

FAST FACTS

United Nations
Development Programme



U N
D P

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), namely:

- 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
- 2. Achieve universal primary education**
 - ❖ Ensure that all boys and girls complete a full course of primary schooling
- 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
- 4. Reduce child mortality**
 - ❖ Reduce by two thirds the mortality of children under-five
- 5. Improve maternal health**
 - ❖ Reduce maternal mortality by three quarters
- 6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases**
 - ❖ Halt and reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS
 - ❖ Halt and reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases
- 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
- 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 update

Now at the halfway mark to the 2015 target date, the MDG track record is mixed. Compared to the year 2000, we can point to undeniable progress in some areas in many countries. Global growth rates so far in this century have been high by historical standards. Enrolment in primary education in the developing world grew from 80 per cent in 1991 to 88 per cent in 2005. Women's political participation has also been growing; even in countries where previously only men were allowed to stand for political election, women now have a seat in parliament. Fewer children are dying of preventable diseases and more resources continue to be directed at building health systems and tackling malaria, HIV and AIDS, and tuberculosis. Developing countries are increasingly preparing National Development Strategies that have MDG achievement as their longer-term aim, including policy reform and institution building geared to implementing those plans.



Photo by Adam Rogers/UNCDF

Challenges

But two major gaps remain: first, progress against the different targets is highly uneven, and second, growth and progress on human development is being unequally shared, both between and within countries.

Many countries are falling behind and sub-Saharan Africa is most at risk – the region is not on track to meet a single MDG by 2015. Even regions that have made substantial progress, including parts of Asia, face challenges in areas such as health and environmental sustainability.

More generally, the lack of employment opportunities for young people, gender inequalities, rapid and unplanned urbanization, deforestation, increasing water scarcity, and high HIV prevalence are pervasive obstacles to long-term development efforts and to the achievement of the MDGs in many countries. In turn, poverty, hunger, lack of opportunities and inequality are key drivers of conflict and violence. Moreover, the ongoing increase of global food prices could mean being set back to square one—“seven lost years” in our work towards the achievement of the MDGs. Climate change is projected to have serious economic and social impacts which will impede progress towards the MDGs, especially in the less developed countries.

- 854 million people across the world are hungry, of which 7 out of 10 are women and girls.
- Every year six million children die from malnutrition before their fifth birthday.
- 1 in 16 women in sub-Saharan Africa will die from pregnancy and childbirth complications over the course of her lifetime, compared to 1 in 3,800 in the developed world
- Everyday HIV/AIDS kills 6,000 people and another 8,200 people are infected.
- Half the population of the developing world lack basic sanitation.
- Per capita incomes in the 10 richest countries were 21 times higher than those in the 10 poorest countries in 1950. But by 2005 this ratio had more than doubled to 50.

Achievements

In spite of all these challenges, the MDGs are achievable even in the poorest and most disadvantaged countries. Our world today has the necessary science, technology, medicine, knowledge and wealth to eradicate extreme poverty and build a more prosperous world: what we need is better aid coordination and a strength of purpose to employ the ingenuity and resources we have – and to employ them well - to help those who need it.

The results achieved in the most successful cases demonstrate that rapid and large-scale progress is possible when strong government leadership, good policies and practical strategies for scaling up public investments in vital areas are combined with adequate financial and technical support from the international community.

Recent examples include:

- In one year **Malawi's** voucher programme for fertilizers and seeds has led to a doubling of agricultural productivity during the 2006/7 growing season.
- In **Argentina**, 2,300 micro-entrepreneurs, 69 per cent of which are women, doubled their family income and sales in 2007 through micro-credit programmes.
- **Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda** and other sub-Saharan African countries have abolished fees for primary schools, dramatically increasing enrolment during the past few years.
- In **Haiti**, 4,300 of the country's poorest children from 33 schools received school materials and supplies, contributing to a decrease in drop-out rates.
- In **Rwanda**, the gender gap in primary education reached its goal of zero in 2005, and the gender gaps in literacy and parliamentary representation are currently close to zero.
- In **Algeria**, parity between sexes has been achieved at the primary school level, and the proportion accounted for by girls exceeds the proportion of boys at the secondary and higher education levels.
- **Burundi** introduced free medical care for mothers and children.
- **Bangladesh** conducted the world's largest ever measles eradication campaign in 20 days, vaccinating 33.5 million children between the ages of nine months and 10 years.
- In **Niger**, hundreds of thousands of people in rural communities greatly improved their livelihoods and reduced their vulnerability to droughts through large-scale reforestation driven by national policy reforms.
- In **Bulgaria**, long-term unemployment rates fell to 3.95 per cent in June 2007, compared to 9.59 per cent in 2001.

Looking ahead

While strengthening a global partnership for development will continue to be a crucial cornerstone of development progress, another basic principle to face some key challenges will be a commitment to put in place structures that over time reduce inequalities both between and within countries. Trade and investment will remain a key factor in addressing inequalities between countries. Inclusive and pro-poor growth in international markets as well as in national markets will be also indispensable. Another tier of support should come from improved access to more appropriate technologies including clean energy, higher and better quality private investment, and grant finance from richer countries given in support of developing country priorities.

For more information visit:

www.undp.org and
MDG Monitor: www.mdgmonitor.org

United Nations Development Programme
One United Nations Plaza
New York, NY 10017 USA

May 2008

