



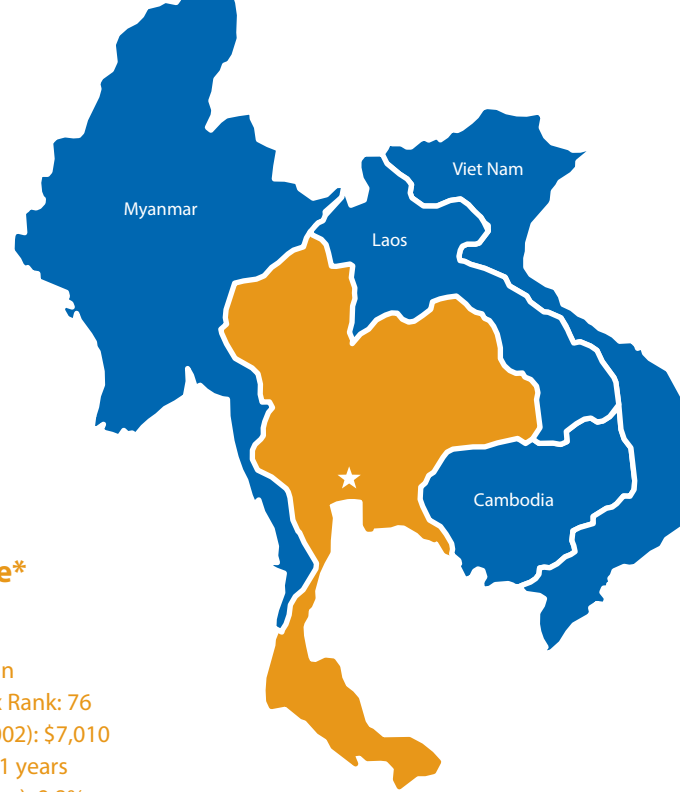
MDG-Plus: a case study of Thailand

• eradicate extreme poverty and hunger • achieve universal primary education • promote gender equality and empower women • reduce child mortality • improve maternal health • combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases • ensure environmental sustainability • develop a global partnership for development • eradicate extreme poverty and hunger • achieve universal primary education • promote gender equality and empower women • reduce child mortality • improve maternal health • combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases



Part of a series to share good practices from countries successfully promoting and advancing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), this case is intended to help UNDP Country Offices, national governments and their partners to determine whether adapting the MDG targets to local contexts could advance the MDGs in their countries, and if so, how the Thailand experience can be applied elsewhere. The case focuses on implementation of the adaptation and reporting processes, which, enabled by the leadership of the Royal Thai Government, made a profound impact on Government policies and priorities.





Thailand at a Glance*

Location: South East Asia

★ Capitol: Bangkok

Total Population: 62.2 million

Human Development Index Rank: 76

GDP per Capita (PPP US\$ 2002): \$7,010

Life Expectancy at Birth: 69.1 years

Poverty (national poverty line): 9.8%

Adult Literacy: 92.6%

Why MDG-Plus? How Does This Adaptation Advance Development in Thailand?

Thailand exemplifies how the MDGs can be put to good use in a middle-income country that has already achieved most of the MDGs well in advance of the 2015 deadline. The process to transform the MDGs into a floor instead of a ceiling for human development and ultimate commitment to these adapted goals, known locally as MDG-Plus, has made the MDG-Plus a mobilizing and agenda-setting theme in Thailand. The adaptation process, technical work and related campaigning in Thailand has helped to:

- focus attention on vulnerable groups, minorities and more neglected regions and issues;
- re-prioritize and refine Government development planning in favour of pro-poor interventions, including through Cabinet approval of the MDG-Plus targets;
- broaden the ownership of MDG and development processes across Government ministries, academic institutions, civil society organizations and UN agencies;
- reinvigorate Thailand's response to HIV/AIDS after a period of complacency, and help to shape the Government's policy shift;
- support the Government in revising the national poverty line to better capture the real extent and distribution of poverty;
- improve development planning at the provincial level by applying the MDG framework as a broad-based and results-oriented strategic planning tool;
- prompt the Government to take measures to improve its capacity to monitor human development; and
- set the vision for Thailand's contribution to Goal 8 as an emerging donor and leader in regional cooperation.

* Sources: Human Development Report 2004, Poverty from the *Thailand Millennium Development Goals Report 2004*.

The Development Context

Thailand is a middle-income country that has seen remarkable progress in human development in the last twenty years. It will achieve most if not all of the global MDGs well in advance of 2015. Thailand has reduced poverty from 27% in 1990 to 9.8% in 2002, and the proportion of underweight children has fallen by nearly half. Most children are in school; malaria is no longer a problem in most of the country. Annual new HIV infections have been reduced by more than 80% since 1991, the peak of the epidemic. Strides are being made toward gender equality. (See Table 1.)

Thailand's success can be attributed to a powerful mix of national harmony, astute policy making, stronger democratic governance, the industriousness of Thai people, public investment in social services, advantageous historic and geopolitical circumstances and, not least, economic growth fuelled by high exports, diversified manufacturing, agriculture, mining and foreign direct investment. In general, Thailand has proven to be resilient in weathering storms and adept at repositioning itself in a fast-changing, global context. Thus, the financial crisis in the late 1990s eroded, but did not overturn prior human development progress. Since then, assiduous macroeconomic and domestic reforms have poised Thailand for impressive growth, as demonstrated by the 6.7% GDP growth in 2003.

This notable progress has not, however, benefited everyone equally. Benefits accrued faster to those more closely linked to the international economy, for example by jobs in manufacturing for export. Those who remained in the domestic economy, for example small scale farmers, generally received fewer benefits, proportionately. Thailand's cities have grown faster than its countryside; poverty is widespread in the rural northeast, far north and far south of the country. Persistent development challenges include: higher rates of maternal mortality in the Muslim south; enduring child malnutrition in remote northern hill tribe areas; and, unsustainable use of natural resources. Additionally, there are warning signs of a resurgence of HIV/AIDS. Despite a high level of school enrollment, the quality of education and inadequate training for workers risks undermining Thailand's ability to reap the benefits of globalization and, ultimately, its future human development.

The First MDG Report: Government Commitment to Action

When the Cabinet of the Royal Thai Government approved the *Thailand Millennium Development Goals Report 2004* on 22 June 2004, it committed Thailand to the ambitious development agenda set out in the report. The report was groundbreaking in three respects. First, it is a tribute to Thailand's success in reaching most, if not all, the MDG targets well ahead of schedule. Some targets, such as poverty, were already achieved more than five years ago. (See Table 1). At the same time, the report calls attention to inequitable development and persistent challenges in sectors of education, environment and health, as discussed above.

Second, the report establishes a new set of MDG-Plus targets that are much more ambitious than the globally agreed targets. For example, with poverty already reduced by two-thirds, the report sets a target of reaching 4% poverty by 2009, which would mark a four-fifth reduction in poverty since 1990. MDG-Plus targets were also set for education, maternal and child mortality, HIV/AIDS, gender equality and environment, as laid out in Figure 1 and Table 2.

Table 1: Status at a Glance: Progress toward the MDGs in Thailand

Source: *Thailand Millennium Development Goals Report 2004*

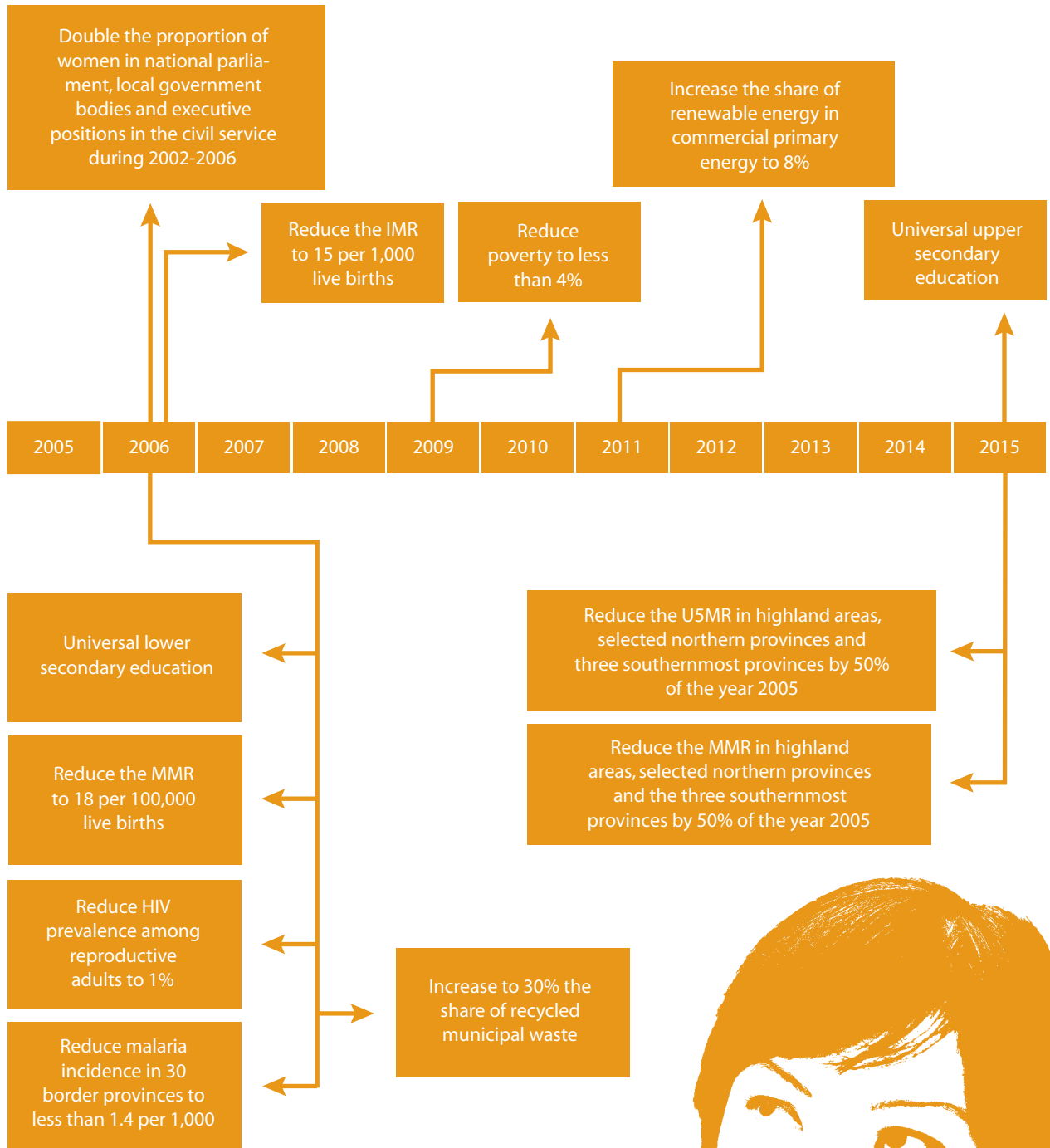
MDG Target	Scorecard
Halve the proportion of people living in extreme poverty between 1990-2015.	Already achieved
Halve the proportion of people who suffer from hunger between 1990-2015.	Already achieved
Ensure that by 2015, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling.	Highly likely
Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015.	Already achieved
Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate.	Not applicable ¹
Reduce by three-quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio.	Not applicable ²
Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS.	Already achieved, but signs of possible reversal in 2004
Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria, tuberculosis, and other major diseases.	Already achieved for malaria; potentially for tuberculosis
Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the losses of environmental resources.	Potentially
Halve by 2015 the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation.	Already achieved
By 2020 to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of slum dwellers.	Likely

Third, the report sets a vision for Thailand's contribution to MDG 8, a global partnership for development, making Thailand the first developing country to do so in a national MDG Report. The report specifies how, as a middle-income country, Thailand can help to promote MDGs beyond its borders through south-south development cooperation, foreign direct investment, opening its markets to poor countries, regional and global cooperation, and trade with its neighbours, several of which are least developed countries. Thailand can also offer many insights and experiences from its own development history on what it takes to achieve the MDGs.

¹ Under five mortality is already approaching Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development(OECD) levels and is too low to reduce by two-thirds.

² Maternal mortality is already approaching OECD levels and is too low to reduce by three-quarters.

Figure 1: Thailand's MDG-Plus Timeline



National Leadership to Adapt the MDGs

The Thailand MDG Report was the culmination of an unprecedented national consultation among government agencies, NGOs, academia and the UN Country Team that emerged during the preparation process. Several factors have made the Thai MDG effort so successful to date, beginning with this inclusive and dynamic consultation. The process benefited from strong Government leadership, particularly the visionary leadership of the planning branch of the Thai Government, the National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB). The Development Board's organizational culture and leadership fosters creativity, innovation, independent thinking, and openness to working with national and international partners.

Another crucial decision was to anchor the MDG report processes in established offices and mainstream policy discourses. This minimized duplication, avoided time consuming processes to initiate new mechanisms, and increased integration with other policy processes. The Development Board initiated the process in 2002 with a series of working papers that survey the availability and quality of existing data, and identify data gaps and weaknesses. Based on this analysis, the Development Board created six MDG Cluster Groups to review data and the application of the MDG framework to the Thai context, including adaptation of the MDG targets, and to suggest development strategies to achieve the MDGs. Individual Cluster Groups focused on: poverty and hunger (MDG 1); education (MDG 2); gender equality (MDG 3); health (MDGs 4 - 6); environment (MDG 7); and Thailand's contribution to the global partnership for development (MDG 8). Each MDG Cluster Group met at least five times during the year and included representatives of Government ministries, academic and non-governmental organizations and the UN Country Team.

The Development Board assigned six MDG Cluster Champions' from line ministries and civil society to convene and to lead the individual Cluster Groups. Importantly, the MDG Cluster Champions were prominent leaders in their respective fields, including a Senior Advisor from the Development Board, the Inspector General in the Ministry of Education, the President of Women's Health Advocacy Foundation and advisor to the Prime Minister's Office on gender issues, the Director of Health Systems Research Institute in the Ministry of Public Health, and the Deputy Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment. The Cluster Champions' participation broadened ownership of the MDGs and facilitated implementation of the recommendations and MDG-Plus agenda once the Cabinet approved them.

The concept of MDG-Plus had been coined by a senior official of the Thai Development Board at an MDG workshop in the Lao People's Democratic Republic in October 2002. In 2003, the Development Board, UNDP and the World Bank refined this concept, which was then introduced to the MDG Cluster Groups. Each group considered and agreed upon MDG-Plus targets and indicators tailored to Thailand's needs and priorities. The groups also discussed data availability and reliability, and policy recommendations to be included in the MDG Report. The process culminated in a national workshop, where the analysis of the cluster groups was presented and their recommendations brought together into a coherent framework for Thailand's development. (See Table 2.)

Table 2: Global MDG and Thailand MDG-Plus Targets and Indicators

Goal		Targets	Indicators
Poverty	Global MDG	Halve the proportion of people living in extreme poverty between 1990-2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportion of population below national poverty line • Poverty gap ratio • Share of poorest quintile in individual household income
	Thailand MDG+	Reduce poverty to less than 4% by 2009.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poverty incidence in the Northeast and 3 Southernmost provinces • Poverty severity
Hunger	Global MDG	Halve the proportion of people who suffer from hunger between 1990-2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevalence of underweight children (under five years of age) • Proportion of population below food poverty line
	Thailand MDG+	Same	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevalence of underweight highland children • Prevalence of micro-nutrient deficiency (iodine, iron, vitamin A) among school-aged children • Proportion of population aged over 20 below minimum level of dietary energy consumption
Education	Global MDG	Ensure that by 2015, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Net and gross enrollment ratio in primary education • Proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reach grade 6 (retention rate) • Literacy rate of 15-years old
	Thailand MDG+	Universal lower secondary education by 2006. Universal upper secondary education by 2015.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Net and gross enrollment ratio in lower and upper secondary education • Retention rate in lower and upper secondary education • National test scores of primary, lower and upper secondary students • IT literacy of 15-24 years old
Gender	Global MDG	Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ratio of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education • Ratio of literate women to men of 15-24 years old • Share of women in waged employment in non-agricultural sector • Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament
	Thailand MDG+	Double the proportion of women in the national parliament, Tambon Administrative Organizations, and executive positions in the civil service by 2006.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ratios of girls to boys in selected fields in tertiary education • Ratio of literate women to men over 40 years old • Proportion of women's income in waged employment in non-agricultural sector • Proportion of women in Tambon Administrative Organizations and executive positions in the civil service
Child health	Global MDG	Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate (U5MR).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under-five mortality rate • Infant mortality rate • Proportion of 1-year old children immunized against measles
	Thailand MDG+	Reduce infant mortality rate (IMR) to 15 per 1,000 live births by 2006. Reduce by half the U5M in highland areas, selected northern provinces and three southernmost provinces between 2005-2015.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IMR in highland areas, northern provinces and three southernmost provinces • U5M in highland areas, selected Northern provinces and three southernmost provinces

Goal		Targets	Indicators
Maternal health	Global MDG	Reduce by three-quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio (localized to MMR in high-income OECD in 2000).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maternal mortality ratio • Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel
	Thailand MDG+	Reduce MMR to 18 per 100,000 live births by 2006. Reduce by half MMR in highland areas, selected Northern provinces and 3 Southernmost provinces between 2005-2015.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MMR in highland areas, northern provinces and 3 southernmost provinces
HIV/AIDS	Global MDG	Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HIV prevalence among pregnant women • Rates of constant condom use of secondary schools male students • Number of children orphaned by AIDS
	Thailand MDG+	Reduce HIV prevalence among reproductive adults to 1% by 2006.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HIV prevalence among reproductive adults • HIV prevalence among injecting drug users
Malaria, tuberculosis and heart disease	Global MDG	Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incidence and death rates associated with malaria • Prevalence and death rates associated with tuberculosis • Proportion of tuberculosis cases cured under DOTS
	Thailand MDG+	Reduce Malaria incidence in 30 border provinces to less than 1.4 per 1,000 by 2006.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Malaria incidence in 30 border provinces • Prevalence and death rates associated with heart disease
Sustainable development	Global MDG	Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the losses of environmental resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportion of land area covered by forest • Ratio of area protected to maintain biological diversity to surface area • Energy use per 1,000 Baht of GDP • Carbon dioxide emission and consumption of ozone-depleting CFCs • Proportion of population using solid fuel (i.e. fuel wood, charcoal)
	Thailand MDG+	Increase the share of renewable energy to 8% of the commercial primary energy by 2011. Increase the share of municipal waste recycled to 30% by 2006.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mangrove forest area • Share of renewable energy in commercial primary energy • Proportion of major rivers that do not meet DO, BOD and TCB standard • Proportion of municipal waste recycled
Safe drinking water and sanitation	Global MDG	Halve by 2015 the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportion of population with sustainable access to an improved water source, urban and rural • Proportion of urban and rural population with access to improved sanitation
	Thai MDG+	Same	Same
Secure tenure	Global MDG	By 2020 to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of slum dwellers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportion of households with access to secure tenure (owned or rented)
	Thai MDG+	Same	Same

Underlying MDG-Plus is an emphasis to reduce persistent and remaining poverty, and to direct education, health and environmental protection and benefits to the poorest people in the poorer areas. For example, the indicators for the MDG-Plus target on poverty measure the incidence of poverty in the poorest provinces of the country. Similarly, the MDG-Plus target on child mortality specifies reducing rates in highland areas, and northern and southernmost provinces. A relative increase in budget allocations to these regions and demographic groups will be needed to implement this policy effectively.

The new, more rigorous targets made the global MDGs a floor instead of a ceiling for human development in Thailand. These aspirations made the MDGs more relevant to Thailand and, in the process, built ownership of the MDGs, an important ingredient in successful implementation.

UN Country Team involvement was crucial to this process. It occurred in two primary ways. First, a creative relationship emerged among the Thai Development Board, UNDP and the World Bank. The resulting triumvirate provided overall substantive guidance and funding for the adaptation and report preparation processes. Together with the World Bank, UNDP provided the necessary support to the Thai Government to ensure a dynamic consultative process and an MDG Report that meets highest standards. The UN Resident Coordinator in Thailand capitalized on his concurrent role as the UNDP Resident Representative by using UNDP as the financial and substantive engine in support of a joint UN Country Team effort in this process.

Second, the UN Country Team and UNDP invested substantial staff time and financial resources to the preparation processes for the MDG Report. Members of the UN Country Team participated actively in the MDG Cluster Groups, contributing their expertise in specialized topics, particularly on complex data issues, as well as suggestions on policy analysis and messaging. By providing support, technical assistance, and substantive inputs, UNDP ensured that its global experience and expertise were brought to bear. The strong Government leadership meant that the role of the UN agencies fell into place without friction, and enabled productive UN Country Team engagement.

Concurrently, the agencies of the UN Country Team continued their operations to assist Thailand through projects and programmes to achieve the MDGs. Many agencies also increased their policy analysis and advocacy efforts in support of Government implementation of the MDG-Plus agenda. The MDG Report and the MDG-Plus targets are now providing the overall framework for all future UN development work in Thailand. The UN Common Country Assessment, under preparation in 2005, is focused on the challenge of achieving the MDG-Plus targets. The Assessment will in turn determine the strategic priorities and direction of the joint UN Development Assistance Framework for Thailand for 2007-2011.

Impact of the MDG-Plus Agenda

The Cabinet's endorsement of the MDG Report transformed the ambitious MDG-Plus targets into Government policy. It had an immediate impact on the development agenda in Thailand. After the launch of the report, the Prime Minister called for a special follow-up session of the Cabinet to discuss the implications of the MDG-Plus targets for Government Ministries and their sector strategies. The Cabinet also discussed the many data problems identified by the report. The Development Board took this opportunity to recommend to the Cabinet measures to improve the availability and reliability of statistics that would be essential for monitoring future progress. This subsequently resulted in a partnership among the National Statistical Office, UNDP, UNICEF and the World Bank to support Government's efforts to improve its statistical system and the availability of quality aggregated and disaggregated data.

The Ministry of Public Health was then the first to act. The Permanent Secretary quickly convened a meeting to revise and re-prioritize the national health plan in line with the MDG-Plus targets. The Senate Sub-Committee on Women in Politics and Administration assigned the Bureau of Women's Affairs in the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security to take the lead in advocating for gender rights, namely the doubling of the proportion of women in national parliament, local government bodies and executive positions in the civil service by 2006, an MDG-Plus target. Concurrently, the Senate Sub-Committee also requested Women for Democratic Development Foundation, a leading non-governmental think tank, to prepare a thematic MDG Report on the status of women in politics and administration, which will anchor a nation-wide campaign.

One MDG at a Time: Sharp Steps Toward Progress

In its advocacy work, the UN Country Team prioritized one MDG at a time. The first goal selected was MDG 6, reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS. Thailand has much to offer other countries in sharing how it so successfully reversed the spread of HIV/AIDS in the 1990s. At the same time, this past success was at the risk of increased complacency and inaction, and infection rates were increasing. There was need for targeted advocacy and action. The focus proved expedient and strategic. Tapping a prior success can require less education and can mobilize 'can-do' sentiments, sentiments that can spill over or be tapped for other development efforts. In Thailand, it also contributed to the atmosphere of support to tailor the MDGs to national needs.

This focused campaigning began about a year after work on the MDG Report. Lead partners in the initiative included the Ministry of Health, the Thailand Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS, the Population Development Agency, the Thai Business Coalition on AIDS and the UN Country Team. Consultations were held with Government agencies, civil society organizations and the UN Country Team. The UN Theme Group on HIV/AIDS, UNDP and the Health Systems Research Institute, an independent think tank attached to the Ministry of Public Health, prepared a thematic MDG report, in part to give substantive backing to advocacy efforts. The report drew partially on work of the MDG health cluster.

The report, *Thailand's Response to HIV/AIDS: Progress and Challenges*, provides: (i) an in-depth analysis of why Thailand has been so successful in curbing HIV/AIDS, reducing yearly new infections from more than 140,000 in 1991 at the peak of the epidemic to about 20,000 in 2003; (ii) a sobering account of a newly evolving epidemic, showing clear warning signs of a possible resurgence in HIV infection in the general population; and (iii) a frank assessment of a faltering national response, a series of specific policy recommendations, and a call for a “new wave of political leadership” by the current government. This targeted message reinforced the call to action in the national MDG Report and MDG-Plus agenda.

The report formed the backbone of a major joint advocacy effort by the UNAIDS family³ in Thailand. It was launched just ten days after the national MDG Report and four days before the International AIDS Conference in Bangkok. It had a huge media impact in Thailand and abroad.⁴ The report had a discernable impact on Government policies, and made an important contribution to the policy debate at the conference.

Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra said at the International AIDS Conference in Bangkok, “there is no time for complacency: no time to rest on our laurels”; and committed to a remarkable set of actions, including in formerly controversial areas:

- a nation-wide harm reduction programme to prevent HIV infection among injecting drug users;
- distribution of 100,000 condoms in Thai prisons to stem the spread of HIV among the many injecting drug users in prisons;
- inclusion of AIDS education in the national school curriculum, a blind spot in the Thai response to date;
- nation-wide income-generating schemes for people living with HIV/AIDS and scholarship support to orphans;
- free universal access to anti-retroviral (ARVs) as an integral part of the Government’s universal health care scheme, building on an earlier commitment to expand access to drug treatment to about half of those in need;
- expansion of generic drug production, including newer generation medications, and reassurance that the UN-Thai Free Trade Agreement then being negotiated would not include TRIPS-plus measures that would limit the scope of generic drug production in Thailand;
- provision of anti-retroviral (ARVs) drugs to neighbouring Cambodia, Laos, and Myanmar, and later to Africa; and pledge of US \$5 million to the Global Fund on AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria over five years.

³ The UN Office on Drugs and Crime, UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the International Labour Organization (ILO) UNICEF and UNDP were each active in advocacy and outreach.

⁴ All major Thai newspapers gave the report prominent coverage, as did *The Herald Tribune*, *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *The Guardian*, and hundreds of other newspapers around the world. The report also generated global television and radio reports.

NextSteps

Next steps in Thailand focus on implementing new policies, continuing to build ownership of the MDGs in Thailand, deepening MDG awareness and action at the provincial level, and improving monitoring, data and planning. A second one-goal-focus in advocacy, this time on MDG 3 to promote gender equality, will be launched in August 2005 to assist in outreach.

As a part of the effort, the Government, UN Country Team and partners decided to focus development planning action on the poorest provinces and select provinces that have fallen behind. Two provinces, Mae Hong Song in the far north and Nakhon Phanom in the northeast on the banks of the Mekong River and Thailand's poorest province, were selected as pilots. Both are struggling with lack of livelihood opportunities, environmental degradation, and low educational attainment. In the pilot projects, the Development Board (NESDB) and the Provincial Governments are using the MDG framework to generate a broad based consultation on how these provinces can make rapid gains in achieving the MDGs Plus targets, and catch up with the rest of the country. The Development Board is also piloting sub-national MDG reports in these two provinces as a means to engage provincial authorities in a process of improving and broadening local development planning.

The many related MDG initiatives have boosted ongoing efforts to improve human development monitoring and statistical capacity, with benefits that will extend across sectors and to the sub-provincial level. Following up on issues raised during the preparation of the MDG Report, UNDP, the World Bank and UNICEF are supporting initiatives to strengthen statistical capacity and data quality. Initiatives include:

- revision of the official poverty line, which was found to underestimate the real extent of poverty, especially in urban areas as well as the north. The new poverty line, adopted in May 2005 increases the incidence of poverty significantly and reflects changing patterns of consumption of food regions and population groups;
- technical support and advice to the National Statistical Office on re-designing and streamlining socio-economic, demographic and labour surveys; and
- design and implementation of DevInfo software to monitor human development, covering MDG, MDG-Plus and other human development indicators used in Thailand. The Government is rolling out DevInfo in all provinces, with the lead support of UNICEF.

Finally, the Thai Development Board and UNDP launched an MDGs campaign to bring MDG-Plus to the people. The campaign includes an easily accessible "people's version" of the MDG Report, a website, and a series of public service announcements to be aired on Thai TV channels.



Lessons Learned

- **The MDGs can provide a framework through which middle-income countries can re-examine their human development successes and prioritize assistance to vulnerable groups and more neglected themes.** In Thailand, the MDG-Plus process and related reporting initiatives called attention to areas in the Northeast and South that lag behind national averages. Government and UN programmes are prioritizing development aid to these regions.
- **Strong national leadership can advance MDG outreach and policy planning, and open significant space for input by partners.** In Thailand, the MDG process has benefited from the visionary leadership of the National Economic and Social Development Board, whose organizational culture fosters innovation, independent thinking, and openness to working with national and international partners. The strong leadership also enabled productive interaction with the UN Country Team; the role of the various UN agencies fell into place without friction.
- **Appointment of senior Government officials and civil society leaders to lead consultative processes can mobilize stakeholders, boost buy-in, and increase impact.** The Thai Government and civil society leaders appointed prominent leaders in their fields as MDG Cluster Champions. Coming from line Ministries, think tanks and non-governmental organizations, these champions led sector-specific research and consultations on MDG targets and policies.
- **The emergence of a creative vanguard among partners can lend strong momentum to an MDG process, and ensure timely follow-on initiatives.** In Thailand, the collaborative relationship among the National Economic and Social Development Board, UNDP and the World Bank, and with other partners including UNICEF, proved instrumental in facilitating the adaptation of the MDGs into MDG-Plus, thematic campaigning, initiation of provincial MDG reports, and steps to improve monitoring capacity.
- **Anchoring the MDGs in the mainstream policy discourse can facilitate well-functioning processes that feed into national policies.** It also reduces creation of additional or parallel structures. In Thailand, the National Economic and Social Development Board coordinated an inclusive and dynamic MDG processes among line Ministries, non-governmental organizations, academia, the UN Country Team and the World Bank.
- **Developing and middle income countries can contribute to MDG 8 through south-south cooperation, investment, trade, regional initiatives and sharing of experiences while still working to advance development at home.** Ways that Thailand can assist in a global partnership for development are a distinguishing and important feature of the MDG-Plus agenda in Thailand, and helped to further national commitment to the MDGs.
- **Substantial investment of staff time and financial resources by the UN Country Team can be necessary to support successful adaptation of MDGs to national contexts, participatory processes, outreach and implementation.** The strong capacity and commitment of the Government notwithstanding, the process in Thailand benefited from significant substantive capacity in and financial support from the UNDP Country Office and the World Bank. This support enabled UNDP to provide pivotal inputs to the MDG reports and processes, and bring its experience and expertise to bear.

- **Prioritizing one MDG in campaigning and advocacy can call attention to particular, forgotten or unseen needs, while simultaneously advancing the larger MDG cause.** In Thailand, an initial advocacy focus on HIV/AIDS helped to bring attention and policy action back to the epidemic in a time of complacency and inaction following enormous success in curbing its spread. Concurrently, the attention it drew to related issues supported the larger MDG-Plus agenda.

This case is one in a series of good practices prepared by the Bureau for Resources and Strategic Partnerships/MDGs Unit in conjunction with the Regional Bureaux and Country Offices.

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Web Sites and Reference Documents

UNDP Thailand Website: www.undp.or.th

National Economic and Social Development Board website: <http://ie.nesdb.go.th/mdg>

Thailand MDG website: www.un.or.th/mdg

Additional cases in this Good Practice series: www.undp.org/mdg/goodpractices.html



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