



*Permanent Mission of the Republic of Zimbabwe  
to the United Nations*

STATEMENT

BY

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PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE

TO THE

10<sup>th</sup> INFORMAL MEETING OF THE PLENARY OF THE GENERAL

ASSEMBLY TO THE UNITED NATIONS

IN NEW YORK: 10 FEBRUARY 2005

Mr. President,

Let me join other delegations in welcoming the Millennium Project Report which attempts to provide a practical plan to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. In doing so, we would like, from the outset to align ourselves with statements made by Kenya on behalf of the Africa Group, Jamaica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and Malaysia on behalf the of Non-Aligned Movement. It is evident that Prof. Sachs and his team put a lot of effort to come up with all the recommendations that they did, and for that we are grateful.

Mr. President,

Zimbabwe, like many other countries, has customised the MDGs to its own specific realities and has begun mainstreaming implementation in the operations of both Government agencies and civil society. It is our intention, as we believe it is for every developing country, to do everything possible to meet the goal of reducing poverty by half by the year 2015.

Our preliminary comments on the Millennium Project Report, which we are still studying, have led us to conclude that more dialogue is needed among the various stakeholders in the international community in order to arrive at a proper understanding of the predicament of developing countries in their attempts to meet the MDGs.

My delegation strongly feels that the absence of the MDG-based aid process within programmes driven by Multilateral Financial Institutions, which the Millennium Project Report identifies, needs to be examined much more closely. On the ground, the processes of PRSPs and Social Sector Expenditure Review appear to proceed parallel to the MDG process. The link and synergies between these processes have not been well articulated in the Report. My delegation would like to note that despite this weakness, the Millennium Project Report proceeds to use the PRSPs, HIPC and World Bank absorptive capacity, as qualifying indicators for potential candidates for MDG fast-tracking. This apparent oversight is cause for concern.

Mr. President,

While we welcome the focus of the Millennium Project Report on issues of governance in the process of development, we are greatly disappointed that the Report failed to rise above issues of selectivity and politicisation and singles out four countries as undeserving of support to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, allegedly because they lack the political will to implement these goals.

In the case of Zimbabwe, it is worth noting that those who are opposed to the country's land reform programme aimed at reducing poverty by correcting historical imbalances in the distribution of resources tend to hide behind unsubstantiated claims of bad governance and lack of political will. We are dismayed that a report that seeks to advance the achievement of the MDGs makes recommendations that undermine that same objective. Such

politically-inspired recommendations should not see the light of day, and have no place in a discussion aimed at promoting the realisation of internationally agreed development goals.

We believe that it would have been more helpful if the Report had come up with an elaborate plan to support processes such as Zimbabwe's land reform to facilitate the achievement of MDGs. Instead of frustrating such programmes, donors should accept the sovereign right of countries to utilize their natural resources in a way that is beneficial to the majority of their people and provide the necessary support.

Mr. President,

My delegation would also like to join others in reinforcing the idea that the key issue that needs to be addressed in our countries is to ensure the sustainability of the programmes that we implement. To achieve this, it is necessary to emphasize programmes that promote economic growth and development in a comprehensive manner. To enhance the capacity of developing countries to meet the development challenges, emphasis should not be placed only on ODA and humanitarian aid but also on issues of FDIs, technology transfer, capacity building, high transport costs, and market access. As trade plays a critical role in this regard, it is imperative that trade distorting subsidies and other barriers to exports from developing countries be removed. It is also our view that debt cancellation should not be limited to HIPC countries, but must be extended to all countries that carry the burden of an unsustainable debt.

Mr. President,

The prevalence of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, particularly in Africa, warrants urgent attention from the international community. Any plan aimed at reviving or accelerating Africa's economic fortunes should start with an elaboration of urgent measures to address this problem. The plan should include, among others, measures to ensure affordability of anti-retroviral drugs and a co-ordinated research to find a vaccine. At the same time, the international community should refrain from politicising this issue, as the pandemic knows no boundaries. We feel that the Millennium Project Report does not deal sufficiently with this subject.

Mr. President,

Let me conclude by observing that while the report dwelt at length on issues of governance at the national level, it paid little attention to the need for reform of global governance within the United Nations as well as the Bretton Woods Institutions. We believe that every effort should be made to make these institutions more transparent, and to enhance effective representation and participation of developing countries in the decision-making processes. This may be one of the ways of facilitating the attainment of the MDG target of reducing poverty by half by the year 2015.

I thank you.