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# U.N. to add to funds for development

UNITED NATIONS

**But some aid groups are skeptical \$40 billion pledged will materialize**

BY NEIL MACFARQUHAR

Secretary General Ban Ki-moon planned to end a development summit meeting of world leaders on Wednesday by announcing a huge increase in aid to improve the health of women and children, but independent specialists said they were skeptical about the amount of actual new money committed, given the global economic crisis.

Governments and private aid organizations committed to spending more than \$40 billion toward that goal, Robert Orr, the assistant secretary general leading the effort, said Tuesday, and pledges were still flowing in.

U.N. officials said they hoped that the bulk of the \$40 billion would go to the poorest 49 countries, those least able to afford money from their own budgets. But those countries alone need a projected \$88 billion over the next five years to meet the goals.

Aid groups remain skeptical that the traditional donors among Western nations will really increase their giving at a time when they are slashing budgets. In addition, experts say, any announced increases, like France and Norway pledging to increase by 20 percent previous commitments to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, still fall short of the need.

"It has to be more than announcing amounts at a summit, it is about going home and putting that money in national budgets," said Emma Seery, a development specialist at Oxfam International, a global anti-poverty organization. "I am not seeing where the money is coming from."

At the development meeting on Tuesday, Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany said that her country would not cut its aid budget, but she did not announce any increase. "The primary responsibility for development lies with the governments of the developing countries," she said. "Development aid cannot continue indefinitely."