



*“From Thoughts to Action”*

## **GRF Position Paper**

### **on the occasion of the Official Opening of the United Nations Summit on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)**

**New York, 20 – 22 September 2010**

### ***“Toward Full Integration of The Risk, Security, Climate Change and Equity Dimensions Into The MDGs”***

Based on the Outcomes of the 3<sup>rd</sup> International Disaster and Risk Conference,

IDRC Davos 2010, 30 May – 3 June 2010, Davos Switzerland, with 850 participants from  
100 countries

---

*Disclaimer: The information provided in this position paper on climate change is based on the GRF Fact Sheet (FS 02-2010) on the MDGs and expresses the views of GRF Davos on the progress of the UN Millennium Declaration. GRF reserves the right not to be responsible for the topicality, correctness, completeness or quality of the information provided.*

Global Risk Forum GRF Davos - Promenade 35 - CH-7270 Davos Platz - Switzerland  
Phone +41 (0)81 414 16 00 - Fax +41 (0)81 414 16 10 - [www.grforum.org](http://www.grforum.org) - [info@grforum.org](mailto:info@grforum.org)

## The Outset

IDRC Davos 2010 highlighted the development dimension within the international risk and disaster discourse. The critical questions of how to enhance the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, and that of what should happen after their expiration in 2015, showed that poverty, famine, diseases, lack of education, forced migration and under-development pose clear risks to the global society and undermine its resilience. It also became obvious that transforming the world economy on a sustainable basis, i.e. greening business models is crucial. Moreover, stakeholders from different sectors agreed that the financial crisis has a dramatic impact on the progress of the MDGs and especially concerns the poor.

In general, the MDGs (as much as the Millennium Declaration) have constituted a positive step forward to frame and guide human development cooperation worldwide. However, for the forthcoming five years the international community has to embark on an increased effort to implement the goals and meet the targets, and integrate these existing elements with the broader agendas of global environmental change, climate change and human climate justice in particular, safety and security, and effective risk reduction and disaster management (i.e. risk governance).

- An agenda for enhanced MDG implementation will include the following objectives:
- Global inequality and its reduction should be given more emphasis: an explicit call for the reduction of inequality should be paired with the objective of economic growth.
- It is a prerogative to stress the importance of cultural diversity and social values, and the principles of accountability and legitimacy for effective MDG implementation.
- Fragile statehood, political instability and larger societal uncertainties oftentimes pose risks to MDG success and require the attention of policy-makers.
- The MDG process needs to entail effective tools and standards for risk and safety assessment and integrated risk management in a variety of areas, including those of natural hazards and extreme events, technology, environmental change, finance or trade.
- The science and technology capacity and access to education in developing countries is critically important for MDG implementation and should be further strengthened.

## New Challenges

As the process of advocating, catalyzing and implementing the MDGs is moving into its next phase – ten years from their inception in the year 2000 – new and emerging challenges as well as aggravated factors will have to be taken into account and shouldered so as to keep the goals on track and ensure success. Among these challenges which pose enormous risks for international development and security, and which are often inter-linked, are certainly:

- The persistent fragility of our global financial and economic system

*Disclaimer: The information provided in this position paper on climate change is based on the GRF Fact Sheet (FS 02-2010) on the MDGs and expresses the views of GRF Davos on the progress of the UN Millennium Declaration. GRF reserves the right not to be responsible for the topicality, correctness, completeness or quality of the information provided.*

- Weak performance of ecosystem services for human well-being (loss in biodiversity, land degradation, desertification, deforestation, water scarcity)
- Eroded human and food security
- The challenges of global climate change with an increased number and scale of natural hazards, disasters and extreme events (weather extremes like floods, hurricanes, heat waves, sea-level rise, etc.)
- Progressive urbanisation and increasing vulnerability of societies, critical infrastructures and services

## Harmonizing climate change mitigation and adaptation with disaster risk reduction

Climate change, its root causes, impacts and response options needs to be part of the equation for the period until 2015. Climate change and the MDGs are intrinsically linked and deeply interdependent. The very cause of anthropogenic climate change runs counter to global sustainable development and therefore the MDGs. Climate change is not only about the environment. It results in growing risks and vulnerabilities, particularly in developing countries. Climate change thus severely undermines the achievement of the MDGs. We risk derailment of the MDGs if we fail to mitigate and adapt to climate change effectively. Effective mitigation is largely linked with green growth. Social and economic opportunities deriving from such new trajectories can help developing nations. At the same time, effective and sustainable adaptation policies must be identified to assist poor and underdeveloped countries, particularly in the most vulnerable regions. As most disasters – besides earthquakes – are of meteorological origin, climate change adaptation is also disaster prevention. Both strategies have to be linked and harmonized. Such policies can help attain the MDGs in a variety of ways and should be seen as means to implement the Millennium Declaration and achieve the MDGs as they provide proper risk governance elements.

## Risk Governance and Resilience

Ultimately, policy and practice development at all levels has to seek the resilience of the social as well as the ecological spheres. Through an integrated risk governance approach, the very notion of sustainable development, i.e. the balance between economy, ecology and equity can be brought about and thus re-invigorate the MDGs while at the same time effectively address the multitude of risks imposed upon us.

*Andreas Rechkemmer, Prof., Dr., Chief Senior Scientific Advisor, GRF Davos*

*Walter J. Ammann, Dr. Ing. ETH, President and CEO, GRF Davos*

*Davos, 20 September 2010*

*Disclaimer: The information provided in this position paper on climate change is based on the GRF Fact Sheet (FS 02-2010) on the MDGs and expresses the views of GRF Davos on the progress of the UN Millennium Declaration. GRF reserves the right not to be responsible for the topicality, correctness, completeness or quality of the information provided.*