

**Ræða forsætisráðherra á leiðtogafundi um þúsaldarmarkmið Sp
20.-22. september, New York**

Secretary General, honoured colleagues

- Ten years ago a milestone was reached in international cooperation. The endorsement of the Millennium Development Goals. This provided common universal objectives for the global fight against poverty.
- The Goals have helped us draw the world's attention to our mutual responsibility: The responsibility of all nations to help the most poor and deprived citizens of the world.
- We need to listen to the voices of women and children worldwide. We need to hear the poor and marginalized. It is our responsibility to act in all of their interest as leaders accountable to our fellow citizens.
- During the last decade the global community has faced serious challenges, such as famine, disease, natural disasters and wars. At present, we are slowly recovering from the most serious international economic crisis in decades.
- We have learned a hard lesson from the financial turmoil, and it has most affected those most vulnerable. We must not lose sight of fundamental values, such as fair and just society. Short term policies and benefits must not replace sound economic management and long term stability.
- But challenges that developed countries face must not divert our attention from the burning issues at hand. Our attention should be focused on the extreme needs in the poorest regions of the world.
- No child should be homeless, no child should be deprived of nourishment or water. No child should be denied schooling or suffer from a disease that is preventable. and an alarmingly high maternal and child mortality. This is the crisis that must remain at the top of our collective agenda.
- Many developing countries have made great strides to improve the lives of their people. Their hard work and success stories are a reminder that progress can be achieved.
- Gender equality and empowerment of women is key to the success of the Millennium Development Goals. Not only as a specific target, but for the goals in general.
- Women bear a heavier burden of the world's poverty than men, because of the discrimination they face in education, health care, employment and control of assets.
- Women are also particularly defenseless against violence and exploitation in conflict situations. UN WOMEN is a historic step. We need to make it a strong and efficient agent for the needs of women and girls worldwide.
- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that "*all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights*". The respect for human rights is essential to a more peaceful, prosperous and just world. We need to make a common international effort, and respond more efficiently when human rights are not being respected.
- With leadership and political will we can accomplish real progress and make a world free of poverty a reality.