

Module 2.4 Unit 1.6 MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are eight international development goals that were established following the Millennium Summit of the United Nations in 2000, following the adoption of the United Nations Millennium Declaration. All 189 United Nations member states at the time (there are 193 currently) and at least 23 international organizations committed to help achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, the goals are as follows:

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 in 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 programmes 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 by 2020 a significant improvement 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, non-discriminatory trading and financial system (includes a commitment to good governance, development and poverty reduction—both nationally and internationally).

Target 13 Address the special needs of the Least Developed Countries (includes tariff- and quota-free access for Least Developed Countries' exports, enhanced programme of debt relief for HIPC and cancellation of official bilateral debt and more generous ODA for countries committed to poverty reduction).

Target 14 Address the special needs of landlocked countries and small island developing states (through the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and the twenty second General Assembly provisions).

Target 15 Deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries through national and international measures in order 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 technologies.

BACKGROUND

Millennium Summit

Preparations for the 2000 Millennium Summit launched with the report of the Secretary-General entitled, "We the Peoples: The Role of the United Nations in the Twenty-First Century". Additional input was prepared by the Millennium Forum, which brought together representatives of over 1,000 non-governmental and civil society organizations from more than 100 countries. The Forum met in May to conclude a two-year consultation process covering issues such as poverty eradication, environmental protection, human rights and protection of the vulnerable.

MDGs derive from earlier development targets, where world leaders adopted the United Nations Millennium Declaration. The approval of the Millennium Declaration was the main outcome of the Millennium Summit. The MDGs originated from the United Nations Millennium Declaration. The Declaration asserted that every individual has dignity; and hence, the right to freedom, equality, a basic standard of living that includes freedom from hunger and violence and encourages tolerance and solidarity. The MDGs set concrete targets and indicators for poverty reduction in order to achieve the rights set forth in the Declaration.

PRECURSORS

The Brahimi Report provided the basis of the goals in the area of peace and security.

The Millennium Summit Declaration was, however, only part of the origins of the MDGs. More ideas came from Adam Figueroa, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. A series of UN-led conferences in the 1990s focused on issues such as children, nutrition, human rights and women. The OECD criticized major donors for reducing their levels of Official Development Assistance (ODA). UN Secretary General Kofi Annan signed a report titled, *We the Peoples: The Role of the United Nations in the 21st Century*. The OECD had formed its International Development Goals (IDGs). The two efforts were combined for the World Bank's 2001 meeting to form the MDGs.

Human capital, infrastructure and human rights

The MDG emphasized three areas: *human capital, infrastructure and human rights* (social, economic and political), with the intent of increasing living standards. Human capital objectives include nutrition, healthcare (including child mortality, HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, and reproductive health) and education. Infrastructure objectives include access to safe drinking water, energy and modern information/communication technology; increased farm outputs using sustainable practices; transportation, and environment. Human rights objectives include empowering women, reducing violence, increasing political voice, ensuring equal access to public services and increasing security of property rights. The goals were intended to increase an individual's human capabilities and "advance the means to a productive life". The MDGs emphasize that each nation's policies should be tailored to that country's needs; therefore most policy suggestions are general.

PARTNERSHIP

MDGs emphasize the role of developed countries in aiding developing countries, as outlined in Goal Eight, which sets objectives and targets for developed countries to achieve a "global partnership for development" by supporting fair trade, debt relief, increasing aid, access to affordable essential medicines and encouraging technology transfer. Thus developing nations became partners with developed nations in the struggle to reduce world poverty.

GAPS

General

General criticisms include a perceived lack of *analytical power and justification* behind the chosen objectives. The MDGs *lack strong objectives and indicators* for within-country equality, despite significant disparities in many developing nations. Further critique of the MDGs is that the mechanism being used is that *they seek to introduce local change through external innovations supported by external financing*. The counter proposal being that these goals are better achieved by community initiative, building from resources of solidarity and local growth within existing cultural and government structures. Iterative mobilization of local successes that have proven their effectiveness can scale up to address the larger need through human energy and existing resources using methodologies such as Participatory Rural Appraisal, Asset Based Community Development, or SEED-SCALE, originally developed under UNICEF and now tested in a number of countries over two decades.

Lack of Legitimacy

The entire MDG process has been accused of lacking legitimacy as a result of failure to include, often, the voices of the very participants that the MDGs seek to assist. The International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty, in its Post 2015 thematic consultation document on MDG 1 states "The major limitation of the MDGs by 2015 was the lack of political will to implement due to the lack of ownership of the MDGs by the most affected constituencies".

Human rights

According to Deneulin & Shahani the MDGs underemphasize local participation and empowerment (other than women's empowerment). FIAN International, a human rights organization focusing on the right to adequate food, contributed to the Post 2015 process by pointing out a lack of: "primacy of human rights; qualifying policy coherence; and of human rights based monitoring and accountability. "Without such accountability, no substantial change in national and international policies can be expected."

Infrastructure

The MDGs were attacked for insufficient emphasis on environmental sustainability. Thus, they do not capture all elements needed to achieve the ideals set out in the Millennium Declaration.

Agriculture was not specifically mentioned in the MDGs even though most of the world's poor are farmers.

Human capital

MDG 2 focuses on primary education and emphasizes enrollment and completion. In some countries, primary enrollment increased at the expense of achievement levels. In some cases, the emphasis on primary education has negatively affected secondary and post-secondary education.

MDG proponents such as McArthur and Sachs countered that setting goals is still valid despite measurement difficulties, as they provide a political and operational framework to efforts. With an

increase in the quantity and quality of healthcare systems in developing countries, more data could be collected. They asserted that non-health related MDGs were often well measured, and that not all MDGs were made moot by lack of data.

The attention to well being other than income helps bring funding to achieving MDGs. Further MDGs prioritize interventions, establish obtainable objectives with useful measurements of progress despite measurement issues and increased the developed world's involvement in worldwide poverty reduction. MDGs include gender and reproductive rights, environmental sustainability, and spread of technology. Prioritizing interventions helps developing countries with limited resources make decisions about allocating their resources. MDGs also strengthen the commitment of developed countries and encourage aid and information sharing. The global commitment to the goals likely increases the likelihood of their success. They note that MDGs are the most broadly supported poverty reduction targets in world history.

Equity

Further developments in rethinking strategies and approaches to achieving the MDGs include *research by the Overseas Development Institute into the role of equity*. Researchers at the ODI argued that progress could be accelerated due to recent breakthroughs in the role equity plays in creating a virtuous circle where rising equity ensures the poor participate in their country's development and creates reductions in poverty and financial stability. Yet equity should not be understood purely as economic, but also as political.

Women's issues

Kabeer and Heyzer believe that the current MDGs targets do not place enough emphasis on tracking gender inequalities in poverty reduction and employment as there are only gender goals relating to health, education, and political representation. To encourage women's empowerment and progress towards the MDGs, increased emphasis should be placed on gender mainstreaming development policies and collecting data based on gender.

PROGRESS

Progress towards reaching the goals has been uneven across countries. Brazil achieved many of the goals, while others, such as Benin, are not on track to realize any. The major successful countries include China (whose poverty population declined from 452 million to 278 million) and India. The World Bank estimated that MDG 1A (halving the proportion of people living on less than \$1 a day) was achieved in 2008 mainly due to the results from these two countries and East Asia.

In the early 1990s Nepal was one of the world's poorest countries and remains South Asia's poorest country. Doubling health spending and concentrating on its poorest areas halved maternal mortality between 1998 and 2006. Its Multidimensional Poverty Index has seen the largest falls of any tracked country. Bangladesh has made some of the greatest improvements in infant and maternal mortality ever seen, despite modest income growth.

Between 1990 and 2010 the population living on less than \$1.25 a day in developing countries halved to 21%, or 1.2 billion people, achieving MDG1A before the target date, although the biggest decline was in China, which took no notice of the goal. However, the child mortality and maternal mortality are down by less than half. Sanitation and education targets will also be missed.

Sub-Saharan Africa

One success was to strengthen rice production. By the mid-1990s rice imports reached nearly \$1 billion annually. Farmers had not found suitable species that produce high yields. New Rice for Africa (NERICA), a high-yielding and well adapted strain was developed and introduced in areas including

Congo Brazzaville, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea, Kenya, Mali, Nigeria, Togo and Uganda. Some 18 varieties of the hybrid species became available, enabling farmers to produce enough rice to feed their families and have extra to sell.

The region also showed progress towards MDG 2. School fees that included Parent-Teacher Association and community contributions, textbook fees, compulsory uniforms and other charges took up nearly a quarter of a poor family's income and led countries including Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, and Uganda to eliminate such fees, increasing enrollment. For instance, in Ghana, public school enrollment in the most deprived districts soared from 4.2 million to 5.4 million between 2004 and 2005. In Kenya, primary school enrollment added 1.2 million in 2003 and by 2004, the number had climbed to 7.2 million.

European Union

In 2005 the European Union reaffirmed its commitment to the 0.7% aid targets, noting that "four out of the five countries, which exceed the UN target for ODA of 0.7%, of GNI are member states of the European Union". Further, the UN "believe that donors should commit to reaching the long-standing target of 0.7 percent of GNI by 2015".

United States

However, the United States as well as other nations disputed the Monterrey Consensus that urged "developed countries that have not done so to make concrete efforts towards the target of 0.7% of gross national product (GNP) as ODA to developing countries".

Attempts to increase U.S. political attention to the Millennium Development Goals include The Borgen Project which worked with then Senator Barack Obama on the Global Poverty Act, a bill requiring the White House to develop a strategy for achieving the goals. The bill did not pass, despite Obama's two terms as US President.

The US consistently opposed setting specific foreign-aid targets since the UN General Assembly first endorsed the 0.7% goal in 1970.