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Opening and closing address for MDG Review Summit & Exhibition 2012

Cape Town
03 May 2012

1. CHAIRMAN'S OPENING ADDRESS (Terry Booysen: CEO - CGF Research Institute (Pty) Ltd))

Good morning esteemed guests, ladies and gentlemen; and a special welcome to all of those who have travelled from near and afar, in order to attend this special event – the **MDG Review Summit & Exhibition of 2012**.

We extend to you our warm South African greetings, and trust that you will find this Summit to be an enlightening one; and one that provides more answers than questions and more particularly the manner in which 191 heads of states, and the private sector have collaborated to address the Millennium Development Goals, and for which we committed to achieve by 2015.

I am reminded of the adage that “with great power comes responsibility” and with great responsibility we must be willing to be held accountable when we fail to deliver in areas that affect the basic human rights and the dignity of people. South Africa is known to have one of the most progressive Constitutions world-wide, and whilst it promises so much to its people, regrettably millions still do not feel the relief it advocates. Similarly, this situation is found in many other parts of the world.

For this reason -- amongst others -- the MDGs are a commitment by many countries and their leaders that promises her people a better life. Drawing from South Africa's Constitution -- Chapter Two -- in our Bill of Rights it states that our people -- should have, amongst other, the right to LIFE and:

- the right to equality before the law
- the right to freedom from discrimination
- the right to human dignity
- the right to freedom from slavery, servitude or forced labour
- the right to privacy
- the right to freedom of speech and expression
- the right to education
- the right to a healthy environment, and for it to be protected
- the right to property and housing
- the right to food, water, health care and social assistance

And for our children, they are promised the right of parental care and the right to a basic standard of living, the right to be protected from maltreatment and abuse, the protection from inappropriate child labour, and the right not to be detained.

These rights, as enshrined in South Africa's Constitution are reflective of the MDGs, and are mirrored in many other nations across the globe. The questions we need to be asking ourselves are;

1. How far are the various countries from achieving their respective MDGs?
2. What goals have *truly* been achieved, and have these been *independently verified*?
3. Who has done it right, and can we learn from them to expedite the progress?

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4. What goals are likely to be missed, why, and is this acceptable?
5. Should these goals and their attainment precede other agendas set by governments?
6. Should the MDGs be a critical KPI at individual levels in government?
7. Should governments be held accountable for the attainment of the MDGs?
8. What incentives have governments provided businesses to assist in the attainment of the MDGs?
9. Who should ultimately be held accountable for failure of the MDGs by 2015?

Ladies and gentlemen, as countries who *claim* to be concerned about these matters, and countries who espouse the values and principles of practicing good governance and integrated reporting; each and everyone of us has a role to play and to ensure that our countries and their respective leaders are held to account for their leadership or lack thereof.

Civil society – and for the sake of humanity – requires a spirit of *ubuntu*, which is drawn from our African culture and has a meaning of togetherness – the essence of being human and that we cannot exist as a human being in isolation. In this spirit, we all need to be leaders who path the way such where our moral consciousness is constantly aroused until we are truly able to say that these goals have been achieved, better still, exceeded.

Do we need to wait for others I ask?

Do we need permission to be human?

As a recap, let us remember the MDGs, which are to:

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

We need to further remind ourselves of the two fundamental reasons why the MDGs are critical. These reasons are:

1. They represent the means to a productive life for a billion-plus people living in extreme poverty.
 - a. the MDGs are a life-and-death issue for so many helpless people
 - b. while the MDGs are ends in themselves, for households suffering extreme poverty, they are also the means to a productive life, to economic growth & to further development
2. They are essential to international security and stability.
 - a. poor & hungry societies are far more likely than high-income societies to fall into conflict over scarce vital resources, such as water & arable land, as well as scarce natural resources, such as oil, diamonds & timber

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The MDGs provide a framework for the entire United Nation's system to work coherently together -- as a global partnership -- toward a common end.

Before we declare this Summit officially opened, let's ponder the words of two iconic Presidents;

I quote:

- "We shall build a society in which all South Africans, both black and white, will be able to walk tall, without any fear in their hearts, assured of their inalienable right to human dignity - a rainbow nation at peace with itself and the world." - **President Nelson Mandela (Inaugural speech - 1994)**

and my second quote from **US President Barak Obama**,

- "Development depends on good governance, and that is the ingredient which has been missing in far too many countries. That's the change which can unlock African potential, but that is a responsibility which must be met by Africans. Africa's future is up to Africans."

Let's also remember the power of partnership, and that tackling a task as great as the MDGs requires all hands on deck. To quote the **Dalai Lama**;

- "Responsibility does not only lie with the leaders of our countries or with those who have been appointed or elected to do a particular job. It lies with each of us individually."

As we open this summit, I was inspired to learn of a group of rural craft women in one of South Africa's provinces - KwaZulu Natal - where these women have indeed followed the wisdom of the Dalai Lama where they have held themselves responsible as individuals to uphold the vision of the MDGs. From a tiny village in KwaZulu Natal, these women have ignited others through their **Shake the World Campaign**, and have achieved international recognition with the production of their colourful bracelets as a reminder of the MDGs. Interestingly, since their start of production in 2010, they have produced over 400 000 bracelets, empowering over 1000 rural craft women without a penny of grants, which makes it a leading example of job creation, enterprise development, social entrepreneurship and **TRADE** instead of **AID**.

With this, ladies and gentlemen, I sincerely thank you and declare this Summit officially open.

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2. CHAIRMAN'S CLOSING ADDRESS (Terry Booysen: CEO - CGF Research Institute (Pty) Ltd))

Ladies and gentlemen, it's been an intense two days of jammed packed presentations and discussions; we have heard a number of presenters – all experts in their own fields – deliver very interesting presentations that have covered their views and statistics regarding how businesses from across the world may assist their respective governments and stakeholders to achieve their MDGs, which are due in 2015.

Whilst we should be reminded of our own comforts and timelines, these are surely not the same for those less privileged who are critically dependant on our collective efforts to rapidly achieve these goals.

These goals are quite different to any other, and so they should be – LIVES literally hang on the balance of either our successes or failures in achieving these goals. Time is not a luxury we can afford!

We must be reminded that these MDGs are people centered, and they depend upon our humanness; our compassion for fellow human beings. We know that man cannot be an island to himself and in a human supply chain, we are *only as strong as the weakest link*. In order to achieve these goals, which are indeed measurable – we are critically dependant upon partnerships, at all levels. Indeed the weak, or less developed countries cannot simply expect a 'bail-out' – they need to be taught how to fish, rather than simply being provided AID. President Barrak Obama reminded us that Africans potential can be unlocked by Africans, but in order to do this, good corporate governance must apply. This means that rampant corruption, bribery and extortion must be radically dealt with and its perpetrators brought to book. Clearly, as Prof Bob Garret writes, the fish rots from the head and it will be up to each of us to get our houses in order -- individually, at business levels and governmental levels.

Decisive action against this scourge that robs our achievements towards these goals must be cemented in the fabric of our thinking and actions, if there is to be any truth in our country Constitutions, let alone the promise of a better life for all. As we all trade in a global economy, underpinned by the Geneva Convention and its values, political leaders need to lead us with decisiveness, as they have been elected to do. The MDGs have been agreed by the highest leaders in the world, surely there is no higher authority by which these goals must be attained? I am reminded by a dear friend of mine -- David Parry Davies -- who recently asked, if the leaders of our countries and captains of business could actually feel the pain, and their tears were to fall, would action to remedy so much that is wrong, be acted upon sooner with a resolve? My immediate answer to this question would be a categorical "yes", as we ponder how many things the world *has* managed to put right in the name of LOVE.

The past UN General Secretary, Kofi Annun in his 2005 MDG Report said, "Let us be clear about the costs of missing this opportunity; millions of lives that could have been saved will be lost; many freedoms that could have been secured will be denied; and we shall inhabit a more dangerous and unstable world."

There's no doubt that these goals cannot be achieved, we just need the political will to set aside disparate thinking, agendas and projects and work on these MDGs so that the estimated 450 million people who live on less than \$1 a day, will begin to believe in humanity, in themselves and a world that reverses its destructive behaviour.

And whilst there are undoubtedly many positive things happening across the world, and indeed many MDG success stories which we have heard about at this Summit – such as Roche's *Phelepha Train* that travels for 9 months across South Africa helping the sick; and Vestergaard's water / carbon trading system, and Alcatel-Lucent's and Ericssons' telecom teaching systems in the Millennium villages -- the reality is that in order for African countries to achieve some of their primary MDG goals; to halve poverty, to reduce child mortality by two

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thirds and to achieve universal access to primary education by 2015, the continent will require at least a 7% year-on-year GDP and a lot more effort to achieve the MDGs in time.

At Africa's current rates of development, the continent will battle to achieve the MDGs and in some cases, at least 150 years will still be required for some sub-Saharan African countries to achieve them.

Let us consider some of the recent facts -- both good and bad -- as we watch the clock count the MDGs down, with less than 4 years to go;

1. Eradicate extreme poverty & hunger (Goal 1)

- a. To date, over 74 countries with more than one third of the world's population will not half the poverty income by 2015
- b. 10 million die every year of hunger and hunger-related diseases. Rising food prices may push 100 million people deeper into poverty

2. Achieve universal primary education (Goal 2)

- a. 28 million more children are able to attend school since 1999
- b. But 75 million still miss out on education-34 million boys and 41 million girls
- c. However 443 million school days are lost globally due to diarrhoea and 1.8 million children die from water related diseases every year

3. Promote gender equality & empower women (Goal 3)

- a. Women have more access to employment now than ever before
- b. But they still earn one-third less than men

4. Reduce child mortality (Goal 4)

- a. A child born in a developing country is over 13 times more likely to die within the first five years of life than a child born in an industrialized country

5. Improve maternal health (Goal 5)

- a. More than 500,000 women in developing countries die every year in childbirth or during pregnancy

6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria & other diseases (Goal 6)

- a. Malaria kills a child every 30 seconds. It infects 350-500 million people each year, killing 1 million
- b. Global distribution of bed nets increased from 1.35 million in 2004 to 18 million in 2006. In more recent times, according to Netmapping, it is estimated that 130 million nets per annum have been distributed, with 95 million of these in Africa

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7. Ensure environmental sustainability (Goal 7)

- a. Nine planet Earths would be required to absorb the world's carbon if every person had the same energy-rich lifestyle as people in developed countries
- b. Nearly one billion people live in slums
- c. 2.6 billion people (42% of the world's population) live without basic sanitation (WHO)
- d. Nearly 1.1 billion people (represents 18% of the world's population) lack access to safe drinking water (WHO)

8. Develop a Global Partnership for Development (Goal 8)

- a. Developed countries' subsidies to domestic agriculture are still more than three times higher than their Official Development Assistance (ODA).
- b. To date, of the 41 heavily-indebted poor countries, 33 have received US\$48 billion in debt relief.
- c. ODA needs to double to about US\$100 billion a year to achieve the MDGs

According to recent reports from the Globe & Mail, areas where little progress has been made in Africa to reach the MDGs by 2015 include the issues of:

- a. productive and decent employment,
- b. reducing maternal mortality by three quarters, and
- c. halting and reversing cases of tuberculosis.

Past analysis estimates that Asia accounts for over 60% of the world's population; while Africa is representative of some 14% of the total. Understandably, where there are exceptional population growth rates, there is proportionally a strain on the country's infrastructure, health and educational resources – worse so in under-developed regions where the infrastructure is weak or the resources are scarce.

Where the population growth rates exceed 3% p.a., this means that the total number of people doubles every 20 years or so. In figures released by UN Human Settlements Programme (March 2010), it revealed that providing these extra people with housing, water, electricity, sewerage, hospitals and schools would be a major challenge. Moreover, the programme showed that 227 million people had escaped the slums in the last 10 years, however that the people subject to this lifestyle, had increased from 776.7m to 827.6m.

Indeed as the MDG clock counts down, the call for yet a further and special MDG Summit Review of what our government and business leaders should have done by 2013, and 2014 is absolutely critical. It seems that the world recession (and locally the energy crisis) may have been used by some leaders as an excuse for certain non-performance against the MDGs. Considering still the massive task ahead of us, one needs to question whether this action may not be 'a little, too late' and whether it is not prudent to have more regular reviews to ensure the world; government leaders and their captains of industry catches up on their promises.

Also considering the most recent statistics from the WEF's Global Competitiveness Reports of 2012, we notice that countries such as China (26th), United Arab Emirates (27th), Tunisia (40th), South Africa (50th), Brazil (53rd), India (56th) feature in the top echelons of global country competitiveness; yet still somehow these countries are

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not sure if they will achieve all their MDG goals. Surely there must be good reasons why this is the case? And so if these leading developing countries are not making it, it seems all the more reasons why countries such as Nigeria (127th), Zimbabwe (132nd), Mozambique (133rd) and Angola (139th out of 142 countries) will offer their reasons for also not making their MDGs and failing their people.

We need good leadership and exemplary examples of countries who set aside any form of excuses for missing these goals, so that others may follow their lead and be accountable for action, or non-action as the case may be.

For the success of the MDGs, countries and their leaders must all work together, which is epitomised in the last of the eight MDGs and encompasses a “global partnership for development”. The eighth goal includes four specific targets, these being:

1. an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system
2. specific attention to the needs of the least developed countries
3. assistance for landlocked developed countries, and
4. national and international measures to deal with developing countries’ debt problems.

There is no doubt that partnerships between business and government will be required and Public Private Partnerships is only possible when there is an alignment and shared values between these parties, underpinned by trust. Ultimately achieving these goals remains the accountability of governments, and not businesses. We need to stop operating in silos, at both governmental and business levels across the world. It is imperative to see impoverished people trade aid for trade as was covered by many of our speakers.

On this note, ladies and gentlemen, as I close this MDG Summit of 2012, let’s reflect upon the Secretary General of the United Nations, Ban Ki Moon’s words;

“The international community must offer short-term emergency measures to meet critical needs. But it must also make longer-term investments to promote food production and agricultural development, enhance food security and maintain and accelerate momentum towards the MDGs.”

“World military spending has now risen to over \$1.2 trillion. This incredible sum represents 2.5 per cent of GDP (global gross domestic product). Even if 1 per cent of it were redirected towards development, the world would be much closer to achieving the Millennium Development Goals.”

I ask again, what needs to be done – are the MDGs simply (or just) another ‘soft topic and buzz word’? Whilst many deliberate, people are literally dying for our help. This is no time for politics; the time to act is now!

I sincerely thank you, for your interest and willingness to be held responsible, and that no matter how small your contribution towards these goals, every small step taken, is a step closer to realizing these goals which makes – in greater scheme of things - a significant difference in some one’s life.

Remember, “all it takes for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing!” (Burke)

Travel safely on your journeys and your respective destinations as we now officially close this Summit.

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About CGF Research Institute (Pty) Ltd

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The company has developed numerous products that cover GRC reports designed to create a high-level awareness and understanding of issues impacting a CEO through to all employees of the organisation.

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