



We cannot turn our backs on the poor and vulnerable because it's inconvenient or hard-going

About Caritas Voices Against Poverty

In 2000, the world came together to make its biggest promise ever – to build a better world for humanity by 2015. The Millennium Declaration was a milestone in cooperation, committing the 189 member states of the United Nations to ambitious but achievable targets.

Take action!

Caritas believes the Millennium Development Goals must be met because we made a promise and a deep moral commitment. The lives of millions of people around the world have already improved.

Ours is the first generation with the possibility to end poverty.

Find out what you can do to help.

- 1** [Ask your family members, friends and colleagues](#) to spread the word about the Millennium Development Goals.
- 2** Put up a poster where you work from the Caritas Internationalis Millennium Development Goals campaign. We will send you one! ([see posters](#))
- 3** Contribute to our [Caritas global MDG map](#). Send us your stories
- 4** Post a link to our Millennium Development Goals campaign site on your Facebook or other social networking page.
- 5** Organise a staff meeting where you work to raise more awareness about the 8 Millennium Development Goals.
- 6** Create bell ringing moments during MDG 'Stand Up Weekend (17- 19 September) and the UN General Assembly (20-22 September). Make noises to break the silence.

7 Use a Caritas MDG Prayer Card at Mass for Prayers of the Faithful. Print the prayers for distribution to family, neighbours, parish organisations. ([Download one here](#))

8 Find out what Caritas national members are [doing already](#) on campaigning for the Millennium Development Goals. And send us your stories to publish on [the blog](#).

What Can You Do?

- | Eradicate extreme poverty & hunger

Urge our governments to live up to their promises and increase the amount of development aid they give to poor countries to the 0.7 percent of GDP which they pledged.

Highlight the scandal of the extreme poor and their sheer numbers.

Legislate - and persuade other countries to do the same - for fair pay and social safety nets.

Invest in science, technology and training to allow more food to be grown for the world's hungry. Ensure that as much of this is done locally as possible.

Raise a warning flag on our changing climate and the additional challenges it will pose for the poor and hungry.

- | Achieve universal access to education

Provide more financial assistance to promote universal primary schooling – especially in rural areas - and then carry it through to more children staying on for secondary and tertiary education.

Encourage the development of social benefits so that the first response to a family crisis is not to take a child – often a girl - out of school. Abolish fees for primary schooling.

Create more teachers. In sub-Saharan Africa, 3.8 million extra teachers need to be recruited, trained and paid by 2015 to achieve the universal primary schooling goal.

Educate parents and carers to fully understand the wider benefits of schooling for girls. Girls in the poorest 20 percent of households have the least chance of getting an education – they are 3.5 times more likely to be out of school than girls in the richest households.

Focus more on ethnic, linguistic and religious minorities around the world, as they have far fewer educational opportunities than the overall population.

Link universal primary education to the other Millennium Development Goals. Educated parents mean less poverty and hunger, an educated mother means less infant mortality. Education is vital to the battle against AIDS and other pandemics.

- | Promote greater respect for women

Reiterate commitments regarding parity and women's rights in development policy and funding and advocate for equal pay for women in all societies.

Remove school fees and provide incentives for girls to attend school. Build schools closer to remote communities and recruit local women teachers. Equality requires women have access to education.

Support women's organisations which promote greater opportunities for women in the workplace and encourage targeted public policy and governance to overcome inequality.

Legislate to increase women's participation in parliament. In 2008, after safeguarding seats, Rwanda became the first country with more than 50 percent of female-held seats.

Continue working to change attitudes and cultural practices, such as keeping girls at home and early marriage.

- | Reduce child mortality

Strengthen our efforts against HIV/AIDS – especially in Africa and South Asia, with more education on the mother-to-child transmission of the virus.

Join the Caritas 'HAART for Children' campaign to urge drug companies and governments to develop specific medicines for children – Highly Active Anti-Retroviral Therapy – at lower prices. The medicines most suitable for children are three times more expensive than for adults. Without them, most HIV-positive children die before they turn two.

Ensure more children are tested for HIV as soon as possible so as to raise their chances of treatment and of survival.

Campaign for the delivery of other cost effective health interventions, like de-worming Vitamin A supplementation and improved nutrition.

Keep up the big increase in funding of the last two decades on child health and expand it further.

- | Improve maternal health

Fund increased access to health care and training to tackle health care system weaknesses. Screening for tetanus and anaemia must be increased, as many health problems during pregnancy and delivery are preventable, detectable and treatable.

Train more doctors, nurses and midwives and provide life-saving emergency obstetric care.

Educate and inform women about the warning signs which show a pregnancy complication and urge them to seek help.

Strongly question why so very little progress overall has been made in reducing deaths in childbirth. In 1990 there were 480 deaths per 100,000 births: by 2005, this had only declined to 450. Even though in South Asia a decline of 20 percent has been achieved, the number of deaths is still unacceptably high.

Educate people on cultural practices such as early marriage. In the period 1998-2007, 49 percent of young women in South Asia had been married before they were 18.

Celebrate and learn from countries like Rwanda, where in a model for Africa, 92 percent of the population has access to basic care.

- | Combat HIV/AIDS and other diseases

We need to keep the pressure up on the people who make anti-retroviral drugs, and those who pay for them, on behalf of poor people. There has been a big increase in the number of people living with HIV getting the treatment they need. In 2009 it is estimated that 40 percent did. That is 4 million people in the developing world. But 60 percent still don't.

More education is needed. For every 2 people who started on ARVs in 2009, five others were infected. In developing countries, only 30 percent of young men and 20 percent of young women understand how HIV is transmitted.

We must protect unborn children more. Although globally, services to prevent mother to child transmission rose from 10 percent in 2004 to 45 percent in 2008, more robust health systems are needed. Children with HIV or HIV and TB need to be given access to early testing and treatment with more child-friendly and affordable drugs.

We must reduce violence against girls and women. We must advocate to change cultural and social norms and practices which expose women and young girls to infection.

We must provide more insecticide treated bed nets, and support the good leadership in countries which have made serious interventions with the use of bed nets. We must lobby for funding for indoor spraying with safe insecticide.

Advocacy is necessary for better malaria treatment. Many African children are still given less effective medicines despite the expansion of new drugs.

Faster and better testing for tuberculosis needs to be developed, an effective vaccine, and new affordable drugs. Extra measures are needed in the former Soviet Union where there are the highest ever rates of extremely multi-drug resistant TB.

We should remind African governments of their 2001 promise to be spending 15 percent of their budget on health care by 2015. We need to help them keep that promise by reminding rich countries of their promise to dedicate 0.7 percent of their GDP to overseas development.

- | **Ensure environmental sustainability**

Actively fund programmes to provide sanitation to target regions – especially in rural parts of the developing world.

Find the large multi-sectored investment which will be necessary to improve the lives of slum dwellers. We must encourage private partners to join us.

Decisively respond to climate change beyond the negotiations which have taken place in recent years.

Stop the expected surge in carbon dioxide emissions once the current economic downturn is over.

The rich world must provide sufficient levels of secure financial and technological support for the poor world to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change.

Legislate to conserve the world's biodiversity through protecting more key habitats and the species who live in them.

- | **Global partnership for development**

Press for 100 percent cancellation for the poorest nations. Keep the spotlight on continuing and enhancing the current programme of relief for heavily indebted poor countries.

Congratulate countries like Nigeria which is using \$750 million in debt-savings to train new teachers and Cameroon which is spending its money on education to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS.

Create tariff and quota-free access for exports from the least developed countries.

Petition the developed world to live up to its promise of spending 0.7 percent of GDP on overseas development, not the 0.31 percent which remains the average.

Use what we have learned about environmental trade exploitation to press for legislation forcing multi-national companies to act more responsibly in the developing world.

Advocate for more technical help to poorer countries to develop their trade and production capacities, and make sure this is without strings and fairly priced. Increase access to the internet and mobile phone technology at prices the developing world can afford.

Source: http://mdg2015.caritas.org/take_action.html