprofile/ecp.htm?ver=9&postredir=false>

Info on carbon footprint
<http://www.carboncounter.org/?gclid=CMam57mCl5ICFSkViQodFSUo7g>

Inconvenient Truth <http://www.climatecrisis.net/takeaction/carboncalculator/>

At the League office we are trying to limit our consumption but realize we have far to go. Many of you have opted to receive the monthly *Voter* by email. We encourage others to consider this as well. Studies and hard copies of pages you need can be highlighted and printed as a "print selection" option. You will receive less mail and the League will decrease our paper use and cut printing costs.

March Board Briefs

By Karen Adair, Secretary

The Board received a first draft of the fiscal year 2009 Budget from the finance committee to review. Board members were encouraged to direct concerns and questions to the committee.

Our current membership totals 827 members (764 are in good standing; 54 are in their grace period). There have been many responses to the invitations for the Get to Know League Dinner.

The Annual Meeting will be held on Thursday, May 22.

We will monitor the national Board elections of the National Indian Education Association in October. This will involve two days of overseeing voting and counting the results.

We sent a letter commending the Mercer Island School District for holding one of their recent retreat days in the district. The *Mercer Island Reporter* will publish the letter.

We will submit a letter stating our concerns about the Seattle City Council proposal to require registration of lobbyists: the law allows paid lobbyists 16 days a year of lobbying before they are required to register and proposed monitoring is not specific enough.

We will send a letter to the Seattle City Council in support of increasing housing and services to the homeless and sign the *Real Change* petition that states "we, the undersigned, call on Mayor Nickels to stop all non-emergency sweeps immediately and expand housing and services instead of criminalizing survival."

A group is circulating a petition to make all King County offices non-partisan. Our positions on King County governance (on page 22-23 of our current local positions) state that the voters should have the opportunity to decide whether county positions should be partisan or non-partisan.

The Ed Fund recently approved the civics education committee's proposal to publish 16 units of Newspapers in Education material. We are working with the LWVWA Ed Fund to come up with the rest of the funding. The LWVUS has suggested that locals make use of the NIE program. The material would reach teachers in a large part of the state, so it's an exciting opportunity.

We will share a table with two other groups at the Women's Fair, March 28-30, send a League representative to the Hate Free Zone dinner on May 2, and participate in the Family Resource Fair at Crossroads Mall on May 3.

Committee Meetings

International Relations Committee

Date: Monday, April 7
Time: 12:45 – 2:45 p.m.
Place: League Office

Having just finished our big project of the year, we will have one of our free ranging I-R discussions! All are welcome! Email Ellen Berg (ellenzberg@msn.com) to find out more.

Civics Education Committee

Date: Tuesday, April 8
Time: 4:00 – 6:00 p.m.
Place: League Office

The Civic Education Committee meets the second Tuesday of the month. We are finalizing details to partner on a project to provide students and newspaper readers with information on the people and process involved in the national election. New members are invited to bring ideas we can implement to promote civics education. For information, email Jaclyn Wall at speakingstrategies@hotmail.com.

Social Justice Committee

Date: Tuesday, April 8
Time: 6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
Place: League Office

At the March meeting, the committee continued work on the May unit materials and a forum on voting rights. Members reported on work with the Real Change Organizing Project and the Seattle League board's endorsement of the petition to urge the City of Seattle to stop all non-emergency sweeps and focus instead on expanding housing with supportive services for those leaving homelessness.

All are welcome to attend and join in our efforts. If you have questions leave a message for Pat Cleary at (206) 329-4848.

Membership Strategic Planning Committee

Date: Tuesday, April 15
Time: 5:30 p.m.
Place: League Office

Education Committee

Date: Monday, April 21
Time: 12 noon – 1:30 p.m.
Place: League Office

Cheryl Chow, Seattle School Board President and member of Washington State Basic Education Finance Task Force, will talk about the key issues in studying education funding in Washington State. For Info, leave message for Lucy Gaskill-Gaddis at (206) 329-4848 or lucygg@seattlelwv.org.

Land Use Committee

Date: Thursday, April 24
Time: 12:30–2:30 p.m.
Place: Park Shore Building
1630 43rd Ave. East

Extremely limited, free parking is available on site and along adjacent streets, plus the #11 bus provides service to Madison Park. Bus stops to enter and depart the neighborhood are located within one block of Park Shore. The Land Use Committee is tentatively scheduled to review a revised proposal for future management of the historic officers' housing properties located in Discovery Park. For further information, please leave message for Karen Kane at (206) 329-4848.

Economics and Taxation Committee

Date: Saturday, April 26
Time: 9:00 a.m.
Place: 909 E. Newton #D9

For more information, leave message for Nora Leech at (206) 329-4848.

Immigration Study Committee

Date: Wednesday, April 16
Time: 9:00 – 11:00 a.m.
Place: League Office

We are pulling together information from various interviews with immigrant groups. All are welcome to join us! For more information, please leave message for either Barbara Reid or Annette Holcomb at (206) 329-4848.

Transportation Committee

Date: Tuesday, April 15
Time: 10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.,
speakers coming at 11:00
Place: Skagit Station, 105 E.
Kincaid in Mount Vernon

The Transportation Committee is going for a special meeting and an outing in April. Our meeting date is the usual 3rd Tuesday—but we're going to Mount Vernon to meet with Martha Rose, Director of Island Transit and Dale O'Brien, Director of Skagit Transit.

The meeting will be at Skagit Station, a multi modal transit center where the buses come in from Bellingham, from Whidbey and Camano Islands, and from Everett—and where Greyhound and Amtrak also come in.

The reason the meeting time is a bit later than usual is so Leaguers from Bellingham and the islands can consider coming to the meeting—and coming by bus. Those of us going north from the Puget Sound region will probably want to carpool, because the bus schedules don't work well for us. BUT! If we carpool, at least some of us plan to go on over to see the tulip fields after the meeting. It's that time of year. So, please consider joining us for the April meeting in Mount Vernon.

Announcements

THANKS TO CIS VOLUNTEERS!

The League of Women Voters is a grassroots organization with a personal touch, which is exemplified by the crew of dedicated volunteers who staff the Citizen Information Service (CIS) desk in the Seattle League office five days a week. They answer questions from the public and our own members, saving Monya, our office specialist, valuable time to spend on other things as well as giving the League a personal face and a live voice.

March saw the departure of two long-time CIS volunteers, **Marguerite Kuhns** and **Hazel Schiffer**, who have both worked on the desk for a number of years. Marguerite moved to Tacoma to be closer to her daughter; Hazel continues to work in the office inputting data into the computer. Thank you both for your many hours of cheerful work on the desk. Fridays were special because you were there!

And welcome to **Estelle Wertheimer** and **Jeannette Kahlenberg**, who will take their places on Fridays. Estelle has been a member of the Mercer Island unit for many years and will soon be moving closer to the office as she settles into her new apartment in Horizon House. Jeannette is a newcomer to Seattle, having moved from New Jersey last year, but she is a long-time League member, both in Minnesota and in New Jersey. She also lives at Horizon House.

With the exciting election year ahead, the CIS desk will be a busy place. Thank you all for your continued help. Anyone else who would like to see how the League operates firsthand and have a little fun at the same time is welcome to join the CIS team. Call or email Cynthia Howe at (206) 329-4848, or howe.john@comcast.net.

CEDAR RIVER TRIP PLANNED

The Issaquah day unit is planning a trip to the Cedar River Watershed Education Center at Rattlesnake Lake after its 10 a.m. meeting April 10. All League members are invited to go along. The plan is to meet behind the Issaquah City Hall at 12:15, bringing a bag lunch, and carpool from there. For more information, leave message for Betty Culbert at (206) 329-4848.

CARRIE CHAPMAN CATT AWARD

The League of Women Voters of Seattle is now accepting nominations for the 2008 Carrie Chapman Catt Award. Each year at the Annual Meeting in May, LWVS presents this award to a member who has gone above and beyond the call of duty to further the mission of the League. The award is generally reserved for off-board members who impact the community through their commitment to making democracy work. If you have someone in mind, please contact Denise Smith (206) 329-4848, or email president@seattlelwv.org.

Previous Carrie Chapman Catt Award Winners:

- 2007 Myra Lupton
- 2006 Jeannie Hale
- 2005 Elsie Simon
- 2004 Carol Goldenberg
- 2003 Lucy Steers
- 2002 Barbara Guptill
- 2001 Ann Bowden and Peg Williams
- 2000 Peggy Saari
- 1999 Jan O'Connor
- 1998 Shirley Bridge
- 1997 Mary Frances Aldrich
- 1996 Lillian Gibbs
- 1995 Olive Spannaus
- 1994 Margaret Colony
- 1993 Ruthe Ridder
- 1992 Jane Brown and Eileen Hambly

APRIL FORUM DATE CORRECTION

The March *Voter* listed an incorrect date for the upcoming forum in April. **The correct date is Thursday, April 3.** We apologize for the error, and encourage everyone to plan to attend what promises to be an extremely informative forum planned by the International Relations Committee.

A PUBLIC FORUM ON UNIVERSAL HEALTH CARE

By Margery H. Krieger, Ph.D.

On April 26, 2008, the League of Women Voters of Snohomish County will conduct a forum, free to the public, entitled "Universal Health Care -- What Should It Be and How Do We Get It?" The forum will take place at the New Everett Theatre, 2911 Colby Ave., Everett, from 1:30 to 4:30 P.M. The League of Women Voters of Seattle is one of several co-sponsors of the event.

A panel of very knowledgeable national and local figures will present and discuss their views. Members include John Geyman, M.D., Professor Emeritus of Family Medicine, U.W. School of Medicine; Grant Hendrickson, Ph.D., former Trustee of Group Health Cooperative; Don Howard, M.D., Ph.D., Chairman, CellNetix Pathology and Laboratories, Seattle; and Kathleen O'Connor, founder and CEO of CodeBlueNow!, a national grass-roots organization that examines health care system issues and solutions. We are hoping that a state legislator, and perhaps a local Congressman, will be able to join the panel to discuss the political realities. The audience will be invited to participate with questions, comments and ideas.

Why the call to develop an effective universal health care system? More than forty years ago, Martin Luther King, Jr. tried to arouse public concern by stating, "Of all the forms of inequality, injustice in health care is the most shocking and the most inhumane." Yet nearly a half century later, access to and quality of health care in the U.S. remains unequal. To make matters worse, although ours is the most expensive health care system in the world, most measures of effectiveness such as longevity and infant mortality rate find the U.S. at about 14th place or lower among developed nations worldwide.

All the evidence indicates that there is a major health care crisis in the United States, one that will only become worse as costs spiral upward and access and effectiveness decrease. In light of these problems, the League of Women Voters of Washington has taken a position in support of a universal health care system.

In the spirit of this position, we offer our forum as a way to involve the public in examining our present state, the kind of health care system we want and need, and the actions needed to attain it.

ACLU ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP CONFERENCE

By Peg Williams

The ACLU held its annual membership conference on Saturday, Feb 23 at the University of Washington. Several League members were in attendance. I was impressed by four topics covered during this meeting.

Separation of Church and State

The keynote speaker was David Domke, a UW professor of Communications, author of *God Willing?* and coauthor of *The God Strategy*. He spoke on the subject of "Religion as a Political Weapon." Domke started by quoting President John Kennedy's famous speech on the separation of church and state, "**I believe in an America where the separation of church and state is absolute...**" He asked how we have moved so far from that message in the last 50 years. To find an answer, Domke and associates have studied public messages of U.S. leaders to show the growing role of religion as it influences policy and public opinion.

Death With Dignity

One of three workshops concerned a new initiative being promoted by Booth Gardner on compassionate end-of-life choices.

Harvesting Data from Driver's Licenses

There is proposed legislation to prevent the use of personal information on driver's licenses without the person's permission. Technology is available to scan the bar code on the back of your license. The ACLU recommends a law to prevent such scanning without a person's permission.

Marijuana Conversation

Washington State has been picked by the National ACLU Board to try to promote broad range conversation about marijuana. A 30-minute film moderated by Rick Steves gives the history of marijuana's medicinal use, the circumstances under which it was made illegal, and the effect the current "war on drugs" has had on those incarcerated for possessing small amounts of it. Individuals and groups are urged to use this film to encourage conversations about the issue and the way it is handled.

Time to Check Your Legislator's Report Card!

By Patti Catalano

We're well into the New Year and we've all been busy paying attention to legislative issues and taking action on those issues when necessary. Now that you're comfortable calling or emailing your legislator, you can educate yourself on how your representatives and senators are doing in the other Washington. The League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS) has identified several issues as Good Government Issues, and has compiled the votes of the 110th Congress, First Session in easily accessible formats that give voters information on how their representatives voted on these issues, and if those votes agreed with the LWVUS stands. To reach this information, log on to www.lwv.org, then click on "Take Action" on the home page. Next click on "How Are Your Members of Congress Voting on Key Good Government Issues?" The report is divided into three sections, so that you can see how the representative from your congressional district voted, how all the members of Congress from your state voted, and how individual states across the country voted. Clear language describes each issue and explains the League's stand. For each issue, a simple plus or minus lets you know if your representatives did or did not support that stand. Think of it as a report card shared with EVERY voter. I checked on my own districts and was surprised at a few of the votes. Are you pleased or disappointed in how your legislators voted? Do you see a chance coming up in which you can educate them further on these issues? Can you use this as a way to create a dialogue with your representative to gain support on other similar issues? Having this information available can help you articulate your views when approaching representatives.

For the U.S. House of Representatives, LWVUS identified these issues as key for good government:

1. House vote to override the President's veto of the State Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), which provides health-care coverage to millions of low-income children. (10/18/2007, Roll Call No. 982)
2. House vote on final passage of the Protect America Act, which gave sweeping new surveillance powers to the Executive Branch. (08/04/2007, Roll Call No. 836)
3. House vote on Udall Amendment to set Renewable Performance Standards (RPS) for electric utilities. (08/04/2007, Roll Call No. 827)

4. House vote on Pence Amendment to prohibit Justice Department expenditures to enforce the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act. (07/26/2007, Roll Call No. 737)
5. House vote on legislation requiring disclosure of campaign contributions to members of Congress "bundled" by registered lobbyists. (05/24/2007, Roll Call No. 420)
6. House vote on final passage of the DC Voting Rights Act. (04/19/2007, Roll Call No. 231)

For the Senate, LWVUS identified these issues:

1. Senate cloture vote on the comprehensive energy bill passed by the House. (12/07/2007, Roll Call No. 416)
2. Senate vote on cloture on the motion to proceed to consideration of the State Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), which provides health care coverage to millions of low-income children. (10/31/2007, Roll Call No. 401)
3. Senate cloture vote on Specter Amendment to restore the fundamental due process protection of Habeas Corpus to detainees in U.S. custody. (09/19/2007, Roll Call No. 340)
4. Senate cloture vote on the motion to proceed to consideration of the DC Voting Rights Act. (09/18/2007, Roll Call No. 339)
5. Senate vote on final passage of Protect the America Act, which gave sweeping new surveillance powers to the Executive Branch. (08/03/2007, Roll Call No. 309)
6. Senate vote on cloture on the Honest Leadership and Open Government Act. (08/02/2007, Roll Call No. 293)
7. Senate vote on McConnell Amendment to require every voter to provide government-issued, current and valid photo identification when voting at a polling place in 2008. (06/05/2007, Roll Call No. 184)
8. Senate vote on Bennett Amendment to strip grassroots lobbying disclosure requirements from the ethics and lobbying legislation. (01/18/2007, Roll Call No. 17)
9. Senate vote on Lieberman Amendment to establish a Senate Office of Public Integrity. (01/18/2007, Roll Call No. 18)

By clicking the "More" under each issue, you can view a state-by-state map of how the votes went. It's a fascinating, informative way to see how your own state stacks up with other states on the League's issues. It gives you one more tool to stay educated on the issues as you review your legislator's report card.

Observer Corps

by Harriett Morton and Anita Warmflash

Like the spring crocus, the newly official Observer Corps sprouted this past month. Wearing the blue LWV badge and taking notes, our observers are attending governmental meetings suggested by current committee chairs. Their observations will be shared with applicable committee chairs, studies or units. Not only will the individual learn about issues, but her or his observations will inform League members and may lead to action, which is generally initiated through committees. Units that represent a defined jurisdiction, such as Mercer Island, also can initiate action. A record of the observers and their reports will reside with the coordinator of the Observer Corps, Anita Warmflash. A sign-up sheet at every monthly forum will beckon members, both new and old, to sign up to observe or acknowledge ongoing attendance at meetings of policy-making government bodies. Members may also call the League office or use the website "Contact Us" page. We welcome all!

A Mercer Islander's Observations on Being an Observer

By Myra Lupton

In addition to being members of the League of Women Voters of Seattle (LWVS), each of us lives in governance (and taxing) districts which make decisions about our schools, land use, traffic choices and other important parts of our daily lives. To come up with these decisions, they meet in public, following stipulated regulations about how to perform their tasks. Each of us has no doubt at one time or another attended such a meeting when a certain topic prompted our interest and concern. But are you a LWVS member who frequently finds a reason to observe in one particular area? If so, consider being an observer, using the training LWVS provides. For a number of years I have done this informally in my city, Mercer Island. Start with an agenda for topics. Often your unit will be talking about some of these issues and you can help inform them; for instance, you can suggest elected or staff members of a city or school district who can provide information in a unit meeting. Our guests always comment that our unit members listen, ask questions and study the printed material provided. If you believe that it might be appropriate for LWVS to provide an official public statement on a topic on which it has a position, talk about that with your unit, the unit leader and the LWVS Board, formulate a statement using a League position, and confer with the Board for authorization. We have done this several times about topics such as public use of our city parks, and the practice of holding school board retreat

meetings outside of our district. We have had an effect on these decisions consistent with our position. Your observing might also have an outcome similar to that achieved by one of our decades-long members. Having been a regular attendee at MI City Council meetings, our member Lissa Wells was appointed as a member when a mid-term vacancy occurred: she was known to be informed and dependable!

Calling All Education Advocates:

By Lucy Gaskill-Gaddis

Last year, the Legislature established the Basic Education Finance Study Task Force to come up with a new financing system for K-12 education in the state. Members of the task force include two superintendents, one school board member (Cheryl Chow of Seattle) and a number of legislators. Washington Learns was originally supposed to develop a new system but it never got off the ground. So here we are again with a committee that so far has not done much. In the 2008 Legislature, there is a bill to ensure that the study completes its work by December 2008. The State League, in concert with other organizations, filed suit over education financing and the trial date is March 2009. This should put more pressure on this task force to do its work. Districts all over King County will be making budget cuts this spring due to insufficient state funding to keep pace with expenses.

This is a critical issue for our state. On Monday, April 21st at noon Cheryl Chow, the President of the Seattle School Board will speak to interested members at noon in the League office. Bring your lunch and your questions and come talk about education funding. This is a statewide issue which should appeal to members in our countywide area.

For more information, contact Lucy Gaskill-Gaddis at (206) 329-4848 or lucygg@seattlelwv.org.

 THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS THROUGH THE DECADES!

Part VI – the 21st Century

We continue with the history of the League, as written by Kay J. Maxwell, former LWVUS president.

Organization:

A hallmark of the new century was the commitment on the part of the League to increased use of electronic communication to League leaders across the nation. A monthly electronic newsletter was begun and the League's membership database became available electronically for direct updating by League membership chairs.

At convention 2000, the per member payment (PMP) for student members was set at one half the regular rate and direct member input on program planning was implemented. For the first time, membership brochures were produced in Spanish and in 2004, the League received the Civic Change award from the Pew Partnership for Civic Change.

Issues:

Beginning in 2000 Issues for Emphasis were no longer selected at conventions and, at the 2000 convention, the League adopted a concurrence to add support for restoration of the federal payment to the District of Columbia. The League offered the first "candidate debates" online through the League's Internet based voter education program, DNet. DNet ended in 2005, but was replaced by the even more effective voter education web site, Vote411, in 2006. The League adopted updated positions on Trade and the UN in 2001 and 2002, an updated position on election of the president in 2004, as well as a concurrence in support of the abolition of the death penalty and a study of immigration policies at convention 2006.

The League was instrumental in the enactment of the Help America Vote Act of 2002 and the Bipartisan Campaign Finance Reform Act of 2002. The League worked to renew the Voting Rights Act, and filed a number of amicus briefs relating to campaign finance reform issues, racial bias in jury selection and Title IX. Beginning in 2004, the League focused its legislative work under a "Democracy Agenda" umbrella that included redistricting, civil liberties, campaign finance reform, voting rights for District of Columbia residents, election administration reform and ethics and lobbying reform.

The League launched a nationwide voter education campaign on "5 Things You Need to Know on Election Day" in 2004 that was repeated in 2006. In addition, the League engaged in a multi-year education project on Judicial Independence. A major effort was the Local Voices Project that fostered a dialogue on the critical issue of balancing homeland security and civil liberties.

The League continued its international work through several Global Democracy Programs that included working with women in Africa, Brazil, Ukraine and Russia. In addition, the League participated in a number of programs that focused on increased understanding of international affairs on the part of Americans.

Audience Participation Enhances Forum

When they learned that the featured speaker for the March Women's History Month forum had been delayed, League President Denise Smith and Economics Committee Chair Nora Leech took advantage of the situation. Realizing there were many women present qualified to offer a personal perspective on "Women's Changing Roles and Economic Survival," they asked audience members to contribute their own experiences in this area.

Especially for younger members, some of the tales of life in past decades were eye-opening. Karen Lahey, who became a computer programmer in the 1970s, told of having to take up swearing in the workplace after she learned that one manager objected to hiring women because their presence would keep him from using his customary salty language. Even more startling was the information, supplied by Pat Cleary, that as late as 1933, the City of Seattle refused to hire married women, and dismissed any female employee who did get married.

Well warmed up by this stimulating discussion, the audience gave an enthusiastic welcome to Professor Elaina Rose, who offered an informative and thought-provoking address on women's economic and personal strategies for survival, past and present.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

By Kitty Mahon, Membership Chair

When this edition of the *Seattle Voter* goes to press, we will have already held our spring Get to Know League Dinner on March 6. As I write this column, it is February 28 and the last minute details are still to be completed. Since publishing the invitation, I have been very touched by the large number of League members who have stepped forward with offers of support, enthusiastic participation and willingness to contribute to spreading the word about what the League of Women Voters does and is capable of doing. In the next edition, I will be able to tell you who they all are. In the meantime, thank you, one and all.



Kitty Mahon

“Don’t underestimate your power.” – Naila Harper, 50 year member, February 2008

\$2.50 CLUB

Immigration is a hot button topic in this year’s election cycle. Helping to underwrite the cost of the LWVUS study of this important issue are: Myra Lupton, Connie Reed, Jane Stevens, JoAnne Way, Constance Wentzel, Dorothy Cyra, Jo Anne Laz, Gail Shurgot, Diane Snell, Linda Snider, Jane Stevens, Melinda Young, Juliet Beard, Frederick Bonk, Karen Bonk, Mickey Horwitz, Ellen Jensen, Elaine Birn, Jean Burch Falls, Marilyn Knight, Dorris Martin, Wayne Martin, Katherine Pearson, Helen Brumbach, Nancy Debaste, Ann Durham, Deborah Gayle, Susan K. Jones, Beret Kischner, Monica Leigh, Mary McCumber, Donald Mitchell, Pamela Mitchell, Ray Starks, Jack Stern, Lorna Stern, and Gerry Williams.

CONTINUING GENEROSITY

We have the following members to thank for their generosity in contributing above their dues levels: Verda Hansberry, Tami Szerlip, Margaret Vance, Nancy Smith, Mary Wolch, and Judi Jones (underwriting 20 members at \$2.50).

LEAGUE MEMBER RECOGNIZED

On March 30, League of Women Voters of Seattle (LWVS) member Alice Siegal was presented with the “Shirley Bridge Power of One Award.” This award is given by the Women’s Endowment Fund of the Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle, and is inspired by the tradition of repairing the world, along with justice and service to others. Alice has been a civic activist for more than 30 years, working in the field of education and as a counselor to the youth of greater Seattle. She has made many contributions in the areas of social and economic justice. Congratulations and thank you, Alice.

ERA Histories – Update

LWVS member Dorothy Sale is a member of the Washington Women’s History Consortium and has offered to be the local contact for the Equal Rights Amendment history project described in the March *Seattle Voter*. If you have a story to share about your part in the effort to pass the ERA, please leave a message for Dorothy at 206-329-4848 or saledy@aol.com.

Welcome New Members

Ron Moore is a professor of philosophy at the University of Washington. He’s been on the faculty since 1979. His specialties are philosophy of law and philosophy of art. He has chaired a professional association and served several years as book review editor of a professional journal. He also chaired the U.W. Faculty Senate and served for nine years on the board of the University of Washington Medical Center. His interests include higher education and art. Ron joins the League as a family member; his wife Nan currently serves on the LWVS Board as Program Chair.

Suzy Mygatt Wakefield joins the League after retiring as a high school counselor and university instructor. She holds a Ph.D. in School Counselor Education from the University of Michigan. She is the editor of *Unfocused Kids: Helping Students to Focus on their Education and Career Plans*. Suzy also serves as photographer for the Seattle Opera Guild. She is on the Board of Directors of the Kirkland Performance Center and is past president of the Washington Career Development Association. Suzy is interested in public speaking, editing, tennis, travel and photography. She is new to the League and looks forward to making contacts and volunteering.

How to Help Poor Countries

By Vicky Downs

In our world of 6.1 billion people, Americans are among the richest, and many of us are concerned for the poorest countries where life is difficult and short, and billions die because they are too poor to survive. Members of the International Relations Committee have read three books which tell us what can be done to help. *The End of Poverty: Economic Possibilities for Our Time* (2005) by Jeffrey Sachs is one. Sachs believes that poverty can and should end with the next two decades. His book tells "how the world economy has gotten to where it is today," and describes efforts starting with an on-the-ground diagnosis in village after village that can lead to positive changes.

I read that when countries get their foot on the "ladder of development, they are generally able to continue the upward climb" on their own. However, some countries are trapped below the ladder, and it takes special effort to get onto that bottom rung. In Bangladesh, sweatshops became the first rung out of extreme poverty—an idea I found surprising.

The White Man's Burden: Why the West's Efforts to Aid the Rest Have Done So Much Ill and So Little Good (2006), by William Easterly, is skeptical about much of the top-down aid that seems to have been based on ideas of rich outsiders rather than those who are suffering inside the country. Committee member Betsy Greene says that this book is an interesting read, with many fascinating vignettes. Easterly believes the poor themselves must be involved in the planning. Often it is small-scale projects with accountability and observable results that work best. Betsy described a plan to pay mothers to send their children to schools as an example of the programs Easterly approves of.

The Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries Are Failing and What Can Be Done About It (2007), by Paul Collier, focuses on countries that are well under the bottom rung of the "development ladder," and have never known economic growth. Committee chair Ellen

Berg reports that this very readable book is based on research in which British-born Collier seeks to find out why countries are stuck at the very bottom. Ellen found some ideas especially thought-provoking. For example, Collier says, "what modern armies are for [is] to supply the global public good of peace in territories that otherwise have the potential for nightmare." I wondered if a recent example occurred when President Charles Taylor of Liberia was forcibly removed, followed by Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf's winning an election and reorganizing her country. That seems to be the sort of thing Collier recommends, though a Foreign Affairs review points out that his own example is British and not well known in America. Considering the current problems in Iraq, I imagine people today will be very cautious about using force.

Since WWII the developed nations have been trying to help entire countries of poor people. We are not yet expert, we have made mistakes, but clearly we have learned a great deal. These excellent books convince readers that there are ways out of poverty. What is needed is intelligent, consistent and generous help.

The opinions in this review are personal and do not represent those of the League of Women Voters.

Diversity Policy

The League of Women Voters of Seattle (LWVS), in both its values and practices, affirms its beliefs and commitment to diversity and pluralism, which means there shall be no barriers to participation in any activity of the League on the basis of gender, race, creed, age, sexual orientation, national origin or disability.

LWVS recognizes that diverse perspectives are important and necessary for responsible and representative decision-making. LWVS subscribes to the belief that diversity and pluralism are fundamental to the values it upholds and that this inclusiveness enhances the organization's ability to respond more effectively to changing conditions and needs.

LWVS affirms its commitment to reflecting the diversity of Americans in its membership, board, staff and programs.

Brief Book Reviews Relating to Millennium Development Goals

by Vicky Downs (Recommended by members of I-R Committee)

Achebe, Chinua *Things Fall Apart* (1959)

This classic is the story of one person, yet seems the story of an entire people. Okonkwo is a self-made man who grew up in a pre-colonial Ibo village in what would become Nigeria. Achebe shows Okonkwo in all his glorious strength as a champion wrestler, a prosperous farmer, and a husband with three wives and several children. Son of a ne'er-do-well, he is afraid of failure and weakness – a character flaw that eventually undoes him. Christian missionaries followed by colonial bureaucrats arrive with new values, and soon corrupt Ibo culture. Though Okonkwo might have been redeemed by the old traditions, with the new ways, he is totally lost.

Kidder, Tracy *Mountains Beyond Mountains: The Quest of Dr. Paul Farmer, A Man Who Would Cure The World* (2004)

A Pulitzer Prize winner, this is fast turning into a classic about a humanitarian genius who is unrelenting when facing a problem. Learning that a patient had stopped taking his pills, Farmer walked for miles to talk with him. The doctor soon learned that the pills had been sold for food, as the man's family needed a source of income. Farmer arranged for that. The reality of dealing with disease in a place like Haiti requires profound understanding of politics, culture and social systems as well as the diseases themselves.

Kingsolver, Barbara *The Poisonwood Bible* (1998)

Preacher Nathan Price takes his wife and daughters to the Belgian Congo in 1959. Each of the girls and the mother take turns telling this story. They have each packed personal "necessities", not realizing that foods and clothing meant for America would be inappropriate in Africa. They are unaware that they perceive the world through culture-biased lenses. The Congo is not as they anticipated and each is changed by it.

Mortenson, Greg and David O. Relin *Three Cups of Tea* (2006)

The title refers to the Pakistani belief that the first time you are offered tea you are a stranger, the second time you are an honored guest and the third time you are family. Greg Mortenson was very much a stranger, lost and in broken health, when he first arrived in a tiny impoverished village in North Eastern Pakistan. After recovering, he told his hosts he would return to build them a school. Many months later, when he returned with the material for a school, the village welcomed him as

an honored guest, but the school had to wait until a bridge to transport the materials could be built. On subsequent returns, he felt like a member of the headman's family. An uplifting book.

Wills, Christopher *Yellow Fever, Black Goddess: The Co-evolution of People and Plagues* (1996).

For readers with a scientific bent, this book by an evolutionary biologist explains how viruses (e.g. AIDS) and bacteria (e.g. Malaria) have evolved over time. Knowing how diseases change makes it possible to figure out how to master them.

Yunus, Muhammad *Banker to the Poor: Micro-Lending and the Battle Against World Poverty* (1999)

Nobel Prize Winner Yunus, a Bangladeshi economist, had to learn a whole new kind of economics to help the poor in his country. His culture tends to disempower all women, not just the poor: bankers will lend only to men, most poor women never touch money and can not distinguish their different amounts, and no "decent woman" should be seen walking in a strange area on her own. Yunus's students (male and female) helped him develop the Grameen Bank, which now provides loans to poor women. This book shows how, after months and years of attempting to overcome cultural barriers, they finally succeeded.

Yunus, Muhammad *Creating a World Without Poverty: Social Business and the Future of Capitalism*. (2007)

In this new book, Yunus shows how he combines business ingenuity and practices with a goal to create "social businesses," whose bottom line is not profit but achieving a specific social goal. For example, his Grameen Bank and Dannon (the yogurt company) joined to provide nutritious food (actually fortified yogurt suited to the local palate) at a low price, so many poor, malnourished Bangladeshi now eat better. Unlike a non-profit, a social business is not self-sustaining or dependent on donations. It is a "no loss-no dividend" company with profits paying off loans (with no interest) and going back into the business itself. Yunus's joy in helping the poor and his delight in figuring out how to marry ordinary business practices with a social bottom line makes the reader hope that we will soon see social businesses everywhere.

The opinions in this review are personal and do not represent those of the League of Women Voters.

**A REPORT ON THE UNITED NATIONS'
MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

This report was prepared by a subcommittee of:
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In 2006-2007 LWVUS, in partnership with the Millennium Campaign of the Better World Foundation, offered grants to state and local Leagues for organizing educational outreach activities about the Millennium Development Goals. We did not apply for one of these grants, but we were inspired by the LWVUS project to undertake this report, and in it we have tried to meet the grant’s requirement, set out in the application, to design a MDGs project which would “support and promote dialog and a diversity of opinions.” (Grant application, LWV Global Democracy Program, April 2006)

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)	
Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger	Target 1: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day
	Target 2: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger
Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education	Target 3: Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling
Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women	Target 4: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015
Goal 4: Reduce child mortality	Target 5: Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate
Goal 5: Improve maternal health	Target 6: Reduce by three-quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio
Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases	Target 7: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS
	Target 8: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases
Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability	Target 9: Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources
	Target 10: Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation
	Target 11: By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers
Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development	Target 12: Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, nondiscriminatory trading and financial system Includes a commitment to good governance, development and poverty reduction – both nationally and internationally
	Target 13: Address the special needs of the least developed countries Includes: tariff and quota free access for the least developed countries' exports; enhanced programme of debt relief for heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC) and cancellation of official bilateral debt; and more generous ODA for countries committed to poverty reduction
	Target 14: Address the special needs of landlocked developing countries and small island developing States (through the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and the outcome of the twenty-second special session of the General Assembly)
	Target 15: Deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries through national and international measures in order to make debt sustainable in the long term
	Target 16: In cooperation with developing countries, develop and implement strategies for decent and productive work for youth
	Target 17: In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries
	Target 18: In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications

How Did We Get the MDGs?



The UN Charter, 1945

identifies 4 purposes, one of which is a progenitor of the MDGs

“To achieve international cooperation in solving problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms.”



UN Sponsored Summits and Conferences

The Millennium Development Goals are a crystallization of commitments which were made during the 1990s. Some issues which are important to development, such as population planning, are not included because international meetings did not produce agreement



"Millennium Declaration" from the United Nations Millennium Summit - September 2000

The MDGs are implicit in the Millennium Declaration, adopted by all 189 member nations – and signed by 147 heads of state and government.



"Road Map Toward the Implementation of the UN Millennium Declaration," report by the Secretary-General - September 2001

Includes the Millennium Development Goals, with associated numerical targets – e.g. extreme poverty will be halved between 1990 and 2015 – and indicators by which this change is to be measured



"Monterrey Consensus," International Conference on Financing for Development - 2002

This embodies a commitment to a global partnership to achieve the MDGs, and addresses the financial requirements for attaining them.



"Investing in Development: A Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Overview", report by UN Millenium Project, Jeffrey D. Sachs, Director - 2005

The UN Millennium Project was commissioned by Secretary-General Kofi Anan to propose the best strategies for meeting the Millennium Development Goals.



Ongoing UN Direction of and Publication about the MDGs

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has overarching responsibility for tracking MDG efforts, and for issuing annual progress reports.

INTRODUCTION

In September 2000 the world's leaders met to reaffirm the principles and objectives of the United Nations. The leaders of 189 countries agreed that they “have a collective responsibility to uphold the principles of human dignity, equality and equity at the global level.” And turning to the objective of “Development and poverty eradication,” they resolved “to create an environment – at the national and global levels alike – which is conducive to development and to the elimination of poverty.” (*Declaration*, p. 4)

Creating this environment and securing these principles is to be done in the context of the new millennium, which is the context of globalization. In the opening section of their *Millennium Declaration* these leaders acknowledged the inequities of globalization, a system whose costs and benefits are unevenly shared, and concluded “that the central challenge we face today is to ensure that globalization becomes a positive force for all the world's people.” (*Declaration*, p. 1)

The *Declaration* continues for several pages which contain, in nascent form, the development objectives now known as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Succinctly put, they are:

- Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education
- Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women
- Goal 4: Reduce child mortality
- Goal 5: Improve maternal health
- Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
- Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability
- Goal 8: Develop a Global Partnership for Development

Subsequently these MDGs have been elaborated to include a time frame, numerical targets used to measure progress and signal success, a framework for their financing, and strategies for their attainment. The Millennium Development Goals have become a *program*, and it is this we will discuss in some detail in the following pages. But first, we want to spell out more fully the *mission* this program is designed to accomplish.

As they have been elaborated in a series of UN documents, it has become clear that a great deal is expected of the goals. When attained, they are meant to simultaneously improve the lives of individuals, contribute to a country's development, and enhance global security. The following examples are intended to suggest how the goals might do this:

- It is a truism that good health is of great value to individuals: it improves the quality and extends the span of their lives. That is arguably reason enough to strive to meet the goals to eliminate hunger and disease. But there are other benefits as well.

- When good health is combined with adequate education – another goal – individuals are able to take their part in society as productive workers. This, too, improves their individual lives. And it contributes to their country’s development because having a healthy and educated workforce – “adequate human capital” – enables a country to participate more productively in the global economy, and thereby to prosper. (UN Millennium Project 2005, hereinafter UNMP, pp. 12-13)
- Eliminating poverty is the first goal on the list, and is the one most implicated in enhancing security. Just as poverty is known to produce misery for individuals and countries, so it is also known to prompt conflict. It is not difficult to conjure up examples of how in neighborhoods, in countries, and globally, violent acts can seem to be the only recourse impoverished people have. Eliminating poverty will eliminate a major cause of conflict, and so lessen the risk it will break out. (UNMP, p. 6.)

This then is the mission of the MDG program: in a context of globalization it is to overcome poverty and other disadvantages, so ensuring all the world’s people of their human rights – including dignity, equality, and equity – and to help them and their countries enter the mainstream of global exchange and prosperity.

Can it be done? A report to the Secretary-General on strategies for attaining the MDGs opens with an assurance that, indeed, they *are* within our reach because: “The practical solutions exist. The political framework is established. And for the first time, the cost is utterly affordable....All that is needed is action.” (UNMP, p. 1)

This report on the MDGs continues with four sections: I. MDG Background, II. MDG Strategy, III. MDG Progress, and IV. MDG Concerns and Critiques.

I. MDG BACKGROUND

In this section we want to offer just enough about the attributes of the MDGs, and the United States’ orientation to them, for the rest of the report to make sense.

MDG Attributes

The Millennium Development Goals are expressed in terms of measurable progress to be made between two points in time: 1990 and 2015. This is the span of a generation, which intuitively seems like enough time in which to achieve big things. For each goal, targets specify just how much progress should be made, for example:

Goal 1: Eradicate Poverty Target 1: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than \$1 a day

Why halve it? Why not reduce it by 25% or 75% instead? The targets were based on extrapolating past rates of change into the future, and so, because the global trend over the previous 25 years showed a 50% reduction in poverty, the projected target for the next 25 years was also set at 50%. (Vandemoortele, p. 2) This was

how each target was set, and accounts for why they differ from one another.

The MDGs are expressed as numerical targets not only for global change, but for change within every developing country. This attribute of the goals has important implications: some countries are better poised than others to mimic the global trend. This further implies that strategies for attaining the goals need to be different in different places, with some countries needing much more assistance than others.

U.S. Commitments vis-à-vis the MDGs

Without digressing too far into a discussion of U.S. foreign assistance, we want to take note of where the U.S. stands in terms of its MDG policy and financial commitments.

Policy Commitments: The United States signed the Millennium Declaration and the Monterrey Consensus, and has regularly reconfirmed its support for the MDGs at the annual G8 meetings of leading industrialized nations. But it has not supported all the subsequent elaboration of the goals, and this became a highly visible issue in the weeks before the UN's 2005 World Summit. (See *Seattle Voter*, May 2006). The document which finally emerged with U.S. support continued the emphasis on development as a core focus of the UN and reaffirmed the financial agreements as spelled out in the Monterrey Consensus.

One underlying issue going into the summit concerned the targeted level for official development assistance (ODA in development lingo). In 1970, the General Assembly adopted the position that developed countries should allocate 1% of their gross national product (GNP) to foreign aid – with 0.7% to be ODA and 0.3% to be private giving from non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The United States has never committed to this target, and so resisted an attempt at the summit to exact a firm pledge to reach it. The Monterrey Consensus reiterates the desirability of the target, without exacting a firm pledge to reach it, so the U.S. found it acceptable.

The Monterrey Consensus says: “(We) urge the developed countries that have not done so to make concrete efforts towards the target of 0.7% of Gross National Product (GNP) as official development assistance (ODA) to developing countries...” (*Consensus*, Para. 42) In 2007, experts Hindery, Sachs, and Smith noted that “the U.S. has no timetable or political consensus to reach that goal, despite (its) pledge at Monterrey to make concrete efforts to do so.” (HSS, p. 187)

Financial Commitments: So, what is the current level of U.S. foreign aid? In 2004-05 U.S. foreign assistance included:

1. ODA at 0.20 % of GNP
2. NGO at 0.06 % of GNP
3. Totaling a commitment of 0.26% of GNP

In 2004-05, assistance in the form of debt relief was high; it is now tapering off and in 2006 ODA was at 0.17 % of GNP where it remains. (HSS, pp. 171, 174) This would surprise most Americans who, surveys show, believe the U.S. foreign aid program is larger than it is – guesstimating ODA to be around 5% of GNP. (HSS, p. 171)

President Bush proposed, and in 2004 Congress established, the Millennium Challenge Account to focus specifically on promoting sustainable economic growth aimed at reducing poverty. Based on the principle that aid is most effective when it reinforces good governance, economic freedom and investments in people, these factors are evaluated in determining eligibility for assistance through this program. A government corporation, the Millennium Challenge Corporation, was established to run the program. MDG oriented, and novel in its structure, this program is still small; the Agency for International Development remains the principal conduit for U.S. bilateral assistance.

In looking at ODA, it is important to bear in mind that only part is devoted to economic development as described by the MDGs; it also addresses humanitarian crises and serves U.S. political aims. Hindery, Sachs, and Smith have looked at current aid to sub-Saharan Africa, since that region is “the epicenter of the world’s economic development challenge.” They report that in FY06, ODA for Africa “came to around \$3 billion,...(which is) approximately \$4 per African per year.” (HSS, p. 172)

These writers are critical of the United States’ level of development assistance, and its refusal to embrace the 0.7% target. Others take another view. Supporters of the U.S. policy point out that in absolute amounts, the U.S. contributes more assistance than any other country, and that giving by U.S. NGOs is at the high end of the spectrum. Moreover, they note that remittances sent home by immigrants and capital investment flows contribute significantly to the financial transfers from the U.S. to developing countries. And finally, they point to the defense commitments the U.S. has made to other nations – tying up U.S. funds and concomitantly freeing up the funds of other nations for assistance. (HSS, p. 86)

The other side has rejoinders, of course. But while we know this is a debate worth understanding, it is not one we can explore further now. The MDGs await!

II. MDG STRATEGY

2005 saw the publication of multiple goal-specific reports and an *Overview* outlining concrete plans of action for achieving the various goals. This body of work was written by a UN advisory commission – the UN Millennium Project (UNMP) – directed by Professor Jeffrey Sachs. In what follows we draw extensively on the *Overview*, which is cited as UNMP; references in the text are to the UNMP authors.

General Strategy: In their *Overview* of the best strategies for attaining the MDGs, the UNMP authors express a certain urgency, pointing out that on the one hand, the world community of nations has signed on to the Millennium Development Goals,

but on the other hand, developing nations, donor nations, and multilateral aid organizations have not yet lived up to their commitments. The timeline runs from 1990 to 2015, which means this train has left the station and now everyone who wants to reach the destination needs to scramble on board.

Now is the time, they insist, for developing countries to recommit to the goals, frame their development plans to include them, and begin implementation; and for developed countries to recommit to the goals and meet their pledges to support them – with development assistance as well as appropriate trade and debt policies.

As is probably already apparent, the overarching attainment strategy for the MDGs is assistance – financial and technical – flowing from developed to developing countries. Various organizations and entities, public and private, have worked out their idiosyncratic ways of defining and labeling “developed” and “developing” countries. In the MDG literature one finds both this simple bipolar designation and a more complex continuum:

Developed—Developing—Least Developed

Types of Developing Countries: In discussing the flow of assistance from developed to developing countries, the UNMP authors put forward a nuanced continuum of developing countries based on five criteria: income level, governance capabilities, conflict, special needs, and geopolitical issues. They contend that considering these factors makes assistance more appropriate and so more useful. Thus they suggest:

- Middle-income developing countries can finance the goals themselves, with development bank and private capital flows. Here official assistance (ODA) should target pockets of poverty, and assist these countries through debt cancellation. Some of these countries (e.g. China, Brazil, and Malaysia) are themselves donor countries. Others (e.g. India) should consider becoming donors.
- Well-governed countries which are deeply impoverished cannot generate enough funds to finance the goals, and need ODA for that purpose. These countries are ready and able to absorb assistance to scale up their infrastructure, human capital, and public administration investments – so it is important that donors make the needed assistance available in a timely way.
- Some poorly governed impoverished countries have political leaders who are unwilling to focus on the MDGs; this is true of places like Myanmar and North Korea. Here the case for development assistance really cannot be made. If any is offered to the government, it should have economic and human rights policy conditions. Humanitarian assistance is, of course, another matter.
- Some poorly governed impoverished countries suffer from poor public administration, despite political will at the highest levels to adopt a development strategy. These countries have high potential, and donors should think of their governance problems as remediable, and should offer assistance targeted at strengthening public administration.

- Countries in conflict, just out of conflict, or going into conflict present urgent and different challenges. Aid (especially in the form of carrots, not sticks) should target ending conflict and building basic services. If it is timely, it can ensure stability.
- Some countries have special geographic needs: small islands, mountain states, landlocked states, and states vulnerable to natural disasters need special investments in transportation and communications, as well as investments in regional cooperation and integration.
- Finally, the report takes notes of countries which may get a disproportionate amount of assistance for geopolitical reasons. Iraq and Afghanistan are given as examples. While these countries have urgent needs, so do others and it strikes the UNMP authors as unfair for these countries to get more attention to their needs than do others. (Excerpted and paraphrased from UNMP, Box 9 pp. 43-44)

The UNMP authors make the point that the planning and implementation strategies they propose do not require “new development processes or policy vehicles.” The assistance agencies should just proceed along as usual – except that they should reorient their programs to focus on the Millennium Development Goals. (UNMP, p. 24) This begins with a country-level planning process.

Country-level Strategy: A fundamental premise of the proposed strategy is that development cannot be imposed; it is a transformative process which needs to be ‘owned’ by the community undergoing it. Thus, the core planning strategy recommended for attaining the goals is a country-level process, “chaired by the national government” but inclusive of “all key stakeholders.”

It is suggested that “each country convene an MDG strategy group chaired by the national government – but also including bilateral and multilateral donors, UN specialized agencies, provincial and local authorities, and domestic civil society leaders, including women’s organizations, which are traditionally underrepresented.” (UNMP, p. 25) This group would then design a national strategy for achieving the MDGs – all of them, not just the more popular ones. A four-step approach to designing such a strategy is laid out:

1. Using available data, each country should map the key dimensions and causes of extreme poverty by region, locality, and gender;
2. Using these maps, each country should do a needs assessment, to identify the public investments required to reach the goals;
3. Using the needs assessment, each country should develop a 10-year action framework, including public investment, public management, and financing;
4. Finally, extrapolating from the 10-year framework, each country should elaborate a 3-5 year MDG based poverty reduction strategy. (UNMP, p. 24)

The **operating strategy** is the 3-5 year plan which “outline(s) the specific and practical steps required to reach the goals.” In apparent recognition of how daunting a task that seems, the UNMP authors hasten to add: “Fortunately, these steps are known.” And they continue with examples of things required by the goals which we know how to do:

- Prevent mothers from dying in pregnancy and childbirth
- Encourage girls to enroll in and complete a full cycle of basic education
- Triple African maize yields
- Provide rural clinics and hospitals with uninterrupted electricity
- Increase tree coverage in deforested areas (UNMP, p. 25)

Immediate Interventions: The **implementation strategy** the UNMP authors recommend begins with some measures they designate Quick Wins. These, they promise, can bring “breathtaking results” in no more than three years. A synopsis of the Quick Wins list is presented below:

Directed towards school children:

- Eliminate school and uniform fees
- Provide free school meals and take home rations using locally grown food
- Provide annual deworming treatment in affected areas

Directed towards improving health:

- Eliminate fees for basic health services
- Distribute insecticide-treated bed nets
- Expand access to treatment for AIDS, malaria, TB
- Expand access to sexual and reproductive health services

Directed towards women (and children):

- Launch campaign to reduce violence against women
- Empower women to play a central role in policy making
- Design nutrition programs, including supplements, for pregnant and lactating women, and children under five years
- Guarantee women and children inheritance rights

Directed towards rural and urban needs, infrastructure, and policy:

- Train village workers in health, farming, and community infrastructure
- Provide affordable fertilizer
- Fund slum-upgrading and earmark public land for low cost urban housing
- Insure that social service institutions (e.g. hospitals) have access to electricity, water, sanitation, and the internet
- Provide community level support to plant trees
- Establish an office of science advisor to consolidate the role of science in national policy making (UNMP, p. 26)

Long Term Interventions: Beyond the Quick Wins, longer term interventions are needed to achieve the MDGs. The UNMP authors establish seven main “investment-and-policy clusters” and indicate best practices for each. This helps country level planners organize their individualized plans, and simultaneously draw on what is known to work well in achieving various goals. The clusters are summarized in the *Overview*; here we can just list their titles:

1. Rural development: increasing food output and incomes
2. Urban development: promoting jobs, upgrading slums, and developing alternatives to new slum formation
3. Health systems: ensuring universal access to essential services
4. Education: ensuring universal primary, expanded secondary, and expanded higher education
5. Gender equality: investing to overcome pervasive gender bias
6. Environment: investing in improved resource management
7. Science, technology, and innovation: building national capacities (UNMP, pp. 27-31)

For all of these clusters, the UNMP authors suggest an implementation strategy they call scaling-up. “National scale-up,” they write, “is the process of bringing essential MDG-based investments and services to most or all of the population, on an equitable basis, by 2015.” (UNMP, p. 31).

Financing and Managing Implementation: In addition to practical steps for realizing the goals, the 3-5 year plans are expected to include strategies for financing and managing the implementation of the recommended measures. On the finance side, the UNMP authors call for “co-financing” MDG investments by donor countries and the developing countries themselves. The developing countries, they suggest, should use their own revenues for “priority investments.” (UNMP, p. 23) But they also note that if the MDGs are to be realized, foreign assistance “needs to be both increased and predictable over the period 2005-2015, covering both capital and recurrent costs, including civil service salaries.” (UNMP, p. 35)

The actual process for transmitting aid is straightforward: the donor country gives directly to the receiving country. The donor country must report to the UN the amount and purpose of the amount given, and spell out its connection with the MDGs. The UNMP authors set target levels for ODA, reaching 0.7% of GNP by 2015. If these targets are met, they estimate that the costs of meeting the MDGs will be met. By contrast, another expert, Jan Vandemoortele looks at all cost estimates warily: “The simple fact is that it cannot be known in advance...how a specific MDG target will be achieved in a particular country. Therefore, it cannot be known in advance with any sensible degree of precision how much it will cost to meet the MDGs in that country.” (Vandemoortele, p. 6)

As for management planning, scaled-up development (reaching the whole population) requires a high level of public management capability: to set concrete objectives and work plans, to deliver on those plans, and to evaluate progress and make mid-course corrections as needed. Public sector managers need to be trained, and then retained. Both technical and financial assistance from the developing countries can make a significant contribution here.

Good Governance: Good governance is not a MDG – presumably because it cannot be quantified and measured as the selected goals can. But it is present in this report as an essential factor: when it is lacking, development is impeded; when it is present, development is possible. Good governance can be said to emerge as a precondition for achieving the MDGs.

The UNMP authors note that it is often the case in the developing world that poor governance is due to scant national resources, both financial and technical. In such cases, it is important to focus assistance directly on improving governance. When its successful, and good governance evolves, the path to achieving all the MDGs is opened.

The Millennium Villages Project

This section of our report is a bridge between the discussion of MDG strategy and MDG progress. It describes a project, designed and directed by Jeffrey Sachs, to pour MDG-focused assistance into a dozen clusters of African villages, located in poor but well-governed countries, for five years.

The countries involved are Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania, and Uganda. The village clusters, comprised of 79 small villages, are located in distinctive agro-ecological zones: arid or humid, highland or lowland, grain producing or pastoral. These zones are representative of 93% of agricultural land and home to 90% of the agricultural population of Africa. Within these zones the village clusters were selected, in close cooperation with the national governments, because they are hunger “hotspots.” In each there is widespread chronic hunger, a high prevalence of disease, little access to medical care and very poor infrastructure.

Sachs and his partners want to show how villages such as these – hopeless villages – can be turned around by a two pronged MDG strategy:

- Community ownership of the project: by which members of each community identify its development needs, design action plans and appoint village committees for various aspects of the project (e.g. agriculture, education, health, water & sanitation, gender and disadvantaged groups).
- Outside financial and technical assistance: by which residents get improved seeds and fertilizer, safe water, bed nets and basic health care, and primary education.

The first village project began in August, 2004 in Sauri, Kenya, where villagers have gone from chronic hunger to a tripling of their crop production, which allows them to sell their produce in nearby markets for the first time in years. The experience has not been without its challenges: when it was time to elect

committees the dominant clan reportedly used scare tactics – witch-craft – so its members would capture all the leadership posts. Clannism then fostered nepotism and other forms of favoritism.

In 2006, the Millennium Villages Project (MVP) began working in Ruhiira, Uganda, designating it a research village. Now a cluster has formed, comprised of about 50,000 people in eight hill villages. This is an area with little rain, where crop yields were low – and declining. In the research village, many women walked three kilometers to get water from a filthy pond; malaria and TB raged, and only 85% of the school-age children were enrolled.

After the initial development plans were drawn, and the farmers received training in farming techniques, each household received an average of 10 kilos of K132 improved maize seeds and 25 kilos of DAP fertilizers. Despite poor rains, crop yields doubled.

In return for this assistance, the plans called for a contribution, known as a pay-back, to the community. Consultations had revealed that school children were starving – and until then there had been no meals provided at schools. So it was decided that farmers would give a pay-back of 10% of their harvest to be used for school meals, which has happened. A meal observed by an *Observer Weekly* reporter included first class posho (cornmeal) and fried bean sauce mixed with leafy green vegetables, all contributed as part of pay-back. Enrollment has increased from 515 to 638 pupils, perhaps as a result of the meals. The project has also given the school two water tanks and is helping to renovate a building.

At the same time, the Ruhiira Health Centre, which serves 5000 people, was being improved, with the local district government and the MVP both contributing. Its staff has grown from a nursing assistant with minimal training to include a medical doctor and a midwife. It is now stocked with essential drugs. A new out-patient block is being built, mostly with outside money, but also with local investments: \$1200 from the local council, and 28,000 bricks, water, stone and some sand from villagers. Due to MVP, 182 outreach workers have been deployed to promote community health, with good results. A major gift from Japan has made possible the distribution of 33,000 long-lasting, insecticide-treated bed nets. Malaria incidence dropped from 2,141 cases to 751 between August and October 2006. The Centre now sees as many as 60 patients a day, in contrast to the previous 2-10 per day.

Other interventions are underway to achieve piped water, provision of entrepreneurial training and creation of a bank. The organization of marketing groups for matooke (plantain) has resulted in better prices per bunch, and three nurseries are producing grafted fruit and other trees to improve the local diet, provide firewood and save the environment.

Of course, challenges remain. Land is in short supply and the rainfall is low. Some outsiders have voiced concern about the genetically modified seeds and chemical fertilizer, citing the Green Revolution which damaged the environment. Some question whether five years is enough for this sort of project – and wonder about whether gains will be self-sustaining. (See Bibliography for source materials.)

III. MDG PROGRESS

The United Nations issues a Millennium Development Goals Report every year, summarizing progress for the world as a whole and in various regions: Northern Africa, sub-Saharan Africa, Eastern Asia, Southern Asia, Southeastern Asia, Western Asia, Oceania, Latin America and the Caribbean, and in Eastern Europe the CIS (Countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States). It is important to note that data in these reports is often a year or two behind – thus the MDGs report for 2007 typically summarizes changes between 1990 and 2005. Drawing on this Report, in what follows we offer two kinds of statements for each goal: a summary statement reflecting trends, and one or more interesting, illustrative facts; we conclude the section for each goal with a general citation of the relevant pages in the 2007 Report.

Goal 1 – Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

Worldwide, poverty is decreasing: those living on less than \$1 per day have fallen from 1.23 billion in 1990 to 980 million in 2004. This puts the world and most regions on track for reaching the MDG poverty reduction target.

- Sub-Saharan Africa remains the most impoverished region, yet even here there is a ray of hope: poverty has fallen 6% since 2000. While this rate of change is not enough to meet the goal in 2015, it is positive change.

As regards hunger, the report focuses on children: some places, such as China, are surpassing the MDGs – but other places are below par and so depress the trend.

- “If current trends continue, the world will miss the 2015 (hunger) target by 30 million children, essentially robbing them of their full potential.” (pp. 4-9)

Goal 2 – Achieve universal primary education

Since 1991 the percentage of children in school has increased from 80% to 88%. This leaves 72 million children of primary school age who are not in school. Fifty-seven percent of these are girls.

- Making things worse, many children who are enrolled do not attend regularly, or drop-out. And making things worse still, many children start school late – in sub-Saharan Africa more secondary school age children are in primary school than are in secondary school. This means they are not starting basic learning at the developmentally optimal age, and that after the primary years they need to take on adult responsibilities incompatible with going on to secondary school. (pp. 10-11)

Goal 3 – Promote gender equality and empower women

Women’s participation in paid, non-agricultural employment has been increasing slowly, with good gains made in three regions with generally low female participation: Southern Asia, Western Asia, and Oceania.

- But in North Africa women’s rate of employment is low and stagnant: only 1 in 5 women are employed.

Women's political participation is also growing, albeit slowly; countries with gender quota systems for representation in parliament have done best. Rwanda is close to parity with 49% women, Sweden follows with 47% and Costa Rica has 39%.

- Gains have been recently made in three Arab states: Bahrain just elected its first woman to parliament, and in their first ever elections, Kuwait elected two women and the United Arab Emirates reached 23% female representation. (pp. 12-13)

Goal 4 – Reduce child mortality

Child survival rates are improving slowly, although unevenly, across regions and countries. Most progress took place among children living in the wealthiest households, in urban areas or whose mothers have some education. Despite progress, the mortality numbers remain depressingly high: estimates for 2005 indicate 10.1 million children died before their fifth birthday, mostly from preventable diseases.

- Measles is a leading preventable cause of death. Globally, measles deaths fell by over 60% between 2000 and 2005 because of vaccination programs – but the regions vary and some have had fluctuating rates, indicating that the programs are vulnerable and inconsistent. Other diseases and war also contribute to childhood mortality. (pp. 14-15)

Goal 5 – Improve maternal health

Some middle income countries have made rapid progress but maternal mortality levels remain unacceptably high across the developing world, especially in sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia. These regions have the highest percentages of maternal deaths, and correspondingly, the lowest percentages of skilled health attendants (doctors, nurses, midwives). Not surprisingly, a survey of 57 developing countries showed that urban women are more likely than rural women to have the assistance of skilled health workers.

- It is estimated that the rate of maternal death could be reduced by $\frac{1}{4}$ by preventing unwanted pregnancies. Between 1990 and 2005, contraceptive use worldwide slowly grew from 55% to 64%, with sub-Saharan Africa lagging at 21%. And while the causes of maternal deaths vary across regions, they include unsafe abortion everywhere. (pp. 16-17)

Goal 6 – Combat HIV/AIDs, malaria and other diseases

Between 1990 and 2002 the percentage of people living with HIV was continuing to grow, in both developed and developing regions, but between 2002 and 2006 the percentages leveled off and remained steady in both regions. That said, the number of women with HIV is still rising.

- In developing regions, only about 28% of those needing it were receiving antiretroviral treatment in 2006; consequently, the AIDs death rate in sub-Saharan Africa is still rising and the care of AIDs orphans is a pressing problem.
- Correct knowledge about the transmission and treatment of HIV/AIDs remains a problem – especially among African youth.

Malaria control efforts are showing success, but additional efforts are needed. Only a few countries come close to the 2005 target of 60% coverage in the use of insecticide- treated bed nets, and coverage is inequitable.

- Around \$3 billion is needed worldwide to fight malaria, but despite a ten-fold increase in international funding, only about \$6 million was available in 2004.

The number of TB cases per 1000 persons is leveling off globally – but due to population growth the absolute number of new cases is still rising. Reaching global targets for control will require accelerated progress, especially in sub-Saharan Africa and the Commonwealth of Independent States in Europe and Asia. (pp. 18-21)

Goal 7 – Ensure environmental sustainability

Deforestation, declining biodiversity, overexploited fish stocks, and greenhouse gas- induced climate change are global issues under the umbrella of environmental sustainability. Developed and developing regions contribute to and suffer from these problems – but when we consider environmental sustainability, there is an issue which stands out as uniquely relevant to developing regions. This is safe drinking water and basic sanitation. To increase the proportion of the population of the developing regions with access to good water and sanitation to target levels will require extraordinary efforts.

- In 2005 one of three urban dwellers was living in slum conditions, defined as lacking at least one of the basics of decent housing: adequate sanitation, improved water supply, durable housing and adequate living space.
- The rapid expansion of urban areas will make it challenging to meet the MDG target of improving the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020. (pp. 22-27)

Goal 8 – Develop a global partnership for development

The 2002 *Monterrey Consensus* laid out a blueprint for development assistance which would take several forms, including aid, debt relief, and favorable trade policies. Initially debt relief rose dramatically, but is now nearing completion, so the ODA totals are smaller. In 2006 ODA recorded its first decline (1.8%) since 1997, and the trend was expected to continue in 2007 – despite renewed commitments by donors, including pledges to double aid to Africa by 2010.

- If the donors are to meet their pledges, then the current rate of increase to core development programs must triple over the next four years.

As pertains to trade policy, there have been some piecemeal advances, but no new coherent strategy.

- Advances include: eliminating duties and quotas on most goods from least developed countries, restructuring of trade flows on textiles and clothing, and more duty free access to the Chinese market. Each of these measures has been of benefit to some developing countries but detrimental to others.

Two final pieces of the economic development partnership are information technology and jobs.

- Technology is on the rise in the developing world, with mobile phones leading the way. Internet use is also growing, but is still at small to negligible levels.
- There are 195 million jobless people in the world, half of whom are youth. A problem everywhere, it is more emphatically a problem in the developing countries where 89% of the world's youth reside. (pp. 28-33)

IV. MDG CONCERNS AND CRITIQUES

In this section we will consider a set of concerns related to the last section, on MDG progress, and then will consider a critique which cuts to the quick of the MDG program and proposes an alternative.

Vandemoortele's Concerns

Measuring progress is a prominent part of the MDG program – and a controversial one. To explore this we turn now to a critic with insider knowledge of the program: Jan Vandemoortele, who currently serves as UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative in Pakistan.

As we have seen, MDG progress reports are based on whether or not the world, a region, or a country is experiencing a rate of positive change which puts it on track for achieving the numerical targets associated with the goals. Vandermootele has no quarrel with measuring world progress in this way, but he does object to measuring the progress of individual regions and countries in this way. He argues that because the numerical targets were set by extrapolating from global data, they are inappropriate for assessing the progress of individual regions or countries.

Furthermore, Vandemoortele does not think there is any other single “yardstick” for measuring progress. He writes that it goes against “the spirit of the Millennium Declaration...to impose a one-size-fits-all yardstick for judging national performances, regardless of historical backgrounds, natural endowments and particular challenges.” (p. 3) What he thinks each country should measure is the rate of acceleration in its own historical rate of positive change.

Vandemoortele believes that all countries should set numerical targets which reflect what is achievable in their circumstances; in some cases these will be more ambitious than the global targets, and in some less. To some extent this has already happened; the list of those setting targets above the global level includes Thailand, Viet Nam and Chile, while the list of those setting targets below the global level includes Bangladesh, Cambodia, and Mozambique. It is prudent, Vandemoortele argues, to do this: “A judicious balance between ambition and realism is essential for national ownership. Targets that are over-ambitious will not trigger action; targets that lack any sense of urgency will not motivate people or mobilize extra resources.” (p. 7)

This sounds reasonable – and yet, specially tailored targets will not change the fact that some countries and regions are trailing behind the rest of the world, and that the people in those places are grievously disadvantaged. This begs the question: Will more aid and a laser-like focus on the MDGs turn this around? The proponents of the MDGs clearly think so; but we turn now to Paul Collier who disagrees.

Collier's Critique

Paul Collier offers an alternative to the MDG program in a new book: *The Bottom Billion; Why the Poorest Countries are Failing and What Can Be Done About It*. Collier was director of research at the World Bank for many years, and now continues his research as Director of the Center for the Study of African Economies at Oxford University.

Collier notes that there are about five billion people in the developing world, 80 percent of whom live in countries which are developing and are on track for achieving the MDGs. The other 20 percent – the bottom billion – live in the countries which are not on track for achieving the MDGs. About 70 percent live in Africa, the rest in countries scattered across the globe. The countries at the bottom are small, their economies are stagnant, and while they “coexist with the twenty-first century, . . . their reality is the fourteenth century: civil war, plague, ignorance.” (p. 3)

Collier argues that for decades the development challenge has been bridging the gulf between the developed one billion and the developing five billion. This is the problem the Millennium Development Goals are designed to address: bridging the gulf between the developed and developing countries in critical areas such as per capita income, health outcomes, and education. And the progress reports show they are doing so – except for the bottom billion.

This, Collier continues, changes the development challenge. Now we have five billion people living in countries where the MDGs have been achieved or are on track to be achieved, and one billion living in countries which are “falling behind, and often falling apart.” (p. 3)

Development, Collier insists, should focus on the bottom billion – but not with an MDG program. What distinguishes the developing countries which are doing well from those which are not is, Collier claims, their rates of economic growth. The middle income developing countries have experienced unprecedented growth since the 1970s, while the bottom billion countries have experienced stalled or declining growth. The divergence between them is “massive and accelerating,” and closing it should be our development priority, for humanitarian and security reasons alike. (p. 10)

Collier does not disdain the MDGs, but he does not think a MDGs program – even with more money – is what will meet the current development challenge. Economic growth is the engine, he argues, which will change the trajectory for the bottom billion countries, and several instruments of change will be necessary to accomplish that.

In the first part of his book, Collier presents empirical evidence about four traps which cause the bottom billion countries to be stuck, having to do with endemic conflict, bad governance, being landlocked, and having nothing but natural resources to trade – and not enough of them to become prosperous. He also examines why globalization no longer offers newcomers the opportunity for economic growth it so recently did.

- When the current wave of globalization began, firms off-shored to countries with little experience in the global economy – but with lots of cheap labor. It was risky to be a pioneer in a new place, but now those places offer more — appropriate physical, technological, and legal infrastructure, as well as lots of cheap labor. There is no reason to go to a small, fragile, inexperienced country with nothing but labor to offer. So it is harder now for developing countries to join the global economy – the bottom billion countries, Collier concludes, have missed that boat.

In the second part of the book Collier presents a discussion of four development instruments, in distinction to the MDGs program which focuses mostly on aid (and secondarily on trade).

- Aid is one of these instruments. It has made a significant contribution in the past: about 1% per year in added economic growth, “which has made the difference between stagnation and severe cumulative decline.” (p. 100) But aid, like everything else, has a point at which additional increments bring diminishing returns. There is evidence that current levels are at that point, so Collier is dubious that higher aid – e.g. the G8 plan to double aid to Africa – is prudent.
- Military intervention in failing states in order to expel aggressors, restore order, maintain post-conflict peace, or prevent coups is the second development instrument Collier proposes – and he acknowledges that nowadays it is difficult to drum up support for it. He begins by reminding us of Somalia, where media coverage of eighteen U.S. fatalities was so intense it doomed an intervention, with the result that Somalia remains a failed state in which hundreds of thousands have died. A spin-off occurred the next year, when the unwillingness to intervene in Rwanda led to hundreds of thousands of deaths there. Intervention can, he argues, have positive results.
- Changes in laws and charters is the third development instrument Collier presents. This includes changes in our own laws in ways that would help the bottom billion. One example is in the area of banking laws, which could be strengthened to make it easier to freeze and repatriate funds corrupt leaders have stolen from their public coffers and deposited in Western banks. Secondly, we can establish international charters about many things, e.g. natural resource extraction, media independence, and private investment. “An international charter,” Collier writes, “gives people something very concrete to demand: either the government adopts it or it must explain why it won’t.” (p. 143) In this way civil society will be reinforced in the bottom billion societies.
- The fourth and final development instrument Collier presents is trade policy. The idea is to help the bottom billion countries take part in the global economy. Central to this is implementing trade policies which help these countries develop an array of products for export. One recommendation is that the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development design temporary policies which would protect the bottom billion countries from the flourishing developing countries of Asia. Such a policy would ensure

that for a time “goods and services exported from the bottom billion to the rich world markets would pay lower tariffs than the same goods coming from Asia.” (p. 167) While imposing new tariffs on Asia is not conceivable, removing tariffs against the bottom billion but leaving them in place for Asia is. Calling this “a pump-priming strategy,” Collier defends it as necessary now, when it is no longer easy for developing countries to become actors in the global economy.

In his concluding chapter, “An Agenda for Action,” Collier comments directly on the MDGs. They were, he notes, “a big advance” in that they “encouraged people to shift their agenda from inputs to outcomes: halving poverty, getting children in school, and so forth.” (p. 189) Nonetheless, they have two drawbacks: (1) they focus on progress in the successful developing countries, while the focus needs to be on the bottom billion who are falling behind; and (2) the MDGs program emphasizes one development instrument – aid – to the relative neglect of all others. Collier concludes: “In short, we need to narrow the target and broaden the instruments. That should be the agenda for the G8.” (p. 192)

In the context of a longer report on U.S. foreign assistance, Hindery, Sachs, and Smith offer what sounds like a rejoinder: “It is occasionally said that objectives such as the MDGs...are distinct from objectives to promote wealth creation and economic growth. We emphasize here that this is not the case. Achieving the MDGs and achieving long-term economic growth require the same policy focus, including increased investments in the core infrastructure (roads, power, and connectivity), health and skills of the labor force, and improvements in the business environment (transparency, macroeconomic stability, ease of doing business, and a vibrant financial sector). The fight against extreme poverty and the challenge of long-term economic growth and wealth creation go hand in hand.” (HSS, p. 170)

Conclusion

Development is a complicated and enormous process of societal transformation, which the world community has agreed to tackle through the Millennium Development Goals program. We have reviewed the program’s mission, its strategies, and its progress; and we have briefly reviewed the United States’ policy and financial commitment towards it. Finally, we have reviewed concerns and critiques – including an alternative approach to development. It is our hope that this discussion will help readers reflect intelligently about the challenge of development, the MDGs program, and United States policy.

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HHS = Leo Hindery Jr., HELP Commission Vice Chair, and Commissioners Jeffrey D. Sachs and Gayle E. Smith. “Revamping U.S. Foreign Assistance,” pp. 163-195 in *Beyond Assistance: The HELP Commission Report on Foreign Assistance Reform*. 2007. Found online at:

<http://www.helpcommission.gov>

Vandemoortele, Jan. “Making Sense of the MDGs,” unpublished ms., forthcoming in *Development*, the journal of the Society for International Development.

APRIL UNIT AGENDA

Discussion Questions

1. What have you read or heard about in the news that gives you a sense these goals are achievable?
2. Do you think the action strategies for country-level planning and foreign assistance are sound? Do you think they are enough, or do Collier's additional strategies (aid + military intervention + laws and charters + trade policies) strike you as also necessary?
3. Using the medical concept of triage, where would you concentrate scarce assistance: On countries on track for the goals? On the bottom billion countries? On specific goals? On economic growth?
4. Do you think good governance is a necessary precondition for foreign aid? Should a country's human rights policies be a criterion for giving assistance?
5. What do you think about the United States' policy on the MDGs and financial commitment to them, as briefly described in the Background section of the report?
6. Is there any message about the MDGs program (mission, strategy, progress) or about the U.S. position vis-à-vis the MDGs, that your Unit would like to convey to the national League?

Calling All Readers!

We are developing a Bibliography of Readable Books on each of the eight Millennium Development Goals. Vicky Downs' book reviews in this Voter will give you an idea of what we have in mind. Fiction and non-fiction suggestions are welcome, as are all genres (poetry, anyone?) So, Readers! Please bring titles and a couple of sentences describing each one to your Unit discussion or send them to ellenzberg@msn.com – and thanks in advance for participating!

Unit Meetings

Unit leader	email	Phone	Time	Host	Host Phone
Monday, April 7, 2008					
Southend					
Sam Scharff	webcats@speakeasy.net	(206) 329-4848	7:30 p.m.	Lila Bulen 3716 Cascade Ave S	(206) 329-4848
Issaquah Evening					
Ann Thornton	alpheaan@aol.com	(206) 329-4848	6:30 p.m.	Starbuck's at Meadow Center 1460 Gilman Blvd #K	
Tuesday, April 8, 2008					
Bellevue					
Bonnie Rimawi	BNRimawi@aol.com	(206) 329-4848	10:00 a.m.	Bellevue Library	
JoAnne Way	waytandj@comcast.net	(206) 329-4848		Room 6	
North End Aft.					
CoraLea Doty	clnjdoty@earthlink.net	(206) 329-4848	12:30 p.m.	Cora Lea Doty 2133 N 115th St	(206) 329-4848
West Seattle Day					
Lucy Gaskill-Gaddis	terrylucy2u@comcast.net	(206) 329-4848	12:30 p.m.	Anne Bowden The Kenney 7125 Fauntleroy SW	(206) 329-4848
West Seattle Eve					
JoAnne McGaw	N/A	(206) 329-4848	7:00 p.m.	Eleanor Laxdall 3525 SW Seola Lane	(206) 329-4848
Wednesday, April 9, 2008					
View Ridge					
Marcia Brown	marciajobebrown@hotmail.com	(206) 329-4848	12:45 p.m.	Gail Winberg	(206) 329-4848
Elaine Birn	mbirn@verizon.net	(206) 329-4848		6004 NE 60th	
Magnolia/Queen Anne/Ballard Eve					
Elsie Simon	elsiesimon@comcast.net	(206) 329-4848	7:30 p.m.	Nancy Debaste 800 – 4th Ave N #101	(206) 329-4848
Thursday, April 10, 2008					
Mercer Island					
Martha Jordan	marty4lww@yahoo.com	(206) 329-4848	9:15 a.m.	Lissa Wells 7651 SE 40th	(206) 329-4848
Issaquah					
Margaret Austin	Margaret.Austin@comcast.net	(206) 329-4848	10:00 a.m.	Issaquah City Hall & Police	
Connie Reed	reedhtop@earthlink.net	(206) 329-4848		130 E. Sunset Way Coho Room (upstairs)	
Shoreline					
Juliet Beard	juliet@windermere.com	(206) 329-4848	4:30 p.m.	Richmond Beach Congregational Church NW 195th St and 15th Ave NW	
North Central					
Jan Orlando	orlanre@aol.com	(206) 329-4848	7:30 p.m.	Gail Shurgot	(206) 329-4848
Gail Shurgot	gailshurgot@earthlink.net	(206) 329-4848		6536 – 31st Ave NE	
Monday, April 14, 2008					
First Hill					
Janet Perry	jhperry@foxiinternet.com	(206) 329-4848	10:00 a.m.	Mary Margaret Pruitt Horizon House, 900 University Sky Lounge	(206) 329-4848
Capitol Hill/Montlake					
Jan O'Connor	oconnor.js@gmail.com	(206) 329-4848	7:15 p.m.	Zita Cook	(206) 329-4848
Vicky Downs	DownsVdowns@aol.com	(206) 329-4848		2801 – 1st Ave #911	
Tuesday, April 15, 2008					
Pioneer Square					
Pat Cleary	patiquah@msn.com	(206) 329-4848	5:30 p.m.	Zeitgeist Coffee 174 So. Jackson St	
Saturday, April 19, 2008					
Ballard/Queen Anne/Magnolia Day					
Judy Ostrow	2jostrow@comcast.net	(206) 329-4848	9:15 a.m.	Joan Peterson	(206) 329-4848
Alice Peterson	peterson-alice-jack@msn.com	(206) 329-4848		6537 Dibble Ave NW	

Board & Committee Contacts

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2007–2009	2nd V.P.... Program	Harriett Morton	action@seattlelwv.org
2007–2009	4th V.P.... Membership	Kitty Mahon	membership@seattlelwv.org
2007–2009	Secretary	Karen Adair	adairk@seanet.com
2007–2008	Treasurer	Laraine Volkman	treasurer@seattlelwv.org

Term	Directors		
2007–2008	*Voter Service	Victoria Bennett	voterservice@seattlelwv.org
2007–2009	Director	Patti Catalano	pattimusic@comcast.net
2007–2009	Voter Editor	Beatrice Crane	votereditor@seattlelwv.org
2007–2008	Social Justice	Pat Cleary	patiquah@msn.com
2007–2009	Eastside Liaison	Doreen Cato	dcato@firstplaceschool.org
2006–2008	Unit Coordinator	Mickey Horwitz	stellarinteriors@hotmail.com
2007–2009	Civics Education	Jaclyn Wall	speakingstrategies@hotmail.com
2007–2009	Seattle Liaison	Anita Warmflash	ansky2@comcast.net

Term	Education Fund Board		
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2007–2008	Vice President	Myra Lupton	mlupton@mailstation.com
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2007–2008	Secretary	Boots Winterstein	paulandbootswinterstein@juno.com
2007–2008	Board member	Dorothy Y. Sale	saledy@comcast.net

Voter Service

CIS Coordinator	Cynthia Howe	howe.john@comcast.net
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Study & Action Committees

Civics Education	Jaclyn Wall	speakingstrategies@hotmail.com
Economics & Taxation	Nora Leech	nleech2002@yahoo.com
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Immigration Study Co-chair	Barbara Reid	barbereid@yahoo.com
International Relations	Ellen Berg	ellenzberg@msn.com
Land Use	Karen Kane	kanek@iopener.net
Natural Resources	John Roberts	jrahimsa@seattle-ts.org
Transportation	Linnea Hirst	LWVquilter@comcast.net

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email info@seattlelwv.org

April Forum: Local Contributions to Our Global Village

Thursday, April 3, 2008

7:30 p.m. Briefing for discussion leaders at 6:30 p.m.

Speakers:

Jane Hutchings, Program Leader, Reproductive Health
at PATH, an international nonprofit organization which
is "A Catalyst for Global Health."

Dick Moxon, Director of Investment Analysis at Global
Partnerships, a nonprofit microfinance organization
which is "In Business to Eliminate Poverty."

Location:

Seattle First Baptist Church
1111 Harvard Avenue
Seattle, WA 98122
(Harvard & Seneca)

All forums are free and open to the public.

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