

FAST FACTS

United Nations
Development Programme



The Millennium Development Goals

In September 2000, 189 world leaders met at the UN and endorsed the Millennium Declaration, a commitment to work together to build a safer, more prosperous and equitable world. The Declaration was translated into a roadmap setting out eight time-bound and measurable goals to be reached by 2015, known as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs):

Goal 1 Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

- Reduce by half the proportion of people whose income is less than \$1 a day
- Reduce by half the proportion of people who suffer from hunger

Goal 2 Achieve universal primary education

- Ensure that all boys and girls complete a full course of primary schooling

Goal 3 Promote gender equality and empower women

- 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

- Reduce by two thirds the mortality of children under five

Goal 5 Improve maternal health

- Reduce maternal mortality by three quarters

Goal 6 Combat HIV and AIDS, malaria and other diseases

- Halt and reverse the spread of HIV and AIDS
- Halt and reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases

Goal 7 Ensure environmental sustainability

- Integrate principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes; reverse the loss of environmental resources
- Halve the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation
- Improve the lives of at least 100 million slum-dwellers by 2020

Goal 8 Develop a global partnership for development

- Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system
- Address special needs of the least developed countries, landlocked countries and small island developing states

- Deal with developing countries' debt
- In cooperation with developing countries, develop and implement strategies for decent and productive work for youth
- In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications

Progress

A decade after the Millennium Declaration, we can point to undeniable progress on some MDGs in many countries. There have been noticeable reductions in poverty globally. Significant improvements have been made in enrolment and gender parity in schools. Progress is evident in reducing child and maternal mortality, increasing HIV treatments and ensuring environmental sustainability. Developing countries are increasingly incorporating the MDGs into their national development strategies, reforming policies and building institutions in order to implement those plans effectively. There have been welcome developments in the global partnership where, although still not complete, some countries have met their commitments.



Photo by UNDP Burkina Faso

Challenges

While the share of poor people is declining, the absolute number of the poor in South Asia and in sub-Saharan Africa is increasing. Countries that achieved rapid reductions in income poverty are not necessarily making the same progress in gender equality and environmental sustainability. Lack of progress in reducing HIV is curtailing improvements in both maternal and child mortality. Moreover, we have not paid enough attention to the quality of education and health services in the rush to

expand coverage. In sub-Saharan Africa, no country is currently on course to achieve all the MDGs by 2015.

MDG progress is also threatened by the combination of high food prices and the impact of the international financial and economic crisis. Sustained poverty and hunger reduction is at risk because of vulnerability to climate change, particularly in the area of agricultural production. Weak institutional capacity in conflict and post-conflict countries slows MDG progress. And rapid urbanization is putting pressure on social services.

Matters of Fact

- 1.2 billion people across the world are hungry. Seven out of ten of them are women and girls.
- Millions of children start school but eventually drop out — too many of them leave school without having acquired the most basic literacy and numeracy skills.
- Women hold 18 percent of seats in parliament.
- Every year, 536,000 women and girls die as a result of complications during pregnancy, childbirth or the six weeks following delivery. 99 percent of them occur in developing countries.
- Two thirds of those living with HIV are in sub-Saharan Africa. Most of them are women.
- 1.2 billion people lack access to basic sanitation. The vast majority of them live in rural areas.
- Aid to the poorest countries falls far short of the 2010 target.

Country-level Evidence

There are important synergies among the MDGs — acceleration in one Goal often speeds up progress in others. For instance, gender equality and women's empowerment have large multiplier impacts on other MDGs. Evidence shows that acceleration of progress is possible when strong government leadership, effective policies and institutional capacity for scaling up public investments are complemented by adequate financial and technical support from the international community. Recent examples include:

- **Malawi's** national fertilizer subsidy programme has been associated with a 25 percent increase total cultivation area. Maize production reached 3.2 million tons in 2007, ensuring self-sufficiency.
- Debt relief through **Nigeria's** Virtual Poverty Fund was directed to agriculture and contributed to doubling agricultural production and farmers' income.
- Abolition of school fees at the primary level contributed to surges of enrolment in **Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, Nepal** and **Tanzania**.
- In **Bahrain**, 98 percent of women participated in a referendum in 2001, paving the way for legislative reforms that gave Bahraini women full rights as citizens.
- **Afghanistan's** Basic Package of Health Services focused on

construction of health centres and hospitals, training of health workers, and large-scale vaccinations. Amidst conflicts, under-five mortality declined significantly between 2002 and 2004.

- **Cambodia's** 100 percent Condom Use Programme contributed to twice as much condom use among sex workers. HIV prevalence declined from 1.2 to 0.7 percent between 2003 and 2008.
- **Panama's** Conditional Cash Transfer Programme provided free primary care services, vaccinations and reproductive health care to 70,599 households, or 95 percent of people living under the poverty line, during 2007–2008.
- **South Asia's** Women Well-being, Work, Waste and Sanitation project trained women as sanitation facilities installers. It also allowed them to earn additional income.
- **Ethiopia** promoted small- and medium-scale enterprises, community-based urban works programmes and constructed over 80,000 public housing units to address the 60 percent rise in slum-dwellers between 1990 and 2008.
- Small-scale microprojects such as provision of low-cost electricity in the form of biofuel multifunctional platforms in **Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali** and **Senegal** have created income-generating opportunities for women, while reducing time poverty by up to six hours a day.

A Global Action Plan

The most important lesson learnt is that the MDGs can be achieved even in the poorest and most disadvantaged countries. Today, the world has the knowledge and resources to accelerate progress. What is required is increased commitment to see through the strategies, policies and interventions. In its International Assessment of what it will take to achieve the MDGs, UNDP proposes the following action agenda:

1. Support country-led development;
2. Foster inclusive economic growth;
3. Increase public investments in education, health, water and sanitation and infrastructure;
4. Scale up targeted interventions, including social protection and employment programmes;
5. Invest in women and girls;
6. Enhance access to alternative energy and promote low-carbon development;
7. Accelerate domestic resource mobilization to finance the MDGs; and
8. Deliver on Official Development Aid commitments, and improve its predictability, effectiveness, division of labour and disbursement modality.

For more information, visit:

www.undp.org

www.undp.org/mdg

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