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OPINION

MDGs: Time is running out

by Navi Pillay

Dayaram expected to hold his baby in his arms. Instead, he was left to mourn his wife and unborn child. They died of complications during labour because Dayaram's wife, Pushpa, had to walk fifty kilometres from her remote village in northern India to the nearest hospital. Pushpa's fate is not exceptional.

Saving the lives of the many women like Pushpa is the aim of one of the eight Millennium Development Goals which the world's leaders endorsed 10 years ago. The leaders will meet again this September to assess progress in reaching these Goals, which were conceived to reduce poverty, hunger and disease and to promote gender equality, health, education, environmental sustainability and global partnerships by 2015. Full implementation of these MDGs is literally vital, as is tackling violations of human rights from which poverty and exclusion almost invariably stem. The lives of the world's poorest and most vulnerable people are at stake.

According to current World Bank estimates, more than 1.4 billion people live in extreme poverty. The recent food, economic and financial crises will push an additional 64 million people into extreme poverty by the end of this year. Over 1 billion people suffer from malnutrition. In sub-Saharan Africa and parts of Asia, poverty remains stubbornly high; the number of persons living below US\$1 a day went up by 92 million in sub-Saharan Africa and by 8 million in Western Asia between 1990 and 2005.

In many countries, hundreds of pregnant rural women like Pushpa die unnecessarily because of a lack of accessible medical care. Maternal health is a human rights concern. Indeed, implicit in the MDGs is the concern that all people should be able to meet their basic human rights, including the right to food, to shelter, to education, to obtain remedies when their rights are violated, and to fully participate in public life. The interrelation between freedom from want and freedom from fear is made explicit by the UN Charter and by international human rights law. It must also be regarded as a central tenet of the world leaders' discussions on the MDGs.

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UNIC ALBUM

International Year of Youth launched in New Delhi

The United Nations Information Centre collaborated with Jesus and Mary College, University of Delhi, in launching 2010-2011 International Year of Youth.

Jesus and Mary College Principal **Dr. Sister Marina John** and UN Information Officer **Rajiv Chandran** together released balloons with the Year's logo and addressed students on the Year's theme: *Dialogue and Mutual Understanding*.



A parallel launch took place at the Faculty of Management Studies, South Campus, University of Delhi.



Photos: Sarabjit Dhillon

UNIC ALBUM

... and in Mumbai

The International Year of Youth got off to a festive start in Mumbai, with young icons from the film and business communities gathering at SNDT Women's University to launch the Year.



University Vice Chancellor **Prof. Dr. Chandra Krishnamurthy**, UNIC Assistant Information Officer **Rineeta Naik**, University Registrar **Dr. Madhu Madan**, Maharashtra United Nations Association (MUNA) Executive Chairman **Mohini Mathur**, SNDT Campus In-charge **Dr. Chandrakant Puri**, and Advocate and IFUNA Executive Committee member **Ashraf Ahmed Shaikh** addressed the gathering.

Film actor **Ruslaan Mumtaz** and entrepreneur and former Miss Morocco **Imane Karouach** were special guests at the event.



As part of the launch, SNDT University, in collaboration with the United Nations Information Centre, also hosted a three-day exhibition titled **Lessons from Rwanda**, which included screenings of the award-winning documentary film **As We Forgive** and the much-acclaimed **Invictus**.



Students from SNDT Women's University put up a scintillating cultural performance for the guests, including a skit, dances and a yoga demonstration.

The event concluded with the release of balloons with the Year's logo in the University quadrangle.