

At the WSSD, the governments committed themselves to have national plans for eradicating poverty elaborated during 1996. They had to be able –via studies, projections and political will– to define the date, approximately the year they estimated people in their countries would stop perishing while giving birth or dying while growing. The year in which people, all the people, would stop walking three kilometres to reach safe drinking water or ten to arrive at the nearest school and find it roofless, bookless and with no teachers.

The 1996 UN General Assembly went by, the Year for the Eradication of Poverty went by. National Social Watch coalitions extensively report in this book about anti-poverty efforts in their countries. Internationally, UNDP, the United Nations Development Programme, is the main agency in charge of the Social Summit follow-up. UNDP launched in March 1996 a Poverty Strategies Initiative (PSI), in support of the government's implementation of the WSSD commitments.

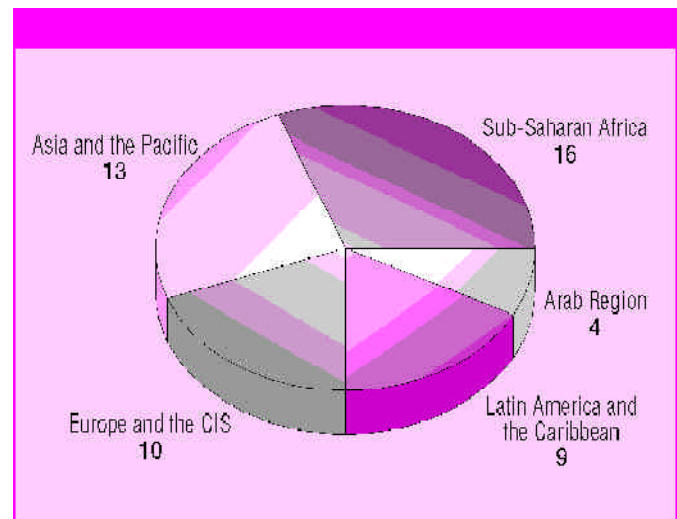
The Initiative is being financed from UNDP redeployed resources amounting to \$11 and donor contributions to a Trust Fund for Follow-Up Activities to WSSD, which has been especially established to support the achievement of the WSSD poverty eradication commitments. Donor pledges currently stand at \$9 million, including \$1mn and \$2mn already transferred to the UNDP treasuries by the Governments of Denmark and the Netherlands, respectively. Additional commitments are expected from the Governments of Norway and Switzerland, amounting to up to \$7.5 million.

## CURRENT STATUS

As of 31 October 1996, 52 proposals from UNDP programme countries have been approved for PSI funding. Almost half of the projects approved originated in low-income countries, and about 40% in LDCs. In terms of human development, more than 50% of the proposals have come from countries with medium human development status, with a further 40% belonging to the low human development category. (See Graphic)

The fact that work has begun in over 50 programme countries in just seven months since the launching of the initiative is con-

## STILL DYING WHILE GROWING AND GIVING BIRTH



sidered by UNDP as a positive development. It shows a high degree of interest on the part of UNDP programme countries as well as responsiveness and celerity on the part of UNDP country offices and headquarters.

Another 15–20 proposals are currently in the pipeline, awaiting for additional funding to become available for programming. In this regard, the Government of Norway has formally expressed its willingness to contribute up to NOK 35 million to the PSI Trust Fund. Half of the amount will be geared towards supporting country level implementation of the 20/20 initiative, aimed at the promotion of universal access to basic social services for all. Negotiations are currently under way in order to finalise the agreement with Norway and have the funds transferred to UNDP at an early date.

Likewise, the Government of Switzerland is considering the possibility of contributing an amount of SF 2 million to the Trust Fund, and a final decision from the Swiss is expected soon.

All the proposals are geared toward providing upstream support in the areas of poverty analysis, policy review and strategy formulation. This has often involved undertaking poverty surveys and assessments to supplement existing poverty information

where data gaps exist; engaging national partners in a review of the policy and institutional framework for poverty reduction; assessing the impact of current social policy and poverty programmes on vulnerable groups; mapping alternative policy choices for poverty reduction; building consensus and validation among national actors on the nature and causes of poverty as well as the most effective strategies to combat it; and strengthening national capacity for poverty and social policy analysis, monitoring and evaluation of social programmes, etc. In at least one case (Burkina Faso), the PSI has provided an opportunity for linking WSSD follow-up with the implementation of the 20/20 initiative, focusing on the restructuring of public expenditures for provision of

universal access to basic social services.

According to UNDP «the Poverty Strategies Initiative has been proceeding smoothly until now, demonstrating a high degree of commitment on the part of UNDP country offices and national partners to the agreement reached at Copenhagen. Lessons are being drawn as implementation gets under way, and will be widely disseminated and shared among countries and regions.

Donor contributions for the Poverty Strategies Initiative, furthermore, have not materialised as quickly as had been expected. This has created a shortage of resources in the case of various regional bureaux, leading to a slowdown in the implementation of the Initiative.»

List of approved and pipelined projects, classified by countries according to geographic region

Arab Region	Asia and the Pacific	Eastern Europe & Central Asia	Latin Amer. & the Caribbean	Sub-Saharan Africa
Approved Djibouti Marruecos Sudán Yemen	Approved Afghanistan Bhutan Cambodia China Fiji Iran Maldives Mongolia Myanmar Papua New Guinea Thailand Vanuatu Vietnam	Approved Armenia Bulgaria Georgia Kyrgyzstan Latvia Moldova Romania Turkey Turkmenistan Uzbekistan	Approved Cuba Grenada Guatemala Guyana Honduras Mexico Nicaragua Paraguay Trinidad & Tobago	Approved Botswana Burkina Faso Central African Republic Ethiopia Gabon Gambia Ghana Guinea Bissau Kenya Malawi Mauritania Senegal South Africa Tanzania Togo Zimbabwe
Pipeline Jordan Lebanon United Arab Emirates	Pipeline India Nepal	Pipeline Azerbaijan Polan	Pipeline Argentina Costa Rica Dominican Rep. El Salvador Panama Peru	Pipeline Angola Cape Verde Mali Tchad Uganda