



STAND UP 2010: Q&A

Q. What is STAND UP about? What are you standing up for?

A. Every year for three days across the globe, events are organized of all types to bring attention to the worldwide crisis that we all face -- poverty.

In Canada, we Stand Up to show our government that Canadians want Canada to keep its promises to end poverty here at home and abroad.

Stand Up is in its fifth year and every year this global movement is growing. Last year over 173 million people took part in the three days of global action.

Q. Where can I find more information about Stand Up events?

A. The Canadian Stand Up web site is:
<http://www.makepovertyhistory.ca/standup/>

For a list of events organized by province and city, go to:
<http://www.makepovertyhistory.ca/standup/events>

The international Stand Up web site is:
<http://standagainstopoverty.org/>

Q. What are you hoping to achieve through Stand Up events?

A. Stand Up events are about awareness building in Canada and sending a clear message to Canadian politicians. Decision-makers need to know that Canadians care and want to address poverty at home and abroad.

Q. Last year over 173 million people stood up. What numbers are you expecting this year?

A. It's anticipated that once again millions of people around the world will Stand UP against poverty. As of September 14, over 50 events have been planned to take place across Canada.

Q. What organizations are involved in Stand Up?

A. Stand Up events are being organized in Canada at the national level by Amnesty International and Make Poverty History and by several organizations at the local level including the Micah Challenge, CUSO-VSO (in Toronto) and the BC Council for International Cooperation (Vancouver). At the international level, the campaign is organized by the United Nations Millennium Campaign, Amnesty International, Oxfam, the Global Campaign Against Poverty (GCAP) and others.

Q. What are the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)?

A. In 2000, leaders from 189 nations signed on to the MDGs and we are now two-thirds towards the deadline for achieving the MDGs. The MDG's set an unprecedented global framework for development that is a crucial step towards ending poverty and inequality by 2015.

The eight MDG goals include:

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Promote gender equality and empower women
4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve maternal health
6. Combat HIV/AIDs, malaria, and other diseases
7. Ensure environmental sustainability
8. Develop a global partnership for development

Q. What's been the progress so far on the MDGs? Is there any hope of meeting the 2015 deadline?

A. With only five years to go before the target date of 2015, progress has stalled or even reversed on some of the Goals because of the impacts of climate change, the food price crisis, and the global economic crisis. Progress is also threatened by donor countries who are freezing or cutting aid budgets. Canada has announced it will freeze aid at 2010 levels in 2011.

Q. What outcomes are you looking for from the UN MDG summit taking place in New York in September 2010?

A. The core message of the Stand Up campaign needs to be heard by delegates attending the Summit. Delegates at the summit need to achieve a global breakthrough – the creation of an accountable and realistic plan to meet the MDGs by 2015.

Q. Where does Canada stand on the Millennium Development Goals? What is Canada's record in terms of achieving the MDGs?

A. From the Executive Summary of the *Canadian Millennium Development Goal Report 2010* (www.makepovertyhistory.ca/learn/issues/mdgs):

Canada has made a positive contribution towards the global effort to achieve several of the Millennium Development Goals since they were adopted by world leaders at the United Nations in 2000.

Canada has contributed to the eradication of hunger by increasing its food aid and directing more aid towards agricultural development and food production in poor countries (Goal 1). It has played a leadership role in promoting gender equality (Goal 3).

Canada also helped to establish the Catalytic Initiative to save children's lives (Goal 4). And Canada has been giving its fair share of funding for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria (Goal 6). But Canada's contribution falls short of what is needed on achieving universal primary education (Goal 2), improving maternal health (Goal 5), and ensuring environmental sustainability (Goal 7).

On its contribution to global partnership for development (Goal 8), Canada also compares very poorly with other developed countries on its foreign aid spending as a percentage of its national income. It currently ranks 14th out of 23 donor countries and is stuck at less than half way to the UN 0.7% aid target. The Report warns that the announced freezing of aid at the 2010 level will worsen this situation.

Q. How can Canada and other donor nations afford to give to the world's poor with the current global economic downturn? How realistic is it for Canada to unfreeze it's aid budget in this context?

A. We can't afford not to. If a global economy recovery is to be sustainable it has to be globally inclusive. If billions of dollars of public money can be spent bailing out bankers and Wall Street brokers, there are clearly resources available for the most vulnerable. It's simply a matter of political will.

Q. What's happening around the world with this year's Stand Up events?

A. "Stand Up" events being organized across the globe include:

- Concerts across Bangladesh, Cambodia, Columbia, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Korea, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Rwanda, Senegal, and Zimbabwe, where local artists will sing their support of the MDGs.

- In Jordan, 40,000 children are expected to simultaneously blow whistles in support of the MDGs, in an attempt to set a new world record.
- In India, "Stand Up" will kick off with a film festival on September 17.
- In New York City, Lincoln Plaza will be the hub of Stand Up activity on September 19, with exhibitions on promises and progress to end poverty as well as speakers and performers.
- In Paris, French citizens and civil society organizations are organizing a flash mob and Stand Up moment in front of the Eiffel Tower on September 18.
- In Washington, DC citizens will come together with local musicians, drummers and bands just two blocks from the White House, to amplify their voices in support of the MDGs.
- In the Philippines, various fiestas in towns and cities nationwide will be dedicated to the call for the achievement of the MDGs, including events from September 17-19 where citizens will play indigenous materials including coconuts and bamboo guitars.
- In Columbia, the United Nations, in partnership with the National Soccer League, will invite 30,000 spectators at one of the most important soccer matches of the season to Stand Up on September 19.
- In Egypt, religious leaders will give sermons calling for an end to poverty in more than 50,000 mosques and at Sunday masses in churches across the country. A national youth rally will take place on September 17 at the historic site of the Giza pyramids, entitled "The Sphinx Stands Against Poverty."

The "Stand Up and Take Action" mobilization comes amidst an ongoing process of citizen engagement with their leaders in support of the MDGs. Upcoming activities include the launch of an alternate report on MDG progress in India and the Philippines on September 15; a dedicated MDG Week in the Philippines House of Representatives where citizens will launch a roadmap for poverty reduction; and a collective appeal in support of the MDGs to be presented to the government of Nepal on September 15.