



## Strategies from the South at the MDG Summit

September 19-22, 2010  
UN Headquarters - New York

The **Millennium Development Goals (MDG) Summit** was held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York on September 20-22, 2010 in the framework of the 65<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations General Assembly. At the Summit, governments came together to review gaps, challenges and successes registered by countries and adopt renewed commitments to accelerating progress toward all the MDGs by 2015.

In preparation for the ten-year review of the MDGs at the Summit, the Strategies from the South member networks collected information and analyzed gaps and challenges in reaching MDGs 3, 5 and 6 in their countries/regions. Two advocacy documents were produced based on the findings and the resulting priorities/demands of the networks: “**MDGs 3, 5 and 6: Filling the Gaps in Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean**” and “**Global Report on MDG 5: Improve Maternal Health. Exploring the Situation in Africa, Asia and Latin America & the Caribbean**” (<http://strategiesfromthesouth.org/>). These documents were produced to do joint advocacy at the Summit, promoting an integrated approach to MDGs 3, 5 and 6.

Representatives of eleven of the regional and international networks that participate in **Strategies from the South** attended the Summit to advocate with governments and UN agencies for the fulfillment of the MDGs in their countries/regions. They were: Innocent Laison, **AfriCASO**; RD Marte, **APCASO**; Saira Shameen, **ARROW**; Mickey Meji, **ASWA/Global NSWP**; Mabel Bianco and Andrea Mariño, **FEIM/IAWC**; Alessandra Nilo and Juliana Cesar, **GESTOS/LACCASO**; Lindsay Menard Freeman, **GYCA**; Betty Escobar, **ICW Global**; Mirellise Vazquez, **IPPF/WHR**; Zoe Dodd, **INWUD**; Imane Khachani and Nida Mushtaq, **Youth Coalition**.

These project members participated in different activities organized by and/or of interest to Strategies from the South during the MDG Summit in New York, including:



pre-Summit Training Session on UN Advocacy for young members of the networks; participation in MDG Summit SRHR NGO Strategy Meetings; side events related to SRHR and women and girls; a working meeting for Strategies from the South members attending the Summit to draw up a plan of action for the project until April 2011.

The day before the Summit began, on September 19 from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., **Strategies from the South** organized a “**UN Advocacy Training Session**” for young members of the networks in the project to train them on how the UN system works and to build their skills for doing advocacy at the UN. The training was developed together with the International



Women's Health Coalition (IWHC) who hosted and ran the session using their model of "Advocacy in Practice". The participants were: Rodelyn Marte of APCASO, Malaysia; Zoe Dodd of INWUD, Canada; Betty Escobar of ICW Global, Venezuela/USA; Mickey Meji of ASWA/Global NSWP, South Africa; Nida Mushtaq of Youth Coalition, Pakistan; Juliana Cesar of GESTOS/LACCASO, Brazil; Lindsay Menard Freeman of GYCA, USA; and Andrea Mariño of FEIM/IAWC, Argentina. The session was coordinated by Alexandra Garita of IWHC, together with Mabel Bianco of FEIM/IAWC and Coordinator of Strategies from the South and Adrienne Germain of the IWHC was an invited presenter.

The training was particularly helpful for understanding how the UN system works, including information about the context of the United Nations, including membership, charter bodies, the General Assembly and its committees, how the decision making processes work and kinds of outcome documents and what they mean, how negotiations among countries occur and how the process of consensus works, the participation of NGOs, and how to approach governments and work with government delegates. Although not all of this information could be applied at the MDG Summit in particular, given that the Outcome Document was a closed document, participants were encouraged to actively participate in side events. The participants also received a calendar of key side events related to SRHR and reviewed together the important aspects of each of them and the most essential issues to raise.



All the participants shared their advocacy experiences with the group and expressed their questions, several of whom did not have experience at the international level, and/or had not been committed to an advocacy process inside the UN before. The range of experiences of

the different participants enriched the session because it allowed them to consider the UN system and negotiations processes in relation to their own work and the realities at country level and learn from each other's experiences in the framework of the workshop. For more information see the report "UN Advocacy Training Session" online: <http://strategiesfromthesouth.org/pdf/SFTS-Training-Report-2010.pdf>

Also on September 19, from 6:00 - 8:00 p.m., prior to the beginning of the Summit, many of the project representatives attended a meeting to analyze the fulfillment of MDG 5 and other future activities in the UN regarding SRHR. Together the participants –mainly SRHR activists as well as HIV/AIDS groups– reviewed the Summit process to date, the schedule of activities at the summit, and analyzed opportunities for civil society participation and advocacy at the Summit as well as after the Summit to hold governments accountable.

The Summit opened on September 20 with two roundtables held that day, discussing the topics: "Addressing the challenge of poverty, hunger and gender Equality" in the morning and "Meeting the goals of health and education" in the afternoon. The remaining four topics discussed on September 21-22 were: "Promoting sustainable development", "Addressing emerging issues and evolving approaches", "Addressing the special needs of the most vulnerable" and "Widening and strengthening partnerships". Although it was very difficult to



access the General Assembly Hall to observe the sessions, only those in the Official Country Delegations, such as Alessandra Nilo of GESTOS (Brazil) and Mabel Bianco of FEIM/IAWC (Argentina), had the opportunity to listen to the country speeches.

On the first day of the Summit, September 20 from 3:00 - 5:00 p.m., the project members convened at the Ford Foundation Office for a **working meeting** to discuss the project's activities around the MDG review process as well as commitments and upcoming activities until the end of the project in April 2011. All the project members in New York participated, except two who sent their regrets: Saira Shameen of ARROW and Lindsay Menard Freeman of GYCA.

At the meeting, the participants exchanged about the discussion process of MDGs at country level until now and follow-up advocacy later in the countries where the networks work. The two advocacy papers developed by the group for the Summit were considered and it was discussed how they would be used at country level and as tools for advocating governments and UN agencies to push in order to accelerate the fulfillment especially of MDGs 3, 5 and 6 and with an integrated approach.



Since it was agreed that the project needs to focus more on **linking country level with regional and international levels**, the participants identified concrete activities and commitments to achieve this between now and April 2011, including linking the MDGs with other UN meetings to be held next year. After some considerations, they agreed on the Commission on Population and Development (CPD) meeting in early April 2011, where the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and SRHR will be the most interesting issue to follow.

This meeting allowed Strategies from the South project to evaluate current working methods, identify emerging priorities and directions that will accelerate the achievement of the project's goals between now and April 2011. It ended with a series of commitments which came out of the discussion among all those present, to maximize the effectiveness of national, regional and international advocacy on SRHR and HIV/AIDS.

On the remaining days of the Summit, the project members participated in important side events, including a session organized by UNICEF, WHO and UNAIDS about "Elimination of Mother-to-Child Transmission of HIV and Synergies for Achieving MDGs 4, 5 and 6", as well as the Partnership Event "Accelerating progress in achieving MDG 5: Trends and lessons from countries", organized by WHO, UNFPA, UNAIDS, World Bank, UNICEF, which





addressed maternal health policies and the integration of PMTCT in reproductive/maternal health programs.

On September 22, at the **UN Secretary General's Launch of the Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health**, where SG Ban Ki-moon launched the effort to achieve progress on women's and children's health. Heads of State and Government, representatives of the private sector, foundations, international organizations, civil society and research organizations were present and several representatives of the project attended. Upon launching the Global Strategy, more than USD 40 billion were pledged to women's and children's health over the next five years.

Before the Summit closed on September 22, the countries approved renewed commitments through the resolution: **"Keeping the promise: united to achieve the Millennium Development Goals"**, available online at: <http://www.un.org/en/mdg/summit2010/pdf/mdg%20outcome%20document.pdf>. The document includes most of the comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services needed to achieve the MDGs and mentions the need to "achieve the goals of the Beijing Declaration...and the commitments in the Programme of Action of the ICPD", however the language on all aspects of SRHR and women's rights is different in those documents. Commitments made regarding MDG 6- HIV/AIDS- do not meet those made in prior international agreements, such as the UNGASS Declaration on HIV/AIDS, however it is important to note the incorporation of language regarding **integration of HIV information and services with primary healthcare, sexual and reproductive health and mother and child health programs**. The Summit, the Outcome Document, and next steps for NGO advocacy were analyzed in an **NGO De-brief and Planning Meeting** upon the close of the Summit on September 22.

The NGO Strategy Meetings, the partnership and side events and the utilization of the project's documents as advocacy tools, were all important opportunities for the project members to engage and build synergies with a wider group of SRHR and HIV/AIDS activist networks and with some Country Mission representatives. These activities, together with those organized by the project –the UN Advocacy Training Session and the planning meeting- allowed the **Strategies from the South** members at the Summit to more effectively evaluate their governments' level of commitment to the different MDGs in the international level. This experience equipped the networks representatives to effectively engage in joint follow-up advocacy with the UN and government representatives to hold them accountable for fulfilling their commitments to MDGs 3, 5 and 6 at the national and regional levels.

