



Linking Muslim Giving to MDGs

2 November 2012, UN Headquarters, New York

Background

While some countries have made impressive gains in achieving Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), others are falling behind. The Muslim world is no exception.

The restricted ability of individual governments in providing social safety nets is forcing philanthropic and private sectors to carry increasing responsibility for meeting basic human needs. This trend, coupled with a global financial and sovereign debt crisis that further limits government capacity, could have disastrous consequences for the billion or more people who experience hunger and poverty.

The World Congress of Muslim Philanthropists (WCMP) commits itself to playing a crucial role in building a global culture of common concern and collaborative action to address pressing global and regional challenges, most notably poverty, hunger, disease, and conflict.

Faith emphasizes building communities, sharing wealth and upholding the rights of the poor and marginalized. WCMP exists to advance these values of social justice by creating vehicles through which faith-based giving such as *Zakat* which amounts to billions of dollars can become more strategic and effective.

Notwithstanding the abundant natural and material endowments in some of the Muslim countries, about 22 of the 57 member states forming the OIC are categorized as Least Developed Countries, while about 41 of these countries are considered as Low Income Food Deficit Countries. The consequence of this phenomenon on the human development profile of OIC countries is enormous and the hope of achieving MDGs by 2015 is dim.

Against this backdrop, it is essential to link 'zakat' (mandatory alms) and 'sadaqa' (charity) with programs that advance MDGs.

According to the World Bank, MDG 1 target on poverty has already been achieved and the world is on track to achieving the other targets in MDG 1 as well as MDGs 2 and 7. However a more detailed analysis shows that many developing countries in south Asia and sub-Saharan Africa; many of which are Muslim countries or have large Muslim populations are lagging behind. The event will therefore present an opportunity for a critical examination



of the status of MDGs in Muslim countries as well as a discussion of the potentials for developing strategic approaches in faith based giving to bridge the financial resource gaps required to meet the MDGs in these countries.

The process of developing a post 2015 framework; led by the UN is already on. The process promises to be open, transparent and inclusive, reaching out to all stakeholders and there is the need for Muslim philanthropic organisations to actively be part of the process as well as contribute to the content of this new framework as an important stakeholder. Therefore the event will serve as a forum for initial dialogue among participants on how Muslim Philanthropic organisations can engage in the formulation of the post 2015 framework; contributing both to the formulation process as well as in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Format

The format will include guest remarks, interactive discussion and a networking coffee or lunch.

Focus

The speakers will examine the potential of faith-based giving, present social investment opportunities, identify working partners, and suggest focus issues that qualifies faith-based funding.

Outcome

The key outcomes of the event will be to provide increased focus to the importance of faith-based giving, which is crucial to accelerate the MDGs in OIC countries.

The activity is expected to:

- i) broaden the range of issues where faith-based giving can make a difference;
- ii) promote concrete initiatives that already exist and initiate new partnerships;
- iii) enhance the effectiveness of faith-based giving;
- iv) explore alternative funding streams to advance MDGs

Target Audience

The audience will be comprised of Member States, representatives of the United Nations system, grantmaking institutions, private sector companies and banks, academia and civil society active in promoting MDGs.



Activity Partners

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation
World Congress of Muslim Philanthropists
United Nations Millennium Campaign
Islamic Solidarity Fund for Development
International Institute of Islamic Thought
International Zakat Organization

Program Outline

10:00 – 10:15	Welcome and Opening Remarks
10:15 – 11:15	State of MDGs in the Muslim World (panel discussion)
11:15 – 11:30	Coffee Break
11:30 – 12:15	Zakat: The Perspective and Potential (presentations)
12:15 – 12:30	Keynote Speech
12:30 – 13:00	Remarks from the selected participants

Inquiries

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Participation to the event is FREE but subject to an accreditation process. Additional details will be provided upon registration.