

AN ORGANIZATION OF
SCIENCE MUSEUMS AND
CENTERS THAT ARE
DEDICATED TO
FURTHERING PUBLIC
UNDERSTANDING OF
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

RECEPTION AND DISCUSSION

A CALL TO ACTION FOR SCIENCE EDUCATION TO SUPPORT THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS



ASSOCIATION OF
SCIENCE-TECHNOLOGY
CENTERS
INCORPORATED

On the occasion of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals Summit, September 20-22, 2010, the Association of Science Technology Centers, Inc. (ASTC) will host a reception and discussion, in cooperation with the World Ocean Network (WON), UNESCO, The Millennium Campaign, and major science center networks worldwide.

The event, hosted by Flanders Investment and Trade, Government of Flanders (Belgium), will take place on:

Tuesday 9/21/2010 from 10.30am until 12.30pm
“The Flanders House” in the New York Times building.
620 8th Avenue, NY 10018 (44th Floor).

The United Nations adopted a resolution on December 21, 2009 calling for the convening of a High-Level Plenary Meeting of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly “to galvanize commitment, rally support and spur collective action in order to reach the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.” The resolution notes further that the meeting – the so-called “MDG Summit” - will be held from Monday, 20 September 2010, to Wednesday, 22 September 2010, in New York with the participation of Heads of State or Government. The meeting will be composed of six plenary sessions and six concurrently running interactive round-table sessions.

The Millennium Declaration adopted in 2000 and the actions set forth in the Millennium Development Goals correspond closely with the priorities of science centers and museums worldwide. Science centers and museums are taking the opportunity of this upcoming Summit to highlight the important role that these institutions play in advancing education and public engagement concerning the MDGs. Support for the MDGs is a principle set forth as well in the Toronto Declaration to which these institutions subscribed at the Fifth Science Center World Congress in June 2008.

These science institutions have circulated a formal Declaration to the UN High-Level Plenary Meeting that urges strong endorsement and action at national, regional, and global levels to enable science centers and museums worldwide to inform, educate, and engage the public more deeply in these critical issues. The Declaration, addressed to Summit delegates, includes the following recommendations:

“Strongly urge them to incorporate within the outcome document of the MDG Summit process some specific references to the valuable role of informal science education platforms such as:

- Progress toward the achievement of the millennium development goals by 2015 requires increased commitment by all countries to greater public discourse and education about critical issues;
- Public discourse and education about the successes, best practices, opportunities, as well as the challenges and obstacles to achievement of the millennium development goals, must be based on objective understanding of the scientific underpinnings of these global concerns”. (...)

And suggest that they, therefore, should:

- “Call on all nations to commit the support necessary for science centers and museums to fulfill the valuable role of 1) helping citizens worldwide to engage more effectively in efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, and 2) preparing the next generation of leaders and global citizens for further successes in responsible stewardship of the planet .”

Supporting this important Declaration, ASTC and co-hosts will convene a reception and discussion on the occasion of the MDG Summit on September 21 to bring global attention to the need for science education in support of the millennium development goals and to highlight the vital role that science centers and the informal science education community can play in this domain. A discussion hosted by Bud Rock, ASTC CEO and featuring speakers from the Millennium Campaign, UNESCO will be joined by leaders of the informal science education field, including Lesley Lewis CEO of the Ontario Science Center and initiator of the “Toronto Declaration” and Margaret Honey, CEO of the NY Hall of Science. The event will be streamed live on the Internet and CEO’s of other science center networks will comment on the discussion from their home towns. The event will include discussion with delegates from several countries represented at the Summit to define additional concrete steps of action to implement support to the MDGs.