



## FAO helping countries achieve the Millennium Development Goals

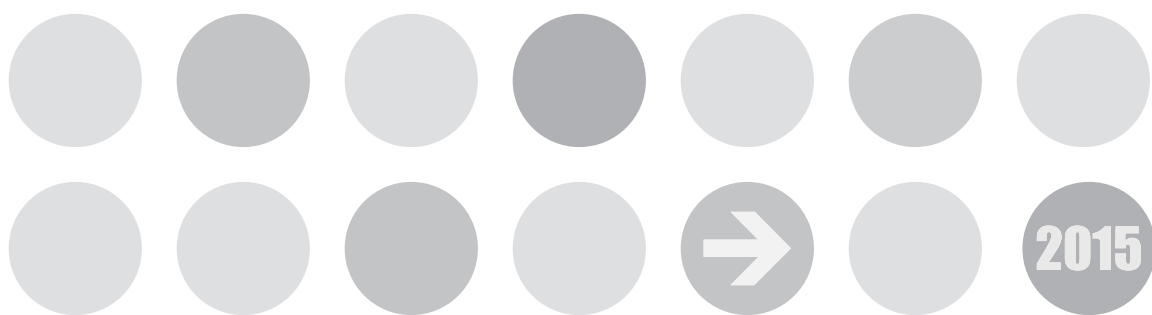
IN SEPTEMBER 2005, world leaders will meet in the United Nations General Assembly to review progress in the five years since the Millennium Summit: progress that, in the view of many, has been disappointingly slow. What has been achieved, however, is an understanding of what is needed for countries to meet the goals that emerged from the Summit, and the reforms that the UN and its agencies need to undertake to help them do so.

The Millennium Declaration adopted at the Summit drew upon the goals that were agreed at the international summits and conferences of the 1990s, including the 1996 World Food Summit goal of reducing by half the number of undernourished people by the year 2015. In the months following the Summit, a number of these goals were brought together and incorporated into a set of eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), to provide an agenda for action and encourage a sense of urgency.

The MDG initiative has rapidly become a focus for support to developing countries by the UN system. As such, it is inextricably linked to the ongoing process of UN system reform. For FAO, as a repository of knowledge in the fields of food and nutrition, agriculture, fisheries and forestry, the priority is to make sure that this wealth of knowledge is made available to member countries to help them reach the Goals.

UN organizations such as FAO have to recognize the changes taking place in the wider development cooperation environment and specifically in aid policies. Aid donors are looking to the UN system to change its methods of working in order to provide more coherent and effective support to developing countries. FAO is committed to making the changes that may be necessary and to do so has embarked on a process of critically re-examining the way it is organized and structured, its methods of working and its role within the UN system.

An internal review has found that while the Organization has not been sufficiently explicit in acknowledging the importance of the MDGs, its work is nonetheless well aligned to those Goals to which its mandate relates, both directly and indirectly. The review also concluded, however, that a more targeted approach and an adaptation of the ways in which FAO operates are certainly needed if the Organization is to ensure the continued quality and relevance of the global public goods it produces, while also helping countries accelerate action towards the Goals.



## A strategic approach

FAO is therefore proposing a four-pronged approach to the challenge of better assisting countries to achieve the MDGs. The key elements of this approach, which will be discussed by member countries in the months ahead, are:

- advocacy and support to the MDG initiative;
- better targeting of FAO's programmes;
- pursuit of strategic alliances and partnerships;
- strategic support to country-level cooperation.

### Advocacy - FAO will advocate for recognition of the critical role of the rural and agricultural sectors in meeting the Goals

Building on the outcome of the World Food Summit and subsequent initiatives to persuade decision-makers of the critical importance of the agriculture, fisheries and forestry sectors, FAO will press for recognition of their key contribution to achieving all the MDGs. The Organization will strengthen its participation in the fora in which the MDG framework is considered and further refined, and play an active part in international and national monitoring of progress towards the Goals. FAO will also seek to involve civil society and the private sector, both internationally and at country level, and will try to secure greater recognition of the unique role that the specialized agencies, as knowledge organizations, can and must play in addressing the MDGs within a more effective and coherent UN system.

### Programme targeting - FAO will focus on policy and capacity-building support to countries that incorporate the MDGs in their national strategies

FAO stands ready to help member countries to incorporate national MDG targets into their development strategies and establish appropriate indicators to measure progress. The Organization will also offer help to reinforce the capacity of national institutions to formulate both convincing rural development strategies and programmes, and related proposals for the allocation of resources. FAO is ready to reinforce its support, through strategy and policy advice, to regional and subregional organizations, and will take immediate steps to strengthen its own capacity to address development issues in its areas of competence in a fully interdisciplinary fashion. Internally, FAO will ensure that the criteria used for establishing priorities among Regular Programme activities and for approving activities funded from extra-budgetary sources take the relevant MDGs into account, and that monitoring and evaluation procedures include verification of effective contribution to the Goals.

### Strategic alliances and partnerships - all stakeholders must work in partnership so as to apply the sum of their capacities to the achievement of the MDGs

The Organization will seek to reinforce existing partnerships and create new ones, based on common objectives and concrete programmes of action. It will actively support the drive for greater harmonization and alignment of UN assistance in order to reduce burdens on national governments. FAO will also seek closer relationships within countries with civil society and other non-governmental organizations concerned with agriculture, rural development, food security and sustainable management of natural resources. And in formulating its Regular Programme, the Organization will take account of measures favouring allocation of resources to partnership undertakings and will seek strategic alliances with donors to complement this.

### Strategic support to country-level cooperation - within the framework of the UN Resident Coordinator system, FAO will align its country-level work with national strategies

The Organization will issue a policy statement emphasizing its commitment to align with and support country-owned instruments and to harmonize its work with that of UN partners, under the leadership of the Resident Coordinator. The Organization will also develop flexible medium-term priority frameworks for cooperation, agreed with individual governments, to identify priorities for support in the context of national development strategies. At the same time FAO will refine its criteria for intervention, taking into account the needs of countries at different levels of development and its own comparative advantage. FAO will seek improved ways of providing support, through the UN Resident Coordinator system, to countries where there is no FAO Representation. Finally, FAO will take concrete action to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of its decentralized structure in line with the decisions of its Governing Bodies.

