

MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

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The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were introduced in the Millennium Declaration, which was signed by 189 states and adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations during the United Nations Millennium Summit on September 6-8, 2000. The eight MDGs and 18 targets formulate a comprehensive set of development objectives, to be attained by 2015. Additionally, the United Nations observe 48 indicators to measure progress towards the MDGs. As the MDGs have been endorsed by a large number of UN member governments and international organizations, they also provide a framework of accountability for the outcomes of international development efforts.

Specifically, the Millennium Declaration establishes the following goals and targets:

Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger.

Target 1: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than \$1 a day.

Target 2: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.

Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education.

Target 3: Ensure that by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling.

Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women.

Target 4: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and at all levels of education no later than 2015.

Goal 4: Reduce child mortality.

Target 5: Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate.

Goal 5: Improve Maternal Health.

Target 6: Reduce by three-quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio.

Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases.

Target 7: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS.

Target 8: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases.

Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability.

Target 9: Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programs and reverse the loss of environmental resources.

Target 10: Halve by 2015 the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation.

Target 11: Have achieved a significant improvement by 2020 in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers.

Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development.

Target 12: Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, nondiscriminatory trading and financial system (including a commitment to good governance, development, and poverty reduction, nationally and internationally).

Target 13: Address the special needs of the least developed countries (including tariff- and quota-free access for exports of the least developed countries; enhanced debt relief for heavily indebted poor countries and cancellation of official bilateral debt; and more generous official development assistance for countries committed to reducing poverty).

Target 14: Address the special needs of landlocked countries and small island developing states.

Target 15: Deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries through national and international measures to make debt sustainable in the long term.

Target 16: In cooperation with developing countries, develop and implement strategies for decent and productive work for youth.

Target 17: In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable, essential drugs in developing countries.

Target 18: In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communication.

Progress towards attainment of these goals and targets is measured by the United Nations using 48 Millennium Development Indicators, such as the proportion of people living under US\$ 1 a day, the net enrolment rate in primary education, the ratio of literate women to men (ages 15-24), the under-five mortality rate, HIV prevalence among women aged 15-24, the proportion of land area covered by forest, and the level of official development assistance.

At the time of writing, progress towards achieving the MDGs has been uneven. For example, the World Bank's *Global Monitoring Report 2006* observes that the share of people in developing countries living at less than US\$ 1 per day will fall to 10.2 percent by 2015 (from 27.9 percent in 1990). However, most of this progress is accounted for by large declines in poverty rates in Asia, while poverty rates in sub-Saharan Africa have improved only

modestly since 1990 (from 44.6 percent in 1990 to 44.0 percent in 2002) and under current projections are expected to fall to 38 percent by 2015, far above the target of 22.3 percent.

By specifying quantitative targets for development outcomes, the MDGs also provide a framework for holding development agencies, international organizations, and recipient countries accountable for the outcomes of development assistance. For example, they lend themselves for analyses of whether aid commitments are consistent with or fall short of the goal of attaining the MDGs. (The *Global Monitoring Report 2006* suggests that, in most cases, the latter case applies.)

The commitment towards attaining the MDGs has contributed to (or at least coincided with) an increase in official development assistance, which has risen from an average of US\$ 59 billion annually (1996-2000) to US\$ 106 billion in 2005 for OECD donor/creditor countries (partly reflecting an increase in debt relief and the emerging international response to HIV/AIDS). While the most recent data on external aid (2006) show no further increase in external aid (excluding debt relief) for OECD countries, aid specifically to sub-Saharan Africa is expected to increase, in line with commitments made at the G8 Summit in Gleneagles in 2005, and some “new” donor countries (most notably, China) have increased their aid commitments.

Have the MDGs been effective? While it is too early to answer this question (they relate to 2015), recent experience provides some pointers. Overall aid has increased over the period the MDGs relate to, although these increased efforts, so far, fall short of what would be required to meet the MDGs. Nevertheless, the MDG targets provide (literally) a measure of accountability for aid outcomes, and therefore reinforce or sustain the momentum towards increased development aid.

Further Reading

Most of the information relating to the Millennium Development Goals is available online, including through websites which provide regular data updates. The most important ones are the United Nations Millennium Assembly website (<http://www.un.org/millennium/>), the United Nations Millennium Goals website (<http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>), the United Nations Millennium Development Indicators website (<http://mdgs.un.org/>), and the World Bank’s MDG website (<http://ddp-ext.worldbank.org/ext/GMIS/home.do?siteId=2>).

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