

# ISSUES AND ACTIONS

July, 2007



*‘I know that the Lord maintains the cause of the needy, and executes justice for the poor.’*

Psalm 140:12

On June 18, community members had an opportunity to take a step deeper into the “Global Heart.” This day gave us an opportunity to celebrate the work we each have contributed to living out the principles of the Earth Charter. The day also assisted us in making the connection of key development issues related to freedom, equality, solidarity, critical choices facing humanity, respect for nature and shared responsibility that are both at the heart of the **Earth Charter**, and **Millennium Development Goals**. Both are a call to action and guide to a sustainable way of life that can inspire commitment, cooperation, and change.

The United Nations Millennium Development Goals not only pursue similar principles of the Earth Charter, but take these principles further with an action plan that is unique because it includes a time line. It is important to keep in mind world leaders from rich and poor countries alike committed themselves—at the highest political level—to a set of eight time-bound targets that, when achieved, will end extreme poverty worldwide by 2015.

Goals 1 through 7 commit them to raise the poor out of poverty and hunger, get every child into school, empower women, reduce child mortality, improve maternal health, combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases, and ensure environmental sustainability. Goal 8 explicitly recognizes that eradicating poverty worldwide can be achieved only through a global partnership for development.

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**Goal 4 sets out by the year 2015 to: \* Reduce by two-thirds the mortality rate among children under five.**

The issues around child mortality are one of the most important indicators of the economic and cultural development of society, since poverty and social isolation directly affect access to health care. In our world today nearly 11 million children under the age of five die in the world every year—well over 1,200 every hour, most from easily preventable or treatable causes.

Child mortality is one of the world’s most urgent crises and one of the most preventable, says Ann M. Veneman, Executive Director of UNICEF. By seizing the opportunity to reach the Millennium Development Goal, we could save more than 30 million young lives in the decade ahead, 10 million through immunization alone.

Other interventions, such as access to safe drinking water and sanitation services, the use of insecticide-treated nets for preventing malaria, delivery attendants when babies are born (to ensure newborn health), prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV, are some of the actions that can be taken to address this goal.

Let's not forget: the health and survival of mothers is intimately linked to the survival of their children. Dr. Lee Jong-Wook, Director-General of the World Health Organization states "Progress in increasing child survival is stalling significantly because of the huge numbers of newborns who die within their first 24 hours and first month. We have to keep the focus on this vital relationship. When we think about life-saving interventions, the child's mother is a crucial component."

***Call to action:***

What will it take to ensure that every child is given a fighting chance for a better life, regardless of where it is born? Governments in the North and South have promised to do their part to accomplish all eight Millennium Development Goals by 2015. **As advocates for children and families**, we must hold them to those promises. We must make it clear to them that we refuse to miss this historic opportunity. And in the meantime we must do our part, believing that together we all make a difference by our actions.

THE FOLLOWING ARE BUT A FEW COMMITMENTS MADE BY OUR SISTERS/ASSOCIATES ON JUNE 18.

"I will join [one.org](http://one.org) to facilitate an action of political involvement on global issues/and introduce my parish to this instrument of outreach, along with [malariaanomore.org](http://malariaanomore.org)"

"I commit to keep on searching for new and better ways to reduce, repair and recycle, and to do what I can to better the lives of others, as well as encourage, remind, and petition those able to do more to effect change to do so."

"I intend to discover ways of assisting the people of Africa who are living and dying with HIV/AIDS; ways financially and spiritually and special needs?"

"To find out more about the filter drinking straw and to promote it with others so that people can drink pure water in developing countries."

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RESOURCES RELATED TO U.N. MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Book: The End of Poverty, by Jeffrey D. Sachs (paperback) Excellent for community study and discussion on the issue of poverty and Millennium Development Goals.

Millennium Campaign [www.millenniumcampaign.org](http://www.millenniumcampaign.org)

Malaria No More [www.malariaanomore.org](http://www.malariaanomore.org)

Save the Children [www.savethechildren.org](http://www.savethechildren.org)



**Celebrate Inter-dependence Day July 4**

SUBMITTED BY THE SISTERS OF THE HOLY FAMILY: PEACE AND JUSTICE COMMITTEE