



"The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have remained silent regarding inequalities," warned today the largest body of independent experts* in the United Nations Human Rights system, while urging the international community to place human rights, equality and non-discrimination, and sustainability at the heart of the post-2015 development agenda.

"Rising inequalities have powerful and corrosive effects; they threaten human development and suggest a trajectory that is contrary to the realization of human rights," said Michel Forst on behalf the group of 72 independent experts charged by the UN Human Rights Council to address specific country situations and thematic issues in all parts of the world.

During a high-level panel of the Human Rights Council, the expert did note that the implementation of the eight goals to fight poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, environmental degradation, and discrimination against women, which all UN member states agreed to try to achieve by the year 2015, has so far been successful in lifting millions of people out of poverty and reducing hunger and the number of preventable maternal and child deaths.

"The MDGs have harnessed the power of numbers to build consensus around critical global challenges by successfully consolidating governments' commitments," Mr. Forst said. However, according to the UN, over 900 million, particularly women and young people, still suffer from

chronic hunger; and diarrhoea still kills more children than AIDS, malaria and measles combined.

"We cannot and should not be satisfied with development goals that exclude millions of the most marginalized and vulnerable people," he said, drawing attention to the fact that 870 million people today are hungry not because of insufficient food production, but because they suffer from insufficient social protection.

"The new goals must constitute incentives for change and this change must reach everyone," Mr. Forst said. "As we approach the 2015 deadline for the realization of the MDGs, the international community must cement the gains achieved, build on the lessons learned and aim higher and be more ambitious in order to realize the freedom from fear, freedom from want."

The independent expert stressed that equality supports economic development and ensures sustainable growth, contrary to the prevailing view that it reduces efficiency and hinders growth. "We will need to address inequality once and for all as it constitutes one of the most persistent challenges that prevent millions of people from living a life in dignity," he said. "We must aim for justice for all; those without a voice do not need charity."

"The post-2015 development agenda should include a stand-alone goal on equality in order to foster more inclusive forms of development," said Mr. Forst, who currently chairs the Coordination Committee of the group of 72 independent experts.

(* Check the full statement by the [Coordination Committee of Special Procedures on behalf of mandate holders of the UN Human Rights Council](#)

"Special procedures" is the general name of the independent fact-finding and monitoring mechanisms of the Human Rights Council that address either specific country situations or thematic issues in all parts of the world. Currently, there are 36 thematic mandates and 12 mandates related to countries and territories, with 72 mandate holders. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights provides these mechanisms with support for the fulfilment of their mandates

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