

# SAAWatch

## The MDG Review Summit 2010: how will the EU contribute?

On June 14<sup>th</sup> the EU Foreign Affairs and Development Ministers' Council adopted the EU position on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for the MDG Review Summit in September. Stop AIDS Alliance is disappointed with the position adopted as there is no concrete commitment or action proposed by the EU. While these Council conclusions do refer to the recently adopted EU strategy on global health, there are no concrete proposals on how the EU will en-

sure that the three health MDGs 4, 5 and 6 will be achieved by 2015. The EU is still the largest provider of development aid in the world, which gives it a critical responsibility in ensuring the health of millions of poor people living in developing countries, especially the most vulnerable and marginalized, who often lack access to basic health care. Even in times of financial uncertainty in many EU Member States, there is no time for complacency. The EU should

commit to the adoption of a concrete and action-oriented MDG rescue plan, which recognises the importance of tackling the MDGs as one holistic package and with concrete financial allocations, in particular to the MDGs most off track. The health MDGs are most off track of all MDGs. In 2008, an estimated 2.7 million new HIV infections occurred and an estimated 2 million people died due to AIDS-related illnesses worldwide.

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## EU responses to a widening HIV/AIDS treatment gap

On 23 June, Stop AIDS Alliance contributed to a debate titled "HIV/AIDS treatment gap widening in Sub-Saharan Africa: what is the European Union doing?" organised by the European Parliament's Working Group on Innovation, Access to Medicines and Poverty-Related Diseases. The meeting, hosted by MEP Michael Cashman gathered together around 50

participants including MEPs, EU civil servants and NGO representatives. Speakers included Mit Philips, author of the Médecins Sans Frontières report "No time to quit: HIV/AIDS treatment gap widening in Africa", Stefan Emblad of the Global Fund, Juan Garay of the European Commission and Guy Rayée, Development Advisor at

the Belgium Permanent Representation to the EU. Stop AIDS Alliance gave a presentation on the *EU's funding mechanisms towards HIV/AIDS*. It showed that it is becoming increasingly complex to monitor the EU's spending to tackle AIDS, especially on activities that focus on HIV prevention or stigma and discrimination of people

living with HIV. This is mainly due to two shifts in the EU's development cooperation: a move from earmarked disease specific financing to strengthening the health sector overall and a move from targeted project financing to budget support. SAA provided specific recommendations for the EU to address those issues in its funding modalities.

## A kick-off for children's health

On June 16<sup>th</sup> at the European Parliament in Strasbourg, Action for Global Health including Stop AIDS Alliance, joined with MEPs and other distinguished guests to mark African Child Day with a football themed event targeting child health. At the event, chaired by MEP Michael Cashman, guests were invited to kick off for children's

health by shooting goals, playing an online game and committing to take greater action for the Health MDGs and in particular for MDG4 (reduce child mortality). Stop AIDS Alliance participated in rolling a giant football through the Parliament to raise awareness on MDG4, collecting more than 50 MEP signatures in support of the cause. Partici-

pants were challenged to test their knowledge of child health by playing the new online game [www.mdg4.eu](http://www.mdg4.eu), now available in 5 languages. The statistics are clear on why Stop AIDS Alliance wants to highlight the links between HIV and child mortality: An estimated 430,000 children under 15 years of age were infected with HIV in 2008, 2.1 million children

were living with HIV at the end of 2008 and AIDS is the leading cause of under-five mortality in the six highest HIV prevalence countries.

