

THE 2ND CONFERENCE ON MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

10 -12 DECEMBER 2010

CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA

CONFERENCE RECOMMENDATIONS

Ilitha Labantu together with Statistics South Africa organised a second Millennium Development Goals Summit which was held in December 2010 in Cape Town. The aim of the Summit was to develop and implement a national plan of action that will address issues emerging from the international commitments taken from the UN New York Summit around violence against women, gender equality, poverty and peace building into concrete actions and to promote the active participation of girls and women in poverty eradication.

The 2nd summit was also a platform for all provinces to present their issues and challenges in regards to achieving the MDGs. After the first summit, provincial workshops were planned and organised with financial, technical and logistical support provided by Statistics South Africa to enable the provinces to conduct discussions on MDGs with topics related to women, Peace and Security Agenda, etc. The all round aim for the Summit was to reconnect and develop a way forward for the MDG agenda, to enable South Africa to achieve the MDG in the specified time frame, being 2015.

During the Summit participants agreed that localizing the MDGs was important in particular for townships and in rural areas, as we need to push the MDG agenda forward. Although as a nation South Africans have achieved most of the MDGs, the levels of achievement have been uneven and several challenges remain if equity is to be achieved more meaningfully. It was also agreed that the voice of ordinary people particularly women of South Africa is crucial and need to be heard in order to implement effective and efficient programs and strategies that will provide the necessary development.

The Summit agreed on strong partnership between government and civil society including international instruments geared to achieving MDGs was of paramount. Government was encouraged to avail funding, while civil society will use its expertise and knowledge, and together they will develop and implement effective programs and strategies that will enable South Africa to achieve the MDGs within the specific timeframe.

Conference came out of feedback / discussion / question time from plenary sessions, concurrent sessions and workshops during the course of the conference such as:

MDGs

- The summit agreed anonymously that Ilitha Labantu should lead Civil Society in implementing the MDGs in South Africa.
- Ilitha Labantu to organise nine provincial to local MDGs training workshops
- Ilitha Labantu together with Statssa organised annual MDGs national summit to assess progress until 2014.
- Statssa should continue to develop statistical systems and apply concern to quality over quantity
- The summit felt that Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) gender responsive should demonstrate how gender equality and women's empowerment perspective will explicitly be reflected in reporting on each of the eight MDG goals.
- Women felt that the advantage with this is that, will provide a template of how gender disaggregated data and gender analysis of trends may be reported against each MDG goal and show gender differentials in progress and the persisting gender inequality gaps. With this kind of analysis, the state and all the planning ministries and departments will sharpen the state responses and citizen's advocacy in terms of proactive policies, development programming and resources allocation for purposes of realizing the MDGs by 2015. The argument was that formulating gender responsive development strategies is not only inclusive, but also enhances programmes that contribute to achieving all the MDGs.
- Each organization must identify an MDG that is in line with its mandate and programs and implement and report to Ilitha Labantu on quarterly basis for the compilation of a national civil society contribution on MDGs. Ilitha Labantu should then compile an annual report to government on behalf of the civil society

On Partnerships and Capacity Building:

- It was agreed that we should set up an NGO tribunal where those NGOs and CBOs that feel aggrieved by other organizations can get recourse
- A national dialogue and summit with International development organizations and donor agencies need to be organized.

- We need to revive or build the NPO sector umbrella bodies in order for them to serve the needs and aspiration of NGOs and CBOs in our country.
- The government must seek to engage representatives from civil society organizations in active and open dialogue and NGOs should draw up appropriate criteria for establishing citizens empowerment organizations.
- The government, in consultation with civil society organizations, should establish measures to encourage greater financial self-reliance and greater mobilization of local resources. This will include tax breaks for individual or corporate donations to civil society organizations and help with the development of locally endowed foundations, local fund-raising and businesses run by civil society organizations.
- The government, in consultation with civil society organizations and as part of its recognition of citizens development organizations, should establish stricter criteria and demand greater transparency for the financial accountability of civil society organizations, in return for government funding or receiving tax breaks.

It should be stressed that, even apart from their responsibilities under the MDGs, governments are already obligated to promote partnerships with civil society and fight women's human rights and eliminate the forms of gender inequality that have been highlighted by the summit. For this reason as well, the broader economic and political positions they advance in international **fora** should always facilitate the realization of civil society rather than serving as an obstacle.

On Census:

- Government to partner with Civil Society structures in assisting in implementation of a census. Census should promote cooperation between civil society organizations and the public in fostering and promoting public understanding of the 2011 census;
- It was agreed that civil society and non government organizations should encourage mass participation and support for the census.

It was agreed that the proposed Census 2011 should also contribute by providing information crucial to developing programs and strategies that will be tailor made to provinces and the society, instead of implementing the continuous recurring duplications of programs and strategies geared to achieving MDGs that have and still fail tremendously. Statistics South Africa is sure that with their previous experiences, they have gathered skills that will enable them to succeed in the Census 2011.

It was agreed that In the census process, civil society should play a significant role. Through various information and awareness campaigns, civil society should communicates messages about the importance of census participation, NGOs should be engaged in the communities and localities to ensure popular participation and support for the census process.

The summit concluded by reminding government that civil society is one of the three important sectors of society, along with government and business. As one of the most important elements of the democratization process in South Africa, its strengths and weaknesses determine both the speed and depth of the transition and it will, in time, help to sustain the democratic system itself.