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A Communion
of Churches

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Resolution - From MDGs to SDGs: Putting Diaconal Participation into Practice

In September 2000, world leaders came together at the United Nations Headquarters in New York to adopt the United Nations Millennium Declaration. Expressing their commitment to global partnership, a series of time-bound targets were designed to reduce extreme poverty by 2015. These eight targets became known as the “Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).”¹

The MDGs are now regarded by the UN as the “most successful global anti-poverty push in history.”² Although not all countries or people are better off, the MDGs have made a profound difference in many people’s lives. For example:

- Global poverty has been halved five years ahead of the 2015 timeframe.³
- Ninety percent of children in developing regions now enjoy primary education, and disparities between boys and girls in enrollment have narrowed.⁴
- 3.3 million malaria deaths were prevented in the span of 12 years, and lifesaving medicines for HIV are more readily available.⁵

As the MDGs come to a conclusion, the global community is entering the final stages of negotiations on the next set of universal goals, the “Sustainable Development Goals” (SDGs), to be a major part of the Post-2015 Development Agenda. The SDGs will guide global anti-poverty efforts through the year 2030. Generally, the SDGs are designed to have a broader focus than the MDGs and are designed to assess responsibility for both developing and developed countries to meet the targets once they are agreed upon. The Lutheran World Federation, a communion of churches spanning the globe, is especially well-placed to promote the SDGs from a diaconic perspective.

The LWF, a founding member of the ACT Alliance, acknowledges with appreciation the advocacy efforts of ACT and its members, including those from within the Lutheran communion, to encourage the adoption of a Post-2015 Development Agenda that leaves no one behind. The LWF affirms especially ACT’s strong support for the inclusion of several cross-sectoral themes in the post-2015 framework: good governance (promoting governmental transparency, accountability and anti-corruption initiatives), sustainable environment (progressive climate and other policies that contribute to sustainable

development and justice for the poor), inequalities (advancing equal access to essential services, particularly for society's most vulnerable), and conflict and fragility (supporting peace building and conflict resolution as key dimensions of holistic development policy-making).

The LWF Council calls on the LWF member churches to:

- Stay informed about the final stages of the negotiations on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, of which the SDGs are a significant part,
- Advocate in their national contexts for full funding and support for the SDGs, beginning in relation to the Third International Conference on Financing for Development to be held in July in Addis Ababa, and
- Encourage the inclusion, within the diaconal and theological work of the member churches and the LWF Communion, of story sharing, advocacy, and efforts toward implementation of the SDGs.

¹ "Background." Millennium Development Goals and Beyond 2015. United Nations. 20 June 2015.

<http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/bkgd.shtml>.

² "The Millennium Development Goals Report 2014." End Poverty 2015 Millennium Campaign. UNMC. 20 June 2015.

<http://www.endpoverty2015.org/en/2014/07/07/the-millennium-development-goals-report-2014/>.

³ "The Millennium Development Goals Report 2014." Research & Publications. United Nations Development Programme. 20 June 2015.

<http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/mdg/themillennium-development-goals-report-2014.html>.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ "United Nations Millennium Campaign." Facebook infographics. 20 June 2015.

<https://www.facebook.com/mcampaign/photos/a.10152238025342496.1073741830.9053837495/10152236309257496/?type=3&theater>.