



INFORMATION BRIEF

Event:

UNDP's Southern Africa Sub-Regional Resource Facility (SURF) will be hosting a Sub-Regional **Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) Forum** from the **2nd to the 4th July 2003** in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Objective:

The main objective of the Southern Africa sub-regional forum is to achieve greater alignment between the MDG's and the policy environment of southern Africa, such that the MDGs become an integral part of national priorities and actions of all countries in the sub-region. In this context therefore the Forum is also designed to enhance NEPAD's role in achieving the MDGs, and to assist assist SADC to couch its regional integration and development agenda within the MDGs framework.

Southern Africa context:

The Southern Africa crisis poses a great challenge to the achievement of the MDGs. In six countries – Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe – there is serious food shortage affecting 15.1 million people. In addition, and closely linked to this, the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Southern Africa is

endangering the lives and livelihoods of millions of people. The Face of poverty across most of Africa is quintessentially female and the southern Africa region is no exception. The combination of HIV/AIDS with chronic poverty, erratic rainfall, poor government policies in some countries, and natural resource degradation all culminate in an acute humanitarian crisis that demands immediate action. This has resulted in the reversal of attaining progress already made towards the achievement of the MDGs.

Outreach:

The Southern Africa sub-regional MDGs Forum aims to bring key stakeholders in the SADC region, including government ministers, parliamentarians, private sector, civil society, academia, regional bodies, together with donor and UN agencies, to review the policy and developmental implications of the MDGs. It is envisaged that the participation of parliamentarians, civil society and the private sector will receive particular attention at this forum.

Thematic Areas

Three key thematic areas have been identified for the Forum in light of the current global policy thrust within the MDGs framework and, more importantly, the sub-regional contextual issues.

- ***Theme 1: Policy Reforms and MDGs***

The MDGs Forum will explore the links between the MDGs targets and national development objectives and instruments (for example, Poverty Reduction Strategies and National Long Term Perspectives). Within this framework of poverty reduction and sustainable human development issues of statistical capacity for poverty monitoring and MDGs performance tracking will be considered. Key cross cutting policy issues will be focused on, namely, food security and the humanitarian crisis, feminization of poverty, and HIV/AIDS.

- ***Theme 2: Sustainable Development and MDGs: Parameters for Measuring Sustainable Development***

The MDGs Forum will provide an opportunity to explore how best to integrate sustainable development issues into the areas of poverty reduction and economic development, taking into account the following: WSSD outcomes and the Commission of Sustainable Development (CSD) processes; environmental indicators and reporting; and the environment and socio-economic policy

linkages. The MDGs provide a useful framework of integrating sustainable development issues as well as monitoring progress in implementation.

- ***Theme 3: Partnerships and MDGs:***

This theme will explore development partnerships at both the global and the local levels. At the global level the focus will be on the engagement of NEPAD, sub-regional bodies, the impact of trade, HIPC and Aid flows on the MDGs process. The role of private sector in domestic resource mobilization and corporate social responsibility will receive particular attention. At the local level the impact of the MDGs will be explored in relation to CSOs and community groups as key partners in the development process. The role of SMMEs and the informal sector will receive specific attention.

Outcome:

The proposed MDGs Forum will provide an opportunity for countries in the Southern African region to review the progress on the attainment of MDGs. It is anticipated that it will also enable participants to elaborate an action programme to achieve the MDGs, based on the national and sub-regional context, and thus work towards sustainable human development and poverty reduction.

Visit the SA SURF Website for further information at:
<http://www.sasurfs.undp.co.zw/MDGsforum.html>

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