



**Asian Media Summit 2006
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**Advocacy of the Millennium Development Goals:
Role of Broadcasters**

**Address by
Mr Kim Hak-Su
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Your Excellency, Mr Cerge Remonde, Secretary of Information, Government of the Philippines,

Your Excellency, Mr Khieu Kanharith, Minister of Information, Royal Government of Cambodia,

Your Excellency, Mr Hussain Shihab, Minister of Information and Arts, Government of Maldives,

Dr Javad Mottaghi, Director, Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development (AIBD)

Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour to join you all in this important summit of Asian broadcasters.

I thank AIBD and all its co-sponsors for dedicating this session to examining the role of broadcasters in advancing the development agenda for the 21st century.

The Indian Ocean tsunami was a story that went out in an instant to every corner of the world. The tragedy, captured on camera, helped mobilize over 13 billion US dollars for relief and rebuilding. This generosity poured in from countries rich and poor, from governments and from individuals, to help those affected.

There is another kind of tsunami, the daily “tsunami “of poverty, hunger, disease and death, and environmental degradation that unfolds silently, affecting millions more adults and children.

The Millennium Development Goals, with their time-bound targets, are sweeping efforts to counter the daily waves of silent tragedies. The Goals are designed to inject a sense of urgency and to hold leaders at all levels accountable.

You may have heard of the Millennium Development Goals. Or you may not. Just what are these Goals, often called the MDGs?

The MDGs are the international blueprint for human development. There are eight goals to be achieved by the year 2015. These goals are the means of implementing the Millennium Declaration --- to which 189 governments committed at the dawn of this century.

The goals represent the collective vision of a better world --- with less poverty, a world where every child is educated, where gender equality is the norm, a world with healthy mothers and children, a world no longer threatened by the HIV/AIDS pandemic and dwindling environmental resources. And these goals can only be achieved through global partnership, including partnership with broadcasters like you.

You may ask, what would broadcasters gain from reporting on MDG-related news and stories?

In a BBC on-line survey, three out of four respondents showed interest in learning more about poverty in developing countries.

This is indicative of a global market for development stories. It also means that your stories on the human drama of MDG issues, wherever they unfold, could attract not only domestic attention but also global interest.

More importantly, you could become change agents in catalysing support to alter the lives of many whom the MDGs aspire to reach. And we urge you to stay with the story.

We're now six years into the new millennium. As the fastest growing region in the world, Asia-Pacific is also leading the world in reducing income poverty. Since 1990, as many as 300 million people have been set free from the poverty trap. The region is also nearly reaching the goal of universal primary education, with most countries achieving gender parity in education.

But these remarkable gains, underpinned by spectacular economic growth, are dented by grim statistics on other fronts:

- *The fight to prevent women from dying of pregnancy and delivery complications has stagnated.* In 22 countries, there is no change in the death rates, and in some, the number has even risen.
- *Every day, 14,000 children die before they reach their fifth birthday.* And nearly half of all young children in South Asia are malnourished.
- *Over 9 million adults and children in Asia-Pacific are living with HIV.* The virus is still spreading. Some countries that enjoyed low HIV prevalence rates are now on the brink of a generalized epidemic.

- *Our forests are vanishing faster than ever before in the region's history. And carbon dioxide emission levels are shooting up rapidly.*

Media Friends,

For putting a human face to the MDGs, your role is all-important. You have a role in shaping public policy, and the human development agenda. *You* could alter the course of history.

On global and regional TV, we see reports on a range of human development and environmental issues. We also see national and local media capture hearts and minds.

As change agents, you serve the public interest by reporting on issues that affect ordinary people and marginalized groups. People want to know how well their country is doing, and what their elected representatives have achieved. Your stories could remind policy makers of their commitment to fighting the daily onslaught of silent tragedies.

The key to spreading the news about the MDGs is through local languages, and by using pictures to tell the story. Our film, "A Future within Reach", jointly produced by UNESCAP and TVE Asia Pacific, provides a quick overview of how Asia-Pacific is faring in its pursuit of the MDGs. The film is available in seven languages, including Bahasa Indonesia, Bengali, Chinese, English, Hindi, Urdu and Russian.

You could also involve politicians and celebrities in high-profile media events, to generate popular support for MDG action. You could hold public debates with them, visit poor areas with them to witness MDG action, or position them as MDG spokespersons.

Last but not least, you could help track MDG progress by conducting on-line surveys to engage the public in this and to raise public awareness and knowledge of the MDGs.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is our shared responsibility to turn around conditions for the millions who are deprived of basic services and equal opportunities, so that they may live healthy, productive lives. It is our joint obligation to continuously advocate the need for cheaper life-saving medicines to treat malaria, tuberculosis, and AIDS. It is our duty to remind all stakeholders that environmental protection is today's necessary insurance for the future.

I invite you to use your creativity in the media world to convey these messages in ways that not only inform but also engender social change.

The partnership between the public sector, the development community and the media has come a long way.

We can make a greater difference by forging a stronger alliance now.

Thank you.
