

From Columbus: General Convention affirms Millennium Development Goals

[Episcopal News Service] The House of Deputies joined the House of Bishops June 18 in supporting the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and urging parishes, missions, congregations and dioceses across the Episcopal Church to work for their implementation.

The MDGs are an eight-pronged declaration that has at its core the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger by the year 2015.

In what has become a major mission and evangelism emphasis of this General Convention, the MDG resolution (D022):

- Establishes achieving the MDGs as a stated mission priority of the Episcopal Church for the next three years;
- Urges each diocese, congregation and parishioner to give 0.7 percent toward the MDGs by July 7, 2007; i.e. by 07/07/07;
- Designates the Last Sunday after Pentecost as a special day of prayer, fasting and giving in the Episcopal Church toward global reconciliation and the Millennium Development Goals;
- Calls on every diocese to establish a global reconciliation commission to mobilize Episcopalians to work for achieving the goals of the MDGs;
- Endorses the "ONE Episcopalian" campaign that calls on the U.S. government to spend an additional 1 percent of its budget to combat global poverty; and
- Asks the budget committee of the Episcopal Church to consider a line item equal to 0.7 percent (or roughly \$900,000) in the coming three-year budget for work that supports the MDGs.

In earlier debate, the General Convention added the MDGs to its top mission budget priorities of justice and peace.

The Millennium Development Goals are:

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 and AIDS, malaria and other diseases
7. Ensure environmental sustainability
8. Create a global partnership for development with a focus on debt, aid and trade.

In a companion resolution (A010), deputies concurred with the bishops in affirming "Call to Partnership," a communiqué to the United Nations from an ecumenical group of Christian bodies that make up the Consultation of Religious Leaders on Global Poverty.

-- -- Melodie Woerman is director of communications for the Diocese of Kansas.